A PLAIN AND LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS

now intituled

The Book of the THOUSAND and ONE NIGHTS

by

Sir Richard Burton

A SELECTION BY

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Contents

	PAGE
In the Name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!	17
Tale of the Fisherman and the Jinni	32
The Tale of the Ensorcelled Prince	45
Tale of the Tailor	55
The Barber's Tale of His Second Brother	66
The Barber's Tale of His Fifth Brother	71
The Barber's Tale of His Sixth Brother	75
Tale of Ghanim Bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love	79
Tale of the First Eunuch, Bukhayt	83
Tale of the Second Eunuch, Kafur	85
The Tale of the Birds and Beasts and the Carpenter	110
The Man Who Stole the Dish of Gold Wherein the Dog Ate	121
The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through a Dream	125
The Ebony Horse	127
The Simpleton and the Sharper	156
The Unwise Schoolmaster Who Fell in Love by Report	158
How Abu Hasan Brake Wind	160

PAGE

SINDBAD THE SEAMAN AND SINDBAD THE LANDSMAN 163

First Voyage of Sindbad, Hight the Seaman 165

The Second Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman 173

The Third Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman 180

The Fourth Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman 191

The Fifth Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman 203

THE LADY AND HER FIVE SUITORS 212

JULNAR THE SEA-BORN AND HER SON KING BADR BASIM OF PERSIA 219

KHALIFAH THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD 258

ABU KIR THE DYER AND ABU SIR THE BARBER 289

THE REEVE'S TALE 318

THE STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE OLD CAIRO POLICE 328

MA'ARUF THE COBBLER AND HIS WIFE FATIMAH 329

CONCLUSION 374

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Introduction

IT is little more than two hundred years since the *Arabian Nights* made their first appearance in Europe. The man who let the Jinni out of the bottle was a French scholar, Antoine Galland, who as attaché-secretary to the French Ambassador at the Porte travelled much in the Levant. His *Mille et une Nuits, Contes Arabes traduits en François* was published at intervals between 1704 and 1717, and although fuller and more faithful translations have appeared since that time it was undeniably Galland who captured (and held) the imagination of the west, who introduced Haroun Al-Rashid and Scheherezade to all the drawing-rooms from Moscow to Madrid, and started that delightful oriental strain in European letters which has produced works as various as Voltaire's *Zadig* and Beckford's *Vathek*. For a long time the European mind had been building up fantasies about the classical world of Greece and Rome. Now it launched out into more extravagant fantasy about Baghdad, the Abode of Peace. The mind's eye could see fresh, exciting landscapes where palaces sparkled in the clear air; there was the flash of jewels, the cry of strange birds, flying horses traversed the night sky, spirits arose and revealed the hidden treasures of the earth and with Sindbad the Sailor the common reader could set out on a new Odyssey across blue seas where islands were (in the words of the story-teller) "white like camphor." Galland, however, intended his version of the *Nights* to be popular and this he achieved by emphasising the strange and the miraculous, and ignoring much that was characteristic of the original: the very frank treatment of sex and its perversions, the more savage stories of brutality and corruption, the historical and semi-historical anecdotes. Galland presented a mere fragment of the repertoire to the Western reader, a fragment we should certainly not care to do without, but one that gives no more idea of the original than Lamb's tales do of Shakespeare.

Europe had to wait a long time before a full and faithful translation was attempted. And while it is waiting this would

seem a suitable moment to say something of the provenance of the tales; something, but not very much, for this is a subject on which only the word of the most scholarly of Orientalists (I am far from being one!) has any right to be heard—and, even then, such is the merciless ferocity of learned men to one another, he would be cut down almost before he had opened his mouth, so controversial has the matter become. Only one scholar of standing, the celebrated Arabist E. W. Lane, has ever claimed that the work was written by one person or, at the most, two. It is evident that in the book of *The Thousand and One Nights* we have a collection of tales not only from many lands, India, Persia, Greece, Syria and Egypt, but also from different epochs; some of the tales, especially the Beast fables, are very ancient indeed, others have been assigned to dates (these vary with the scholar!) between the tenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. An Index-List of Arabic works (the *Kitab al-Fihrist*) compiled in A.D. 987 tells us that the framework of the book, the story of Scheherazade and the misogynist king, was Persian in origin and that the device was taken over by the Arabs who "polished and embellished" the Persian tales and "wrote others resembling them." Modern scholarship has traced this framework back to Indian folk-lore. In some fairly complete form the *Nights* was well known in Egypt in the twelfth century. The important fact to remember, however, is that no matter what scholars are able to tell us of the origins of these tales they have, in the course of centuries, passed through the hands of many Arab scribes and editors, have been transmuted in the process and so provide us with an infinitely varied and vivid expression of the temperament of medieval Islam. The text upon which most modern translations are based was compiled by some unknown editor in Egypt towards the end of the eighteenth century.

The first attempt to render a complete and faithful translation of the *Nights* into English seems to have been made by Henry Torrens (1838) who had for some years been resident in Bengal, but he died prematurely and only one out of his projected nine or ten volumes was completed. The translation is so painstakingly literal that it makes very tiring reading though, true enough, Torrens (an Irishman to be sure!) could enliven a page by stating that one of the characters who had been miraculously transported from Cairo by a Jinni during the night "awoke

sleeping at Damascus." The principal value of E. W. Lane's translation (1839–41) lies in the notes, for his knowledge of Cairo society was encyclopedic; the work was intended for "the drawing-room table" and is, accordingly, a mere castrated selection of the original. The first complete translation was made by John Payne (1882–84) and published by the Villon Society in a limited edition of 500 copies. To these three translations Sir Richard Burton frankly admitted his indebtedness when he came to publish the version (1885–86, in ten volumes, with five supplemental volumes) from which the present selection is made. Burton had been engaged on the translation for many years on and off (he dates his first move in the matter as far back as 1852) for he realised that "while the name of this wondrous treasury of Moslem folk-lore is familiar to almost every English child, no general reader is aware of the valuables it contains, nor indeed will the door open to any but Arabists." This is still largely true even to-day in spite of Payne, Burton and, later, Mardrus the Frenchman; and in this fact lies the excuse for the publication of a selection which will, it is hoped, give the common reader some idea of the range and variety of the *Nights* and, in so doing, rescue them from the nursery where they have lain too long.

Burton's qualifications as a translator of the *Nights* were formidable not only because of his extensive knowledge of Arabic (he was also fluent in Persian and Hindustani, not to mention several lesser Eastern languages and dialects), but because of his extraordinary personality: "Arabia," he said, "is a region so familiar to my mind that even at first sight it seemed a reminiscence of some bygone metempsychic life in the distant past." He was one of that colourful breed of Europeans who are much more at home in the East than their native lands. As a young officer in India he was engaged on intelligence work, passing as a Dervish among the fanatical tribesmen or, in the disguise of a pedlar, penetrating even the mysteries of the harim. While his fellow-officers were taking their afternoon sleep Burton would be hard at work on Gujarati; his native mistress was more to him than the necessary makeshift of Anglo-Indian custom—she was a living dictionary. His physical and mental energy were tireless, and although he managed to win favour under Napier, the conqueror of Sind, he was much too vigorous,

independent and unorthodox to receive the official recognition or even the promotion to which he was undeniably entitled.

He first came to public notice because of his successful pilgrimage, disguised as a Pathan, to Mecca and Medina in 1853. His account of the journey is a classic of English travel literature. No enterprise could have borne more powerful testimony to his knowledge of Eastern customs and beliefs, though the expedition he later made to the city of Harar (1854–55) was probably even more hazardous and revealing of his fearlessness and determination. He is in the first rank of English explorers and was the first European, with Speke for company, to reach the Great Lakes of Central Africa. From this time onwards he was a perpetually disappointed man. His unique talents and knowledge were largely wasted in the Consular Service at such unrewarding places as Fernando Po, Santos in Brazil and, for the last years of his life (it was here he did most of the work on the *Nights*) at Trieste. True, there was one Consulate which he held, that of Damascus, which he found very congenial, but he was peremptorily recalled from the post because he (and his wife) had managed to antagonise certain sections of public opinion there. Isabel Burton was, in some ways, as remarkable as her husband. A brave, pathetic, ridiculous woman, she idolised her Richard, intrigued endlessly with Cabinet Ministers for his advancement (and succeeded in landing the K.C.M.G. for him), tried to emulate his talent for disguise by appearing in silk bloomers and a yashmak in the bazars of Damascus, and on his death (she was a devout Roman Catholic and Richard a heretic) she had his heart animated by an electric battery and Extreme Unction administered to what she insisted was a still-living man.

The publication of the *Nights* was an enormous success, it netted Burton a clear profit of £10,000 and he became a celebrity —but a very notorious one, for the great public immediately fastened on to his volumes not so much for their anthropological lore (as had been his intention) but simply because of the eroticism. Krafft-Ebbing and Freud have been at work since Burton died and we find it the more difficult, therefore, to understand the extraordinary impact the volumes, especially the notes and the celebrated Terminal Essay, had upon the Victorian mind. Informed opinion was, however, unanimous in its praise and Burton was well pleased with the result of his labours. It is

worth while adding, perhaps, that Isabel virtuously promised not to read the translation, though an emasculated selection of the work was subsequently produced in her name, which *Punch* greeted with the phrase: "Burton—drawn mild!"

Burton's aim was to show what *The Thousand and One Nights* really is, "by writing as the Arab would have written in English. . . Moreover, holding that the translator's glory is to add something to his native tongue, while avoiding the hideous hag-like nakedness of Torrens and the bald literalism of Lane, I have carefully Englished the picturesque turns and novel expressions of the original in all their outlandishness. . . . Hence peculiar attention has been paid to the tropes and figures which the Arabic language often packs into a single term; and I have never hesitated to coin a word when wanted, such as 'she snorted and snarked,' fully to represent the original." He adds, elsewhere: "I have carefully sought out the English equivalent of every Arabic word, however low it may be or 'shocking' to ears polite; preserving, on the other hand, all possible delicacy where the indecency is not intentional; and, as a friend advises me to state, not exaggerating the vulgarities and the indecencies which, indeed, can hardly be exaggerated. For the coarseness and the crassness are but the shades of a picture which would otherwise be all lights."

Unlike other translators, Burton attempted to render the balanced sentences, the prose, rhyme and rhythm of certain passages in the original and to which we have nothing quite comparable in English, though he used alliteration to give something of the effect.

So they halted in it other three days, and on the eighth they espied a dust cloud which towered till it walled the whole land; nor was an hour of the day past ere that dust began to drift and was torn to shreds in the lift, and pierced through its shades the starry radiance of lance and the white leven of blades. Presently there appeared beneath it the banners Islamitan and the ensigns Mahometan; the horsemen urged forward, like the letting loose of seas that surged, clad in mail, as they were mackerel-back clouds which the moon enveil; whereupon the two hosts clashed, like two torrents on each other dashed. (King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and his sons.)

To the English reader the result may seem artificial and even irritating, but, as Burton pointed out, the effort of rendering the

effect of the original was worth making ; and if it is remembered that these tales were not meant to be read but heard from the lips of a Rawi, or public reciter, we shall catch some faint echo of his very tones. (The Arabs have a great love of sonorous language and can use it with little self-consciousness. I well remember a man who used to go about the streets of Cairo, his voice raised in measured ecstasy ; he was selling bits of wire to clean primus stoves.) " This Saj'a or cadence of the cooing dove," Burton said, " has in Arabic its special duties. It adds sparkle to description and a point to proverb, epigram and dialogue. . . . It defines the boundaries between the classical and the popular styles which jostle each other in the *Nights*."

It must further be said that verse plays an important part in the *Nights*. All the characters, from the Caliph to the humblest peasant, have the most extraordinary capacity not only for quoting the works of their favourite poets but also for extemporising (it was a mark of intelligence) and they do both on even the most improbable occasions, in the jaws of ferocious lions or menaced with imminent death by colossal Jinn. And it is a very poor beauty who does not inspire a dozen couplets of extravagant praise in her honour. Unfortunately, most of this verse has had to be omitted in the present selection, partly because Burton's renderings are not very happy, but mainly because space did not permit. This is the greatest crime I have committed in putting this book together and one Burton would most certainly have frowned upon ; as he would have frowned upon my ignoring the division of the tales into nights, for to him this was a feature of considerable importance. I have, however, contrived to include many of his notes for, as he said, much would be otherwise obscure or even incomprehensible without some such aid. The well-known *Ali-Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *Aladdin* are not to be found in any known text of the *Nights* and have therefore been omitted.

The *Nights* give a striking picture of a society outside the Christian and European tradition. They are, accordingly, both a fascination and a challenge to that most powerful of English institutions, the Puritan spirit. The characteristic reaction was that of Richard Lovell Edgeworth (father to Maria) who, while failing to discern any moral purpose in the stories, was nevertheless intelligent enough to read them, in Galland's version, to his

children. Romantic love, as we understand it, which was born of the age of chivalry and which we like to think is independent of mere physical charm, has no place in the *Nights*; it is hardly an exaggeration to say that there is no love, only lust, in the whole collection, and where we do seem to come across a tale in the European tradition (*Ghanim, the Thrall of Love*) we are left in little doubt that the theme is no ethereal idealisation of human relationships but a very simple question of sexual attraction. We are also bothered by the fact that luck and chance play a much more important part in an oriental tale than do the merits or demerits of the characters. (This is what disturbed Edgeworth.) Luck, as it happens, is not a cornerstone of our morality. We like our heroes to deserve good fortune as well as win it, they must work hard, they must be brave, they must be strong, they must be good. Our attitude, in its extreme form, was once stated by Maria Edgeworth in a tale she wrote to disprove the existence of such a factor as luck in human affairs. "The lucky man is doubtlessly the prudent man," she said, "the unlucky man is imprudent." An Arab, on the other hand, is much more likely to say that the phenomenally lucky man is the phenomenally good man, for all things are ruled by chance and what is chance but the will of Allah?

It is often said that the oriental temperament is more passive than our own. E. W. Lane, to illustrate the point, told how he was sitting in a Cairo bazar one day when a passer-by asked him why he did not return to his own country. "The true servant of God," Lane replied, "is not elective but passive," and this answer was sufficient to silence all criticism and win great approval. Now the passive temperament is the fatalistic temperament and the obsession of the fatalist is inevitably with destiny. One of the recurring themes of the *Nights* is the impossibility of working against destiny. If it is one's fate to be a beggar then the quicker one gets used to the idea the better for one's peace of mind. Cogia Hassan, the ropemaker, could not make a success of his business in spite of all efforts to help him and his own good management and economy. Success only came when, quite by chance, he caught a fish with a great diamond in its stomach, a diamond of such brilliance that it lit up a dark room. The Arab knows perfectly well what human qualities he most admires—physical beauty, nobility, generosity, ruthlessness—but he is

more keenly aware than we are how much all these qualities are at the mercy of circumstance. His mind being set in this way, the stories which he produces are inevitably not so much stories of character as stories of circumstance. A story is born when providence intervenes miraculously, when quite by chance a Jinni is released from a bottle and reveals where wealth is hidden. Or we climb a tree and (Destiny relenting for once) we hear the robber chief say, " Open Sesame ! " Or we meet a holy man who is so taken by the beauty of our countenances that he presents us with an ointment which, when placed upon the eyelids, allows us to see through rocks and mountains to the treasures they conceal.

As is to be expected, many of the tales are, as a result, obvious wealth and sex fantasies, and the English mind, which is most self-conscious about sex and is fast becoming self-conscious about money, may be distressed by what it considers an unbecoming naïvety. In reality, these fantasies are not so naïve as they seem, but even if they were it would be hard to remain unresponsive to the gusto with which they stride along and the brilliant invention with which they are tricked out. After the hero has cut off the magician's head and made himself master of the mountain of gold he is entertained for a year and a day by forty beautiful damsels with faces like full moons, with lips of coral and bosoms that are temptation to behold. Then later, perhaps, the Caliph presents him with fifty camel-loads of Egyptian stuffs, he is made chief of the merchants of the city (no doubts here about the dignity of trade !) and when he rides forth forty men march at each stirrup. What could be more satisfying ?

The Rawi does not regard his tale as finished when the hero has married the heroine. " The European novelist," said Burton, " marries off his hero and heroine and leaves them to consummate their marriage in privacy ; even Tom Jones has the decency to lock the door. But the Eastern story-teller, especially this unknown prose ' Shakespeare,' must usher you with a flourish into the bridal-chamber and narrate to you, with infinite gusto, everything he sees and hears." Not for any prurient reason, but quite simply because the Oriental makes far less mystery about his personal relations than we do and he does not see why, having told three-quarters of the tale, he should not tell the rest.

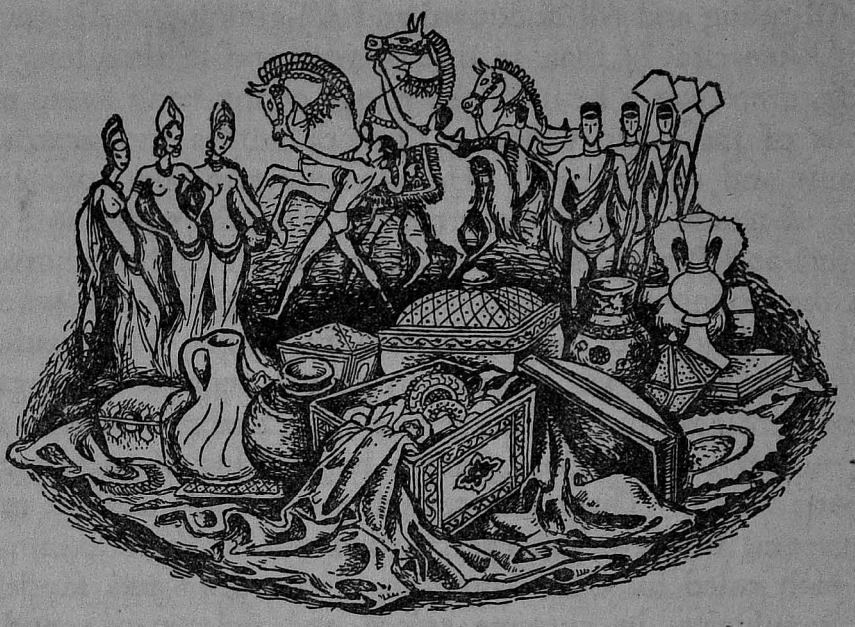
The East conceals far less than the West; Cairo is a less mysterious city than London.

I have said that the fantasy-weaving in the *Nights* is not quite so naïve as it seems; it would be a mistake to imagine that the Oriental is completely unaware of the source of the fascination. Burton, it is true, insisted how completely the Arabs of the desert would surrender to the tales. "The women and children stand motionless as silhouettes outside the ring; and all are breathless with attention; they seem to drink in the words with eyes and mouths as well as with ears. The most fantastic flights of fancy, the wildest improbabilities, the most impossible of impossibilities, appear to them utterly natural, mere matters of everyday occurrence." But these are simple Badawi. The townsman is more sophisticated and for him, I suspect, surrender to the tales will be a form of self-indulgence. It is one of the paradoxes of life in the Near East that an extreme cynicism flourishes side by side with a belief in the most agreeable illusions. "Better good news even if it is untrue than bad news that is the truth," is a common enough sentiment. For this there is no simple explanation, but for the moment it will be enough to say that whereas we are immediately on our dignity when we are being led on by an illusion, the Oriental is prepared to savour it to the full—as the story of the Barmecide feast will show. The more extravagant the fantasy becomes, the more treasure houses, palaces and wives that the hero acquires, the merrier the listener to the tale becomes. But we must not exaggerate. There are many tales in which sex and money fantasies have no part and where the listener has no scope for irony. But the collection as a whole would seem much thinner in substance than it really is if we were to forget the possibility of raillery for it is always present in the oriental mind: and we have only to read such delightful tales as *The Story of Ma'aruf* to discover the raillery rising to the surface.

It may sound odd to recommend *The Thousand and One Nights* as a picture of Arab civilisation. It is hard to see how stories of such exuberant fancy can bear any relation to reality, but of course they have—a very close relation—to the emotional life of the people who created them or coloured them with their imagination; and this emotional life is the distinctive feature of any culture. We find in these pages more than a factual day-to-day account of life in the Arab lands. (Though this is there for the finding; the

supernatural plays a much smaller part in the *Nights* than the common reader might suppose.) The kind of life thus recorded has largely passed away, and that within the past hundred years, but the deeper reality of which the tales treat, the temperament of the people, is unchanged and there is no better chart in existence of its deeps and shallows. Pride, shrewdness, a lively sense of humour, a sensibility that is almost feminine and which finds its most characteristic expression in a love of pathos, a piety without great idealism so that disappointment does not (as in Europe) bring despair and recrimination against the idea of God, an uncalculating love of the good things of the world and an indifference to death, a reverence for tradition and an appetite for novelty, a fatalism that is sometimes infuriating and an opportunism that is frequently breath-taking, and above all, that unanalysable human-heartedness which runs from the top to the bottom of society and makes the extreme contrasts of wealth and poverty a little easier to tolerate; all these are the spiritual qualities that stream perpetually to the surface of the chronicles of *The Thousand and One Nights* and break up what would otherwise be the hard glitter of mere inventiveness with the richer colours of the imagination.

P. H. NEWBY



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COMPASSIONATING, THE COMPASSIONATE!

Praise be to Allah ⌓ the Beneficent King ⌓ the Creator of the Universe ⌓ Lord of the Three Worlds ⌓ Who set up the Firmament without Pillars in its Stead ⌓ and Who stretched out the Earth even as a Bed ⌓ and Grace, and Prayer—Blessing be upon our Lord Mohammed ⌓ Lord of Apostolic Men ⌓ and upon his Family and Companion-train ⌓ Prayer and Blessings enduring and Grace which unto the Day of Doom shall remain ⌓ Amen! ⌓ O thou of the Three Worlds Sovereign!

AND AFTERWARDS. Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become instances and examples to men of our modern day, that folk may view what admonishing chances befell other folk and may therefrom take warning; and that they may peruse the annals of antique peoples and all that hath betided them, and be thereby ruled and restrained: Praise, therefore, be to Him who hath made the histories of the Past an admonition unto the Present! Now of such instances are the tales called *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, together with their far-famed legends and wonders. Therein it is related (but Allah is All-knowing of His hidden things

and All-ruling and All-honoured and All-giving and All-gracious and All-merciful !)[1] that, in tide of yore and in time long gone before, there was a King of the Kings of the Banu Sasan in the Islands of India and China, a Lord of armies and guards and servants and dependents.[2] He left only two sons, one in the prime of manhood and the other yet a youth, while both were Knights and Braves, albeit the elder was a doughtier horseman than the younger. So he succeeded to the empire; when he ruled the land and lorded it over his lieges with justice so exemplary that he was beloved by all the peoples of his capital and of his kingdom. His name was King Shahryar, and he made his younger brother, Shah Zaman hight, King of Samarcand in Barbarian-land. These two ceased not to abide in their several realms and the law was ever carried out in their dominions; and each ruled his own kingdom, with equity and fairdealing to his subjects, in extreme solace and enjoyment; and this condition continually endured for a score of years.

But at the end of the twentieth twelvemonth the elder King yearned for a sight of his younger brother and felt that he must look upon him once more. So he took counsel with his Wazir about visiting him, but the Minister, finding the project unadvisable, recommended that a letter be written and a present be sent under his charge to the younger brother with an invitation to visit the elder. Having accepted this advice the King forthwith bade prepare handsome gifts, such as horses with saddles of gem-encrusted gold; Mamelukes, or white slaves; beautiful handmaids, high-breasted virgins, and splendid stuffs and costly. He then wrote a letter to Shah Zaman expressing his warm love and great wish to see him, ending with these words; "We therefore hope of the favour and affection of the beloved brother that he will condescend to bestir himself and turn his face us-wards. Further-more, we have sent our Wazir to make all ordinance for the march, and our one and only desire is to see thee ere we die; but if thou delay or disappoint us we shall not survive the blow. Wherewith peace be upon thee!" Then King Shahryar, having sealed the missive and given it to the Wazir with the offerings aforementioned, commanded him to

[1] A deprecatory formula used because the writer is going to indulge in a series of what may possibly be untruths.

[2] The Sons of Sásán are the famous Sassanides whose dynasty ended with the Arabian Conquest (A.D. 641).

shorten his skirts and strain his strength and make all expedition in going and returning. "Harkening and obedience!" quoth the Minister, who fell to making ready without stay and packed up his loads and prepared all his requisites without delay.

This occupied him three days, and on the dawn of the fourth he took leave of his King and marched right away, over desert and hill-way, stony waste and pleasant lea without halting by night or by day. But whenever he entered a realm whose ruler was subject to his Suzerain, where he was greeted with magnificent gifts of gold and silver and all manner of presents fair and rare, he would tarry there three days,[1] the term of the guest-rite; and, when he left on the fourth, he would be honourably escorted for a whole day's march. As soon as the Wazir drew near Shah Zaman's court in Samarcand he despatched to report his arrival one of his high officials, who presented himself before the King; and, kissing the ground between his hands, delivered his message. Hereupon the King commanded sundry of his Grandees and Lords of his realm to fare forth and meet his brother's Wazir at the distance of a full day's journey; which they did, greeting him respectfully and wishing him all prosperity and forming an escort and a procession. When he entered the city he proceeded straightway to the palace, where he presented himself in the royal presence; and, after kissing the ground and praying for the King's health and happiness and for victory over all his enemies, he informed him that his brother was yearning to see him, and prayed for the pleasure of a visit.

He then delivered the letter which Shah Zaman took from his hand and read. It contained sundry hints and allusions which required thought; but, when the King had fully comprehended its import, he said, "I hear and I obey the commands of the beloved brother!" adding to the Wazir, "But we will not march till after the third day's hospitality." He appointed for the Minister fitting quarters of the palace; and, pitching tents for the troops, rationed them with whatever they might require of meat and drink and other necessaries. On the fourth day he made ready for wayfare and got together sumptuous presents befitting his elder brother's majesty, and stablished his chief

[1] This three-days term (rest-day, chest-day and departure-day) seems to be an instinct-made rule in hospitality. Among Moslems it is a Sunnat or practice of the Prophet.

Wazir viceroy of the land during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with their bales and loads, attendants and guards, within sight of the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's capital. But when the night was half spent he bethought him that he had forgotten in his palace somewhat which he should have brought with him, so he returned privily and entered his apartments, where he found the Queen, his wife, asleep on his own carpet-bed embracing with both arms a black cook of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime.

When he saw this the world waxed black before his sight and he said, " If such case happen while I am yet within sight of the city what will be the doings of this damned whore during my long absence at my brother's court ? " So he drew his scymitar and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened. Then he gave orders for immediate departure and set out at once and began his travel; but he could not help thinking over his wife's treason and he kept ever saying to himself, " How could she do this deed by me ? How could she work her own death ? " till excessive grief seized him, his colour changed to yellow, his body waxed weak and he was threatened with a dangerous malady, such an one as bringeth men to die. So the Wazir shortened his stages and tarried long at the watering-stations and did his best to solace the King.

Now when Shah Zaman drew near the capital of his brother he despatched vaunt-couriers and messengers of glad tidings to announce his arrival, and Shahryar came forth to meet him with his Wazirs and Emirs and Lords and Grandees of his realm; and saluted him and joyed with exceeding joy and caused the city to be decorated in his honour. When, however, the brothers met, the elder could not but see the change of complexion in the younger and questioned him of his case where he replied, " 'Tis caused by the travails of wayfare and my case needs care, for I have suffered from the change of water and air ! but Allah be praised for reuniting me with a brother so dear and so rare ! " On this wise he dissembled and kept his secret, adding, " O King of the Time and Caliph of the Tide, only toil and moil have tinged my face yellow with bile and hath made my eyes sink deep in my head." Then the two entered the capital in all honour;

and the elder brother lodged the younger in a palace overhanging the pleasure garden; and, after a time, seeing his condition still unchanged, he attributed it to his separation from his country and kingdom. So he let him wend his own ways and asked no questions of him till one day when he again said, "O my brother, I see thou art grown weaker of body and yellower of colour." "O my brother," replied Shah Zaman, "I have an internal wound."[1] Still he would not tell him what he had witnessed in his wife. Thereupon Shahryar summoned doctors and surgeons and bade them treat his brother according to the rules of art, which they did for a whole month; but their sherbets and potions naught availed, for he would dwell upon the deed of his wife, and despondency, instead of diminishing, prevailed, and leach-craft treatment utterly failed. One day his elder brother said to him, "I am going forth to hunt and course and to take my pleasure and pastime; maybe this would lighten thy heart." Shah Zaman, however, refused, saying, "O my brother, my soul yearneth for naught of this sort and I entreat thy favour to suffer me tarry quietly in this place, being wholly taken up with my malady." So King Shah Zaman passed his night in the palace and, next morning, when his brother had fared forth, he removed from his room and sat him down at one of the lattice-windows overlooking the pleasure grounds; and there he abode thinking with saddest thought over his wife's betrayal, and burning sighs issued from his tortured breast.

And as he continued in this case, lo! a postern of the palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open and out of it came twenty slave-girls surrounding his brother's wife who was wondrous fair, a model of beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect loveliness and who paced with the grace of a gazelle which panteth for the cooling stream. Thereupon Shah Zaman drew back from the window, but he kept the bevy in sight espying them from a place whence he could not be espied. They walked under the very lattice and advanced a little way into the garden till they came to a jetting fountain amiddlemost a great basin of water; then they stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then they all paired off, each with each: but the Queen, who was left alone, presently cried out in a loud

[1] I am sick at heart.

voice, " Here to me, O my lord Saeed ! " and then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big, slobbering, blackamoor, with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight. He walked boldly up to her and threw his arms round her neck while she embraced him as warmly ; then he bussed her and, winding his legs round hers, as a button-loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls till all had satisfied their passions, and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing till day began to wane, when the Mamelukes rose from the damsels' bosoms and the blackamoor slave dismounted from the Queen's breast ; the men resumed their disguises and all, except the negro who swarmed up the tree, entered the palace and closed the postern-door as before.

Now, when Shah Zaman saw this conduct of his sister-in-law, he said in himself, " By Allah, my calamity is lighter than this ! My brother is a greater King among the Kings than I am, yet this infamy goeth on in his very palace, and his wife is in love with that filthiest of filthy slaves. But this only showeth that they all do it and that there is no woman but who cuckoldeth her husband, then the curse of Allah be upon one and all and upon the fools who lean against them for support or who place the reins of conduct in their hands." So he put away his melancholy and despondency, regret and repine, and allayed his sorrow by constantly repeating those words, adding, " 'Tis my conviction that no man in this world is safe from their malice ! " When supper-time came they brought him the trays and he ate with voracious appetite, for he had long refrained from meat, feeling unable to touch any dish however dainty. Then he returned grateful thanks to Almighty Allah, praising Him and blessing Him, and he spent a most restful night, it having been long since he had savoured the sweet food of sleep. Next day he broke his fast heartily and began to recover health and strength, and presently regained excellent condition. His brother came back from the chase ten days after, when he rode out to meet him and they saluted each other ; and when King Shahryar looked at King Shah Zaman he saw how the hue of health had returned to him, how his face had waxed ruddy and how he ate with an appetite after his late scanty diet. He wondered much and said, " O my brother, I was so anxious that thou wouldst join me in

hunting and chasing, and wouldst take thy pleasure and pastime in my dominion!" He thanked him and excused himself; then the two took horse and rode into the city and, when they were seated at their ease in the palace, the food-trays were set before them and they ate their sufficiency. After the meats were removed and they had washed their hands, King Shahryar turned to his brother and said, "My mind is overcome with wonderment at thy condition. I was desirous to carry thee with me to the chase but I saw thee changed in hue, pale and wan to view, and in sore trouble of mind too. But now Alhamdolillah—glory be to God!—I see thy natural colour hath returned to thy face and that thou art again in the best of case. It was my belief that thy sickness came of severance from thy family and friends, and absence from capital and country, so I refrained from troubling thee with further questions. But now I beseech thee to expound to me the cause of thy complaint and thy change of colour, and to explain the reason of thy recovery and the return to the ruddy hue of health which I am wont to view. So speak out and hide naught!"

When Shah Zaman heard this he bowed groundwards awhile his head, then raised it and said, "I will tell thee what caused my complaint and my loss of colour; but excuse my acquainting thee with the cause of its return to me and the reason of my complete recovery; indeed I pray thee not to press me for a reply." Said Shahryar, who was much surprised by these words, "Let me hear first what produced thy pallor and thy poor condition." "Know, then, O my brother," rejoined Shah Zaman, "that when thou sentest thy Wazir with the invitation to place myself between thy hands, I made ready and marched out of my city; but presently I minded me having left behind me in the palace a string of jewels intended as a gift to thee. I returned for it alone and found my wife on my carpet-bed and in the arms of a hideous black cook. So I slew the twain and came to thee, yet my thoughts brooded over this business and I lost my bloom and became weak. But excuse me if I still refuse to tell thee what was the reason of my complexion returning." Shahryar shook his head, marvelling with extreme marvel, and with the fire of wrath flaming up from his heart, he cried, "Indeed, the malice of woman is mighty!" Then he took refuge from them with Allah and said, "In very sooth, O my brother, thou

hast escaped many an evil by putting thy wife to death, and right excusable were thy wrath and grief for such mishap which never yet befell crowned King like thee. By Allah, had the case been mine, I would not have been satisfied without slaying a thousand women and that way madness lies! But now praise be to Allah who hath tempered to thee thy tribulation, and needs must thou acquaint me with that which so suddenly restored to thee complexion and health, and explain to me what causeth this concealment." "O King of the Age, again I pray thee excuse my so doing." "Nay, but thou must." "I fear, O my brother, lest the recital cause thee more anger and sorrow than afflicted me." "That were but a better reason," quoth Shahryar, "for telling me the whole history, and I conjure thee by Allah not to keep back aught from me."

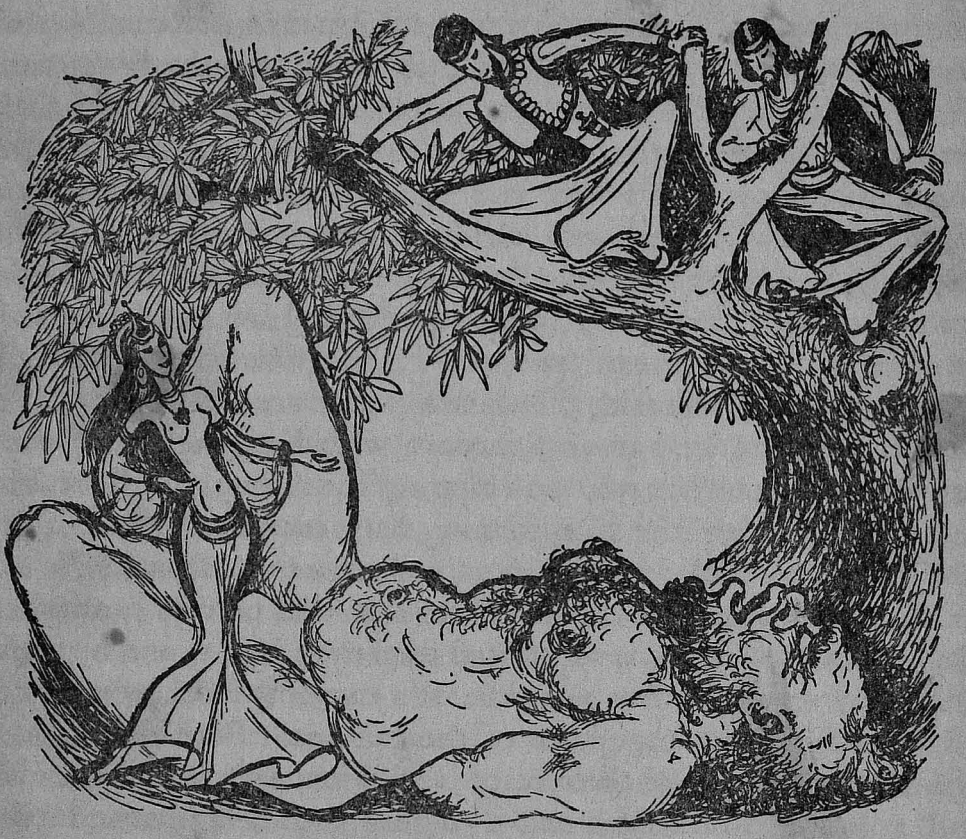
Thereupon Shah Zaman told him all he had seen, from commencement to conclusion, ending with these words, "When I beheld thy calamity and the treason of thy wife, O my brother, and I reflected that thou art in years my senior and in sovereignty my superior, mine own sorrow was belittled by the comparison, and my mind recovered tone and temper: so throwing off melancholy and despondency, I was able to eat and drink and sleep, and thus I speedily regained health and strength. Such is the truth and the whole truth." When King Shahryar heard this he waxed wroth with exceeding wrath, and rage was like to strangle him; but presently he recovered himself and said, "O my brother, I would not give thee the lie in this matter, but I cannot credit it till I see it with mine own eyes." "An thou wouldst look upon thy calamity," quoth Shah Zaman, "rise at once and make ready again for hunting and coursing, and then hide thyself with me, so shalt thou witness it and thine eyes shall verify it." "True," quoth the King; whereupon he let make proclamation of his intent to travel, and the troops and tents fared forth without the city, camping within sight, and Shahryar sallied out with them and took seat amidmost his host, bidding the slaves admit no man to him. When night came on he summoned his Wazir and said to him, "Sit thou in my stead and let none wot of my absence till the term of three days." Then the brothers disguised themselves and returned by night with all secrecy to the palace, where they passed the dark hours: and at dawn they seated themselves at the lattice overlooking the

pleasure grounds, when presently the Queen and her handmaids came out as before, and passing under the windows made for the fountain. Here they stripped, ten of them being men to ten women, and the King's wife cried out, "Where art thou, O Saeed?" The hideous blackamoor dropped from the tree straightway; and, rushing into her arms without stay or delay, cried out, "I am Sa'ad al-Din Saood!" The lady laughed heartily, and all fell to satisfying their lusts, and remained so occupied for a couple of hours, when the white slaves rose up from the handmaidens' breasts and the blackamoor dismounted from the Queen's bosom: then they went into the basin and, after performing the Ghusl, or complete ablution, donned their dresses and retired as they had done before. When King Shahryar saw this infamy of his wife and concubines he became as one distraught and he cried out, "Only in utter solitude can man be safe from the doings of this vile world! By Allah, life is naught but one great wrong." Presently he added, "Do not thwart me, O my brother, in what I propose"; and the other answered, "I will not." So he said, "Let us up as we are and depart forthright hence, for we have no concern with Kingship, and let us overwander Allah's earth, worshipping the Almighty till we find someone to whom the like calamity hath happened; and if we find none then will death be more welcome to us than life."

So the two brothers issued from a second private postern of the palace; and they never stinted wayfaring by day and by night until they reached a tree a-middle of a meadow hard by a spring of sweet water on the shore of the salt sea. Both drank of it and sat down to take their rest; and when an hour of the day had gone by, lo! they heard a mighty roar and uproar in the middle of the main as though the heavens were falling upon the earth; and the sea brake with waves before them, and from it towered a black pillar, which grew and grew till it rose skywards and began making for that meadow. Seeing it, they waxed fearful exceedingly and climbed to the top of the tree, which was lofty; whence they gazed to see what might be the matter. And behold, it was a Jinni, huge of height and burly of breast and bulk, broad of brow and black of blee, bearing on his head a coffer of crystal. He strode to land, wading through the deep, and coming to the tree whereupon were the two Kings, seated himself beneath it. He then set down the coffer on its bottom

and out of it drew a casket, with seven padlocks of steel, which he unlocked with seven keys of steel he took from beside his thigh, and out of it a young lady was seen to come, white-skinned and of winsomest mien, of stature fine and thin, and bright as though a moon of the fourteenth night she had been, or the sun raining lively sheen.

The Jinni seated her under the tree by his side and looking at her said, " O choicest love of this heart of mine ! O dame of



noblest line, whom I snatched away on thy bride night that none might prevent me taking thy maidenhead or tumble thee before I did, and whom none save myself hath loved or hath enjoyed : O my sweetheart ! I would lief sleep a little while." He then laid his head upon the lady's thighs ; and, stretching out his legs which extended down to the sea, slept and snored and snarked like the roll of thunder. Presently she raised her head towards the tree-top and saw the two Kings perched near the summit ; then she softly lifted off her lap the Jinni's pate which she was tired of supporting and placed it upon the ground ; then standing upright under the tree signed to the Kings, " Come ye down,

ye two, and fear naught from this Ifrit." [1] They were in a terrible fright when they found that she had seen them and answered her in the same manner, "Allah upon thee and by thy modesty, O lady, excuse us from coming down!" But she rejoined by saying, "Allah upon you both that ye come down forthright, and if you come not, I will rouse upon you my husband, this Ifrit, and he shall do you to die by the illest of deaths"; and she continued making signals to them. So, being afraid, they came down to her and she rose before them and said, "Stroke me a strong stroke, without stay or delay, otherwise will I arouse and set upon you this Ifrit who shall slay you straightway." They said to her, "O our lady, we conjure thee by Allah, let us off this work, for we are fugitives from such and in extreme dread and terror of this thy husband. How then can we do it in such a way as thou desirest?" "Leave this talk: it needs must be so"; quoth she, and she swore them by Him [2] who raised the skies on high, without prop or pillar, that, if they worked not her will, she would cause them to be slain and cast into the sea. Whereupon out of fear King Shahryar said to King Shah Zaman, "O my brother, do thou what she biddeth thee do"; but he replied, "I will not do it till thou do it before I do." And they began disputing about futtering her. Then quoth she to the twain, "How is it I see you disputing and demurring; if ye do not come forward like men and do the deed of kind ye two, I will arouse upon you the Ifrit."

At this, by reason of their sore dread of the Jinni, both did by her what she bade them do; and, when they had dismounted from her, she said, "Well done!" She then took from her pocket a purse and drew out a knotted string, whereupon were strung five hundred and seventy seal-rings, and asked. "Know ye what be these?" They answered her saying, "We know not!" Then quoth she, "These be the signets of five hundred and seventy men who have all futtered me upon the horns of this foul, this foolish, this filthy Ifrit; so give me also your two seal-rings, ye pair of brothers." When they had drawn their two rings from their hands and given them to her, she said to them,

[1] This variety of the Jinn is generally, but not always, a malignant being, hostile and injurious to mankind. (Koran xxvii. 39.)

[2] This introduction of the name of Allah into an indecent tale is essentially Egyptian and Cairene.

" Of a truth this Ifrit bore me off on my bride night, and put me into a casket and set the casket in a coffer and to the coffer he affixed seven strong padlocks of steel and deposited me on the deep bottom of the sea that raves, dashing and clashing with waves; and guarded me so that I might remain chaste and honest, quotha! that none save himself might have connexion with me. But I have lain under as many of my kind as I please, and this wretched Jinni wotteth not that Destiny may not be averted nor hindered by aught, and that whatso woman willeth the same she fulfilleth however man nilleth."

Hearing these words they marvelled with exceeding marvel, and she went from them to the Ifrit and, taking up his head on her thigh as before, said to them softly, " Now wend your ways and bear yourselves beyond the bounds of his malice." So they fared forth saying either to other, " Allah! Allah! " and, " There be no Majesty and there be no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great; and with Him we seek refuge from women's malice and sleight, for of a truth it hath no mate in might. Consider, O my brother, the ways of this marvellous lady with an Ifrit who is so much more powerful than we are. Now since there hath happened to him a greater mishap than that which befell us and which should bear us abundant consolation, so return we to our countries and capitals, and let us decide never to intermarry with womankind and presently we will show them what will be our action." Thereupon they rode back to the tents of King Shahryar, which they reached on the morning of the third day; and, having mustered the Wazirs and Emirs, the Chamberlains and high officials, he gave a robe of honour to his Viceroy and issued orders for an immediate return to the city. There he sat him upon his throne and sending for the Chief Minister, the father of the two damsels who (Inshallah!) will presently be mentioned, he said, " I command thee to take my wife and smite her to death; for she hath broken her plight and her faith." So he carried her to the place of execution and did her die. Then King Shahryar took brand in hand and repairing to the Serraglio slew all the concubines and their Mamelukes. He also sware himself by a binding oath that whatever wife he married he would abate her maidenhead at night and slay her next morning to make sure of his honour; " For," said he, " there never was nor is there one chaste woman upon the face

of earth." Then Shah Zaman prayed for permission to fare homewards; and he went forth equipped and escorted and travelled till he reached his own country.

Meanwhile Shahryar commanded his Wazir to bring him the bride of the night that he might go into her; so he produced a most beautiful girl, the daughter of one of the Emirs, and the King went in unto her at eventide, and when morning dawned he bade his Minister strike off her head; and the Wazir did accordingly for fear of the Sultan. On this wise he continued for the space of three years, marrying a maiden every night and killing her the next morning, till folk raised an outcry against him and cursed him, praying Allah utterly to destroy him and his rule; and women made an uproar and mothers wept and parents fled with their daughters till there remained not in the city a young person fit for carnal copulation.

Presently the King ordered his Chief Wazir, the same who was charged with the executions, to bring him a virgin as was his wont; and the Minister went forth and searched and found none; so he returned home in sorrow and anxiety fearing for his life from the King. Now he had two daughters, Shahrazad and Dunyazad hight, of whom the elder had perused the books, annals and legends of preceding Kings, and the stories, examples and instances of bygone men and things; indeed it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred. Now on that day she said to her father, "Why do I see thee thus changed and laden with cark and care?" When the Wazir heard from his daughter these words he related to her, from first to last all that had happened between him and the King. Whereupon said she, "By Allah, O my father, how long shall this slaughter of women endure? Shall I tell thee what is in my mind in order to save both sides from destruction?" "Say on, O my daughter," quoth he, and quoth she, "I wish thou wouldst give me in marriage to this King Shahryar; either I shall live or I shall be a ransom for the virgin daughters of Moslems and the cause of their deliverance from his hands and thine." "Allah upon thee!" cried he in wrath exceeding that lacked no feeding,

" O scanty of wit, expose not thy life to such peril! How durst thou address me in words so wide from wisdom and un-far from foolishness? Know that one who lacketh experience in wordly matters readily falleth into misfortune; and whoso considereth not the end keepeth not the world to friend, and the vulgar say: 'I was lying at mine ease; nought but my officiousness brought me unease'." " Needs must thou," she broke in, " make me a doer of this good deed, and let him kill me an he will: I shall only die a ransom for others." " O my daughter," asked he, " and how shall that profit thee when thou shalt have thrown away thy life?" and she answered, " O my father it must be, come of it what will! Leave such talk and tattle. I will not listen to thy words and, if you deny me, I will marry myself to him despite the nose of thee. And first I will go up to the King myself and alone and I will say to him: I prayed my father to wive me with thee, but he refused, being resolved to disappoint his lord, grudging the like of me to the like of thee." Her father asked, " Must this needs be?" and she answered, " Even so."

Hereupon the Wazir, being weary of lamenting and contending, persuading and dissuading her, all to no purpose, went up to King Shahryar and, after blessing him and kissing the ground before him, told him all about his dispute with his daughter from first to last and how he designed to bring her to him that night. The King wondered with exceeding wonder; for he had made an especial exception of the Wazir's daughter, and said to him, " O most faithful of Counsellors, how is this? Thou wottest that I have sworn by the Raiser of the Heavens that after I have gone into her this night I shall say to thee on the morrow's morning: Take her and slay her! and, if thou slay her not, I will slay thee in her stead without fail." " Allah guide thee to glory and lengthen thy life, O King of the Age," answered the Wazir, " it is she that hath so determined: all this have I told her and more; but she will not hearken to me and she persisteth in passing this coming night with the King's Majesty." So Shahryar rejoiced greatly and said, " 'Tis well; go get her ready and this night bring her to me." The Wazir returned to his daughter and reported to her the command saying, " Allah make not thy father desolate by thy loss!"

But Shahrazad rejoined with exceeding joy and gat ready all she required and said to her youngest sister, Dunyazad, " Note

well what directions I entrust to thee! When I have gone into the King I will send for thee and when thou comest to me and seest that he hath had his carnal will of me, do thou say to me: 'O my sister, an thou be not sleepy, relate to me some new story, delectable and delightsome, the better to speed our waking hours'; and I will tell thee a tale which shall be our deliverance, if so Allah please, and which shall turn the King from his blood-thirsty custom." Dunyazad answered, "With love and gladness." So when it was night their father the Wazir carried Shahrazad to the King who was gladdened at the sight and asked, "Hast thou brought me my need?" and he answered, "I have." But when the King took her to his bed and fell to toying with her and wished to go into her she wept; which made him ask, "What aileth thee?" She replied, "O King of the Age, I have a younger sister and lief would I take leave of her this night before I see the dawn." So he sent at once for Dunyazad and she came and kissed the ground between his hands, when he permitted her to take her seat near the foot of the couch. Then the King arose and did away with his bride's maidenhead and the three fell asleep. But when it was midnight Shahrazad awoke and signalled to her sister Dunyazad who sat up and said, "Allah upon thee, O my sister, recite to us some new story, delightsome and delectable, wherewith to while away the waking hours of our latter night." "With joy and goodly gree," answered Shahrazad, "if this pious and auspicious King permits me." "Tell on," quoth the King, who chanced to be sleepless and restless and, therefore, was pleased with the prospect of hearing her story. So Shahrazad rejoiced; and thus, on the first night of the Thousand Nights and a Night, she began with the

TALE OF THE FISHERMAN AND THE JINNI

IT hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was a Fisherman well stricken in years who had a wife and three children, and withal was of poor condition. Now it was his custom to cast his net every day four times, and no more. On a day he went forth about noontide to the seashore, where he laid down his basket and, tucking up his shirt and plunging into the water, made a cast with his net and waited till it settled to the bottom. Then he gathered the cords together and haled away at it, but found it weighty; and however much he drew it landwards, he could not pull it up; so he carried the ends ashore and drove a stake into the ground and made the net fast to it. Then he stripped and dived into the water all about the net, and left not off working hard until he had brought it up. He rejoiced thereat and, donning his clothes, went to the net, when he found in it a dead jackass which had torn the meshes. Now when he saw it, he exclaimed in his grief, "There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah the Glorious, the Great!" Then quoth he, "This is a strange manner of daily bread."

The Fisherman, when he had looked at the dead ass, got it free of the toils and wrung out and spread his net; then he plunged into the sea, saying, "In Allah's name!" and made a cast and pulled at it, but it grew heavy and settled down more firmly than the first time. Now he thought that there were fish in it, and he made it fast, and doffing his clothes went into the water, and diced and haled until he drew it up upon dry land. Then found he in it a large earthen pitcher which was full of sand and mud; so he prayed pardon of Allah and, throwing away the jar, wrung his net and cleansed it and returned to the sea a third time to cast his net and waited till it had sunk. Then he pulled at it and found therein potsherds and broken glass. Then raising his eyes heavenwards he said, "O my God! verily Thou wottest that I cast not my net each day save four times;[1] the third is done and as yet Thou hast vouchsafed me nothing. So this time, O my God, deign give me my daily bread. Then, having called on Allah's name, he again threw his net and waited its sinking and settling; whereupon he haled at it but could not draw it in for that it was entangled at the bottom. He cried out in his vexation, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!"

Thereupon he stripped and, diving down to the net, busied himself with it till it came to land. Then he opened the meshes and found therein a cucumber-shaped jar of yellow copper, evidently full of something, whose mouth was made fast with a leaden cap, stamped with the seal-ring of our Lord Sulayman, son of David (Allah accept the twain!). Seeing this the Fisherman rejoiced and said, "If I sell it in the brass-bazar 'tis worth ten golden dinars." He shook it, and finding it heavy continued, "Would to Heaven I knew what is herein. But I must and will open it and look to its contents and store it in my bag and sell it in the brass-market." And taking out a knife he worked at the lead till he had loosened it from the jar; then he laid the cup on the ground and shook the vase to pour out whatever might be inside. He found nothing in it; whereat he marvelled with an exceeding marvel. But presently there came forth from the jar a smoke which spired heavenwards into æther (whereat he again

[1] Probably in consequence of a vow. These superstitious practices, which have many a parallel amongst ourselves, are not confined to the lower orders in the East.

marvelled with mighty marvel), and which trailed along earth's surface till presently, having reached its full height, the thick vapour condensed, and became an Ifrit, huge of bulk, whose crest touched the clouds while his feet were on the ground. His head was as a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs long as masts and his mouth big as a cave; his teeth were like large stones, his nostrils ewers, his eyes two lamps and his look was fierce and lowering.

Now when the Fisherman saw the Ifrit his side muscles quivered, his teeth chattered, his spittle dried up and he became blind about what to do. Upon this the Ifrit looked at him and cried, "There is no god but *the* God, and Sulayman is the prophet of God"; presently adding, "O Apostle of Allah, slay me not; never again will I gainsay thee in word nor sin against thee in deed." Quoth the Fisherman, "O Marid,[1] diddest thou say, Sulayman the Apostle of Allah; and Sulayman is dead some thousand and eight hundred years ago, and we are now in the last days of the world! What is thy story, and what is thy account of thyself, and what is the cause of thy entering into this cucurbit?" Now when the Evil Spirit heard the words of the Fisherman, quoth he: "There is no god but *the* God: be of good cheer, O Fisherman!" Quoth the Fisherman, "Why biddest thou me to be of good cheer?" and he replied, "Because of thy having to die an ill death in this very hour." Said the Fisherman, "Thou deservest for thy good tidings the withdrawal of Heaven's protection, O thou distant one![2] Wherefore shouldest thou kill me and what thing have I done to deserve death, I who freed thee from the jar, and saved thee from the depths of the sea, and brought thee upon the dry land?" Replied the Ifrit, "Ask of me only what mode of death thou wilt die, and by what manner of slaughter shall I slay thee." Rejoined the Fisherman, "What is my crime and wherefore such retribution?" Quoth the Ifrit, "Hear my story, O Fisherman!" and he answered, "Say on, and be brief in thy saying, for of very sooth my life-breath is in my nostrils."

Thereupon quoth the Jinni, "Know that I am one among the heretical Jann and I sinned against Sulayman, David-son (on the twain be peace!), I together with the famous Sakhr

[1] One of the tribes of the Jinn, generally, but not always, hostile to man.
[2] A euphemism here adopted to prevent using grossly abuse language.

al-Jinni; whereupon the Prophet sent his minister, Asaf, son of Barkhiya, to seize me; and this Wazir brought me against my will and led me in bonds to him (I being downcast despite my nose) and he placed me standing before him like a suppliant. When Sulayman saw me, he took refuge with Allah and made me embrace the True Faith and obey his behests; but I refused, so, sending for this cucurbit [1] he shut me up therein, and stopped it over with lead whereon he impressed the Most High Name, and gave his orders to the Jann who carried me off, and cast me into the midmost of the ocean. There I abode an hundred years, during which I said in my heart, "Whoso shall release me, him will I enrich for ever and ever." But the full century went by and, when no one set me free, I entered upon the second five score saying, "Whoso shall release me, for him will I fulfil three wishes." Yet no one set me free. Thereupon I waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and said to myself, "Whoso shall release me from this time forth, him will I slay and I will give him choice of what death he will die; and now, as thou hast released me, I give thee full choice of deaths."

The Fisherman, hearing the words of the Ifrit, said, "O Allah! the wonder of it that I have not come to free thee save in these days!" adding, "Spare my life, so Allah spare thine; and slay me not, lest Allah set one to slay thee." Replied the contumacious one, "There is no help for it; die thou must; so ask me by way of boon what manner of death thou wilt die." Albeit thus certified, the Fisherman again addressed the Ifrit saying, "Forgive me this my death as a generous reward for having freed thee"; and the Ifrit, "Surely I would not slay thee save on account of that same release." "O Chief of the Ifrits," said the Fisherman, "I do thee good and thou requitest me with evil!" Now, when the Ifrit heard these words, he answered, "No more of this talk, needs must I kill thee." Upon this the Fisherman said to himself, "This is a Jinni; and I am a man to whom Allah hath given a passably cunning wit, so I will now cast about to compass his destruction by my contrivance and by mine intelligence; even as he took counsel only of his malice and his frowardness." [2] He began by asking the Ifrit,

[1] A gourd-shaped bottle, of metal, china, or glass, still used for sprinkling scents.

[2] The intellect of man is stronger than that of the Jinni; the Ifrit, however, enters the jar because he has been adjured by the Most Great Name and not from mere stupidity.

" Hast thou indeed resolved to kill me ? " and, receiving for all answer, " Even so," he cried, " Now in the Most Great Name, graven on the seal-ring of Sulayman the Son of David (peace be with the holy twain !), an I question thee on a certain matter wilt thou give me a true answer ? " The Ifrit replied, " Yea " ; but, hearing mention of the Most Great Name, his wits were troubled and he said with trembling, " Ask and be brief." Quoth the Fisherman, " How didst thou fit into this bottle which would not hold thy hand ; no, nor even thy foot, and how came it to be large enough to contain the whole of thee ? "

Replied the Ifrit, " What ! dost not believe that I was all there ? " and the Fisherman rejoined, " Nay ! I will never believe it until I see thee inside with my own eyes " ; the Evil Spirit on the instant shook and became a vapour, which condensed, and entered the jar little by little, till all was well inside when lo! the Fisherman in hot haste took the leaden cap with the seal and stoppered therewith the mouth of the jar and called out to the Ifrit, saying, " Ask me by way of boon what death thou wilt die ! By Allah, I will throw thee into the sea before us and here will I build me a lodge ; and whoso cometh hither I will warn him against fishing and will say : In these waters abideth an Ifrit who giveth as a last favour a choice of deaths and fashion of slaughter to the man who saveth him ! " Now when the Ifrit heard this from the Fisherman and saw himself in limbo, he was minded to escape, but this was prevented by Sulayman's seal ; so he knew that the Fisherman had cozened and outwitted him, and he waxed lowly and submissive and began humbly to say, " I did but jest with thee." But the other answered, " Thou liest, O vilest of the Ifrits, and meanest and filthiest ! " and he set off with the bottle for the seaside ; the Ifrit calling out " Nay ! Nay ! " and he calling out " Aye ! Aye ! " Thereupon the Evil Spirit softened his voice and smoothed his speech and abased himself, saying, " What wouldest thou do with me, O Fisherman ? " " I will throw thee back into the sea," he answered ; " where thou hast been housed and homed for a thousand and eight hundred years ; and now I will leave thee therein till Judgment Day : did I not say to thee, ' Spare me and Allah shall spare thee ; and slay me not lest Allah slay thee ? ' yet thou spurnedst my supplication and hadst no intention save to deal ungraciously by me, and Allah hath now thrown thee into my

hands and I am cunninger than thou." Quoth the Ifrit, "Open for me that I may bring thee weal." Quoth the Fisherman, "Thou liest, thou accursed! If thou hadst spared me I would have spared thee, but nothing would satisfy thee save my death; so now I will do thee by jailing thee in this jar, and I will hurl thee into the sea."

Then the Marid roared aloud and cried, "Allah upon thee, O Fisherman, don't! Spare me, and pardon my past doings; and, as I have been tyrannous, so be thou generous, for it is said among sayings that go current: O thou who doest good to him who hath done thee evil, suffice for the ill-doer his ill-deeds, and do not deal with me as did Umamah to 'Atikah."[1] Asked the Fisherman, "And what was their case?" and the Ifrit answered, "This is not the time for story-telling and I in this prison; but set me free and I will tell thee the tale." Quoth the Fisherman, "Leave this language: there is no help but that thou be thrown back into the sea nor is there any way for thy getting out of it for ever and ever. Vainly I placed myself under thy protection, and I humbled myself to thee with weeping, while thou soughtest only to slay me, who had done thee no injury deserving this at thy hands; nay, so far from injuring thee by any evil act, I worked thee nought but weal in releasing thee from that jail of thine. Now I knew thee to be an evil-doer when thou diddest to me what thou didst, and know, that when I have cast thee back into this sea, I will warn whomsoever may fish thee up of what hath befallen me with thee, and I will advise him to toss thee back again; so shalt thou abide here under these waters till the end of time shall make an end of thee."

But the Ifrit cried aloud, "Set me free; this is a noble occasion for generosity and I make covenant with thee and vow never to do thee hurt and harm; nay, I will help thee to what shall put thee out of want." The Fisherman accepted his promises on both conditions, not to trouble him as before, but on the contrary to do him service; and, after making firm the plight and swearing him a solemn oath by Allah Most Highest he opened the cucurbit. Thereupon the pillar of smoke rose up till all of it was fully out; then it thickened and once more became an Ifrit of hideous presence, who forthright administered a kick to the bottle and sent it flying into the sea. The Fisherman, seeing how the cucurbit was treated and making sure of his own death,

[1] The tale of these two women is now forgotten.

piddled in his clothes and said to himself, "This promiseth badly"; but he fortified his heart, and cried, "O Ifrit, Allah hath said:[1] Perform your covenant; for the performance of your covenant shall be inquired into hereafter. Thou hast made a vow to me and hast sworn an oath not to play me false lest Allah play thee false, for verily he is a jealous God who respiteth the sinner, but letteth him not escape. Spare me so Allah may spare thee!" The Ifrit burst into laughter and stalked away, saying to the Fisherman, "Follow me"; and the man paced after him at a safe distance (for he was not assured of escape) till they had passed round the suburbs of the city. Thence they struck into the uncultivated grounds, and crossing them descended into a broad wilderness, and lo! in the midst of it stood a mountain tarn. The Ifrit waded into the middle and again cried, "Follow me"; and when this was done he took his stand in the centre and bade the man cast his net and catch his fish. The Fisherman looked into the water and was much astonished to see therein vari-coloured fishes, white and red, blue and yellow; however, he cast his net and, hauling it in, saw that he had netted four fishes, one of each colour.

Thereat he rejoiced greatly and more when the Ifrit said to him, "Carry these to the Sultan and set them in his presence; then he will give thee what shall make thee a wealthy man; and now accept my excuse, for by Allah at this time I wot none other way of benefiting thee, inasmuch I have lain in this sea eighteen hundred years and have not seen the face of the world save within this hour. But I would not have thee fish here save once a day." The Ifrit then gave him Godspeed, saying, "Allah grant we meet again"; and struck the earth with one foot, whereupon the ground clove asunder and swallowed him up.

The Fisherman, much marvelling at what had happened to him with the Ifrit, took the fish and made for the city; and as soon as he reached home he filled an earthen bowl with water and therein threw the fish which began to struggle and wriggle about. Then he bore off the bowl upon his head and, repairing to the King's palace (even as the Ifrit had bidden him) laid the fish before the presence; and the King wondered with exceeding wonder at the sight, for never in his lifetime had he seen fishes like these in quality or in conformation. So he said, "Give

[1] The formula of quoting from the Koran.

those fish to the stranger slave-girl who now cooketh for us," meaning the bondmaiden whom the King of Roum had sent to him only three days before, so that he had not yet made trial of her talents in the dressing of meat. Thereupon the Wazir carried the fish to the cook and bade her fry them, saying, "O damsel, the King sendeth this say to thee: I have not treasured thee, O tear o' me! save for stress-time of me; approve, then, to us this day thy delicate handwork and thy savoury cooking;

for this dish of fish is a present sent to the Sultan and evidently a rarity." The Wazir, after he had carefully charged her, returned to the King, who commanded him to give the Fisherman four hundred dinars: he gave them accordingly, and the man took them to his bosom and ran off home stumbling and falling and rising again and deeming the whole thing to be a dream. However, he bought for his family all they wanted and lastly he went to his wife in huge joy and gladness.

So far concerning him; but as regards the cook maiden, she took the fish and cleansed them and set them in the frying-pan,

basting them with oil till one side was dressed. Then she turned them over and, behold, the kitchen wall clave asunder, and therefrom came a young lady, fair of form, oval of face, perfect in grace, with eyelids which Kohl-lines enchase. Her dress was a silken headkerchief fringed and tasselled with blue; a large ring hung from either ear; a pair of bracelets adorned her wrists; rings with bezels of priceless gems were on her fingers; and she hent in hand a long rod of rattan-cane which she thrust into the frying-pan, saying, "O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your covenant?" When the cook maiden saw this apparition she swooned away. The young lady repeated her words a second time and a third time, and at last the fishes raised their heads from the pan, and saying in articulate speech, "Yes! Yes!" began with one voice to recite:

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I!
But if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

After this the young lady upset the frying-pan and went forth by the way she came in and the kitchen wall closed upon her. When the cook maiden recovered from her fainting fit, she saw the four fishes charred black as charcoal, and crying out, "His staff brake in his first bout,"[1] she again fell swooning to the ground. Whilst she was in this case the Wazir came for the fish, and looking upon her as insensible she lay, not knowing Sunday from Thursday, shoved her with his foot and said, "Bring the fish for the Sultan!" Thereupon recovering from her fainting fit she wept and informed him of her case and all that had befallen her. The Wazir marvelled greatly and exclaiming, "This is none other than a right strange matter!" he sent after the Fisherman and said to him, "Thou, O Fisherman, must needs fetch us four fishes like those thou broughtest before." Thereupon the man repaired to the tarn and cast his net; and when he landed it, lo! four fishes were therein exactly like the first. These he at once carried to the Wazir, who went in with them to the cook maiden and said, "Up with thee and fry these in my presence, that I may see this business." The damsel arose and cleansed the fish, and set them in the frying-pan over the fire; however, they remained there but a little while ere the wall clave asunder and the young lady appeared, clad as before and holding in

[1] Of course applying to her own case.

hand the wand which she again thrust into the frying-pan, saying, "O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your olden covenant?" And behold, the fish lifted their heads, and repeated, "Yes! Yes!" and recited this couplet:

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I!
But if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

Now, when the fishes spoke, and the young lady upset the frying-pan with her rod, and went forth by the way she came and the wall closed up, the Wazir cried out, "This is a thing not to be hidden from the King." So he went and told him what had happened, whereupon quoth the King, "There is no help for it but that I see this with mine own eyes." Then he sent for the Fisherman and commanded him to bring four other fish like the first and to take with him three men as witnesses. The Fisherman at once brought the fish: and the King, after ordering them to give him four hundred gold pieces, turned to the Wazir and said, "Up and fry me the fishes here before me!" The Minister, replying, "To hear is to obey," bade bring the frying-pan, threw therein the cleansed fish and set it over the fire; when lo! the wall clave asunder, and out burst a black slave like a huge rock or a remnant of the tribe Ad[1] bearing in hand a branch of a green tree; and he cried in loud and terrible tones, "O fish! O fish! be ye all constant to your antique covenant?" whereupon the fishes lifted their heads from the frying-pan and said, "Yes! Yes! we be true to our vow"; and they again recited the couplet:

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I!
But if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

Then the huge blackamoor approached the frying-pan and upset it with the branch and went forth by the way he came in. When he vanished from their sight the King inspected the fish; and, finding them all charred black as charcoal, was utterly bewildered and said to the Wazir, "Verily this is a matter whereanent silence cannot be kept, and as for the fishes, assuredly some marvellous adventure connects with them." So he bade bring the Fisherman and asked him, saying, "Fie on thee, fellow! whence come these fishes?" and he answered, "From a tarn between four heights

[1] Prehistoric Arabs who measured from 60 to 100 cubits high. (Koran xxvi. etc.)

lying behind this mountain which is in sight of thy city." Quoth the King, "How many days' march?" Quoth he, "O our lord the Sultan, a walk of half-an-hour." The King wondered and, straightway ordering his men to march and horsemen to mount, led off the Fisherman who went before as guide, privily damning the Ifrit.

They fared on till they had climbed the mountain and descended unto a great desert which they had never seen during all their lives; and the Sultan and his merry men marvelled much at the wold set in the midst of four mountains, and the tarn and its fishes of four colours, red and white, yellow and blue. The King stood fixed to the spot in wonderment and asked his troops and all present, "Hath anyone among you ever seen this piece of water before now?" and all made answer, "O King of the Age, never did we set eyes upon it during all our days." They also questioned the oldest inhabitants they met, men well-stricken in years, but they replied, each and every, "A lakelet like this we never saw in this place." Thereupon quoth the King, "By Allah I will neither return to my capital nor sit upon the throne of my forbears till I learn the truth about this tarn and the fish therein." He then ordered his men to dismount and bivouac all round the mountain; which they did; and summoning his Wazir, a Minister of much experience, sagacious, of penetrating wit and well-versed in affairs, said to him, "'Tis in my mind to do a certain thing, whereof I will inform thee; my heart telleth me to fare forth alone this night and root out the mystery of this tarn and its fishes. Do thou take thy seat at my tent door, and say to the Emirs and Wazirs, the Nabobs and the Chamberlains, in fine to all who ask thee: 'The Sultan is ill at ease, and he hath ordered me to refuse all admittance'; and be careful thou let none know my design." And the Wazir could not oppose him.

Then the King changed his dress and ornaments and, slinging his sword over his shoulder, took a path which led up one of the mountains and marched for the rest of the night till morning dawned; nor did he cease wayfaring till the heat was too much for him. After his long walk he rested for a while, and then resumed his march and fared on through the second night till dawn, when suddenly there appeared a black point in the far distance. Hereat he rejoiced and said to himself, "Haply some

one here shall acquaint me with the mystery of the tarn and its fishes." Presently, drawing near the dark object, he found it a palace built of swart stone plated with iron; and, while one leaf of the gate stood wide open, the other was shut. The King's spirit rose high as he stood before the gate and rapped a light rap; but hearing no answer he knocked a second knock and a third; yet there came no sign. Then he knocked his loudest, but still no answer, so he said, "Doubtless 'tis empty." Thereupon he mustered up resolution, and boldly walked through the main gate into the great hall and there cried out aloud, "Holla, ye people of the palace! I am a stranger and a wayfarer; have you aught here of victual?" He repeated his cry a second time and a third, but still there came no reply; so strengthening his heart and making up his mind he stalked through the vestibule into the very middle of the palace and found no man in it. Yet it was furnished with silken stuffs gold-starred; and the hangings were let down over the doorways. In the midst was a spacious court off which set four open saloons each with its raised dais, saloon facing saloon; a canopy shaded the court and in the centre was a jetting fount with four figures of lions made of red gold, spouting from their mouths water clear as pearls and diaphanous gems. Round about the palace birds were let loose and over it stretched a net of golden wire, hindering them from flying off; in brief there was everything but human beings.

The King marvelled mightily thereat, yet felt he sad at heart for that he saw no one to give him an account of the waste and its tarn, the fishes, the mountains and the palace itself. Presently, as he sat between the doors in deep thought, behold, there came a voice of lament, as from a heart grief-spent and he heard the voice chanting verses.

Now when the Sultan heard the mournful voice he sprang to his feet; and, following the sound, found a curtain let down over a chamber door. He raised it and saw behind it a young man sitting upon a couch about a cubit above the ground; and he fair to the sight, a well-shaped wight, with eloquence dight; his forehead was flower-white, his cheek rosy bright, and a mole on his cheek-breadth like an ambergris-mite. The King rejoiced and saluted him, but he remained sitting in his caftan of silken stuff purified with Egyptian gold and his crown studded with gems of sorts; but his face was sad with the traces of sorrow,

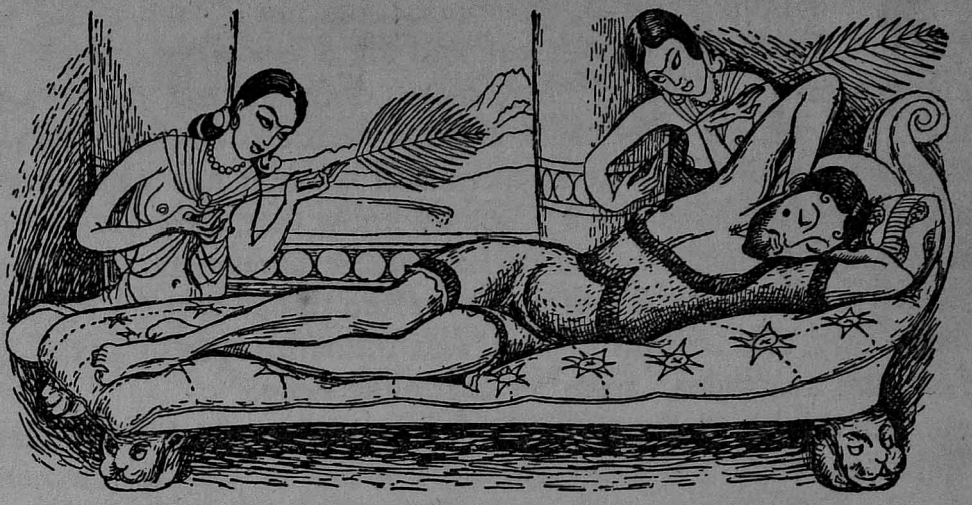
He returned the royal salute in most courteous wise, adding, "O my lord, thy dignity demandeth my rising to thee; and my sole excuse is to crave thy pardon."[1] Quoth the King, "Thou art excused, O youth; so look upon me as thy guest come hither on an especial object. I would thou acquaint me with the secrets of this tarn and its fishes and of this palace and thy loneliness therein and the cause of thy groaning and wailing."

When the young man heard these words he wept[2] with sore weeping; till his bosom was drenched with tears. The King marvelled and asked him, "What maketh thee weep, O young man?" and he answered, "How should I not weep, when this is my case!" Thereupon he put out his hand and raised the skirt of his garment, when lo! the lower half of him appeared stone down to his feet, while from his navel to the hair of his head he was man. The King, seeing this his plight, grieved with sore grief and of his compassion cried, "Alack and well-away! in very sooth, O youth, thou heapest sorrow upon my sorrow. I was minded to ask thee the mystery of the fishes only, whereas now I am concerned to learn thy story as well as theirs. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Lose no time, O youth, but tell me forthright thy whole tale." Quoth he, "Lend me thine ears, thy sight and thine insight"; and quoth the King, "All are at thy service!"

Thereupon the youth began, "Right wondrous and marvellous is my case and that of these fishes; and were it graven with gravers upon the eye-corners it were a warner to whoso would be warned." "How is that?" asked the King, and the young man began to tell

[1] The vagueness of his statement is euphemistic.

[2] This readiness of shedding tears contrasts strongly with the external stoicism of modern civilisation, but it is true to Arab character.



THE TALE OF THE ENSORCELLED PRINCE

KNOW then, O my lord, that whilome my sire was King of this city, and his name was Mahmud, entitled Lord of the Black Islands, and owner of what are now these four mountains. He ruled threescore and ten years, after which he went to the mercy of the Lord and I reigned as Sultan in his stead. I took to wife my cousin, the daughter of my paternal uncle,[1] and she loved me with such abounding love that whenever I was absent she ate not and she drank not until she saw me again. She cohabited with me for five years till a certain day when she went forth to the Hammam bath; and I bade the cook hasten to get ready all requisites for our supper. And I entered this palace and lay down on the bed where I was wont to sleep and bade two damsels to fan my face, one sitting by my head and the other at my feet. But I was troubled and made restless by my wife's absence and could not sleep; for although my eyes were closed my mind and thoughts were wide awake. Presently I heard the slave-girl at my head say to her at my feet, "O Mas'udah, how miserable is our master and how wasted in his youth and oh! the pity of his being so betrayed by our mistress, the accursed whore!" The other replied, "Yes, indeed, Allah curse all faithless women and adulterous; but the like of our master with his fair gifts, deserveth something better than this harlot who lieth abroad every night." Then quoth she who sat by my head, "Is our lord dumb or fit

[1] An Arab holds that he has a right to marry his first cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, and if any win her from him a death and a blood-feud may result.

only for bubbling that he questioneth her not!" and quoth the other, "Fie on thee! doth our lord know her ways or doth she allow him his choice? Nay, more, doth she not drug every night the cup she giveth him to drink before sleep-time, and put Bhang [1] into it? So he sleepeth and wotteth not whither she goeth, nor what she doeth; but we know that, after giving him the drugged wine, she donneth her richest raiment and perfumeth herself and then she fareth out from him to be away till break of day; then she cometh to him, and burneth a pastile under his nose and he awaketh from his death-like sleep."

When I heard the slave-girls' words, the light became black before my sight and I thought night would never fall. Presently the daughter of my uncle came from the baths; and they set the table for us and we ate and sat together a fair half-hour quaffing our wine as was ever our wont. Then she called for the particular wine I used to drink before sleeping and reached me the cup; but, seeming to drink it according to my wont, I poured the contents into my bosom; and, lying down, let her hear that I was asleep. Then, behold, she cried, "Sleep out the night, and never wake again: by Allah, I loathe thee and I loathe thy whole body, and my soul turneth in disgust from cohabiting with thee; and I see not the moment when Allah shall snatch away thy life!" Then she rose and donned her fairest dress and perfumed her person and slung my sword over her shoulder; and, opening the gates of the palace, went her ill way. I rose and followed her as she left the palace, and she threaded the streets until she came to the city gate, where she spoke words I understood not, and the padlocks dropped of themselves as if broken and the gate-leaves opened. She went forth (and I after her without her noticing aught) till she came at last to the outlying mounds [2] and a reed fence built about a round-roofed hut of mud-bricks. As she entered the door I climbed upon the roof which commanded a view of the interior. And lo! my fair cousin had gone into a hideous negro slave with his upper lip like the cover of a pot, and his lower like an open pot; lips which might sweep up sand from the gravel-floor of the cot. He was to boot a leper and a paralytic, lying upon a strew of sugar-cane

[1] A preparation of hemp.

[2] The rubbish heaps which outlie Eastern cities, some (near Cairo) are over a hundred feet high.

trash and wrapped in an old blanket and the foulest rags and tatters. She kissed the earth before him, and he raised his head so as to see her and said, "Woe to thee! what call hadst thou to stay away all this time? Here have been with me sundry of the black brethren, who drank their wine and each had his young lady, and I was not content to drink because of thine absence."

Then she, "O my lord, my heart's love and coolth[1] of my eyes, knowest thou not that I am married to my cousin whose very look I loathe, and hate myself when in his company? And did not I fear for thy sake, I would not let a single sun arise

before making his city a ruined heap wherein raven should croak and howlet hoot, and jackal and wolf harbour and loot; nay I had removed its very stones to the back side of Mount Kaf."[2] Rejoined the slave, "Thou liest, damn thee! Now I swear an oath by the valour and honour of blackamoor men (and deem not our manliness to be the poor manliness of white men), from to-day forth if thou stay away till this hour, I will not keep company with thee nor will I glue my body with thy body and strum and belly-pump. Dost play fast and loose with us, thou cracked pot, that we may satisfy thy dirty lusts? stinkard!

[1] All coolness is pleasant to dwellers in hot lands.
[2] Popularly rendered Caucasus.

bitch! vilest of the vile whites!" When I heard his words, and saw with my own eyes what passed between these two wretches, the world waxed dark before my face and my soul knew not in what place it was. But my wife humbly stood up weeping before and wheedling the slave, and saying, "O my beloved, and very fruit of my heart, there is none left to cheer me but thy dear self; and, if thou cast me off who shall take me in, O my beloved, O light of my eyes?" And she ceased not weeping and abasing herself to him until he deigned to be reconciled with her.

Then she was right glad and stood up and doffed her clothes, even to her petticoat-trousers, and said, "O my master what hast thou here for thy handmaiden to eat?" "Uncover the basin," he grumbled, "and thou shalt find at the bottom the broiled bones of some rats we dined on; pick at them, and then go to that slop-pot where thou shalt find some leavings of beer which thou mayest drink." So she ate and drank and washed her hands, and went and lay down by the side of the slave, upon the cane-trash, and, stripping herself stark naked, she crept in with him under his foul coverlet and his rags and tatters.

When I saw my wife, my cousin, the daughter of my uncle, do this deed, I clean lost my wits, and, climbing down from the roof, I entered and took the sword which she had with her and drew it, determined to cut down the twain. I first struck at the slave's neck and thought that the death decree had fallen on him for he groaned a loud hissing groan, but I had cut only the skin and flesh of the gullet and the two arteries! It awoke the daughter of my uncle, so I sheathed the sword and fared forth for the city; and, entering the palace, lay upon my bed and slept till morning when my wife aroused me, and I saw that she had cut off her hair and had donned mourning garments. Quoth she, "O son of my uncle, blame me not for what I do; it hath just reached me that my mother is dead, and my father hath been killed in holy war, and of my brothers one hath lost his life by a snake-sting and the other by falling down some precipice; and I can and should do naught save weep and lament." When I heard her words I refrained from all reproach and said only, "Do as thou list; I certainly will not thwart thee." She continued sorrowing, weeping and wailing one whole year from the beginning of its circle to the end, and when it was finished she

said to me, "I wish to build me in thy palace a tomb with a cupola, which I will set apart for my mourning and will name the House of Lamentations." Quoth I again, "Do as thou list!"

Then she builded for herself a cenotaph wherein to mourn, and set on its centre a dome under which showed a tomb like a Santon's sepulchre. Thither she carried the slave and lodged him; but he was exceeding weak by reason of his wound, and unable to do her love-service; he could only drink wine and from the day of his hurt he spake not a word, yet he lived on because his appointed hour was not come. Every day, morning and evening, my wife went to him and wept and wailed over him and gave him wine and strong soups, and left not off doing after this manner a second year; and I bore with her patiently and paid no heed to her. One day, however, I went into her unawares; and I found her weeping and beating her face and crying, "Why art thou absent from my sight, O my heart's delight? Speak to me, O my life; talk with me, O my love!" When she had ended for a time her words and her weeping I said to her, "O my cousin, let this thy mourning suffice, for in pouring forth tears there is little profit!" "Thwart me not," answered she, "in aught I do, or I will lay violent hands on myself!" So I held my peace and left her to go her own way; and she ceased not to cry and keen and indulge her affliction for yet another year. At the end of the third year I waxed aweary of this longsome mourning, and one day I happened to enter the cenotaph when vexed and angry with some matter which had thwarted me, and suddenly I heard her say, "O my lord, I never hear thee vouchsafe a single word to me! Why dost thou not answer me, O my master?" and she began reciting:

O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his beauty set in shade?
Hast thou darkened that countenance all-sheeny as the noon?
O thou tomb! neither earth nor yet heaven art to me
Then how cometh it in thee are conjoined my sun and moon?

When I heard such verses as these, rage was heaped upon my rage; I cried out, "Well-away! how long is this sorrow to last?" and I began repeating:

O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his horrors set in blight?
Hast thou darkened his countenance that sickeneth the soul?
O thou tomb! neither cess-pool nor pipkin art to me
Then how cometh it in thee are conjoined soil and coal?

When she heard my words she sprang to her feet crying, "Fie upon thee, thou cur! all this is of thy doings; thou hast wounded my heart's darling and thereby worked me sore woe and thou hast wasted his youth so that these three years he hath lain abed more dead than alive!" In my wrath I cried, "O thou foulest of harlots and filthiest of whores ever futtered by negro slaves who are hired to have at thee![1] Yes, indeed it was I who did this good deed"; and snatching up my sword I drew it and made at her to cut her down. But she laughed my words and mine intent to scorn crying, "To heel, hound that thou art! Alas for the past which shall no more come to pass nor shall any one avail the dead to raise. Allah hath indeed now given unto my hand him who did to me this thing, a deed that hath burned my heart with a fire which died not and a flame which might not be quenched!" Then she stood up; and, pronouncing some words to me unintelligible, she said, "By virtue of my egromancy become thou half stone and half man"; whereupon I became what thou seest, unable to rise or sit, and neither dead nor alive. Moreover, she ensorcelled the city with all its streets and garths, and she turned by her gramarye the four islands into four mountains around the tarn whereof thou questionest me; and the citizens, who were of four different faiths, Moslem, Nazarene, Jew and Magian, she transformed by her enchantments into fishes; the Moslems are the white, the Magians red, the Christians blue and the Jews yellow. And every day she tortureth me and scourgeth me with an hundred stripes, each of which draweth floods of blood and cutteth the skin of my shoulders to strips; and lastly she clotheth my upper half with a haircloth and then throweth over them these robes.

After this the Sultan turned towards the young Prince and said, "O youth, thou hast removed one grief only to add another grief; but now, O my friend, where is she; and where is the mausoleum wherein lieth the wounded slave?" "The slave lieth under yon dome," quoth the young man, "and she sitteth in the chamber fronting yonder door. And every day at sunrise she cometh forth, and first strippeth me, and whippeth me with an hundred strokes of the leathern scourge, and I weep and shriek; but there is no power of motion in my lower limbs to keep her off me. After ending her tormenting she visiteth the slave,

[1] The words are the very lowest and coarsest, but the scene is true to Arab life.

bringing him wine and boiled meats. And to-morrow at an early hour she will be here." Quoth the King, "By Allah, O youth, I will assuredly do thee a good deed which the world shall not willingly let die, and an act of derring-do which shall be chronicled long after I am dead and gone by."

Then the King sat him by the side of the young Prince and talked till nightfall, when he lay down and slept; but, as soon as the false dawn showed, he arose and, doffing his outer garments, bared his blade and hastened to the place wherein lay the slave. Then he was ware of lighted candles and lamps, and the perfumes of incenses and unguents; and, directed by these, he made for the slave and struck him one stroke, killing him on the spot: after which he lifted him on his back and threw him into a well that was in the palace. Presently he returned and, donning the slave's gear, lay down at length within the mausoleum with the drawn sword laid close to and along his side. After an hour or so the accursed witch came; and, first going to her husband, she stripped off his clothes and, taking a whip, flogged him cruelly while he cried out, "Ah! enough for me the case I am in! take pity on me, O my cousin!" But she replied, "Didst thou take pity on me and spare the life of my true love on whom I doated?" Then she drew the cilice over his raw and bleeding skin and threw the robe upon all and went down to the slave with a goblet of wine and a bowl of meat-broth in her hands. She entered under the dome weeping and wailing, "Well-away!" and crying, "O my lord! speak a word to me! O my master! talk awhile with me!"

The King lowered his voice and, twisting his tongue, spoke after the fashion of the blackamoors and said, "'lack! 'lack! there be no Ma'esty and there be no Might save in Allauh, the Gloriose, the Great!" Now when she heard these words she shouted for joy, and fell to the ground fainting; and when her senses returned she asked, "O my lord, can it be true that thou hast power of speech?" and the King, making his voice small and faint, answered, "O my cuss! dost thou deserve that I talk to thee and speak with thee?" "Why and wherefore?" rejoined she; and he replied, "The why is that all the livelong day thou tormentest thy hubby; and he keeps calling on 'eaven for aid until sleep is strange to me even from evenin' till mawnin', and he prays and damns, cussing us two, me and thee, causing

me disquiet and much bother: were this not so, I should long ago have got my health; and it is this which prevents my answering thee." Quoth she, "With thy leave I will release him from what spell is on him"; and quoth the King, "Release him and let's have some rest!" She cried, "To hear is to obey"; and, going from the cenotaph to the palace, she took a metal bowl and filled it with water and spake over it certain words which made the contents bubble and boil as a cauldron seetheth over the fire. With this she sprinkled her husband, saying, "By virtue of the dread words I have spoken, if thou becamest thus by my spells, come forth out of that form into thine own former form."

And lo and behold! the young man shook and trembled; then he rose to his feet and, rejoicing at his deliverance, cried aloud, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and in very truth Mohammed is His Apostle, whom Allah bless and keep!" Then she screamed these words in his face. "Go forth and return not hither, for if thou do I will surely slay thee"; So he went from between her hands; and she returned to the dome and, going down to the sepulchre, she said, "O my lord, come forth to me that I may look upon thee and thy goodliness!" The King replied in faint low words, "What thing hast thou done? Thou hast rid me of the branch but not of the root." She asked, "O my darling! O my negroling! what is the root?" And he answered, "Fie on thee, O my cuss! The people of this city and of the four islands every night when it's half passed lift their heads from the tank in which thou hast turned them to fishes and cry to Heaven and call down its anger on me and thee; and this is the reason why my body's baulked from health. Go at once and set them free; then come to me and take my hand, and raise me up, for a little strength is already back in me."

When she heard the King's words (and she still supposed him to be the slave) she cried joyously, "O my master, on my head and on my eyes be thy command, Bismillah!" So she sprang to her feet and, full of joy and gladness, ran down to the tarn and took a little of its water in the palm of her hand and spake over it words not to be understood; the fishes lifted their heads and stood up on the instant like men, the spell on the people of the city having been removed. What was the lake

again became a crowded capital; the bazars were thronged with folk who bought and sold; each citizen was occupied with his own calling and the four hills became islands as they were whilome. Then the young woman, that wicked sorceress, returned to the King and (still thinking he was the negro) said to him, "O my love! stretch forth thy honoured hand that I may assist thee to rise." "Nearer to me," quoth the King in a faint and feigned tone. She came close as to embrace him when he took up the sword lying hid by his side and smote her across the breast, so that the point showed gleaming behind her back. Then he smote her a second time and cut her in twain and cast her to the ground in two halves. After which he fared forth and found the young man, now freed from the spell, awaiting him and gave him joy of his happy release while the Prince kissed his hand with abundant thanks.

Quoth the King, "Wilt thou abide in this city or go with me to my capital?" Quoth the youth, "O King of the Age, wottest thou not what journey is between thee and thy city?" "Two days and a half," answered he; whereupon said the other, "An thou be sleeping, O King, awake! Between thee and thy city is a year's march for a well-girt walker, and thou haddest not come hither in two days and a half save that the city was under enchantment. And I, O King, will never part from thee; no, not even for the twinkling of an eye." The King rejoiced at his words and said, "Thanks be to Allah who hath bestowed thee upon me! From this hour thou art my son and my only son, for that in all my life I have never been bleessed with issue." Thereupon they embraced and joyed with exceeding great joy; and, reaching the palace, the Prince who had been spellbound informed his lords and his grandees that he was about to visit the Holy Places as a pilgrim, and bade them get ready all things necessary for the occasion. The preparations lasted ten days, after which he set out with the Sultan, whose heart burned in yearning for his city whence he had been absent a whole twelvemonth.

They journeyed with an escort of Mamelukes [1] carrying all manner of precious gifts and rarities, nor stinted they wayfaring day and night for a full year until they approached the Sultan's capital, and sent on messengers to announce their coming.

[1] White slaves trained to arms.

Then the Wazir and the whole army came out to meet him in joy and gladness, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their King; and the troops kissed the ground before him and wished him joy of his safety. He entered and took seat upon his throne and the Minister came before him and, when acquainted with all that had befallen the young Prince, he congratulated him on his narrow escape. When order was restored throughout the land the King gave largesse to many of his people, and said to the Wazir, "Hither the Fisherman who brought us the fishes!" So he sent for the man who had been the first cause of the city and the citizens being delivered from enchantment and, when he came into the presence, the Sultan bestowed upon him a dress of honour, and questioned him of his condition and whether he had children. The Fisherman gave him to know that he had two daughters and a son, so the King sent for them and, taking one daughter to wife, gave the other to the young Prince and made the son his head treasurer. Furthermore, he invested his Wazir with the Sultanate of the City in the Black Islands whilome belonging to the young Prince, and dispatched with him an escort of fifty armed slaves together with dresses of honour for all the Emirs and Grandees. The Wazir kissed hands and fared forth on his way; while the Sultan and the Prince abode at home in all the solace and the delight of life; and the Fisherman became the richest man of his age, and his daughters wived with the Kings, until death came to them.

TALE OF THE TAILOR

KNOW, O King of the Age, that most marvellous was that which befell me but yesterday. It so chanced that in the early day I was at the marriage feast of one of my companions, who had gotten together in his house some twenty of the handicraftsmen of this city, amongst them tailors and silk-spinners and carpenters and others of the same kidney. As soon as the sun had risen, they set food before us that we might eat when, behold, the master of the house entered, and with him a foreign youth and a well-favoured of the people of Baghdad, wearing clothes as handsome as handsome could be; and he was of right comely presence save that he was lame of one leg.

He came and saluted us and we stood up to receive him; but, when he was about to sit down, he espied amongst us a certain man which was a Barber; whereupon he refused to be seated and would have gone away. But we stopped him and our host also stayed him, making oath that he should not leave us, and asked him, "What is the reason of thy coming in and going out again at once?"; whereto he answered, "By Allah,

O my lord, do not hinder me; for the cause of my turning back is yon Barber of bad omen, yon black o' face, yon ne'er-do-well!" When the house-master heard these words he marvelled with extreme marvel and said, "How cometh this young man, who haileth from Baghdad, to be so troubled and perplexed about this Barber?" Then we looked at the stranger and said, "Explain the cause of thine anger against the Barber."

"O fair company," quoth the youth, "there befell me a strange adventure with this Barber in Baghdad (which is my native city); he was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my lameness, and I have sworn never to sit in the same place with him, nor even tarry in any town where he happens to abide; and I have bidden adieu to Baghdad and travelled far from it and come to stay in this your city; yet I have hardly passed one night before I meet him again. But not another day shall go by ere I fare forth from here." Said we to him, "Allah upon thee, tell us the tale; and the youth replied (the Barber changing colour from brown to yellow as he spoke):

Know, O fair company, that my father was one of the chief merchants of Baghdad, and Almighty Allah had blessed him with no son but myself. When I grew up and reached man's estate, my father was received into the mercy of Allah (whose Name be exalted!) and left me money and eunuchs, servants and slaves; and I used to dress well and diet well. Now, Allah had made me a hater of womenkind and one day, as I was walking along a street in Baghdad, a party of females met me face to face in the footway; so I fled from them and, entering an alley which was no thoroughfare, sat down upon a stone bench at its other end. I had not sat there long before the latticed window of one of the houses opposite was thrown open, and there appeared at it a young lady, as she were the full moon at its fullest; never in my life saw I her like; and she began to water some flowers on the window sill. She turned right and left and, seeing me watching her, shut the window and went away. Thereupon fire was suddenly enkindled in my heart; my mind was possessed with her and my woman-hate turned to woman-love. I continued sitting there, lost to the world, till sunset; when lo! the Kazi of the city came riding by with his slaves before him and his eunuchs behind him, and dismounting entered the house in which the damsel had appeared. By this I

knew that he was her father; so I went home sorrowful and cast myself upon my carpet-bed in grief.

Then my handmaids flocked in and sat about me, unknowing what ailed me; but I addressed no speech to them, and they wept and wailed over me. Presently, in came an old woman who looked at me and saw with a glance what was the matter with me:[1] so she sat down by my head and spoke me fair, saying, "O my son, tell me all about it and I will be the means of thy union with her." So I related to her what had happened and she answered, "O my son, this one is the daughter of the Kazi of Baghdad who keepeth her in the closest seclusion; and the window where thou sawest her is her floor, whilst her father occupies the large saloon in the lower storey. She is often there alone and I am wont to visit at the house; so thou shalt not win to her save through me. Now set thy wits to work and be of good cheer." With these words she went away and I took heart at what she said and my people rejoiced that day, seeing me rise in the morning safe and sound.

By and by the old woman returned looking chopfallen,[2] and said, "O my son, do not ask me how I fared with her! When I told her that, she cried at me, 'If thou hold not thy peace, O hag of ill-omen, and leave not such talk, I will entreat thee as thou deservest and do thee die by the foulest of deaths.' But needs must I have at her a second time." When I heard this it added ailment to my ailment and the neighbours visited me and judged that I was not long for this world; but after some days, the old woman came to me and, putting her mouth close to my ear, whispered, "O my son; I claim from thee the gift of good news." With this my soul returned to me and I said, "Whatever thou wilt shall be thine." Thereupon she spoke, "Yesterday I went to the young lady who, seeing me broken in spirit and shedding tears from reddened eyes, asked me, 'O naunty[3] mine, what ails thee, that I see thy breast so straitened?'; and I answered her, weeping bitterly, 'O my lady, I am just come from the house of a youth who loves thee and who is about to die for sake of thee!' Quoth she (and her heart was softened),

[1] Her pimping instinct at once revealed the case to her.

[2] The usual "pander-dodge" to get more money.

[3] Mother's sister. A familiar address to the old as uncle or nuncle (father's brother) to a man.

'And who is this youth of whom thou speakest?'; and quoth I, 'He is to me as a son and the fruit of my vitals. He saw thee, some days ago, at the window watering thy flowers, and espying thy face and wrists he fell in love at first sight. I let him know what happened to me the last time with thee, whereupon his ailment increased, he took to the pillow and he is naught now but a dead man, and no doubt whatever of it.'

"At this she turned pale and asked, 'All this for my sake?' and I answered, 'Ay, by Allah! what wouldst thou have me do?' Said she, 'Go back to him and greet him for me and tell him that I am twice more heart-sick than he is. And on Friday, before the hour of public prayer, bid him here to the house, and I will come down and open the door for him. Then I will carry him up to my chamber and foregather with him for awhile, and let him depart before my father return from the Mosque.'" When I heard the old woman's words, all my sickness suddenly fell from me, my anguish ceased and my heart was comforted, I took off what clothes were on me and gave them to her and, as she turned to go, she said, "Keep a good heart!" "I have not a jot of sorrow left," I replied. My household and intimates rejoiced in my recovery and I abode thus till Friday, when behold, the old woman came in and asked me how I did, to which I answered that I was well and in good case. Then I donned my clothes and perfumed myself and sat down to await the congregation going into prayers, that I might betake myself to her.

But the old woman said to me, "Thou hast time and to spare: so thou wouldst do well to go to the Hammam bath and have thy hair shaven off (especially after thy ailment), so as not to show traces of sickness." "This were the best way," answered I, "I have just now bathed in hot water, but I will have my head shaved." Then I said to my page, "Go to the bazar and bring me a barber, a discreet fellow and one not inclined to meddling or impertinent curiosity or likely to split my head with his excessive talk." The boy went out at once and brought back with him this wretched old man, this Shaykh of ill-omen. When he came in he saluted me and I returned his salutation; then quoth he, "Of a truth I see thee thin of body"; and quoth I, "I have been ailing." He continued, "Allah drive far away from thee thy woe and thy sorrow and thy trouble and thy

distress." "Allah grant thy prayer!" said I. He pursued, "All gladness to thee, O my master, for indeed recovery is come to thee. Dost thou wish to be polled or to be blooded? Indeed it was a tradition of Ibn Abbas [1] (Allah accept of him!) that the Apostle said, 'Whoso cutteth his hair on a Friday, the Lord shall avert from him threescore and ten calamities'; and again is related of him also that he said, 'Cupping on a Friday keepeth from loss of sight and a host of diseases.'" "Leave this talk," I cried, "come, shave me my head at once for I can't stand it."

So he rose and put forth his hand in most leisurely way and took out a kerchief and unfolded it, and lo! it contained an astrolabe with seven parallel plates mounted in silver. Then he went to the middle of the court and raised head and instrument towards the sun's rays and looked for a long while. When this was over, he came back and said to me, "Know that there have elapsed of this our day, which be Friday, and this Friday be the tenth of the month Safar in the six hundred and fifty-third year since the Hegira or Flight of the Apostle (on whom be the bestest of blessings and peace!) and the seventh thousand three hundred and twentieth year of the era of Alexander, eight degrees and six minutes. Furthermore, the ascendant of this our day is, according to the exactest science of computation, the planet Mars; and it so happeneth that Mercury is in conjunction with him, denoting an auspicious moment for hair-cutting; and this also maketh manifest to me that thou desirest union with a certain person and that your intercourse will not be propitious. But after this there occurreth a sign respecting a matter which will befall thee and whereof I will not speak." "O thou," cried I, "by Allah, thou weariest me and scatterest my wits and thy forecast is other than good; I sent for thee to poll my head and naught else: so up and shave me and prolong not thy speech."

"By Allah," replied he, "if thou but knew what is about to befall thee, thou wouldst do nothing this day, and I counsel thee to act by computation of the constellations." "By Allah," said I, "never did I see a barber who excelled in judicial astrology save thyself: but I think and I know that thou art most prodigal of frivolous talk. I sent for thee only to shave my head, but thou comest and pesterest me with this sorry prattle." "What more wouldst thou have?" replied he. "Allah hath bounteously

[1] A cousin and a companion of the

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bestowed on thee a barber, who is an astrologer, one learned in alchemy and white magic; syntax, grammar and lexicology; the arts of logic, rhetoric and elocution; mathematics, arithmetic and algebra; astronomy, astromancy and geometry; theology, the Traditions of the Apostle and the Commentaries on the Koran. Furthermore, I have read books galore and digested them and have had experience of affairs and comprehended them. In short I have learned the theorick and the practick of all the arts and sciences; I know everything of them by rote and I am a past master *in totâ re scibili*. Thy father loved me for my lack of officiousness, argal, to serve thee is a religious duty incumbent on me. I am no busy-body as thou seemest to suppose, and on this account I am known as The Silent Man, also, The Modest Man. Wherefore it behoveth thee to render thanks to Allah Almighty and not cross me, for I am a true counsellor to thee and benevolently-minded towards thee. Would that I were in thy service a whole year that thou mightest do me justice; and I would ask thee no wages for all this." When I heard his flow of words, I said to him, "Doubtless thou wilt be my death this day!"

Then said I, "Be quick and stint this talk and impertinence, for I have to go to a party at the house of some of my intimates." When he heard me speak of the party, he said, "This thy day is a blessed day for me! In very sooth it was but yesterday I invited a company of my friends and I have forgotten to provide anything for them to eat. This very moment I was thinking of it: Alas, how I shall be disgraced in their eyes!" "Be not distressed about this matter," answered I; "I am bidden to an entertainment this day. So everything in my house, eatable and drinkable, shall be thine, if thou wilt only get through thy work and make haste to shave my head." He replied, "Allah requite thee with good! Specify to me what is in thy house for my guests that I may be ware of it." Quoth I, "Five dishes of meat and ten chickens with reddened breasts and a roasted lamb." "Set them before me," quoth he, "that I may see them." So I told my people to buy, borrow or steal them and bring them in anywise, and had all this set before him. When he saw it he cried, "The wine is wanting," and I replied, "I have a flagon or two of good old grape-juice in the house," and he said, "Have it brought out!" So I sent for it and he exclaimed,

"Allah bless thee for a generous disposition! But there are still the essences and perfumes." So I bade them set before him a box containing Nadd, the best of compound perfumes, together with fine lign-aloes, ambergris and musk unmixed, the whole worth fifty dinars.

Now the time waxed strait and my heart straitened with it; so I said to him, "Take it all and finish shaving my head by the life of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!)." "By Allah," said he, "I will not take it till I see all that is in it." So I bade the page open the box and the Barber laid down the astrolabe, leaving the greater part of my head unpolled; and, sitting on the ground, turned over the scents and incense and aloes-wood and essences till I was wellnigh distraught. Then he took the razor and coming up to me shaved off some few hairs and repeated these lines:

The boy like his father shall surely show,
As the tree from its parent root shall grow.

Then said he, "By Allah, O my son, I know not whether to thank thee or thy father; for my entertainment this day is all due to thy bounty and beneficence; and, although none of my company be worthy of it, yet I have a set of honourable men. I have set my heart on thy making one of us; yet if thou must go to thy friends to-day, I will take these good things, wherewith thou hast honoured and favoured me, to my guests and leave them to eat and drink and not wait for me; whilst I will return to thee in haste and accompany thee to thy little party; for there is no ceremony between me and my intimates to prevent my leaving them. Fear not, I will soon be back with thee and wend with thee whithersoever thou wendest. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"

I shouted, "Go thou to thy friends and make merry with them; and *do* let me go to mine and be with them this day, for they expect me." But the Barber cried, "I will not let thee go alone"; and I replied, "The truth is none can enter where I am going save myself." He rejoined, "I suspect that to-day thou art for an assignation with some woman, else thou hadst taken me with thee; yet am I the right man to take, one who could aid thee to the end thou wishest. But I fear me thou art running

after strange women and thou wilt lose thy life; for in this our city of Baghdad one cannot do anything in this line, especially on a day like Friday, our Governor is an angry man and a mighty sharp blade." "Shame on thee, thou wicked, bad old man!" cried I. "Be off! what words are these thou givest me?" "O cold of wit," cried he, "thou sayest to me what is not true and thou hidest thy mind from me, but I know the whole business for certain and I seek only to help thee this day with my best endeavour."

I was fearful lest my people or my neighbours should hear the Barber's talk, so I kept silence for a long time whilst he finished shaving my head; by which time the hour of prayer was come and the Khutbah, or sermon, was about to follow. When he had done, I said to him, "Go to thy friends with their meat and drink, and I will await thy return. Then we will fare together." In this way I hoped to pour oil on troubled waters and to trick the accursed loon, so haply I might get quit of him; but he said, "Thou art cozening me and thou wouldst go alone to thy appointment and cast thyself into jeopardy, whence there will be no escape for thee. Now by Allah! and again by Allah! do not go till I return, that I may accompany thee and watch the issue of thine affair." "So be it," I replied, "do not be long absent." Then he took all the meat and drink I had given him and the rest of it and went out of my house; but the accursed carle gave it in charge of a porter to carry to his home and hid himself in one of the alleys.

As for me I rose on the instant, for the Muezzins had already called the Salam of Friday, the salutation to the Apostle; and I dressed in haste and went out alone and, hurrying to the street, took my stand by the house wherein I had seen the young lady. I found the old woman on guard at the door awaiting me, and went up with her to the upper storey, the damsel's apartment. Hardly had I reached it when behold, the master of the house returned from prayers and, entering the great saloon, closed the door. I looked down from the window and saw this Barber (Allah's curse upon him!) sitting over against the door and said, "How did this devil find me out?" At this very moment, as Allah had decreed it for rending my veil of secrecy, it so happened that a handmaid of the house-master committed some offence for which he beat her. She shrieked out and his slave ran in to

intercede for her, whereupon the Kazi beat him to boot, and he also roared out. The damned Barber fancied that it was I who was being beaten; so he fell to shouting and tore his garments and scattered dust on his head and kept on shrieking and crying "Help! Help!" So the people came round about him and he went on yelling, "My master is being murdered in the Kazi's house!"

Then he ran clamouring to my place with the folk after him, and told my people and servants and slaves; and, before I knew what was doing, up they came tearing their clothes and letting loose their hair and shouting, "Alas, our master!"; and this Barber leading the rout with his clothes rent and in sorriest plight; and he also shouting like a madman and saying, "Alas for our murdered master!" And they all made an assault upon the house in which I was. The Kazi, hearing the yells and the uproar at his door said to one of his servants, "See what is the matter"; and the man went forth and returned and said, "O my master, at the gate there are more than ten thousand souls what with men and women, and all crying out, 'Alas for our murdered master!'; and they keep pointing to our house." When the Kazi heard this, the matter seemed serious and he waxed wroth; so he rose and, opening the door, saw a great crowd of people; whereat he was astounded and said, "O folk! what is there to do?" "O accursed! O dog! O hog!" my servants replied: "'Tis thou who hast killed our master!" Quoth he, "O good folk, and what hath your master done to me that I should kill him? This is my house and it is open to you all."

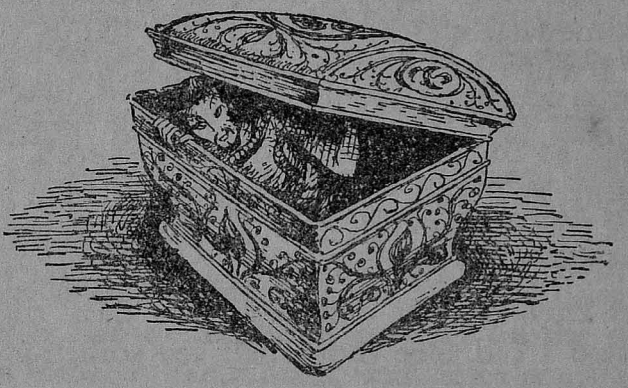
Then quoth the Barber, "Thou didst beat him and I heard him cry out"; and quoth the Kazi, "But what was he doing that I should beat him, and what brought him into my house; and whence came he and whither went he?" "Be not a wicked, perverse old man!" cried the Barber, "for I know the whole story; and the long and short of it is that thy daughter is in love with him and he loves her; and when thou knewest that he had entered the house, thou badest thy servants beat him and they did so: by Allah, none shall judge between us and thee but the Caliph; or else do thou bring out our master that his folk may take him, before they go in and save him perforce from thy house, and thou be put to shame." Then said the Kazi (and his tongue was bridled and his mouth was stopped by confusion

before the people), "An thou say sooth, do thou come in and fetch him out." Whereupon the Barber pushed forward and entered the house.

When I saw this I looked about for a means of escape and flight, but saw no hiding-place except a great chest in the upper chamber where I was. So I got into it and pulled the lid down upon myself and held my breath. The Barber was hardly in the room before he began to look about for me, then turned him right and left and came straight to the place where I was, and stepped up to the chest and, lifting it on his head, made off as fast as he could. At this, my reason forsook me, for I knew that he would not let me be; so I took courage and opening the chest threw myself to the ground. My leg was broken in the fall, and the door being open I saw a great concourse of people looking in. Now I carried in my sleeve much gold and some silver, which I had provided for an ill day like this and the like of such occasion; so I kept scattering it amongst the folk to divert their attention from me and, whilst they were busy scrambling for it, I set off, hopping as fast as I could, through the by-streets of Baghdad, shifting and turning right and left. But whithersoever I went this damned Barber would go in after me, crying aloud, "They would have bereft me of my maa-a-ster! They would have slain him who was a benefactor to me and my family and my friends! Praise be to Allah who made me prevail against them and delivered my lord from their hands!"

Then to me, "Where wilt thou go now? Thou wouldst persist in following thine own evil devices, till thou broughtest thyself to this ill pass; and, had not Allah vouchsafed me to thee, ne'er hadst thou escaped this strait into which thou hast fallen, for they would have cast thee into a calamity whence thou never couldest have won free. But I will not call thee to account for thine ignorance, as thou art so little of wit and inconsequential and addicted to hastiness!" Said I to him, "Doth not what thou hast brought upon me suffice thee, but thou must run after me and talk me such talk in the bazar-streets?" And I wellnigh gave up the ghost for excess of rage against him. Then I took refuge in the shop of a weaver amiddlemost of the market and sought protection of the owner who drove the Barber away; and, sitting in the back-room, I said to myself, "If I return home I shall never be able to get rid of this curse of a Barber, who will

be with me night and day; and I cannot endure the sight of him even for a breathing-space." So I sent out at once for witnesses and made a will, dividing the greater part of my property among my people, and appointed a guardian over them, to whom I committed the charge of great and small, directing him to sell my houses and domains. Then I set out on my travels that I might be free of this pimp; and I came to settle in your town where I have lived some time. When you invited me and I came hither, the first thing I saw was this accursed pander seated in the place of honour. How, then, can my heart be glad and my stay be pleasant in company with this fellow who brought all this upon me, and who was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my exile from home and native land?" And the youth refused to sit down and went away.



THE BARBER'S[1] TALE OF HIS SECOND BROTHER

KNOW, O Commander of the Faithful, that my second brother's name was Al-Haddar, that is, the Babbler, and he was the paralytic. Now it happened to him one day, as he was going about his business, that an old woman accosted him and said, "Stop a little, my good man, that I may tell thee of somewhat which, if it be to thy liking, thou shalt do for me, and I will pray Allah to give thee good of it!" My brother stopped and she went on, "I will put thee in the way of a certain thing, so thou not be prodigal of speech." "On with thy talk," quoth he; and she, "What sayest thou to handsome quarters and a fair garden with flowing waters, flowers blooming, and fruit growing, and old wine going and a pretty young face whose owner thou mayest embrace from dark till dawn? If thou do whatso I bid thee thou shalt see something greatly to thy advantage."

"And is all this in the world?" asked my brother; and she answered, "Yes, and it shall be thine, so thou be reasonable and leave idle curiosity and many words, and do my bidding." "I will indeed, O my lady," said he. "How is it thou hast preferred me in this matter before all men and what is it that so much pleaseth thee in me?" Quoth she, "Did I not bid thee be spare of speech? Hold thy peace and follow me. Know, that

[1] This is the same barber who appeared in the previous tale (P. H. N.).

the young lady, to whom I shall carry thee, loveth to have her own way and hateth being thwarted and all who gainsay; so, if thou humour her, thou shalt come to thy desire of her." And my brother said, "I will not cross her in anything." Then she went on and my brother followed her, an-hungering after what she described to him, till they entered a fine large house, handsome and choicely furnished, full of eunuchs and servants and showing signs of prosperity from top to bottom. And she was carrying him to the upper story when the people of the house said to him, "What dost thou here?" But the old woman answered them, "Hold your peace and trouble him not: he is a workman and we have occasion for him."

Then she brought him into a fine great pavilion, with a garden in its midst, never eyes saw a fairer, and made him sit upon a handsome couch. He had not sat long, before he heard a loud noise and in came a troop of slave-girls surrounding a lady like the moon on the night of its fullest. When he saw her, he rose up and made an obeisance to her, whereupon she welcomed him and bade him be seated. So he sat down and she said to him, "Allah advance thee to honour! Is all well with thee?" "O my lady," he answered, "all with me is right well." Then she bade bring in food, and they set before her delicate viands; so she sat down to eat, making a show of affection to my brother and jesting with him, though all the while she could not refrain from laughing; but as often as he looked at her, she signed towards her handmaidens as though she were laughing at them. My brother (the ass!) understood nothing; but, in the excess of his ridiculous passion, he fancied that the lady was in love with him and that she would soon grant him his desire.

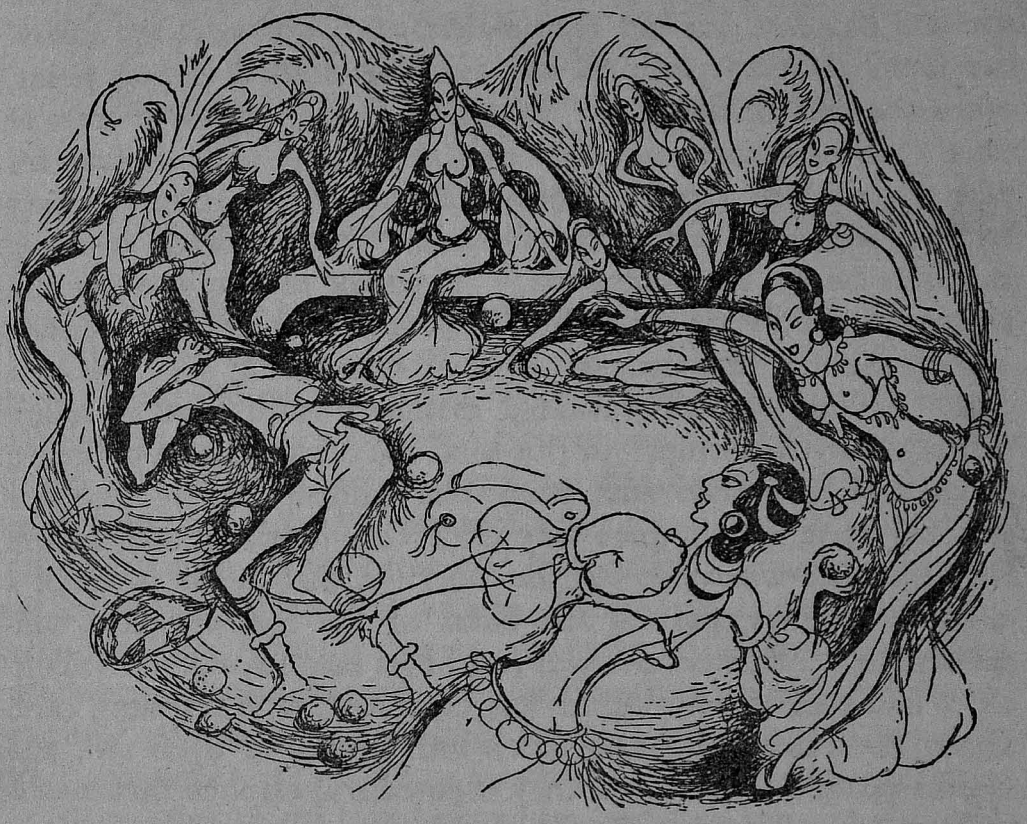
When they had done eating, they set on the wine and there came in ten maidens like moons, with lutes ready strung in their hands, and fell to singing with full voices, sweet and sad, whereupon delight gat hold upon him and he took the cup from the lady's hands and drank it standing. Then she drank a cup of wine and my brother (still standing) said to her, "Health," and bowed to her. She handed him another cup and he drank it off, when she slapped him hard on the nape of his neck. Upon this my brother would have gone out of the house in anger; but the old woman followed him and winked to him to return. So he came back and the lady bade him sit, and he sat down without

a word. Then she again slapped him on the nape of his neck; and the second slapping did not suffice her, she must needs make all her handmaidens also slap and cuff him, while he kept saying to the old woman, "I never saw aught nicer than this." She on her side ceased not exclaiming, "Enough, enough, I conjure thee, O my mistress!"; but the women slapped him till he wellnigh swooned away. Presently my brother rose and went out to obey a call of nature, but the old woman overtook him, and said, "Be patient a little and thou shalt win to thy wish." "How much longer have I to wait?" my brother replied, "this slapping hath made me feel faint." "As soon as she is warm with wine," answered she, "thou shalt have thy desire."

So he returned to his place and sat down, whereupon all the handmaidens stood up and the lady bade them perfume him with pastiles and besprinkle his face with rose-water. Then said she to him, "Allah advance thee to honour! Thou hast entered my house and hast borne with my conditions, for whoso thwarteth me I turn him away, and whoso is patient hath his desire." "O mistress mine," said he, "I am thy slave and in the hollow of thine hand!" "Know then," continued she, "that Allah hath made me passionately fond of frolic; and whoso falleth in with my humour cometh by whatso he wisheth." Then she ordered her maidens to sing with loud voices till the whole company was delighted; after which she said to one of them, "Take thy lord, and do what is needful for him, and bring him back to me forthright." So the damsel took my brother (and he not knowing what she would do with him); but the old woman overtook him and said, "Be patient; there remaineth but little to do." At this his face brightened and he stood up before the lady while the old woman kept saying, "Be patient; thou wilt now at once win to thy wish!"; till he said, "Tell me, what she would have the maiden do with me?" "Nothing but good," replied she, "as I am thy sacrifice! She wisheth only to dye thy eyebrows and pluck out thy mustachios." Quoth he, "As for the dyeing of my eyebrows, that will come off with washing, but for the plucking out of my mustachios that indeed is a somewhat painful process." "Be cautious how thou cross her," cried the old woman "for she hath set her heart on thee."

So my brother patiently suffered her to dye his eyebrows and pluck out his mustachios; after which the maiden returned to

her mistress and told her. Quoth she, " Remaineth now only one other thing to be done ; thou must shave his beard and make him a smooth o' face." So the maiden went back and told him what her mistress had bidden her do ; and my brother (the blockhead !) said to her, " How shall I do what will disgrace me before the folk ? " But the old woman said, " She would do on this wise only that thou mayst be as a beardless youth and that no hair be left on thy face to scratch and prick her delicate

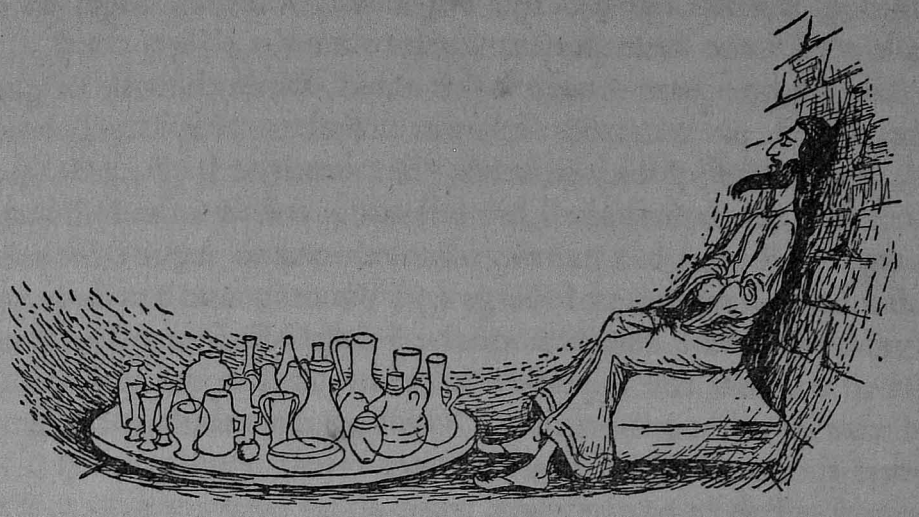


cheeks ; for indeed she is passionately in love with thee. So be patient and thou shalt attain thine object." My brother *was* patient and did her bidding and let her shave off his beard and, when he was brought back to the lady, lo ! he appeared dyed red as to his eyebrows, plucked of both mustachios, shorn of his beard, rouged on both cheeks. At first she was affrighted at him ; then she made mockery of him and, laughing till she fell upon her back, said, " O my lord, thou hast indeed won my heart by thy good nature ! " Then she conjured him, by her life, to stand up and dance, and he arose, and capered about, and there was not a cushion in the house but she threw it at his head,

and in like manner did all her women who also kept pelting him with oranges and lemons and citrons till he fell down senseless from the cuffing on the nape of the neck, the pillowing and the fruit-pelting.

"Now thou hast attained thy wish," said the old woman when he came round; "there are no more blows in store for thee and there remaineth but one little thing to do. It is her wont, when she is in her cups, to let no one have her until she put off her dress and trousers and remain stark naked. Then she will bid thee doff thy clothes and run; and do thou follow her from place to place till thy prickle stands at fullest point, when she will yield to thee"; adding, "Strip off thy clothes at once." So he rose, wellnigh lost in ecstasy, and, doffing his raiment, showed himself mother-naked. Whereupon the lady stripped also and said to my brother, "If thou want anything run after me till thou catch me." Then she set out at a run and he ran after her while she rushed into room after room and rushed out of room after room, my brother scampering after her in a rage of desire like a veritable madman, with yard standing terribly tall. After much of this kind she dashed into a darkened place, and he dashed after her; but suddenly he trod upon a yielding spot, which gave way under his weight; and, before he was aware where he was, he found himself in the midst of a crowded market, part of the bazar of the leather-sellers who were crying the prices of skins and hides and buying and selling.

When they saw him in his plight, naked, with standing yard, shorn of beard and mustachios, with eyebrows dyed red, and cheeks ruddled with rouge, they shouted and clapped their hands at him, and set to flogging him with skins upon his bare body till a swoon came over him. Then they threw him on the back of an ass and carried him to the Chief of Police. Quoth the Chief, "What is this?" Quoth they, "This fellow fell suddenly upon us out of the Wazir's house in this state." So the Prefect gave him an hundred lashes and then banished him from Baghdad.



THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS FIFTH BROTHER

MY fifth brother, Al-Nashshar, the Babbler, the same who was cropped of both ears, O Commander of the Faithful, was an asker wont to beg of folk by night and live on their alms by day. Now when our father, who was an old man well stricken in years, sickened and died, he left us seven hundred dirhams, whereof each son took his hundred; but, as my fifth brother received his portion, he was perplexed and knew not what to do with it. While in this uncertainty he bethought him to lay it out on glassware of all sorts and turn an honest penny on its price. So he bought an hundred dirhams worth of verroterie and, putting it into a big tray, sat down to sell it on a bench at the foot of a wall against which he leant back.

As he sat with the tray before him he fell to musing and said to himself, "Know, O my good Self, that the head of my wealth, my principal invested in this glassware, is an hundred dirhams. I will assuredly sell it for two hundred, with which I will forthright buy other glass and make by it four hundred; nor will I cease to sell and buy on this wise till I have gotten four thousand, and soon find myself the master of much money. With these coins I will buy merchandise and jewels and ottars and gain great profit on them; till, Allah willing, I will make my capital an hundred thousand dirhams. Then I will purchase a fine house with white slaves and eunuchs and horses; and I will eat and drink and disport myself; nor will I leave a singing man or

a singing woman in the city, but I will summon them to my palace and make them perform before me."

All this he counted over in his mind, while the tray of glassware, worth an hundred dirhams, stood on the bench before him, and, after looking at it, he continued, "And when, Inshallah! my capital shall have become one hundred thousand dinars, I will send out marriage-brokeresses to require for me in wedlock the daughters of Kings and Wazirs; and I will demand to wife the eldest daughter of the Prime Minister; for it hath reached me that she is perfect in beauty and prime in loveliness and rare in accomplishments. I will give a marriage-settlement of one thousand dinars; and, if her father consent, well; but, if not, I will take her by force from under his very nose. When she is safely homed in my house, I will buy ten little eunuchs, and for myself a robe of the robes of Kings and Sultans; and get me a saddle of gold and a bridle set thick with gems of price. Then I will mount with the Mamelukes preceding and surrounding me, and I will make the round of the city, whilst the folk salute me and bless me; after which I will repair to the Wazir (he that is father of the girl) with armed white slaves before and behind me and on my right and on my left. When he sees me, the Wazir stands up, and seating me in his own place sits down much below me; for that I am to be his son-in-law.

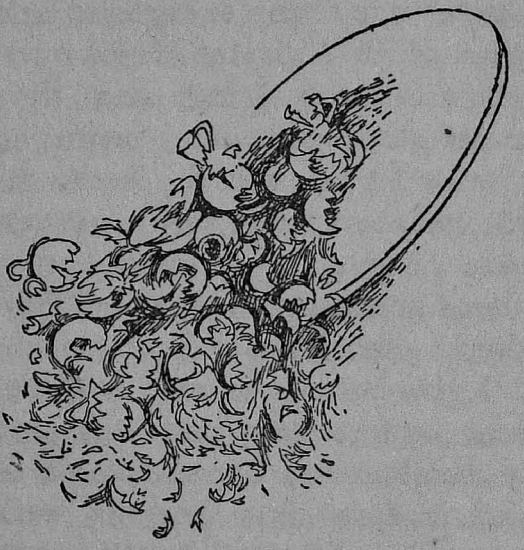
Now I have with me two eunuchs carrying purses, each containing a thousand dinars; and of these I deliver to him the thousand, his daughter's marriage-settlement, and make him a free gift of the other thousand, that he may have reason to know my generosity and liberality and my greatness of spirit and the littleness of the world in my eyes. And for ten words he addresses to me I answer him two. Then back I go to my house, and if one come to me on the bride's part, I make him a present of money and throw on him a dress of honour; but if he bring me a gift, I give it back to him and refuse to accept it, that they may learn what a proud spirit is mine which never condescends to derogate. Thus I establish my rank and status. When this is done I appoint her wedding night and adorn my house showily! gloriously! And as the time for parading the bride is come, I don my finest attire and sit down on a mattress of gold brocade, propping up my elbow with a pillow, and turning neither to the right nor to the left; but looking only straight in front for the haughtiness

of my mind and the gravity of my understanding. And there before me stands my wife in her raiment and ornaments, lovely as the full moon; and I, in my loftiness and dread lordliness, will not glance at her till those present say to me, "O our lord and our master, thy wife, thy handmaid, standeth before thee; vouchsafe her one look, for standing wearieth her." Then they kiss the ground before me many times; whereupon I raise my eyes and cast at her one single glance and turn my face earthwards again. Then they bear her off to the bride-chamber, and I arise and change my clothes for a far finer suit; and, when they bring in the bride a second time, I deign not to throw her a look till they have begged me many times; after which I glance at her out of the corner of one eye, and then bend down my head. I continue acting after this fashion till the parading and displaying are completed.

Thereupon I order one of my eunuchs to bring me a bag of five hundred dinars which I give as largesse to the tirewomen present and bid them one and all lead me to the bride-chamber. When they leave me alone with her I neither look at her nor speak to her, but lie by her side with my face to the wall, showing my contempt, that each and every may again remark how high and haughty I am. Presently her mother comes in to me; and, kissing my head and hand, says to me, "O my lord, look upon thine handmaid who longs for thy favour; so heal her broken spirit!" I give her no answer; and when she sees this she rises and busses my feet many times and says, "O my lord, in very sooth my daughter is a beautiful maid, who hath never known man; and if thou show her this backwardness and aversion, her heart will break; so do thou incline to her and speak to her and soothe her mind and spirit." Then she rises and fetches a cup of wine; and says to her daughter, "Take it and hand it to thy lord." But as she approaches me I leave her standing between my hands and sit, propping my elbow on a round cushion purfled with gold thread, leaning lazily back, and without looking at her in the majesty of my spirit, so that she may deem me indeed a Sultan and a mighty man. Then she says to me, "O my lord, Allah upon thee, do not refuse to take the cup from the hand of thine handmaid, for verily I am thy bondswoman." But I do not speak to her and she presses me, saying, "There is no help but that thou drink it"; and she puts it to

my lips. Then I shake my fist in her face and kick her with my foot—thus."

So he let out with his toe and knocked over the tray of glassware, which fell to the ground, and, falling from the bench, all that was on it was broken to bits.



THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS SIXTH BROTHER

MY sixth brother, O Commander of the Faithful, Shakashik, or Many-clamours, the shorn of both lips, was once rich and became poor; so one day he went out to beg somewhat to keep life in him. As he was on the road he suddenly caught sight of a large and handsome mansion, with a detached building wide and lofty at the entrance, where sat sundry eunuchs bidding and forbidding. My brother inquired of one of those idling there and he replied, "The palace belongs to a scion of the Barmaki house"; so he stepped up to the doorkeepers and asked an alms of them. "Enter," said they, "by the great gate and thou shalt get what thou seekest from the Wazir our master." Accordingly, he went in and, passing through the outer entrance, walked on a while and presently came to a mansion of the utmost beauty and elegance, paved with marble, hung with curtains and having in the midst of it a flower garden whose like he had never seen. My brother stood as one bewildered, not knowing whither to turn his steps; then, seeing the farther end of the sitting-chamber tenanted, he walked up to

it, and there found a man of handsome presence and comely beard.

When this personage saw my brother he stood up to him and welcomed him and asked him of his case ; whereto he replied that he was in want and needed charity. Hearing these words the grandee showed great concern and, putting his hand to his fine robe, rent it, exclaiming, " What ! Am I in a city, and thou here an-hungered ? I have not patience to bear such disgrace ! " Then he promised him all manner of good cheer and said, " There is no help but that thou stay with me and eat of my salt." " O my lord," answered my brother, " I can wait no longer ; for I am indeed dying of hunger." So he cried, " Ho, boy ! bring basin and ewer ! " ; and, turning to my brother, said, " O my guest, come forward and wash thy hands." My brother rose to do so, but he saw neither ewer nor basin ; yet his host kept washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water and cried, " Bring the table ! " But my brother again saw nothing. Then said the host, " Honour me by eating of this meat and be not ashamed." And he kept moving his hand to and fro as if he ate and saying to my brother, " I wonder to see thee eating thus sparely ; do not stint thyself for I am sure thou art famished."

So my brother began to make as though he were eating, whilst his host kept saying to him, " Fall to, and note especially the excellence of this bread and its whiteness ! " But still my brother saw nothing. Then said he to himself, " This man is fond of poking fun at people " ; and replied, " O my lord, in all my days I never knew aught more winsome than its whiteness or sweeter than its savour." The Barmecide said, " This bread was baked by a handmaid of mine whom I bought for five hundred dinars." Then he called out, " Ho, boy ! bring in the meat pudding for our first dish, and let there be plenty of fat in it " ; and, turning to my brother said, " O my guest, Allah upon thee, hast ever seen anything better than this meat pudding ? Now, by my life, eat and be not abashed." Presently he cried out again, " Ho, boy ! serve up the marinated stew with the fatted sand-grouse in it " ; and he said to my brother, " Up and eat, O my guest, for truly thou art hungry and needest food." So my brother began wagging his jaws and made as if champing and chewing, whilst the host continued calling for one dish after

another and yet produced nothing save orders to eat. Presently he cried out, "Ho, boy! bring us the chickens stuffed with pistachio nuts"; and said to my brother, "By thy life, O my guest, I have fattened these chickens upon pistachios; eat, for thou hast never eaten their like." "O my lord," replied my brother, "they are indeed first rate." Then the host began motioning with his hand as though he were giving my brother a mouthful; and ceased not to enumerate and expatiate upon the various dishes to the hungry man whose hunger waxt still more violent, so that his soul lusted after a bit of bread, even a barley scone.

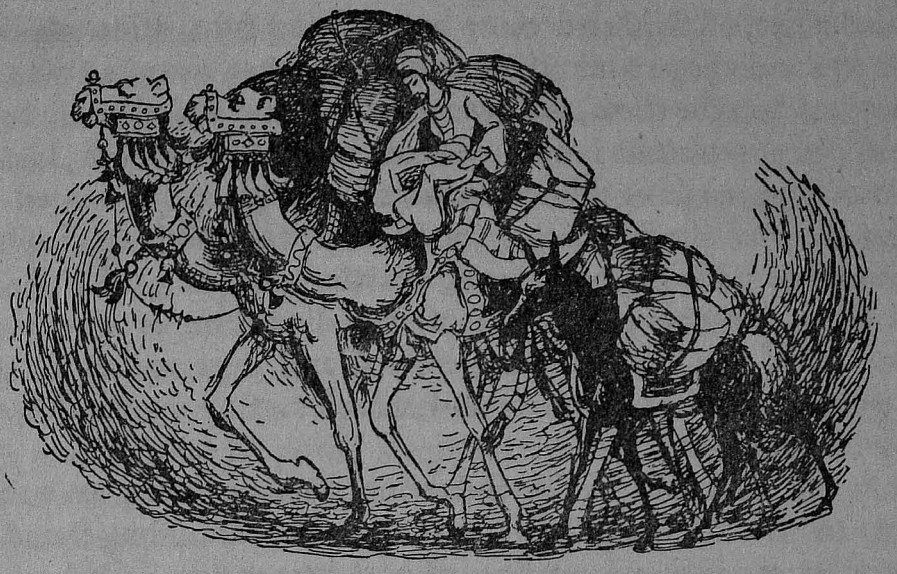
Quoth the Barmecide, "Didst thou ever taste anything more delicious than the seasoning of these dishes?"; and quoth my brother, "Never, O my lord!" "Eat heartily and be not ashamed," said the host; and the guest, "I have eaten my fill of meat." So the entertainer cried, "Take away and bring in the sweets; and, turning to my brother, said, "Eat of this almond conserve, for it is prime, and of these honey fritters; take this one, by my life, the syrup runs out of it." "May I never be bereaved of thee, O my lord," replied the hungry one, and began to ask him about the abundance of musk in the fritters. "Such is my custom," he answered; "they put me a dinar-weight of musk in every honey fritter and half that quantity of ambergris." All this time my brother kept wagging head and jaws till the master cried, "Enough of this. Bring us the dessert!" Then said he to him, "Eat of these almonds and walnuts and raisins; and of this and that"—naming divers kinds of dried fruits—"and be not abashed." But my brother replied, "O my lord, indeed I am full; I can eat no more." "O my guest," repeated the host, "if thou have a mind to these good things, eat. Allah! Allah! do not remain hungry"; but my brother rejoined, "O my lord, he who hath eaten of all these dishes, how can he be hungry?" Then he considered, and said to himself, "I will do that shall make him repent of these pranks."

Presently the entertainer called out, "Bring me the wine"; and, moving his hands in the air, as though they had set it before him, he gave my brother a cup and said, "Take this cup and, if it please thee, let me know." "O my lord," he replied, "it is notable good as to nose, but I am wont to drink wine some

twenty years old." "Knock then at this door," [1] quoth the host, "for thou canst not drink of aught better." "By thy kindness," said my brother, motioning with his hand as though he were drinking. "Health and joy to thee," exclaimed the house-master, and feigned to fill a cup and drink it off; then he handed another to my brother, who quaffed it and made as if he were drunken. Presently he took his host unawares and, raising his arm till the white of his armpit appeared, dealt him such a cuff on the nape of his neck that the palace echoed to it. Then he came down upon him with a second cuff and the entertainer cried aloud, "What is this, O thou scum of the earth?" "O my lord," replied my brother, "thou hast shown much kindness to thy slave, and admitted him into thine abode and given him to eat of thy victual; then thou madest him drink of thine old wine till he became drunken and boisterous; but thou art too noble not to bear with his ignorance and pardon his offence."

When the Barmaki heard my brother's words he laughed his loudest and said, "Long have I been wont to make mock of men and play the madcap among my intimates, but never yet have I come across a single one who had the patience and the wit to enter into all my humours save thyself; so I forgive thee, and thou shalt be my boon companion in very sooth and never leave me." Then he ordered the servants to lay the table in earnest and they set on all the dishes of which he had spoken in sport; and he and my brother ate till they were satisfied; after which they removed to the drinking-chamber, where they found damsels like moons who sang all manner of songs and played on all manner of instruments. There they remained drinking till their wine got the better of them and the host treated my brother like a familiar friend, so that he became, as it were, his brother, and bestowed on him a robe of honour and loved him with exceeding love. Next morning the two fell again to feasting and carousing, and ceased not to lead this life for a term of twenty years.

[1] *I.e.* "This is the very thing for thee."



TALE OF GHANIM BIN AYYUB, THE DISTRAUGHT, THE THRALL O' LOVE

IT hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore, and in years and ages long gone before, there lived in Damascus a merchant among the merchants, a wealthy man who had a son like the moon on the night of his fullness and withal sweet of speech, who was named Ghanim bin Ayyub, surnamed the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love. He had also a daughter, own sister to Ghanim, who was called Fitnah, a damsel unique in beauty and loveliness. Their father died and left them abundant wealth, and amongst other things an hundred loads [1] of silks and brocades, musk-pods and mother o' pearl; and there was written on every bale, "This is of the packages intended for Baghdad," it having been his purpose to make the journey hither, when Almighty Allah took him to Himself, which was in the time of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid.

After a while his son took the loads and, bidding farewell to his mother and kindred and townsfolk, went forth with a company of merchants, putting his trust in Allah Almighty, who decreed him safety, so that he arrived without let or stay at Baghdad. There he hired for himself a fair dwelling-house which he furnished with carpets and cushions, curtains and hangings; and therein stored his bales and stabled his mules and camels, after which he abode a while resting. Presently the merchants

[1] *I.e.* camel-loads about 300 lb.; and for long journeys 250 lb.

and notables of Baghdad came and saluted him, after which he took a bundle containing ten pieces of costly stuffs, with the prices written on them, and carried it to the merchants' bazar, where they welcomed and saluted him and showed him all honour, and, making him dismount from his beast, seated him in the shop of the Syndic of the market, to whom he delivered the package. He opened it and, drawing out the pieces of stuff, sold them for him at a profit of two dinars on every dinar of prime cost. At this Ghanim rejoiced and kept selling his silks and stuffs one after another, and ceased not to do on this wise for a full year.

On the first day of the following year he went, as was his wont, to the Exchange which was in the bazar, but found the gate shut, and inquiring the reason was told, "One of the merchants is dead and all the others have gone to follow his bier. And why shouldst thou not win the meed of good deeds by walking with them?"[1] He replied, "Yes," and asked for the quarter where the funeral was taking place, and one directed him thereto. So he purified himself by the Wazu-ablution[2] and repaired with the other merchants to the oratory, where they prayed over the dead, then walked before the bier to the burial place; and Ghanim, who was a bashful man, followed them, being ashamed to leave them. They presently issued from the city and passed through the tombs until they reached the grave, where they found that the deceased's kith and kin had pitched a tent over the tomb and had brought thither lamps and wax candles. So they buried the body and sat down while the readers read out and recited the Koran over the grave; and Ghanim sat with them, being overcome with bashfulness, and saying to himself, "I cannot well go away till they do."

They tarried, listening to the Koranic perlection till nightfall, when the servants set supper and sweetmeats before them and they ate till they were satisfied; then they washed their hands and again took their places. But Ghanim's mind was preoccupied with his house and goods, being in fear of robbers, and he said to himself, "I am a stranger here and supposed to have money; if I pass the night abroad the thieves will steal my money-bags

[1] It is meritorious to accompany the funeral cortège of a Moslem even for a few paces.

[2] Otherwise he could not have joined in the prayers.

and my bales to boot." So, when he could no longer control his fear, he arose and left the assembly, having first asked leave to go about some urgent business; and following the signs of the road he soon came to the city gate. But it was midnight, and he found the doors locked and saw none going or coming nor heard aught but the hounds baying and the wolves howling. At this he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! I was in fear for my property and came back on its account, but now I find the gate shut and I am in mortal fear for my life!" Then he turned back and, looking out for a place where he could sleep till morning, presently found a Santon's tomb, a square of four walls with a date tree in the central court and a granite gateway. The door was wide open; so he entered and would fain have slept, but sleep came not to him; and terror and a sense of desolation oppressed him, for that he was alone amidst the tombs. So he rose to his feet and, opening the door, looked out, and lo! he was ware of a light afar off in the direction of the city gate; then, walking a little way towards it, he saw that it was on the road whereby he had reached the tomb. This made him fear for his life, so he hastily shut the door and climbed to the top of the date tree, where he hid himself in the heart of the fronds. The light came nearer and nearer till it was close to the tomb; then it stopped, and he saw three slaves, two bearing a chest and one with a lanthorn, an adze and a basket containing some mortar.

When they reached the tomb, one of those who were carrying the case said, "What aileth thee, O Sawab?"; and said the other, "What is the matter, O Kafur?"[1] Quoth he, "Were we not here at supper-tide and did we not leave the door open?" "Yes," replied the other, "that is true." "See," said Kafur, "now it is shut and barred." "How weak are your wits!" cried the third who bore the adze, and his name was Bukhayt, "know ye not that the owners of the gardens used to come out from Baghdad and tend them and, when evening closes upon them, they enter this place and shut the door, for fear lest the wicked black men, like ourselves, should catch them and roast 'em and eat 'em."[2] "Thou sayest sooth," said the two others,

[1] *I.e.* "Camphor" to a negro as we say "Snowball," by the figure antiphrase.

[2] There are, as I have shown, not a few cannibal tribes in Central Africa and these at times find their way into the slave-market.

"but, by Allah, however that may be, none amongst us is weaker of wits than thou." "If ye do not believe me," said Bukhayt, "let us enter the tomb and I will rouse the rat for you; for I doubt not but that, when he saw the light and us making for the place, he ran up the date tree and hid there for fear of us."

When Ghanim heard this, he said in himself, "O curstest of slaves! May Allah not have thee in His holy keeping for this thy craft and keenness of wit! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! How shall I win free of these blackamoors?" Then said the two who bore the box to him of the adze, "Swarm up the wall and open the gate for us, O Bukhayt, for we are tired of carrying the chest on our necks; and when thou hast opened the gate thou shalt have one of these we catch inside, a fine fat rat which we will fry for thee after such excellent fashion that not a speck of his fat shall be lost." But Bukhayt answered, "I am afraid of somewhat which my weak wits have suggested to me; we should do better to throw the chest over the gateway, for it is our treasure." "If we throw it 'twill break," replied they; and he said, "I fear lest there be robbers within who murder folk and plunder their goods, for evening is their time of entering such places and dividing their spoil." "O thou weak o' wits," said both the bearers of the box, "how could they ever get in here!"[1] Then they set down the chest, and climbing over the wall, dropped inside and opened the gate, whilst the third slave (he that was called Bukhayt) stood by them holding the adze, the lanthorn and the hand-basket containing the mortar. After this they locked the gate and sat down; and presently one of them said, "O my brethren, we are wearied with walking and with lifting up and setting down the chest, and with unlocking and locking the gate; and now 'tis midnight, and we have no breath left to open a tomb and bury the box; so let us rest here two or three hours, then rise and do the job.

"Meanwhile each of us shall tell how he came to be castrated and all that befell him from first to last, the better to pass away our time while we take our rest." Thereupon the first, he of the lanthorn and whose name was Bukhayt, said, "I'll tell you my tale." "Say on," replied they; so he began as follows the

[1] *I.e.* after we bar the door.

TALE OF THE FIRST EUNUCH, BUKHAYT

KNOW, O my brothers, that when I was a little one, some five years old, I was taken home from my native country by a slave-driver who sold me to a certain Apparitor. My purchaser had a daughter three years old, with whom I was brought up, and they used to make mock of me, letting me play with her and dance for her [1] and sing to her, till I reached the age of twelve and she that of ten; and even then they did not forbid me seeing her. One day I went in to her and found her sitting in an inner room, and she looked as if she had just come out of the bath

which was in the house; for she was scented with essences and reek of aromatic woods, and her face shone like the circle of the moon on the fourteenth night. She began to sport with me, and I with her. Now I had just reached the age of puberty; so my prickle stood at point, as it were a huge key. Then she threw me on my back and, mounting astraddle on my breast, fell a-wriggling and a-bucking me till she had uncovered my yard. When she saw it standing with head erect, she hent it in hand

[1] This familiarity with blackamoor slave-boys is common in Egypt and often ends as in the story; Egyptian blood is sufficiently mixed with negro to breed inclination for miscegenation. But here the girl was wickedly neglected by her mother at such an age as ten.

and began rubbing it upon the lips of her little slit outside her petticoat-trousers. Thereat hot lust stirred in me and I threw my arms round her, while she wound hers about my neck and hugged me to her with all her might, till, before I knew what I did, my pizzle split up her trousers and entered her slit and did away her maidenhead.

When I saw this, I ran off and took refuge with one of my comrades. Presently her mother came in to her; and, seeing her in this case, fainted clean away. However, she managed the matter advisedly and hid it from the girl's father out of good will to me; nor did they cease to call to me and coax me, till they took me from where I was. After two months had passed by, her mother married her to a young man, a barber who used to shave her papa, and portioned and fitted her out of her own monies; whilst the father knew nothing of what had passed. On the night of consummation they cut the throat of a pigeon poult and sprinkled the blood on her shift.[1] After a while they seized me unawares and gelded me; and, when they brought her to her bridegroom, they made me her Agha,[2] her eunuch, to walk before her wheresoever she went, whether to the bath or to her father's house. I abode with her a long time, enjoying her beauty and loveliness by way of kissing and clipping and coupling with her,[3] till she died, and her husband and mother and father died also, when they seized me for the Royal Treasury as being the property of an intestate, and I found my way hither, where I became your comrade. This, then, O my brethren, is the cause of my cullions being cut off; and peace be with you!

He ceased, and his fellow began in these words the

[1] This ancient and venerable practice of inspecting the marriage-sheet is still religiously preserved in most parts of the East; and in old-fashioned Moslem families it is publicly exposed in the Harim to prove that the "domestic calamity" (the daughter) went to her husband a clean maid. Also the general idea is that no blood will impose upon the experts, or jury of matrons, except that of a pigeon poult, which exactly resembles hymeneal blood—when not subjected to the microscope.

[2] "Agha" Turk.=sir, gentleman; is politely addressed to a eunuch.

[3] As Bukhayt tells us he lost only his testes, consequently his *erectio et distensio penis* was as that of a boy before puberty and it would last as long as his heart and circulation kept sound. Hence the eunuch who preserves his penis is much prized in the Zenanah where some women prefer him to the entire man on account of his long performance of the deed of kind.

TALE OF THE SECOND EUNUCH, KAFUR [1]

KNOW, O my brothers, that, when beginning service as a boy of eight, I used to tell the slave-dealers regularly and exactly one lie every year, so that they fell out with one another, till at last my master lost patience with me and, carrying me down to the market, ordered the brokers to cry, "Who will buy this slave, knowing his blemish and making allowance for it?" He did so, and they asked him, "Pray, what may be his blemish?" and he answered, "He telleth me one single lie every year." Now a man that was a merchant came up and said to the broker, "How much do they allow for him with his blemish?" "They allow six hundred dirhams," he replied; and said the other, "Thou shalt have twenty dirhams for thyself." So he arranged between him and the slave-dealer who took the coin from him and the broker carried me to the merchant's house and departed, after receiving his brokerage. The trader clothed me with suitable dress, and I stayed in his service the rest of my twelve-month, until the new year began happily.

It was a blessed season, plenteous in the produce of the earth, and the merchants used to feast every day at the house of some one among them, till it was my master's turn to entertain them in a flower garden without the city. So he and the other merchants went to the garden, taking with them all that they required of provaunt and else beside, and sat eating and carousing and drinking till mid-day, when my master, having need of some matter from his home, said to me, "O slave, mount the she-mule and hie thee to the house and bring from thy mistress such and such a thing and return quickly." I obeyed his bidding and started for the house but, as I drew near it, I began to cry out and shed tears, whereupon all the people of the quarter collected, great and small; and my master's wife and daughters, hearing the noise I was making, opened the door and asked me what was the matter. Said I, "My master was sitting with his friends beneath an old wall, and it fell on one and all of them; and when I saw what had happened to them, I mounted the mule and came nither in haste to tell you."

[1] The tale is interesting as well as amusing, excellently describing the extravagances still practised in middle-class Moslem families on the death of the pater familias.

When my master's daughters and wife heard this, they screamed and rent their raiment and beat their faces, whilst the neighbours came around them. Then the wife overturned the furniture of the house, one thing upon another, and tore down the shelves and broke the windows and the lattices and smeared the walls with mud and indigo, saying to me, "Woe to thee, O Kafur! come help me to tear down these cupboards and break up these vessels and this china-ware, and the rest of it." So I went to her and aided her to smash all the shelves in the house with whatever stood upon them, after which I went round about

the terrace roofs and every part of the place, spoiling all I could and leaving no china in the house unbroken, till I had laid waste the whole, crying out the while, "Well-away! my master!" Then my mistress fared forth bare faced wearing a headkerchief and naught else, and her daughters and the children sallied out with her, and said to me, "O Kafur, go thou before us and show us the place where thy master lieth dead, that we may take him from under the fallen wall and lay him on a bier and bear him to the house and give him a fine funeral."

So I went forth before them crying out, "Alack, my master!"; and they after me with faces and heads bare and all shrieking, "Alas! Alas for the man!" Now there remained none in the quarter, neither man nor woman, nor epicene, nor youth nor

maid, nor child nor old trot, but went with us smiting their faces and weeping bitterly and I led them leisurely through the whole city. The folk asked them what was the matter, whereupon they told them what they had heard from me, and all exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" Then said one of them, "He was a personage of consequence; so let us go to the Governor and tell him what hath befallen him." When they told the Governor, he rose and mounted and, taking with him labourers, with spades and baskets, went on my track, with many people behind him; and I ran on before them, howling and casting dust on my head and beating my face, followed by my mistress and her children keening for the dead. But I got ahead of them and entered the garden before them, and when my master saw me in this state, I smiting my face and saying, "Well-away! my mistress! Alas! Alas! Alas! Who is left to take pity on me, now that my mistress is gone? Would I had been a sacrifice for her!" he stood aghast and his colour waxed yellow and he said to me, "What aileth thee, O Kafur! What *is* the matter?"

"O my lord," I replied, "when thou sentest me to the house, I found that the saloon wall had given way and had fallen like a layer upon my mistress and her children!" "And did not thy mistress escape?" "No, by Allah, O my master; not one of them was saved; the first to die was my mistress, thine elder daughter!" "And did not my younger daughter escape?" "No, she did not!" "And what became of the mare-mule I used to ride? Is she safe?" "No, by Allah, O my master, the house walls and the stable walls buried every living thing that was within doors, even to the sheep and geese and poultry, so that they all became a heap of flesh, and the dogs and cats are eating them and not one of them is left alive." "And hath not thy master, my elder son, escaped?" "No, by Allah! not one of them was saved, and now there is naught left of house or household, nor even a sign of them; and, as for the sheep and geese and hens, the cats and dogs have devoured them."

When my master heard this the light became night before his sight; his wits were dazed and he so lost command of his senses that he could not stand firm on his feet; he was as one struck with a sudden palsy and his back was like to break. Then he rent his raiment and plucked out his beard and casting, his

turband from off his head, buffeted his face till the blood ran down and he cried aloud, "Alas, my children! Alas, my wife! Alas, my calamity! To whom ever befell that which hath befallen me?" The merchants, his friends, also cried aloud at his crying and wept for his weeping and tore their clothes, being moved to pity of his case; and so my master went out of the garden, smiting his face with such violence that from excess of pain he staggered like one drunken with wine. As he and the merchants came forth from the garden gate, behold, they saw a great cloud of dust and heard a loud noise of crying and lamentation; so they looked, and lo! it was the Governor with his attendants and the townsfolk, a world of people, who had come out to look on, and my master's family following them, all screaming and crying aloud and weeping exceeding sore weeping.

The first to address my owner were his wife and children; and when he saw them he was confounded and laughed[1] and said to them, "How is it with all of you and what befell you in the house and what hath come to pass to you?" When they saw him they exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah for thy preservation!" and threw themselves upon him and his children hung about him crying, "Alack, our father! Thanks to Allah for thy safety, O our father!" And his wife said to him, "Art thou indeed well? Laud to Allah who hath shown us thy face in safety!" And, indeed, she was confounded and her reason fled when she saw him, and she asked, "O, my lord, how didst thou escape, thou and thy friends the merchants?"; and he answered her, "And how fared it with thee in the house?" Quoth they, "We were all well, whole and healthy, nor hath aught of evil befallen us in the house, save that thy slave Kafur came to us, bareheaded, with torn garments, and howling, 'Alas, the master! Alas, the master!' So we asked him, 'What tidings, O Kafur?' and he answered, 'A wall of the garden hath fallen on my master and his friends the merchants, and they are all crushed and dead!'" "By Allah," said my master, "he came to me but now, howling, 'Alas, my mistress! Alas, the children of the mistress!' and said, 'My mistress and her children are all dead, every one of them!'"

Then he looked round, and seeing me with my turband rent

[1]The usual hysterical laughter of this nervous race.

in rags round my neck, howling and weeping with exceeding weeping and throwing dust upon my head, he cried out at me. So I came to him and he said, "Woe to thee, O ill-omened slave! O whoreson knave! O thou damned breed! What mischief hast thou wrought? By Allah! I will flog thy skin from thy flesh and cut thy flesh from thy bones!" I rejoined, "By Allah, thou canst do nothing of the kind with me, O my lord, for thou boughtest me with my blemish; and there are honest men to bear witness against thee that thou didst so accepting the condition, and that thou knewest of my fault, which is to tell one lie every year. Now this is only a half-lie, but by the end of the year I will tell the other half, then will the lie stand whole and complete." "O dog, son of a dog!" cried my master, "O most accursed of slaves, is this all of it but a half-lie? Verily, if it be a half-lie 'tis a whole calamity! Get thee from me, thou art free in the face of Allah!" "By Allah," rejoined I, "if thou free me, I will not free thee till my year is completed and I have told thee the half-lie which is left. When this is done, go down with me to the slave-market and sell me as thou boughtest me to whoso will buy me with my blemish; but thou shalt not manumit me, for I have no handicraft whereby to gain my living;[1] and this my demand is a matter of law which the doctors have laid down in the Chapter of Emancipation."

While we were at these words, up came the crowd of people, and the neighbours of the quarter, men, women and children, together with the Governor and his suite, offering condolence. So my master and the other merchants went up to him and informed him of the adventure, and how this was but a half-lie, at which all wondered, deeming it a whole lie and a big one. And they cursed me and reviled me, while I stood laughing and grinning at them, till at last I asked, "How shall my master slay me when he bought me with this blemish?" Then my master returned home and found his house in ruins, and it was I who had laid waste the greater part of it,[2] having broken things which were worth much money, as also had done his wife, who said to him, "'Twas Kafur who broke the vessels and chinaware."

[1] Here the slave refuses to be set free and starve. For a master to do so without ample reason is held disgraceful.

[2] This is quite true to nature. The most remarkable thing in the wild Central African is his enormous development of "destructiveness." At Zanzibar I never saw a slave break a glass or plate without a grin or a chuckle of satisfaction.

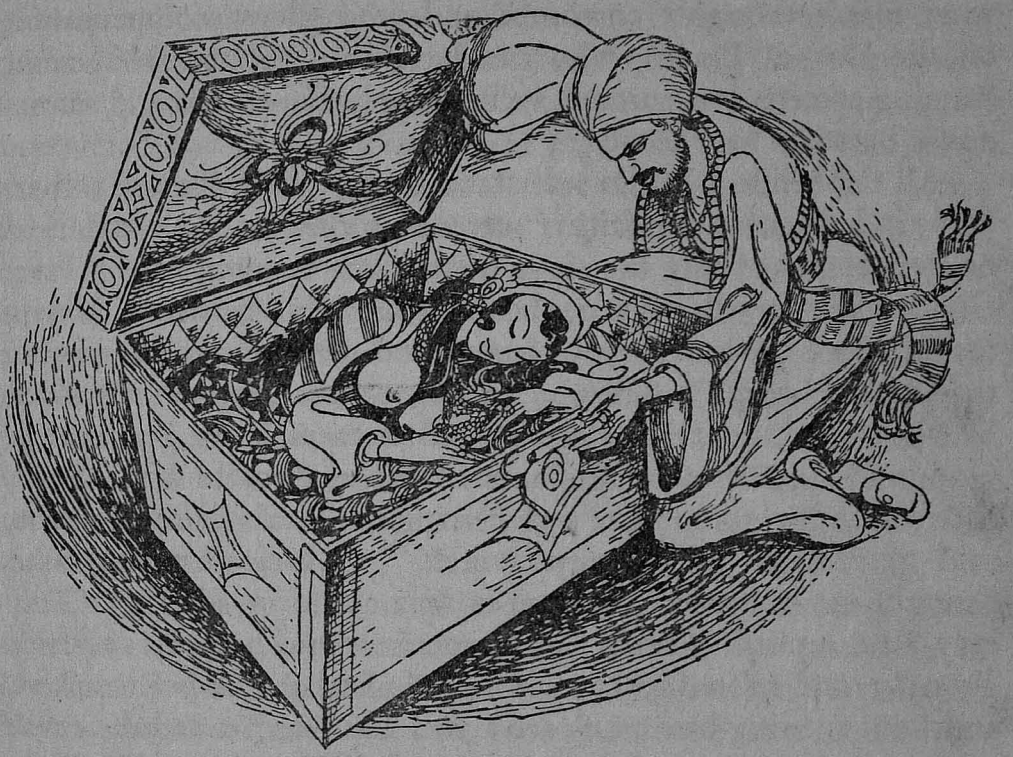
Thereupon his rage redoubled and he struck hand upon hand, explaining, "By Allah! in my life never saw I a whoreson like this slave; and he saith this is but a half-lie! How, then, if he had told me a whole lie? He would ruin a city, aye, or even two." Then in his fury he went to the Governor, and they gave me a neat thing in the bastinado line and made me eat stick till I was lost to the world and a fainting fit came on me; and, whilst I was yet senseless, they brought the barber who docked me and gelded me and cauterised the wound.

When I revived I found myself a clean eunuch with nothing left, and my master said to me, "Even as thou hast burned my heart for the things I held dearest, so have I burnt thy heart for that of thy members whereby thou settest most store!" Then he took me and sold me at a profit, for that I was become an eunuch. And I ceased not bringing trouble upon all, wherever I was sold, and was shifted from lord to lord and from notable to notable, being sold and being bought, till I entered the palace of the Commander of the Faithful. But now my spirit is broken and my tricks are gone from me, so—alas!—are my ballocks.

When the two slaves heard his history, they laughed at him and chaffed him and said, "Truly thou art skite and skite-son! Thou liedest an odious lie." Then quoth they to the third slave, "Tell us thy tale." "O sons of my uncle," quoth he, "all that ye have said is idle; I will tell you the cause of my losing my testicles, and indeed I deserved to lose even more, for I futtered both my mistress and my master's eldest son and heir; but my story is a long one and this is not the time to tell it; for the dawn, O my cousins, draweth near and if morning come upon us with this chest still unburied, we shall get into sore disgrace and our lives will pay for it. So up with you and open the door and, when we get back to the palace, I will tell you my story and the cause of my losing my precious stones."

Then he swarmed up and dropped down from the wall inside and opened the door, so they entered and, setting down the lantern, dug between four tombs a hole as long as the chest and of the same breadth. Kafur plied the spade and Sawab removed the earth by baskets-full till they reached the depth of the stature of a man, when they laid the chest in the hole and threw back the earth over it; then they went forth and, shutting the door, disappeared from Ghanim's eyes. When all was quiet and he

felt sure that he was left alone in the place, his thought was busied about what the chest contained, and he said to himself, "Would that I knew the contents of that box!" However, he waited till day broke, when morning shone and showed her sheen; whereupon he came down from the date tree and scooped away the earth with his hands, till the box was laid bare and disengaged from the ground. Then he took a large stone and hammered at the lock till he broke it and, opening the lid, beheld a young lady, a model of beauty and loveliness, clad in the richest



of garments and jewels of gold and such necklaces of precious stones that, were the Sultan's country evened with them, it would not pay their price. She had been drugged with Bhang, but her bosom, rising and falling, showed that her breath had not departed.

When Ghanim saw her, he knew that some one had played her false and hocussed her; so he pulled her out of the chest and laid her on the ground with her face upwards. As soon as she smelt the breeze, and the air entered her nostrils, mouth and lungs, she sneezed and choked and coughed, when there fell from out her throat a pill of Cretan Bhang; had an elephant smelt

it, it would have slept from night to night. Then she opened her eyes and glancing around said, in sweet voice and gracious words, "Woe to thee, O wind! there is naught in thee to satisfy the thirsty, nor aught to gratify one whose thirst is satisfied! Where is Zahr al-Bostan?" But no one answered her, so she turned her and cried out, "Ho, Sabibah! Shajarat al-Durr! Nur al-Huda! Najmat al-Subh! be ye awake? Shahwah, Nuzhah, Halwa, Zarifah, out on you, speak!" But no one answered her, so she looked all around and said, "Woe's me! have they entombed me in the tombs? O thou who knowest what man's thoughts enwombs and who givest compensation on the Day of Doom, who can have brought me from amid hanging screens and curtains veiling the harim-rooms and set me down between four tombs?"

All this while Ghanim was standing by: then he said to her, "O my lady, here are neither screened rooms nor palace harims nor yet tombs; only the slave henceforth devoted to thy love, Ghanim bin Ayyub, sent to thee by the Omniscient One above, that all thy troubles He may remove and win for thee every wish that doth behove!" Then he held his peace. She was reassured by his words and cried, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!"; then she turned to Ghanim and, placing her hands before her face, said to him in the sweetest speech, "O blessed youth, who brought me hither? See, I am now come to myself." "O my lady," he replied, "three slave-eunuchs came here bearing this chest"; and related to her the whole of what had befallen him, and how evening having closed upon him had proved the cause of her preservation, otherwise she had died smothered.[1] Then he asked her who she was and what was her story, and she answered, "O youth, thanks be to Allah who hath cast me into the hands of the like of thee! But now rise and put me back into the box; then fare forth upon the road and hire the first camel-driver or muleteer thou findest to carry it to thy house. When I am there, all will be well and I will tell thee my tale and acquaint thee with my adventures, and great shall be thy gain by means of me."

At this he rejoiced and went outside the tomb. The day was

[1] This mode of disposing of a rival was very common in harims. But it had its difficulties and the river was (and is) preferred.

now dazzling bright and the firmament shone with light and the folk had begun to circulate; so he hired a man with a mule and, bringing him to the tomb, lifted the chest wherein he had put the damsel and set it on the mule. Her love now engrossed his heart and he fared homeward with her rejoicing, for that she was a girl worth ten thousand gold pieces and her raiment and ornaments would fetch a mint of money. As soon as he arrived at his house he carried in the chest and opened it and took out the young lady, who looked about her and, seeing that the place was handsome, spread with carpets and dight with cheerful colours and other deckings, and noting the stuffs up-piled and packed bales and other else than that, knew that he was a substantial merchant and a man of much money. Thereupon she uncovered her face and looked at him, and lo! he was a fair youth; so when she saw him she loved him and said, "O my lord, bring us something to eat." "On my head and mine eyes!" replied he; and, going down to the bazar, bought a roasted lamb and a dish of sweetmeats, and with these dry fruits and wax candles, besides wine and whatsoever was required of drinking-materials, not forgetting perfumes. With all this gear he returned to the house; and when the damsel saw him she laughed and kissed him and clasped his neck. Then she began caressing him, which made his love wax hotter till it got the mastery of his heart.

They ate and drank and each had conceived the fondest affection; for indeed the two were one in age and one in loveliness; and when night came on Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, rose and lit the wax candles and lamps till the place blazed with light; after which he produced the wine service and spread the table. Then both sat down again, he and she, and he kept filling and giving her to drink, and she kept filling and giving him to drink, and they played and toyed and laughed and recited verses; whilst their joy increased and they clove in closer love each to each (glory be to the Uniter of Hearts!). They ceased not to carouse after this fashion till near upon dawn when drowsiness overcame them and they slept where they were, apart each from other, till the morning.[1] Then Ghanim arose, and going to the market bought all they

[1] He did not sleep with her because he suspected some palace mystery which suggested prudence; she also had her reasons.

required of meat and vegetables and wine and what not, and brought them to the house; whereupon both sat down to eat and ate their sufficiency, when he set on wine. They drank, and each played with each, till their cheeks flushed red and their eyes took a darker hue and Ghanim's soul longed to kiss the girl and to lie with her and he said, "O my lady, grant me one kiss of that dear mouth: perchance 'twill quench the fire of my heart." "O Ghanim," replied she, "wait till I am drunk and dead to the world; then steal a kiss of me, secretly and on such wise that I may not know thou hast kissed me." Then she rose, and taking off her upper dress sat in a thin shift of fine linen and a silken headkerchief.

At this, passion inflamed Ghanim and he said to her, "O my lady, wilt thou not vouchsafe me what I asked of thee?" "By Allah," she replied, "that may not be thine, for there is written upon my trouser-string a hard word!" Thereupon Ghanim's heart sank and desire grew on him as its object offered difficulties. Then his affection increased and love fires rose hotter in his heart, while she refused herself to him, saying, "Thou canst not possess me." They ceased not to make love and enjoy their wine and wassail, whilst Ghanim was drowned in the sea of love and longing; but she redoubled in coyness and cruelty till the night brought on the darkness and let fall on them the skirts of sleep.

Thereupon Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and wax candles and refreshed the room and removed the table; then he took, her feet and kissed them and, finding them like fresh cream, pressed his face on them[1] and said to her, "O my lady, take pity on one thy love hath ta'en and thine eyes hath slain; for indeed I were heart-whole but for thy bane!" And he wept somewhat. "O my lord, and light of my eyes," quoth she, "by Allah, I love thee in very sooth and I trust to thy truth, but I know that I may not be thine." "And what is the obstacle?" asked he; when she answered, "To-night I will tell thee my tale, that thou mayst accept my excuse." Then she threw herself upon him and, winding her arms like a necklace about his neck, kissed him and caressed him and promised him her favours; and they ceased not playing and laughing till love

[1] Like a fawning dog Ghanim is a "softy" lover, a favourite character in Arab tales; and by contrast the girl is masterful enough.

gat the firmest hold upon both their hearts. And so it continued a whole month, both passing the night on a single carpet-bed, but whenever he would enjoy her, she put him off; whilst mutual love increased upon them and each could hardly abstain from other.

One night, as he lay by her side, and both were warm with wine, Ghanim passed his hand over her breasts and stroked them; then he slipped it down to her waist as far as her navel. She awoke and, sitting up, put her hand to her trousers, and finding them fast tied once more fell asleep. Presently, he again felt her, and sliding his hand down to her trouser-string, began pulling at it, whereupon she awoke and sat upright. Ghanim also sat up by her side and she asked him, "What dost thou want?" "I want to lie with thee," he answered, "and that we may deal openly and frankly with each other." Quoth she, "I must now declare to thee my case, that thou mayst know my quality; then will my secret be disclosed to thee and my excuse become manifest to thee." Quoth he, "So be it!" Thereat she opened the skirt of her shift and, taking up her trouser-string,[1] said to him, "O my lord, read what is worked on the flat of this string"; so he took it in hand, and saw these words broidered on it in gold, "I Am Thine, and Thou Art Mine, O Cousin of the Apostle!"[2] When he read this, he withdrew his hand and said to her, "Tell me who thou art!"

"So be it," answered she; "know that I am one of the concubines of the Commander of the Faithful, and my name is Kut al-Kulub—the Food of Hearts. I was brought up in his palace and, when I grew to woman's estate, he looked on me and, noting what share of beauty and loveliness the Creator had given me, loved me with exceeding love, and assigned me a separate apartment, and gave me ten slave-girls to wait on me and all these ornaments thou seest me wearing. On a certain day he set out for one of his provinces, and the Lady Zubaydah came to one of the slave-girls in my service and said to her, 'I have something to require of thee.' 'What is it, O my lady?' asked she, and the Caliph's wife answered, 'When thy mistress,

[1] It would be a broad, ribbon-like band, on which the letters could be worked.

[2] Because the Abbaside Caliphs descend from Al-Abbas, paternal uncle of Mohammed. The text means more explicitly, "O descendant of the Prophet's uncle."

Kut al-Kulub, is asleep, put this piece of Bhang into her nostrils or drop it into her drink, and thou shalt have of me as much money as will satisfy thee.' 'With love and gladness,' replied the girl, and took the Bhang from her, being a glad woman because of the money and because aforetime she had been one of Zubaydah's slaves. So she put the Bhang in my drink, and when it was night I drank, and the drug had no sooner settled in my stomach than I fell to the ground, my head touching my feet, and knew naught of my life but that I was in another world. When her device succeeded, she bade put me in this chest, and secretly brought in the slaves and the doorkeepers and bribed them; and, on the night when thou wast perched upon the date tree, she sent the blacks to do with me as thou sawest. So my delivery was at thy hands, and thou broughtest me to this house and hast entreated me honourably and with thy kindest. This is my story, and I wot not what is become of the Caliph during my absence. Know then my condition and divulge not my case."

When Ghanim heard her words and knew that she was a concubine of the Caliph, he drew back, for awe of the Caliphate beset him, and sat apart from her in one of the corners of the place, blaming himself and brooding over his affair and patiencing his heart, bewildered for love of one he could not possess. Then he wept for excess of longing, and plained him of Fortune and her injuries, and the world and its enmities (and praise be to Him who causeth generous hearts to be troubled with love and the beloved, and who endoweth not the minds of the mean and miserly with so much of it as eveneth a grain-weight!).

Thereupon, Kut al-Kulub arose and took him to her bosom and kissed him; for the love of him was firm fixed in her heart, so that she disclosed to him her secret and all the affection she felt; and, throwing her arms round Ghanim's neck like a collar of pearls, kissed him again and yet again. But he held off from her in awe of the Caliph. Then they talked together a long while (and indeed both were drowned in the sea of their mutual love); and, as the day broke, Ghanim rose and donned his clothes and, going to the bazar, as was his wont, took what the occasion required and returned home. He found her weeping; but when she saw him she checked herself and, smiling through her tears, said, "Thou hast desolated me, O beloved of my

heart. By Allah, this hour of absence hath been to me like a year! I have explained to thee my condition in the excess of my eager love for thee; so come now near me, and forget the past and have thy will of me." But he interrupted her, crying, "I seek refuge with Allah! This thing may never be. How shall the dog sit in the lion's stead? What is the lord's is unlawful to the slave!" So he withdrew from her, and sat down on a corner of the mat. Her passion for him increased with his forbearance; so she seated herself by his side and caroused and played with him, till the two were flushed with wine and she was mad for her own dishonour.

Thereupon, Ghanim wept, and she wept at his weeping, and they ceased not drinking till nightfall, when he rose and spread two beds, each in its place. "For whom is this second bed?" asked she, and he answered her, "One is for me and the other is for thee; from this night forth we must not sleep save thus, for that which is the lord's is unlawful to the thrall." "O my master!" cried she, "let us have done with this, for all things come to pass by Fate and Fortune." But he refused, and the fire was lighted in her heart and, as her longing waxed fiercer, she clung to him and cried, "By Allah, we will not sleep save side by side!" "Allah forfend!" he replied, and prevailed against her and lay apart till the morning, when love and longing redoubled on her and distraction and eager thirst of passion. They abode after this fashion three full-told months, which were long and longsome indeed, and every time she made advances to him, he would refuse himself and say, "Whatever belongeth to the master is unlawful to the man."

They abode in this state a long time, and fear kept Ghanim aloof from her.

So far concerning these two; but as regards the Lady Zubaydah, when, in the Caliph's absence, she had done this deed by Kut al-Kulub she became perplexed, saying to herself, "What shall I tell my cousin when he comes back and asks for her? What possible answer can I make to him?" Then she called an old woman, who was about her and discovered her secret, to her saying, "How shall I act, seeing that Kut al-Kulub died by such untimely death?" "O my lady," quoth the old crone, "the time of the Caliph's return is near; so do thou send for a carpenter and bid him make thee a figure of wood in

the form of a corpse. We will dig a grave for it midmost the palace, and there bury it; then do thou build an oratory over it and set therein lighted candles and lamps, and order each and every in the palace to be clad in black. Furthermore, command thy handmaids and eunuchs, as soon as they know of the Caliph's returning from his journey, to spread straw over the vestibule floors and, when the Commander of the Faithful enters and asks what is the matter, let them say: Kut al-Kulub is dead, and may Allah abundantly compensate thee for the loss of her!;[1] and, for the high esteem in which she was held of our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace. When he hears this he will weep and it shall be grievous to him; then will he cause perlections of the Koran to be made for her and he will watch by night at her tomb. Should he say to himself: Verily, Zubaydah, the daughter of my uncle, hath compassed in her jealousy the death of Kut al-Kulub; or, if love-longing overcome him and he bid her be taken out of her tomb, fear thou not; for when they dig down and come to the image in human shape he will see it shrouded in costly grave-clothes; and, if he wish to take off the winding-sheet that he may look upon her, do thou forbid him or let some other forbid him, saying: The sight of her nakedness is unlawful. The fear of the world to come will restrain him and he will believe that she is dead and will restore the figure to its place and thank thee for thy doings; and thus thou shalt escape, please Almighty Allah, from this slough of despond."

When the Lady Zubaydah heard her words, she commended the counsel and gave her a dress of honour and a large sum of money, ordering her to do all she had said. So the old woman set about the business forthright and bade the carpenter make her the aforesaid image; and, as soon as it was finished, she brought it to the Lady Zubaydah, who shrouded it and buried it and built a sepulchre over it, wherein they lighted candles and lamps, and laid down carpets about the tomb. Moreover, she put on black, and she spread abroad in the harim that Kut al-Kulub was dead. After a time the Caliph returned from his journey and went up to the palace, thinking only of Kut al-Kulub. He saw all the pages and eunuchs and handmaids habited in black, at which his heart fluttered with extreme fear; and, when he went in to the Lady Zubaydah, he found her also garbed in

[1] Koran, Chapter IV. In the East, as elsewhere, the Devil quotes scripture.

black. So he asked the cause of this and they gave him tidings of the death of Kut al-Kulub, whereon he fell a-swooning. As soon as he came to himself, he asked for her tomb, and the Lady Zubaydah said to him, "Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that for especial honour I have buried her in my own palace." Then he repaired in his travelling-garb to the tomb that he might wail over her, and found the carpets spread and the candles and lamps lighted.

When he saw this, he thanked Zubaydah for her good deed, and abode perplexed, halting between belief and unbelief, till at last suspicion overcame him and he gave order to open the grave and take out the body. When he saw the shroud and would have removed it to look upon her, the fear of Allah Almighty restrained him, and the old woman (taking advantage of the delay) said, "Restore her to her place." Then he sent at once for Fakirs and Koran readers, and caused perlections to be made over her tomb and sat by the side of the grave, weeping till he fainted; and he continued to frequent the tomb and sit there for a whole month, at the end of which time it so happened one day that he entered the Serraglio, after dismissing the Emirs and Wazirs, and lay down and slept awhile; and there sat at his head a slave-girl fanning him, and at his feet a second, rubbing and shampooing them. Presently he awoke and, opening his eyes, shut them again and heard the handmaid at his head saying to her who was at his feet, "A nice business this, O Khayzaran!" and the other answered her, "Well, O Kazib al-Ban?" "Verily," said the first, "our lord knoweth naught of what hath happened and sitteth waking and watching by a tomb wherein is only a log of wood carved by the carpenter's art." "And Kut al-Kulub," quoth the other, "what hath befallen her?" She replied, "Know that the Lady Zubaydah sent a pellet of Bhang by one of the slave-women who was bribed to drug her; and when sleep overpowered her she put her in a chest, and ordered Sawab and Kafur and Bukhayt to throw her amongst the tombs." "What dost thou say, O Kazib al-Ban," asked Khayzaran, "is not the lady Kut al-Kulub dead?" "Nay, by Allah!" she answered, "and long may her youth be saved from death! but I have heard the Lady Zubaydah say that she is in the house of a young merchant named Ghanim bin Ayyub of Damascus hight, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love; and she hath been

with him these four months, whilst our lord is weeping and watching by night at a tomb wherein is no corpse."

They kept on talking this sort of talk, and the Caliph gave ear to their words; and, by the time they had ceased speaking, he knew right well that the tomb was a feint and a fraud, and that Kut al-Kulub had been in Ghanim's house for four months. Whereupon he was angered with exceeding anger and, rising up, he summoned the Emirs of his state; and his Wazir, Ja-afar the Barmaki, came also and kissed the ground between his hands. The Caliph said to him in fury, "Go down, O Ja-afar, with a party of armed men and ask for the house of Ghanim, son of Ayyub; fall upon it and spoil it and bring him to me with my slave-girl, Kut al-Kulub, for there is no help but that I punish him!" "To hear is to obey," said Ja-afar; and, setting out with the Governor and the guards and a world of people, repaired to Ghanim's house. Now about that time the youth happened to have brought back a pot of dressed meat and was about to put forth his hand to eat of it, he and Kut al-Kulub, when the lady, happening to look out, saw calamity surrounding the house on every side; for the Wazir and the Governor, the night guard and the Mamelukes, with swords drawn, had girt it as the white of the eye girdeth the black. At this she knew that tidings of her had reached the Caliph, her lord; and she made sure of ruin, and her colour paled and her fair features changed and her favour faded.

Then she turned to Ghanim and said to him, "O my love, fly for thy life!" "What shall I do," asked he, "and whither shall I go, seeing that my money and means of maintenance are all in this house?"; and she answered, "Delay not lest thou be slain and lose life as well as wealth." "O my loved one and the light of mine eyes!" he cried. "How shall I do to get away when they have surrounded the house?" Quoth she, "Fear not"; and, stripping off his fine clothes, dressed him in ragged old garments, after which she took the pot and, putting in it bits of broken bread and a saucer of meat, placed the whole in a basket, and setting it upon his head said, "Go out in this guise and fear not for me who wotteth right well what thing is in my hand for the Caliph."[1] So he went out amongst them, bearing the basket with its contents, and the Protector vouchsafed him

[1] *I.e.* "I will know how to deal with him."

His protection and he escaped the snares and perils that beset him, by the blessing of his good conscience and pure conduct.

Meanwhile, Ja-afar dismounted and, entering the house, saw Kut al-Kulub who had dressed and decked herself in splendid raiments and ornaments and filled a chest with gold and jewellery and precious stones and rarities and what else was light to bear and of value rare. When she saw Ja-afar come in, she rose and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O my lord, the Reed hath written of old the rede which Allah decreed!"[1] "By Allah, O my lady," answered Ja-afar, "he gave me an order to seize Ghanim, son of Ayyub"; and she rejoined, "O my lord, he made ready his goods and set out therewith for Damascus and I know nothing more of him; but I desire thee take charge of this chest and deliver it to me in the harim of the Prince of the Faithful." "Hearing and obedience," said Ja-afar, and bade his men bear it away to the headquarters of the Caliphate, together with Kut al-Kulub, commanding them to entreat her with honour as one in high esteem. They did his bidding after they had wrecked and plundered Ghanim's house.[2] Then Ja-afar went in to the Caliph and told him all that had happened, and he ordered Kut al-Kulub to be lodged in a dark chamber and appointed an old woman to serve her, feeling convinced that Ghanim had debauched her and slept with her. Then he wrote a mandate to the Emir Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, his viceroy in Damascus, to this effect: "The instant thou shalt receive this our letter, seize upon Ghanim bin Ayyub and send him to us."

When the missive came to the viceroy, he kissed it and laid it on his head; then he let proclaim in the bazars, "Whoso is desirous to plunder, away with him to the house of Ghanim, son of Ayyub." So they flocked thither, when they found that Ghanim's mother and sister had built him a tomb in the midst of the house and sat by it weeping for him; whereupon they seized the two without telling them the cause and, after spoiling the house, carried them before the viceroy. He questioned them concerning Ghanim and both replied, "For a year or more

[1] The Pen (title of the Koranic, Chapter LXVIII) and the Preserved Tablet.

[2] These plunderings were sanctioned by custom. But a few years ago, when the Turkish soldiers mutinied about arrears of pay (often delayed for years) the governing Pasha would set fire to the town and allow the men to loot what they pleased during a stated time.

we have had no news of him." So they restored them to their place.

Thus far concerning them; but as regards Ghanim, when he saw his wealth spoiled and his ruin utterest he wept over himself till his heart wellnigh brake. Then he fared on at random till the last of the day, and hunger grew hard on him and walking wearied him. So, coming to a village, he entered a mosque, where he sat down upon a mat and propped his back against the wall; but presently he sank to the ground in his extremity of famine and fatigue. There he lay till dawn, his heart fluttering for want of food; and, owing to his sweating, the lice coursed over his skin; his breath waxed fetid and his whole condition was changed. When the villagers came to pray the dawn-prayer, they found him prostrate, ailing, hunger-lean, yet showing evident signs of former affluence. As soon as prayers were over, they drew near him; and, understanding that he was starved with hunger and cold, they gave him an old robe with ragged sleeves and said to him, "O stranger, whence art thou and what sickness is upon thee?" He opened his eyes and wept, but returned no answer; whereupon one of them, who saw that he was starving, brought him a saucer of honey and two barley scones. He ate a little and they sat with him till sunrise when they went to their work.

He abode with them in this state for a month, whilst sickness and weakliness grew upon him; and they wept for him and, pitying his condition, took counsel with one another upon his case and agreed to forward him to the hospital in Baghdad.[1] Meanwhile, behold, two beggar-women,[2] who were none other than Ghanim's mother and sister, came into the mosque and, when he saw them, he gave them the bread that was at his head; and they slept by his side that night, but he knew them not. Next day the villagers brought a camel and said to the cameleer, "Set this sick man on thy beast and carry him to Baghdad and put him down at the Spital door; so haply he may be medicined and be healed and thou shalt have thy hire." "To hear is to comply," said the man. So they brought Ghanim, who was

[1] The Moslem peasant is a kind-hearted man and will make any sacrifices for a sick stranger, even of another creed.

[2] Such treatment of innocent women was only too common under the Caliphate and in contemporary Europe.

asleep, out of the mosque and set him, mat and all, on the camel; and his mother and sister came out among the crowd to gaze upon him, but they knew him not. However, after looking at him and considering him carefully, they said, "Of a truth he favours our Ghanim, poor boy! Can this sick man be he?"

Presently, he woke, and finding himself bound with ropes on a camel's back he began to weep and complain,[1] and the village people saw his mother and sister weeping over him, albeit they knew him not. Then they fared forth for Baghdad, but the camel-man forwent them and, setting Ghanim down at the Spital gate, went away with his beast. The sick man lay there till dawn and, when the folk began to go about the streets, they saw him and stood gazing on him, for he had become as thin as a tooth-pick, till the Syndic of the bazar came up and drove them away from him, saying, "I will gain Paradise through this poor creature; for if they take him into the hospital, they will kill him in a single day."[2] Then he made his young men carry him to his house, where they spread him a new bed with a new pillow, and he said to his wife, "Tend him carefully"; and she replied, "Good! on my head be it!" Thereupon she tucked up her sleeves and, warming some water, washed his hands, feet and body; after which she clothed him in a robe belonging to one of her slave-girls and made him drink a cup of wine and sprinkled rose water over him. So he revived and complained, and the thought of his beloved Kut al-Kulub made his grief redouble.

Thus far concerning him; but as regards Kut al-Kulub, when the Caliph was angered against her, he ordered her to a dark chamber where she abode eighty days, at the end of which the Caliph, happening to pass on a certain day the place where she was, heard her repeating poetry, and after she ceased reciting her verse, saying, "O my darling, O my Ghanim! how great is thy goodness and how chaste is thy nature! thou didst well by one who did ill by thee and thou guardest his honour who garred thine become dishonour, and his Harim thou didst protect who to enslave thee and thine did elect! But thou shalt surely stand, thou and the Commander of the Faithful, before the Just Judge, and thou shalt be justified of him on the Day when the Lord (to whom be honour and glory!) shall be Kazi and the

[1] He felt that he was being treated like a corpse.

[2] A common enough idea even in twentieth-century Cairo (P. H. N.).

Angels of Heaven shall be witnesses!" When the Caliph heard her complaint, he knew that she had been wronged and, returning to the palace, sent Masrur the Eunuch for her. She came before him with bowed head and eyes tearful and heart sorrowful; and he said to her, "O Kut al-Kulub, I find thou accusest me of tyranny and oppression, and thou avouchest that I have done ill by one who did well by me. Who is this who hath guarded my honour while I garred his become dishonour? Who protected my Harim and whose Harim I wrecked?"

"He is Ghanim, son of Ayyub," replied she, "for he never approached me in wantonness or with lewd intent, I swear by thy munificence, O Commander of the Faithful!" Then said the Caliph, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Ask what thou wilt of me, O Kut al-Kulub." "O Prince of the Faithful!" answered she, "I require of thee only my beloved Ghanim, son of Ayyub." He did as she desired, whereupon she said, "O Lord of the Moslems, if I bring him to thy presence, wilt thou bestow me on him?"; and he replied, "If he come into my presence, I will give thee to him as the gift of the generous who revoketh not his largesse." "O Prince of True Believers," quoth she, "suffer me to go and seek him; haply Allah may unite me with him"; and quoth he, "Do even as thou wilt." So she rejoiced and, taking with her a thousand dinars in gold, went out and visited the elders of the various faiths and gave alms in Ghanim's name.[1] Next day she walked to the merchants' bazar, and disclosed her object to the Syndic and gave him money, saying, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" On the following Friday she fared to the bazar (with other thousand dinars) and, entering the goldsmiths' and jewellers' market street, called the Chief and presented to him a thousand dinars with these words, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" The Chief looked at her (and he was the Syndic who had taken in Ghanim) and said, "O my lady, wilt thou come to my house and look upon a youth, a stranger I have there, and see how goodly and graceful he is?"

Now the stranger was Ghanim, son of Ayyub, but the Chief had no knowledge of him and thought him to be some wandering pauper, some debtor whose wealth had been taken from him. or some lover parted from his beloved. When she heard his

[1] That they might pray for him.

words her heart fluttered and her vitals yearned, and she said to him, "Send with me one who shall guide me to thy house." So he sent a little lad who brought her to the house wherein was the head man's stranger-guest and she thanked him for this. When she reached the house, she went and saluted the Syndic's wife, who rose and kissed the ground between her hands, for she knew her. Then quoth Kut al-Kulub, "Where is the sick man who is with thee?" She wept and replied, "He is here, O my lady; by Allah, he is come of good folk and he beareth the signs of gentle breeding; you see him lying on yonder bed." So she turned and looked at him; and she saw something like him, but he was worn and wasted till he had become lean as a toothpick, so his identity was doubtful to her and she could not be certain that it was he. Yet pity for him possessed her and she wept, saying, "Verily the stranger is unhappy, even though he be a prince in his own land!"; and his case was grievous to her and her heart ached for him, yet she knew him not to be Ghanim. Then she furnished him with wine and medicines and she sat awhile by his head, after which she mounted and returned to her palace and continued to visit every bazar in quest of her lover.

Meanwhile, Ghanim's mother and sister Fitnah arrived at Baghdad and met the Syndic, who carried them to Kut al-Kulub and said to her, "O princess of beneficent ladies, there came to our city this day a woman and her daughter, who are fair of favour and signs of good breeding and dignity are apparent in them, though they be dressed in haircloth and have each one a wallet hanging to her neck; and their eyes are tearful and their hearts are sorrowful. So I have brought them to thee that thou mayst give them refuge, and rescue them from beggary, for they are not of asker-folk and, if it please Allah, we shall enter Paradise through them." "By Allah, O my master," cried she, "thou makest me long to see them! Where are they?" adding, "Here with them to me!" So he bade the eunuch bring them in; and, when she looked on them and saw that they were both of distinguished beauty, she wept for them and said, "By Allah, these are people of condition and show plain signs of former opulence." "O my lady," said the Syndic's wife, "we love the poor and the destitute, more especially as reward in Heaven will recompense our love; and, as for these persons, haply the

oppressor hath dealt hardly with them and hath plundered their property and harried their houses."

Then Ghanim's mother and sister wept with sore weeping, remembering their former prosperity and contrasting it with their present poverty and miserable condition; and their thoughts dwelt upon son and brother, whilst Kut al-Kulub wept for their weeping; and they said, "We beseech Allah to reunite us with him whom we desire, and he is none other but my son named Ghanim bin Ayyub!" When Kut al-Kulub heard this, she knew them to be the mother and sister of her lover and wept till a swoon came over her. When she revived she turned to them and said, "Have no fear and sorrow not, for this day is the first of your prosperity and the last of your adversity!"

When Kut al-Kulub had consoled them she bade the Syndic lead them to his house and let his wife carry them to the Hammam and dress them in handsome clothes and take care of them and honour them with all honour; and she gave him a sufficient sum of money. Next day, she mounted and, riding to his house, went in to his wife who rose up and kissed her hands and thanked her for her kindness. There she saw Ghanim's mother and sister whom the Syndic's wife had taken to the Hammam and clothed afresh, so that the traces of their former condition became manifest upon them. She sat talking with them awhile, after which she asked the wife about the sick youth who was in her house and she replied, "He is in the same state." Then said Kut al-Kulub, "Come, let us go and visit him." So she arose, she and the Chief's wife and Ghanim's mother and sister, and went in to the room where he lay and sat down near him.

Presently, Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, heard them mention the name of Kut al-Kulub; whereupon life returned to him, emaciated and withered as he was, and he raised his head from the pillow and cried aloud, "O Kut al-Kulub!" She looked at him and made certain it was he and shrieked rather than said, "Yes, O my beloved!" "Draw near to me," said he, and she replied, "Surely thou art Ghanim bin Ayyub?"; and he rejoined, "I am indeed!" Hereupon a swoon came upon her; and, as soon as Ghanim's mother and his sister Fitnah heard these words, both cried out, "O our joy!" and fainted clean away. When they all recovered, Kut al-Kulub exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah who hath brought us

together again and who hath reunited thee with thy mother and thy sister!" And she related to him all that had befallen her with the Caliph and said, "I have made known the truth to the Commander of the Faithful, who believed my words and was pleased with thee; and now he desireth to see thee," adding, "He hath given me to thee."

Thereat he rejoiced with extreme joy, when she said, "Quit not this place till I come back," and, rising forthwith, betook herself to her palace. There she opened the chest which she had brought from Ghanim's house and, taking out some of the dinars, gave them to the Syndic, saying, "Buy with this money for each of them four complete suits of the finest stuffs and twenty kerchiefs, and else beside of whatsoever they require"; after which she carried all three to the baths and had them washed and bathed and made ready for them consommes, and galangale-water and cider against their coming out. When they left the Hammam, they put on the new clothes, and she abode with them three days, feeding them with chicken meats and bouillis, and making them drink sherbet of sugar candy. After three days their spirits returned; and she carried them again to the baths, and when they came out and had changed their raiment, she led them back to the Syndic's house and left them there, whilst she returned to the palace and craved permission to see the Caliph. When he ordered her to come in, she entered and, kissing the ground between his hands, told him the whole story and how her lord, Ghanim bin Ayyub, yclept the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, and his mother and sister were now in Baghdad. When the Caliph heard this, he turned to the eunuchs and said, "Here with Ghanim to me." So Ja-afar went to fetch him; but Kut al-Kulub forewent him and told Ghanim, "The Caliph hath sent to fetch thee before him," and charged him to show readiness of tongue and firmness of heart and sweetness of speech.

Then she robed him in a sumptuous dress and gave him dinars in plenty, saying, "Be lavish of largesse to the Caliph's household as thou goest in to him." Presently Ja-afar, mounted on his Nubian mule, came to fetch him; and Ghanim advanced to welcome the Wazir and, wishing him long life, kissed the ground before him. Now the star of his good fortune had risen and shone brightly; and Ja-afar took him; and they ceased not faring together, he and the Minister, till they went in to the

Commander of the Faithful. When he stood in the presence, he looked at the Wazirs and Emirs and Chamberlains, and Viceroys and Grandees and Captains, and then at the Caliph. Hereupon he sweetened his speech and his eloquence and, bowing his head to the ground, broke out in these extempore couplets :

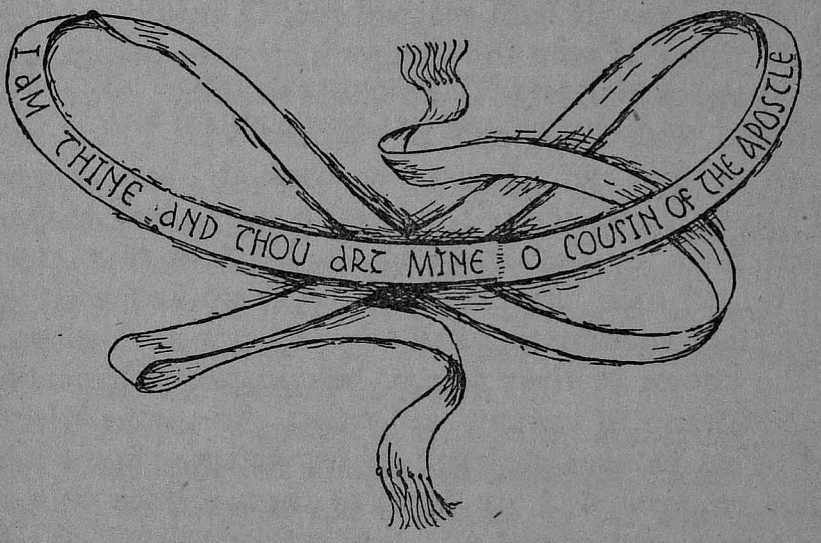
May that Monarch's life span a mighty span,
Whose lavish of largesse all lieges scan :
None other but he shall be Kaysar hight,
Lord of lordly hall and of haught Divan :
Kings lay their gems on his threshold-dust
As they bow and salam to the mighty man ;
And his glances foil them and all recoil,
Bowing beards aground and with faces wan :
Yet they gain the profit of royal grace,
The rank and station of high soldan.
Earth's plain is scant for thy world of men,
Camp there in Kaywan's Empyrean !
May the King of Kings ever hold thee dear ;
Be counsel thine and right steadfast plan,
Till thy justice spread o'er the wide-spread earth
And the near and the far be of equal worth.

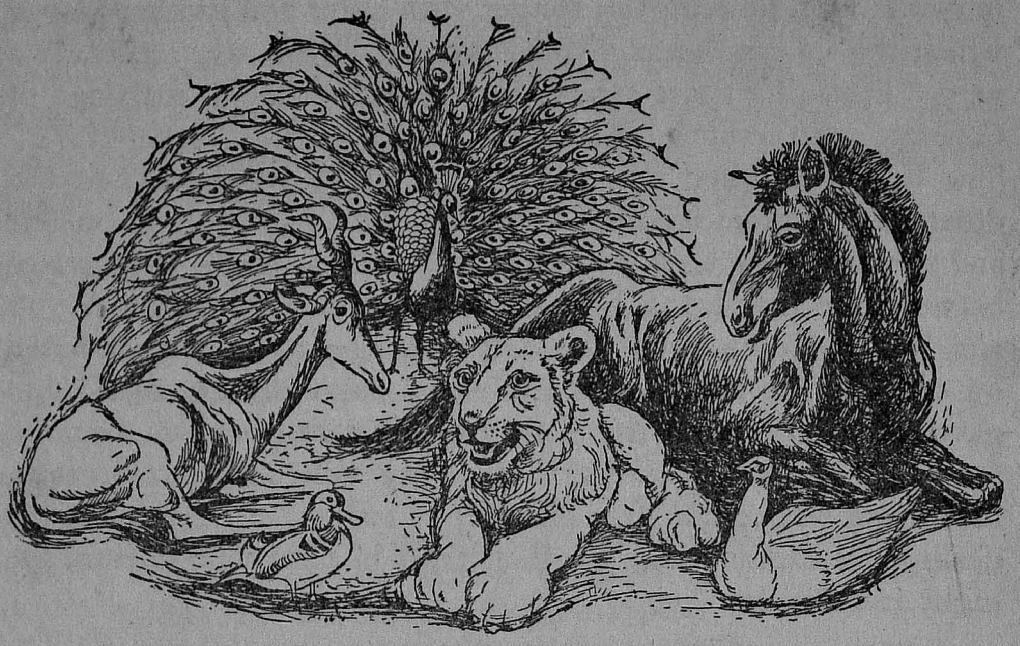
When he ended his improvisation the Caliph was pleased by it and marvelled at the eloquence of his tongue and the sweetness of his speech, and he said to him, " Draw near to me." So he drew near, and quoth the King, " Tell me thy tale and declare to me thy case." So Ghanim sat down and related to him what had befallen him in Baghdad, of his sleeping in the tomb and of his opening the chest after the three slaves had departed, and informed him, in short, of everything that had happened to him from commencement to conclusion—none of which we will repeat for interest fails in twice-told tales.

The Caliph was convinced that he was a true man ; so he invested him with a dress of honour, and placed him near himself in token of favour, and said to him, " Acquit me of the responsibility I have incurred." [1] And Ghanim so did, saying, " O our lord the Sultan, of a truth thy slave and all things his two hands own are his master's." The Caliph was pleased at this and gave orders to set apart a palace for him and assigned to him pay and allowances, rations and donations, which amounted to something

[1] *I.e.* " Pardon me if I have injured thee "—a popular phrase.

immense. So he removed thither with sister and mother; after which the Caliph, hearing that his sister Fitnah was in beauty a very "fitnah," a mere seduction, demanded her in marriage of Ghanim, who replied, "She is thy handmaid as I am thy slave." The Caliph thanked him and gave him an hundred thousand dinars, then summoned the witnesses and the Kazi, and on one and the same day they wrote out the two contracts of marriage between the Caliph and Fitnah and between Ghanim bin Ayyub and Kut al-Kulub; and the two marriages were consummated on one and the same night. When it was morning, the Caliph gave orders to record the history of what had befallen Ghanim from first to last and to deposit it in the royal muniment-rooms, that those who came after him might read it and marvel at the dealings of Destiny and put their trust in Him who created the night and the day.





THE TALE OF THE BIRDS AND BEASTS AND THE CARPENTER

QUOTH she, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore and in ages long gone before, a peacock abode with his wife on the seashore. Now the place was infested with lions and all manner wild beasts, withal it abounded in trees and streams. So cock and hen were wont to roost by night upon one of the trees, being in fear of the beasts, and went forth by day questing food. And they ceased not thus to do till their fear increased on them and they searched for some place wherein to dwell other than their dwelling-place; and in the course of their search, behold, they happened on an island abounding in streams and trees. So they alighted there and ate of its fruits and drank of its waters. But whilst they were thus engaged, lo! up came to them a duck in a state of extreme terror, and stayed not, faring forwards till she reached the tree whereon were perched the two peafowl, when she seemed reassured in mind.

The peacock doubted not but that she had some rare story; so he asked her of her case and the cause of her concern, whereto she answered, "I am sick for sorrow, and my horror of the son of Adam; so beware, and again I say beware of the son of

Adam!" Rejoined the peacock, "Fear not now that thou hast won our protection." Cried the duck, "Alhamdolillah! glory to God, who hath done away my cark and care by means of you being near! For indeed I come of friendship fain with you twain." And when she had ended her speech the peacock's wife came down to her and said, "Well come and welcome and fair cheer! No harm shall hurt thee; how can son of Adam come to us and we in this isle which lieth amiddlemost of the sea? From the land he cannot reach us, neither can he come against us from the water. So be of good cheer and tell us what hath betided thee from the child of Adam." Answered the duck, "Know, then, O thou peahen, that of a truth I have dwelt all my life in this island safely and peacefully, nor have I seen any disquieting thing, till one night, as I was asleep, I sighted in my dream the semblance of a son of Adam, who talked with me and I with him. Then I heard a voice say to me, 'O thou duck, beware of the son of Adam and be not imposed on by his words nor by that he may suggest to thee; for he aboundeth in wiles and guiles; so beware with all wariness of his perfidy, for again I say, he is crafty and right cunning even as singeth of him the poet:

He'll offer sweetmeats with his edged tongue,
And fox thee with the foxy guile of fox.

And know thou that the son of Adam circumventeth the fishes and draweth them forth of the seas; and he shooteth the birds with a pellet of clay, and trappeth the elephant with his craft. None is safe from his mischief and neither bird nor beast escapeth him; and on this wise have I told thee what I have heard concerning the son of Adam.'

"So I awoke, fearful and trembling, and from that hour to this my heart hath not known gladness, for dread of the son of Adam, lest he surprise me unawares by his wile or trap me in his snares. By the time the end of the day overtook me, my strength was grown weak and my spunk failed me; so, desiring to eat and drink, I went forth walking, troubled in spirit and with a heart ill at ease. Now, when I reached yonder mountain, I saw a tawny lion-whelp at the door of a cave; and sighting me he joyed in me with great joy, for my colour pleased him and my gracious shape; so he cried out to me, saying, 'Draw nigh

unto me.' I went up to him and he asked me, 'What is thy name, and what is thy nature?' Answered I, 'My name is Duck, and I am of the bird-kind'; and I added, 'But thou, why tarriest thou in this place till this time?' Answered the whelp, 'My father hath for many a day warned me against the son of Adam, and it came to pass this night that I saw in my sleep the semblance of a son of Adam.' And he went on to tell me the like of that I have told you.

"When I heard these words, I said to him, 'O lion, I take asylum with thee, that thou mayest kill the son of Adam and be steadfast in resolve to his slaughter; verily I fear him for myself with extreme fear and to my fright affright is added for that thou also dreadest the son of Adam, albeit thou art Sultan of savage beasts.' Then I ceased not, O my sister, to bid the young lion beware of the son of Adam and urge him to slay him, till he rose of a sudden and at once from his stead and went out and he fared on, and I after him, and I noted him lashing flanks with tail. We advanced in the same order till we came to a place where the roads forked and saw a cloud of dust arise which, presently clearing away, discovered below it a runaway naked ass, now galloping and running at speed and now rolling in the dust. When the lion saw the ass, he cried out to him, and he came up to him in all humility. Then said the lion, 'Hark ye, crack-brain brute! What is thy kind and what be the cause of thy coming hither?' He replied, 'O son of the Sultan! I am by kind an ass—Asinus Caballus—and the cause of my coming to this place is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam.' Asked the lion-whelp, 'Dost thou fear then that he will kill thee?' Answered the ass, 'Not so, O son of the Sultan, but I dread lest he put a cheat on me and mount upon me; for he hath a thing called Pack-saddle, which he setteth on my back; also a thing called Girths, which he bindeth about my belly; and a thing called Crupper, which he putteth under my tail, and a thing called Bit, which he placeth in my mouth; and he fashioneth me a goad and goadeth me with it and maketh me run more than my strength. If I stumble, he curseth me, and if I bray, he revileth me; and at last, when I grow old and can no longer run, he putteth on me a pannel of wood and delivereth me to the water-carriers, who load my back with water from the river in skins and other vessels, such as jars, and I cease not to wone in

misery and abasement and fatigue till I die, when they cast me on the rubbish-heaps to the dogs. So what grief can surpass this grief, and what calamities can be greater than these calamities?'

"Now, when I heard, O peahen, the ass's words, my skin shuddered, and became as gooseflesh at the son of Adam; and I said to the lion-whelp, 'O my lord, the ass of a verity hath excuse and his words add terror to my terror.' Then quoth the young lion to the ass, 'Whither goest thou?' Quoth he, 'Before sunrise I espied the son of Adam afar off, and fled from him; and now I am minded to flee forth and run without ceasing for the greatness of my fear of him, so haply I may find me a place of shelter from the perfidious son of Adam.' Whilst the ass was thus discoursing with the lion-whelp, seeking the while to take leave of us and go away, behold, appeared to us another cloud of dust, whereat the ass brayed and cried out and looked hard and let fly a loud fart. After a while the dust lifted and discovered a black steed finely dight with a blaze on the forehead like a dirham round and bright,[1] handsomely marked about the hoof with white and with firm strong legs pleasing to sight, and he neighed with affright. This horse ceased not running till he stood before the whelp, the son of the lion who, when he saw him, marvelled and made much of him and said, 'What is thy kind, O majestic wild beast, and wherefore fleest thou into this desert wide and vast?'

"He replied, 'O lord of wild beasts, I am a steed of the horse-kind, and the cause of my running is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam.' The lion-whelp wondered at the horse's speech and cried to him, 'Speak not such words, for it is shame to thee, seeing that thou art tall and stout. And how cometh it that thou fearest the son of Adam, thou, with thy bulk of body and thy swiftness of running, when I, for all my littleness of stature, am resolved to encounter the son of Adam and, rushing on him, eat his flesh, that I may allay the affright of this poor duck and make her dwell in peace in her own place? But now thou hast come here and thou hast wrung my heart with thy talk and turned me back from what I had resolved to do, seeing that

[1] This is one of the lucky signs and adds to the value of the beast. There are some fifty of these marks, some of them so ill-omened that the animal can be bought for almost nothing.

for all thy bulk, the son of Adam hath mastered thee and hath feared neither thy height nor thy breadth; albeit, wert thou to kick him with one hoof thou wouldst kill him, nor could he prevail against thee, but thou wouldst make him drink the cup of death.'

"The horse laughed when he heard the whelp's words and replied, 'Far, far is it from my power to overcome him, O Prince. Let not my length and my breadth nor yet my bulk delude thee with respect to the son of Adam; for that he, of the excess of his guile and his wiles, fashioneth me a thing called Hobble and applieth to my four legs a pair of ropes made of palm fibres bound with felt, and gibbeteth me by the head to a high peg, so that I being tied up remain standing and can neither sit nor lie down. And when he is mindeth to ride me, he bindeth on his feet a thing of iron called Stirrup and layeth on my back another thing called Saddle, which he fasteneth by two Girths passed under my armpits. Then he setteth in my mouth a thing of iron he calleth Bit, to which he tieth a thing of leather called Rein; and, when he sitteth in the saddle on my back, he taketh the rein in his hand and guideth me with it, goading my flanks the while with the shovel-stirrups till he maketh them bleed. So do not ask, O son of our Sultan, the hardships I endure from the son of Adam. And when I grow old and lean and can no longer run swiftly, he selleth me to the miller, who maketh me turn in the mill, and I cease not from turning night and day till I grow decrepit. Then he in turn vendeth me to the knacker, who cutteth my throat and flayeth off my hide and plucketh out my tail, which he selleth to the sieve-maker; and he melteth down my fat for tallow candles.'

"When the young lion heard the horse's words, his rage and vexation redoubled and he said, 'When didst thou leave the son of Adam?' Replied the horse, 'At mid-day, and he is upon my track.' Whilst the whelp was thus conversing with the horse, lo! there rose a cloud of dust and, presently opening out, discovered below it a furious camel gurgling and pawing the earth with his feet and never ceasing so to do till he came up with us. Now, when the lion-whelp saw how big and buxom he was, he took him to be the son of Adam and was about to spring upon him when I said to him, 'O Prince, of a truth this is not the son of Adam; this be a camel, and he seemeth to be fleeing from the

son of Adam.' As I was thus conversing, O my sister, with the lion-whelp, the camel came up and saluted him; whereupon he returned the greeting and said, 'What bringeth thee hither?'

"Replied he, 'I came here fleeing from the son of Adam.' Quoth the whelp, 'And thou, with thy huge frame and length and breadth, how cometh it that thou fearest the son of Adam, seeing that with one kick of thy foot thou wouldst kill him?' Quoth the camel, 'O son of the Sultan, know that the son of Adam hath subtleties and wiles, which none can withstand nor can any prevail against him, save only Death; for he putteth into my nostrils a twine of goat's hair he calleth Nose-ring, and over my head a thing he calleth Halter; then he delivereth me to the least of his little children, and the youngling draweth me along by the nose-ring, my size and strength notwithstanding. Then they load me with the heaviest of burdens and go long journeys with me and put me to hard labour through the hours of the night and the day. When I grow old and stricken in years and disabled from working, my master keepeth me not with him, but selleth me to the knacker, who cutteth my throat and vendeth my hide to the tanners and my flesh to the cooks. So do not ask the hardships I suffer from the son of Adam.'

"'When didst thou leave the son of Adam?' asked the young lion; and he answered, 'At sundown, and I suppose that, coming to my place after my departure and not finding me there, he is now in search of me; wherefore let me go, O son of the Sultan, that I may flee into the wolds and the wilds.' Said the whelp, 'Wait awhile, O camel, till thou see how I will tear him, and give thee to eat of his flesh, whilst I craunch his bones and drink his blood.' Replied the camel, 'O King's son, I fear for thee from the child of Adam, for he is wily and guileful.' And he began repeating these verses:

'When the tyrant enters the lieges' land
Naught remains for the lieges but quick remove!'

"Now, whilst the camel was speaking with the lion-whelp, behold, there rose a cloud of dust which, after a time, opened and showed an old man, scanty of stature and lean of limb; and he bore on his shoulder a basket of carpenter's tools and on his head a branch of a tree and eight planks. He led little children by the hand and came on at a trotting pace, never stopping till

he drew near the whelp. When I saw him, O my sister, I fell down for excess of fear; but the young lion rose and walked forward to meet the carpenter, and when he came up to him the man smiled in his face and said to him, with a glib tongue and in courtly terms, 'O King who defendeth from harm and lord of the long arm, Allah prosper thine evening and thine endeavouring and increase thy valiancy and strengthen thee! Protect me from that which hath distressed me and with its mischief hath oppressed me, for I have found no helper save only thyself.' And the carpenter stood in his presence, weeping and wailing and complaining.

"When the whelp heard his sighing and his crying he said, 'I will succour thee from that thou fearest. Who hath done thee wrong, and what art thou, O wild beast, whose like in my life I never saw, nor ever espied one goodlier of form or more eloquent of tongue than thee? What is thy case?' Replied the man, 'O lord of wild beasts, as to myself, I am a carpenter; but as to who hath wronged me, verily he is a son of Adam, and by break of dawn after this coming night he will be with thee in this place.' When the lion-whelp heard these words of the carpenter, the light was changed to night before his sight and he snorted and roared with ire and his eyes cast forth sparks of fire. Then he cried out, saying, 'By Allah, I will assuredly watch through this coming night till dawn, nor will I return to my father till I have won my will.' Then he turned to the carpenter and asked, 'Of a truth I see thou art short of step and I would not hurt thy feelings for that I am generous of heart; yet do I deem thee unable to keep pace with the wild beasts. Tell me, then, whither thou goest?' Answered the carpenter, 'Know that I am on my way to thy father's Wazir, the lynx; for when he heard that the son of Adam had set foot in this country he feared greatly for himself and sent one of the wild beasts on a message for me, to make him a house wherein he should dwell, that it might shelter him and fend off his enemy from him, so not one of the sons of Adam should come at him. Accordingly, I took up these planks and set forth to find him.'

"Now, when the young lion heard these words, he envied the lynx and said to the carpenter, 'By my life, there is no help for it but thou make me a house with these planks ere thou make one for Sir Lynx! When thou hast done my work, go to him

and make him whatso he wisheth.' The carpenter replied, 'O lord of wild beasts, I cannot make thee aught till I have made the lynx what he desireth; then will I return to thy service and build thee a house as a fort to ward thee from thy foe.' Exclaimed the lion-whelp, 'By Allah, I will not let thee leave this place till thou build me a house of planks.' So saying, he made for the carpenter and sprang upon him, thinking to jest with him, and cuffed him with his paw, knocking the basket off his shoulder; and threw him down in a fainting fit, whereupon the young lion laughed at him and said, 'Woe to thee, O carpenter, of a truth thou art feeble and hast no force; so it is excusable in thee to fear the son of Adam.' Now, when the carpenter fell on his back, he waxed exceeding wroth; but he dissembled his wrath for fear of the whelp and sat up and smiled in his face, saying, 'Well, I will make for thee the house.'

"With this he took the planks he had brought and nailed together the house, which he made in the form of a chest after the measure of the young lion. And he left the door open, for he had cut in the box a large aperture, to which he made a stout cover, and bored many holes therein. Then he took out some newly wrought nails and a hammer and said to the young lion, 'Enter the house through this opening, that I may fit it to thy measure.' Thereat the whelp rejoiced and went up to the opening, but saw that it was strait; and the carpenter said to him, 'Enter and crouch down on thy legs and arms!' So the whelp did thus and entered the chest, but his tail remained outside. Then he would have drawn back and come out; but the carpenter said to him, 'Wait patiently a while till I see if there be room for thy tail with thee.' The young lion did as he was bid, when the carpenter twisted up his tail and, stuffing it into the chest, whipped the lid on to the opening and nailed it down; whereat the whelp cried out and said, 'O carpenter, what is this narrow house thou hast made me? Let me out, sirrah!' But the carpenter answered, 'Far be it, far be it from thy thought! Repentance for past avails naught, and indeed of this place thou shalt not come out.' He then laughed and resumed, 'Verily thou art fallen into the trap and from thy duresse there is no escape, O vilest of wild beasts!' Rejoined the whelp, 'O my brother, what manner of words are these thou addressest to me?' The carpenter replied, 'Know, O dog of

the desert! that thou hast fallen into that which thou fearedst. Fate hath upset thee, nor shall caution set thee up.'

"When the whelp heard these words, O my sister, he knew that this was indeed the very son of Adam, against whom he had been warned by his sire in waking state and by the mysterious Voice in sleeping while; and I also was certified that this was indeed he without doubt; wherefore great fear of him for myself seized me and I withdrew a little apart from him and waited to see what he would do with the young lion. Then I saw, O my sister, the son of Adam dig a pit in that place hard by the chest which held the whelp and, throwing the box into the hole, heap dry wood upon it and burn the young lion with fire. At this sight, O sister mine, my fear of the son of Adam redoubled and in my affright I have been these two days fleeing from him."

But when the peahen heard from the duck this story, she wondered with exceeding wonder and said to her, "O my sister, here thou art safe from the son of Adam, for we are in one of the islands of the sea whither there is no way for the son of Adam; so do thou take up thine abode with us till Allah make easy thy case and our case." Quoth the duck, "I fear lest some calamity come upon me by night, for no runaway can rid him of fate by flight." Rejoined the peahen, "Abide with us, and be like unto us"; and ceased not to persuade her, till she yielded, saying, "O my sister, thou knowest how weak is my resistance; but, verily, had I not seen thee here, I had not remained." Said the peahen, "That which is on our foreheads[1] we must indeed fulfil, and when our doomed day draweth near, who shall deliver us? But not a soul departeth except it have accomplished its predestined livelihood and term."

Now, the while they talked thus, a cloud of dust appeared and approached them, at sight of which the duck shrieked aloud and ran down into the sea, crying out, "Beware! beware! though flight there is not from Fate and Lot!"[2] After a while the dust opened out and discovered under it an antelope; whereat the duck and the peahen were reassured and the peacock's wife said to her companion, "O my sister, this thou seest and wouldst

[1] The vulgar belief is that man's fate is written upon his skull, the sutures being the writing.

[2] Koran ii. 191.

have me beware of is an antelope, and here he is, making for us. He will do us no hurt, for the antelope feedeth upon the herbs of the earth and, even as thou art of the bird-kind, so is he of the beast-kind. Be therefore of good cheer and cease care-taking; for care-taking wasteth thy body." Hardly had the peahen done speaking, when the antelope came up to them, thinking to shelter him under the shade of the tree; and, sighting the peahen and the duck, saluted them and said, "I came to this island to-day and I have seen none richer in herbage nor pleasanter for habitation." Then he besought them for company and amity and, when they saw his friendly behaviour to them, they welcomed him and gladly accepted his offer. So they struck up a sincere friendship and sware thereto; and they slept in one place and they ate and drank together; nor did they cease dwelling in safety, eating and drinking their fill, till one day there came thither a ship which had strayed from her course in the sea.

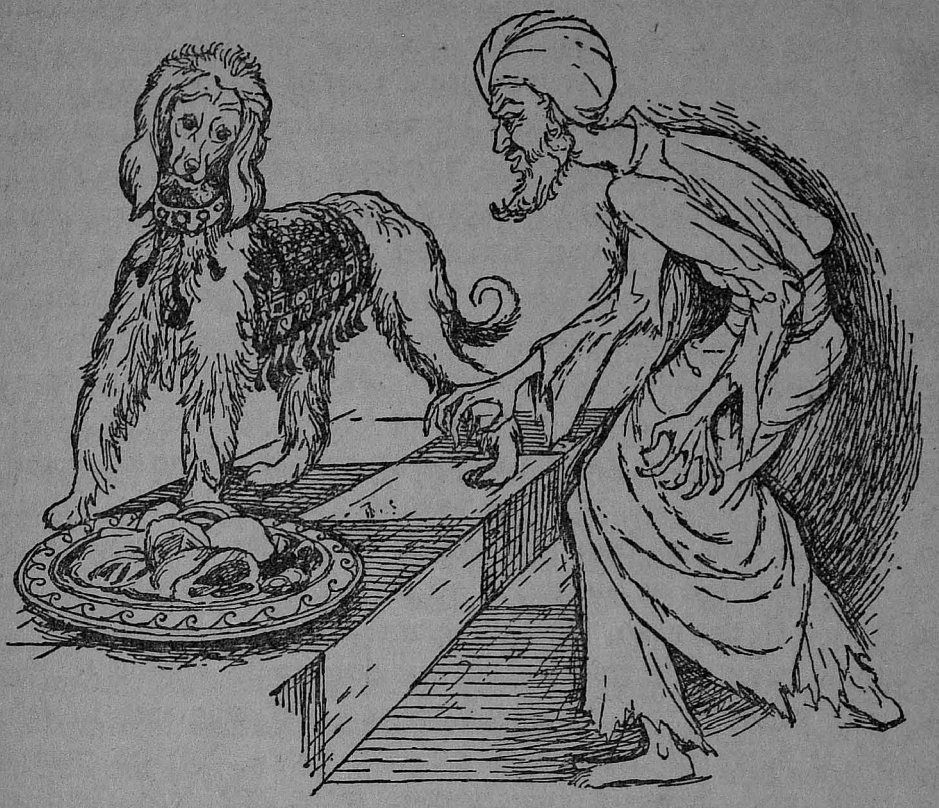
She cast anchor near them and the crew came forth and dispersed about the island. They soon caught sight of the three friends, antelope, peahen and duck, and made for them; whereupon the peahen flew up into the tree and thence winged her way through air; and the antelope fled into the desert, but the duck abode paralysed by fear. So they chased her till they caught her and she cried out and said, "Caution availed me naught against Fate and Lot!"; and they bore her off to the ship. Now, when the peahen saw what had betided the duck, she removed from the island, saying, "I see that misfortunes lie in ambush for all. But for yonder ship, parting had not befallen between me and this duck, because she was one of the truest of friends." Then she flew off and rejoined the antelope, who saluted her and gave her joy of her safety and asked for the duck, to which she replied, "The enemy hath taken her and I loathe the sojourn of this island after her." Then she wept for the loss of the duck and began repeating:

The day of parting cut my heart in twain:
In twain may Allah cut the parting-day!

And she spake also this couplet:

I pray some day that we re-union gain,
So may I tell him Parting's ugly way.

The antelope sorrowed with great sorrow, but dissuaded the peahen from her resolve to remove from the island. So he abode there together with him, eating and drinking, in peace and safety, except that they ceased not to mourn for the loss of the duck; and the antelope said to the peahen, "O my sister, thou seest how the folk who came forth of the ship were the cause of our severance from the duck and of her destruction; so do thou beware of them and guard thyself from them and from the wile of the son of Adam and his guile." But the peahen replied, "I am assured that nought caused her death save her neglecting to say Subhan' Allah, glory to God; indeed, I often said to her, 'Exclaim thou, Praised be Allah, and verily I fear for thee, because thou neglectest to laud the Almighty; for all things created by Allah glorify Him on this wise, and whoso neglecteth the formula of praise, him destruction waylays.'" When the antelope heard the peahen's words, he exclaimed, "Allah make fair thy face!" and betook himself to repeating the formula of praise, and ceased not therefrom a single hour. And it is said that his form of adoration was as follows: "Praise be to the Requiter of every good and evil thing, the Lord of Majesty and of Kings the King!"



THE MAN WHO STOLE THE DISH OF GOLD WHEREIN THE DOG ATE

SOME time erst there was a man, who had accumulated debts, and his case was straitened upon him, so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction; and he ceased not wandering on at random till he came, after a time, to a city tall of walls and firm of foundations. He entered it in a state of despondency and despair, harried by hunger and worn with the weariness of his way. As he passed through one of the main streets, he saw a company of the great going along; so he followed them till they reached a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not faring forwards till they came in presence of a person seated at the upper end of a saloon, a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, surrounded by pages and eunuchs, as he were of the sons of the Wazirs. When he saw the visitors, he rose to greet them

and received them with honour; but the poor man aforesaid was confounded at his own boldness, when beholding the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants; so, drawing back, in perplexity and fear for his life, sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him.

Now it chanced that whilst he was sitting, behold, in came a man with four sporting-dogs, whereon were various kinds of raw silk and brocade and wearing round their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set privy for him; after which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, which he set severally before the dogs, one for each. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food, for stress of hunger, and longed to go up to one of the dogs and eat with them; but fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and Allah Almighty inspired the dog with a knowledge of his case; so he drew back from the platter and signed to the man, who came and ate till he was filled. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog again signed to him to take for himself the dish and what food was left in it, and pushed it towards him with his fore-paw. So the man took the dish and, leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him.

Then he journeyed to another city where he sold the dish, and buying with the price a stock-in-trade returned to his own town. There he sold his goods and paid his debts; and he throve and became affluent and rose to perfect prosperity. He abode in his own land; but after some years had passed he said to himself, "Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, and carry him a fit and handsome present and pay him the money value of that which his dog bestowed upon me." So he took the price of the dish and a suitable gift; and, setting out, journeyed day and night, till he came to that city; he entered it and sought the place where the man lived; but he found there naught save ruins mouldering in row and croak of crow. and house and home desolate and all conditions in changed state.

Now, when the man saw these mouldering ruins and witnessed what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the substantial things that erewhiles had

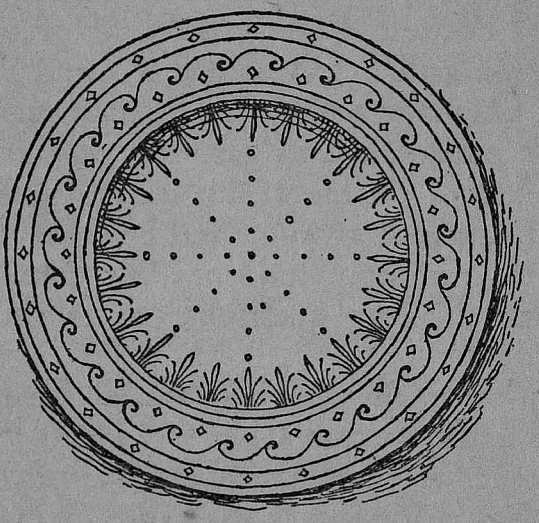
been, a little reflection made it needless for him to inquire of the case; so he turned away. Presently, seeing a wretched man, in a plight which made him shudder and feel goose-skin, and which would have moved the very rock to ruth, he said to him, "Ho, thou! What have time and fortune done with the lord of this place? Where are his lovely faces, his shining full moons and splendid stars; and what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode, so that nothing save the walls thereof remain?" Quoth the other, "He is the miserable thou seest mourning that which hath left him naked. But knowest thou not the words of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!), wherein is a lesson to him who will learn by it and a warning to whoso will be warned thereby and guided in the right way, 'Verily it is the way of Allah Almighty to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again?' If thou question of the cause of this accident, indeed it is no wonder, considering the chances and changes of Fortune. I was the lord of this place and I builded it and founded it and owned it; and I was the proud possessor of its full moon slucent and its circumstance resplendent and its damsels radiant and its garniture magnificent, but Time turned and did away from me wealth and servants and took from me what it had lent (not given); and brought upon me calamities which it held in store hidden. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question; so tell it me and leave wondering."

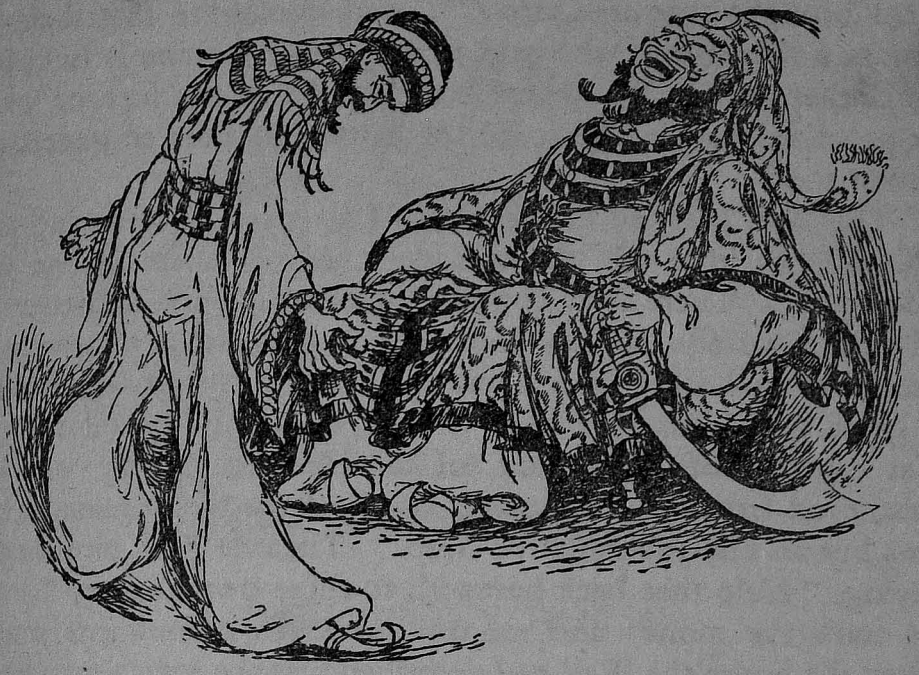
Thereupon, the man who had waxed wealthy being sore concerned, told him the whole story, and added, "I have brought thee a present, such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold which I took; for it was the cause of my affluence after poverty, and of the replenishment of my dwelling-place, after desolation, and of the dispersion of my trouble and straitness." But the man shook his head, and weeping and groaning and complaining of his lot, answered, "Ho, thou! methinks thou art mad; for this is not the way of a man of sense. How should a dog of mine make generous gift to thee of a dish of gold and I meanly take back the price of what a dog gave? This were indeed a strange thing! Were I in extremest unease and misery, by Allah, I would not accept of thee aught; no, not the worth of a nail-paring! So return whence thou camest in health and safety." Whereupon the merchant kissed his feet and, taking

leave of him, returned whence he came, praising him and reciting this couplet :

Men and dogs together are all gone by ;
So peace be with all of them ! dogs and men !

And Allah is All-knowing !





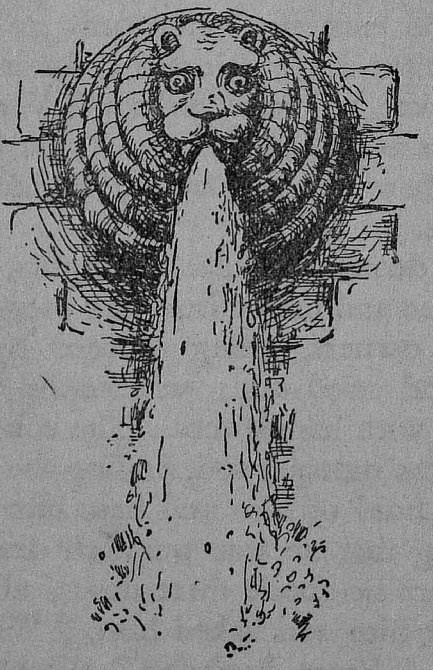
THE RUINED MAN WHO BECAME RICH AGAIN THROUGH A DREAM

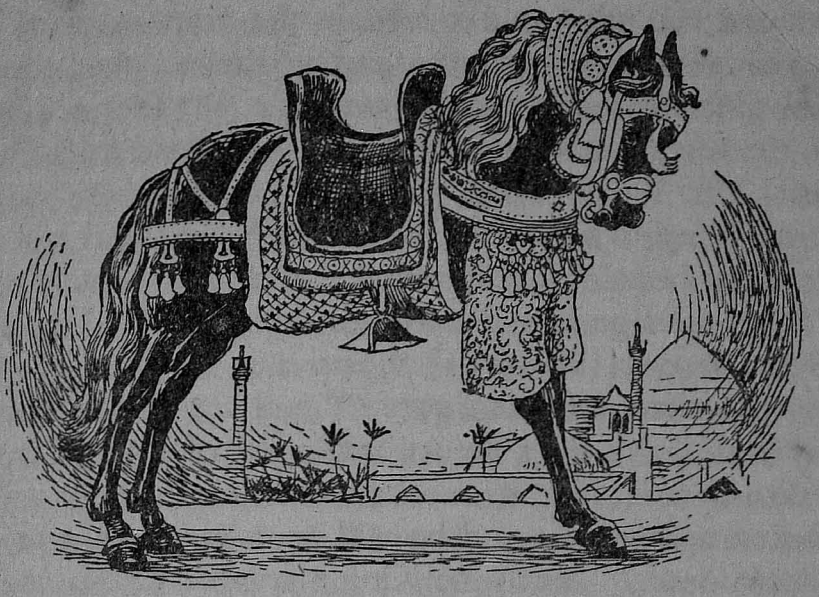
THERE lived once in Baghdad a wealthy man and made of money, who lost all his substance and became so destitute that he could earn his living only by hard labour. One night, he lay down to sleep, dejected and heavy hearted, and saw in a dream a Speaker, who said to him, "Verily thy fortune is in Cairo; go thither and seek it." So he set out for Cairo; but when he arrived there, evening overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque.

Presently, by decree of Allah Almighty, a band of bandits entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house; but the owners, being aroused by the noise of the thieves, awoke and cried out; whereupon the Chief of Police came to their aid with his officers. The robbers made off; but the Wali entered the mosque and, finding the man from Baghdad asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm rods so grievous a beating that he was wellnigh dead. Then they cast him into jail, where he abode three days; after which the Chief of Police sent for him and asked him, "Whence art thou?"; and he answered, "From Baghdad." Quoth the Wali, "And

what brought thee to Cairo?"; and quoth the Baghdadi, "I saw in a dream one who said to me, 'Thy fortune is in Cairo; go thither to it.' But when I came to Cairo the fortune which he promised me proved to be the palm rods thou so generously gavest me."

The Wali laughed till he showed his wisdom-teeth and said, "O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me, 'There is in Baghdad a house in such a district and of such a fashion and its courtyard is laid out garden-wise, at the lower end whereof is a jetting fountain and under the same a great sum of money lieth buried. Go thither and take it.' Yet I went not; but thou, of the briefness of thy wit, hast journeyed from place to place, on the faith of a dream, which was but an idle galimatias of sleep." Then he gave him money, saying, "Help thee back herewith to thine own country"; and he took the money and set out upon his homewards march. Now the house the Wali had described was the man's own house in Baghdad; so the wayfarer returned thither and, digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure. And thus Allah gave him abundant fortune; and a marvellous coincidence occurred.





THE EBONY HORSE

THERE was once in times of yore and ages long gone before, a great and puissant King, of the Kings of the Persians, Sabur by name, who was the richest of all the Kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed each and every in wit and wisdom. He was generous, openhanded and beneficent, and he gave to those who sought him and repelled not those who resorted to him; and he comforted the broken-hearted and honourably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon the oppressor.

He had three daughters, like full moons of shining light or flower gardens blooming bright; and a son as he were the moon; and it was his wont to keep two festivals in the twelvemonth, those of the Nau-Roz, or New Year, and Mihrgan, the Autumnal Equinox, on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave largesse and made proclamation of safety and security and promoted his chamberlains and viceroys; and the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the holy day, bringing him gifts and servants and eunuchs.

Now, he loved science and geometry, and one festival day, as he sat on his kingly throne, there came in to him three wise men, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of craft and inventions, skilled in making things curious and rare, such

as confound the wit; and versed in the knowledge of occult truths and perfect in mysteries and subtleties. And they were of three different tongues and countries: the first a Hindi, or Indian, the second a Roumi, or Greek, and the third a Farsi, or Persian. The Indian came forward and, prostrating himself before the King, wished him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting his dignity; that is to say, a man of gold, set with precious gems and jewels of price and hending in hand a golden trumpet. When Sabur saw this, he asked, "O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?" and the Indian answered, "O my lord, if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for, if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this clarion against him and he will be seized with a palsy and drop down dead." Much the King marvelled at this and cried, "By Allah, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire."

Then came forward the Greek and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver, in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four-and-twenty chicks of the same metal. Sabur looked at them and, turning to the Greek, said to him, "O sage, what is the virtue of this peacock?" "O my lord," answered he, "as often as an hour of the day or night passeth, it pecketh one of its young and crieth out and flappeth its wings, till the four-and-twenty hours are accomplished, and when the month cometh to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the crescent therein." And the King said, "An thou speak sooth, I will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire."[1]

Then came forward the Persian sage and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse of the blackest ebony wood, inlaid with gold and jewels, and ready harnessed with saddle, bridle and stirrups, such as befit Kings; which, when Sabur saw, he marvelled with exceeding marvel and was confounded at the beauty of its form and the ingenuity of its fashion. So he asked, "What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and what the secret of its movement?"; and the Persian answered, "O my lord, the virtue of this horse

[1] All Moslems, except those of the Maliki school, hold that the maker of an image representing anything of life will be commanded on the Judgment Day to animate it, and failing will be duly sent to the Fire.

is that, if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air and cover the space of a year in a single day." The King marvelled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon one another on the same day and, turning to the sage, said to him, "By Allah the Omnipotent, and our Lord the Beneficent, who created all creatures and feedeth them with meat and drink, an thy speech be veritable and the virtue of thy contrivance appear, I will assuredly give thee whatsoever thou lustest for and will bring thee to thy desire and thy wish!" Then he entertained the sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts; after which they brought the figures before him and each took the creature he had wroughten and showed him the mystery of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trump; the peacock pecked its chicks; and the Persian sage mounted the ebony horse, whereupon it soared with him high in air and descended again. When King Sabur saw all this, he was amazed and perplexed and felt like to fly for joy and said to the three sages, "Now I am certified of the truth of thy words and it behoveth me to quit me of my promise. Ask ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give you that same."

Now the report of the King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered, "If the King be content with us and accept our gifts and allow us to prefer a request to him, we crave of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-in-law; for that the stability of Kings may not be gainsaid." Quoth the King, "I grant you that which you wish and you desire," and bade summon the Kazi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters. Now it fortuned that the Princesses were behind a curtain, looking on; and when they heard this, the youngest considered her husband-to-be and, behold, he was an old man [1] an hundred years of age, with hair frosted, forehead drooping, eyebrows mangy, ears slitten, beard and mustachios stained and dyed; eyes red and goggle; cheeks bleached and hollow; flabby nose like a brinjail, or egg-plant; face like a cobbler's apron, teeth overlapping and lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous; in brief a terror, a horror, a monster, for he was of the folk of his time the unsightliest, and of his age the frightfullest; sundry

[1] This description of ugly old age is written with true Arab verve.

of his grinders had been knocked out and his eye-teeth were like the tusks of the Jinni who frighteneth poultry in hen-houses. Now the girl was the fairest and most graceful of her time, more elegant than the gazelle however tender, than the gentlest zephyr blander and brighter than the moon at her full; for amorous fray right suitable; confounding in graceful sway the waving bough, and outdoing in swimming gait the pacing roe; in fine, she was fairer and sweeter by far than all her sisters. So, when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and weeping and wailing.

Now the Prince, her brother, Kamar al-Akmar, or the Moon of Moons hight, was then newly returned from a journey and, hearing her weeping and crying, came in to her (for he loved her with fond affection, more than his other sisters) and asked her, "What aileth thee? What hath befallen thee? Tell me and conceal naught from me." So she smote her breast and answered, "O my brother and my dear one, I have nothing to hide. If the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out; and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to make provision for me; and my Lord will provide." Quoth he, "Tell me what meaneth this talk and what hath straitened thy breast and troubled thy temper." "O my brother and my dear one," answered the Princess, "know that my father hath promised me in marriage to a wicked magician who brought him, as a gift, a horse of black wood, and hath bewitched him with his craft and his egromancy; but, as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him, I had never come into this world!"

Her brother soothed and solaced her, then fared to his sire and said, "What be this wizard to whom thou hast given my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present which he hath brought thee, so that thou hast killed my sister with chagrin? It is not right that this should be." Now the Persian was standing by and, when he heard the Prince's words, he was mortified and filled with fury, and the King said, "O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be amated with amazement." Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so; and, when the Prince saw it, it pleased him. So (being an accomplished cavalier) he mounted

it forthright and struck its sides with the shovel-shaped stirrup-irons; but it stirred not, and the King said to the sage, "Go show him its movement, that he also may help thee to win thy wish." Now the Persian bore the Prince a grudge because he willed not he should have his sister; so he showed him the pin of ascent on the right side of the horse, and saying to him, "Trill this," left him.

Thereupon, the Prince trilled the pin, and lo! the horse forthwith soared with him high in æther, as it were a bird, and gave not over flying till it disappeared from men's espying, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his case and said to the Persian, "O sage, look how thou mayst make him descend." But he replied, "O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till Resurrection Day, for he, of his ignorance and pride, asked me not of the pin of descent and I forgot to acquaint him therewith." When the King heard this he was enraged with sore rage, and bade bastinado the sorcerer and clap him in jail, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and beat his face and smote his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and keening, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city; and thus their joy was turned to annoy, and their gladness changed into sore affliction and sadness.

Thus far concerning them; but as regards the Prince, the horse gave not over soaring with him till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and saw death in the skies, and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying to himself, "Verily, this was a device of the sage to destroy me on account of my youngest sister; but there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I am lost without recourse; but I wonder, did not he who made the ascent-pin make also a descent-pin?" Now, he was a man of wit and knowledge and intelligence; so he fell to feeling all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a screw, like a cock's head, on its right shoulder and the like on the left, when quoth he to himself, "I see no sign save these things like buttons." Presently he turned the right-hand pin, whereupon the horse flew heavenwards with increased speed. So he left it, and looking at the sinister shoulder and finding another pin he wound it up, and immediately the

steed's upward motion slowed and ceased and it began to descend, little by little, towards the face of the earth, while the rider became yet more cautious and careful of his life. And when he saw this and knew the uses of the horse, his heart was filled with joy and gladness and he thanked Almighty Allah for that He had deigned deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whithersoever he would, making it rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete mastery over its every movement.

He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's ascending flight had borne him afar from the earth; and, as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various cities and countries over which he passed and which he knew not, never having seen them in his life. Amongst the rest, he descried a city ordered after the fairest fashion in the midst of a verdant and riant land, rich in trees and streams, with gazelles pacing daintily over the plains; whereat he fell a-musing, and said to himself, "Would I knew the name of yon town and in what land it is!" And he took to circling about it and observing it right and left. By this time, the day began to decline and the sun drew near to its downing; and he said in his mind, "Verily, I find no goodlier place to night in than this city; so I will lodge here, and early on the morrow I will return to my kith and kin and my kingdom and tell my father and family what hath passed and acquaint him with what mine eyes have seen."

Then he addressed himself to seeking a place wherein he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should descry him, and presently, behold, he espied amiddlemost of the city a palace rising high in upper air surrounded by a great wall with lofty crenelles and battlements, guarded by forty black slaves, clad in complete mail, and armed with spears and swords, bows and arrows. Quoth he, "This is a goodly place," and turned the descent-pin, whereupon the horse sank down with him like a weary bird, and alighted gently on the terrace roof of the palace. So the Prince dismounted and, ejaculating "Alhamdolillah"—praise be to Allah[1]—he began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying, "By Allah, he who fashioned thee with these perfections was a cunning

[1] *I.e.* for fear of the evil eye injuring the palace and, haply, himself.

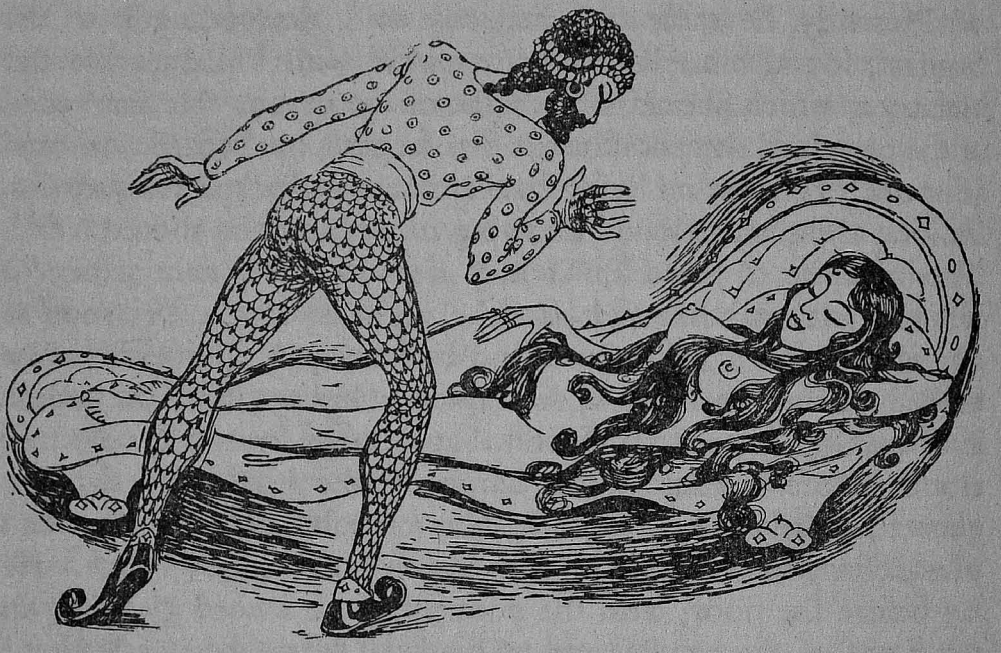
craftsman, and if the Almighty extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and kinsfolk in safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner of bounties and benefit him with the utmost beneficence." By this time night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof till he was assured that all in the palace slept; and, indeed, hunger and thirst were sore upon him, for that he had not tasted food nor drunk water since he parted from his sire. So he said within himself, "Surely the like of this palace will not lack of victual"; and, leaving the horse above, went down in search of somewhat to eat.

Presently, he came to a staircase and, descending it to the bottom, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, which shone in the light of the moon. He marvelled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but sensed no sound of speaker and saw no living soul and stood in perplexed surprise, looking right and lelt and knowing not whither he should wend. Then said he to himself, "I may not do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it; and as soon as day shall dawn I will mount and ride away." However, as he tarried talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace and, making towards it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the harim, at the head of a sleeping eunuch, as he were one of the Ifrits of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than lumber and broader than a bench. He lay before the door, with the pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a bag of leather[1] hanging from a column of granite. When the Prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, "I crave help from Allah the Supreme! O mine Holy One, even as Thou hast already delivered me from destruction, so vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of this palace!" So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and, taking it, carried it aside and opened it and found in it food of the best. He ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung up the provision-bag in its place, and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the slave slept on, knowing not whence destiny should come to him.

Then the Prince fared forwards into the palace and ceased

[1] The "Sufrah," an acting provision-bag and table-cloth.

not till he came to a second door, with a curtain drawn before it; so he raised the curtain and, behold, on entering he saw a couch of the whitest ivory, inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave-girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was thereon, and found a young lady lying asleep, chemised with her hair [1] as she were the full moon rising over the Eastern horizon, with flower-white brow and shining hair-parting, and cheeks like blood-red anemones and dainty moles thereon. He was amazed at her as she lay in her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and grace, and he recked



no more of death. So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve and, shuddering with pleasure, kissed her on the right cheek; whereupon she awoke forthright and opened her eyes, and seeing the Prince standing at her head, said to him, "Who art thou and whence comest thou?" Quoth he, "I am thy slave and lover." Asked she, "And who brought thee hither?" and he answered, "My Lord and my fortune." Then said Shams al-Nahar (for such was her name), "Haply thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favour. By Allah, my sire lied in his throat when he spoke this thing, for

[1] Eastern women in hot weather lie mother-nude under a sheet here represented by the hair.

thou art not other than beautiful." Now the son of the King of Hind had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him, for that he was ugly and uncouth, and she thought the Prince was he. So, when she saw his beauty and grace (for indeed he was like the radiant moon) the syntheism [1] of love gat hold of her heart as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse.

Suddenly, her waiting-women awoke and, seeing the Prince with their mistress, said to her, "O my lady, who is this with thee?" Quoth she, "I know not; I found him sitting by me, when I woke up; haply 'tis he who seeketh me in marriage of my sire." Quoth they, "O my lady, by Allah the All-Father, this is not he who seeketh thee in marriage, for he is hideous and this man is handsome and of high degree. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant." Then the handmaidens went out to the eunuch, and finding him slumbering awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Said they, "How happeth it that thou art on guard at the palace and yet men come in to us, whilst we are asleep?" When the black heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found it not; and fear took him and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress, and seeing the Prince sitting at talk with her, said to him, "O my lord, art thou man or Jinni?" Replied the Prince, "Woe to thee, O unluckiest of slaves; how darest thou even the sons of the royal Chosroes with one of the unbelieving Satans?" And he was as a raging lion. Then he took the sword in his hand and said to the slave, "I am the King's son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her." And when the eunuch heard these words he replied, "O my lord, if thou be indeed of kind a man as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but for thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other."

Thereupon the eunuch ran to the King, shrieking loud and rending his raiment and heaving dust upon his head; and when the King heard his outcry, he said to him, "What hath befallen thee? Speak quickly and be brief, for thou hast fluttered my heart." Answered the eunuch, "O King, come to thy daughter's succour; for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a King's son, hath got possession of her; so up and at him!" When the

[1] Arab. "Shirk"=worshipping more than one God. A theological term here most appropriately used.

King heard this, he thought to kill him and said, "How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?" Then he betook himself to the Princess's palace, where he found her slave-women standing to await him and asked them, "What is come to my daughter?" "O King," answered they, "slumber overcame us and, when we awoke, we found a young man sitting upon her couch in talk with her, as he were the full moon; never saw we aught fairer of favour than he. So we questioned him of his case and he declared that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a Jinni; but he is modest and well bred, and doth nothing unseemly or which leadeth to disgrace."

Now, when the King heard these words, his wrath cooled and he raised the curtain little by little and, looking in, saw sitting at talk with his daughter a Prince of the goodliest with a face like the full moon for sheen. At this sight he could not contain himself of his jealousy for his daughter's honour and, putting aside the curtain, rushed in upon them, drawn sword in hand, like a furious Ghul. Now, when the Prince saw him he asked the Princess, "Is this thy sire?"; and she answered, "Yes." Whereupon he sprang to his feet and, seizing his sword, cried out at the King with so terrible a cry that he was confounded. Then the youth would have fallen on him with the sword; but the King, seeing that the Prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his scymitar and stood till the young man came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, "O youth, art thou a man or a Jinni?" Quoth the Prince, "Did I not respect thy right as mine host and thy daughter's honour, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou fellow me with devils, me that am a Prince of the sons of the royal Chosroës who, had they wished to take thy kingdom, could shake thee like an earthquake from thy glory and thy dominions and spoil thee of all thy possessions?"

Now, when the King heard his words, he was confounded with awe and bodily fear of him and rejoined, "If you indeed be of the sons of the Kings, as thou pretendest, how cometh it that thou enterest my palace without my permission, and smirchest mine honour, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and claiming that I have given her to thee

to wife, I that have slain Kings and Kings' sons, who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my might and majesty when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to the vilest of deaths they would slay thee forthright? Who shall deliver thee out of my hand?" When the Prince heard this speech of the King he answered, "Verily, I wonder at thee and at the shortness and denseness of thy wit! Say me, canst covet for thy daughter a mate comelier than myself, and hast ever seen a stouter-hearted man or one better fitted for a Sultan or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?" Rejoined the King, "Nay, by Allah! but I would have had thee, O youth, act after the custom of Kings and demand her from me to wife before witnesses, that I might have married her to thee publicly; and now, even were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonoured me in her person." Rejoined the Prince, "Thou sayest sooth, O King, but if thou summon thy slaves and thy soldiers and they fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendeth, thou wouldst but publish thine own disgrace, and the folk would be divided between belief in thee and disbelief in thee. Wherefore, O King, thou wilt do well, meseemeth, to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee."

Quoth the King, "Let me hear what thou hast to advise"; and quoth the Prince, "What I have to propose to thee is this: either do thou meet me in combat singular, I and thou; and he who slayeth his adversary shall be held the worthier, and having a better title to the kingdom; or else, let me be this night and, whenas dawns the morn, draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants; but first tell me their number." Said the King, "They are forty thousand horse, besides my own slaves and their followers,[1] who are the like of them in number." Thereupon said the Prince, "When the day shall break, do thou array them against me and say to them, 'This man is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle single-handed against you all; for he pretendeth that he will overcome you and put you to the rout and, indeed, that ye cannot prevail against him.' After which, leave me to do battle with

[1] The dearest ambition of a slave is not liberty but to have a slave of his own. This was systematised by the servile rulers known in history as the Mameluke Beys. Each had his household of servile pages and squires who looked forward to filling the master's place as knight or baron.

them; if they slay me, then is thy secret the surer guarded and thine honour the better warded; and if I overcome them and see their backs, then is it the like of me a King should covet to his son-in-law."

So the King approved of his opinion and accepted his proposition, despite his awe at the boldness of his speech and amaze at the pretensions of the Prince to meet in fight his whole host, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the fray and so he should be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonour. Thereupon he called the eunuch and bade him go to his Wazir without stay and delay and command him to assemble the whole of the army and cause them don their arms and armour and mount their steeds. So the eunuch carried the King's orders to the Minister, who straightway summoned the Captains of the host and the Lords of the realm and bade them don their harness of derring-do and mount horse and sally forth in battle array. Such was their case; but as regards the King, he sat a long while conversing with the young Prince, being pleased with his wise speech and good sense and fine breeding. And when it was daybreak he returned to his palace and, seating himself on his throne, commanded his merry men to mount, and bade them saddle one of the best of the royal steeds with handsome selle and housings and trappings and bring it to the Prince. But the youth said, "O King, I will not mount horse, till I come in view of the troops and review them." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the King.

Then the two repaired to the parade-ground, where the troops were drawn up, and the young Prince looked upon them and noted their great number; after which the King cried out to them, saying, "Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeketh my daughter in marriage; and in very sooth never have I seen a goodlier than he; no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier of arm, for he pretendeth that he can overcome you, single-handed, and force you to flight, and that, were ye an hundred thousand in number, yet for him would ye be but few. Now, when he chargeth down on you, do ye receive him upon point of pike and sharp of sabre; for, indeed, he hath undertaken a mighty matter." Then quoth the King to the Prince, "Up, O my son, and do thy devoir on them." Answered he, "O King, thou dealest not justly and fairly by me; how shall I go

forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and the men be mounted?" The King retorted, "I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst; but choose thou which of my horses thou wilt." Then he said, "Not one of thy horses pleaseth me, and I will ride none but that on which I came." Asked the King, "And where is thy horse?" "Atop of thy palace." "In what part of my palace?" "On the roof."

Now, when the King heard these words, he cried, "Out on thee! this is the first sign thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof? But we shall at once see if thou speak truth or lies." Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, "Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof." So all the people marvelled at the young Prince's words, saying one to other, "How can a horse come down the steps from the roof? Verily, this is a thing whose like we never heard." In the meantime the King's messenger repaired to the palace and, mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there, and never had he looked on a handsomer; but when he drew near and examined it, he saw that it was made of ebony and ivory. Now the officer was accompanied by other high officers, who also looked on, and they laughed to one another, saying, "Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spake? We cannot deem him other than mad; however, we shall soon see the truth of his case. Peradventure herein is some mighty matter, and he is a man of high degree." Then they lifted up the horse bodily and, carrying it to the King, set it down before him, and all the lieges flocked round to look at it, marvelling at the beauty of its proportions and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it and wondered at it with extreme wonder; and he asked the Prince, "O youth, is this thy horse?" He answered, "Yes, O King, this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see the marvel it showeth." Rejoined the King, "Then take and mount it," and the Prince retorted, "I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it." So the King bade them retire a bowshot from the horse; whereupon quoth its owner, "O King, see thou; I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy host and scatter them right and left and split their hearts asunder." Said the King, "Do as thou wilt; and spare not their lives, for they will not spare thine."

Then the Prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, "When the youth cometh between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the sharps of our sabres." Quoth another, "By Allah, this is a mere misfortune; how shall we slay a youth so comely of face and shapely of form?" And a third continued, "Ye will have hard work to get the better of him; for the youth had not done this, but for what he knew of his own prowess and pre-eminence of valour." Meanwhile, having settled himself in his saddle, the Prince turned the pin of ascent, whilst all eyes were strained to see what he would do, whereupon the horse began to heave and rock and sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements steed ever made, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with its rider and soared high into the sky. When the King saw this he cried out to his men, saying, "Woe to you! catch him, catch him, ere he 'scape you!" But his Wazirs and Viceroys said to him, "O King, can a man overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty magician or Marid of the Jinn or devil, and Allah save thee from him. So praise thou the Almighty for deliverance of thee and of all thy host from his hand."

Then the King returned to his palace after seeing the feat of the Prince and, going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen them both on the parade-ground. He found her grievously afflicted for the Prince and bewailing her separation from him; wherefore she fell sick with violent sickness and took to her pillow. Now, when her father saw her on this wise, he pressed her to his breast and, kissing her between the eyes, said to her, "O my daughter, praise Allah Almighty and thank Him for that He hath delivered us from this crafty enchanter, this villain, this low fellow, this thief who thought only of seducing thee!" And he repeated to her the story of the Prince and how he had disappeared in the firmament; and he abused him and cursed him knowing not how dearly his daughter loved him. But she paid no heed to his words and did but redouble in her tears and wails, saying to herself, "By Allah, I will neither eat meat nor drain drink till Allah reunite me with him!" Her father was greatly concerned for her case and mourned much over her plight; but, for all he could do to soothe her, love-longing only increased on her.

Thus far concerning the King and Princess Shams al-Nahar; but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, when he had risen high in air, he turned his horse's head towards his native land and, being alone, mused upon the beauty of the Princess and her loveliness. Now he had inquired of the King's people the name of the city and of its King and his daughter; and men had told him that it was the city of Sana'a. So he journeyed with all speed, till he drew near his father's capital and, making an airy circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King's palace, where he left his horse, whilst he descended into the palace, and, seeing its threshold strewn with ashes, thought that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, all pale of faces and lean of frames. When his sire descried him and was assured that it was indeed his son, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit, but after a time coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, clipping him to his bosom and rejoicing in him with exceeding joy and extreme gladness. His mother and sisters heard this; so they came in and, seeing the Prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping, and joying with exceeding joyance. Then they questioned him of his case; so he told them all that had past from first to last, and his father said to him, "Praised be Allah for thy safety, O coolth of my eyes and core of my heart!"

Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad tidings flew through the city. So they beat drums and cymbals and, doffing the weed of mourning, they donned the gay garb of gladness and decorated the streets and markets; whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the King proclaimed a general pardon and, opening the prisons, released those who were therein prisoned. Moreover, he made banquets for the people, with great abundance of eating and drinking, for seven days and nights, and all creatures were gladsomest; and he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice. After a while the Prince asked about the maker of the horse, saying, "O my father, what hath fortune done with him?"; and the King answered, "Allah never bless him nor the hour wherein I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us,

O my son, and he hath lain in jail since the day of thy disappearance." Then the King bade release him from prison and, sending for him, invested him in a dress of satisfaction and entreated him with the utmost favour and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife; whereat the sage raged with sore rage and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the Prince had secured the secret of the steed and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son, "I reck thou wilt do well not to go near the horse henceforth and, more especially, not to mount it after this day; for thou knowest not its properties, and belike thou art in error about it."

Now the Prince had told his father of his adventure with the King of Sana'a and his daughter and he said, "Had the King intended to kill thee, he had done so; but thine hour was not yet come." When the rejoicings were at an end the people returned to their places and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating and drinking and making merry. Now the King had a handsome handmaiden who was skilled in playing the lute; so she took it and began to sweep the strings and sing thereto before the King and his son of separation of lovers, and she chanted the following verses:

Deem not that absence breeds in me aught of forgetfulness;
What should remember I did you fro' my remembrance wane?
Time dies but never dies the fondest love for you we bear;
And in your love I'll die and in your love I'll rise again.

When the Prince heard these verses, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart and pine and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his bowels yearned in him for love of the King's daughter of Sana'a; so he rose forthright and, escaping his father's notice, went forth the palace to the horse and, mounting it, turned the pin of ascent, whereupon bird-like it flew with him high in air and soared towards the upper regions of the sky. In early morning his father missed him and, going up to the pinnacle of the palace, in great concern, saw his son rising into the firmament; whereat he was sore afflicted and repented in all penitence that he had not taken the horse and hidden it; and he said to himself, "By Allah, if but my son return to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart

may be at rest concerning my son." And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself for his son.

Such was his case; but as regards the Prince, he ceased not flying on through air till he came to the city of Sana'a and alighted on the roof as before. Then he crept down stealthily and, finding the eunuch asleep, as of wont, raised the curtain and went on little by little, till he came to the door of the Princess's alcove-chamber and stopped to listen; when lo! he heard her shedding her plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept around her. Presently, overhearing her weeping and wailing, quoth they, "O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourneth not for thee?" Quoth she, "O ye little of wit, is he for whom I mourn of those who forget or who are forgotten?" And she fell again to wailing and weeping, till sleep overcame her. Hereat the Prince's heart melted for her and his gall-bladder was like to burst, so he entered and, seeing her lying asleep without covering, touched her with his hand; whereupon she opened her eyes and espied him standing by her. Said he, "Why all this crying and mourning?" And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him, and took him around the neck and kissed him and answered, "For thy sake and because of my separation from thee." Said he, "O my lady, I have been made desolate by thee all this long time!" But she replied, "'Tis thou who hast desolated *me*; and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!" Rejoined he, "O my lady, what thinkest thou of my case with thy father and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O temptation and seduction of the Three Worlds, I had certainly slain him and made him a warning to all beholders; but, even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake." Quoth she, "How couldst thou leave me: can my life be sweet to me after thee?" Quoth he, "Let what hath happened suffice; I am now hungry, and thirsty."

So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, and they sat eating and drinking and conversing till night was wellnigh ended; and when day broke he rose to take leave of her and depart, ere the eunuch should awake. Shams al-Nahar asked him, "Whither goest thou?"; and he answered, "To my father's house, and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week." But she wept and said, "I conjure thee, by Allah the Almighty, take me with thee whereso thou wendest

and make me not taste anew the bitter-gourd of separation from thee." Quoth he, "Wilt thou indeed go with me?" and quoth she, "Yes." "Then," said he, "arise that we depart." So she rose forthright and, going to a chest, arrayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price, and she fared forth, her handmaids recking naught. So he carried her up to the roof of the palace and, mounting the ebony horse, took her up behind him and made her fast to himself, binding her with strong bonds; after which he turned the shoulder-pin of ascent, and the horse rose with him high in air. When her slave-women saw this they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who in hot haste ran to the palace roof and, looking up, saw the magical horse flying away with the Prince and Princess. At this the King was troubled with ever-increasing trouble and cried out, saying, "O King's son, I conjure thee, by Allah, have ruth on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!" The Prince made him no reply; but, thinking in himself that the maiden repented of leaving father and mother, asked her, "O ravishment of the age, say me, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy mother and father?"; whereupon she answered, "By Allah, O my lord, that is not my desire; my only wish is to be with thee, wherever thou art; for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even from my father and mother."

Hearing these words the Prince joyed with great joy, and made the horse fly and fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet her; nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, wherein was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank; after which the Prince took horse again and set her behind him, binding her in his fear for her safety; after which they fared on till they came in sight of his father's capital. At this, the Prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show his beloved the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her sire. So he set her down in one of his father's gardens without the city where his parent was wont to take his pleasure; and, carrying her into a domed summer-house prepared there for the King, left the ebony horse at the door and charged the damsel keep watch over it, saying, "Sit here, till my messenger come to thee; for I go now to my father,

to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate." She was delighted when she heard these words and said to him, "Do as thou wilt"; for she thereby understood that she should not enter the city but with due honour and worship, as became her rank.

Then the Prince left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and met and welcomed him; and the Prince said to him, "Know that I have brought with me the King's daughter of whom I told thee; and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayst make ready the procession of estate and go forth to meet her and show her thy royal dignity and troops and guards." Answered the King, "With joy and gladness"; and straightway bade decorate the town with the goodliest adornment. Then he took horse and rode out in all magnificence and majesty, he and his host, high officers and household, with drums and kettledrums, fifes and clarions and all manner instruments; whilst the Prince drew forth of his treasuries jewellery and apparel and what else of the things which kings hoard and made a rare display of wealth and splendour; moreover he got ready for the Princess a canopied litter of brocades, green, red and yellow, wherein he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave-girls. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and preceded them to the pavilion where he had set her down; and searched but found naught, neither Princess nor horse.

When he saw this, he beat his face and rent his raiment and began to wander round about the garden, as he had lost his wits; after which he came to his senses and said to himself, "How could she have come at the secret of this horse, seeing I told her nothing of it? Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse hath chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him." Then he sought the guardians of the garden and asked them if they had seen any pass the precincts; and said, "Hath anyone come in here? Tell me the truth and the whole truth or I will at once strike off your heads." They were terrified by his threats; but they answered with one voice, "We have seen no man enter save the Persian sage, who came to gather healing herbs." So the Prince was certified that it was indeed he who had taken away the maiden and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before

the folk and, turning to his sire, told him what had happened and said to him, " Take the troops and march them back to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair." When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him, " O my son, calm thy choler and master thy chagrin and come home with us and look what King's daughter thou wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her." But the Prince paid no heed to his words and, farewelling him, departed, whilst the King returned to the city and their joy was changed into sore annoy.

Now, as Destiny issued her decree, when the Prince left the Princess in the garden-house and betook himself to his father's palace, for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck certain simples and, scenting the sweet savour of musk and perfumes that exhaled from the Princess and impregnated the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw standing at the door the horse which he had made with his own hands. His heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had bemourned its loss much since it had gone out of his hand; so he went up to it and, examining its every part, found it whole and sound; whereupon he was about to mount and ride away, when he bethought himself and said, " Needs must I first look what the Prince hath brought and left here with the horse." So he entered the pavilion, and seeing the Princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining sheen in the sky serene, knew her at the first glance to be some high-born lady and doubted not but the Prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion, whilst he went to the city, to make ready for her entry in state procession with all splendour.

Then he went up to her and kissed the earth between her hands; whereupon she raised her eyes to him and, finding him exceedingly foul of face and favour, asked, " Who art thou ? "; and he answered, " O my lady, I am a messenger sent by the Prince who hath bidden me bring thee to another pleasance nearer the city; for that my lady the Queen cannot walk so far and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee." Quoth she, " Where is the Prince ? "; and quoth the Persian, " He is in the city, with his sire, and forthwith he shall come for thee in great state." Said she, " O thou ! say me, could he find none handsomer to send to me ? "; whereat loud

laughed the sage and said, "Yea, verily, he hath not a Mameluke as ugly as I am; but, O my lady, let not the ill-favour of my face and the foulness of my form deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the Prince, verily thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee, because of my uncomeliness and loathsomeness in his jealous love of thee; else hath he Mamelukes and negro slaves, pages, eunuchs and attendants out of number, each goodlier than other." When as she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him; so she rose forthright; and, putting her hand in his, said, "O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?" He replied, "O my lady, thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on"; and she, "I cannot ride it by myself." Whereupon he smiled and knew that he was her master and said, "I will ride with thee myself."

So he mounted and, taking her up behind him, bound her to himself with firm bonds, while she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the ascent-pin, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro like a wave of the sea, and rose with them high in air nor slackened in its flight, till it was out of sight of the city. Now, when Shams al-Nahar saw this, she asked him, "Ho, thou! what is become of that thou toldest me of my Prince, making me believe that he sent thee to me?" Answered the Persian, "Allah damn the Prince! he is a mean and skinflint knave." She cried, "Woe to thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment?" Whereto the Persian replied, "He is no lord of mine; knowest thou who I am?" Rejoined the Princess, "I know nothing of thee save what thou toldest me"; and retorted he, "What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the King's son; I have long lamented the loss of this horse which is under us; for I constructed it and made myself master of it. But now I have gotten firm hold of it and of thee too, and I will burn his heart even as he hath burnt mine; nor shall he ever have the horse again; no, never! So be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for I can be of more use to thee than he; and I am generous as I am wealthy; my servants and slaves shall obey thee as their mistress; I will robe thee in finest raiment and thine every wish shall be at thy will."

When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out,

saying, "Ah, well-away! I have not won my beloved and I have lost my father and mother!" And she wept bitter tears over what had befallen her, whilst the sage fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks and alighted in a verdant mead, abounding in streams and trees. Now this meadow lay near a city wherein was a King of high puissance, and it chanced that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the damsel and the horse by his side; and, before the sage was ware, the King's slaves fell upon him and carried him and the lady and the horse to their master who, noting the foulness of the man's favour and his loathsomeness and the beauty of the girl and her loveliness, said, "O my lady, what kin is this oldster to thee?" The Persian made haste to reply, saying, "She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother." But the lady at once gave him the lie and said, "O King, by Allah, I know him not, nor is he my husband; nay, he is a wicked magician who hath stolen me away by force and fraud." Thereupon the King bade bastinado the Persian and they beat him till he was wellnigh dead; after which the King commanded to carry him to the city and cast him into jail; and, taking from him the damsel and the ebony horse (though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion), set the girl in his Serraglio and the horse amongst his hoards.

Such was the case with the sage and the lady; but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, he garbed himself in travelling gear and taking what he needed of money, set out tracking their trail in very sorry plight; and journeyed from country to country and city to city seeking the Princess and inquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marvelled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus he continued doing a long while; but, for all his inquiry and quest, he could hit on no news of her. At last he came to her father's city of Sana'a and there asked for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, continuing to inquire concerning the twain as he went along, till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain Khan and saw a company of merchants sitting at talk. So he sat down near them and heard one say, "O my friends, I lately witnessed a wonder of wonders."

They asked, "What was that?" and he answered, "I was visiting such a district in such a city (naming the city wherein was the Princess), and I heard its people chatting of a strange thing which had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day hunting and coursing with a company of his courtiers and the lords of his realm; and, issuing from the city, they came to a green meadow where they espied an old man standing, with a woman sitting hard by a horse of ebony. The man was foulest-foul of face and loathly of form, but the woman was a marvel of beauty and loveliness and elegance and perfect grace; and as for the wooden horse, it was a miracle, never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more gracious than its make." Asked the others, "And what did the King with them?"; and the merchant answered, "As for the man the King seized him and questioned him of the damsel and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his paternal uncle; but she gave him the lie forthright and declared that he was a sorcerer and a villain. So the King took her from the old man and bade bear him and cast him into the trunk-house. As for the ebony horse, I know not what became of it."

When the Prince heard these words, he drew near to the merchant and began questioning him discreetly and courteously touching the name of the city and of its King; which when he knew, he passed the night full of joy. And as soon as dawned the day he set out and travelled sans surcease till he reached that city; but, when he would have entered, the gatekeepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King to question him of his condition and the craft in which he skilled and the cause of his coming thither—such being the usage and custom of their ruler. Now it was supper-time when he entered the city, and it was then impossible to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting the stranger. So the guards carried him to the jail, thinking to lay him by the heels there for the night; but, when the warders saw his beauty and loveliness, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him: they made him sit with them without the walls; and, when food came to them, he ate with them what sufficed him.

As soon as they had made an end of eating, they turned to the Prince and said, "What countryman art thou?" "I

come from Fars," answered he, "the land of the Chosroës." When they heard this they laughed and one of them said, "O Chosroan,[1] I have heard the talk of men and their histories and I have looked into their conditions; but never saw I or heard I a bigger liar than the Chosroan which is with us in the jail." Quoth another, "And never did I see aught fouler than his favour or more hideous than his visnomy." Asked the Prince, "What have ye seen of his lying?"; and they answered, "He pretendeth that he is one of the wise! Now the King came upon him, as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most beautiful woman and a horse of the blackest ebony, never saw I a handsomer. As for the damsel, she is with the King, who is enamoured of her and would fain marry her; but she is mad, and were this man a leach as he claimeth to be, he would have healed her, for the King doth his utmost to discover a cure for her case and a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers, on her account; but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal hoard-house, and the ugly man is here with us in prison; and as soon as night falleth, he weepeth and bemoaneth himself and will not let us sleep."

When the warders had recounted the case of the Persian egromancer they held in prison and his weeping and wailing, the Prince at once devised a device whereby he might compass his desire; and presently the guards of the gate, being minded to sleep, led him into the jail and locked the door. So he overheard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself, in his own tongue, and saying, "Alack, and alas for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King's son, in that which I did with the damsel; for I neither left her nor won my will of her! All this cometh of my lack of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me; for whoso seeketh what suiteth him not at all, falleth with the like of my fall." Now when the King's son heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying, "How long will this weeping and wailing last? Say me, thinkest thou that hath befallen thee that which never befell other than thou?" Now when the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to

[1] "Fars" is the origin of Persia; and there is a hit at the prodigious lying of the modern race.

complain to him of his case and misfortunes. And as soon as the morning morrowed, the warders took the Prince and carried him before their King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when audience was impossible. Quoth the King to the Prince, "Whence comest thou and what is thy name and trade and why hast thou travelled hither?" He replied, "As to my name I am called in Persian Harjah; as to my country I come from the land of Fars; and I am of the men of art and especially of the art of medicine and healing the sick and those whom the Jinn drive mad. For this I go round about all countries and cities, to profit by adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a patient I heal him and this is my craft."

Now when the King heard this, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said; "O excellent sage, thou hast indeed come to us at a time when we need thee." Then he acquainted him with the case of the Princess, adding, "If thou cure her and recover her from her madness, thou shalt have of me everything thou seekest." Replied the Prince, "Allah save and favour the King: describe to me all thou hast seen of her insanity and tell me how long it is since the access attacked her; also how thou camest by her and the horse and the sage." So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, "The sage is in jail." Quoth the Prince, "O auspicious King, and what hast thou done with the horse?" Quoth the King, "O youth, it is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure-chambers," whereupon said the Prince within himself, "The best thing I can do is first to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and sound, all will be well and end well; but, if its motor-works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved."

Thereupon he turned to the King and said to him, "O King, I must see the horse in question: haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel." "With all my heart," replied the King, and taking him by the hand, showed him into the place where the horse was. The Prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and sound, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King, "Allah save and exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her; for I hope in

Allah to heal her by my healing hand through means of the horse." Then he bade them take care of the horse and the King carried him to the Princess's apartment, where her lover found her wringing her hands and writhing and beating herself against the ground, and tearing her garments to tatters as was her wont; but there was no madness of Jinn in her, and she did this but that none might approach her.

When the Prince saw her thus, he said to her, "No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of the three worlds"; and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he managed to whisper, "I am Kamar al-Akmar"; whereupon she cried out with a loud cry and fell down fainting for excess of joy; but the King thought this was epilepsy brought on by her fear of him, and by her suddenly being startled. Then the Prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her, "O Shams al-Nahar, O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for this our position needeth sufferance and skilful contrivance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. My first move will be now to go out to him and tell him that thou art possessed of a Jinni and hence thy madness; but that I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit, if he will at once unbind thy bonds. So when he cometh in to thee, do thou speak him smooth words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be done for us as we desire." Quoth she, "Hearkening and obedience"; and he went out to the King in joy and gladness, and said to him, "O august King, I have, by thy good fortune, discovered her disease and its remedy, and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to her and speak her softly and treat her kindly, and promise her what may please her; so shall all thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee."

Thereupon the King went in to her and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground before him, bade him welcome and said, "I admire how thou hast come to visit thy handmaid this day"; whereat he was ready to fly for joy and bade the waiting-women and the eunuchs attend her and carry her to the Hammam and make ready for her dresses and adornment. So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their salams with the goodliest language and after the pleasantest fashion; whereupon they clad her in royal apparel and, clasping a collar

of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth, as she were the full moon; and, when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissing the ground before him; whereupon he joyed in her with joy exceeding and said to the Prince, "O sage, O philosopher, all this is of thy blessing. Allah increase to us the benefit of thy healing breath!" The Prince replied, "O King, for the completion of her cure it behoveth that thou go forth, thou and all thy troops and guards, to the place where thou foundest her, not forgetting the beast of black wood which was with her; for therein is a devil; and, unless I exorcise him, he will return to her and afflict her at the head of every month." "With love and gladness," cried the King, "O thou Prince of all philosophers and most learned of all who see the light of day."

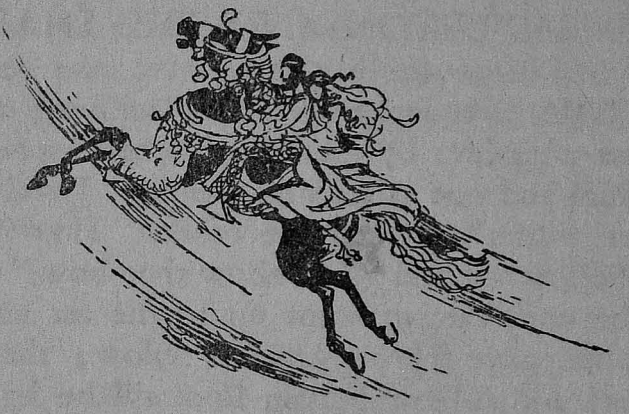
Then he brought out the ebony horse to the meadow in question and rode thither with all his troops and the Princess, little weeting the purpose of the Prince. Now when they came to the appointed place, the Prince, still habited as a leach, bade them set the Princess and the steed as far as eye could reach from the King and his troops, and said to him, "With thy leave, and at thy word, I will now proceed to the fumigations and conjurations, and here imprison the adversary of mankind, that he may never more return to her. After this, I shall mount this wooden horse which seemeth to be made of ebony, and take the damsel up behind me; whereupon it will shake and sway to and fro and fare forwards, till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end; and after this thou mayst do with her as thou wilt." When the King heard his words, he rejoiced with extreme joy; so the Prince mounted the horse, and, taking the damsel up behind him, whilst the King and his troops watched him, bound her fast to him. Then he turned the ascending-pin and the horse took flight and soared with them high in air, till they disappeared from every eye.

After this the King abode half the day, expecting their return; but they returned not. So when he despaired of them, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel, he went back to the city with his troops. He then sent for the Persian who was in prison and said to him, "O thou traitor, O thou villain, why didst thou hide from me

the mystery of the ebony horse? And now a sharper hath come to me and hath carried it off, together with a slave-girl whose ornaments are worth a mint of money, and I shall never see anyone or anything of them again!" So the Persian related to him all his past, first and last, and the King was seized with a fit of fury which wellnigh ended his life. He shut himself up in his palace for a while, mourning and afflicted; but at last his Wazirs came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying, "Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be Allah who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!" And they ceased not from him, till he was comforted for her loss.

Thus far concerning the King; but as for the Prince, he continued his career towards his father's capital in joy and cheer, and stayed not till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the lady in safety; after which he went in to his father and mother and saluted them and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they were filled with solace and gladness. Then he spread great banquets for the townsfolk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the Princess and they took their joy of each other with exceeding joy. But his father brake the ebony horse in pieces and destroyed its mechanism for flight; moreover the Prince wrote a letter to the Princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and informing him how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness, and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and curious rarities. And when the messenger arrived at the city which was Sana's and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, he read the missive and rejoiced greatly thereat and accepted the presents, honouring and rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he forwarded rich gifts to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed; whereat he was much cheered. And after this the Prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him presents till, in course of time, his sire King Sabur deceased and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his lieges and conducting himself well and righteously towards them, so that the land submitted to him and his subjects did him loyal service; and Kamar al-Akmar and his wife Shams al-Nahar abode in the enjoyment

of all satisfaction and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Societies; the Plunderer of Palaces, the Caterer for Cemeteries, and the Garnerer of Graves. And now glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the worlds visible and invisible!



THE SIMPLETON AND THE SHARPER

A CERTAIN simpleton was once walking along, haling his ass after him by the halter, when a pair of sharpers saw him and one said to his fellow, "I will take that ass from yonder wight." Asked the other, "How wilt thou do that?" "Follow me and I will show thee how," answered the first. So the cony-catcher went up to the ass and, loosing it from the halter, gave the beast to his fellow; then he haltered his own head and followed Tom Fool till he knew the other had got clean off with the ass, when he stood still. The oaf haled at the halter, but the rascal stirred not; so he turned and seeing the halter on a man's neck, said to him, "What art thou?" Quoth the sharper, "I am thine ass and my story is a wondrous one and 'tis this. Know that I have a pious old mother and came in to her one day, drunk; and she said to me, 'O my son, repent to the Almighty of these thy transgressions.' But I took my staff and beat her, whereupon she cursed me and Allah changed me into an ass and caused me fall into thy hands, where I have remained till this moment. However, to-day, my mother called me to mind and her heart yearned towards me; so she prayed for me and the Lord restored me to my former shape amongst the sons of Adam."

Cried the silly one, "There is no Majesty and there is no

Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Allah upon thee, O my brother, acquit me of what I have done with thee in the way of riding and so forth." Then he let the cony-catcher go and returned home, drunken with chagrin and concern as with wine. His wife asked him, "What aileth thee and where is the donkey?"; and he answered, "Thou knowest not what was this ass; but I will tell thee." So he told her the story, and she exclaimed, "Alack and alas for the punishment we shall receive from Almighty Allah! How could we have used a man as a beast of burden, all this while?" And she gave alms by way of atonement and prayed pardon of Heaven. Then the man abode awhile at home, idle and feckless, till she said to him, "How long wilt thou sit at home doing naught? Go to the market and buy us an ass and ply thy work with it." Accordingly, he went to the market and stopped by the ass-stand, where behold, he saw his own ass for sale. So he went up to it and clapping his mouth to its ear, said to it, "Woe to thee, thou ne'er-do-well! Doubtless thou hast been getting drunk again and beating thy mother! But, by Allah, I will never buy thee more!" And he left it and went away.

THE UNWISE SCHOOLMASTER WHO FELL IN LOVE BY REPORT

QUOTH one of the learned: I passed once by a school wherein a schoolmaster was teaching children; so I entered, finding him a good-looking man and a well-dressed; when he rose to me and made me sit with him. Then I examined him in the Koran and in syntax and prosody and lexicography; and behold, he was perfect in all required of him, so I said to him, "Allah strengthen thy purpose! Thou art indeed versed in all that is requisite." Thereafter I frequented him a while, discovering daily some new excellence in him, and quoth I to myself, "This is indeed a wonder in any dominie; for the wise are agreed upon a lack of wit in children's teachers." Then I separated myself from him and sought him and visited him only every few days, till coming to see him one day as of wont, I found the school shut and made inquiry of his neighbours, who replied, "Someone is dead in his house." So I said in my mind, "It behoveth me to pay him a visit of condolence," and going to his house, knocked at the door, when a slave-girl came out to me and asked, "What dost thou want?" and I answered, "I want thy master." She replied, "He is sitting alone, mourning"; and I rejoined, "Tell him that his friend so and so seeketh to console him." She went in and told him; and he said, "Admit him."

So she brought me in to him, and I found him seated alone and his head bound with mourning fillets. So I said to him, "Allah requite thee amply! This is a path all must perforce tread, and it behoveth thee to take patience"; adding, "But who is dead unto thee?" He answered, "One who was dearest of the folk to me and best beloved." "Perhaps thy father?" "No!" "Thy brother?" "No!" "One of thy kindred?" "No!" Then asked I, "What relation was the dead to thee?"; and he answered, "My lover." Quoth I to myself, "This is the first proof to swear by of his lack of wit." So I said to him, "Assuredly there be others than she and fairer"; and he made answer, "I never saw her, that I might judge whether or no there be others fairer than she." Quoth I to myself, "This is another proof positive." Then I said to him, "And how couldst thou fall in love with one thou hast never seen?" He replied, "Know that I was sitting one day at the window, when lo! there passed by a man, singing the following distich:

Umm Amr', thy boons Allah repay!
Give back my heart be't where it may!

When I heard the man humming these words as he passed along the street, I said to myself, 'Except this Umm Amru were without equal in the world, the poets had not celebrated her in ode and canzon.' So I fell in love with her; but, two days after, the same man passed, singing the following couplet:

Ass and Umm Amr' went their way;
Nor she, nor ass returned for aye.

Thereupon I knew that she was dead and mourned for her. This was three days ago, and I have been mourning ever since."

HOW ABU HASAN BRAKE WIND

THEY recount that in the City Kaukaban of Al-Yaman there was a man of the Fazli tribe who had left Badawi life, and become a townsman for many years and was a merchant of the most opulent merchants. His wife had deceased when both were young; and his friends were instant with him to marry again, ever quoting to him the words of the poet:

> Go, gossip! re-wed thee, for Prime draweth near:
> A wife is an almanac—good for the year.

So being weary of contention, Abu Hasan entered into negotiations with the old women who procure matches, and married a maid like Canopus when he hangeth over the seas of Al-Hind. He made high festival therefor, bidding to the wedding-banquet kith and kin, Olema and Fakirs; friends and foes and all his acquaintances of that countryside. The whole house was thrown open to feasting: there were rices of five several colours, and sherbets of as many more; and kids stuffed with walnuts and

almonds and pistachios, and a camel-colt [1] roasted whole. So they ate and drank and made mirth and merriment; and the bride was displayed in her seven dresses and one more, to the women, who could not take their eyes off her.

At last, the bridegroom was summoned to the chamber where she sat enthroned; and he rose slowly and with dignity from his divan; but in so doing, for that he was over-full of meat and drink, lo and behold! he let fly a fart, great and terrible. Thereupon each guest turned to his neighbour and talked aloud and made as though he had heard nothing, fearing for his life. But a consuming fire was lit in Abu Hasan's heart; so he pretended a call of nature; and, in lieu of seeking the bride-chamber, he went down to the house-court and saddled his mare and rode off, weeping bitterly, through the shadow of the night. In time he reached Lahej where he found a ship ready to sail for India; so he shipped on board and made Calicut of Malabar. Here he met with many Arabs, especially Hazramis,[2] who recommended him to the King; and this King (who was a Kafir) trusted him and advanced him to the captainship of his bodyguard. He remained ten years in all solace and delight of life; at the end of which time he was seized with homesickness; and the longing to behold his native land was that of a lover pining for his beloved; and he came near to die of yearning desire.

But his appointed day had not dawned; so, after taking the first bath of health, he left the King without leave, and in due course landed at Makalla of Hazramaut. Here he donned the rags of a religious; and, keeping his name and case secret, fared for Kaukaban afoot; enduring a thousand hardships of hunger, thirst and fatigue; and braving a thousand dangers from the lion, the snake and the Ghul. But when he drew near his old home, he looked down upon it from the hills with brimming eyes, and said in himself, "Haply they might know thee; so I will wander about the outskirts, and hearken to the folk. Allah grant that my case be not remembered by them!" He listened carefully for seven nights and seven days, till it so chanced that, as he was sitting at the door of a hut, he heard the

[1] A favourite Badawi dish, but too expensive unless some accident happens to the animal.

[2] *I.e.* of the province of Hazramaut, the Biblical Hazarmaveth (Gen. x. 26).

voice of a young girl saying, "O my mother, tell me the day when I was born; for such an one of my companions is about to take an omen for me."[1] And the mother answered, "Thou was born, O my daughter, on the very night when Abu Hasan farted."

Now the listener no sooner heard these words than he rose up from the bench, and fled away saying to himself, "Verily thy fart hath become a date, which shall last for ever and ever; even as the poet said:

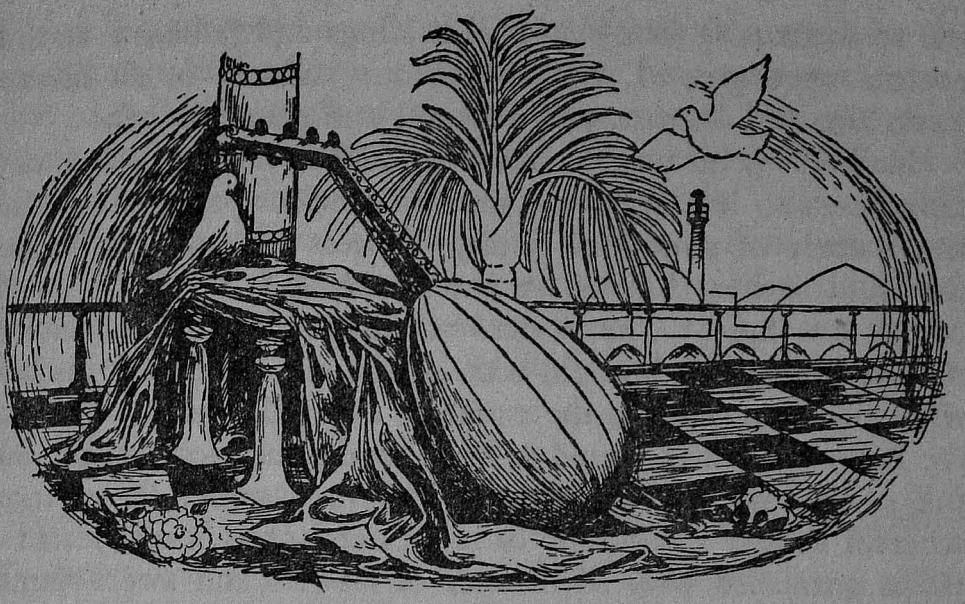
As long as palms shall shift the flower;
As long as palms shall sift the flour.[2]

And he ceased not travelling and voyaging and returned to India; and there abode in self-exile till he died; and the mercy of Allah be upon him![3]

[1] Alluding to the *Sortes Coranicæ* and other silly practices known to the English servant-girl when curious about her future.

[2] *I.e.* in Arab-land (where they eat dates) and Ajam, or lands non-Arab (where bread is the staff of life); that is, all the world over.

[3] The Badawi who eructates as a civility has a mortal hatred of a *crepitus ventris*; and were a by-stander to laugh at its accidental occurrence he would at once be cut down as a "pundonor."



SINDBAD THE SEAMAN AND SINDBAD THE LANDSMAN

THERE lived in the city of Baghdad, during the reign of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, a man named Sindbad the Hammal, one in poor case who bore burdens on his head for hire. It happened to him one day of great heat that whilst he was carrying a heavy load, he became exceeding weary and sweated profusely, the heat and the weight alike oppressing him. Presently, as he was passing the gate of a merchant's house, before which the ground was swept and watered, and there the air was temperate, he sighted a broad bench beside the door; so he set his load thereon, to take rest and smell the air, and there came out upon him from the court-door a pleasant breeze and a delicious fragrance. He sat down on the edge of the bench, and at once heard from within the melodious sound of lutes and other stringed instruments, and mirth-exciting voices singing and reciting, together with the song of birds warbling and glorifying Almighty Allah in various tunes and tongues; turtles, mocking-birds, merles, nightingales, cushats and stone-curlews, whereat he marvelled in himself and was moved to mighty joy and solace. Then he went up to the gate and saw within a great flower garden wherein were pages and black slaves and such a train of servants and attendants

and so forth as is found only with Kings and Sultans; and his nostrils were greeted with the savoury odours of all manner meats rich and delicate, and delicious and generous wines.

He bore up his burden and was about to fare on, when there came forth to him from the gate a little foot-page, fair of face and shapely of shape and dainty of dress who caught him by the hand saying, "Come in and speak with my lord, for he calleth for thee." The Porter would have excused himself to the page but the lad would take no refusal; so he left his load with the doorkeeper in the vestibule and followed the boy into the house, which he found to be a goodly mansion, radiant and full of majesty, till he brought him to a grand sitting-room wherein he saw a company of nobles and great lords, seated at tables garnished with all manner of flowers and sweet-scented herbs, besides great plenty of dainty viands and fruits dried and fresh and confections and wines of the choicest vintages. There also were instruments of music and mirth and lovely slave-girls playing and singing. All the company was ranged according to rank; and in the highest place sat a man of worshipful and noble aspect whose beard-sides hoariness had stricken; and he was stately of stature and fair of favour, agreeable of aspect and full of gravity and dignity and majesty. So Sindbad the Porter was confounded at that which he beheld and said in himself, "By Allah, this must be either a piece of Paradise or some King's palace!" Then he saluted the company with much respect praying for their prosperity, and kissing the ground before them, stood with his head bowed down in humble attitude.

The master of the house bade him draw near and be seated and bespoke him kindly, bidding him welcome. Then he set before him various kinds of viands, rich and delicate and delicious, and the Porter, after saying his Bismillah, fell to and ate his fill, after which he exclaimed, "Praised be Allah whatso be our case!" and, washing his hands, returned thanks to the company for his entertainment. Quoth the host, "Thou art welcome and thy day is a blessed. But what is thy name and calling?" Quoth the other, "O my lord, my name is Sindbad the Hammal, and I carry folk's goods on my head for hire." The house-master smiled and rejoined, "Know, O Porter that thy name is even as mine, for I am Sindbad the Seaman. My story is a wonderful one, and thou shalt hear all that befell me

and all I underwent ere I rose to this state of prosperity and became the lord of this place wherein thou seest me; for I came not to this high estate save after travail sore and perils galore, and how much toil and trouble have I not suffered in days of yore! I have made seven voyages, by each of which hangeth a marvellous tale, such as counfoundeth the reason, and all this came to pass by doom of fortune and fate; for from what Destiny doth write there is neither refuge nor flight." Know, then, good my lords (continued he) that I am about to relate the

FIRST VOYAGE OF SINDBAD, HIGHT THE SEAMAN

My father was a merchant, one of the notables of my native place, a monied man and ample of means, who died whilst I was yet a child, leaving me much wealth in money and lands and farm-houses. When I grew up, I laid hands on the whole and ate of the best and drank freely and wore rich clothes and lived lavishly, companioning and consorting with youths of my own age, and considering that this course of life would continue for ever and ken no change. Thus I did for a long time, but at last I awoke from my heedlessness and, returning to my senses, I found my wealth had become unwealth and my condition ill-conditioned and all I once hent had left my hand. And recovering my reason I was stricken with dismay and confusion and bethought me of a saying of our Lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), which I had heard aforetime from my father, "Three things are better than other three; the day of death is better than the day of birth, a live dog is better than a dead lion and the grave is better than want." Then I got together my remains of estates and property and sold all, even my clothes, for three thousand dirhams, with which I resolved to travel to foreign parts.

So taking heart I bought me goods, merchandise and all needed for a voyage and, impatient to be at sea, I embarked, with a company of merchants, on board a ship bound for Bassorah. There we again embarked and sailed many days and nights, and we passed from isle to isle and sea to sea and shore to shore, buying and selling and bartering everywhere the ship touched, and continued our course till we came to an island as

it were a garth of the gardens of Paradise. Here the captain cast anchor and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-planks. So all on board landed and made furnaces and lighting fires therein, busied themselves in various ways, some cooking and some washing, whilst other some walked about the island for solace, and the crew fell to eating and drinking and playing and sporting. I was one of the walkers but, as we were thus engaged, behold the master who was standing on the gunwale cried out to us at the top of his voice, saying, "Ho there! passengers, run for your lives and hasten back to the ship and leave your gear and save yourselves from destruction, Allah preserve you! For this island whereon ye stand is no true island, but a great fish stationary amiddlemost of the sea, whereon the sand hath settled and trees have sprung up of old time, so that it is become like unto an island, but, when ye lighted fires on it, felt the heat and moved; and in a moment it will sink with you into the sea and ye will all be drowned. So leave your gear and seek your safety ere ye die!"

All who heard him left gear and goods, clothes washed and unwashed, fire-pots and brass cooking-pots, and fled back to the ship for their lives, and some reached it while others (amongst whom was I) did not, for suddenly the island shook and sank into the abysses of the deep, with all that were thereon, and the dashing sea surged over it with clashing waves. I sank with the others down, down into the deep, but Almighty Allah preserved me from drowning and threw in my way a great wooden tub of those that had served the ship's company for tubbing. I gripped it for the sweetness of life and, bestriding it like one riding, paddled with my feet like oars, whilst the waves tossed me as in sport right and left. Meanwhile the captain made sail and departed with those who had reached the ship, regardless of the drowning and the drowned; and I ceased not following the vessel with my eyes, till she was hid from sight and I made sure of death. Darkness closed in upon me while in this plight and the winds and waves bore me on all that night and the next day, till the tub brought to with me under the lee of a lofty island, with trees overhanging the tide.

I caught hold of a branch and by its aid clambered up on to the land, after coming nigh upon death; but when I reached the shore, I found my legs cramped and numbed and my feet

bore traces of the nibbling of fish upon their soles; withal I had felt nothing for excess of anguish and fatigue. I threw myself down on the island ground, like a dead man, and drowned in desolation swooned away, nor did I return to my senses till next morning, when the sun rose and revived me. But I found my feet swollen, so made shift to move by shuffling on my breech and crawling on my knees, for in that island were found store of fruits and springs of sweet water. I ate of the fruits which strengthened me; and thus I abode days and nights, till my life seemed to return and my spirits began to revive and

I was better able to move about. So, after due consideration, I fell to exploring the island and diverting myself with gazing upon all things that Allah Almighty had created there; and rested under the trees from one of which I cut me a staff to lean on.

One day as I walked along the marge, I caught sight of some object in the distance and thought it a wild beast or one of the monster-creatures of the sea; but, as I drew near it, looking hard the while, I saw that it was a noble mare, tethered on the beach. Presently I went up to her, but she cried out against me with a great cry, so that I trembled for fear and turned to go away, when there came forth a man from under the earth and

followed me, crying out and saying, " Who and whence art thou, and what caused thee to come hither ? " " O my lord," answered I, " I am in very sooth, a waif, a stranger, and was left to drown with sundry others by the ship we voyaged in ; but Allah graciously sent me a wooden tub ; so I saved myself thereon and it floated with me, till the waves cast me up on this island." When he heard this, he took my hand and saying, " Come with me," carried me into a great Sardab, or underground chamber, which was spacious as a saloon. He made me sit down at its upper end ; then he brought me somewhat of food and, being anhungered, I ate till I was satisfied and refreshed ; and when he had put me at mine ease he questioned me of myself, and I told him all that had befallen me from first to last ; and, as he wondered at my adventure, I said, " By Allah, O my lord, excuse me ; I have told thee the truth of my case and the accident which betided me ; and now I desire that thou tell me who thou art and why thou abidest here under the earth and why thou hast tethered yonder mare on the brink of the sea." Answered he, " Know that I am one of the several who are stationed in different parts of this island, and we are of the grooms of King Mihrjan and under our hand are all his horses. Every month, about new-moontide we bring hither our best mares which have never been covered, and picket them on the seashore and hide ourselves in this place under the ground, so that none may espy us. Presently, the stallions of the sea scent the mares and come up out of the water and seeing no one, leap the mares and do their will of them.

" When they have covered them, they try to drag them away with them, but cannot, by reason of the leg-ropes ; so they cry out at them and butt at them and kick them, which we hearing, know that the stallions have dismounted ; so we run out and shout at them, whereupon they are startled and return in fear to the sea. Then the mares conceive by them and bear colts and fillies worth a mint of money, nor is their like to be found on earth's face. This is the time of the coming forth of the sea-stallions ; and Inshallah ! I will bear thee to King Mihrjan and show thee our country. And know that hadst thou not happened on us thou hadst perished miserably and none had known of thee : but I will be the means of the saving of thy life and of thy return to thine own land."

I called down blessings on him and thanked him for his kindness and courtesy; and, while we were yet talking, behold, the stallion came up out of the sea; and, giving a great cry, sprang upon the mare and covered her. When he had done his will of her, he dismounted and would have carried her away with him, but could not by reason of the tether. She kicked and cried out at him, whereupon the groom took a sword and target and ran out of the underground saloon, smiting the buckler with the blade and calling to his company, who came up shouting and brandishing spears; and the stallion took fright at them and plunging into the sea, like a buffalo, disappeared under the waves. After this we sat awhile, till the rest of the grooms came up, each leading a mare, and seeing me with their fellow-syce, questioned me of my case and I repeated my story to them. Thereupon they drew near me and spreading the table, ate and invited me to eat; so I ate with them, after which they took horse and mounting me on one of the mares, set out with me and fared on without ceasing, till we came to the capital city of King Mihrjan, and going in to him acquainted him with my story.

Then he sent for me, and when they set me before him and salams had been exchanged, he gave me a cordial welcome and wishing me long life bade me tell him my tale. So I related to him all that I had seen and all that had befallen me from first to last, whereat he marvelled and said to me, "By Allah, O my son, thou hast indeed been miraculously preserved! Were not the terms of thy life a long one, thou hadst not escaped from these straits; but praised be Allah for safety!" Then he spoke cheerily to me and entreated me with kindness and consideration: moreover, he made me his agent for the port and registrar of all ships that entered the harbour. I attended him regularly, to receive his commandments, and he favoured me and did all manner of kindness and invested me with costly and splendid robes. Indeed, I was high in credit with him, as an intercessor for the folk and an intermediary between them and him, when they wanted aught of him. I abode thus a great while and, as often as I passed through the city to the port, I questioned the merchants and travellers and sailors of the city of Baghdad; so haply I might hear of an occasion to return to my native land, but could find none who knew it or knew any who resorted

thither. At this I was chagrined, for I was weary of long stranger-hood; and my disappointment endured for a time till one day, going in to King Mihrjan, I found with him a company of Indians.

I saluted them and they returned my salam; and politely welcomed me and asked me of my country. I questioned them of theirs and they told me that they were of various castes, some being called Shakiriyah who are the noblest of their castes and neither oppress nor offer violence to any, and others Brahmans, a folk who abstain from wine, but live in delight and solace and merriment and own camels and horses and cattle. Moreover, they told me that the people of India are divided into two-and-seventy castes, and I marvelled at this with exceeding marvel.

Amongst other things that I saw in King Mihrjan's dominions was an island called Kasil, wherein all night is heard the beating of drums and tabrets; but we were told by the neighbouring islanders and by travellers that the inhabitants are people of diligence and judgment. In this sea I saw also a fish two hundred cubits long and the fishermen fear it; so they strike together pieces of wood and put it to flight. I also saw another fish, with a head like that of an owl, besides many other wonders and rarities, which it would be tedious to recount. I occupied myself thus in visiting the islands till, one day, as I stood in the port, with a staff in my hand, according to my custom, behold, a great ship, wherein were many merchants, came sailing for the harbour. When it reached the small inner port where ships anchor under the city, the master furled his sails and, making fast to the shore, put out the landing-planks, whereupon the crew fell to breaking bulk and landing cargo whilst I stood by, taking written note of them.

They were long in bringing the goods ashore so I asked the master, "Is there aught left in thy ship?"; and he answered, "O my lord, there are divers bales of merchandise in the hold, whose owner was drowned from amongst us at one of the islands on our course; so his goods remained in our charge by way of trust and we purpose to sell them and note their price, that we may convey it to his people in the city of Baghdad, the Home of Peace." "What was the merchant's name?" quoth I, and quoth he, "Sindbad the Seaman";

whereupon I straitly considered him and knowing him, cried out to him with a great cry, saying, "O captain, I am that Sindbad the Seaman who travelled with other merchants; and when the fish heaved and thou calledst to us some saved themselves and others sank, I being one of them. But Allah Almighty threw in my way a great tub of wood, of those the crew had used to wash withal, and the winds and waves carried me to this island, where by Allah's grace, I fell in with King Mihrjan's grooms and they brought me hither to the King their master. When I told him my story, he entreated me with favour and made me his harbour-master, and I have prospered in his service and found acceptance with him. These bales, therefore are mine, the goods which God hath given me."

The other exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, there is neither conscience nor good faith left among men!" Said I, "O Rais, what mean these words, seeing that I have told thee my case?" And he answered, "Because thou heardest me say that I had with me goods whose owner was drowned, thou thinkest to take them without right; but this was forbidden by law to thee, for we saw him drown before our eyes, together with many other passengers, nor was one of them saved. So how canst thou pretend that thou art the owner of the goods?" "O captain," said I, "listen to my story and give heed to my words, and my truth will be manifest to thee; for lying and leasing are the letter-marks of the hypocrites." Then I recounted to him all that had befallen me since I sailed from Baghdad with him to the time when we came to the fish-island where we were nearly drowned; and I reminded him of certain matters which had passed between us; whereupon both he and the merchants were certified of the truth of my story and recognised me and gave my joy of deliverance, saying, "By Allah, we thought not that thou hadst escaped drowning! But the Lord hath granted thee new life." Then they delivered my bales to me, and I found my name written thereon, nor was aught thereof lacking. So I opened them and making up a present for King Mihrjan of the finest and costliest of the contents, caused the sailors carry it up to the palace, where I went in to the King and laid my present at his feet, acquainting him with what had happened, especially concerning the ship and my goods; whereat he

wondered with exceeding wonder and the truth of all that I had told him was made manifest to him.

His affection for me redoubled after that and he showed me exceeding honour and bestowed on me a great present in return for mine. Then I sold my bales and what other matters I owned making a great profit on them, and bought me other goods and gear of the growth and fashion of the island-city. When the merchants were about to start on their homeward voyage, I embarked on board the ship all that I possessed, and going in to the King, thanked him for all his favours and friendship and craved his leave to return to my own land and friends. He farewelled me and bestowed on me great store of the country-stuffs and produce; and I took leave of him and embarked. Then we set sail and fared on nights and days, by the permission of Allah Almighty; and Fortune served us and Fate favoured us, so that we arrived in safety at Bassorah city where I landed rejoiced at my safe return to my natal soil. After a short stay, I set out for Baghdad, the House of Peace, with store of goods and commodities of great price. Reaching the city in due time, I went straight to my own quarter and entered my house where all my friends and kinsfolk came to greet me. Then I bought me eunuchs and concubines, servants and negro slaves till I had a large establishment, and I bought me houses, and lands and gardens, till I was richer and in better case than before, and returned to enjoy the society of my friends and familiars more assiduously than ever, forgetting all I had suffered of fatigue and hardship and strangerhood and every peril of travel; and I applied myself to all manner joys and solaces and delights, eating the daintiest viands and drinking the deliciousest wines; and my wealth allowed this state of things to endure.

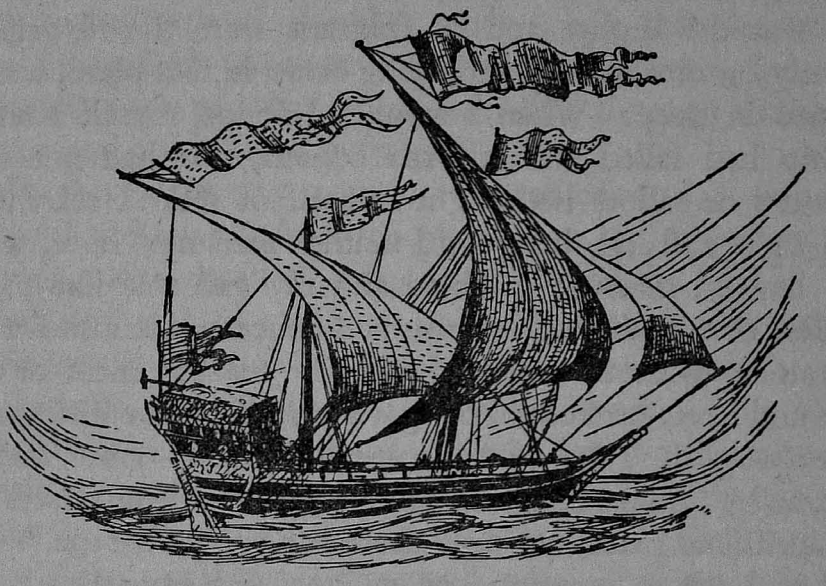
This, then, is the story of my first voyage, and to-morrow, Inshallah! I will tell you the tale of the second of my seven voyages.

Saith he who telleth the tale: Then Sindbad the Seaman made Sindbad the Landsman sup with him and bade him give an hundred gold pieces, saying, "Thou hast cheered us with thy company this day." The Porter thanked him and, taking the gift, went his way, pondering that which he had heard and marvelling mightily at what things betide mankind. He passed the night in his own place and with early morning repaired to

the abode of Sindbad the Seaman, who received him with honour and seated him by his side. As soon as the rest of the company was assembled, he set meat and drink before them and, when they had well eaten and drunken and were in merry and cheerful case, he took up his discourse and recounted to them in these words the narrative of

THE SECOND VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN

KNOW, O my brother, that I was living a most comfortable and enjoyable life, in all solace and delight, as I told you yester-



day, until one day my mind became possessed with the thought of travelling about the world of men and seeing their cities and islands; and a longing seized me to traffic and to make money by trade. Upon this resolve I took a great store of cash and, buying goods and gear fit for travel, bound them up in bales. Then I went down to the river-bank, where I found a noble ship and brand-new about to sail, equipped with sails of fine cloth and well-manned and provisioned; so I took passage in her, with a number of other merchants, and after embarking our goods we weighed anchor the same day. Right fair was our voyage and we sailed from place to place and from isle to isle; and whenever we anchored we met a crowd of merchants and notables and customers, and we took to buying and selling and bartering.

At last Destiny brought us to an island, fair and verdant, in trees abundant, with yellow-ripe fruits luxuriant, and flowers fragrant and birds warbling soft descant; and streams crystalline and radiant; but no sign of man showed to the descrier, no, not a blower of the fire. The captain made fast with us to this island, and the merchants and sailors landed and walked about, enjoying the shade of the trees and the song of the birds, that chanted the praises of the One, the Victorious, and marvelling at the works of the Omnipotent King. I landed with the rest; and, sitting down by a spring of sweet water that welled up among the trees, took out some vivers I had with me and ate of that which Allah Almighty had allotted unto me. And so sweet was the zephyr and so fragrant were the flowers, that presently I waxed drowsy and, lying down in that place, was soon drowned in sleep. When I awoke, I found myself alone, for the ship had sailed and left me behind, nor had one of the merchants or sailors bethought himself of me. I searched the island right and left, but found neither man nor Jinni, whereat I was beyond measure troubled and my gall was like to burst for stress of chagrin and anguish and concern, because I was left quite alone, without aught of worldly gear or meat or drink, weary and heart-broken. So I gave myself up for lost and said, "Not always doth the crock escape the shock. I was saved the first time by finding one who brought me from the desert island to an inhabited place, but now there is no hope for me."

Then I fell to weeping and wailing and gave myself up to an access of rage, blaming myself for having again ventured upon the perils and hardships of voyage, whenas I was at my ease in mine own house in mine own land, taking my pleasure with good meat and good drink and good clothes and lacking nothing, neither money nor goods. And I repented me of having left Baghdad, and this the more after the travails and dangers I had undergone in my first voyage, wherein I had so narrowly escaped destruction, and exclaimed, "Verily we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning!" I was indeed even as one mad and Jinn-struck and presently I rose and walked about the island, right and left and every whither, unable for trouble to sit or tarry in any one place. Then I climbed a tall tree and looked in all directions, but saw nothing save sky and sea and trees and birds and isles and sands. However, after a while my eager

glances fell upon some great white thing, afar off in the interior of the island; so I came down from the tree and made for that which I had seen; and behold, it was a huge white dome rising high in air and of vast compass. I walked all around it, but found no door thereto, nor could I muster strength or nimbleness to climb it by reason of its exceeding smoothness and slipperiness. So I marked the spot where I stood and went round about the dome to measure its circumference which I found fifty goodpaces. And as I stood, casting about how to gain an entrance the day sun was suddenly hidden from me and the air became dull and dark. Methought a cloud had come over the sun, but it was the season of summer; so I marvelled at this and lifting my head looked steadfastly at the sky, when I saw that the cloud was none other than an enormous bird, of gigantic girth and inordinately wide of wing which, as it flew through the air, veiled the sun and hid it from the island.

At this sight my wonder redoubled and I remembered a story I had heard aforetime of pilgrims and travellers, how in a certain island dwelleth a huge bird, called the "Rukh" which feedeth its young on elephants; and I was certified that the dome which caught my sight was none other than a Rukh's egg. As I looked and wondered at the marvellous works of the Almighty, the bird alighted on the dome and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs stretched out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! When I saw this, I arose and, unwinding my turband from my head, doubled it and twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound my waist fast to the legs of the Rukh, saying in myself, "Peradventure, this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this desert island." I passed the night watching and fearing to sleep, lest the bird should fly away with me unawares; and, as soon as the dawn broke and morn shone, the Rukh rose off its egg and spreading its wings with a great cry flew up into the air dragging me with it; nor ceased it to soar and to tower till I thought it had reached the limit of the firmament; after which it descended, earthwards, little by little, till it lighted on the top of a high hill.

As soon as I found myself on the hard ground, I made haste to unbind myself quaking for fear of the bird, though it took

no heed of me nor even felt me ; and, loosing my turband from its feet, I made off with my best speed. Presently, I saw it catch up in its huge claws something from the earth and rise with it high in air, and observing it narrowly I saw it to be a serpent big of bulk and gigantic of girth, wherewith it flew away clean out of sight. I marvelled at this and faring forwards found myself on a peak overlooking a valley, exceeding great and wide

and deep, and bounded by vast mountains that spired high in air : none could descry their summits, for the excess of their height, nor was any able to climb up thereto. When I saw this, I blamed myself for that which I had done and said, " Would Heaven I had tarried in the island ! It was better than this wild desert ; for there I had at least fruits to eat and water to drink, and here are neither trees nor fruits nor streams. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great ! Verily as often as I am quit of one peril, I fall into a worse danger and a more grievous."

However, I took courage and walking along the wady found that its soil was of diamond, the stone wherewith they pierce minerals and precious stones and porcelain and the onyx, for that it is a dense stone and a dure, whereon neither iron nor hardhead hath effect, neither can we cut off aught therefrom nor break it, save by means of leadstone. Moreover, the valley swarmed with snakes and vipers, each big as a palm tree, that would have made but one gulp of an elephant; and they came out by night, hiding during the day, lest the Rukhs and eagles pounce on them and tear them to pieces, as was their wont, why I wot not. And I repented of what I had done and said, "By Allah, I have made haste to bring destruction upon myself!" The day began to wane as I went along and I looked about for a place where I might pass the night, being in fear of the serpents; and I took no thought of meat and drink in my concern for my life. Presently, I caught sight of a cave nearhand, with a narrow doorway; so I entered and seeing a great stone close to the mouth, I rolled it up and stopped the entrance, saying to myself, "I am safe here for the night; and as soon as it is day, I will go forth and see what Destiny will do."

Then I looked within the cave and saw at the upper end a great serpent brooding on her eggs, at which my flesh quaked and my hair stood on end; but I raised my eyes to Heaven and, committing my case to fate and lot, abode all that night without sleep till daybreak, when I rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave and went forth, staggering like a drunken man and giddy with watching and fear and hunger. As in this sore case I walked along the valley, behold, there fell down before me a slaughtered beast; but I saw no one, whereat I marvelled with great marvel and presently remembered a story I had heard aforetime of traders and pilgrims and travellers; how the mountains where are the diamonds are full of perils and terrors, nor can any fare through them; but the merchants who traffic in diamonds have a device by which they obtain them, that is to say, they take a sheep and slaughter and skin it and cut it into pieces and cast them down from the mountain-tops into the valley-sole, where the meat being fresh and sticky with blood, some of the gems cleave to it. There they leave it till mid-day, when the eagles and vultures swoop down upon it and carry it in their claws to the mountain-summits, whereupon

the merchants come and shout at them and scare them away from the meat. Then they come and, taking the diamonds which they find sticking to it, go their ways with them and leave the meat to the birds and beasts; nor can any come at the diamonds but by this device.

So, when I saw the slaughtered beast fall (he pursued), and bethought me of the story, I went up to it and filled my pockets and shawl-girdle and turband and the folds of my clothes with the choicest diamonds; and, as I was thus engaged, down fell before me another great piece of meat. Then, with my unrolled turband and lying on my back, I set the bit on my breast so that I was hidden by the meat, which was thus raised above the ground. Hardly had I gripped it when an eagle swooped down upon the flesh and, seizing it with his talons, flew up with it high in air and me clinging thereto, and ceased not its flight till it alighted on the head of one of the mountains where, dropping the carcass, he fell to rending it; but, behold, there arose behind him a great noise of shouting and clattering of wood, whereat the bird took fright and flew away. Then I loosed off myself the meat, with clothes daubed with blood therefrom, and stood up by its side; whereupon up came the merchant, who had cried out at the eagle, and, seeing me standing there, bespoke me not, but was affrighted at me and shook with fear. However, he went up to the carcass and, turning it over, found no diamonds sticking to it, whereat he gave a great cry and exclaimed, "Harrow, my disappointment! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah with whom we seek refuge from Satan the Stoned!" And he bemoaned himself and beat hand upon hand, saying, "Alas, the pity of it! How cometh this?"

Then I went up to him and he said to me, "Who art thou and what causeth thee to come hither?" And I, "Fear not, I am a man, and a good man and a merchant. My story is a wondrous and my adventures marvellous and the manner of my coming hither is prodigious. So be of good cheer, thou shalt receive of me what shall rejoice thee, for I have with me great plenty of diamonds and I will give thee thereof what shall suffice thee; for each is better than aught thou couldst get otherwise. So fear nothing." The man rejoiced thereat and thanked and blessed me; then we talked together till the other merchants, hearing me in discourse with their fellow, came up

and saluted me; for each of them had thrown down his piece of meat. And I went off with them and I told them my whole story, how I had suffered hardships at sea and the fashion of my reaching the valley. But I gave the owner of the meat a number of the stones I had by me, so they all wished me joy of my escape, saying, "By Allah a new life hath been decreed to thee, for none ever reached yonder valley and came off thence alive before thee; but praised be Allah for thy safety."

We passed the night together in a safe and pleasant place, beyond measure rejoiced at my deliverance from the Valley of Serpents and my arrival in an inhabited land; and on the morrow we set out and journeyed over the mighty range of mountains, seeing many serpents in the valley, till we came to a fair great island, wherein was a garden of huge camphor trees under each of which an hundred men might take shelter. When the folk have a mind to get camphor, they bore into the upper part of the bole with a long iron; whereupon the liquid camphor, which is the sap of the tree, floweth out, and they catch it in vessels, where it concreteth like gum; but, after this, the tree dieth and becometh firewood. Moreover, there is in this island a kind of wild beast, called "Rhinoceros," that pastureth as do steers and buffaloes with us; but it is a huge brute, bigger of body than the camel and like it feedeth upon the leaves and twigs of trees. It is a remarkable animal with a great and thick horn, ten cubits long, amiddleward its head; wherein, when cleft in twain, is the likeness of a man. Voyagers and pilgrims and travellers declare that this beast called "Karkadan" will carry off a great elephant on its horn and graze about the island and the sea-coast therewith and take no heed of it, till the elephant dieth and its fat, melting in the sun, runneth down into the rhinoceros's eyes and blindeth him, so that he lieth down on the shore. Then comes the bird Rukh and carrieth off both the rhinoceros and that which is on its horn to feed its young withal.

Moreover, I saw in this island many kinds of oxen and buffaloes, whose like are not found in our country. Here I sold some of the diamonds which I had by me for gold dinars and silver dirhams and bartered others for the produce of the country; and, loading them upon beasts of burden, fared on with the merchants from valley to valley and town to town, buying and selling and viewing foreign countries and the works and creatures

of Allah, till we came to Bassorah city, where we abode a few days, after which I continued my journey to Baghdad. I foregathered with my friends and relations and gave alms and largesse and bestowed curious gifts and made presents to all my friends and companions. Then I betook myself to eating well and drinking well and wearing fine clothes and making merry with my fellows, and forgot all my sufferings in the pleasures of return to the solace and delight of life, with light heart and broadened breast. And every one who heard of my return came and questioned me of my adventures and of foreign countries, and I related to them all that had befallen me, and the much I had suffered, whereat they wondered and gave me joy of safe return. This, then, is the end of the story of my second voyage; and to-morrow, Inshallah! I will tell you what befell me in my third voyage.

The company marvelled at his story and supped with him; after which he ordered an hundred dinars of gold to be given to the Porter, who took the sum with many thanks and blessings (which he stinted not even when he reached home) and went his way, wondering at what he had heard. Next morning, as soon as day came in its sheen and shone, he rose and, praying the dawn-prayer, repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, even as he had bidden him, and went in and gave him good-morrow. The merchant welcomed him and made him sit with him, till the rest of the company arrived; and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry with joy and jollity, their host began by saying: Hearken, O my brothers, to what I am about to tell you; for it is even more wondrous than what you have already heard; but Allah alone kenneth what things His Omniscience concealed from man! And listen to

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN

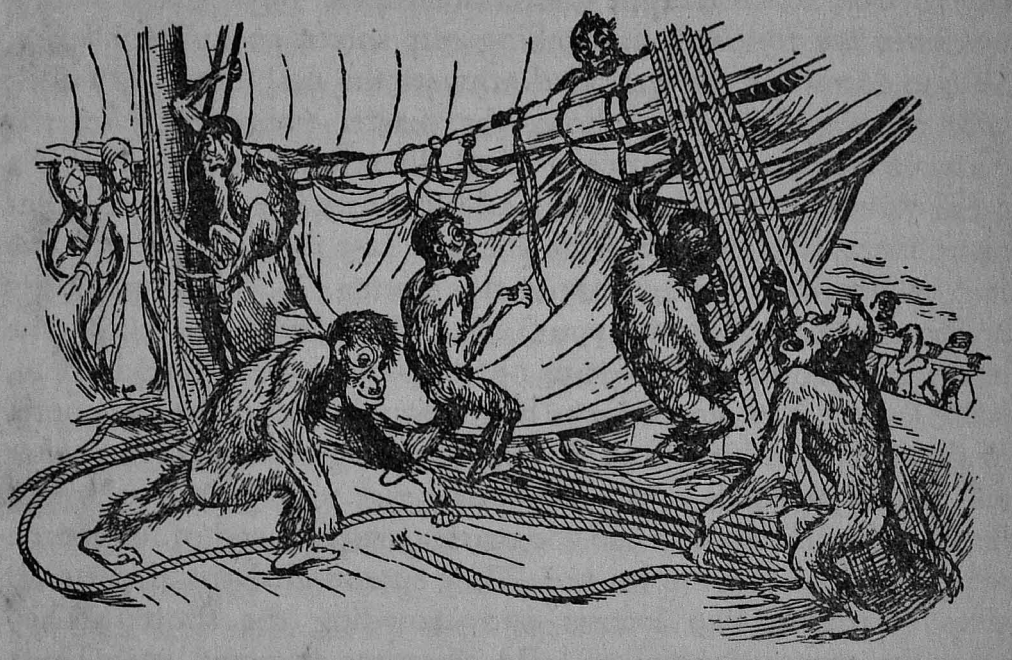
As I told you yesterday, I returned from my second voyage overjoyed at my safety and with great increase of wealth, Allah having requited me all that I had wasted and lost, and I abode awhile in Baghdad city savouring the utmost ease and prosperity and comfort and happiness, till the carnal man was once more seized with longing for travel and diversion and adventure, and yearned after traffic and lucre and emolument, for that the human

heart is naturally prone to evil. So, making up my mind, I laid in great plenty of goods suitable for a sea voyage and, repairing to Bassorah, went down to the shore and found there a fine ship ready to sail, with a full crew and a numerous company of merchants, men of worth and substance; faith, piety and consideration. I embarked with them and we set sail on the blessing of Allah Almighty and on His aidance and His favour to bring our voyage to a safe and prosperous issue and already we congratulated one another on our good fortune and boon voyage.

We fared on from sea to sea and from island to island and city to city, in all delight and contentment, buying and selling wherever we touched, and taking our solace and our pleasure, till one day when, as we sailed athwart the dashing sea, swollen with clashing billows, behold, the master (who stood on the gunwale examining the ocean in all directions) cried out with a great cry and buffeted his face and pluckt out his beard and rent his raiment, and bade furl the sail and cast the anchors. So we said to him, "O Rais, what is the matter?" "Know, O my brethren (Allah preserve you!), that the wind hath gotten the better of us and hath driven us out of our course into mid-ocean, and Destiny, for our ill-luck, hath brought us to the Mountain of the Zughb, a hairy folk like apes, among whom no man ever fell and came forth alive; and my heart presageth that we all be dead men." Hardly had the master made an end of his speech when the apes were upon us. They surrounded the ship on all sides swarming like locusts and crowding the shore. They were the most frightful of wild creatures, covered with black hair like felt, foul of favour and small of stature, being but four spans high, yellow-eyed and black-faced; none knoweth their language nor what they are, and they shun the company of men. We feared to slay them or strike them or drive them away, because of their inconceivable multitude; lest, if we hurt one, the rest fall on us and slay us, for numbers prevail over courage; so we let them do their will, albeit we feared they would plunder our goods and gear.

They swarmed up the cables and gnawed them asunder, and on like wise they did with all the ropes of the ship, so that it fell off from the wind and stranded upon their mountainous coast. Then they laid hands on all the merchants and crew, and landing us on the island, made off with the ship and its cargo

and went their ways, we wot not whither. We were thus left on the island, eating of its fruits and pot-herbs and drinking of its streams till, one day, we espied in its midst what seemed an inhabited house. So we made for it as fast as our feet could carry us and behold, it was a castle strong and tall, compassed about with a lofty wall, and having a two-leaved gate of ebony-wood both of which leaves open stood. We entered and found within a space wide and bare like a great square, round which stood many high doors open thrown, and at the farther end a long bench of stone, and brasiers, with cooking-gear hanging thereon and



about it great plenty of bones ; but we saw no one and marvelled thereat with exceeding wonder. Then we sat down in the courtyard a little while and presently falling asleep, slept from the forenoon till sundown, when lo ! the earth trembled under our feet and the air rumbled with a terrible tone.

Then there came down upon us, from the top of the castle, a huge creature in the likeness of a man, black of colour, tall and big of bulk, as he were a great date-tree, with eyes like coals of fire and eye-teeth like a boar's tusks and a vast big gape like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had long loose lips like camel's, hanging down upon his breast, and ears like two Jarms falling over his shoulder-blades and the nails of his hands were like the claws of a lion. When we saw this frightful giant,

we were like to faint and every moment increased our fear and terror; and we became as dead men for excess of horror and affright. And after trampling upon the earth, he sat awhile on the bench; then he arose and coming to us seized me by the arm choosing me out from among my comrades the merchants. He took me up in his hand and turning me over felt me, as a butcher feeleth a sheep he is about to slaughter, and I but a little mouthful in his hands; but finding me lean and fleshless for stress of toil and trouble and weariness, let me go and took up another, whom in like manner he turned over and felt and let go; nor did he cease to feel and turn over the rest of us, one after another, till he came to the master of the ship.

Now he was a sturdy, stout, broad-shouldered wight, fat and in full vigour; so he pleased the giant, who seized him, as a butcher seizeth a beast, and throwing him down, set his foot on his neck and brake it; after which he fetched a long spit and thrusting it up his backside, brought it forth of the crown of his head. Then, lighting a fierce fire, he set over it the spit with the Rais thereon, and turned it over the coals, till the flesh was roasted, when he took the spit off the fire and set it like a Kabab-stick before him. Then he tare the body, limb from limb, as one jointeth a chicken and, rending the flesh with his nails, fell to eating of it and gnawing the bones, till there was nothing left but some of these, which he threw on one side of the wall. This done, he sat for a while; then he lay down on the stone bench and fell asleep, snarking and snoring like the gurgling of a lamb or a cow with its throat cut; nor did he awake till morning, when he rose and fared forth and went his ways.

As soon as we were certified that he was gone, we began to talk with one another, weeping and bemoaning ourselves for the risk we ran, and saying, "Would Heaven we had been drowned in the sea or that the apes had eaten us! That were better than to be roasted over the coals; by Allah, this is a vile, foul death! But whatso the Lord willeth must come to pass and there is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Him, the Glorious, the Great! We shall assuredly perish miserably and none will know of us; as there is no escape for us from this place." Then we arose and roamed about the island, hoping that haply we might find a place to hide us in or a means of flight, for indeed death was a light matter to us, provided we were not

roasted over the fire and eaten. However, we could find no hiding-place and the evening overtook us; so, of the excess of our terror, we returned to the castle and sat down awhile. Presently, the earth trembled under our feet and the black ogre came up to us and turning us over, felt one after other, till he found a man to his liking, whom he took and served as he had done the captain, killing and roasting and eating him: after which he lay down on the bench and slept all night, snarking and snoring like a beast with its throat cut, till daybreak, when he arose and went out as before.

Then we drew together and conversed and said one to other, "By Allah, we had better throw ourselves into the sea and be drowned than die roasted; for this is an abominable death!" Quoth one of us, "Hear ye my words! let us cast about to kill him, and be at peace from the grief of him and rid the Moslems of his barbarity and tyranny." Then said I, "Hear me, O my brothers; if there is nothing for it but to slay him, we may either embark and let the waters carry us whither Allah willeth, or else abide here till some ship pass, when we will take passage in it. If we fail to kill him, we will embark in the boat and put out to sea; and if we be drowned, we shall at least escape being roasted over a kitchen fire with sliced weasands; whilst, if we escape, we escape, and if we be drowned, we die martyrs." "By Allah," said they all, "this rede is a right"; and we agreed upon this, and set about carrying it out. So we haled down to the beach the pieces of wood which lay about the bench; and, making a boat, moored it to the strand, after which we stowed therein somewhat of victual and returned to the castle.

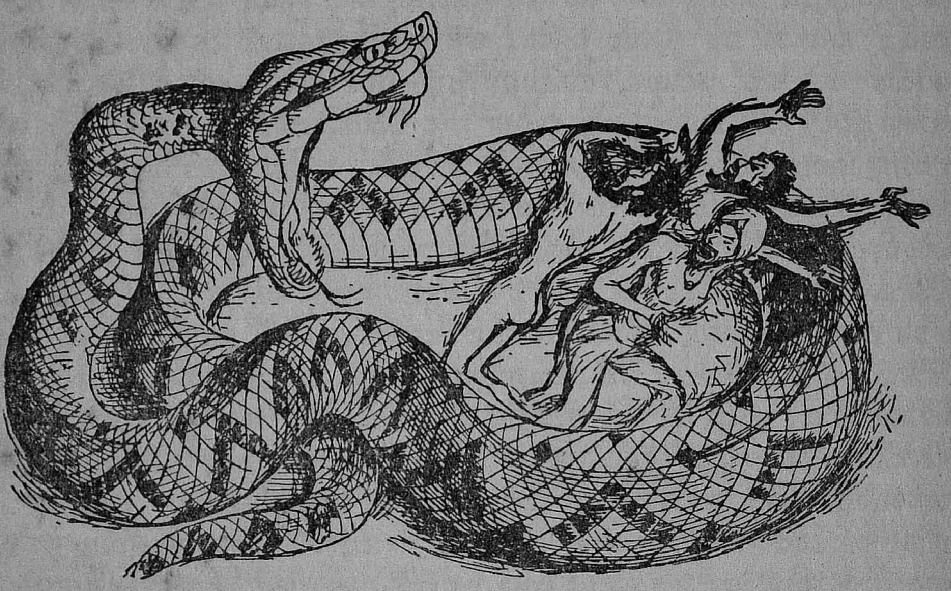
As soon as evening fell the earth trembled under our feet and in came the blackamoor upon us, snarling like a dog about to bite. He came up to us, and feeling us and turning us over one by one, took one of us and did with him as he had done before and ate him, after which he lay down on the bench and snored and snorted like thunder. As soon as we were assured that he slept, we arose and taking two iron spits of those standing there, heated them in the fiercest of the fire, till they were red-hot, like burning coals, when we gripped fast hold of them and going up to the giant, as he lay snoring on the bench, thrust them into his eyes and pressed upon them, all of us, with our united might, so that his eyeballs burst and he became stone blind.

Thereupon he cried with a great cry, whereat our hearts trembled, and springing up from the bench, he fell a-groping after us, blindfold. We fled from him right and left and he saw us not, for his sight was altogether blent; but we were in terrible fear of him and made sure we were dead men despairing of escape. Then he found the door, feeling for it with his hands and went out roaring aloud; and behold, the earth shook under us, for the noise of his roaring, and we quaked for fear.

As he quitted the castle we followed him and betook ourselves to the place where we had moored our boat, saying to one another, "If this accursed abide absent till the going down of the sun and come not to the castle, we shall know that he is dead; and if he come back, we will embark in the boat and paddle till we escape, committing our affair to Allah." But as we spoke, behold, up came the blackamoor with other two as they were Ghuls, fouler and more frightful than he, with eyes like red-hot coals; which when we saw, we hurried into the boat and casting off the moorings paddled away and pushed out to sea. As soon as the ogres caught sight of us they cried out at us and, running down to the seashore, fell a-pelting us with rocks, whereof some fell amongst us and others fell into the sea. We paddled with all our might till we were beyond their reach, but the most part of us were slain by the rock-throwing, and the winds and waves sported with us and carried us into the midst of the dashing sea, swollen with billows clashing. We knew not whither we went and my fellows died one after another, till there remained but three, myself and two others for, as often as one died, we threw him into the sea.

We were sore exhausted for stress of hunger, but we took courage and heartened one another and worked for dear life and paddled with main and might, till the winds cast us upon an island, as we were dead men for fatigue and fear and famine. We landed on the island and walked about it for a while, finding that it abounded in trees and streams and birds; and we ate of the fruits and rejoiced in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; and thus we did till nightfall, when we lay down and fell asleep for excess of fatigue. But we had hardly closed our eyes before we were aroused by a hissing sound, like the sough of wind, and awaking, saw a serpent like a dragon, a seld-seen sight, of monstrous make and belly of

enormous bulk which lay in a circle around us. Presently it reared its head and, seizing one of my companions, swallowed him up to his shoulders; then it gulped down the rest of him, and we heard his ribs crack in its belly. Presently it went its way, and we abode in sore amazement and grief for our comrade and mortal fear for ourselves, saying, "By Allah, this is a marvellous thing! Each kind of death that threateneth us is more terrible than the last. We were rejoicing in our escape from the black ogre and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; but now we have fallen into that which is worse. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! By the



Almighty, we have escaped from the blackamoor and from drowning: but how shall we escape from this abominable and viperish monster?" Then we walked about the island, eating of its fruits and drinking of its streams till dusk, when we climbed up into a high tree and went to sleep there, I being on the topmost bough. As soon as it was dark night, up came the serpent, looking right and left; and, making for the tree whereon we were, climbed up to my comrade and swallowed him down to his shoulders. Then it coiled about the bole with him, whilst I, who could not take my eyes off the sight, heard his bones crack in its belly, and it swallowed him whole, after which it slid down from the tree.

When the day broke and the light showed me that the serpent was gone, I came down, as I were a dead man for stress

of fear and anguish, and thought to cast myself into the sea and be at rest from the woes of the world; but could not bring myself to do this, for verily life is dear. So I took five pieces of wood, broad and long, and bound one crosswise to the soles of my feet and others in like fashion on my right and left sides and over my breast; and the broadest and largest I bound across my head and made them fast with ropes. Then I lay down on the ground on my back, so that I was completely fenced in by the pieces of wood, which enclosed me like a bier. So soon as it was dark, up came the serpent as usual, and made towards me, but could not get at me to swallow me for the wood that fenced me in. So it wriggled round me on every side, whilst I looked on, like one dead by reason of my terror; and every now and then it would glide away and come back; but as often as it tried to come at me, it was hindered by the pieces of wood wherewith I had bound myself on every side. It ceased not to beset me thus from sundown till dawn, but when the light of day shone upon the beast it made off, in the utmost fury and extreme disappointment. Then I put out my hand and unbound myself, wellnigh down among the dead men for fear and suffering; and went down to the island-shore, whence a ship afar off in the midst of the waves suddenly struck my sight. So I tore off a great branch of a tree and made signs with it to the crew, shouting out the while; which when the ship's company saw they said to one another, "We must stand in and see what this is; peradventure 'tis a man." So they made for the island and presently heard my cries, whereupon they took me on board and questioned me of my case. I told them all my adventures from first to last, whereat they marvelled mightily and covered my shame with some of their clothes. Moreover, they set before me somewhat of food and I ate my fill and I drank cold sweet water and was mightily refreshed; and Allah Almighty quickened me after I was virtually dead.

So I praised the Most Highest and thanked Him for His favours and exceeding mercies, and my heart revived in me after utter despair, till meseemed as if all I had suffered were but a dream I had dreamed. We sailed on with a fair wind the Almighty sent us till we came to an island, called Al-Salahitah, which aboundeth in sandal-wood, when the captain cast anchor, and the merchants and the sailors landed with their goods to sell

and to buy. Then the captain turned to me and said, " Hark'ee, thou art a stranger and a pauper and tellest us that thou hast undergone frightful hardships; wherefore I have a mind to benefit thee with somewhat that may further thee to thy native land, so thou wilt ever bless me and pray for me." " So be it," answered I; " thou shalt have my prayers." Quoth he, " Know then that there was with us a man, a traveller, whom we lost, and we know not if he be alive or dead, for we had no news of him; so I purpose to commit his bales of goods to thy charge, that thou mayst sell them in this island. A part of the proceeds we will give thee as an equivalent for thy pains and service, and the rest we will keep till we return to Baghdad, where we will inquire for his family and deliver it to them, together with the unsold goods. Say me then, wilt thou undertake the charge and land and sell them as other merchants do? "

I replied, " Hearkening and obedience to thee, O my lord; and great is thy kindness to me," and thanked him; whereupon he bade the sailors and porters bear the bales in question ashore and commit them to my charge. The ship's scribe asked him, " O master, what bales are these and what merchant's name shall I write upon them? "; and he answered, " Write on them the name of Sindbad the Seaman, him who was with us in the ship and whom we lost at Rukh's island, and of whom we have no tidings; for we mean this stranger to sell them; and we will give him a part of the price for his pains and keep the rest till we return to Baghdad where, if we find the owner, we will make it over to him, and, if not, to his family." And the clerk said, " Thy words are apposite and thy rede is right."

Now, when I heard the captain give orders for the bales to be inscribed with my name, I said to myself, " By Allah, I am Sindbad the Seaman! " So I armed myself with courage and patience and waited till all the merchants had landed and were gathered together, talking and chaffering about buying and selling; then I went up to the captain and asked him, " O my lord, knowest thou what manner of man was this Sindbad, whose goods thou hast committed to me for sale? "; and he answered, " I know of him naught save that he was a man from Baghdad city, Sindbad, hight the Seaman, who was drowned with many others when we lay anchored at such an island and I have heard nothing of him since then." At this I cried out with

a great cry and said, " O captain, whom Allah keep ! know that I am that Sindbad the Seaman and that I was not drowned, but when thou castest anchor at the island, I landed with the rest of the merchants and crew ; and I sat down in a pleasant place by myself and ate somewhat of food I had with me and enjoyed myself till I became drowsy and was drowned in sleep ; and when I awoke, I found no ship and none near me. These goods are my goods and these bales are my bales ; and all the merchants who fetch jewels from the Valley of Diamonds saw me there and will bear me witness that I am the very Sindbad the Seaman ; for I related to them everything that had befallen me and told them how you forgot me and left me sleeping on the island, and that betided me which betided me."

When the passengers and crew heard my words, they gathered about me and some of them believed me and others disbelieved ; but presently, behold, one of the merchants, hearing me mention the Valley of Diamonds, came up to me and said to them, " Hear what I say, good people ! When I related to you the most wonderful thing in my travels, and I told you that, at the time we cast down our slaughtered animals into the Valley of Serpents (I casting with the rest as was my wont), there came up a man hanging to mine, ye believed me not and gave me the lie." " Yes," quoth they, " thou didst tell us some such tale, but we had no call to credit thee." He resumed, " Now this is the very man, by token that he gave me diamonds of great value and high price whose like are not to be found, requiting me more than would have come up sticking to my quarter of meat ; and I companied with him to Bassorah city, where he took leave of us and went on to his native stead, whilst we returned to our own land. This is he ; and he told us his name, Sindbad the Seaman, and how the ship left him on the desert island. And know ye that Allah hath sent him hither, so might the truth of my story be made manifest to you. Moreover, these are his goods, for, when he first foregathered with us, he told us of them ; and the truth of his words is patent."

Hearing the merchant's speech the captain came up to me and considered me straitly awhile, after which he said, " What was the mark on thy bales ? " " Thus and thus," answered I, and reminded him of somewhat that had passed between him and me when I shipped with him from Bassorah. Thereupon he

was convinced that I was indeed Sindbad the Seaman and took me round the neck and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, O my lord, thy case is indeed wondrous and thy tale marvellous; but lauded be Allah who hath brought thee and me together again, and who hath restored to thee thy goods and gear!"

Then I disposed of my merchandise to the best of my skill, and profited largely on them, whereat I rejoiced with exceeding joy and congratulated myself on my safety and the recovery of my goods. We ceased not to buy and sell at the several islands till we came to the land of Hind, where we bought cloves and ginger and all manner spices; and thence we fared on to the land of Sind, where also we bought and sold. In these Indian seas I saw wonders without number or count, amongst others a fish like a cow which bringeth forth its young and suckleth them like humar beings; and of its skin bucklers are made. There were eke fishes like asses and camels and tortoises twenty cubits wide. And I saw also a bird that cometh out of a sea-shell and layeth eggs and hatcheth her chicks on the surface of the water, never coming up from the sea to the land. Then we set sail again with a fair wind and the blessing of Almighty Allah; and, after a prosperous voyage, arrived safe and sound at Bassorah. Here I abode a few days and presently returned to Baghdad where I went at once to my quarter and my house and saluted my family and familiars and friends. I had gained on this voyage what was beyond count and reckoning, so I gave alms and largesse and clad the widow and the orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions and intimates, and forgot, while eating well and drinking well and dressing well, everything that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had suffered.

These, then, are the most admirable things I sighted on my third voyage, and to-morrow, an it be the will of Allah, you shall come to me and I will relate the adventures of my fourth voyage, which is still more wonderful than those you have already heard.

Saith he who telleth the tale: Then Sindbad the Seaman bade give Sindbad the Landsman an hundred golden dinars as of wont and called for food. So they spread the tables and the company ate the night-meal and went their ways, marvelling

at the tale they had heard. The Porter, after taking his gold, passed the night in his own house, also wondering at what his namesake the Seaman had told him, and as soon as day broke and the morning showed with its sheen and shone, he rose and, praying the dawn-prayer, betook himself to Sindbad the Seaman who returned his salute and received him with an open breast and cheerful favour and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when he caused set on food and they ate and drank and made merry. Then Sindbad the Seaman bespake them and related to them the narrative of

THE FOURTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN

KNOW, O my brethren, that after my return from my third voyage and foregathering with my friends, and forgetting all my perils and hardships in the enjoyment of ease and comfort and repose, I was visited one day by a company of merchants who sat down with me and talked of foreign travel and traffic, till the old bad man within me yearned to go with them and enjoy the sight of strange countries, and I longed for the society of the various races of mankind and for traffic and profit. So I resolved to travel with them and, buying the necessaries for a long voyage and great store of costly goods, more than ever before, transported them from Baghdad to Bassorah, where I took ship with the merchants in question, who were of the chief of the town.

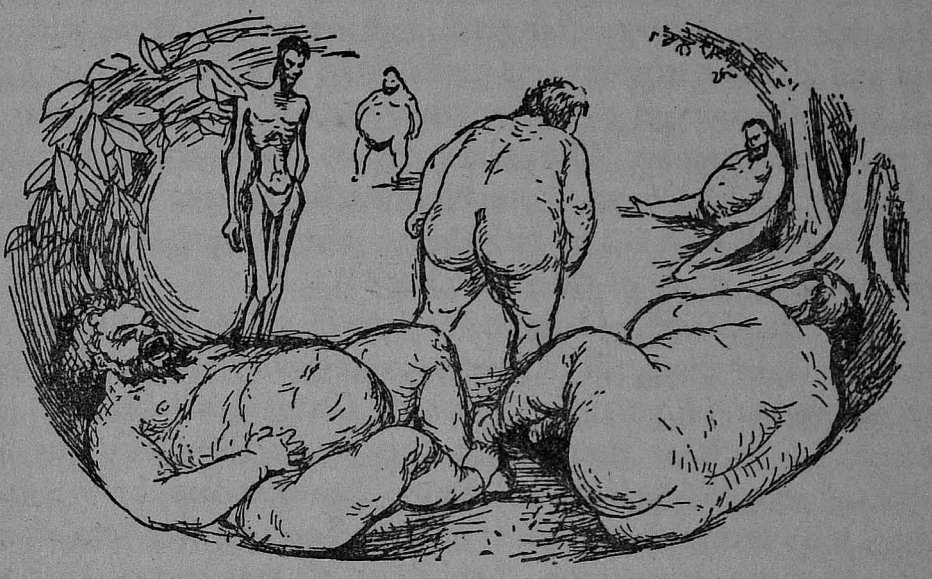
We set out, trusting in the blessing of Almighty Allah; and with a favouring breeze and the best conditions we sailed from island to island and sea to sea, till, one day, there arose against us a contrary wind and the captain cast out his anchors and brought the ship to a standstill, fearing lest she should founder in mid-ocean. Then we all fell to prayer and humbling ourselves before the Most High; but, as we were thus engaged, there smote us a furious squall which tore the sails to rags and tatters; the anchor-cable parted and, the ship foundering, we were cast into the sea, goods and all. I kept myself afloat by swimming half the day, till, when I had given myself up for lost, the Almighty threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, whereon I and some others of the merchants scrambled and, mounting it as we would a horse, paddled with our feet in the sea.

We abode thus a day and a night, the wind and waves helping us on, and on the second day, shortly before the mid-time between sunrise and noon, the breeze freshened and the sea wrought and the rising waves cast us upon an island, wellnigh dead bodies for weariness and want of sleep, cold and hunger and fear and thirst. We walked about the shore and found abundance of herbs, whereof we ate enough to keep breath in body and to stay our failing spirits, then lay down and slept till morning hard by the sea. And when morning came with its sheen and shone, we arose and walked about the island to the right and left, till we came in sight of an inhabited house afar off. So we made towards it, and ceased not walking till we reached the door thereof, when lo! a number of naked men issued from it and, without saluting us or a word said, laid hold of us masterfully and carried us to their King, who signed us to sit. So we sat down and they set food before us such as we knew not and whose like we had never seen in all our lives. My companions ate of it, for stress of hunger, but my stomach revolted from it and I would not eat; and my refraining from it was, by Allah's favour, the cause of my being alive till now; for no sooner had my comrades tasted of it than their reason fled and their condition changed and they began to devour it like madmen possessed of an evil spirit.

Then the savages gave them to drink of cocoa-nut oil and anointed them therewith; and straightway after drinking thereof, their eyes turned into their heads and they fell to eating greedily, against their wont. When I saw this, I was confounded and concerned for them, nor was I less anxious about myself, for fear of the naked folk. So I watched them narrowly, and it was not long before I discovered them to be a tribe of Magian cannibals whose King was a Ghul. All who came to their country or whoso they caught in their valleys or on their roads they brought to this King and fed them upon that food or anointed them with that oil, whereupon their stomachs dilated that they might eat largely, whilst their reason fled and they lost the power of thought and became idiots. Then they stuffed them with cocoa-nut oil and the aforesaid food, till they became fat and gross, when they slaughtered them by cutting their throats and roasted them for the King's eating; but, as for the savages themselves, they ate human flesh raw.

When I saw this, I was sore dismayed for myself and my

comrades, who were now become so stupefied that they knew not what was done with them and the naked folk committed them to one who used every day to lead them out and pasture them on the island like cattle. And they wandered amongst the trees and rested at will, thus waxing very fat. As for me, I wasted away and became sickly for fear and hunger and my flesh shrivelled on my bones; which, when the savages saw, they left me alone and took no thought of me and so far forgot me that one day I gave them the slip and, walking out of their place, made for the beach which was distant and there espied a very old man seated on a high place, girt by the waters. I looked at



him and knew him for the herdsman, who had charge of pasturing my fellows, and with him were many others in like case. As soon as he saw me, he knew me to be in possession of my reason and not afflicted like the rest whom he was pasturing; so signed to me from afar, as who should say, "Turn back and take the right-hand road, for that will lead thee into the King's highway." So I turned back, as he bade me, and followed the right-hand road, now running for fear and then walking leisurely to rest me, till I was out of the old man's sight.

By this time, the sun had gone down and the darkness set in; so I sat down to rest and would have slept, but sleep came not to me that night, for stress of fear and famine and fatigue. When the night was half-spent, I rose and walked on, till the day broke in all its beauty and the sun rose over the heads of the

lofty hills and athwart the low gravelly plains. Now I was weary and hungry and thirsty; so I ate my fill of herbs and grasses that grew in the island and kept life in body and stayed my stomach, after which I set out again and fared on all that day and the next night, staying my greed with roots and herbs; nor did I cease walking for seven days and their nights, till the morn of the eighth day, when I caught sight of a faint object in the distance. So I made towards it, though my heart quaked for all I had suffered first and last, and, behold, it was a company of men gathering pepper-grains. As soon as they saw me, they hastened up to me and, surrounding me on all sides, said to me, "Who art thou and whence come?" I replied, "Know, O folk, that I am a poor stranger," and acquainted them with my case and all the hardships and perils I had suffered and how I had fled from the savages; whereat they marvelled and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, this is wonderful! But how didst thou escape from these blacks who swarm in the island and devour all who fall in with them; nor is any safe from them, nor can any get out of their clutches?"

And after I had told them the fate of my companions, they made me sit by them, till they got quit of their work; and fetched me somewhat of good food, which I ate, for I was hungry, and rested awhile, after which they took ship with me and carrying me to their island home brought me before their King, who returned my salute and received me honourably and questioned me of my case. I told him all that had befallen me, from the day of my leaving Baghdad city, whereupon he wondered with great wonder at my adventures, he and his courtiers, and bade me sit by him; then he called for food and I ate with him what sufficed me and washed my hands and returned thanks to Almighty Allah for all His favours praising Him and glorifying Him. Then I left the King and walked for solace about the city, which I found wealthy and populous, abounding in market-streets well stocked with food and merchandise and full of buyers and sellers. So I rejoiced at having reached so pleasant a place and took my ease there after my fatigues; and I made friends with the townsfolk, nor was it long before I became more in honour and favour with them and their King than any of the chief men of the realm. Now I saw that all the citizens, great and small, rode fine horses, high-priced

and thoroughbred; without saddles or housings, whereat I wondered and said to the King, "Wherefore, O my lord, dost thou not ride with a saddle? Therein is ease for the rider and increase of power." "What is a saddle?" asked he: "I never saw nor used such a thing in all my life"; and I answered, "With thy permission I will make thee a saddle, that thou mayest ride on it and see the comfort thereof." And quoth he, "Do so."

So quoth I to him, "Furnish me with some wood," which being brought, I sought me a clever carpenter and sitting by him showed him how to make the saddle-tree, portraying for him the fashion thereof in ink on the wood. Then I took wool and teased it and made felt of it, and, covering the saddle-tree with leather, stuffed it and polished it and attached the girth and stirrup-leathers; after which I fetched a blacksmith and described to him the fashion of the stirrups and bridle-bit. So he forged a fine pair of stirrups and a bit, and filed them smooth and tinned them. Moreover, I made fast to them fringes of silk and fitted bridle-leathers to the bit. Then I fetched one of the best of the royal horses and saddling and bridling him, hung the stirrups to the saddle and led him to the King. The thing took his fancy and he thanked me; then he mounted and rejoiced greatly in the saddle and rewarded me handsomely for my work. When the King's Wazir saw the saddle, he asked of me one like it and I made it for him. Furthermore, all the grandees and officers of state came for saddles to me; so I fell to making saddles (having taught the craft to the carpenter and blacksmith), and selling them to all who sought, till I amassed great wealth and became in high honour and great favour with the King and his household and grandees. I abode thus till, one day, as I was sitting with the King in all respect and contentment, he said to me, "Know thou, O such an one, thou art become one of us, dear as a brother, and we hold thee in such regard and affection that we cannot part with thee nor suffer thee to leave our city; wherefore I desire of thee obedience in a certain matter, and I will not have thee gainsay me?" Answered I, "O King, what is it thou desirest of me? Far be it from me to gainsay thee in aught, for I am indebted to thee for many favours and bounties and much kindness, and (praised be Allah!) I am become one of thy servants."

Quoth he, "I have a mind to marry thee to a fair, clever and agreeable wife who is wealthy as she is beautiful; so thou mayst be naturalised and domiciled with us: I will lodge thee with me in my palace; wherefore oppose me not, neither cross me in this." When I heard these words I was ashamed and held my peace nor could make him any answer, by reason of my much bashfulness before him. Asked he, "Why dost thou not reply to me, O my son?"; and I answered, saying, "O my master, it is thine to command, O King of the Age!" So he summoned the Kazi and witnesses and married me straightway to a lady of a noble tree and high pedigree; wealthy in monies and means; the flower of an ancient race; of surpassing beauty and grace, and the owner of farms and estates and many a dwelling-place. The King also gave me a great and goodly house standing alone, together with slaves and officers, and assigned me pay and allowances. So I became in all ease and contentment and delight and forgot everything which had befallen me of weariness and trouble and hardship; for I loved my wife with fondest love and she loved me no less, and we were as one and abode in the utmost comfort of life and in its happiness. And I said in myself, "When I return to my native land, I will carry her with me." But whatso is predestined to a man, that needs must be, and none knoweth what shall befall him.

We lived thus a great while, till Almighty Allah bereft one of my neighbours of his wife. Now he was a gossip of mine; so hearing the cry of the keeners I went in to condole with him on his loss and found him in very ill plight, full of trouble and weary of soul and mind. I condoled with him and comforted him, saying "Mourn not for thy wife who hath now found the mercy of Allah; the Lord will surely give thee a better in her stead and thy name shall be great and thy life shall be long in the land, Inshallah!" But he wept bitter tears and replied, "O my friend, how can I marry another wife and how shall Allah replace her to me with a better than she, whenas I have but one day left to live?" "O my brother," said I, "return to thy senses and announce not the glad tidings of thine own death, for thou art well, sound and in good case." "By thy life, O my friend," rejoined he, "to-morrow thou wilt lose me and wilt never see me again till the Day of Resurrection." I asked, "How so?" and he answered, "This very day they bury

my wife, and they bury me with her in one tomb; for it is the custom with us, if the wife die first, to bury the husband alive with her and in like manner the wife, if the husband die first; so that neither may enjoy life after losing his or her mate." "By Allah," cried I, "this is a most vile, lewd custom and not to be endured of any!"

Meanwhile, behold, the most part of the townsfolk came in and fell to condoling with my gossip and his wife and for himself. Presently they laid the dead woman out, as was their wont; and, setting her on a bier, carried her and her husband without the city, till they came to a place in the side of a mountain at the end of the island by the sea; and here they raised a great rock and discovered the mouth of a stone-riveted pit or well, leading down into a vast underground cavern that ran beneath the mountain. Into this pit they threw the corpse, then tying a rope of palm-fibres under the husband's armpits, they let him down into the cavern, and with him a great pitcher of fresh water and seven scones by way of viaticum. When he came to the bottom, he loosed himself from the rope and they drew it up; and, stopping the mouth of the pit with the great stone, they returned to the city, leaving my friend in the cavern with his dead wife.

When I saw this, I said to myself, "By Allah, this fashion of death is more grievous than the first!" And I went in to the King and said to him, "O my lord, why do ye bury the quick with the dead?" Quoth he, "It hath been the custom, thou must know, of our forbears and our olden Kings from time immemorial, if the husband die first, to bury his wife with him, and the like with the wife, so we may not sever them, alive or dead." I asked, "O King of the Age, if the wife of a foreigner like myself die among you, deal ye with him as with yonder man?"; and he answered, "Assuredly, we do with him even as thou hast seen." When I heard this, my gall-bladder was like to burst, for the violence of my dismay and concern for myself: my wit became dazed; I felt as if in a vile dungeon; and hated their society; for I went about in fear lest my wife should die before me and they bury me alive with her. However, after a while I comforted myself, saying, "Haply I shall predecease her, or shall have returned to my own land before she die, for none knoweth which shall go first and which shall go last."

Then I applied myself to diverting my mind from this thought with various occupations; but it was not long before my wife sickened and complained and took to her pillow and fared after a few days to the mercy of Allah; and the King and the rest of the folk came, as was their wont, to condole with me and her family and to console us for her loss and not less to condole with me for myself. Then the women washed her and arraying her in her richest raiment and golden ornaments, necklaces and jewellery, laid her on the bier and bore her to the mountain aforesaid, where they lifted the cover of the pit and cast her in; after which all my intimates and acquaintances and my wife's kith and kin came round me, to farewell me in my lifetime and console me for my own death, whilst I cried out among them, saying, "Almighty Allah never made it lawful to bury the quick with the dead! I am a stranger, not one of your kind; and I cannot abear your custom, and had I known it I never would have wedded among you!" They heard me not and paid no heed to my words, but laying hold of me, bound me by force and let me down into the cavern, with a large gugglet of sweet water and seven cakes of bread, according to their custom. When I came to the bottom, they called out to me to cast myself loose from the cords, but I refused to do so; so they threw them down on me and, closing the mouth of the pit with the stones aforesaid, went their ways.

I looked about me and found myself in a vast cave full of dead bodies, that exhaled a fulsome and loathsome smell and the air was heavy with the groans of the dying. Thereupon I fell to blaming myself for what I had done, saying, "By Allah, I deserve all that hath befallen me and all that shall befall me! What curse was upon me to take a wife in this city? There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! As often as I say, I have escaped from one calamity, I fell into a worse. By Allah, this is an abominable death to die! Would Heaven I had died a decent death and been washed and shrouded like a man and a Moslem. Would I had been drowned at sea or perished in the mountains! It were better than to die this miserable death!" And on such wise I kept blaming my own folly and greed of fain in that black hole, knowing not night from day; and I ceased not to ban the Foul Fiend and to bless the Almighty Friend. Then I threw myself down on the bones

of the dead and lay there, imploring Allah's help and in the violence of my despair, invoking death which came not to me, till the fire of hunger burned my stomach and thirst set my throat aflame when I sat up and feeling for the bread, ate a morsel and upon it swallowed a mouthful of water. After this, the worst night I ever knew, I arose and, exploring the cavern, found that it extended a long way with hollows in its sides; and its floor was strewn with dead bodies and rotten bones that had lain there from olden times. So I made myself a place in a cavity of the

cavern, afar from the corpses lately thrown down, and there slept.

I abode thus a long while, till my provision was like to give out; and yet I ate not save once every day or second day; nor did I drink more than an occasional draught, for fear my victual should fail me before my death; and I said to myself, "Eat little and drink little; belike the Lord shall vouchsafe deliverance to thee!" One day, as I sat thus, pondering my case and bethinking me how I should do when my bread and water should be exhausted, behold, the stone that covered the opening was suddenly rolled away and the light streamed down upon me: Quoth I, "I wonder what is the matter; haply they have brought another corpse." Then I espied folk standing about the mouth of the pit, who presently let down a dead man

and a live woman, weeping and bemoaning herself, and with her an ampler supply of bread and water than usual. I saw her and she was a beautiful woman; but she saw me not; and they closed up the opening and went away. Then I took the leg-bone of a dead man and, going up to the woman, smote her on the crown of the head; and she cried one cry and fell down in a swoon. I smote her a second and a third time, till she was dead, when I laid hands on her bread and water and found on her great plenty of ornaments and rich apparel, necklaces, jewels and gold trinkets; for it was their custom to bury women in all their finery. I carried the vivers to my sleeping-place in the cavern-side and ate and drank of them sparingly, no more than sufficed to keep the life in me, lest the provaunt come speedily to an end and I perish of hunger and thirst. Yet did I never wholly lose hope in Almighty Allah.

I abode thus a great while, killing all the live folk they let down into the cavern and taking their provisions of meat and drink; till one day, as I slept, I was awakened by something scratching and burrowing among the bodies in a corner of the cave and said, "What can this be?" fearing wolves or hyænas. So I sprang up and seizing the leg-bone aforesaid, made for the noise. As soon as the thing was ware of me, it fled from me into the inward of the cavern, and lo! it was a wild beast. However, I followed it to the farther end, till I saw afar off a point of light not bigger than a star, now appearing and then disappearing. So I made for it, and as I drew near, it grew larger and brighter, till I was certified that it was a crevice in the rock, leading to the open country; and I said to myself, "There must be some reason for this opening: either it is the mouth of a second pit, such as that by which they let me down, or else it is a natural fissure in the stonery." So I bethought em awhile and nearing the light, found that it came from a breach in the back side of the mountain, which the wild beasts had enlarged by burrowing, that they might enter and devour the dead and freely go to and fro. When I saw this, my spirits revived and hope came back to me and I made sure of life, after having died a death. So I went on, as in a dream, and making shift to scramble through the breach found myself on the slope of a high mountain, overlooking the salt sea and cutting off all access thereto from the island, so that none could come at that part of the beach from the city.

I praised my Lord and thanked Him, rejoicing greatly and heartening myself with the prospect of deliverance; then I returned through the crack to the cavern and brought out all the food and water I had saved up and donned some of the dead folk's clothes over my own; after which I gathered together all the collars and necklaces of pearls and jewels and trinkets of gold and silver set with precious stones and other ornaments and valuables I could find upon the corpses; and, making them into bundles with the grave clothes and raiment of the dead, carried them out to the back of the mountain facing the seashore, where I established myself, purposing to wait there till it should please Almighty Allah to send me relief by means of some passing ship. I visited the cavern daily and as often as I found folk buried alive there; I killed them all indifferently, men and women, and took their victual and valuables and transported them to my seat on the seashore.

I abode a long while by the sea, pondering my case, till one day I caught sight of a ship passing in the midst of the clashing sea, swollen with dashing billows. So I took a piece of a white shroud I had with me and, tying it to a staff, ran along the seashore, making signals therewith and calling to the people in the ship, till they espied me and, hearing my shouts, sent a boat to fetch me off. When it drew near, the crew called out to me, saying, "Who art thou and how camest thou to be on this mountain, whereon never saw we any in our born days?" I answered, "I am a gentleman and a merchant, who hath been wrecked, and saved myself on one of the planks of the ship, with some of my goods; and by the blessing of the Almighty and the decrees of Destiny and my own strength and skill, after much toil and moil I have landed with my gear in this place where I awaited some passing ship to take me off." So they took me in their boat, together with the bundles I had made of the jewels and valuables from the cavern, tied up in clothes and shrouds, and rowed back with me to the ship, where the captain said to me, "How camest thou, O man, to yonder place on yonder mountain behind which lieth a great city? All my life I have sailed these seas and passed to and fro hard by these heights; yet never saw I here any living thing save wild beasts and birds."

I repeated to him the story I had told the sailors, but acquainted

him with nothing of that which had befallen me in the city and the cavern, lest there should be any of the islandry in the ship. Then I took out some of the best pearls I had with me and offered them to the captain, saying, " O my lord, thou hast been the means of saving me off this mountain. I have no ready money; but take this from me in requital of thy kindness and good offices." But he refused to accept it of me, saying, " When we find a shipwrecked man on the seashore or on an island, we take him up and give him meat and drink, and if he be naked we clothe him; nor take we aught from him; nay, when we reach a port of safety, we set him ashore with a present of our own money and entreat him kindly and charitably, for the love of Allah the Most High." So I prayed that his life be long in the land and rejoiced in my escape, trusting to be delivered from my stress and to forget my past mishaps; for every time I remembered being let down into the cave with my dead wife I shuddered in horror.

Then we pursued our voyage and sailed from island to island and sea to sea, till we arrived at the Island of the Bell, which containeth a city two days' journey in extent, whence after a six days' run we reached the Island Kala, hard by the land of Hind. This place is governed by a potent and puissant King and it produceth excellent camphor and an abundance of the Indian rattan; here also is a lead mine. At last, by decree of Allah, we arrived in safety at Bassorah city where I tarried a few days, then went on to Baghdad city, and, finding my quarter, entered my house with lively pleasure. There I foregathered with my family and friends, who rejoiced in my happy return and gave me joy of my safety. I laid up in my storehouses all the goods I had brought with me, and gave alms and largesse to Fakirs and beggars and clothed the widow and the orphan. Then I gave myself up to pleasure and enjoyment, returning to my old merry mode of life. Such, then, be the most marvellous adventures of my fourth voyage, but to-morrow, if you will kindly come to me, I will tell you that which befell me in my fifth voyage, which was yet rarer and more marvellous than those which forewent it. And thou, O my brother Sindbad the Landsman, shalt sup with me as thou art wont.

Saith he who telleth the tale: When Sindbad the Seaman had made an end of his story, he called for supper; so they

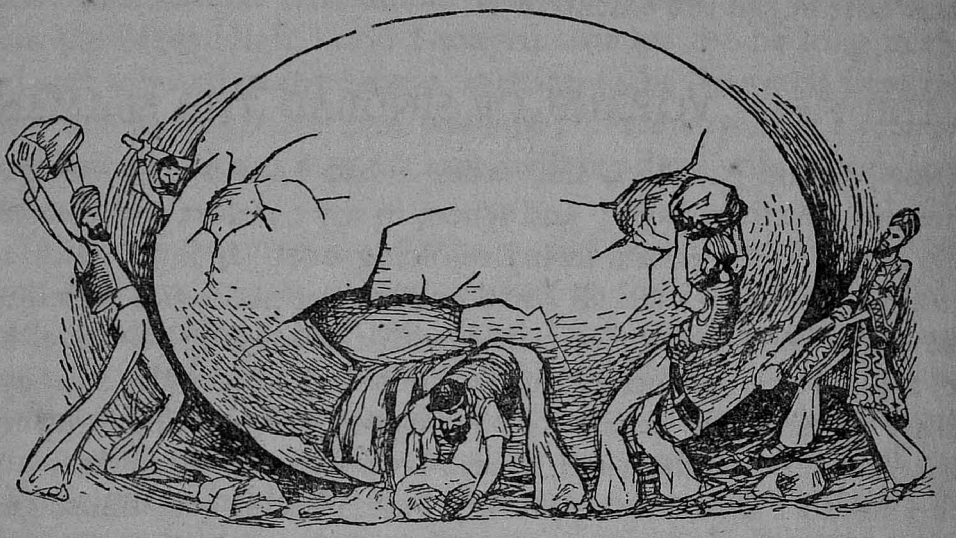
spread the table and the guests ate the evening meal; after which he gave the Porter an hundred dinars as usual, and he and the rest of the company went their ways, glad at heart and marvelling at the tales they had heard, for that each story was more extraordinary than that which forewent it. The Porter Sindbad passed the night in his own house, in all joy and cheer and wonderment; and, as soon as morning came with its sheen and shone, he prayed the dawn-prayer and repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, who welcomed him and bade him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when they ate and drank and made merry and the talk went round amongst them. Presently their host began the narrative of

THE FIFTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN

KNOW, O my brothers, that when I had been awhile on shore after my fourth voyage; and when, in my comfort and pleasures and merry-makings and in my rejoicing over my large gains and profits, I had forgotten all I had endured of perils and sufferings, the carnal man was again seized with the longing to travel and to see foreign countries and islands. Accordingly I bought costly merchandise suited to my purpose and, making it up into bales, repaired to Bassorah, where I walked about the river quay till I found a fine tall ship, newly builded with gear unused and fitted ready for sea. She pleased me; so I bought her and, embarking my goods in her, hired a master and crew, over whom I set certain of my slaves and servants as inspectors. A number of merchants also brought their outfits and paid me freight and passage money; then, after reciting Fatihah, we set sail over Allah's pool in all joy and cheer, promising ourselves a prosperous voyage and much profit.

We sailed from city to city and from island to island and from sea to sea viewing the cities and countries by which we passed, and selling and buying in not a few, till one day we came to a great uninhabited island, deserted and desolate, whereon was a white dome of biggest bulk half-buried in the sands. The merchants landed to examine this dome, leaving me in the ship; and when they drew near, behold, it was a huge Rukh's egg. They fell a-beating it with stones, knowing not what it was, and presently broke it open, whereupon much water ran out of it

and the young Rukh appeared within. So they pulled it forth of the shell and cut its throat and took of it great store of meat. Now I was in the ship and knew not what they did ; but presently one of the passengers came up to me and said, " O my lord, come and look at the egg that we thought to be a dome." So I looked and, seeing the merchants beating it with stones, called out to them, " Stop, stop ! do not meddle with that egg, or the bird Rukh will come out and break our ship and destroy us." But they paid no heed to me and gave not over smiting upon the egg, when, behold, the day grew dark and dun and the sun was hidden from us, as if some great cloud had passed over the



firmament. So we raised our eyes and saw that what we took for a cloud was the Rukh poised between us and the sun, and it was his wings that darkened the day.

When he came and saw his egg broken he cried a loud cry, whereupon his mate came flying up and they both began circling about the ship, crying out at us with voices louder than thunder. I called to the Rais and crew, " Put out to sea and seek safety in flight, before we be all destroyed." So the merchants came on board and we cast off and made haste from the island to gain the open sea. When the Rukhs saw this, they flew off, and we crowded all sail on the ship, thinking to get out of their country ; but presently the two reappeared and flew after us and stood over us, each carrying in its claws a huge boulder which it had brought from the mountains. As soon as the he-Rukh came up with us, he let fall upon us the rock he held in his pounces ;

but the master put about ship, so that the rock missed her by some small matter and plunged into the waves with such violence that the ship pitched high and then sank into the trough of the sea and the bottom of the ocean appeared to us. Then the she-Rukh let fall her rock, which was bigger than that of her mate, and, as Destiny had decreed, it fell on the poop of the ship and crushed it, the rudder flying into twenty pieces; whereupon the vessel foundered and all and everything on board were cast into the main. As for me I struggled for sweet life, till Almighty Allah threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, to which I clung and, bestriding it, fell a-paddling with my feet.

Now the ship had gone down hard by an island in the midst of the main and the winds and waves bore me on till, by permission of the Most High, they cast me up on the shore of the island, at the last gasp for toil and distress and half-dead with hunger and thirst. So I landed more like a corpse than a live man and, throwing myself down on the beach, lay there awhile, till I began to revive and recover spirits, when I walked about the island and found it as it were one of the garths and gardens of Paradise. Its trees, in abundance dight, bore ripe-yellow fruit for freight; its streams ran clear and bright; its flowers were fair to scent and to sight, and its birds warbled with delight the praises of Him to whom belong permanence and all-might. So I ate my fill of the fruits and slaked my thirst with the water of the streams till I could no more and I returned thanks to the Most High and glorified Him; after which I sat till nightfall, hearing no voice and seeing none inhabitant. Then I lay down, wellnigh dead for travail and trouble and terror, and slept without surcease till morning, when I arose and walked about under the trees, till I came to the channel of a draw-well fed by a spring of running water, by which sat an old man of venerable aspect, girt about with a waistcloth made of the fibre of palm-fronds.

Quoth I to myself, "Haply this Shaykh is of those who were wrecked in the ship and hath made his way to this island." So I drew near to him and saluted him, and he returned my salam by signs, but spoke not; and I said to him, "O nuncle mine, what causeth thee to sit here?" He shook his head and moaned, and signed to me with his hands as who should say, "Take me on thy shoulders and carry me to the other side of the well-channel." And quoth I in my mind, "I will deal kindly with

him and do what he desireth ; it may be I shall win me a reward in Heaven for he may be a paralytic." So I took him on my back and, carrying him to the place whereat he pointed, said to him, " Dismount at thy leisure." But he would not get off my back and wound his legs about my neck. I looked at them, and seeing that they were like a buffalo's hide for blackness and roughness, was affrighted, and would have cast him off; but he clung to me and gripped my neck with his legs, till I was wellnigh choked ; the world grew black in my sight and I fell senseless to the ground like one dead. But he still kept his seat and, raising his legs, drummed with his heels and beat harder than palm rods my back and shoulders, till he forced me to rise for excess of pain. Then he signed to me with his hand to carry him hither and thither among the trees which bore the best fruits ; and if ever I refused to do his bidding or loitered or took my leisure he beat me with his feet more grievously than if I had been beaten with whips. He ceased not to signal with his hand wherever he was minded to go ; so I carried him about the island, like a captive slave, and he bepissed and conskited my shoulders and back, dismounting not night nor day ; and whenas he wished to sleep he wound his legs about my neck and leaned back and slept awhile, then arose and beat me ; whereupon I sprang up in haste, unable to gainsay him because of the pain he inflicted on me.

And indeed I blamed myself and sore repented me of having taken compassion on him and continued in this condition, suffering fatigue not to be described, till I said to myself, " I wrought him a weal and he requited me with my ill ; by Allah, never more will I do any man a service so long as I live ! " And again and again I besought the Most High that I might die, for stress of weariness and misery ; and thus I abode a long while till, one day, I came with him to a place wherein was abundance of gourds, many of them dry. So I took a great dry gourd and, cutting open the head, scooped out the inside and cleaned it ; after which I gathered grapes from a vine which grew hard by and squeezed them into the gourd, till it was full of the juice. Then I stopped up the mouth and set it in the sun, where I left it for some days, until it became strong wine ; and every day I used to drink of it, to comfort and sustain me under my fatigues with that froward and obstinate fiend ; and as often as I drank myself drunk, I forgot my troubles and took new heart.

One day he saw me drinking and signed to me with his hand, as who should say, "What is that?" Quoth I, "It is an excellent cordial, which cheereth the heart and reviveth the spirits." Then, being heated with wine, I ran and danced with him among the trees, clapping my hands and singing and making merry; and I staggered under him by design. When he saw this, he signed to me to give him the gourd that he might drink, and I feared him and gave it to him. So he took it and, draining

it to the dregs, cast it on the ground, whereupon he grew frolicsome and began to clap hands and jig to and fro on my shoulders and he made water upon me so copiously that all my dress was drenched. But presently the fumes of the wine rising to his head, he became helplessly drunk and his side-muscles and limbs relaxed and he swayed to and fro on my back. When I saw that he had lost his senses for drunkenness, I put my hands to his legs and, loosing them from my neck, stooped down wellnigh to the ground and threw him at full length, hardly crediting my deliverance from him and fearing lest he should shake off his drunkenness and do me a mischief. Then I took up a great stone from among the trees and coming up to him smote him

therewith on the head with all my might and crushed in his skull as he lay dead drunk. Thereupon his flesh and fat and blood being in a pulp, he died and went to his deserts, The Fire, no mercy of Allah be upon him!

I then returned, with a heart at ease, to my former station on the seashore and abode in that island many days, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and keeping a look out for passing ships; till one day, as I sat on the beach, recalling all that had befallen me and saying, "I wonder if Allah will save me alive and restore me to my home and family and friends!" behold, a ship was making for the island through the dashing sea and clashing waves. Presently, it cast anchor and the passengers landed; so I made for them, and when they saw me, all hastened up to me and gathering round me questioned me of my case and how I came thither. I told them all that had betided me, whereat they marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "He who rode on thy shoulder is called the 'Shaykh al-Bahr' or Old Man of the Sea, and none ever felt his legs on neck and came off alive but thou; and those who die under him he eateth: so praised be Allah for thy safety!" Then they set somewhat of food before me, whereof I ate my fill, and gave me somewhat of clothes wherewith I clad myself anew and covered my nakedness; after which they took me up into the ship, and we sailed days and nights, till fate brought us to a place called the City of Apes, builded with lofty houses, all of which gave upon the sea and it had a single gate studded and strengthened with iron nails.

Now every night, as soon as it is dusk the dwellers in this city use to come forth of the gates and, putting out to sea in boats and ships, pass the night upon the waters in their fear lest the apes should come down on them from the mountains. Hearing this I was sore troubled remembering what I had before suffered from the ape-kind. Presently I landed to solace myself in the city, but meanwhile the ship set sail without me and I repented of having gone ashore, and calling to mind my companions and what had befallen me with the apes, first and after, sat down and fell a-weeping and lamenting. Presently one of the townsfolk accosted me and said to me, "O my lord, meseemeth thou art a stranger to these parts?" "Yes," answered I, "I am indeed a stranger and a poor one, who came hither in a ship which cast anchor here, and I landed to visit the town;

but when I would have gone on board again, I found they had sailed without me." Quoth he, "Come and embark with us, for if you lie the night in the city, the apes will destroy thee." "Hearkening and obedience," replied I, and rising, straightway embarked with him in one of the boats, whereupon they pushed off from shore and anchoring a mile or so from land, there passed the night. At daybreak, they rowed back to the city and landing, went each about his business. This they did every night, for if any tarried in the town by night the apes came down on him and slew him. As soon as it was day, the apes left the place and ate of the fruits of the gardens, then went back to the mountains and slept there till nightfall, when they again came down upon the city.

Now this place was in the farthest part of the country of the blacks, and one of the strangest things that befell me during my sojourn in the city was on this wise. One of the company with whom I passed the night in the boat, asked me, "O my lord, thou art apparently a stranger in these parts; hast thou any craft whereat thou canst work?"; and I answered, "By Allah, O my brother, I have no trade nor know I any handicraft, for I was a merchant and a man of money and substance and had a ship of my own, laden with great store of goods and merchandise; but it foundered at sea and all were drowned excepting me who saved myself on a piece of plank which Allah vouchsafed to me of His favour." Upon this he brought me a cotton bag and giving it to me, said, "Take this bag and fill it with pebbles from the beach and go forth with a company of the townsfolk to whom I will give a charge respecting thee. Do as they do and belike thou shalt gain what may further thy return voyage to thy native land." Then he carried me to the beach, where I filled my bag with pebbles large and small, and presently we saw a company of folk issue from the town, each bearing a bag like mine, filled with pebbles. To these he committed me, commending me to their care, and saying, "This man is a stranger, so take him with you and teach him how to gather, that he may get his daily bread, and you will earn your reward and recompense in Heaven." "On our head and eyes be it!" answered they and bidding me welcome, fared on with me till we came to a spacious wady, full of lofty trees with trunks so smooth that none might climb them.

Now sleeping under these trees were many apes, which when they saw us arose and fled from us and swarmed up among the branches; whereupon my companions began to pelt them with what they had in their bags, and the apes fell to plucking of the fruit of the trees and casting them at the folk. I looked at the fruits they cast at us and found them to be Indian or cocoa nuts; so I chose out a great tree, full of apes, and going up to it, began to pelt them with stones, and they in return pelted me with nuts, which I collected, as did the rest; so that even before I had made an end of my bagful of pebbles, I had gotten great plenty of nuts; and as soon as my companions had in like manner gotten as many nuts as they could carry, we returned to the city where we arrived at the fag-end of day. Then I went in to the kindly man who had brought me in company with the nut-gatherers and gave him all I had gotten, thanking him for his kindness; but he would not accept them, saying, "Sell them and make profit by the price," and presently he added (giving me the key of a closet in his house) "Store thy nuts in this safe place and go thou forth every morning and gather them as thou hast done to-day, and choose out the worst for sale and supplying thyself; but lay up the rest here, so haply thou mayst collect enough to serve thee for thy return home." "Allah requite thee!" answered I and did as he advised me, going out daily with the cocoa-nut gatherers, who commended me to one another and showed me the best-stocked trees.

Thus did I for some time, till I had laid up great store of excellent nuts, besides a large sum of money, the price of those I had sold. I became thus at my ease and bought all I saw and had a mind to, and passed my time pleasantly greatly enjoying my stay in the city, till, as I stood on the beach, one day, a great ship steering through the heart of the sea presently cast anchor by the shore and landed a company of merchants, who proceeded to sell and buy and barter their goods for cocoa-nuts and other commodities. Then I went to my friend and told him of the coming of the ship and how I had a mind to return to my own country; and he said, "'Tis for thee to decide." So I thanked him for his bounties and took leave of him; then, going to the captain of the ship I agreed with him for my passage and embarked my cocoa-nuts and what else I possessed.

We weighed anchor the same day and sailed from island to

island and sea to sea; and whenever we stopped, I sold and traded with my cocoa-nuts, and the Lord requited me more than I erst had and lost. Amongst other places, we came to an island abounding in cloves and cinnamon and pepper; and the country people told me that by the side of each pepper-bunch groweth a great leaf which shadeth it from the sun and casteth the water off it in the wet season; but, when the rain ceaseth the leaf turneth over and droopeth down by the side of the bunch. Here I took in great store of pepper and cloves and cinnamon in exchange for cocoa-nuts, and we passed thence to the Island of Al-Usirat, whence cometh the Comorin aloes-wood and thence to another island, five days' journey in length, where grows the Chinese lign-aloes, which is better than the Comorin; but the people of this island are fouler of condition and religion than those of the other, for that they love fornication and wine-bibbing, and know not prayer nor call to prayer. Thence we came to the pearl-fisheries, and I gave the divers some of my cocoa-nuts and said to them, "Dive for my luck and lot!" They did so and brought up from the deep bight great store of large and priceless pearls; and they said to me, "By Allah, O my master, thy luck is a lucky!"

Then we sailed on, with the blessing of Allah (whose name be exalted!); and ceased not sailing till we arrived safely at Bassorah. There I abode a little and then went on to Baghdad where I entered my quarter and found my house and fore-gathered with my family and saluted my friends who gave me joy of my safe return, and I laid up all my goods and valuables in my storehouses. Then I distributed alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan and made presents to my relations and comrades; for the Lord had requited me fourfold that I had lost. After which I returned to my old merry way of life and forgot all I had suffered in the great profit and gain I had made. Such, then, is the history of my fifth voyage and its wonderments, and now to supper.

Saith he who telleth the tale: Then he called for food; and the servants spread the table, and when they had eaten the evening meal, he bade give Sindbad the Porter an hundred golden dinars and the Landsman returned home and lay him down to sleep, much marvelling at all he had heard.

THE LADY AND HER FIVE SUITORS

A WOMAN of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveller. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, from pure ennui, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, and they loved each other with exceeding love. One day the youth quarrelled with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the Chief of Police, and he cast him into prison. When the news came to the merchant's wife his mistress, she wellnigh lost her wits; then she arose and donning her richest clothes repaired to the house of the Chief of Police. She saluted him and presented a written petition to this purport: "He thou hast clapped in jail is my brother such and such, who fell out with such an one; and those who testified against him bore false witness. He hath been wrongfully imprisoned, and I have none other to come in to me nor to provide for my support; therefore I beseech thee of thy grace to release him."

When the magistrate had read the paper, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her forthright; so he said to her, "Go into the house, till I bring him before me; then I will send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," replied she, "I have none to protect me save Almighty Allah! I am a stranger and may not enter any man's abode." Quoth the Wali, "I will not let him go, except thou come to my home and I take my will of thee." Rejoined she, "If it must be so, thou must needs come to my lodging and sit and sleep the siesta and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy abode?" asked he; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for such a time. Then she went out from him, leaving his

heart taken with love of her, and she repaired to the Kazi of the city to whom she said, "O our lord the Kazi!" He exclaimed, "Yes!" and she continued, "Look into my case, and thy reward be with Allah the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" and quoth she, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but that one, and it is on his account that I come to thee; because the Wali hath imprisoned him for a criminal and men have borne false witness against him that he is a wrong-doer; and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the Chief of Police."

When the Kazi looked on her, he fell in love with her forthright and said to her, "Enter the house and rest awhile with my handmaids whilst I send to the Wali to release thy brother. If I knew the money-fine which is upon him, I would pay it out of my own purse, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleasest me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." Quoth he, "An thou wilt not come in, wend thy ways." Then said she, "An thou wilt have it so, O our lord, it will be privier and better in my place than in thine, for here are slave-girls and eunuchs and goers-in and comers-out, and indeed I am a woman who wotteth naught of this fashion; but need compelleth." Asked the Kazi, "And where is thy house?"; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for the same day and time as the Chief of Police. Then she went out from him to the Wazir, to whom she preferred her petition for the release from prison of her brother who was absolutely necessary to her; but he also required her of herself, saying, "Suffer me to have my will of thee and I will set thy brother free." Quoth she, "An thou wilt have it so, be it in my house, for there it will be privier both for me and for thee. It is not far distant and thou knowest that which behoveth us women of cleanliness and adornment." Asked he, "Where is thy house?" "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the two others.

Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" inquired he; and she replied, "'Twas thy Chief of Police." When the King heard her speech, it transpierced his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Kazi and release

her brother. Quoth she, "O King, this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or nill; and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune; but, if he come to my house, he will do me the more honour by setting step therein." Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she appointed him for the same time as the three others, and told him where her house was.

Then she left him and, betaking herself to a man which was a carpenter, said to him, "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments one above other, each with its door for locking up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." Replied he, "My price will be four dinars; but, O noble lady and well-protected, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favours, I will ask nothing of thee." Rejoined she, "An there be no help but that thou have it so, then make thou five compartments with their padlocks"; and she appointed him to bring it exactly on the day required. Said he, "It is well; sit down, O my lady, and I will make it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down by him, whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had made an end of it she chose to see it at once carried home and set up in the sitting-chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different colour; after which she applied herself to making ready meat and drink, fruits, flowers and perfumes.

Now, when the appointed trysting-day came, she donned her costliest dress and adorned herself and scented herself, then spread the sitting-room with various kinds of rich carpets and sat down to await who should come. And behold, the Kazi was the first to appear, devancing the rest; and when she saw him, she rose to her feet and kissed the ground before him; then, taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her on the couch and lay with him and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by, he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, doff thy clothes and turband and assume this yellow cassock and this headkerchief,[1] whilst I bring thee meat and drink; and

[1] When Easterns sit down to a drinking-bout, which means to get drunk as speedily and pleasantly as possible, they put off dresses of dull colours and robe themselves in clothes supplied by the host, of the brightest he may have, especially yellow, green and red of different shades. So the lady's proceeding was not likely to breed suspicion.

after thou shalt win thy will." So saying, she took his clothes and turband and clad him in the cassock and the kerchief; but hardly had she done this, when lo! there came a knocking at the door. Asked he, "Who is that rapping at the door?" and she answered, "My husband." Quoth the Kazi, "What is to be done, and where shall I go?" Quoth she, "Fear nothing, I will hide thee in this cabinet"; and he, "Do as seemeth good to thee." So she took him by the hand and, pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door upon him.

Then she went to the house-door, where she found the Wali; so she kissed the ground before him and, taking his hand, brought him into the saloon, where she made him sit down and said to him, "O my lord, this house is thy house; this place is thy place, and I am thy handmaid; thou shalt pass all this day with me; wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping-gown." So she took away his clothes and made him assume the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her; after which she sat by him on the divan and she sported with him while he toyed with her awhile, till he put out his hand to her. Whereupon she said to him, "O our lord, this day is thy day and none shall share in it with thee; but first, of thy favour and benevolence, write me an order for my brother's release from jail that my heart may be at ease." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience; on my head and eyes be it!"; and wrote a letter to his treasurer, saying: "As soon as this communication shall reach thee, do thou set such an one free, without stay or delay; neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began to toy again with him on the divan when, behold, someone knocked at the door. He asked, "Who is that?" and she answered, "My husband." "What shall I do?" said he, and she, "Enter this cabinet, till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment from the bottom and padlocked the door on him; and meanwhile the Kazi heard all they said.

Then she went to the house-door and opened it, whereupon, lo! the Wazir entered. She kissed the ground before him and received him with all honour and worship, saying, "O my lord, thou exaltest us by thy coming to our house; Allah never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated

him on the divan and said to him, " O my lord, doff thy heavy dress and turband and don these lighter vestments." So he put off his clothes and turband and she clad him in a blue cassock and a tall red bonnet, and said to him, " Erst thy garb was that of the Wazirate; so leave it to its own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep." Thereupon she began to play with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her; but she put him off, saying, " O my lord, this shall not fail us." As they were talking there came a knocking at the door, and the Wazir asked her, " Who is that? "; to which she answered, " My husband." Quoth he, " What is to be done? " Quoth she, " Enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee and fear thou nothing." So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on him, after which she went out and opened the house door when, lo and behold! in came the King.

As soon as she saw him she kissed the ground before him and, taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the divan at the upper end. Then said she to him, " Verily, O King, thou dost us high honour, and if we brought thee to gift the world and all that therein is, it would not be worth a single one of thy steps us-wards." And when he had taken his seat upon the divan she said, " Give me leave to speak one word." " Say what thou wilt," answered he, and she said, " O my lord, take thine ease and doff thy dress and turband." Now his clothes were worth a thousand dinars; and when he put them off she clad him in a patched gown, worth at the very most ten dirhams, and fell to talking and jesting with him; all this while the folk in the cabinet hearing everything that passed, but not daring to say a word. Presently, the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his desire of her; when she said, " This thing shall not fail us, but I had first promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting-chamber, and I have that which shall content thee." Now, as they were speaking, someone knocked at the door and he asked her, " Who is that? " " My husband," answered she; and he, " Make him go away of his own good will, or I will fare forth to him and send him away perforce." Replied she, " Nay, O my lord, have patience till I send him away by my skilful contrivance." " And I, how shall I do? " inquired the King; whereupon she took him by the hand and, making him

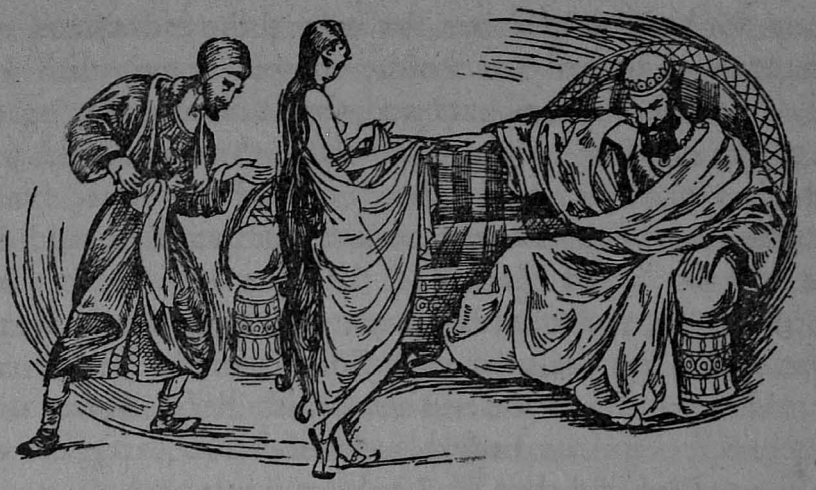
enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him. Then she went out and opened the house-door, when behold, the carpenter entered and saluted her.

Quoth she, "What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?" "What aileth it, O my lady?" asked he, and she answered, "The top compartment is too strait." Rejoined he, "Not so"; and she, "Go in thyself and see; it is not wide enough for thee." Quoth he, "It is wide enough for four," and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon she locked the door on him. Then she took the letter of the Chief of Police and carried it to the treasurer who, having read and understood it, kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all she had done and he said, "And how shall we act now?" She answered, "We will remove hence to another city, for after this work there is no tarrying for us here." So the twain packed up what goods they had and, loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city.

Meanwhile, the five abode each in his compartment of the cabinet without eating or drinking three whole days, during which time they held their water, until at last the carpenter could retain his no longer; so he staled on the King's head, and the King urined on the Wazir's head, and the Wazir piddled on the Wali and the Wali pissed on the head of the Kazi; whereupon the Judge cried out and said, "What nastiness is this? Doth not what strait we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?" The Chief of Police recognised the Kazi's voice and answered, saying aloud, "Allah increase thy reward, O Kazi!" And when the Kazi heard him, he knew him for the Wali. Then the Chief of Police lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" and the Wazir answered, saying, "Allah increase thy reward, O Wali!" whereupon he knew him to be the Minister. Then the Wazir lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" But when the King heard and recognised his Minister's voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair. Then said the Wazir, "May God damn this woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the Chief Officers of the State, except the King." Quoth the King, "Hold your peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd strumpet." Whereat cried the carpenter, "And I, what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four gold pieces, and

when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, diverting the King and doing away his chagrin.

Presently the neighbours came up to the house and, seeing it deserted, said one to other, "But yesterday our neighbour, the wife of such an one, was in it; but now no sound is to be heard therein nor is soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the Wali or the King and we be cast into prison and regret not doing this thing before." So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw a large wooden cabinet and heard men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a Jinni in this cabinet?" and his fellow, "Let us heap fuel about it and burn it with fire." When the Kazi heard this, he bawled out to them, "Do it not!" And they said to one another, "Verily the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Thereupon the Kazi repeated somewhat of the Sublime Koran and said to the neighbours, "Draw near to the cabinet wherein we are." So they drew near, and he said, "I am so and so the Kazi, and ye are such an one and such an one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbours, "Who brought you here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end. Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors and let out Kazi, Wazir, Wali, King and carpenter in their queer disguises; and each, when he saw how the others were accoutred, fell a-laughing at them.



JULNAR THE SEA-BORN AND HER SON KING BADR BASIM OF PERSIA

THERE was once in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, in Ajam-land, a King, Shahriman hight, whose abiding-place was Khorasan. He owned an hundred concubines, but by none of them had he been blessed with boon of child, male or female, all the days of his life. One day, among the days, he bethought him of this and fell lamenting for that the most part of his existence was passed and he had not been vouchsafed a son to inherit the kingdom after him, even as he had inherited it from his fathers and forbears; by reason whereof there betided him sore cark and care and chagrin exceeding. As he sat thus one of his Mamelukes came in to him and said, "O my lord, at the door is a slave-girl with her merchant, and fairer than she eye hath never seen." Quoth the King, "Hither to me with merchant and maid!"; and both came in to him. Now, when Shahriman beheld the girl, he saw that she was like a Rudaynian lance, and she was wrapped in a veil of gold-purfled silk. The merchant uncovered her face, whereupon the place was illumined by her beauty and her seven tresses hung down to her anklets like horses' tails. She had Nature-kohl'd eyes, heavy hips and thighs and waist of slenderest guise; her sight healed all maladies and quenched the fire of sighs.

The King, seeing her, marvelled at her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and perfect grace, and said to the merchant, "O Shaykh, how much for this maiden?" Replied the merchant,

"O my lord, I bought her for two thousand dinars of the merchant who owned her before myself, since when I have travelled with her three years and she hath cost me, up to the time of my coming hither, other three thousand gold pieces; but she is a gift from me to thee." The King robed him with a splendid robe of honour and ordered him ten thousand ducats, whereupon he kissed his hands, thanking him for his bounty and beneficence, and went his ways. Then the King committed the damsel to the tire-women, saying, "Amend ye the case of this maiden [1] and adorn her and furnish her a bower and set her therein." And he bade his chamberlains carry her everything she needed and shut all the doors upon her.

Now his capital wherein he dwelt was called the White City and was seated on the seashore; so they lodged her in a chamber whose latticed casements overlooked the main. Then Shahriman went in to her; but she spake not to him neither took any note of him. Quoth he, "'Twould seem she hath been with folk who have not taught her manners." Then he looked at the damsel and saw her surpassing beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, with a face like the rondure of the moon at its full or the sun shining in the sheeny sky. So he marvelled at her charms of favour and figure and he praised Allah the Creator (magnified be His might!), after which he walked up to her and sat him down by her side; then he pressed her to his bosom and seating her on his thighs, sucked the dew of her lips which he found sweeter than honey. Presently he called for trays spread with richest viands of all kinds and ate and fed her by mouthfuls, till she had enough; yet she spoke not one word.

The King began to talk to her and asked her of her name; but she abode still silent and uttered not a syllable nor made him any answer, neither ceased to hang down her head groundwards; and it was but the excess of her beauty and loveliness and the amorous grace that saved her from the royal wrath. Quoth he to himself, "Glory be to God, the Creator of this girl! How charming she is, save that she speaketh not! But perfection belongeth only to Allah the Most High." And he asked the slave-girls whether she had spoken, and they said, "From the time of her coming until now she hath not uttered

[1] *I.e.* bathe her and apply cosmetics to remove all traces of travel.

a word nor have we heard her address us." Then he summoned some of his women and concubines and bade them sing to her and make merry with her, so haply she might speak. Accordingly they played before her all manner instruments of music and sports and what not and sang, till the whole company was moved to mirth, except the damsel, who looked at them in silence, but neither laughed nor spoke. The King's breast was straitened; thereupon he dismissed the women and abode alone with that damsel: after which he doffed his clothes and disrobing her with his own hand, looked upon her body and saw it as it were a silvern ingot. So he loved her with exceeding love and falling upon her, took her maidenhead and found her a pure virgin; whereat he rejoiced with excessive joy and said in himself, "By Allah, 'tis a wonder that a girl so fair of form and face should have been left by the merchants a clean maid as she is!"

Then he devoted himself altogether to her, heeding none other and forsaking all his concubines and favourites, and tarried with her a whole year as it were a single day. Still she spoke not, till one morning he said to her (and indeed the love of her and longing waxed upon him), "O desire of souls, verily passion for thee is great with me, and I have forsaken for thy sake all my slave-girls and concubines and women and favourites and I have made thee my portion of the world and had patience with thee a whole year; and now I beseech Almighty Allah, of His favour, to soften thy heart to me, so thou mayst speak to me Or, an thou be dumb, tell me by a sign, that I may give up hope of thy speech. I pray the Lord (extolled be He!) to vouchsafe me by thee a son child who shall inherit the kingdom after me; for I am old and lone and have none to be my heir. Wherefore, Allah upon thee, an thou love me, return me a reply." The damsel bowed her head awhile in thought, and presently raising it, smiled in his face; whereat it seemed to him as if lightning filled the chamber. Then she said, "O magnanimous liege lord, and valorous lion, Allah hath answered thy prayer, for I am with child by thee and the time of my delivery is near at hand, though I know not if the unborn babe be male or female. But, had I not conceived by thee, I had not spoken to thee one word."

When the King heard her speech, his face shone with joy and gladness and he kissed her head and hands for excess of delight, saying, "Alhamdolillah—laud to Lord—who hath

vouchsafed me the things I desired!; first, thy speech, and secondly, thy tidings that thou art with child by me." Then he rose up and went forth from her and, seating himself on the throne of his kingship in an ecstasy of happiness, bade his Wazir distribute to the poor and needy and widows and others an hundred thousand dinars, by way of thank-offering to Allah Most High and alms on his own account. The Minister did as bidden by the King who, returning to the damsel, sat with her and embraced and pressed her to his breast, saying, "O my lady, my queen, whose slave I am, prithee what was the cause of this thy silence? Thou hast been with me a whole year, night and day, waking and sleeping, yet hast not spoken to me till this day." She replied, "Hearken, O King of the Age, and know that I am a wretched exile, broken-hearted and far-parted from my mother and my family and my brother." When the King heard her words, he knew her desire and said, "As for thy saying that thou art wretched, there is for such speech no ground, inasmuch as my kingdom and good and all I possess are at thy service and I also am become thy bondman; but, as for thy saying 'I am parted from my mother and brother and family,' tell me where they are and I will send and fetch them to thee."

Thereupon she answered, "Know, then, O auspicious King, that I am called Julnar the Sea-born and that my father was of the Kings of the Main. He died and left us his reign, but while we were yet unsettled, behold, one of the other Kings arose against us and took the realm from our hands. I have a brother called Salih, and my mother also is a woman of the sea; but I fell out with my brother, 'The Pious,' and swore that I would throw myself into the hands of a man of the folk of the land. So I came forth of the sea and sat down on the edge of an island in the moonshine, where a passer-by found me and, carrying me to his house, besought me of love-liesse; but I smote him on the head, so that he all but died; whereupon he carried me forth and sold me to the merchant from whom thou hadst me, and this was a good man and a virtuous; pious, loyal and generous. Were it not that thy heart loved me and that thou promotedest me over all thy concubines, I had not remained with thee a single hour, but had cast myself from this window into the sea and gone to my mother and family; but I was ashamed to fare themwards, being with child by thee; for they would have deemed

evilly of me and would not have credited me, even although I swore to them, an I told them that a King had bought me with his gold and made me his portion of the world and preferred me over all his wives and every thing that his right hand possessed. This then is my story and—the Peace!"

The King thanked her and kissed her between the eyes, saying, "By Allah, O my lady and light of mine eyes, I cannot bear to be parted from thee one hour; and given thou leave me, I shall die forthright. What then is to be done?" Replied she, "O my lord, the time of my delivery is at hand and my family needs must be present, that they may tend me; for the women of the land know not the manner of child-bearing of the women of the sea, nor do the daughters of the ocean know the manner of the daughters of the earth; and when my people come, I shall be reconciled to them and they will be reconciled to me." Quoth the King, "How do the people of the sea walk therein, without being wetted?"; and quoth she, "O King of the Age, we walk in the waters with our eyes open, as do ye on the ground, by the blessing of the names graven upon the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on whom be peace!). But, O King, when my kith and kin come, I will tell them how thou boughtest me with thy gold, and hast entreated me with kindness and benevolence. It behoveth that thou confirm my words to them and that they witness thine estate with their own eyes and they learn that thou art a King, son of a King." He rejoined, "O my lady, do what seemeth good to thee and what pleaseth thee; and I will consent to thee in all thou wouldst do."

The damsel continued, "Yes, we walk in the sea and see what is therein and behold the sun, moon, stars and sky, as it were on the surface of earth; and this irketh us naught. Know also that there be many peoples in the main and various forms and creatures of all kinds that are on the land, and that all that is on the land compared with that which is in the main is but a very small matter." And the King marvelled at her words. Then she pulled out from her bosom two bits of Comorin lign-aloes and, kindling fire in a chafing-dish, chose somewhat of them and threw it in, then she whistled a loud whistle and spake words none understood. Thereupon arose a great smoke and she said to the King, who was looking on, "O my lord, arise and hide thyself in a closet, that I may show thee my brother

and mother and family, whilst they see thee not; for I design to bring them hither, and thou shalt presently espy a wondrous thing and shalt marvel at the several creatures and strange shapes which Almighty Allah hath created." So he arose without stay or delay and entering a closet, fell awatching what she should do. She continued her fumigations and conjurations till the sea foamed and frothed turbid and there rose from it a handsome young man of a bright favour, as he were the moon at its full, with brow flower-white, cheeks of ruddy light and teeth like the marguerite. He was the likest of all creatures to his sister. After him there came forth of the sea an ancient dame with hair speckled grey and five maidens, as they were moons, bearing a likeness to the damsel hight Julnar.

The King looked upon them as they all walked upon the face of the water, till they drew near the window and saw Julnar, whereupon they knew her and went in to her. She rose to them and met them with joy and gladness, and they embraced her and wept with sore weeping. Then said they to her, "O Julnar, how couldst thou leave us four years, and we unknowing of thine abiding place? By Allah the world hath been straitened upon us for stress of severance from thee, and we have had no delight of food or drink; no, not for one day, but have wept with sore weeping night and day for the excess of our longing after thee!" Then she fell to kissing the hands of the youth her brother and her mother and cousins, and they sat with her awhile, questioning her of her case and of what had betided her, as well as of her present estate. "Know," replied she, "that, when I left you, I issued from the sea and sat down on the shore of an island, where a man found me and sold me to a merchant, who brought me to this city and sold me for ten thousand dinars to the King of the country, who entreated me with honour and forsook all his concubines and women and favourites for my sake and was distracted by me from all he had and all that was in his city." Quoth her brother, "Praised be Allah, who hath reunited us with thee! But now, O my sister, 'tis my purpose that thou arise and go with us to our country and people."

When the King heard these words his wits fled him for fear lest the damsel accept her brother's words and he himself avail not to stay her, albeit he loved her passionately, and he became

distracted with fear of losing her. But Julnar answered, "By Allah, O my brother, the mortal who bought me is lord of this city and he is a mighty King and a wise man, good and generous with extreme generosity. Moreover, he is a personage of great worth and wealth and hath neither son nor daughter. He hath entreated me with honour and done me all manner of favour and kindness; nor, from the day of his buying me to this time have I heard from him an ill-word to hurt my heart; but he hath never ceased to use me courteously; doing nothing save with my counsel, and I am in the best of case with him and in the perfection of fair fortune. Furthermore, were I to leave him, he would perish; for he cannot endure to be parted from me an hour; and if I left him I also should die, for the excess of love I bear him, by reason of his great goodness to me during the time of my sojourn with him; for, were my father alive, my estate with him would not be like my estate with this great and glorious and puissant potentate. And verily, ye see me with child by him and praise be to Allah, who hath made me a daughter of the Kings of the sea, and my husband the mightiest of the Kings of the land, and Allah, in very sooth, he hath compensated me for whatso I lost. Now this King hath no issue, male or female, so I pray the Almighty to vouchsafe me a son who shall inherit of this mighty sovran that which the Lord hath bestowed upon him of the lands and palaces and possessions."

Now, when her brother and the daughters of her uncle heard this her speech, their eyes were cooled thereby and they said, "O Julnar, thou knowest thy value with us and thou wottest the affection we bear thee and thou art certified that thou art to us the dearest of all creatures and thou art assured that we seek but ease for thee, without travail or trouble. Wherefore, an thou be in unease, arise and go with us to our land and our folk; but, an thou be at thine ease here, in honour and happiness, this is our wish and and our will; for we desire naught save thy welfare in any case." Quoth she, "By Allah, I am here in the utmost ease and solace and honour and grace!" When the King heard what she said, he joyed with a heart set at rest and thanked her silently for this; the love of her redoubled on him and entered his heart-core and he knew that she loved him and he loved her and that she desired to abide with him, that she might see his child by her. Then Julnar bade her women lay the tables

and set on all sorts of viands, which had been cooked in kitchen under her own eyes, and fruits and sweetmeats, whereof she ate, she and her kinsfolk.

But presently they said to her, "O Julnar, thy lord is a stranger to us, and we have entered his house, without his leave or weeting. Thou hast extolled to us his excellence and eke thou hast set before us of his victual whereof we have eaten; yet have we not companied with him nor seen him, neither hath he seen us nor come to our presence and eaten with us, so there might be between us bread and salt." And they all left eating and were wroth with her, and fire issued from their mouths, as from cressets; which, when the King saw, his wits fled for excess of fear of them. But Julnar arose and soothed them and, going to the closet where was the King her lord, said to him, "O my lord, hast thou seen and heard how I praised thee and extolled thee to my people, and hast thou noted what they said to me of their desire to carry me away with them?" Quoth he, "I both heard and saw. May the Almighty abundantly requite thee for me! By Allah, I knew not the full measure of thy fondness until this blessed hour, and now I doubt not of thy love to me!" Quoth she, "O my lord, is the reward of kindness aught but kindness? Verily, thou hast dealt generously with me and hast entreated me with worship and I have seen that thou lovest me with the utmost love, and thou hast done me all manner of honour and kindness and preferred me above all thou lovest and desirest. So how should my heart be content to leave thee and depart from thee, and how should I do thus after all thy goodness to me? But now I desire of thy courtesy that thou come and salute my family, so thou mayst see them and they thee and pure love and friendship may be between you; for know, O King of the Age, that my brother and mother and cousins love thee with exceeding love, by reason of my praises of thee to them, and they say, 'We will not depart from thee nor go to our homes till we have foregathered with the King and saluted him.' For indeed they desire to see thee and make acquaintance with thee."

The King replied, "To hear is to obey, for this is my very own wish." So saying, he rose and went in to them and saluted them with the goodliest salutation; and they sprang up to him and received him with the utmost worship, after which he sat down in the palace and ate with them; and he entertained them

thus for the space of thirty days. Then, being desirous of returning home, they took leave of the King and Queen and departed with due permission to their own land, after he had done them all possible honour.

Awhile after this, Julnar completed the days of her pregnancy; and the time of her delivery being come, she bore a boy, as he were the moon at its full; whereat the utmost joy betided the King, for that he had never in his life been vouchsafed son or daughter. So they held high festival and decorated the city seven days, in the extreme of joy and jollity; and, on the seventh day, came Queen Julnar's mother, Farashah hight, and brother and cousins, whenas they knew of her delivery. The King received them with joy at their coming and said to them, "I said that I would not give my son a name till you should come and name him of your knowledge." So they named him Badr Basim, and all agreed upon this name. Then they showed the child to his uncle, Salih, who took him in his arms and, arising, began to walk about the chamber with him in all directions right and left. Presently he carried him forth of the palace and, going down to the salt sea, fared on with him, till he was hidden from the King's sight. Now, when Shahriman saw him take his son and disappear with him in the depth of the sea, he gave the child up for lost and fell to weeping and wailing; but Julnar said to him, "O King of the Age, fear not, neither grieve for thy son, for I love my child more than thou and he is with my brother; so reck thou not of the sea, neither fear for him drowning. Had my brother known that aught of harm would betide the little one, he had not done this deed; and he will presently bring thee thy son safe, Inshallah!—an it please the Almighty."

Nor was an hour past before the sea became turbid and troubled and King Salih came forth and flew from the sea till he came up to them with the child lying quiet and showing a face like the moon on the night of fullness. Then, looking at the King, he said, "Haply thou fearedst harm for thy son, whenas I plunged into the sea with him?" Replied the father, "Yes, O my lord, I did indeed fear for him and thought he would never be saved therefrom." Rejoined Salih, "O King of the land, we pencilled his eyes with an eye-powder we know of and recited over him the names graven upon the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on whom be the Peace!), for this is what we used to

do with children newly born among us; and now thou needst not fear for him drowning or suffocation in all the oceans of the world, if he should go down into them; for, even as ye walk on the land, so walk we in the sea." Then he pulled out of his pocket a casket, graven and sealed, and, breaking open the seals, emptied it; whereupon there fell from it strings of all manner of jacinths and other jewels, besides three hundred bugles of emerald and other three hundred hollow gems, as big as ostrich eggs, whose light dimmed that of sun and moon. Quoth Salih, "O King of the Age, these jewels and jacinths are a present from me to thee. We never yet brought thee a gift, for that we knew not Julnar's abiding-place neither had we of her any tidings or trace; but now that we see thee to be united with her and we are all become one thing, we have brought thee this present; and every little while we will bring thee the like thereof, Inshallah! for that these jewels and jacinths are more plentiful with us than pebbles on the beach and we know the good and the bad of them and their whereabouts and the way to them, and they are easy to us."

When the King saw the jewels, his wits were bewildered and his sense was astounded and he said, "By Allah, one single gem of these jewels is worth my realm!" Then he thanked for his bounty Salih the Sea-born and, looking towards Queen Julnar, said, "I am abashed before thy brother, for that he hath dealt munificently by me and bestowed on me this splendid gift, which the folk of the land were unable to present." So she thanked her brother for his deed and he said, "O King of the Age, thou hast the prior claim on us and it behoves us to thank thee, for thou hast entreated our sister with kindness and we have entered thy dwelling and eaten of thy victual. And if we stood on our faces in thy service, O King of the Age, a thousand years, yet had we not the might to requite thee, and this were but a scantling of thy due." The King thanked him with heartiest thanks and the Merman and Merwomen abode with him forty days' space, at the end of which Salih arose and kissed the ground before his brother-in-law, who asked, "What wantest thou, O Salih?" He answered, "O King of the Age, indeed thou hast done us overabundant favours, and we crave of thy bounties that thou deal charitably with us and grant us permission to depart; for we yearn after our people and country and kinsfolk and our

homes; so we will never forsake thy service nor that of my sister and my nephew; and, by Allah, O King of the Age, 'tis not pleasant to my heart to part from thee, but how shall we do, seeing that we have been reared in the sea and that the sojourn of the shore liketh us not?" When the King heard these words he rose to his feet and farewelled Salih the Sea-born and his mother and his cousins, and all wept together, because of parting and presently they said to him, "Anon we will be with thee again, nor will we forsake thee, but will visit thee every few days." Then they flew off and, descending into the sea, disappeared from sight.

After this King Shahriman showed the more kindness to Julnar and honoured her with increase of honour; and the little one grew up and flourished, whilst his maternal uncle and grandam and cousins visited the King every few days and abode with him a month or two months at a time. The boy ceased not to increase in beauty and loveliness with increase of years, till he attained the age of fifteen and was unique in his perfection and symmetry. He learnt writing and Koran-reading; history, syntax and lexicography; archery, spearplay and horsemanship and what not else behoveth the sons of kings; nor was there one of the children of the folk of the city, men or women, but would talk of the youth's charms, for he was of surpassing beauty and perfection. And, indeed, the King loved him with exceeding love, and summoning his Wazir and Emirs and the Chief Officers of State and Grandees of his realm, required of them a binding oath that they would make Badr Basim King over them after his sire; and they sware the oath gladly, for the sovran was liberal to the lieges, pleasant in parley and a very compend of goodness, saying naught but that wherein was advantage for the people.

On the morrow Shahriman mounted, with all his troops and Emirs and Lords, and went forth into the city and returned. When they drew near the palace, the King dismounted, to wait upon his son who abode on horseback, and he and all the Emirs and Grandees bore the saddle-cloth of honour before him, each and every of them bearing it in his turn, till they came to the vestibule of the palace, where the Prince alighted and his father and the Emirs embraced him and seated him on the throne of Kingship, whilst they (including his sire) stood before him.

Then Badr Basim judged the people, deposing the unjust and promoting the just and continued so doing till near upon noon, when he descended from the throne and went in to his mother, Julnar the Sea-born, with the crown upon his head, as he were the moon. When she saw him, with the King standing before him, she rose and, kissing him, gave him joy of the Sultanate and wished him and his sire length of life and victory over their foes. He sat with her and rested till the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when he took horse and repaired, with the Emirs before him, to the Maydan-plain, where he played at arms with his father and his Lords, till nightfall, when he returned to the palace, preceded by all the folk.

He rode thus every day to the tilting-ground, returning to sit and judge the people and do justice between carl and churl; and thus he continued doing a whole year, at the end of which he began to ride out a-hunting and a-chasing and to go round about in the cities and countries under his rule, proclaiming security and satisfaction and doing after the fashion of Kings; and he was unique among the people of his day for glory and valour and just-dealing among the subjects.

And it chanced that one day the old King fell sick and his fluttering heart forebode him of translation to the Mansion of Eternity. His sickness grew upon him till he was nigh upon death, when he called his son and commended his mother and subjects to his care and caused all the Emirs and Grandees once more swear allegiance to the Prince and assured himself of them by strongest oaths; after which he lingered a few days and departed to the mercy of Almighty Allah. His son and widow and all the Emirs and Wazirs and Lords mourned over him, and they built him a tomb and buried him therein. They ceased not ceremonially to mourn for him a whole month, till Salih and his mother and cousins arrived and condoled with their grieving for the King and said, "O Julnar, though the King be dead, yet hath he left this noble and peerless youth, and not dead is whoso leaveth the like of him, the rending lion and the shining moon." Thereupon the Grandees and notables of the Empire went in to King Badr Basim and said to him, "O King, there is no harm in mourning for the late sovran; but over-mourning beseemeth none save women; wherefore occupy thou not thy heart and our hearts with mourning for thy sire; inasmuch as he hath left

thee behind him, and whoso leaveth the like of thee is not dead." Then they comforted him and diverted him and lastly carried him to the bath.

When he came out of the Hammam, he donned a rich robe, purfled with gold and embroidered with jewels and jacinths; and, setting the royal crown on his head, sat down on his throne of kingship and ordered the affairs of the folk, doing equal justice between strong and weak, and exacting from the prince the dues of the pauper; wherefore the people loved him with exceeding love. Thus he continued doing for a full year, whilst, every now and then, his kinsfolk of the sea visited him, and his life was pleasant and his eye was cooled.

Now it came to pass that his uncle Salih went in one night of the nights to Julnar and saluted her; whereupon she rose and, embracing him, seated him by her side and asked him "O my brother, how art thou and my mother and my cousins." He answered, "O my sister, they are well and glad and in good case, lacking naught save a sight of thy face." Then she set somewhat of food before him and he ate, after which talk ensued between the twain and they spake of King Badr Basim and his beauty and loveliness, his symmetry and skill in cavalrice and cleverness and good breeding. Now Badr was propped upon his elbow hard by them; and, hearing his mother and uncle speak of him, he feigned sleep and listened to their talk. Presently Salih said to his sister, "Thy son is now seventeen years old and is unmarried, and I fear lest mishap befall him and he have no son; wherefore it is my desire to marry him to a Princess of the princesses of the sea, who shall be a match for him in beauty and loveliness." Quoth Julnar, "Name them to me for I know them all." So Salih proceeded to enumerate them to her, one by one, but to each she said, "I like not this one for my son; I will not marry him but to one who is his equal in beauty and loveliness and wit and piety and good breeding and magnanimity and dominion and rank and lineage." Quoth Salih, "I know none other of the daughters of the Kings of the sea, for I have numbered to thee more than an hundred girls and not one of them pleaseth thee: but see, O my sister, whether thy son be asleep or no."

So she felt Badr and finding on him the signs of slumber said to Salih, "He is asleep; what hast thou to say and what

is thine object in making sure his sleeping?" Replied he, "O my sister, know that I have bethought me of a Mermaid of the mermaids who befitteth thy son; but I fear to name her, lest he be awake and his heart be taken with her love and maybe we shall be unable to win to her; so should he and we and the Grandees of the realm be wearied in vain and trouble betide us through this." When she heard these words, she cried, "Tell me the condition of this girl, and her name for I know all the damsels of the sea, King's daughters and others; and, if I judge her worthy of him, I will demand her in marriage for him of her father, though I spend on her whatso my hand possesseth. So recount to me all anent her and fear naught, for my son sleepeth." Quoth Salih, "I fear lest he be awake." But Julnar said, "Speak out and be brief and fear not, O my brother." So he said, "By Allah, O my sister, none is worthy of thy son save the Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, for that she is like unto him in beauty and loveliness and brilliancy and perfection; nor is there found, in sea or on land, a sweeter or pleasanter of gifts than she; for she is prime in comeliness and seemlihead of face and symmetrical shape of perfect grace; her cheek is ruddy dight, her brow flower-white, her teeth gem-bright, her eyes blackest black and whitest white, her hips of heavy weight, her waist slight and her favour exquisite. When she turneth she shameth the wild cattle and the gazelles and when she walketh, she breedeth envy in the willow branch: when she unveileth, her face outshineth sun and moon and all who look upon her she enslaveth soon: sweet-lipped and soft-sided indeed is she."

Now when Julnar heard what Salih said, she replied, "Thou sayest sooth, O my brother! By Allah, I have seen her many and many a time and she was my companion, when we were little ones; but now we have no knowledge of each other, for constraint of distance; nor have I set eyes on her for eighteen years. By Allah, none is worthy of my son but she!" Now Badr heard all they said and mastered what had passed, first and last, of these praises bestowed on Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal; so he fell in love with her on hearsay, pretending sleep the while, wherefore fire was kindled in his heart on her account full sore and he was drowned in a sea without bottom or shore. Then Salih, looking at his sister,

exclaimed, " By Allah, O my sister, there is no greater fool among the Kings of the sea than her father nor one more violent of temper than he! So name thou not the girl to thy son, till we demand her in marriage of her father. If he favour us with his assent, we will praise Allah Almighty; and if he refuse us and will not give her to thy son to wife, we will say no more about it and seek another match." Answered Julnar, " Right is thy rede "; and they parleyed no more; but Badr passed the night with a heart on fire with passion for Princess Jauharah. However he concealed his case and spake not of her to his mother or his uncle, albeit he was on coals of fire for love of her.

Now when it was morning, the King and his uncle went to the Hammam bath and washed, after which they came forth and drank wine and the servants set food before them, whereof they and Julnar ate their sufficiency, and washed their hands. Then Salih rose and said to his nephew and sister, " With your leave, I would fain go to my mother and my folk for I have been with you some days and their hearts are troubled with awaiting me." But Badr Basim said to him, " Tarry with us this day "; and he consented. Then quoth the King, " Come, O my uncle, let us go forth to the garden." So they sallied forth and promenaded about the pastures and took their solace awhile, after which King Badr lay down under a shady tree, thinking to rest and sleep; but he remembered his uncle's description of the maiden and her beauty and loveliness and shed railing tears. When Salih saw this he smote hand upon hand and said, " There is no god but *the* God! Mohammed is the Apostle of God and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! " adding, " O my son, heardest thou what passed between me and thy mother respecting Princess Jauharah? " Replied Badr Basim, " Yes, O my uncle, and I fell in love with her by hearsay through what I heard you say. Indeed, my heart cleaveth to her and I cannot live without her."

Rejoined his uncle, " O King, let us return to thy mother and tell her how the case standeth and crave her leave that I may take thee with me and seek the Princess in marriage of her sire; after which we will farewell her and I and thou will return. Indeed, I fear to take thee and go without her leave, lest she be wroth with me; and verily the right would be on her side, for I should be the cause of her separation from us.

Moreover, the city would be left without king and there would be none to govern the citizens and look to their affairs; so should the realm be disordered against thee and the kingship depart from thy hands." But Badr Basim, hearing these words, cried, "O my uncle, if I return to my mother and consult her on such matter, she will not suffer me to do this; wherefore I will not return to my mother nor consult her." And he wept before him and presently added, "I will go with thee and tell her not and after will return." When Salih heard what his nephew said, he was confused anent his case and said, "I crave help of the Almighty in any event." Then, seeing that Badr Basim was resolved to go with him, whether his mother would let him or no, he drew from his finger a seal-ring whereon were graven certain of the names of Allah the Most High, and gave it to him, saying, "Put this on thy finger, and thou shalt be safe from drowning and other perils and from the mischief of sea-beasts and great fishes." So King Badr Basim took the ring and set it on his finger. Then they drove into the deep and fared on till they came to Salih's palace, where they found Badr Basim's grandmother, the mother of his mother, seated with her kinsfolk; and, going in to them, kissed their hands.

When the old Queen saw Badr she rose to him and embracing him, kissed him between the eyes and said to him, "A blessed coming, O my son! How didst thou leave thy mother Julnar?" He replied, "She is well in health and fortune, and saluteth thee and her uncle's daughters. Then Salih related to his mother what had occurred between him and his sister and how King Badr Basim had fallen in love with the Princess Jauharah, daughter of Al-Samandal, by report, and told her the whole tale from beginning to end, adding, "He hath not come save to demand her in wedlock of her sire"; which when the old Queen heard, she was wroth against her son with exceeding wrath and sore troubled and concerned and said, "O Salih, O my son, in very sooth thou diddest wrong to name the Princess before thy nephew, knowing as thou dost, that her father is stupid and violent, little of wit and tyrannical of temper, grudging his daughter to every suitor; for all the Monarchs of the Main have sought her hand, but he rejected them all; nay, he would none of them, saying, 'Ye are no match for her in beauty or in loveliness or in aught else.' Wherefore we fear to demand

her in wedlock of him lest he reject us, even as he hath rejected others; and we are a folk of high spirit and should return broken-hearted."

Hearing these words Salih answered, "O my mother, what is to do? For King Badr Basim saith, 'There is no help but that I seek her in marriage of her sire, though I expend my whole kingdom'; and he avoucheth that, an he take her not to wife, he will die of love for her and longing." And Salih continued, "He is handsomer and goodlier than she; his father was King of all the Persians, whose King he now is, and none is worthy of Jauharah save Badr Basim. Wherefore I purpose to carry her father a gift of jacinths and jewels befitting his dignity, and demand her of him in marriage. An he object to us that he is a King, behold, our man also is a King and the son of a King; or, if he object to us her beauty, behold our man is more beautiful than she; or, again, if he object to us the vastness of his dominion, behold our man's dominion is vaster than hers and her father's and numbereth more troops and guards, for that his kingdom is greater than that of Al-Samandal. Needs must I do my endeavour to further the desire of my sister's son, though it relieve me of my life; because I was the cause of whatso hath betided; and, even as I plunged him into the ocean of her love, so will I go about to marry him to her, and may Almighty Allah help me thereto!" Rejoined his mother, "Do as thou wilt, but beware of giving her father rough words, whenas thou speakest with him; for thou knowest his stupidity and violence and I fear lest he do thee a mischief, for he knoweth not respect for any." And Salih answered, "Hearkening and obedience."

Then he sprang up, and taking two bags full of gems such as rubies and bugles of emerald, noble ores and all manner jewels, gave them to his servants to carry and set out with his nephew for the palace of Al-Samandal. When they came thither, he sought audience of the King and being admitted to his presence, kissed the ground before him and saluted him with the goodliest salam. The King rose to him and honouring him with the utmost honour, bade him be seated. So he sat down and presently the King said to him, "A blessed coming: indeed thou has desolated us, O Salih! But what bringeth thee to us? Tell me thine errand that we may fulfil it to thee." Whereupon

Salih arose and, kissing the ground a second time, said, "O King of the Age, my errand is to Allah and the magnanimous liege lord of the valiant lion, the report of whose good qualities the caravans far and near have dispread and whose renown for benefits and beneficence and clemency and graciousness and liberality to all climes and countries hath sped." Thereupon he opened the two bags and, displaying their contents before Al-Samandal, said to him, "O King of the Age, haply wilt thou accept my gift and, by showing favour to me, heal my heart." King Al-Samandal asked, "With what object dost thou gift me with this gift? Tell me thy tale and acquaint me with thy requirement. An its accomplishment be in my power I will straightway accomplish it to thee and spare thee toil and trouble; and if I be unable thereunto, Allah compelleth not any soul aught beyond its power."

So Salih rose and kissing the ground three times, said, "O King of the Age, that which I desire thou art indeed able to do; it is in thy power and thou art master thereof; and I impose not on the King a difficulty, nor am I Jinn-demented, that I should crave of the King a thing whereto he availeth not; for one of the sages saith, 'An thou wouldst be complied with, ask that which can be readily supplied.' Wherefore, that of which I am come in quest, the King (whom Allah preserve!) is able to grant." The King replied, "Ask what thou wouldst have, and state thy case and seek thy need." Then said Salih, "O King of the Age, know that I come as a suitor, seeking the unique pearl and the hoarded jewel, the Princess Jauharah, daughter of our lord the King; wherefore, O King, disappoint thou not thy suitor." Now when the King heard this, he laughed till he fell backwards, in mockery of him and said, "O Salih, I had thought thee a man of worth and a youth of sense, seeking naught save what was reasonable and speaking not save advisedly. What then hath befallen thy reason and urged thee to this monstrous matter and mighty hazard, that thou seekest in marriage daughters of Kings, lords of cities and climates? Say me, art thou of a rank to aspire to this great eminence and hath thy wit failed thee to this extreme pass that thou affrontest me with this demand?" Replied Salih, "Allah amend the King! I seek her not for myself (albeit, an I did, I am her match and more than her match, for thou knowest that my father was

King of the Kings of the sea, for all thou art this day our King), but I seek her for King Badr Basim, lord of the lands of the Persians and son of King Shahriman, whose puissance thou knowest. An thou object that thou art a mighty great King, King Badr is a greater; and if thou object thy daughter's beauty, King Badr is more beautiful than she and fairer of form and more excellent of rank and lineage; and he is the champion of the people of his day. Wherefore, if thou grant my request, O King of the Age, thou wilt have set the thing in its stead; but, if thou deal arrogantly with us, thou wilt not use us justly nor travel with us the 'road which is straight.' Moreover, O King, thou knowest that the Princess Jauharah, the daughter of our lord the King, must needs be wedded and bedded, for the sage saith, a girl's lot is either grace of marriage or the grave. Wherefore, an thou mean to marry her, my sister's son is worthier of her than any other man."

Now, when King Al-Samandal heard Salih's words, he was wroth with exceeding wrath; his reason wellnigh fled and his soul was like to depart his body for rage, and he cried, "O dog, shall the like of thee dare to bespeak me thus and name my daughter in the assemblies, saying that the son of thy sister Julnar is a match for her? Who art thou and who is this sister of thine and who is her son and who was his father, that thou durst say to me such say and address me with such address? What are ye all, in comparison with my daughter, but dogs?" And he cried out to his pages, saying, "Take yonder gallows-bird's head?" So they drew their swords and made for Salih, but he fled and for the palace gate sped; and, reaching the entrance, he found of his cousins and kinsfolk and servants, more than a thousand horse armed cap-à-pie in iron and close-knitted mail-coats, hending in hand spears and naked swords glittering white. And these, when they saw Salih come running out of the palace (they having been sent by his mother to his succour), questioned him and he told them what was to do; whereupon they knew that the King was a fool and violent tempered to boot. So they dismounted and, baring their blades, went in to the King Al-Samandal, whom they found seated upon the throne of his Kingship, unaware of their coming and enraged against Salih with furious rage; and they beheld his eunuchs and pages and officers unprepared. When the King

saw them enter, drawn brand in hand, he cried out to his people, saying, "Woe to you! Take me the heads of these hounds!" But ere an hour had sped Al-Samandal's party were put to the route and relied upon flight, and Salih and his kinsfolk seized upon the King and pinioned him.

Then Princess Jauharah awoke and knew that her father was a captive and his guards slain. So she fled forth the palace to a certain island and, climbing up into a high tree, hid herself in its summit. Now, when the two parties came to blows, some of King Al-Samandal's pages fled and Badr Basim, meeting them, questioned them of their case and they told him what had happened. But when he heard that the King was a prisoner, Badr feared for himself and fled, saying in his heart, "Verily, all this turmoil is on my account and none is wanted but I." So he sought safety in flight, security to sight, knowing not whither he went; but destiny from Eternity fore-ordained drave him to the very island where the Princess had taken refuge, and he came to the very tree whereon she sat and threw himself down, like a dead man, thinking to lie and repose himself and knowing not there is no rest for the pursued, for none knoweth what Fate hideth for him in the future. As he lay down, he raised his eyes to the tree and they met the eyes of the Princess. So he looked at her, and seeing her to be like the moon rising in the east, cried, "Glory to Him who fashioned yonder perfect form, Him who is the Creator of all things and who over all things is Almighty! Glory to the Great God, the Maker, the Shaper and Fashioner! By Allah, if my presentiments be true, this is Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal! Methinks that, when she heard of our coming to blows with her father, she fled to this island and, happening upon this tree, hid herself on its head; but, if this be not the Princess herself, 'tis one yet goodlier than she." Then he bethought himself of her case and said in himself, "I will arise and lay hands on her and question her of her condition; and, if she be indeed the she, I will demand her in wedlock of herself and so win my wish."

So he stood up and said to her, "O end of all desire, who art thou and who brought thee hither?" She looked at Badr Basim, and seeing him to be as the full moon when it shineth from under the black cloud, slender of shape and sweet of smile,

answered, " O fair of fashion, I am Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, and I took refuge in this place, because Salih and his host came to blows with my sire and slew his troops and took him prisoner, with some of his men ; wherefore I fled, fearing for my very life," presently adding, " And I weet not what fortune hath done with my father." When King Badr Basim heard these words he marvelled with exceeding marvel at this strange chance and thought, " Doubtless I have won my wish by the capture of her sire." Then he looked at Jauharah and said to her, " Come down, O my lady ; for I am slain for love of thee and thine eyes have captivated me. On my account and thine are all these broils and battles ; for thou must know that I am King Badr Basim, Lord of the Persians, and Salih is my mother's brother and he it is who came to thy sire to demand thee of him in marriage. As for me, I have quitted my kingdom for thy sake, and our meeting here is the rarest coincidence. So come down to me and let us twain fare for thy father's palace, that I may beseech Uncle Salih to release him and I may make thee my lawful wife."

When Jauharah heard his words, she said in herself, " 'Twas on this miserable gallows-bird's account, then, that all this hath befallen and that my father hath fallen prisoner and his chamberlains and suite have been slain and I have been departed from my palace, a miserable exile, and have fled for refuge to this island. But, an I devise not against him some device to defend myself from him, he will possess himself of me and take his will of me ; for he is in love and for aught that he doeth a lover is not blamed." Then she beguiled him with winning words and soft speeches, whilst he knew not the perfidy against him she purposed, and asked him, " O my lord and light of my eyes, say me, art thou indeed King Badr Basim, son of Queen Julnar ? " And he answered, " Yes, O my lady ! " Then she, " May Allah cut off my father and gar his kingdom cease from him and heal not his heart, neither avert from him strangerhood, if he could desire a comelier than thou or aught goodlier than these fair qualities of thine ! By Allah, he is of little wit and judgment ! " presently adding, " But, O King of the Age, punish him not for that he hath done ; more by token that an thou love me a span, verily I love thee a cubit. Indeed, I have fallen into the net of thy love and am become of the number of thy slain. The love

that was with thee hath transferred itself to me and there is left thereof with thee but a tithe of that which is with me."

So saying, she came down from the tree and, drawing near him, strained him to her bosom and fell to kissing him; whereat passion and desire for her redoubled on him and, doubting not but she loved him, he trusted in her, and returned her kisses and caresses. Presently he said to her, "By Allah, O Princess, my Uncle Salih set forth to me not a fortieth part of thy charms; no, nor a quarter-carat of the four-and-twenty." Then Jauharah pressed him to her bosom and pronounced some unintelligible words; then spat on his face, saying, "Quit this form of man

and take shape of bird, the handsomest of birds, white of robe, with red bill and legs." Hardly had she spoken, when King Badr Basim found himself transformed into a bird, the handsomest of birds, who shook himself and stood looking at her. Now Jauharah had with her one of her slave-girls, by name Marsinah; so she called her and said to her, "By Allah, but that I fear for the life of my father, who is his uncle's prisoner, I would kill him! Allah never requite him with good! How unlucky was his coming to us; for all this trouble is due to his hard-headedness! But do thou, O slave-girl, bear him to the Thirsty Island and leave him there to die of thirst." So Marsinah carried him to the island in question and would have returned and left him there; but she said in herself, "By Allah, the lord of such beauty and loveliness deserveth not to die of thirst!" So she went forth from that island and brought him to another

abounding in trees and fruits and rills and, setting him down there, returned to her mistress and told her, " I have left him on the Thirsty Island."

Such was the case of Badr Basim ; but as regards King Salih, he sought for Jauharah after capturing the King and killing his folk ; finding her not, returned to his palace and said to his mother, " Where is my sister's son, King Badr Basim ? " " By Allah, O my son," replied she, " I know nothing of him ! For when it reached him that you and King Al-Samandal had come to blows and that strife and slaughter had betided between you, he was affrighted and fled." When Salih heard this, he grieved for his nephew and said, " O my mother, by Allah, we have dealt negligently by King Badr and I fear lest he perish or lest one of King Al-Samandal's soldiers or his daughter Jauharah fall in with him. So should we come to shame with his mother and no good betide us from her, for that I took him without her leave." Then he despatched guards and scouts throughout the sea and elsewhere to seek for Badr ; but they could learn no tidings of him ; so they returned and told King Salih, wherefore cark and care redoubled on him and his breast was straitened for King Badr Basim.

So far concerning nephew and uncle, but as for Julnar the Sea-born, after their departure, she abode in expectation of them, but her son returned not and she heard no report of him. So when many days of fruitless waiting had gone by, she arose and, going down into the sea, repaired to her mother, who, sighting her, rose to her and kissed her and embraced her, as did the Mermaids her cousins. Then she questioned her mother of King Badr Basim, and she answered, saying, " O my daughter, of a truth he came hither with his uncle, who took jacinths and jewels and, carrying them to the King Al-Samandal, demanded his daughter in marriage for thy son ; but he consented not and was violent against thy brother in words. Now, I had sent Salih nigh upon a thousand horse and a battle befell between him and King Al-Samandal ; but Allah aided thy brother against him, and he slew his guards and troops and took himself prisoner. Meanwhile, tidings of this reached thy son, and it would seem as if he feared for himself ; wherefore he fled forth from us, without our will, and returned not to us, nor have we heard any news of him." Then Julnar inquired for King Salih, and his mother

said, " He is seated on the throne of his kingship, in the stead of King Al-Samandal, and hath sent in all directions to seek thy son and Princess Jauharah." When Julnar heard the maternal words she mourned for her son with sad mourning and was highly incensed against her brother Salih for that he had taken him and gone down with him into the sea without her leave; and she said, " O my mother, I fear for our realm; as I came to thee without letting any know; and I dread tarrying with thee, lest the state fall into disorder and the kingdom pass from our hands. Wherefore I deem best to return and govern the reign till it please Allah to order our son's affair for us. But, look ye, forget him not, neither neglect his case; for should he come to any harm, it would infallibly kill me, since I see not the world save in him and delight but in his life." She replied, " With love and gladness, O my daughter. Ask not what we suffer by reason of his loss and absence." Then she sent to seek for her grandson, whilst Julnar returned to her kingdom, weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted, and indeed the gladness of the world was straitened upon her.

So fared it with her; but as regards King Badr Basim, after Princess Jauharah had ensorcelled him and had sent him with her handmaid to the Thirsty Island, saying, " Leave him there to die of thirst," and Marsinah had set him down in a green islet, he abode days and nights in the semblance of a bird, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and knowing not whither to go nor how to fly; till, one day, there came a certain fowler to the island to catch somewhat wherewithal to get his living. He espied King Badr Basim in his form of a white-robed bird, with red bill and legs, captivating the sight and bewildering the thought; and, looking thereat, said in himself, " Verily, yonder is a beautiful bird; never saw I its like in fairness or form." So he cast his net over Badr and, taking him, carried him to the town, mentally resolved to sell him for a high price. On his way one of the townsfolk accosted him and said, " For how much this fowl, O fowler?" Quoth the fowler, " What wilt thou do with him an thou buy him?" Answered the other, " I will cut his throat and eat him"; whereupon said the birder, " Who could have the heart to kill this bird and eat him? Verily, I mean to present him to our King, who will give me more than thou wouldst give me and will not kill him, but will divert

himself by gazing upon his beauty and grace, for in all my life, since I have been a fowler, I never saw his like among land game or water fowl. The utmost thou wouldst give me for him, however much thou covet him, would be a dirham, and, by Allah Almighty, I will not sell him!"

Then he carried the bird up to the King's palace, and when the King saw it, its beauty and grace pleased him and the red colour of its beak and legs. So he sent an eunuch to buy it, who accosted the fowler and said to him, "Wilt thou sell this bird?" Answered he, "Nay, 'tis a gift from me to the King." So the eunuch carried the bird to the King and told him what the man had said; and he took it and gave the fowler ten dinars, whereupon he kissed the ground and fared forth. Then the eunuch carried the bird to the palace and, placing him in a fine cage, hung him up after setting meat and drink by him. When the King came down from the Divan, he said to the eunuch, "Where is the bird? Bring it to me, that I may look upon it; for, by Allah, 'tis beautiful!" So the eunuch brought the cage and set it between the hands of the King, who looked and, seeing the food untouched, said, "By Allah, I wist not what it will eat, that I may nourish it!" Then he called for food and they laid the tables the King ate.

Now when the bird saw the flesh and meats and fruits and sweetmeats, he ate of all that was upon the trays before the King, whereat the Sovran and all the by-standers marvelled and the King said to his attendants, eunuchs and Mamelukes, "In all my life I never saw a bird eat as doth this bird!" Then he sent an eunuch to fetch his wife that she might enjoy looking upon the bird, and he went in to summon her and said, "O my lady, the King desireth thy presence, that thou mayst divert thyself with the sight of a bird he hath bought. When we set on the food it flew down from its cage and perching on the table ate of all that was thereon. So arise, O my lady, and solace thee with the sight for it is goodly of aspect and is a wonder of the wonders of the age." Hearing these words she came in haste; but, when she noted the bird, she veiled her face and turned to fare away. The King rose up and looking at her, asked, "Why dost thou veil thy face when there is none in presence save the women and eunuchs who wait on thee and thy husband?" Answered she, "O King, this bird is no bird, but

a man like thyself." He rejoined, "Thou liest, this is too much of a jest. How should he be other than a bird?"; and she, "O King, by Allah, I do not jest with thee nor do I tell thee aught but the truth; for verily this bird is King Badr Basim, son of King Shahriman, Lord of the land of the Persians, and his mother is Julnar the Sea-born." Quoth the King, "And how came he in this shape?"; and quoth she, "Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, hath enchanted him": and told him all that had passed with King Badr Basim from first to last.

The King marvelled exceedingly at his wife's words and conjured her, on his life, to free Badr from his enchantment (for she was the notablest enchantress of her age), and not leave him in torment, saying, "May Almighty Allah cut off Jauharah's hand, for a foul witch as she is! How little is her faith and how great her craft and perfidy!" Said the Queen, "Do thou say to him, 'O Badr Basim, enter yonder closet!'" So the King bade him enter the closet and he went in obediently. Then the Queen veiled her face and taking in her hand a cup of water, entered the closet, where she pronounced over the water certain incomprehensible words ending with, "By the virtue of these mighty names and holy verses and by the majesty of Allah Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, the Quickener of the dead and Appointer of the means of daily bread and the terms determined, quit this thy form wherein thou art and return to the shape in which the Lord created thee!" Hardly had she made an end of her words, when the bird trembled once and became a man; and the King saw before him a handsome youth, than whom on earth's face was none goodlier. But when King Badr Basim found himself thus restored to his own form he cried, "There is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! Glory be to the Creator of all creatures and Provider of their provision, and Ordainer of their life-terms preordained!" Then he kissed the King's hand and wished him long life, and the King kissed his head and said to him, "O Badr Basim, tell me thy history from commencement to conclusion."

So he told him his whole tale, concealing naught; and the King marvelled thereat and said to him, "O Badr Basim, Allah hath saved thee from the spell: but what hath thy judgment decided and what thinkest thou to do?" Replied he, "O King of the Age, I desire of thy bounty that thou equip me a ship

with a company of thy servants and all that is needful; for 'tis long since I have been absent and I dread lest the kingdom depart from me. And I misdoubt me my mother is dead of grief for my loss; and this doubt is the stronger for that she knoweth not what is come of me nor whether I am alive or dead. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O King, to crown thy favours to me by granting me what I seek." The King, after beholding the beauty and grace of Badr Basim and listening to his sweet speech, said "I hear and obey." So he fitted him out a ship, to which he transported all that was needful and which he manned with a company of his servants; and Badr Basim set sail in it, after having taken leave of the King.

They sailed over the sea ten successive days with a favouring wind; but, on the eleventh day, the ocean became troubled with exceeding trouble, the ship rose and fell and the sailors were powerless to govern her. So they drifted at the mercy of the waves, till the craft neared a rock in mid-sea which fell upon her and broke her up and all on board were drowned, save King Badr Basim who got astride one of the planks of the vessel, after having been nigh upon destruction. The plank ceased not to be borne by the set of the sea, whilst he knew not whither he went and had no means of directing its motion, as the wind and waves wrought for three whole days. But on the fourth the plank grounded with him on the seashore where he sighted a white city, as it were a dove passing white, builded upon a tongue of land that jutted out into the deep and it was goodly of ordinance, with high towers and lofty walls against which the waves beat. When Badr Basim saw this he rejoiced with exceeding joy, for he was wellnigh dead of hunger and thirst, and dismounting from the plank, would have gone up the beach to the city; but there came down to him mules and asses and horses, in number as the sea-sands and fell to striking at him and staying him from landing. So he swam round to the back of the city, where he waded to shore and entering the place, found none therein and marvelled at this, saying, "Would I knew to whom doth this city belong, wherein is no lord nor any liege, and whence came these mules and asses and horses that hindered me from landing?" And he mused over his case.

Then he walked on at hazard till he espied an old man, a grocer. So he saluted him and the other returned his salam

and seeing him to be a handsome young man, said to him, "O youth, whence comest thou and what brought thee to this city?" Badr told him his story; at which the old man marvelled and said, "O my son, didst thou see any on thy way?" He replied, "Indeed, O my father, I wondered in good sooth to sight a city void of folk." Quoth the Shaykh, "O my son, come up into the shop lest thou perish." So Badr Basim went up into the shop and sat down; whereupon the old man set before him somewhat of food, saying, "O my son, enter the inner shop; glory be to Him who hath preserved thee from yonder she-Sathanas!" King Badr Basim was sore affrighted at the grocer's words; but he ate his fill and washed his hands; then glanced at his host and said to him, "O my lord, what is the meaning of these words? Verily thou hast made me fearful of this city and its folk." Replied the old man, "Know, O my son, that this is the City of the Magicians and its Queen is as she were a she-Satan, a sorceress and a mighty enchantress, passing crafty and perfidious exceedingly. All thou sawest of horses and mules and asses were once sons of Adam like thee and me; they were also strangers, for whoever entereth this city, being a young man like thyself, this miscreant witch taketh him and hometh him for forty days, after which she enchanteth him, and he becometh a mule or a horse or an ass, of those animals thou sawest on the seashore. All these people hath she spelled; and, when it was thy intent to land they feared lest thou be transmewed like themselves; so they counselled thee by signs that said, 'Land not,' of their solicitude for thee, fearing that haply she should do with thee like as she had done with them. She possessed herself of this city and seized it from its citizens by sorcery and her name is Queen Lab, which being interpreted, meaneth in Arabic 'Almanac of the Sun.'"

When Badr Basim heard what the old man said, he was affrighted with sore affright and trembled like reed in wind saying in himself, "Hardly do I feel me free from the affliction wherein I was by reason of sorcery, when Destiny casteth me into yet sorrier case!" And he fell a-musing over his condition and that which had betided him. When the Shaykh looked at him and saw the violence of his terror, he said to him, "O my son, come, sit at the threshold of the shop and look upon yonder creatures and upon their dress and complexion and that wherein

they are by reason of gramarye and dread not; for the Queen and all in the city love and tender me and will not vex my heart or trouble my mind." So King Badr Basim came out and sat at the shop-door, looking out upon the folk; and there passed by him a world of creatures without number.

But when the people saw him, they accosted the grocer and said to him, "O elder, is this thy captive and thy prey gotten in these days?" The old man replied, "He is my brother's son, I heard that his father was dead; so I sent for him and brought him here that I might quench with him the fire of my home-sickness." Quoth they, "Verily, he is a comely youth; but we fear for him from Queen Lab, lest she turn on thee with treachery and take him from thee, for she loveth handsome young men." Quoth the Shaykh, "The Queen will not gainsay my commandment, for she loveth and tendereth me; and when she shall know that he is my brother's son, she will not molest him or afflict me in him neither trouble my heart on his account." Then King Badr Basim abode some months with the grocer, eating and drinking, and the old man loved him with exceeding love.

One day, as he sat in the shop according to his custom, behold, there came up a thousand eunuchs, with drawn swords and clad in various kinds of raiment and girt with jewelled girdles: all rode Arabian steeds and bore in baldrick Indian blades. They saluted the grocer, as they passed his shop and were followed by a thousand damsels like moons, clad in various raiments of silks and satins fringed with gold and embroidered with jewels of sorts, and spears were slung to their shoulders. In their midst rode a damsel mounted on a Rabite mare, saddled with a saddle of gold set with various kinds of jewels and jacinths; and they reached in a body the Shaykh's shop. The damsels saluted him and passed on, till, lo and behold! up came Queen Lab, in great state, and seeing King Badr Basim sitting in the shop, as he were the moon at its full, was amazed at his beauty and loveliness and became passionately enamoured of him, and distraught with desire of him. So she alighted and sitting down by King Badr Basim said to the old man, "Whence hadst thou this handsome one?"; and the Shaykh replied, "He is my brother's son, and is lately come to me." Quoth Lab, "Let him be with me this night, that I may talk with him"; and quoth the old

man, "Wilt thou take him from me and not enchant him?" Said she, "Yes," and said he, "Swear to me." So she sware to him that she would not do him any hurt or ensorcell him, and bidding bring him a fine horse, saddled and bridled with a golden bridle and decked with trappings all of gold set with jewels, gave the old man a thousand dinars, saying, "Use this." Then she took Badr Basim and carried him off, as he were the full moon on its fourteenth night, whilst all the folk, seeing his beauty, were grieved for him and said, "By Allah, verily, this youth deserveth not to be bewitched by yonder sorceress, the accursed!"

Now King Badr Basim heard all they said, but was silent, committing his case to Allah Almighty, till they came to her palace gate, where the Emirs and eunuchs and Lords of the realm took foot and she bade the Chamberlains dismiss her Officers and Grandees, who kissed the ground and went away, whilst she entered the palace with Badr Basim and her eunuchs and women. Here he found a place, whose like he had never seen at all, for it was builded of gold and in its midst was a great basin brimful of water midmost a vast flower-garden. He looked at the garden and saw it abounding in birds of various kinds and colours, warbling in all manner tongues and voices, pleasurable and plaintive. And everywhere he beheld great state and dominion and said, "Glory be to God, who of His bounty and long-suffering provideth those who serve other than Himself!" The Queen sat down at a latticed window overlooking the garden on a couch of ivory, whereon was a high bed, and King Badr Basim seated himself by her side. She kissed him and pressing him to her breast, bade her women bring a tray of food. So they brought a tray of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels and spread with all manner of viands and he and she ate, till they were satisfied, and washed their hands; after which the waiting-women set on flagons of gold and silver and glass, together with all kinds of flowers and dishes of dried fruits. Then the Queen summoned the singing-women and there came ten maidens, as they were moons, hending all manner of musical instruments. Queen Lab crowned a cup and drinking it off, filled another and passed it to King Badr Basim, who took it and drank; and they ceased not to drink till they had their sufficiency. Then she bade the damsels sing, and they sang

all manner modes till it seemed to Badr Basim as if the palace danced with him for joy.

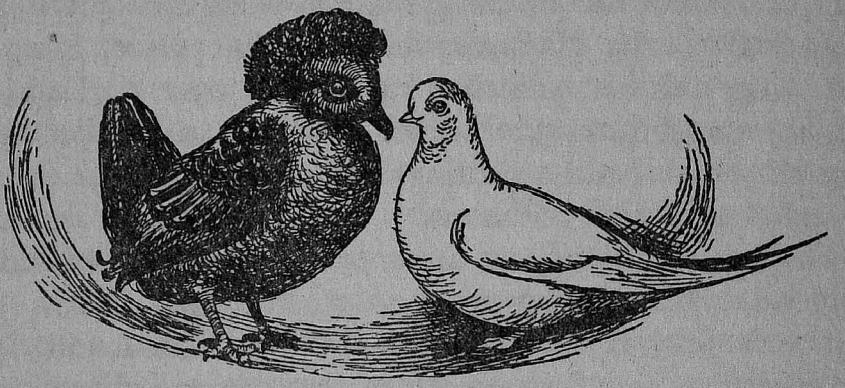
His sense was ecstasied and his breast broadened, and he forgot his strangerhood and said in himself, "Verily, this Queen is young and beautiful and I will never leave her; for her kingdom is vaster than my kingdom and she is fairer than Princess Jauharah." So he ceased not to drink with her till eventide came, when they lighted the lamps and waxen candles and diffused censer-perfumes; nor did they leave drinking, till they were both drunken, and the singing-women sang the while. Then Queen Lab, being in liquor, rose from her seat and lay down on a bed and dismissing her women called to Badr Basim to come and sleep by her side. So he lay with her, in all delight of life till the morning. And when the Queen awoke she repaired to the Hammam bath in the palace, King Badr Basim being with her, and they bathed and were purified; after which she clad him in the finest of raiment and called for the service of wine. So the waiting-women brought the drinking-gear and they drank. Presently, the Queen arose and taking Badr Basim by the hand, sat down with him on chairs and bade bring food, whereof they ate, and washed their hands. Then the damsels fetched the drinking-gear and fruits and flowers and confections and they ceased not to eat and drink,[1] whilst the singing-girls sang various airs till the evening.

They gave not over eating and drinking and merry-making for a space of forty days, when the Queen said to him, "O Badr Basim, say me whether is the more pleasant, this place or the shop of thine uncle the grocer?" He replied, "By Allah, O Queen, this is the pleasanter, for my uncle is but a beggarly man, who vendeth pot-herbs." She laughed at his words and the twain lay together in the pleasantest of case till the morning, when King Badr Basim awoke from sleep and found not Queen Lab by his side, so he said, "Would Heaven I knew where can she have gone!" And indeed he was troubled at her absence and perplexed about the case, for she stayed away from him a great while and did not return; so he donned his dress and went

[1] The heroes and heroines of Eastern love tales are always *bonnes fourchettes*; they eat and drink hard enough to scandalise the sentimental amourist of the West; but it is understood that this abundant diet is necessary to qualify them for the Herculean labours of the love-night.

seeking her, but not finding her, and he said to himself, "Haply, she is gone to the flower garden." Thereupon he went out into the garden and came to a running rill beside which he saw a white she-bird and on the stream bank a tree full of birds of various colours, and he stood and watched the birds without their seeing him. And, behold, a black bird flew down upon that white she-bird and fell to billing her pigeon fashion, then he leapt on her and trod her three consecutive times, after which the bird changed and became a woman. Badr looked at her and lo! it was Queen Lab.

So he knew that the black bird was a man transmewed and that she was enamoured of him and had transformed herself into a bird, that he might enjoy her; wherefore jealousy got hold



upon him and he was wroth with the Queen because of the black bird. Then he returned to his place and lay down on the carpet-bed and after an hour or so she came back to him and fell to kissing him and jesting with him; but, being sore incensed against her, he answered her not a word. She saw what was to do with him and was assured that he had witnessed what befell her when she was a white bird and was trodden by the black bird; yet she discovered naught to him but concealed what ailed her. When he had done her need, he said to her, "O Queen, I would have thee give me leave to go to my uncle's shop, for I long after him and have not seen him these forty days." She replied, "Go to him, but tarry not from me, for I cannot brook to be parted from thee, nor can I endure without thee an hour." He said, "I hear and I obey," and, mounting, rode to the shop of the Shaykh, the grocer, who welcomed him and rose to him, and, embracing him, said to him, "How hast thou fared with yonder idolatress?"

He replied, "I was well in health and happiness till this last night," and told him what had passed in the garden with the black bird. Now, when the old man heard his words, he said, "Beware of her, for know that the birds upon the trees were all young men and strangers, whom she loved and enchanted and turned into birds. That black bird thou sawest was one of her Mamelukes whom she loved with exceeding love, till he cast his eyes upon one of her women, wherefore she changed him into a black bird. And whenas she lusteth after him she transformeth herself into a she-bird that he may enjoy her, for she still loveth him with passionate love. When she found that thou knewest of her case, she plotted evil against thee, for she loveth thee not wholly. But no harm shall betide thee from her, so long as I protect thee; therefore fear nothing; for I am a Moslem, by name Abdallah, and there is none in my day more magical than I; yet do I not make use of gramarye save upon constraint. Many a time have I put to naught the sorceries of yonder accursed and delivered folk from her, and I care not for her, because she can do me no hurt—nay, she feareth me with exceeding fear, as do all in the city who, like her, are magicians and serve the Fire, not the Omnipotent Sire. So to-morrow, come thou to me and tell me what she doth with thee; for this very night she will cast about to destroy thee, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with her, that thou mayst save thyself from her malice."

Then King Badr Basim farewelled the Shaykh and returned to the Queen whom he found awaiting him. When she saw him, she rose and, seating him and welcoming him, brought him meat and drink and the two ate till they had enough and washed their hands; after which she called for wine and they drank till the night was wellnigh half-spent, when she plied him with cup after cup till he was drunken and lost sense and wit. When she saw him thus, she said to him, "I conjure thee by Allah and by whatso thou worshippest, if I ask thee a question wilt thou inform me rightly and answer me truly?" And he being drunken, answered, "Yes, O my lady." Quoth she, "O my lord and light of mine eyes, when thou awokest last night and foundest me not, thou soughtest me, till thou sawest me in the garden, under the guise of a white she-bird, and also thou sawest the black bird leap on me and tread me. Now I will tell the truth of this matter. That black bird was one of my Mamelukes, whom I loved with

exceeding love; but one day he cast his eyes upon a certain of my slave-girls, wherefore jealousy gat hold upon me and I transformed him by my spells into a black bird and her I slew. But now I cannot endure without him a single hour; so, whenever I lust after him, I change myself into a she-bird and go to him, that he may leap me and enjoy me, even as thou hast seen. Art thou not therefore incensed against me, because of this, albeit, by the virtue of Fire and Light, Shade and Heat, I love thee more than ever and have made thee my portion of the world?"

He answered (being drunken), "Thy conjecture of the cause of my rage is correct, and it had no reason other than this." With this she embraced him and kissed him and made great show of love to him; then she lay down to sleep and he by her side. Presently, about midnight, she rose from the carpet-bed and King Badr Basim was awake; but he feigned sleep and watched stealthily to see what she would do. She took out of a red bag a something red, which she planted amiddlemost the chamber, and it became a stream, running like the sea; after which she took a handful of barley and, strewing it on the ground, watered it with water from the river; whereupon it became wheat in the ear, and she gathered it and ground it into flour. Then she set it aside and, returning to bed, lay down by Badr Basim till morning, when he arose and washed his face and asked her leave to visit the Shaykh his uncle. She gave him permission and he repaired to Abdallah and told him what had passed. The old man laughed and said, "By Allah, this miscreant witch plotteth mischief against thee; but reck thou not of her ever!" Then he gave him a pound of parched corn and said to him, "Take this with thee and know that, when she seeth it, she will ask thee, 'What is this and what wilt thou do with it?' Do thou answer, 'Abundance of good things is good'; and eat of it.

"Then she will bring forth to thee parched grain of her own and say to thee, 'Eat of this Sawik'; and do thou feign to her that thou eatest thereof, but eat of this instead, and beware and have a care lest thou eat of hers even a grain; for, an thou eat so much as a grain thereof, her spells will have power over thee and she will enchant thee and say to thee, 'Leave this form of a man.' Whereupon thou wilt quit thine own shape for what shape she will. But, an thou eat not thereof, her enchantments will

be null and void and no harm will betide thee therefrom ; whereat she will be shamed with shame exceeding and say to thee, ' I did but jest with thee ! ' Then will she make a show of love and fondness to thee ; but this will all be but hypocrisy in her and craft. And do thou also make a show of love to her and say to her, ' O my lady and light of mine eyes, eat of this parched barley and see how delicious it is.' And if she eat thereof, though it be but a grain, take water in thy hand and throw it in her face, saying, ' Quit this human form ' (for what form soever thou wilt have her take). Then leave her and come to me and I will counsel thee what to do."

So Badr Basim took leave of him and, returning to the palace, went in to the Queen, who said to him, " Welcome and well come and good cheer to thee ! " And she rose and kissed him, saying, " Thou hast tarried long from me, O my lord." He replied, " I have been with my uncle, and he gave me to eat of this Sawik." Quoth she, " We have better than that." Then she laid his parched Sawik in one plate and hers in another and said to him, " Eat of this, for 'tis better than thine." So he feigned to eat of it and when she thought he had done so, she took water in her hand and sprinkled him therewith, saying, " Quit this form, O thou gallows-bird, thou miserable, and take that of a mule one-eyes and foul of favour." But he changed not ; which, when she saw, she arose and went up to him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, " O my beloved, I did but jest with thee ; bear me no malice because of this." Quoth he, " O my lady, I bear thee no whit of malice ; nay, I am assured that thou lovest me ; but eat of this my parched barley." So she ate a mouthful of Abdallah's Sawik ; but no sooner had it settled in her stomach than she was convulsed ; and King Badr Basim took water in his palm and thew it in her face, saying, " Quit this human form and take that of a dapple mule."

No sooner had he spoken than she found herself changed into a she-mule, whereupon the tears rolled down her cheeks and she fell to rubbing her muzzle against his feet. Then he would have bridled her, but she would not take the bit ; so he left her and, going to the grocer, told him what had passed. Abdallah brought out for him a bridle and bade him rein her forthwith. So he took it to the palace, and when she saw him, she came up to him and he set the bit in her mouth and, mounting her, rode

forth to find the Shaykh. But when the old man saw her, he rose and said to her, "Almighty Allah confound thee, O accursed woman!" Then quoth he to Badr, "O my son, there is no more tarrying for thee in this city; so ride her and fare with her whither thou wilt and beware lest thou commit the bridle to any."

King Badr thanked him and, farewelling him, fared on three days, without ceasing, till he drew near another city and there met him an old man, grey-headed and comely, who said to him, "Whence comest thou, O my son?" Badr replied, "From the city of this witch"; and the old man said, "Thou art my guest to-night." He consented and went with him; but by the way, behold, they met an old woman, who wept when she saw the mule, and said, "There is no god but *the* God! Verily, this mule resembleth my son's she-mule, which is dead, and my heart acheth for her; so, Allah upon thee, O my lord, do thou sell her to me!" He replied, "By Allah, O my mother, I cannot sell her." But she cried, "Allah upon thee, do not refuse my request, for my son will surely be a dead man except I buy him this mule." And she importuned him, till he exclaimed, "I will not sell her save for a thousand dinars," saying in himself, "Whence should this old woman get a thousand gold pieces?" Thereupon she brought out from her girdle a purse containing a thousand ducats, which when King Badr Basim saw, he said, "O my mother, I did but jest with thee; I cannot sell her." But the old man looked at him and said, "O my son, in this city none may lie, for whoso lieth they put to death."

So King Badr Basim dismounted from and delivered the mule to the old woman; she drew the bit from her mouth and, taking water in her hand, sprinkled the mule therewith, saying, "O my daughter, quit this shape for that form wherein thou wast aforetime!" Upon this she was straightway restored to her original semblance and the two women embraced and kissed each other. So King Badr Basim knew that the old woman was Queen Lab's mother and that he had been tricked and would have fled; when lo! the old woman whistled a loud whistle and her call was obeyed by an Ifrit as he were a great mountain, whereat Badr was affrighted and stood still. Then the old woman mounted on the Ifrit's back, taking her daughter behind her and King Badr Basim before her, and the Ifrit flew off with them;

nor was it a full hour ere they were in the palace of Queen Lab who sat down on the throne of kingship and said to Badr, " Gallows-bird that thou art, now am I come hither and have attained to that I desired and soon will I show thee how I will do with thee and with yonder old man the grocer! How many favours have I shown him! Yet he doth me frowardness; for thou hast not attained thine end but by means of him." Then she took water and sprinkled him therewith, saying, " Quit the shape wherein thou art for the form of a foul-favoured fowl, the foulest of all fowls "; and she set him in a cage and cut off from him meat and drink; but one of her women, seeing this cruelty, took compassion on him and gave him food and water without her knowledge.

One day, the damsel took her mistress at unawares and going forth the palace, repaired to the old grocer, to whom she told the whole case, saying, " Queen Lab is minded to make an end of thy brother's son." The Shaykh thanked her and said, " There is no help but that I take the city from her and make thee Queen thereof in her stead." Then he whistled a loud whistle and there came forth to him an Ifrit with four wings, to whom he said, " Take up this damsel and carry her to the city of Julnar the Sea-born and her mother Farashah for they twain are the most powerful magicians on face of earth." And he said to the damsel, " When thou comest thither, tell them that King Badr Basim is Queen Lab's captive." Then the Ifrit took up his load and, flying off with her, in a little while set her down upon the terrace roof of Queen Julnar's palace. So she descended and going in to the Queen, kissed the earth and told her what had passed to her son, first and last, whereupon Julnar rose to her and entreated her with honour and thanked her. Then she let beat the drums in the city and acquainted her lieges and the lords of her realm with the good news that King Badr Basim was found; after which she and her mother Farashah and her brother Salih assembled all the tribes of the Jinn and the troops of the main; for the Kings of the Jinn obeyed them since the taking of King Al-Samandal.

Presently they all flew up into the air and lighting down on the city of the sorceress, sacked the town and the palace and slew all the Unbelievers therein in the twinkling of an eye. Then said Julnar to the damsel, " Where is my son? " And the

slave-girl brought her the cage and signing to the bird within, cried, " This is thy son." So Julnar took him forth of the cage and sprinkled him with water, saying, " Quit this shape for the form wherein thou wast aforetime " ; nor had she made an end of her speech ere he shook and became a man as before : whereupon his mother, seeing him restored to human shape, embraced him and he wept with sore weeping. On likewise did his uncle Salih and his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle and fell to kissing his hands and feet. Then Julnar sent for Shaykh Abdallah and, thanking him for his kind dealing with her son, married him to the damsel whom he had despatched to her with news of him, and made him King of the city. Moreover, she summoned those who survived of the citizens (and they were Moslems), and made them swear fealty to him and take the oath of loyalty, whereto they replied, " Hearkening and obedience ! " Then she and her company farewelled him and returned to their own capital. The townsfolk came out to meet them, with drums beating, and decorated the place three days and held high festival, of the greatness of their joy for the return of their King Badr Basim.

After this Badr said to his mother, " O my mother, naught remains but that I marry and we be all united." She replied, " Right is thy rede, O my son, but wait till we ask who befitteth thee among the daughters of the Kings." And his grandmother Farashah, and the daughters of both his uncles said, " O Badr Basim, we will help thee to win thy wish forthright." Then each of them arose and fared forth questing in the lands, whilst Julnar sent out her waiting-women on the necks of Ifrits, bidding them leave not a city nor a King's palace without noting all the handsome girls that were therein. But, when King Badr Basim saw the trouble they were taking in this matter, he said to Julnar, " O my mother, leave this thing, for none will content me save Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal ; for that she is indeed a jewel, according to her name." Replied Julnar, " I know that which thou seekest " ; and bade forthright bring Al-Samandal the King. As soon as he was present she sent for Badr Basim and acquainted him with the King's coming, whereupon he went in to him.

Now when Al-Samandal was aware of his presence, he rose to him and saluted him and bade him welcome ; and King

Badr Basim demanded of him his daughter Jauharah in marriage. Quoth he, " She is thine handmaid and at thy service and disposition," and despatched some of his suite bidding them seek her abode and, after telling her that her sire was in the hands of King Badr Basim, to bring her forthright. So they flew up into the air and disappeared and they returned after a while, with the Princess who, as soon as she saw her father, went up to him and threw her arms round his neck. Then, looking at her, he said, " O my daughter, know that I have given thee in wedlock to this magnanimous Sovran, and valiant lion King Badr Basim, son of Queen Julnar the Sea-born, for that he is the goodliest of the folk of his day and most powerful and the most exalted of them in degree and the noblest in rank; he befitteth none but thee and thou none but him." Answered she, " I may not gainsay thee, O my sire; do as thou wilt, for indeed chagrin and despite are at an end, and I am one of his handmaids." So they summoned the Kazi and the witnesses who drew up the marriage contract between King Badr Basim and the Princess Jauharah, and the citizens decorated the city and beat the drums of rejoicing, and they released all who were in the jails, whilst the King clothed the widows and orphans and bestowed robes of honour upon the Lords of the Realm and Emirs and Grandees: and they made bride-feasts and held high festival night and morn ten days, at the end of which time they displayed the bride, in nine different dresses, before King Badr Basim who bestowed an honourable robe upon King Al-Samandal and sent him back to his country and people and kinsfolk. And they ceased not from living the most delectable of life and the most solaceful of days, eating and drinking and enjoying every luxury, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Societies; and this is the end of their story, may Allah have mercy on them all!

KHALIFAH THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD

THERE was once in tides of yore and in ages and times long gone before in the city of Baghdad a fisherman, Khalifah hight, a pauper wight, who had never once been married in all his days.[1] It chanced one morning that he took his net and went with it to the river, as was his wont with the view of fishing before the others came. When he reached the bank he girt himself and tucked up his skirts; then, stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it a first cast and a second but it brought up naught. He ceased not to throw it, till he had made ten casts, and still naught came up therein; wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said, "I crave pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and unto Him I repent. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Whatso He willeth is and whatso He nilleth is not! Upon Allah (to whom belong Honour and Glory) dependeth daily bread! Whenas He giveth to His servant, none denieth him; and whenas He denieth a servant, none giveth to him."

Then he said in his mind, "I will make this one more cast, trusting in Allah, so haply He may not disappoint my hope"; and he rose and casting into the river the net as far as his arm availed, gathered the cords in his hands and waited a full hour, after which he pulled at it and, finding it heavy, handled it gently

[1] This is so rare, even in the poorest classes in the East, that it is mentioned with some emphasis.

and drew it in, little by little, till he got ashore, when lo and behold! he saw in it a one-eyed, lame-legged ape. Seeing this quoth Khalifah, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Verily, we are Allah's and to Him we are returning! What meaneth this heart-breaking, miserable ill-luck and hapless fortune? What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the destinies of Almighty Allah!" Then he took the ape and tied him with a cord to a tree which grew on the river-bank, and grasping a whip he had with him, raised his arm in the air, thinking to bring down the scourge upon the quarry, when Allah made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying, "O Khalifah, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in Allah; for He will give thee thy daily bread." Hearing this Khalifah went down to the river and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before; so he ceased not to tug at it, till he brought it to land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart, Kohl-darkened eyes and hands stained with Henna-dyes; and he was laughing and wore a tattered waist-cloth about his middle.

Quoth Khalifah, "Praised be Allah who hath changed the fish of the river into apes!" [1] Then, going up to the first ape, who was still tied to the tree, he said to him, "See, O unlucky, how fulsome was the counsel thou gavest me! None but thou made me light on this second ape: and for that thou gavest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness,[2] I am become distressed and weary, without dirham or dinar." So saying, he hent in hand a stick and, flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it upon the lame ape, when the creature cried out for mercy and said to him, "I conjure thee, by Allah, spare me for the sake of this my fellow and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire! So he held his hand from him and, throwing down the stick, went up to and stood by the second ape, who said to him, "O Khalifah, this my speech will profit thee naught, except thou hearken to what

[1] True fellah "chaff."

[2] Alluding to the well-known superstition that the first object seen in the morning, such as a crow, a cripple, or a cyclops, determines the fortunes of the day.

I say to thee; but, an thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the cause of thine enrichment." Asked Khalifah, "And what hast thou to say to me that I may obey thee therein?" The ape answered, "Leave me bound on the bank and hie thee down to the river; then cast thy net a third time, and after I will tell thee what to do." So he took his net and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in and finding it heavy, laboured at it and ceased not his travail till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape; but this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with Henna and his eyes blackened with Kohl.

When Khalifah saw this, he exclaimed, "Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! Verily, this is a blessed day from first to last: its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of the first ape, and the scroll is known by its superscription! Verily, to-day is a day of apes: there is not a single fish left in the river, and we are come out to-day but to catch monkeys!" Then he turned to the third ape and said, "And what thing art thou also, O unlucky?" Quoth the ape, "Dost thou not know me, O Khalifah!"; and quoth he, "Not I!" The ape cried, "I am the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, the shroff." Asked Khalifah, "And what dost thou for him?"; and the ape answered, "I give him good-morrow at the first of the day, and he gaineth five ducats; and again at the end of the day I give him good-even and he gaineth other five ducats." Whereupon Khalifah turned to the first ape and said to him, "See, O unlucky, what fine apes other folk have! As for thee, thou givest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thy ill-omened phiz and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!" So saying, he took the cattle-stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Abu al-Sa'adat's ape said to him, "Let him be, O Khalifah, hold thy hand and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do." So Khalifah threw down the stick and, walking up to him, cried, "And what hast thou to say to me, O monarch of all monkeys?" Replied the ape, "Leave me and the other two apes here, and take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever cometh up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall gladden thee." He

replied, "I hear and obey," and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder.

Then Khalifah went down to the river and, casting his net, waited awhile; after which he drew it up and found therein a fine young fish, with a big head, a tail like a ladle and eyes like two gold pieces. When Khalifah saw this fish he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he took it, marvelling, and carried it to the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the universal world. Quoth the ape, "O Khalifah, what wilt thou do with this and with thine ape?"; and quoth the Fisherman, "I will tell thee, O monarch of monkeys, all I am about to do. Know then that first, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed, my ape, and take thee in his stead and give thee every day to eat of whatso thou wilt." Rejoined the ape, "Since thou hast made choice of me, I will tell thee how thou shalt do wherein, if it please Allah Almighty, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Lend thy mind, then, to what I say to thee and 'tis this! Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of The Dyke and cast thy net into the Tigris. Then, after waiting awhile, draw it up and thou shalt find therein a fish, than which thou never sawest a finer in thy whole life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this."

So Khalifah rose forthright and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great cat-fish, the bigness of a lamb; never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him, "Gather thee some green grass and set half of it in a basket; lay the fish therein and cover it with the other moiety. Then, leaving us here tied, shoulder the basket and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee by the way, answer him not, but fare on till thou comest to the market-street of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, Shaykh of the shroffs, and wilt see him sitting on a mattress, with a cushion behind him and two coffers, one for gold and one for silver, before him while around him stand his Mamelukes and negro slaves and servant-lads. Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying, 'O Abu al-Sa'adat, verily I went out to-day to fish and cast my net in thy name, and Allah Almighty sent me this fish.' He will ask, 'Hast thou shown it

to any but me ?' ; and do thou answer, ' No, by Allah !' Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars ; but do thou return them also and so do with everything he may offer thee ; and take naught from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold. Then will he say to thee, ' Tell me what thou wouldst have ' ; and do thou reply, ' By Allah, I will not sell the fish save for two words !' He will ask, ' What are they ?' And do thou answer, ' Stand up and say, Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give Khalifah the Fisherman my ape in exchange for his ape, and that I barter for his lot my lot and luck for his luck. This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold.' If he do this, I will every day give thee good-morrow and good-even, and every day thou shalt gain ten dinars of good gold ; whilst this one-eyed, lame-legged ape shall daily give the Jew good-morrow, and Allah shall afflict him every day with an avania which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath naught. Hearken then to my words ; so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright."

Quoth Khalifah, " I accept thy counsel, O monarch of all the monkeys ! But, as for this unlucky, may Allah never bless him ! I know not what to do with him." Quoth the ape, " Let him go into the water, and let me go also." " I hear and obey," answered Khalifah and unbound the three apes, and they went down into the river. Then he took up the cat-fish which he washed then laid it in the basket upon some green grass, and covered it with other ; and lastly, shouldering his load, set out with the basket upon his shoulder and ceased not faring till he entered the city of Baghdad. And as he threaded the streets the folk knew him and cried out to him, saying, " What hast thou there, O Khalifah ? " But he paid no heed to them and passed on till he came to the market-street of the money-changers and fared between the shops, as the ape had charged him, till he found the Jew seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a King of the Kings of Khorasan. He knew him at first sight ; so he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat raised his eyes and, recognising him, said, " Welcome, O Khalifah ! What wantest thou and what is thy need ? If any have mis-said thee or spited thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Chief of Police, who shall do thee justice

on him." Replied Khalifah, "Nay, as thy head liveth, O Chief of the Jews, none hath mis-said me. But I went forth this morning to the river and, casting my net into the Tigris on thy luck, brought up this fish." Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Jew, who admired it and said, "By the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments,[1] I dreamt last night that the Virgin came to me and said, 'Know, O Abu al-Sa'adat, that I have sent thee a pretty present!' And doubtless 'tis this fish." Then he turned to Khalifah and said to him, "By thy faith, hath any seen it but I?" Khalifah replied, "No, by Allah, and by Abu Bakr the Viridical, none hath seen it save thou, O Chief of the Jews!" Whereupon the Jew turned to one of his lads and said to him, "Come, carry this fish to my house and bid Sa'adah[2] dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and hie me home." And Khalifah said, "Go, O my lad; get the master's wife fry some of it and broil the rest." Answered the boy, "I hear and I obey, O my lord," and taking the fish went away with it to the house.

Then the Jew put out his hand and gave Khalifah the Fisherman a dinar, saying, "Take this for thyself, O Khalifah, and spend it on thy family." When Khalifah saw the dinar on his palm, he took it, saying, "Laud to the Lord of Dominion!" as if he had never seen aught of gold in his life, and went somewhat away; but, before he had gone far, he was minded of the ape's charge and, turning back, threw down the ducat, saying, "Take thy gold and give folk back their fish! Dost thou make a laughing-stock of folk?" The Jew, hearing this, thought he was jesting and offered him two dinars upon the other, but Khalifah said, "Give me the fish and no nonsense. How knewest thou I would sell it at this price?" Whereupon the Jew gave him two more dinars and said, "Take these five ducats for thy fish and leave greed." So Khalifah hent the five dinars in hand and went away, rejoicing, and gazing and marvelling at the gold and saying, "Glory be to God! There is not with the Caliph of Baghdad what is with me this day!" Then he ceased not faring till he came to the end of the market-street, when he

[1] This extraordinary confusion of two distinct religious mythologies cannot be the result of ignorance. Educated Moslems know at least as much as Christians do on these subjects, but the Rawi, or story-teller, speaks to the gallery. In fact, it becomes mere chaff.

[2] The Jew's wife.

remembered the words of the ape and his charge and, returning to the Jew, threw him back the gold. Quoth he, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah? Dost thou want silver in exchange for gold?" Khalifah replied, "I want nor dirhams nor dinars. I only want thee to give me back folk's fish."

With this the Jew waxed wroth and shouted out at him, saying, "O Fisherman, thou bringest me a fish not worth a sequin and I give thee five for it; yet art thou not content! Art thou Jinn-mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it." Answered Khalifah, "I will not sell it for silver nor for gold, only for two sayings [1] thou shalt say me." When the Jew heard speak of the "Two Sayings," his eyes sank into his head, he breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage and said to him, "O nail-paring of the Moslems, wilt thou have me throw off my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and stultify my belief and my conviction which I inherited of old from my forbears?" Then he cried out to his servants who were in waiting and said, "Out on you! Bash me this unlucky rogue's neck and bastinado him soundly!" So they came down upon him with blows and ceased not beating him till he fell beneath the shop, and the Jew said to them, "Leave him and let him rise." Whereupon Khalifah jumped up as if naught ailed him, and the Jew said to him, "Tell me what price thou asketh for this fish and I will give it thee; for thou hast gotten but scant good of us this day." Answered the Fisherman, "Have no fear for me, O master, because of the beating; for I can eat ten donkeys' rations of stick."

The Jew laughed at his words and said, "Allah upon thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the right of my Faith, I will give it thee!" The Fisherman replied, "Naught from thee will remunerate me for this fish save the two words whereof I spake." And the Jew said, "Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Moslem?" Khalifah rejoined, "By Allah, O Jew, an thou islamise [2] 'twill nor advantage the Moslems nor damage the Jews; and, in like manner, an thou hold to thy misbelief 'twill nor damage the Moslems nor advantage the Jews. But what I

[1] Here is a double entendre. The fisherman meant a word or two. The Jew understood the Shibboleth of the Moslem creed, popularly known as the "Two Words," pronouncing which would make the Jew a Moslem.

[2] The reply embodies the popular idea that the number of Moslems (who will be saved) is preordained and that no art of men can add to it or take from it.

desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say, 'Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for the ape of Khalifah the Fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck.'" Quoth the Jew, "If this be all thou desirest 'twill sit lightly upon me." So he rose without stay or delay and, standing on his feet, repeated the required words; after which he turned to the Fisherman and asked him, "Hast thou aught else to ask of me?" "No," answered he, and the Jew said, "Go in peace!" Hearing this Khalifah sprung to his feet forthright; took up his basket and net and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with travail, when he found it full of fish of all kinds.

Presently, up came a woman with a dish, who gave him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it; and after her an eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and so forth till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten an hundred dinars. Now, Khalifah the Fisherman had quarters in the Passage of the Merchants, and, as he lay one night in his lodging much bemused with Hashish, he said to himself, "O Khalifah, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten an hundred golden dinars. Needs must the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, hear of this from someone, and haply he will be wanting money and will send for thee and say to thee, 'I need a sum of money and it hath reached me that thou hast an hundred dinars; so do thou lend them to me those same.'" I shall answer, "O Commander of the Faithful, I am a poor man, and whoso told thee that I had an hundred dinars lied against me; for I have naught of this." Thereupon he will commit me to the Chief of Police, saying, 'Strip him of his clothes and torment him with the bastinado till he confess and give up the hundred dinars in his possession.' Wherefore, meseemeth to provide against this predicament, the best thing I can do is to rise forthright and bash myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating." And his Hashish said to him, "Rise, doff thy dress."

So he stood up and, putting off his clothes, took a whip he had by him and set handy a leathern pillow; then he fell to lashing himself, laying every other blow upon the pillow and roaring out the while, "Alas! Alas! By Allah, 'tis a false saying, O

my lord, and they have lied against me ; for I am a poor fisherman and have naught of the goods of the world ! " The noise of the whip falling on the pillow and on his person resounded in the still of night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and they said, " Whatever can ail the poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him ? 'Twould seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him." Presently, they all came forth of their lodgings, at the noise of the blows and the crying, and repaired to Khalifah's room, but they found the door locked and said one to other, " Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the adjoining saloon. It behoveth us to climb over by the roofs." So they clomb over the roofs and, coming down through the skylight, saw him naked and flogging himself and asked him, " What aileth thee, O Khalifah ? " He answered, " Know, O folk, that I have gained some dinars and fear lest my case be carried up to the Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, and he send for me and demand of me those same gold pieces ; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that, if I deny, he will torture me, so I am torturing myself, by way of accustoming me to what may come."

The merchants laughed at him and said, " Leave this fooling, may Allah not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten ! Verily thou hast disturbed us this night and hast troubled our hearts." So Khalifah left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he rose and would have gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and said in his mind, " An I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt about my waist, peradventure some one will see me and lay in wait for me till he come upon me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money ; but I have a device that should serve me well, right well." So he jumped up forthright and made him a pocket in the collar of his gaberdine and, tying the hundred dinars up in a purse, laid them in the collar-pocket. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris, where he made a cast, but brought up naught. So he removed from that place to another and threw again, but once more the net came up empty ; and he went on removing from place to place till he had gone half a day's journey from the city, ever casting the net which kept bringing up naught.

So he said to himself, "By Allah, I will throw my net a-stream but this once more, whether ill come of it or weal!" Then he hurled the net with all his force, of the excess of his wrath, and the purse with the hundred dinars flew out of his collar-pocket and, lighting in mid-stream, was carried away by the strong current; whereupon he threw down the net and, doffing his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue without chancing on it. When he despaired of finding the purse he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but staff, net and basket and sought for his clothes, but could light on no trace of them; so he said in himself, "O vilest of those wherefor was made the byword, 'The pilgrimage is not perfected save by copulation with the camel!'"[1] Then he wrapped the net about him and, taking staff in one hand and basket in other, went trotting about like a camel in rut, running right and left and backwards and forwards, dishevelled and dusty, as he were a rebel Marid let loose from Solomon's prison.

So far for what concerns the Fisherman Khalifah; but as regards the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, he had a friend, a jeweller called Ibn al-Kirnas, and all the traders, brokers and middle-men knew him for the Caliph's merchant; wherefore there was naught sold in Baghdad by way of rarities and things of price or Mamelukes or handmaidens, but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, behold, there came up to him the Shaykh of the brokers, with a slave-girl, whose like seers never saw, for she was of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, and among her gifts was that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner musical instruments. So Ibn al-Kirnas bought her for five thousand golden dinars and clothed her with other thousand; after which he carried her to the Prince of True Believers, with whom she lay the night and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all sorts of arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Kut al-Kulub.

[1] "O vilest of sinners!" alludes to the thief. "A general plunge into worldly pleasures and pursuits announced the end of the pilgrimage ceremonies" (Burton's *Pilgrimage* iii. 365).

On the morrow the Caliph sent for Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweller, and bade him receive ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with the slave-girl Kut al-Kulub and he forsook the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, for all she was the daughter of his father's brother and he abandoned all his favourite concubines and abode a whole month without stirring from Kut al-Kulub's side save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her all in haste. This was grievous to the Lords of the Realm and they complained thereof to the Wazir Ja-afar the Barmecide, who bore with the Commander of the Faithful and waited till the next Friday, when he entered the cathedral-mosque and, foregathering with the Caliph, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories anent seld-seen love and lovers with intent to draw out what was in his mind. Quoth the Caliph, " By Allah, O Ja-afar, this is not of my choice; but my heart is caught in the snare of love and wot I not what is to be done! " The Wazir Ja-afar replied, " O Commander of the Faithful, thou knowest how this girl Kut al-Kulub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which hand possesseth soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing which is that the highest boast of Kings and Princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, perchance it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her." Rejoined the Caliph, " Thou sayest well, O Ja-afar; come let us go a-hunting forthright, without stay or delay."

So soon as Friday prayers were prayed, they left the mosque and at once mounting their she-mules rode forth to the chase and fared out into the open country, occupied with talk, and their attendants outwent them. Presently, the heat became overhot and Al-Rashid said to his Wazir, " O Ja-afar, I am sore athirst." Then he looked around and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, asked Ja-afar, " Seest thou what I see? ' Answered the Wazir, " Yes, O Commander of the Faithful; I see a dim figure on a high mound; belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber-plot, and in whatsowise water will not be lacking in his neighbourhood "; presently adding, " I will go to him and fetch thee some." But Al-Rashid said, " My mule is swifter than thy mule; so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of this

person drink and return." So saying, he urged his she-mule, which started off like racing wind or railing-water and, in the twinkling of an eye, made the mound, where he found the figure he had seen to be none other than Khalifah the Fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net; and indeed he was horrible to behold, as to and fro he rolled with eyes for very redness like cresset-gleam and dusty hair in dishevelled trim, as he were an Ifrit or a lion grim.

Al-Rashid saluted him and he returned his salutation; but he was wroth and fires might have been lit at his breath. Quoth the Caliph, "O man, hast thou any water?"; and quoth Khalifah, "Ho thou, art thou blind, or Jinn-mad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for 'tis behind this mound." So Al-Rashid went around the mound and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule: then without a moment's delay he returned to Khalifah and said to him, "What aileth thee, O man, to stand here, and what is thy calling?" The Fisherman cried, "This is a stranger and sillier question than that about the water! Seest thou not the gear of my craft on my shoulder?" Said the Caliph, "Belike thou art a fisherman?"; and he replied, "Yes." Asked Al-Rashid, "Where is thy gaberdine, and where are thy waistcloth and girdle and where be the rest of thy raiment?" Now these were the very things which had been taken from Khalifah, like for like; so, when he heard the Caliph name them, he got into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the river-bank and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftlier than the blinding leven, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, "Hark ye, man, bring me back my things and leave jesting and joking." Al-Rashid replied, "By Allah, I have not seen thy clothes, nor know aught of them!"

Now the Caliph had large cheeks and a small mouth; so Khalifah said to him, "Belike, thou art by trade a singer or a piper on pipes? But bring me back my clothes fairly and without more ado, or I will bash thee with this my staff till thou bepiss thyself and befoul thy clothes." When Al-Rashid saw the staff in the Fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said to himself, "By Allah, I cannot brook from this mad beggar half a blow of that staff!" Now he had on a satin gown; so he pulled it off and gave it to Khalifah, saying, "O man, take this in place of thy clothes." The Fisherman took it

and turned it about and said, " My clothes are worth ten of this painted 'Aba-cloak " ; and rejoined the Caliph, " Put it on till I bring thee thy gear." So Khalifah donned the gown, but finding it too long for him, took a knife he had with him, tied to the handle of his basket, and cut off nigh a third of the skirt, so that it fell only beneath his knees. Then he turned to Al-Rashid and said to him, " Allah upon thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping." Replied the Caliph, " My wage is ten dinars a month," and Khalifah continued, " By Allah, my poor fellow, thou makest me sorry for thee ! Why, I make ten dinars every day ! Hast thou a mind to take service with me and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee ? So shalt thou make five dinars a day and be my slavey and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff."

Quoth Al-Rashid, " I will well " ; and quoth Khalifah, " Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright." So Al-Rashid alighted and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khalifah said to him, " O piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thy fore-arm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus." Accordingly, the Caliph took heart of grace and, doing as the fisherman showed him, threw the net and pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khalifah came to his aid and tugged at it with him ; but the two together could not hale it up : whereupon said the Fisher-man, " O piper of ill-omen, for the first time I took thy gown in place of my clothes ; but this second time I will have thine ass and will beat thee to boot, till thou bepiss and beskite thyself ! An I find my net torn." Quoth Al-Rashid, " Let the twain of us pull at once." So they both pulled together and succeeded with difficulty in hauling that net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colours ; and Khalifah said to Al-Rashid, " By Allah, O piper, thou art foul of favour, but, an thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a mighty fine fisherman. But now 'twere best thou bestraddle thine ass and make for the market and fetch me a pair of frails, and I will look after the fish till thou return, when I and thou will load it on thine ass's back. I have scales and weights and all we want, so we can take them with us and thou wilt have nothing to do

but to hold the scales and pouch the price; for here we have fish worth twenty dinars. So be fast with the frails and loiter not."

Answered the Caliph, "I hear and obey," and mounting, left him with his fish, and spurred his mule, in high good humour, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the Fisherman, till he came up to Ja-afar, who said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, belike, when thou wentest down to drink, thou foundest a pleasant flower garden and enteredst and tookest thy pleasure therein alone?" At this Al-Rashid fell a-laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, Allah make joy to endure for thee and do away annoy from thee! What was the cause of thy delaying when thou faredst to drink and what hath befallen thee?" Quoth the Caliph, "Verily, a right wondrous tale and a joyous adventure and a wondrous hath befallen me." Andhe repeated to them what had passed between himself and the Fisherman and his words, "Thou stolest my clothes!" and how he had given him his gown and how he had cut off a part of it, finding it too long for him. Said Ja-afar, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee: but now I will go straight to the Fisherman and buy it of him."

The Caliph replied, "By Allah, he hath cut off a third part of the skirt and spoilt it! But, O Ja-afar, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish which I left on the bank with my master Khalifah, and he is watching them and waiting for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a matchet. Then we are to go, I and he, to the market and sell the fish and share the price." Ja-afar rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will bring you a purchaser for your fish." And Al-Rashid retorted, "O Ja-afar, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khalifah, who taught me angling, I will give him for it a gold dinar!" So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the Caliph, and they all arose and made for the riverside.

Now, while Khalifah was expecting the Caliph's return with the two frails, behold, the Mamelukes swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-

embroidered kerchief, beating one another in their eagerness to get at the Fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "Doubtless these are of the fish of Paradise!" and hending two fish in right hand and left, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, "O Allah, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me at this very moment." And suddenly up to him came a black slave which was the chief of the Caliph's negro eunuchs. He had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to make water by the way, and finding that naught remained of the fish, little or much, looked right and left, till he espied Khalifah standing in the stream, with fish in either hand, and said to him, "Come hither, O Fisherman!" But Khalifah replied, "Begone and none of your impudence!" So the eunuch went up to him and said, "Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price." Replied the Fisherman, "Art thou little of wit? I will not sell them." Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khalifah cried out, saying, "Strike not, O loon! Better largesse than the mace." So saying, he threw the two fishes to the eunuch, who took them and laid them in his kerchief. Then he put hand in pouch, but found not a single dirham and said to Khalifah, "O Fisherman, verily thou art out of luck for, by Allah, I have not a silver about me! But come to-morrow to the Palace of the Caliphate and ask for the eunuch Sandal; whereupon the castratos will direct thee to me and by coming thither thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and therewith wend thy ways." Quoth Khalifah, "Indeed, this is a blessed day and its blessedness was manifest from the first of it!" [1]

Then he shouldered his net and returned to Baghdad; and as he passed through the streets, the folk saw the Caliph's gown on him and stared at him till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the Caliph's tailor. When the man saw him wearing a dress of the apparel of the Caliph, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, "O Khalifah, whence hadst thou that gown?" Replied the Fisherman, "What aileth thee to be impudent? I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. I forgave him the cutting off of his hand [2] for that he stole my clothes and gave me this cape in their

[1] Said ironicè, a favourite figure of speech with the Fellah.
[2] The penalty of theft.

place." So the tailor knew that the Caliph had come upon him as he was fishing and jested with him and given him the gown.

Such was his case; but as regards Harun al-Rashid, he had gone out a-hunting and a-fishing only to divert his thoughts from the damsel, Kut al-Kulub. But when Zubaydah heard of her and of the Caliph's devotion to her, the Lady was fired with the jealousy which the more especially fireth women, so that she refused meat and drink and rejected the delights of sleep and awaited the Caliph's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel. So when she learnt that he was gone hunting and fishing, she bade her women furnish the palace fairly and decorate it splendidly and serve up viands and confections; and among the rest she made a china dish of the daintiest sweetmeats that can be made wherein she had put Bhang. Then she ordered one of her eunuchs go to the damsel Kut al-Kulub and bid her to the banquet, saying, "The Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine to-day and, having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, longeth to divert herself with somewhat of thine art." Kut al-Kulub replied, "Hearing and obedience are due to Allah and the Lady Zubaydah," and rose without stay or delay, unknowing what was hidden for her in the Secret Purpose.

Then she took with her what instruments she needed and, accompanying the eunuch, ceased not faring till she stood in the presence of the Princess. When she entered she kissed the ground before her again and again, then, rising to her feet, said, "Peace be on the Lady of the exalted seat and the presence whereto none may avail, daughter of the house Abbasi and scion of the Prophet's family! May Allah fulfil thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years!" Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and presently the Lady Zubaydah raised her eyes and considered her beauty and loveliness. She saw a damsel with cheeks smooth as rose and breasts like granado, a face moon-bright, a brow flower-white and great eyes black as night; her eyelids were langour-dight and her face beamed with light, as if the sun from her forehead arose and the murks of the night from the locks of her brow; and the fragrance of musk from her breath strayed and flowers bloomed in her lovely face

inlaid; the moon beamed from her forehead and in her slender shape the branches swayed. She was like the full moon shining in the nightly shade; her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were like a bow arched and her lips of coral moulded. Her beauty amazed all who espied her and her glances amated all who eyed her. Glory be to Him who formed her and fashioned her and perfected her!

Quoth the Lady Zubaydah, "Well come, and welcome and fair cheer to thee, O Kut al-Kulub! Sit and divert us with thine art and the goodliness of thine accomplishments." Quoth the damsel, "I hear and I obey"; and, putting out her hand, took

the tambourine, which she smote briskly, and so sang thereto that she stopped the birds in the sky and the place danced with them blithely; after which she laid down the tambourine and took the pipe. Then she laid down the pipe, after she had charmed therewith all who were present, and took up the lute. Then she tightened its pegs and tuned its strings and laying it in her lap, bended over it as mother bendeth over child. Then she preluded in fourteen different modes and sang to the lute an entire piece, so as to confound the gazers and delight her hearers. Then she arose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner pleasing arts, till the Princess came near to fall in love with her and said to herself, "Verily, my cousin Al-Rashid is not to blame for loving her!" Then the damsel kissed the ground before Zubaydah and sat down, whereupon they set food before her.

Presently they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof; and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backwards and she sank on the ground sleeping. With this, the Lady said to her women, "Carry her up to one of the chambers, till I summon her"; and they replied, "We hear and we obey." Then said she to one of her eunuchs, "Fashion me a chest and bring it hither to me!"; and shortly afterwards she bade make the semblance of a tomb and spread the report that Kut al-Kulub had choked and died, threatening her familiars that she would smite the neck of whoever should say, "She is alive." Now, behold, the Caliph suddenly returned from the chase, and the first inquiry he made was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom the Lady Zubaydah had charged to declare she was dead, if the Caliph should ask for her and, kissing the ground before him, said, "May thy head live, O my lord! Be certified that Kut al-Kulub choked in eating and is dead." Whereupon cried Al-Rashid, "God never gladden thee with good news, O thou bad slave!" and entered the palace, where he heard of her death from everyone and asked, "Where is her tomb?" So they brought him to the sepulchre and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, "This is her burial-place." The Caliph, weeping sore for her, abode by the tomb a full hour, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress and the deepest melancholy.

So the Lady Zubaydah saw that her plot had succeeded and forthright sent for the eunuch and said, "Hither with the chest!" He set it before her, when she bade bring the damsel and, locking her up therein, said to the eunuch, "Take all pains to sell this chest and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked; then give alms with its price." So he took it, and went forth to do her bidding.

Thus fared it with these; but as for Khalifah the Fisherman, when morning morrowed and shone with its light and sheen, he said to himself, "I cannot do aught better to-day than visit the eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the palace of the Caliphate." So he went forth of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found Mamelukes, negro slaves and eunuchs standing and sitting; and, looking at them, behold, seated amongst them was the eunuch who had taken the fish of him, with the white

slaves waiting on him. Presently, one of the Mameluke-lads called out to him; whereupon the eunuch turned to see who he was and lo! it was the Fisherman. Now, when Khalifah was ware that he saw him and recognised him, he said to him, "I have not failed thee, O my little Tulip! On this wise are men of their word." Hearing his address Sandal the Eunuch laughed and replied, "By Allah, thou art right, O Fisherman," and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat; but at that moment there arose a great clamour. So he raised his head to see what was to do and, finding that it was the Wazir Ja-afar the Barmecide coming forth from the Caliph's presence, he rose to him and forewent him, and they walked about, conversing for a longsome time.

Khalifah the Fisherman waited awhile; then, growing weary of standing and finding that the eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, "O my lord Tulip, give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him because of the Minister's presence; so he went on talking with Ja-afar and took no notice whatever of the Fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "O Slow o' Pay! May Allah put to shame all churls and all who take folk's goods and are niggardly with them! I put myself under thy protection, O my lord Bran-belly, to give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Ja-afar; and the Minister saw the Fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he was saying; so he said to Sandal, misliking his behaviour, "O Eunuch, what would yonder beggar with thee?" Sandal replied, "Dost thou not know him, O my lord the Wazir?"; and Ja-afar answered, "By Allah, I know him not! How should I know a man I have never seen but at this moment?" Rejoined the eunuch, "O my lord, this is the Fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks of the Tigris. I came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Prince of True Believers, empty-handed, when all the Mamelukes had some. Presently I espied the Fisherman standing in mid-stream, calling on Allah, with two fishes in his hands, and said to him, 'Give me what thou hast there and take their worth.' He handed me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, purposing to gift him with somewhat, but found naught therein and said, 'Come to me in

the Palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to aid thee in thy poverty.' So he came to me to-day and I was putting hand to pouch, that I might give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting; and this is the whole story, how he cometh to be standing here."

The Wazir, hearing this account, smiled and said, "O Eunuch, how is it that this Fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou satisfiest him not? Dost thou not know him, O Chief of the Eunuchs?" "No," answered Sandal, and Ja-afar said, "This is the Master of the Commander of the Faithful, and his partner and our lord the Caliph hath arisen this morning, strait of breast, heavy of heart and troubled in thought, nor is there aught will broaden his breast save this fisherman. So let him not go, till I crave the Caliph's pleasure concerning him and bring him before him; perchance Allah will relieve him of his oppression and console him for the loss of Kut al-Kulub, by means of the Fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to better himself; and thou wilt be the cause of this." Replied Sandal, "O my lord, do as thou wilt and may Allah Almighty long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow Allah perpetuate and prosper it, root and branch!" Then the Wazir, Ja-afar, rose up and went in to the Caliph and Sandal ordered the Mamelukes not to leave the Fisherman; whereupon Khalifah cried, "How goodly is thy bounty, O Tulip! The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for debts in arrears!"

When Ja-afar came in to the presence of the Caliph, he found him sitting with his head bowed earthwards, breast straitened and mind melancholy. Whenas Ja-afar stood in the presence, he said, "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, Defender of the Honour of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles, Allah assain him and save him and his family one and all!" The Caliph raised his head and answered, "And on thee be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings!" Quoth Ja-afar, "With leave of the Prince of True Believers, his servant would speak without restraint." Asked the Caliph, "And when was restraint put upon thee in speech and thou the Prince of Wazirs? Say what thou wilt."

Answered Ja-afar, " When I went out, O my lord, from before thee, intending for my house, I saw standing at the door thy master and teacher and partner, Khalifah the Fisherman, who was aggrieved at thee and complained of thee, saying, ' Glory be to God ! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but never came back ; and this is not the way of a good partner or of a good apprentice.' So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good ; and, if not, tell him, that he may take to partner another."

Now, when the Caliph heard these words, he smiled, and his straitness of breast was done away with and he said, " My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the Fisherman standeth at the door ? " ; and Ja-afar replied, " By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he standeth at the door." Quoth the Caliph, " O Ja-afar, by Allah, I will assuredly do my best to give him his due ! If Allah at my hands send him misery, he shall have it ; and if prosperity he shall have it." Then he took a piece of paper and, cutting it to pieces, said to the Wazir, " O Ja-afar, write down with thine own hand twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least appointment to the Caliphate ; also twenty kinds of punishment from the lightest beating to death." " I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Ja-afar and did as he was bidden. Then said the Caliph, " O Ja-afar, I swear by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hamzah [1] and Akil,[2] that I mean to summon the Fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I ; and whatsoever is written in the paper which he shall choose, I will give it to him ; though it be the Caliphate I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him ; and, on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me." When Ja-afar heard this, he said to himself, " There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great ! It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction, and I shall be the cause. But the Caliph hath sworn ; so nothing

[1] Uncle of the Prophet.

[2] First cousin of the Prophet, son of Abu Telib, a brother of El-Abbas from whom the Abbasides claimed descent.

remains now but to bring him in, and naught will happen save whatso Allah willeth."

Accordingly he went out to Khalifah the Fisherman and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the Caliph, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself, "What a stupid I was to come after yonder ill-omened slave, Tulip, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!" Ja-afar fared on with him, with Mamelukes before and behind, whilst he said, "Doth not arrest suffice, but these must go behind and before me, to hinder my making off?" till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the Wazir said to him, "Mark my words, O Fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!" Then he raised the great curtain and Khalifah's eyes fell on the Caliph, who was seated on his couch, with the Lords of the Realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said, "Well come, and welcome to thee, O piper! 'Twas not right of thee to make thyself a fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting to guard the fish, and never to return! For, before I was aware, there came up Mamelukes on beasts of all manner colours, and snatched away the fish from me, I standing alone, and this was all of thy fault; for, hadst thou returned with the frails forthright, we had sold an hundred dinars' worth of fish. And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But thou, who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?"

The Caliph smiled and, raising a corner of the curtain, put forth his head and said to the Fisherman, "Come hither and take thee one of these papers." Quoth Khalifah the Fisherman, "Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and to-day thou hast become an astrologer; but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he waxeth." Thereupon Ja-afar said, "Take the paper at once, and do as the Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee without prating." So he came forward and put forth his hand, saying, "Far be it from me that this piper should ever again be my knave and fish with me!" Then taking the paper he handed it to the Caliph, saying, "O piper, what hath come out for me therein? Hide naught thereof." So Al-Rashid received it and passed it on to Ja-afar and said to him, "Read what is therein." He looked at it and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"

Said the Caliph, "Good news, O Ja-afar? What seest thou therein?" Answered the Wazir, "O Commander of the Faithful, there came up from the paper, 'Let the Fisherman receive an hundred blows with a stick.'" So the Caliph commanded to beat the Fisherman and they gave him an hundred sticks: after which he rose, saying, "Allah damn this, O Branbelly! Are jail and sticks part of the game?"

Then said Ja-afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, this poor devil is come to the river, and how shall he go away thirsting? We hope that among the alms-deeds of the Commander of the Faithful, he may have leave to take another paper, so haply somewhat may come out wherewithal he may succour his poverty." Said the Caliph, "By Allah, O Ja-afar, if he take another paper and death be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the cause." Answered Ja-afar, "If he die he will be at rest." But Khalifah the Fisherman said to him, "Allah ne'er gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that ye seek to slay me?" Quoth Ja-afar, "Take thee a paper and crave the blessing of Allah Almighty!" So he put out his hand and taking a paper, gave it to Ja-afar, who read it and was silent. The Caliph asked, "Why art thou silent, O son of Yahya?"; and he answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, there hath come out on this paper, 'Naught shall be given to the Fisherman.'" Then said the Caliph, "His daily bread will not come from us: bid him fare forth from before our face." Quoth Ja-afar, "By the claims of thy pious forefathers, let him take a third paper, it may be it will bring him alimony"; and quoth the Caliph, "Let him take one and no more." So he put out his hand and took a third paper and, behold, therein was written, "Let the Fisherman be given one dinar." Ja-afar cried to him, "I sought good fortune for thee, but Allah willed not to thee aught save this dinar." And Khalifah answered, "Verily, a dinar for every hundred sticks were rare good luck, may Allah not send thy body health!" The Caliph laughed at him and Ja-afar took him by the hand and let him out.

When he reached the door, Sandal the Eunuch saw him and said to him, "Hither, O Fisherman! Give us portion of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee, whilst jesting with thee." Replied Khalifah, "By Allah, O Tulip, thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, O nigger?

Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of an hundred blows and have earned one dinar, and thou art but too welcome to it." So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears flowing down the plain of his cheeks. When the eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken sooth and called to the lads to fetch him back: so they brought him back and Sandal, putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied an hundred golden dinars into the Fisherman's hand, saying, "Take this gold in payment of thy fish and wend thy ways." So Khalifah, in high good humour, took the hundred ducats and the Caliph's one dinar and went his way, and forgot the beating.

Now, as Allah willed it for the furthering of that which He had decreed, he passed by the mart of the handmaidens and seeing there a mighty ring where many folks were foregathering, said to himself, "What is this crowd?" So he brake through the merchants and others, who said, "Make wide the way for Skipper Rapscallion, and let him pass." Then he looked and, behold, he saw a chest with an eunuch seated thereon and an old man standing by it, and the Shaykh was crying, "O merchants, O men of money, who will hasten and hazard his coin for this chest of unknown contents from the palace of the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? How much shall I say for you, Allah bless you all!" Quoth one of the merchants, "By Allah, this is a risk! But I will say one word and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars." Quoth another, "Fifty," and they went on bidding, one against other, till the price reached an hundred ducats. Then said the crier, "Will any of you bid more, O merchants?" And Khalifah the Fisherman said, "Be it mine for an hundred dinars and one dinar." The merchants, hearing these words, thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, "O eunuch sell it to Khalifah for an hundred dinars and one dinar!" Quoth the eunuch, "By Allah, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O Fisherman, the Lord bless thee in it, and here with thy gold." So Khalifah pulled out the ducats and gave them to the eunuch, who, the bargain being duly made, delivered to him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot; after which he returned to the Palace and acquainted the Lady Zubaydah with what he had done, whereat she rejoiced.

Meanwhile the Fisherman hove the chest on shoulder, but could not carry it on this wise for the excess of its weight; so he lifted it on to his head and thus bore it to the quarter where he lived. Here he set it down and being weary, sat awhile, bemusing what had befallen him and saying in himself, "Would Heaven I knew what is in this chest!" Then he opened the door of his lodging and haled the chest till he got it into his closet; after which he strove to open it, but failed. Quoth he, "What folly possessed me to buy this chest? There is no help for it but to break it open and see what is herein." So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said to himself, "I will leave it till to-morrow." Then he would have stretched him out to sleep, but could find no room; for the chest filled the whole closet. So he got upon it and lay him down; but, when he had lain awhile, behold, he felt something stir under him whereat sleep forsook him and his reason fled. So he arose and cried, "Meseems there be Jinn in the chest. Praise to Allah who suffered me not to open it! For, had I done so, they had risen against me in the dark and slain me, and from them would have befallen me naught of good." Then he lay down again when, lo! the chest moved a second time, more than before; whereupon he sprang to his feet and said, "There it goes again: but this is terrible!" And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not find it and had not the wherewithal to buy another.

So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the most part of the folk were asleep; but they awoke at his crying and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered, "Bring me a lamp, for the Jinn are upon me." They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, wherewith he returned to his closet. Then he smote the lock of the chest with a stone and broke it and opening it, saw a damsel like a houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with Bhang, but at that moment she threw up the stuff and awoke; then she opened her eyes and, feeling herself confined and cramped, moved. At this sight quoth Khalifah, "By Allah, O my lady, whence art thou?"; and quoth she, "Bring me Jessamine, and Narcissus."[1] And Khalifah answered, "There is naught here but Henna-flowers."[2]

[1] The names of slave-girls or eunuchs.

[2] The cheapest of dyes used even by the poorest classes. Its smell is that of newly mown hay and is prized like that of the tea-rose.

Thereupon she came to herself and considering Khalifah, said to him, "What art thou?" presently adding, "And where am I?" He said, "Thou art in my lodging." Asked she, "Am I not in the Palace of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid?" And quoth he, "What manner of thing is Al-Rashid? O madwoman, thou are naught but my slave-girl: I bought thee this very day for an hundred dinars and one dinar, and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this here chest." When she heard these words she said to him, "What is thy name?" Said he, "My name is Khalifah. How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know my ascendant to have been otherwise?"

She laughed and cried, "Spare me this talk! Hast thou anything to eat?" Replied he, "No, by Allah, nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days and am now in want of a morsel." She asked, "Hast thou no money?"; and he said, "Allah keep this chest which hath beggared me: I gave all I had for it and am become bankrupt." The damsel laughed at him and said, "Up with thee and seek of thy neighbours somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry." So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the folk were asleep; but they awoke and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" Answered he, "O my neighbours, I am hungry and have nothing to eat." So one came down to him with a bannock and another with broken meats and a third with a bittock of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber; and so on till his lap was full and he returned to his closet and laid the whole between her hands, saying, "Eat." But she laughed at him, saying, "How can I eat of this, when I have not a mug of water whereof to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die." Quoth he, "I will fetch thee this pitcher." So he took the pitcher and going forth, stood in the midst of the street and cried out, saying, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Quoth they, "What calamity is upon thee to-night, O Khalifah!" And he said, "Ye gave me food and I ate; but now I am athirst; so give me to drink." Thereupon one came down to him with a mug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet; and he filled his pitcher and, bearing it back, said to the damsel, "O my lady, thou lackest nowhing now." Answered she, "True, I want nothing more at this present."

Quoth he, "Speak to me and say me thy story." And quoth she, "Fie upon thee! An thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Kut al-Kulub, the Caliph's handmaiden, and the Lady Zubaydah was jealous of me; so she drugged me with Bhang and set me in this chest," presently adding, "Alhamdolillah—praised be God—for that the matter hath come to easy issue and no worse! But this befell me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the Caliph Al-Rashid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment." Quoth Khalifah, "Is not Al-Rashid he in whose Palace I was imprisoned?" "Yes," answered she; and he said, "By Allah, never saw I more niggardly wight than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me an hundred blows with a stick yesterday and but one dinar, for all I taught him how to fish and made him my partner; but he played me false." Replied she, "Leave this unseemly talk, and open thine eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully, whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt win thy wish." When he heard her words, it was if he had been asleep and awoke; and Allah removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck, and he answered, "O my head and eyes!" Then said he to her, "Sleep, in the name of Allah." So she lay down and fell asleep (and he afar from her) till the morning, when she sought of him ink-case and paper and, when they were brought, wrote to Ibn al-Kirnas, the Caliph's friend, acquainting him with her case and how at the end of all that had befallen her she was with Khalifah the Fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the scroll, saying, "Take this and hie thee to the jewel-market and ask for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweller and give him this paper and speak not." "I hear and I obey," answered Khalifah and going with the scroll to the market, inquired for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas. They directed him thither and on entering it he saluted the merchant, who returned his salam with contempt and said to him, "What dost thou want?" Thereupon he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the Fisherman a begger, who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his lads, "Give him half a dirham." Quoth Khalifah, "I want no alms; read the paper."

So Ibn al-Kirnas took the letter and read it; and no sooner knew its import than he kissed it and laying it on his head, arose

and said to Khalifah, "O my brother, where is thy house?" Asked Khalifah, "What wantest thou with my house? Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave-girl?" Then Ibn al-Kirnas answered, "Not so: on the contrary, I will buy thee somewhat whereof you may eat, thou and she." So he said, "My house is in such a quarter"; and the merchant rejoined, "Thou hast done well. May Allah not give thee health, O unlucky one!"[1] Then he called out to two of his slaves and said to them, "Carry this man to the shop of Mohsin the Shroff and say to him, "O Mohsin, give this man a thousand dinars of gold; then bring him back to me in haste." So they carried him to the money-changer, who paid him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dappled she-mule worth a thousand dinars, with Mamelukes and pages about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweller to Khalifah, "Bismillah, mount this mule." Replied he, "I won't; for by Allah, I fear she throw me"; and quoth Ibn al-Kirnas, "By God, needs must thou mount." So he came up and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out; whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him; but he rose and said, "Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great jenny-ass?" Thereupon Ibn al-Kirnas left him in the market and repairing to the Caliph, told him of the damsel; after which he returned and removed her to his own house.

Meanwhile, Khalifah went home to look after the handmaid and found the people of the quarter foregathering and saying, "Verily, Khalifah is to-day in a terrible pickle! Would we knew whence he can have gotten this damsel?" Quoth one of them, "He is a mad pimp; haply he found her lying on the road drunken, and carried her to his own house, and his absence showeth that he knoweth his offence." As they were talking, behold, up came Khalifah, and they said to him, "What a plight is thine, O unhappy! knowest thou not what is come to thee?" He replied, "No, by Allah!" and they said, "But just now there came Mamelukes and took away thy slave-girl whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not." Asked Khalifah, "And how came they to take my slave-girl?"; and quoth one, "Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him."

[1] A specimen of inverted speech—"Thou art in luck this time!"

But he, so far from heeding them, returned running to the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him, "By Allah, 'twas not right of thee to wheedle me and meanwhile send thy Mamelukes to take my slave-girl!" Replied the jeweller, "O idiot, come with me and hold thy tongue." So he took him and carried him into a house handsomely builded, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave-girls like moons round her. Sighting her, Ibn al-Kirnas kissed the ground before her and she said, "What hath thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he owned?" He replied, "O my lady, I gave him a thousand golden dinars"; and related to her Khalifah's history from first to last, whereat she laughed and said, "Blame him not; for he is but a common wight. These other thousand dinars are a gift from me to him and, Almighty Allah willing, he shall win of the Caliph what shall enrich him."

As they were talking, there came an eunuch from the Commander of the Faithful, in quest of Kut al-Kulub for, when he knew that she was in the house of Ibn al-Kirnas, he could not endure the severance, but bade bring her forthwith. So she repaired to the palace, taking Khalifah with her and, going into the presence, kissed the ground before the Caliph, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her. She replied, "He is a man, Khalifah the Fisherman hight, and there he standeth at the door. He telleth me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the Caliph in fishing." Asked Al-Rashid, "Is he at the door?" and she answered, "Yes." So the Caliph sent for him and he kissed the ground before him and wished him endurance of glory and prosperity. The Caliph marvelled at him and laughed at him and said to him, "O Fisherman, wast thou in very deed my partner yesterday?"[1] Khalifah took his meaning and, heartening his heart and summoning spirit, replied, "By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thy cousin, I know her not in any wise and have had no commerce with her save by way of sight and speech!" Then he repeated to him all that had befallen him, since he last saw him, whereat the Caliph laughed and his breast broadened and he

[1] *I.e.* in Kut al-Kulub.

said to Khalifah, " Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou who bringest to owners their own ! " But he was silent ; so the Caliph ordered him fifty thousand dinars of gold and a costly dress of honour such as great sovrans don, and a she-mule, and gave him black slaves of the Sudan to serve him, so that he became as he were one of the kings of that time.

The Caliph was rejoiced at the recovery of his favourite and knew that all this was the doing of his cousin-wife, the Lady Zubaydah ; wherefore he was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great while, visiting her not neither inclining to pardon her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his wrath, and her face that was wont to be rosy, waxed pale and wan till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful, making her excuses to him and confessing her offences. When the Lady Zubaydah's letter reached the Caliph, and reading it he saw that she confessed her offence and sent her excuses to him therefor, he said to himself, " Verily, all sins doth Allah forgive ; aye, Gracious, Merciful is He ! "[1] And he returned her an answer, expressing satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly.

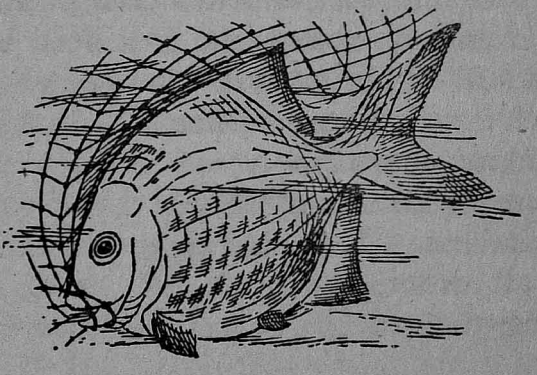
As for Khalifah the Fisherman, the Caliph assigned him a monthly solde of fifty dinars, and took him into especial favour, which would lead to rank and dignity, honour and worship. Then he kissed the ground before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the eunuch Sandal, who had given him the hundred dinars, saw him, and knowing him, said to him, " O Fisherman, whence all this ? " So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sandal rejoiced, because he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, " Wilt thou not give me largesse of this wealth which is now become thine ? " So Khalifah put hand to pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the eunuch, who said, " Keep thy coins and Allah bless thee therein ! " and marvelled at his manliness and at the liberality of his soul, for all his late poverty.[2]

Then, leaving the eunuch, Khalifah mounted his she-mule

[1] Koran xxxix. 54.

[2] Easterns find it far easier to get the chill of poverty out of their bones than Westerns.

and rode, with the slaves' hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging at the Khan, whilst the folk stared at him in surprise for that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted from his beast they accosted him and inquired the cause of his change from poverty to prosperity, and he told them all that had happened to him from incept to conclusion. Then he bought a fine mansion and laid out thereon much money, till it was perfect in all points. Then, as soon as he was settled in his house, he sought him in marriage the daughter of one of the chief men of the city, a handsome girl, and went in unto her and led a life of solace and satisfaction, joyaunce and enjoyment; and he rose to passing affluence and exceeding prosperity. So, when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to Allah (extolled and excelled be He!) for what He had bestowed on him of wealth exceeding and of favours ever succeeding, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful. And thereafter Khalifah continued to pay frequent visits to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, with whom he found acceptance and who ceased not to overwhelm him with boons and bounty; and he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honour and happiness and joy and gladness and in riches more than sufficing and in rank ever rising; brief, a sweet life and a savoury, pure as pleasurable, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Societies; and extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence and He is the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die!



ABU KIR THE DYER AND ABU SIR THE BARBER

THERE dwelt once, in Alexandria city, two men, of whom one was a dyer, by name Abu Kir, and the other a barber, Abu Sir, and they were neighbours in the market-street, where their shops stood side by side. The dyer was a swindler and a liar, an exceeding wicked wight, as if indeed his head-temples were hewn out of a boulder rock or fashioned of the threshold of a Jewish synagogue, nor was he ashamed of any shameful work he wrought amongst the folk. It was his wont, when any brought him cloth for staining, first to require of him payment under pretence of buying dye-stuffs therewith. So the customer would give him the wage in advance and wend his ways, and the dyer would spend all he received, on meat and drink; after which he would sell the cloth itself as soon as ever its owner turned his back and waste its worth in eating and drinking and what not else, for he ate not but of the daintiest and most delicate viands nor drank but of the best of that which doth away the wit of man. And when the owner of the cloth came to him, he would say to him, "Return to me to-morrow before sunrise and thou shalt find thy stuff dyed." So the customer would go away, saying to himself, "One day is near another day," and return next day at the appointed time, when the dyer would say to him, "Come to-morrow; yesterday I was not at work, for I had with me guests and was occupied

with doing what their wants required till they went; but to-morrow before sunrise come and take thy cloth dyed."

When the man came again at the appointed time, he would put him off with some other pretence, it mattered little what, and would swear to him; nor would he cease to promise and swear to him, as often as he came, till the customer lost patience and said, "How often wilt thou say to me, 'To-morrow'? Give me my stuff; I will not have it dyed." Whereupon the dyer would make answer, "By Allah, O my brother, I am abashed at thee; but I must tell the truth and may Allah harm all who harm folk in their goods!" The other would exclaim, "Tell me what hath happened"; and Abu Kir would reply, "As for thy stuff I dyed that same on matchless wise and hung it on the drying-rope, but 'twas stolen and I know not who stole it." If the owner of the stuff were of the kindly he would say, "Allah will compensate me"; and if he were of the ill-conditioned, he would haunt him with exposure and insult, but would get nothing of him, though he complained of him to the judge. He ceased not doing thus till his report was noised abroad among the folk and each used to warn other against Abu Kir who became a byword amongst them.

So they all held aloof from him and none would be entrapped by him save those who were ignorant of his character; but, for all this, he failed not daily to suffer insult and exposure from Allah's creatures. By reason of this his trade became slack and he used to go to the shop of his neighbour the barber, Abu Sir, and sit there, facing the dyery and with his eyes on the door. Whenever he espied anyone who knew him not, standing at the dyery door with a piece of stuff in his hand, he would leave the barber's booth and go up to him saying, "What seekest thou, O thou?"; and the man would reply, "Take and dye me this thing." So the dyer would ask, "What colour wilt thou have it?" For, with all his knavish tricks his hand was in all manner of dyes; but he was never true to anyone; wherefore poverty had gotten the better of him. Then he would take the stuff and say, "Give me my wage in advance and come to-morrow and take the stuff." So the stranger would advance him the money and wend his way; whereupon Abu Kir would carry the cloth to the market-street and sell it, and with its price buy meat and vegetables and tobacco and what not else he needed;

but, whenever he saw anyone who had given him stuff to dye, standing at the door of his shop, he would not come forth to him or even show himself to him.

On this wise he abode years and years, till it fortuned one day that he received cloth to dye from a man of wrath and sold it and spent the proceeds. The owner came to him every day, but found him not in his shop; for, whenever he espied anyone who had claim against him, he would flee from him into the shop of the barber Abu Sir. At last, that angry man, finding that he was not to be seen and growing weary of such work, repaired to the Kazi and, bringing one of his serjeants to the shop, nailed up the door, in presence of a number of Moslems, and sealed it, for that he saw therein naught save some broken pans of earthenware to stand him instead of his stuff; after which the serjeant took the key, saying to the neighbours, "Tell him to bring back this man's cloth then come to me[1] and take his shop key"; and went his way, he and the man. Then said Abu Sir to Abu Kir, "What ill business is this? Whoever bringeth thee aught thou losest it for him. What hath become of this angry man's stuff?" Answered the dyer, "O my neighbour, 'twas stolen from me." "Prodigious!" exclaimed the barber. "Whenever anyone giveth thee aught, a thief stealeth it from thee! Art thou then the meeting-place of every rogue upon town? But I doubt me thou liest; so tell me the truth."

Replied Abu Kir, "O my neighbour, none hath stolen aught from me." Asked Abu Sir, "What then dost thou with the people's property?"; and the dyer answered, "Whenever anyone giveth me aught to dye, I sell it and spend the price." Quoth Abu Sir, "Is this permitted thee of Allah?" and quoth Abu Kir, "I do this only out of poverty, because business is slack with me and I am poor and have nothing."[2] And he went on to complain to him of the dullness of his trade and his lack of means. Abu Sir in like manner lamented the little profit of his own calling, saying, "I am a master of my craft and have not my

[1] Which meant that the serjeant, after the manner of such officials, would make him pay dearly before giving up the key. Hence a very severe punishment in the East is to "call in a policeman" who carefully fleeces all those who do not bribe him to leave them in freedom.

[2] Amongst Moslems the plea of robbing to keep life and body together would be accepted by a good man like Abu Sir, who still consorted with a self-confessed thief.

equal in this city ; but no one cometh to me to be polled, because I am a pauper ; and I loathe this art and mystery, O my brother." Abu Kir replied, " And I also loathe my own craft, by reason of its slackness ; but, O my brother, what call is there for our abiding in this town ? Let us depart from it, I and thou, and solace ourselves in the lands of mankind, carrying in our hands our crafts which are in demand all the world over ; so shall we breathe the air and rest from this grievous trouble." And he ceased not to commend travel to Abu Sir, till the barber became wishful to set out ; so they agreed upon their route.

When they agreed to travel together Abu Kir said to Abu Sir, " O my neighbour, we are become brethren and there is no difference between us, so it behoveth us to recite the Fatihah [1] that he of us who gets work shall of his gain feed him who is out of work, and whatever is left we will lay in a chest ; and when we return to Alexandria, we will divide it fairly and equally." " So be it," replied Abu Sir, and they repeated the Opening Chapter of the Koran on this understanding. Then Abu Sir locked up his shop and gave the key to its owner, whilst Abu Kir left his door locked and sealed and let the key lie with the Kazi's serjeant ; after which they took their baggage and embarked on the morrow in a galleon upon the salt sea. They set sail the same day and fortune attended them, for, of Abu Sir's great good luck, there was not a barber in the ship albeit it carried an hundred and twenty men, besides Captain and crew. So, when they loosed the sails, the barber said to the dyer, " O my brother, this is the sea and we shall need meat and drink ; we have but little provaunt with us and haply the voyage will be long upon us ; wherefore methinks I will shoulder my budget and pass among the passengers, and may be someone will say to me, ' Come hither, O barber, and shave me,' and I will shave him for a scone or a silver bit or a draught of water : so shall we profit by this, I and thou too." " There's no harm in that," replied the dyer and laid down his head and slept, whilst the barber took his gear and water-tasse [2] and throwing over his

[1] To make their agreement religiously binding.

[2] The patient is usually lathered in a big basin of tinned brass, a " Mambrino's helmet " with a break in the rim to fit the throat ; but the poorer classes carry only a small cup with water instead of soap and water, ignoring the Italian proverb, *Barba ben saponata mezza fatta*—well lathered is half shaved. A napkin fringed at either end is usually thrown over the Figaro's shoulder and used to wipe the razor.

shoulder a rag, to serve as napkin (because he was poor), passed among the passengers.

Quoth one of them, "Ho, master, come and shave me." So he shaved him, and the man gave him a half-dirham; whereupon quoth Abu Sir, "O my brother, I have no use for this bit; hadst thou given me a scone 'twere more blessed to me in this sea, for I have a shipmate and we are short of provision." So he gave him a loaf and a slice of cheese and filled him the tasse with sweet water. The barber carried all this to Abu Kir and said, "Eat the bread and cheese and drink the water." Accordingly he ate and drank, whilst Abu Sir again took up his shaving gear and, tasse in hand and rag on shoulder, went round about the deck among the passengers. One man he shaved for two scones and another for a bittock of cheese, and he was in demand, because there was no other barber on board. Also he bargained with everyone who said to him, "Ho, master, shave me!" for two loaves and a half-dirham, and they gave him whatever he sought, so that, by sundown, he had collected thirty loaves and thirty silvers with store of cheese and olives and botargoes. And besides these he got from the passengers whatever he asked for and was soon in possession of things galore. Amongst the rest he shaved the Captain, to whom he complained of his lack of victual for the voyage, and the skipper said to him, "Thou art welcome to bring thy comrade every night and sup with me and have no care for that so long as ye sail with us."

Then he returned to the dyer, whom he found asleep; so he roused him; and when Abu Kir awoke, he saw at his head an abundance of bread and cheese and olives and botargoes and said, "Whence gottest thou all this?" "From the bounty of Allah Almighty," replied Abu Sir. Then Abu Kir would have fallen to, but the barber said to him, "Eat not of this, O my brother; but leave it to serve us another time; for know that I shaved the Captain and complained to him of our lack of victual: whereupon quoth he, 'Welcome to thee! Bring thy comrade and sup both of ye with me every night.' And this night we sup with him for the first time." But Abu Kir replied, "My head goeth round with seasickness and I cannot rise from my stead: so let me sup off these things and fare thou alone to the Captain." Abu Sir replied, "There is no harm in that";

and sat looking at the other as he ate, and saw him hew off gobbets, as the quarryman heweth stone from the hill-quarries and gulp them down with the gulp of an elephant which hath not eaten for days, bolting another mouthful ere he had swallowed the previous one and glaring the while at that which was before him with the glowering of a Ghul and blowing as bloweth the hungry bull over his beans and bruised straw.

Presently up came a sailor and said to the barber, "O craftsmaster, the Captain biddeth thee come to supper and bring thy comrade." Quoth the barber to the dyer, "Wilt thou come with us?"; but quoth he, "I cannot walk." So the barber went by himself and found the Captain sitting before a tray whereon were a score or more of dishes and all the company were awaiting him and his mate. When the Captain saw him he asked, "Where is thy friend?"; and Abu Sir answered, "O my lord, he is seasick." Said the skipper, "That will do him no harm; his sickness will soon pass off; but do thou carry him his supper and come back, for we tarry for thee." Then he set apart a porringer of Kababs and putting therein some of each dish, till there was enough for ten, gave it to Abu Sir, saying, "Take this to thy chum." He took it and carried it to the dyer, whom he found grinding away with his dog-teeth at the food which was before him, as he were a camel and heaping mouthful on mouthful in his hurry. Quoth Abu Sir, "Did I not say to thee, 'Eat not of this'? Indeed the Captain is a kindly man. See what he hath sent thee, for that I told him thou wast seasick." "Give it here," cried the dyer. So the barber gave him the platter, and he snatched it from him and fell upon his food, ravening for it and resembling a grinning dog or a raging lion or a Rukh pouncing on a pigeon or one wellnigh dead for hunger who, seeing meat, falls ravenously to eat. Then Abu Sir left him and going back to the Captain, supped and enjoyed himself and drank coffee with him; after which he returned to Abu Kir and found that he had eaten all that was in the porringer and thrown it aside, empty. So he took it up and gave it to one of the Captain's servants, then went back to Abu Kir and slept till the morning.

On the morrow he continued to shave, and all he got by way of meat and drink he gave to his shipmate, who ate and drank and sat still, rising not save to do what none could do for

him, and every night the barber brought him a full porringer from the Captain's table. They fared thus for twenty days until the galleon cast anchor in the harbour of a city; whereupon they took leave of the skipper and landing, entered the town and hired them a closet in a Khan. Abu Sir furnished it and buying a cooking-pot and a platter and spoons and what else they needed, fetched meat and cooked it; but Abu Kir fell asleep the moment he entered the caravanserai and awoke not till Abu Sir aroused him and set the tray of food before him. When he awoke, he ate and saying to Abu Sir, "Blame me not, for I am giddy," fell asleep again. Thus he did forty days, whilst, every day, the barber took his gear and making the round of the city, wrought for that which fell to his lot,[1] and returning, found the dyer asleep and aroused him. The moment he awoke he fell ravenously upon the food, eating as one who cannot have his fill nor be satisfied; after which he went asleep again. On this wise he passed other forty days and whenever the barber said to him, "Sit up and be comfortable [2] and go forth and take an airing in the city, for 'tis a gay place and a pleasant and hath not its equal among the cities," he would reply, "Blame me not, for I am giddy."

Abu Sir cared not to hurt his feelings nor give him hard words; but, on the forty-first day, he himself fell sick and could not go abroad; so he engaged the porter of the Khan to serve them both, and he did the needful for them and brought them meat and drink whilst Abu Kir would do nothing but eat and sleep. The man ceased not to wait upon them on this wise for four days, at the end of which time the barber's malady redoubled on him, till he lost his senses for stress of sickness; and Abu Kir, feeling the sharp pangs of hunger, arose and sought in his comrade's clothes, where he found a thousand silver bits. He took them and, shutting the door of the closet upon Abu Sir, fared forth without telling any; and the doorkeeper was then at market and thus saw him not go out. Presently Abu Kir betook himself to the bazar and clad himself in costly clothes, at a price of five hundred half-dirhams; then he proceeded to walk about the streets and divert himself by viewing the city which he found to be one whose like was not among cities;

[1] *I.e.* gaining much one day and little another.
[2] Literally "Rest thyself," *i.e.* by changing posture.

but he noted that all its citizens were clad in clothes of white and blue, without other colour.

Presently he came to a dyer's and seeing naught but blue in his shop, pulled out to him a kerchief and said, "O master, take this and dye it and win thy wage." Quoth the dyer, "The cost of dyeing this will be twenty dirhams"; and quoth Abu Kir, "In our country we dye it for two." "Then go and dye it in your own country! As for me, my price is twenty dirhams and I will not bate a little thereof." "What colour wilt thou dye it?" "I will dye it blue." "But I want it dyed red." "I know not how to dye red." "Then dye it green." "I know not how to dye green." "Yellow." "Nor yet yellow." Thereupon Abu Kir went on to name the different tints to him, one after other, till the dyer said, "We are here in this city forty master-dyers, not one more nor one less; and when one of us dieth, we teach his son the craft. If he leave no son, we abide lacking one, and if he leave two sons, we teach one of them the craft, and if he die, we teach his brother. Thus our craft is strictly ordered, and we know how to dye but blue and no other tint whatsoever." Then said Abu Kir, "Know that I too am a dyer and wot how to dye all colours; and I would have thee take me into thy service on hire, and I will teach thee everything of my art, so thou mayst glory therein over all the company of dyers."

But the dyer answered, "We never admit a stranger into our craft." Asked Abu Kir, "And what if I open a dyery for myself?"; whereto the other answered, "We will not suffer thee to do that on any wise"; whereupon he left him and going to a second dyer, made him the like proposal; but he returned him the same answer as the first; and he ceased not to go from one to other, till he had made the round of the whole forty masters; but they would not accept him either to master or apprentice. Then he repaired to the Shaykh of the Dyers and told him what had passed, and he said, "We admit no strangers into our craft." Hereupon Abu Kir became exceeding wroth and going up to the King of that city, made complaint of him, saying, "O King of the Age, I am a stranger and a dyer by trade"; and he told him whatso had passed between himself and the dyers of the town, adding, "I can dye various kinds of green, such as grass-green and pistachio-green and olive and parrot's

wing, and various kinds of black, such as coal-black and Kohl-black, and various shades of yellow, such as orange and lemon-colour," and went on to name to him the rest of the colours. Then said he, " O King of the Age, all the dyers in thy city can not turn out of hand any one of these tincts, for they know not how to dye aught but blue; yet will they not admit me amongst them, either to master or apprentice."

Answered the King, " Thou sayst sooth for that matter, but I will open to thee a dyery and give thee capital and have thou no care anent them; for whoso offereth to do thee let or hindrance, I will hang him over his shop-door." Then he sent for builders and said to them, " Go round about the city with this master-dyer, and whatsoever place pleaseth him, be it shop or Khan or what not, turn out its occupier and build him a dyery after his wish. Whatsoever he biddeth you, that do ye, and oppose him not in aught." And he clad him in a handsome suit and gave him two white slaves to serve him, and a horse with housings of brocade and a thousand dinars, saying, " Expend this upon thyself against the building be completed." Accordingly Abu Kir donned the dress and mounting the horse, became as he were an Emir. Moreover the King assigned him a house and bade furnish it; so they furnished it for him and he took up his abode therein. On the morrow he mounted and rode through the city, whilst the architects went before him; and he looked about him till he saw a place which pleased him and said, " This stead is seemly "; whereupon they turned out the owner and carried him to the King, who gave him, as the price of his holding, what contented him and more. Then the builders fell to work, whilst Abu Kir said to them, " Build thus and thus and do this and that," till they built him a dyery that had not its like; whereupon he presented himself before the King and informed him that they had done building the dyery and that there needed but the price of the dye-stuffs and gear to set it going.

Quoth the King, " Take these four thousand dinars to thy capital and let me see the first fruits of thy dyery." So he took the money and went to the market where, finding dye-stuffs plentiful and well-nigh worthless, he bought all he needed of materials for dyeing; and the King sent him five hundred pieces of stuff, which he set himself to dye of all colours and then he

spread them before the door of his dyery. When the folk passed by the shop, they saw a wonder-sight whose like they had never in their lives seen; so they crowded about the entrance, enjoying the spectacle and questioning the dyer and saying, "O master, what are the names of these colours?" Quoth he, "This is red and that yellow and the other green" and so on, naming the rest of the colours. And they fell to bringing him longcloth and saying to him, "Dye it for us like this and that and take what hire thou seekest." When he had made an end of dyeing the King's stuffs, he took them and went up with them to the Divan; and when the King saw them he rejoiced in them and bestowed abundant bounty on the dyer. Furthermore, all the troops brought him stuffs, saying, "Dye for us thus and thus"; and he dyed for them to their liking, and they threw him gold and silver. After this his fame spread abroad and his shop was called the Sultan's Dyery. Good came in to him at every door and none of the other dyers could say a word to him, but they used to come to him kissing his hands and excusing themselves to him for past affronts they had offered him and saying, "Take us to thine apprentices." But he would none of them for he had become the owner of black slaves and handmaids and had amassed store of wealth.

On this wise fared it with Abu Kir; but as regards Abu Sir, after the closet door had been locked on him and his money had been stolen, he abode prostrate and unconscious for three successive days, at the end of which the Concierge of the Khan, chancing to look at the door, observed that it was locked and bethought himself that he had not seen and heard aught of the two companions for some time. So he said in his mind, "Haply they have made off, without paying rent,[1] or perhaps they are dead, or what is to do with them?" And he waited till sunset, when he went up to the door and heard the barber groaning within. He saw the key in the lock; so he opened the door and, entering, found Abu Sir lying, groaning, and said to him, "No harm to thee; where is thy friend?" Replied Abu Sir, "By Allah, I came to my senses only this day and called out; but

[1] Still a popular form of "bilking" in the Wakalahs or Caravanserais of Cairo; but as a rule the Bawwab (porter or doorkeeper) keeps a sharp eye on those he suspects. The evil is increased when women are admitted into these places: so periodical orders for their exclusion are given to the police.

none answered my call. Allah upon thee, O my brother, look for the purse under my head and take from it five half-dirhams and buy me somewhat nourishing, for I am sore anhungered." The porter put out his hand and, taking the purse, found it empty and said to the barber, "The purse is empty; there is nothing in it." Whereupon Abu Sir knew that Abu Kir had taken that which was therein and had fled and he asked the porter, "Hast thou not seen my friend?" Answered the doorkeeper, "I have not seen him these three days; and indeed methought you had departed, thou and he." The barber cried, "Not so; but he coveted my money and took it and fled seeing me sick."

Then he fell a-weeping and a-wailing, but the doorkeeper said to him, "No harm shall befall thee, and Allah will requite him his deed." So he went away and cooked him some broth, whereof he ladled out a plateful and brought it to him; nor did he cease to tend him and maintain him with his own monies for two months' space, when the barber sweated[1] and the Almighty made him whole of his sickness. Then he stood up and said to the porter, "An ever the Most High Lord enable me, I will surely requite thee thy kindness to me; but none requiteth save the Lord of His bounty;" Answered the porter, "Praised be He for thy recovery.' I dealt not thus with thee but of desire for the face of Allah the Bountiful." Then the barber went forth of the Khan and threaded the market-streets of the town, till Destiny brought him to the bazar wherein was Abu Kir's dyery, and he saw the varicoloured stuffs dispread before the shop and a jostle of folk crowding to look upon them. So he questioned one of the townsmen and asked him, "What place is this and how cometh it that I see the folk crowding together?"; whereto the man answered, saying, "This is the Sultan's Dyery, which he set up for a foreigner Abu Kir hight; and whenever he dyeth new stuff, we all flock to him and divert ourselves by gazing on his handiwork, for we have no dyers in our land who know how to stain with these colours; and indeed there befell him with the dyers who are in the city that which befell." And

[1] Natives of Egypt always hold this diaphoresis a sign that the disease has abated and they regard it rightly in the case of bilious remittents to which they are subject, especially after the hardships and sufferings of a sea voyage with its alternations of fasting and over-eating.

he went on to tell him all that had passed between Abu Kir and the master-dyers and how he had complained of them to the Sultan who took him by the hand and built him that dyery and gave him this and that; brief, he recounted to him all that had occurred.

At this the barber rejoiced and said in himself, "Praised be Allah who hath prospered him, so that he is become a master of his craft; And the man is excusable, for of a surety he hath been diverted from thee by his work and hath forgotten thee; but thou actedst kindly by him and entreatedst him generously, what time he was out of work; so, when he seeth thee, he will rejoice in thee and entreat thee generously, even as thou entreatedst him." According he made for the door of the dyery and saw Abu Kir seated on a high mattress spread upon a bench beside the doorway, clad in royal apparel and attended by four blackamoor slaves and four white Mamelukes all robed in the richest of raiment. Moreover, he saw the workmen, ten negro slaves, standing at work; for, when Abu Kir bought them, he taught them the craft of dyeing, and he himself sat amongst his cushions, as he were a Grand Wazir or a mighty Monarch putting his hand to naught, but only saying to the men, "Do this and do that." So the barber went up to him and stood before him, deeming he would rejoice in him when he saw him and salute him and entreat him with honour and make much of him; but, when eye fell upon eye, the dyer said to him, "O scoundrel, how many a time have I bidden thee stand not at the door of the workshop? Hast thou a mind to disgrace me with the folk, thief that thou art? Seize him."

So the blackamoors ran at him and laid hold of him; and the dyer rose up from his seat and said, "Throw him." Accordingly they threw him down and Abu Kir took a stick and dealt him an hundred strokes on the back; after which they turned him over and he beat him other hundred blows on his belly. Then he said to him, "O scoundrel, O villain, if ever again I see thee standing at the door of this dyery, I will forthwith send thee to the King, and he will commit thee to the Chief of Police, that he may strike thy neck. Begone, may Allah not bless thee;" So Abu Sir departed from him, broken-hearted by reason of the beating and shame that had betided him; whilst the bystanders asked Abu Kir, "What hath this man done?" He answered,

" This fellow is a thief, who stealeth the stuffs of folk; he hath robbed me of cloth, how many a time; and I still said in myself, 'Allah forgive him; he is a poor man'; and I cared not to deal roughly with him; so I used to give my customers the worth of their goods and forbid him gently; but he would not be forbidden; and if he come again, I will send him to the King, who will put him to death and rid the people of his mischief." And the by-standers fell to abusing the barber after his back was turned.

Such was the behaviour of Abu Kir; but as regards Abu Sir, he returned to the Khan, where he sat pondering that which the dyer had done by him and he remained seated till the burning of the beating subsided, when he went out and walked about the markets of the city. Presently, he bethought him to go to the Hammam bath, so he said to one of the townsfolk, " O my brother, which is the way to the Baths? " Quoth the man, " And what manner of thing may the Baths be? "; and quoth Abu Sir, " 'Tis a place where people wash themselves and do away their dirt and defilements, and it is of the best of the good things of the world." Replied the townsman, " Get thee to the sea," but the barber rejoined, " I want the Hamman baths." Cried the other, " We know not what manner of thing is the Hammam, for we all resort to the sea; even the King, when he would wash, betaketh himself to the sea." When Abu Sir was assured that there was no bath in the city and that the folk knew not the Baths nor the fashion thereof, he betook himself to the King's Divan and, kissing the ground between his hands, called down blessings on him and said, " I am a stranger and a Bath-man by trade, and I entered thy city and thought to go to the Hammam; but found not one therein. How cometh a city of this comely quality to lack a Hammam, seeing that the bath is of the highest of the delights of this world? " Quoth the King, " What manner of thing is the Hammam? " So Abu Sir proceeded to set forth to him the quality of the bath, saying, " Thy capital will not be a perfect city till there be a Hammam therein."

" Welcome to thee; " said the King, and clad him in a dress that had not its like and gave him a horse and two blackamoor slaves, presently adding four handmaids and as many white Mamelukes; he also appointed him a furnished house and

honoured him yet more abundantly than he had honoured the dyer. After this he sent builders with him, saying to them, "Build him a Hammam in what place soever shall please him." So he took them and went with them through the midst of the city, till he saw a stead that suited him. He pointed it out to the builders and they set to work, whilst he directed them, and they wrought till they builded him a Hammam that had not its like. Then he bade them paint it, and they painted it rarely, so that it was a delight to the beholders; after which Abu Sir went up to the King and told him that they had made an end of building and decorating the Hammam, adding, "There lacketh naught save the furniture." The King gave him ten thousand dinars wherewith he furnished the Bath and ranged the napkins on the ropes; and all who passed by the door stared at it and their mind was confounded at its decorations. So the people crowded to this spectacle, whose like they had never in their lives seen, and solaced themselves by staring at it and saying, "What is this thing?" To which Abu Sir replied, "This is a Hammam"; and they marvelled thereat.

Then he heated water and set the bath a-working,[1] and he made a jetting fountain in the great basin, which ravished the wit of all who saw it of the people of the city. Furthermore, he sought of the King ten Mamelukes not yet come to manhood, and he gave him ten boys like moons; whereupon Abu Sir proceeded to shampoo them, saying, "Do in this wise with the bathers." Then he burnt perfumes and sent out a crier to cry aloud in the city, saying, "O creatures of Allah, get ye to the Baths which be called the Sultan's Hammam;" So the lieges came thither and Abu Sir bade the slave-boys wash their bodies. The folk went down into the tank and, coming forth, seated themselves on the raised pavement, whilst the boys shampooed them, even as Abu Sir had taught them; and they continued to enter the Hammam and do their need therein gratis and go out, without paying, for the space of three days. On the fourth day the barber invited the King, who took horse with his Grandees and rode to the Baths, where he put off his clothes and entered; then Abu Sir came in to him and rubbed his body with the bag-gloves, peeling from his skin dirt-rolls like lamp-wicks and showing them to the King, who rejoiced therein, and clapping

[1] *I.e.* he turned on the water, hot and cold.

his hand upon his limbs heard them ring again for very smoothness and cleanliness,[1] after which thorough washing Abu Sir mingled rose-water with the water of the tank and the King went down therein. When he came forth, his body was refreshed and he felt a lightness and liveliness such as he had never known in his life. Then the barber made him sit on the daïs and the boys proceeded to shampoo him, whilst the censers fumed with the finest lign-aloes.

Then said the King, "O master, is this the Hammam?"; and Abu Sir said, "Yes." Quoth the King, "As my head liveth, my city is not become a city indeed but by this Bath," presently adding, "But what pay takest thou for each person?" Quoth Abu Sir, "That which thou biddest will I take"; whereupon the King cried, "Take a thousand gold pieces for everyone who washeth in thy Hammam." Abu Sir, however, said, "Pardon, O King of the Age; All men are not alike, but there are amongst them rich and poor, and if I take of each a thousand dinars, the Hammam will stand empty, for the poor man cannot pay this price." Asked the King, "How then wilt thou do for the price;"; and the barber answered, "I will leave it to their generosity. Each who can afford aught shall pay that which his soul grudgeth not to give, and we will take from every man after the measure of his means. On this wise the folk come to us and he who is wealthy shall give according to his station and he who is wealth-less shall give what he can afford. Under such condition the Hammam will still be at work and prosper exceedingly; but a thousand dinars is a Monarch's gift, and not every man can avail to this."

The Lords of the Realm confirmed Abu Sir's words, saying, "This is the truth, O King of the Age; Thinkest thou that all folk are like unto thee, O glorious King?" The King replied, "Ye say sooth; but this man is a stranger and poor and 'tis incumbent on us to deal generously with him, for that he hath made in our city this Hammam whose like we have never in our lives seen and without which our city were not adorned nor hath

[1] Men are often seen doing this in the Hammam. The idea is that the skin when free from sebaceous exudation sounds louder under the clapping. Easterns judge much by the state of the perspiration, especially in horse-training, which consists of hand-gallops for many successive miles. The sweat must not taste over-salt and when held between thumb and forefinger and the two are drawn apart must not adhere in filaments.

gotten importance; wherefore, an we favour him with increase of fee 'twill not be much." But the Grandees said, "An thou wilt guerdon him be generous with thine own monies, and let the King's bounty be extended to the poor by means of the low price of the Hammam, so the lieges may bless thee; but, as for the thousand dinars, we are the Lords of thy Land, yet do our souls grudge to pay it; and how then should the poor be pleased to afford it?" Quoth the King, "O my Grandees, for this time let each of you give him an hundred dinars and a Mameluke, a slave-girl and a blackamoor"; and quoth they, "'Tis well; we will give it; but after to-day whoso entereth shall give him only what he can afford, without grudging." "No harm in that," said the King; and they gave him the thousand gold pieces and three chattels. Now the number of the Nobles who were washed with the King that day was four hundred souls; so that the total of that which they gave him was forty thousand dinars, besides four hundred Mamelukes and a like number of negroes and slave-girls. Moreover the King gave him ten thousand dinars, besides white slaves and ten handmaidens and a like number of blackamoors; whereupon coming forward Abu Sir kissed the ground before him and said, "O auspicious Sovereign, lord of justice, what place will contain me all these women and slaves?" Quoth the King, "O weak o' wit, I bade not my nobles deal thus with thee but that we might gather together unto thee wealth galore; for may be thou wilt bethink thee of thy country and family and repine for them and be minded to return to thy motherland; so shalt thou take from our country muchel of money to maintain thyself withal, what while thou livest in thine own country." And quoth Abu Sir, "O King of the Age (Allah advance thee); these white slaves and women and negroes befit only Kings and hadst thou ordered me ready money, it were more profitable to me than this army; for they must eat and drink and dress, and whatever betideth me of wealth, it will not suffice for their support."

The King laughed and said, "By Allah thou speakest sooth! They are indeed a mighty host, and thou hast not the wherewithal to maintain them; but wilt thou sell them to me for an hundred dinars a head?" Said Abu Sir, "I sell them to thee at that price." So the King sent to his treasurer for the coin and he brought it and gave Abu Sir the whole of the price

without abatement[1] and in full tale; after which the King restored the slaves to their owners, saying, "Let each of you who knoweth his slaves take them; for they are a gift from me to you." So they obeyed his bidding and took each what belonged to him; whilst Abu Sir said to the King, "Allah ease thee, O King of the Age, even as thou hast eased me of these Ghuls, whose bellies none may fill save Allah!" The King laughed, and said he spake sooth; then, taking the Grandees of his Realm from the Hammam returned to his palace; but the barber passed the night in counting out his gold and laying it up in bags and sealing them; and he had with him twenty black slaves and a like number of Mamelukes and four slave-girls to serve him.

Now when morning morrowed, he opened the Hammam and sent out a crier to cry, saying, "Whoso entereth the Baths and washeth shall give that which he can afford and which his generosity requireth him to give." Then he seated himself by the pay-chest and customers flocked in upon him, each putting down that which was easy to him, nor had eventide evened ere the chest was full of the good gifts of Allah the Most High. Presently the Queen desired to go to the Hammam, and when this came to Abu Sir's knowledge, he divided the day on her account into two parts, appointing that between dawn and noon to men and that between mid-day and sundown to women.[2] As soon as the Queen came, he stationed a handmaid behind the pay-chest; for he had taught four slave-girls the service of the Hammam, so that they were become expert bath-women and tire-women. When the Queen entered, this pleased her and her breast waxed broad and she laid down a thousand dinars. Thus his report was noised abroad in the city, and all who entered the Bath he entreated with honour, were they rich or poor; good came in upon him at every door and he made acquaintance with the royal guards and got him friends and intimates. The King himself used to come to him one day in

[1] *I.e.* the treasurer did not, as is the custom of such gentry, demand and receive a large "Bakhshish" on the occasion.

[2] This is the rule in Egypt and Syria and a clout hung over the door shows that women are bathing. I have heard, but only heard, that in times when eunuchs went in with the women, youths managed by long practice to retract the testicles so as to pass for castratos. It is hard to say what perseverance may not effect in this line; witness Orsini and his abnormal development of hearing, by exercising muscles which are usually left idle.

every week, leaving with him a thousand dinars and the other days were for rich and poor alike; and he was wont to deal courteously with the folk and use them with the utmost respect. It chanced that the King's Sea-Captain came in to him one day in the Bath; so Abu Sir did off his dress and going in with him, proceeded to shampoo him and entreated him with exceeding courtesy. When he came forth, he made him sherbet and coffee; and when he would have given him somewhat, he swore

that he would not accept from him aught. So the Captain was under obligation to him, by reason of his exceeding kindness and courtesy and was perplexed how to requite the bath-man his generous dealing.

Thus fared it with Abu Sir: but as regards Abu Kir, hearing all the people recounting wonders of the Baths and saying, "Verily, this Hammam is the Paradise of this world! Inshallah! O such an one, thou shalt go with us to-morrow to this delightful Bath," he said to himself, "Needs must I fare like the rest of the world, and see this Bath that hath taken folk's wits." So he donned his richest dress and mounting a she-mule and bidding

the attendance of four white slaves and four blacks, walking before and behind him, he rode to the Hammam. When he alighted at the door, he smelt the scent of burning aloes-wood and found people going in and out and the benches full of great and small. So he entered the vestibule and saw Abu Sir, who rose to him and rejoiced in him: but the dyer said to him, "Is this the way of well-born men? I have opened me a dyery and am become master-dyer of the city and acquainted with the King and have risen to prosperity and authority: yet camedst thou not to me nor askest of me nor saidst, Where's my comrade? For my part I sought thee in vain and sent my slaves and servants to make search for thee in all the Khans and other places; but they knew not whither thou hadst gone, nor could anyone give me tidings of thee."

Said Abu Sir, "Did I not come to thee and didst thou not make me out a thief and bastinado me and dishonour me before the world?" At this Abu Kir made a show of concern and asked, "What manner of talk is this? Was it thou whom I beat?": and Abu Sir Answered, "Yes, 'twas I." Whereupon Abu Kir swore to him a thousand oaths that he knew him not and said, "There was a fellow like thee, who used to come every day and steal the people's stuff, and I took thee for him." And he went on to pretend penitence, beating hand upon hand and saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Indeed we have sinned against thee; but would that thou hadst discovered thyself to me and said, I am such an one! Indeed the fault is with thee, for that thou madest not thyself known unto me, more especially seeing that I was distracted for much business." Replied Abu Sir, "Allah pardon thee,[1] O my comrade! This was fore-ordained in the Secret Purpose, and reparation is with Allah. Enter and put off thy clothes and bathe at thine ease." Said the dyer, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O my brother, forgive me!"; and said Abu Sir, "Allah acquit thee of blame and forgive thee! Indeed this thing was decreed to me from all eternity." Then asked Abu Kir, "Whence gottest thou this high degree?"; and answered Abu Sir, "He who prospered thee prospered me; for I went up to the King and described to him the fashion of the Hammam and he bade me build one." And the dyer said,

[1] This reference to Allah shows that Abu Sir did not believe his dyer friend.

" Even as thou art beknown of the King, so also am I; and, Inshallah!—God willing—I will make him love and favour thee more than ever, for my sake, he knoweth not that thou art my comrade, but I will acquaint him of this and commend thee to him." But Abu Sir said, " There needeth no commendation; for He who moveth man's heart to love still liveth; and indeed the King and all his court affect me and have given me this and that."

And he told him the whole tale and said to him, " Put off thy clothes behind the chest and enter the Hammam, and I will go in with thee and rub thee down with the glove." So he doffed his dress and Abu Sir, entering the Bath with him, soaped him and gloved him and then dressed him and busied himself with his service till he came forth, when he brought him dinner and sherbets, whilst all the folk marvelled at the honour he did him. Then Abu Kir would have given him somewhat; but he swore that he would not accept aught from him and said to him, " Shame upon such doings! Thou art my comrade, and there is no difference between us." Then Abu Kir observed, " By Allah, O my comrade, this is a mighty fine Hammam of thine, but there lacketh somewhat in its ordinance." Asked Abu Sir, " And what is that?" and Abu Kir answered, " It is the depilatory, to wit, the paste compounded of yellow arsenic and quicklime which removeth the hair with comfort. Do thou prepare it and next time the King cometh, present it to him, teaching him how he shall cause the hair to fall off by such means and he will love thee with exceeding love and honour thee.', Quoth Abu Sir, " Thou speakest sooth, and Inshallah! I will at once make it."

Then Abu Kir left him and mounted his mule and going to the King said to him, " I have a warning to give thee, O King of the Age!" " And what is thy warning?" asked the King; and Abu Kir answered, " I hear that thou hast built a Hammam." Quoth the King, " Yes: there came to me a stranger and I builded the Baths for him, even as I builded the dyery for thee; and indeed 'tis a mighty fine Hammam and an ornament to my city"; and he went on to describe to him the virtues of the Bath. Quoth the dyer, " Hast thou entered therein?"; and quoth the King, " Yes." Thereupon cried Abu Kir, " Alhamdolillah—praised be God—who saved thee from the

mischief of yonder villain and foe of the Faith, I mean the bath-keeper!" The King inquired, "And what of him?"; and Abu Kir replied, "Know, O King of the Age that, an thou enter the Hammam again, after this day, thou wilt surely perish." "How so?" said the King; and the dyer said, "This bath-keeper is thy foe and the foe of the Faith, and he induced thee not to stablish this Bath but because he designed therein to poison thee. He hath made for thee somewhat and he will present it to thee when thou enterest the Hammam, saying, 'This is a drug which, if one apply it to his parts below the waist, will remove the hair with comfort.'

"Now it is no drug, but a drastic dreg and a deadly poison; for the Sultan of the Christians hath promised this obscene fellow to release to him his wife and children, an he will kill thee; for they are prisoners in the hands of that Sultan. I myself was captive with him in their land, but I opened a dyery and dyed for them various colours, so that they conciliated the King's heart to me and he bade me ask a boon of him. I sought of him freedom and he set me at liberty, whereupon I made my way to this city and seeing yonder man in the Hammam, said to him, 'How didst thou effect thine escape and win free with thy wife and children?' Quoth he, 'We ceased not to be in captivity I and my wife and children, till one day the King of the Nazarenes held a court whereat I was present, amongst a number of others; and as I stood amongst the folk, I heard them open out on the Kings and name them, one after other, till they came to the name of the King of this city, whereupon the King of the Christians cried out "Alas!" and said, "None vexeth me in the world, but the King of such a city! Whosoever will contrive me his slaughter I will give him all he shall ask."' So I went up to him and said, 'An I compass for thee his slaughter, wilt thou set me free, me and my wife and my children?' The King replied 'Yes; and I will give thee to boot whatso thou shalt desire.' So we agreed upon this and he sent me in a galleon to this city, where I presented myself to the King and he built me this Hammam. Now, therefore, I have nought to do but to slay him and return to the King of the Nazarenes, that I may redeem my children and my wife and ask a boon of him.' Quoth I, 'And how wilt thou go about to kill him?'; and quoth he, 'By the simplest of all devices; for I have compounded

him somewhat wherein is poison; so, when he cometh to the Bath, I shall say to him, "Take this paste and anoint therewith thy parts below the waist for it will cause the hair to drop off." So he will take it and apply it to himself and the poison will work in him a day and a night, till it reacheth his heart and destroyeth him; and meanwhile I shall have made off and none will know that it was I slew him.' When I heard this," added Abu Kir, "I feared for thee, my benefactor, wherefore I have told thee of what is doing."

As soon as the King heard the dyer's story, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and said to him, "Keep this secret." Then he resolved to visit the Hammam, that he might dispel doubt by supplying certainty; and when he entered, Abu Sir doffed his dress and betaking himself as of wont to the service of the King, proceeded to glove him; after which he said to him, "O King of the Age, I have made a drug which assisteth in plucking out the lower hair." Cried the King, "Bring it to me": so the barber brought it to him and the King, finding it nauseous of smell, was assured that it was poison; wherefore he was incensed and called out to his guards, saying, "Seize him!" Accordingly they seized him and the King donned his dress and returned to his palace, boiling with fury, whilst none knew the cause of his indignation; for, of the excess of his wrath he had acquainted no one therewith and none dared ask him. Then he repaired to the audience-chamber and causing Abu Sir to be brought before him, with his elbows pinioned, sent for his Sea-Captain and said to him, "Take this villain and set him in a sack with two quintals of lime unslaked and tie its mouth over his head. Then lay him in a cock-boat and row out with him in front of my palace, where thou wilt see me sitting at the lattice. Do thou say to me, 'Shall I cast him in?' and if I answer, 'Cast him!' throw the sack into the sea, so the quick-lime may be slaked on him to the intent that he shall die drowned and burnt."

"Hearkening and obeying"; quoth the Captain and taking Abu Sir from the presence carried him to an island facing the King's palace, where he said to him, "Ho thou, I once visited thy Hammam and thou entreatedst me with honour and accomplishedst all my needs and I had great pleasure of thee: moreover, thou swarest that thou wouldst take no pay of me, and

I love thee with a great love. So tell me how the case standeth between thee and the King and what abominable deed thou hast done with him that he is wroth with thee and hath commanded me that thou shouldst die this foul death." Answered Abu Sir, "I have done nothing, nor weet I of any crime I have committed against him which meriteth this!" Rejoined the Captain, "Verily, thou wast high in rank with the King, such as none ever won before thee, and all who are prosperous are envied. Haply someone was jealous of thy good fortune and threw out certain hints concerning thee to the King, by reason whereof he is become enraged against thee with rage so violent: but be of good cheer; no harm shall befall thee; for, even as thou entreatedst me generously, without acquaintanceship between me and thee, so now I will deliver thee. But, an if I release thee, thou must abide with me on this island till some galleon sail from our city to thy native land, when I will send thee thither therein."

Abu Sir kissed his hand and thanked him for that; after which the Captain fetched the quicklime and set it in a sack, together with a great stone, the size of a man, saying, "I put my trust in Allah!" Then he gave the barber a net, saying, "Cast this net into the sea, so haply thou mayst take somewhat of fish. For I am bound to supply the King's kitchen with fish every day; but to-day I have been distracted from fishing by this calamity which hath befallen thee, and I fear lest the cook's boys come to me in quest of fish and find none. So, an thou take aught, they will find it and thou wilt veil my face, whilst I go and play off my practice in front of the palace and feign to cast thee into the sea." Answered Abu Sir, "I will fish the while; go thou and God help thee!" So the Captain set the sack in the boat and paddled till he came under the palace, where he saw the King seated at the lattice and said to him, "O King of the Age, shall I cast him in?" "Cast him!" cried the King, and signed to him with his hand, when lo and behold! something flashed like leven and fell into the sea.

Now that which had fallen into the water was the King's seal-ring; and the same was enchanted in such way that, when the King was wroth with anyone and was minded to slay him, he had but to sign to him with his right hand, whereon was the signet-ring, and therefrom issued a flash of lightning, which smote

the object, and thereupon his head fell from between his shoulders; and the troops obeyed him not, nor did he overcome the men of might save by means of the ring. So, when it dropped from his finger, he concealed the matter and kept silence, for that he dared not say, "My ring is fallen into the sea," for fear of the troops, lest they rise against him and slay him.

On this wise it befell the King; but as regards Abu Sir, after the Captain had left him on the island, he took the net and casting it into the sea presently drew it up full of fish; nor did he cease to throw it and pull it up full, till there was a great mound of fish before him. So he said in himself, "By Allah, this long while I have not eaten fish!" and chose himself a large fat fish, saying, "When the Captain cometh back, I will bid him fry it for me, so I may dine on it." Then he cut its throat with a knife he had with him; but the knife stuck in its gills and there he saw the King's signet-ring; for the fish had swallowed it and Destiny had driven it to that island, where it had fallen into the net. He took the ring and drew it on his little finger, not knowing its peculiar properties. Presently, up came two of the cook's boys in quest of fish and seeing Abu Sir, said to him, "O man, whither is the Captain gone?" "I know not," said he and signed to them with his right hand; when, behold, the heads of both underlings dropped off from between their shoulders. At this Abu Sir was amazed and said, "Would I wot who slew them!" And their case was grievous to him, and he was still pondering it when the Captain suddenly returned and, seeing the mound of fishes and two men lying dead and the seal-ring on Abu Sir's finger, said to him, "O my brother, move not thy hand whereon is the signet-ring; else thou wilt kill me."

Abu Sir wondered at this speech and kept his hand motionless; whereupon the Captain came up to him and said, "Who slew these two men?" "By Allah, O my brother, I wot not;" "Thou sayest sooth; but tell me, whence hadst thou that ring?" "I found it in this fish's gills." "True," said the Captain, "for I saw it fall flashing from the King's palace and disappear in the sea, what time he signed towards thee,[1] saying, 'Cast him in.'

[1] Meaning, of course, that the King signed towards the sack in which he supposed the victim to be, but the ring fell off before it could take effect. The Eastern story-teller often balances his multiplicity of words and needless details by a conciseness and an elliptical style which make his meaning a matter of divination.

So I cast the sack into the water, and it was then that the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the sea, where this fish swallowed it, and Allah drave it to thee, so that thou madest it thy prey, for this ring was thy lot; but kennest thou its property?" Said Abu Sir, "I knew not that it had any properties peculiar to it"; and the Captain said, "Learn, then, that the King's troops obey him not save for fear of this signet-ring, because it is spelled, and when he was wroth with anyone and had a mind to kill him, he would sign at him therewith and his head would drop from between his shoulders; for there issued a flash of lightning from the ring and its ray smote the object of his wrath, who died forthright." At this, Abu Sir rejoiced with exceeding joy and said to the Captain, "Carry me back to the city"; and he said, "That will I, now that I no longer fear for thee from the King; for, wert thou to sign at him with thy hand, purposing to kill him, his head would fall down between thy hands; and if thou be minded to slay him and all his host, thou mayst slaughter them without let or hindrance."

So saying, he embarked him in the boat and bore him back to the city; so Abu Sir landed and, going up to the palace, entered the council chamber, where he found the King seated facing his officers, in sore cark and care by reason of the seal-ring and daring not tell any of his folk anent its loss. When he saw Abu Sir, he said to him, "Did we not cast thee into the sea? How hast thou contrived to come forth of it?" Abu Sir replied, "O King of the Age, whenas thou badest throw me into the sea, thy Captain carried me to an island and asked me of the cause of thy wrath against me, saying, 'What hast thou done with the King, that he should decree thy death?' I answered, 'By Allah, I know not that I have done him any wrong!' Quoth he, 'Thou wast high in rank with the King, and haply someone envied thee and threw out certain hints concerning thee to him, so that he is become incensed against thee. But when I visited thee in thy Hammam, thou entreatedst me honourably, and I will requite thee thy hospitality to me by setting thee free and sending thee back to thine own land.' Then he set a great stone in the sack in my stead and cast it into the sea; but, when thou signedst to him to throw me in, thy seal-ring dropped from thy finger into the main, and a fish swallowed it.

"Now I was on the island a-fishing, and this fish came up in

the net with others ; whereupon I took it, intending to broil it ; but, when I opened its belly, I found the signet-ring therein; so I took it and put it on my finger. Presently, up came two of the servants of the kitchen, questing fish, and I signed to them with my hand, knowing not the property of the seal-ring, and their heads fell off. Then the Captain came back, and seeing the ring on my finger, acquainted me with its spell ; and, behold, I have brought it back to thee, for that thou dealtest kindly by me and have entreatedst me with the utmost honour, nor is that which thou hast done me of kindness lost upon me. Here is thy ring ; take it ! But an I have done with thee aught deserving of death, tell me my crime and slay me and thou shalt be absolved of sin in shedding my blood." So saying, he pulled the ring from his finger and gave it to the King who, seeing Abu Sir's noble conduct, took the ring and put it on and felt life return to him afresh. Then he rose to his feet and, embracing the barber, said to him, " O man, thou art indeed of the flower of the well-born ; Blame me not, but forgive me the wrong I have done thee. Had any but thou gotten hold of this ring, he had never restored it to me." Answered Abu Sir, " O King of the Age, an thou wouldst have me forgive thee, tell me what was my fault which drew down thine anger upon me, so that thou commandedst to do me die." Rejoined the King, " By Allah, 'tis clear to me that thou art free and guileless in all things of offence since thou hast done this good deed ; only the dyer denounced thee to me in such and such words " ; and he told him all that Abu Kir had said.

Abu Sir replied, " By Allah, O King of the Age, I know no King of the Nazarenes, nor during my days have ever journeyed to a Christian country, nor did it ever come into my mind to kill thee. But this dyer was my comrade and neighbour in the city of Alexandria where life was straitened upon us ; therefore we departed thence, to seek our fortunes, by reason of the narrowness of our means at home, after we had recited the Opening Chapter of the Koran together, pledging ourselves that he who got work should feed him who lacked work ; and there befell me with him such and such things." Then he went on to relate to the King all that had betided him with Abu Kir the dyer ; how he had robbed him of his dirhams and had left him alone and sick in the Khan-closet and how the doorkeeper had fed

him of his own monies till Allah recovered him of his sickness, when he went forth and walked about the city with his budget, as was his wont, till he espied a dyery, about which the folk were crowding; so he looked at the door and seeing Abu Kir seated on a bench there, went in to salute him, whereupon he accused him of being a thief and beat him a grievous beating; brief, he told him his whole tale, from first to last, and added, "O King of the Age, 'twas he who counselled me to make the depilatory and present it to thee, saying, 'The Hammam is perfect in all things but that it lacketh this'; and know, O King of the Age, that this drug is harmless and we use it in our land where 'tis one of the requisites of the Bath; but I had forgotten it; so, when the dyer visited the Hammam I entreated him with honour and he reminded me of it, and enjoined me to make it forthwith. But do thou send after the porter of such a Khan and the workmen of the dyery and question them all of that which I have told thee."

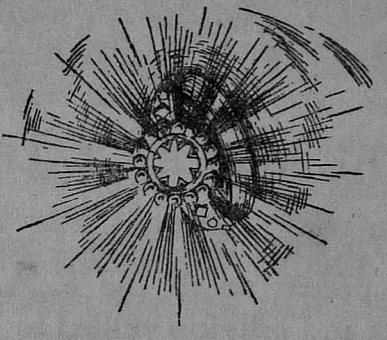
Accordingly the King sent for them and questioned them one and all and they acquainted him with the truth of the matter. Then he summoned the dyer, saying, "Bring him barefooted, bareheaded and with elbows pinioned!" Now he was sitting in his house, rejoicing in Abu Sir's death; but ere he could be ware, the King's guards rushed in upon him and cuffed him on the nape, after which they bound him and bore him into the presence, where he saw Abu Sir seated by the King's side and the doorkeeper of the Khan and workmen of the dyery standing before him. Quoth the doorkeeper to him, "Is not this thy comrade whom thou robbedst of his silvers and leftest with me sick in the closet doing such and such by him?" And the workmen said to him, "Is not this he whom thou badest us seize and beat?" Therewith Abu Kir's baseness was made manifest to the King and he was certified that he merited torture yet sorer than the torments of Munkar and Nakir. So he said to his guards, "Take him and parade him about the city and the markets; then set him in a sack and cast him into the sea." Whereupon quoth Abu Sir, "O King of the Age, accept my intercession for him, for I pardon him all he hath done with me." But quoth the King, "An thou pardon him all his offences against thee, I cannot pardon him his offences against me." And he cried out, saying, "Take him."

So they took him and paraded him about the city, after which they set him in a sack with quick-lime and cast him into the sea, and he died, drowned and burnt. Then said the King to the barber, "O Abu Sir, ask of me what thou wilt and it shall be given thee." And he answered, saying, "I ask of thee to send me back to my own country, for I care no longer to tarry here." Then the King gifted him great store of gifts, over and above that which he had whilome bestowed on him; and amongst the rest a galleon freighted with goods; and the crew of this galleon were Mamelukes; so he gave him these also, after offering to make him his Wazir whereto the barber consented not. Presently he farewelled the King and set sail in his own ship manned by his own crew; nor did he cast anchor till he reached Alexandria and made fast to the shore there. Then they landed and one of his Mamelukes, seeing a sack on the beach, said to Abu Sir, "O my lord, there is a great heavy sack on the seashore, with the mouth tied up and I know not what therein." So Abu Sir came up and, opening the sack, found therein the remains of Abu Kir, which the sea had borne thither. He took it forth and, burying it near Alexandria, built over the grave a place of visitation and endowed it with mortmain, writing over the door these couplets:

Man is known among men as his deeds attest;
Which make noble origin manifest:
Backbite not, lest other men bite thy back;
Who saith aught, the same shall to him be addrest:
Shun immodest words and indecent speech
When thou speakest in earnest or e'en in jest.
We bear with the dog which behaves itself
But the lion is chained lest he prove a pest:
And the desert carcases swim the main
While union-pearls on the sand-bank rest:
No sparrow would hustle the sparrow-hawk,
Were it not by folly and weakness prest:
A-sky is written on page of air,
"Who doth kindly of kindness shall have the best!"
'Ware of gathering sugar from bitter-gourd:
'Twill prove to its origin like in taste.

After this Abu Sir abode awhile, till Allah took him to Himself, and they buried him hard by the tomb of his comrade Abu Kir;

wherefore that place was called Abu Kir and Abu Sir; but it is now known as Abu Kir only. This, then, is that which hath reached us of their history, and glory be to Him who endureth for ever and aye and by whose will interchange the night and the day.



THE REEVE'S TALE[1]

KNOW, O King, that last night I was at a party where they made a perlection of the Koran and got together doctors of law and religion skilled in recitation and intoning; and, when the readers ended, the table was spread and amongst other things they set before us was a marinated ragout flavoured with cumin-seed. So we sat down, but one of our number held back and refused to touch it. We conjured him to eat of it but he swore he would not; and, when we again pressed him, he said, "Be not instant with me; sufficeth me that which hath already befallen me through eating it"; and he began reciting:

Shoulder thy tray and go straight to thy goal;
And, if suit thee this Kohl why,—use this Kohl![2]

When he ended his verse we said to him, "Allah upon

[1] This, together with the "Tale of the Tailor" (p. 55) and the "Barber's Tales of his Brothers" (pp. 66, 71, 75) are, in the original, stories within a story; they are told to the Sultan of China. (P.H.N.)

[2] *I.e.* let each man do as he seems fit.

thee, tell us thy reason for refusing to eat of the cumin-ragout?" "If so it be," he replied, "and needs must I eat of it, I will not do so except I wash my hands forty times with soap, forty times with potash and forty times with galangale,[1] the total being one hundred and twenty washings." Thereupon the hospitable host bade his slaves bring water and whatso he required; and the young man washed his hand as afore mentioned. Then he sat down, as if disgusted and frightened withal and, dipping his hand in the ragout, began eating and at the same time showing signs of anger. And we wondered at him with extreme wonderment, for his hand trembled and the morsel in it shook and we saw that his thumb had been cut off and he ate with his four fingers only. So we said to him, "Allah upon thee, what happened to thy thumb? Is thy hand thus by the creation of God or hath some accident befallen it?" "O my brothers," he answered, "it is not only thus with this thumb, but also with my other thumb and with both my great toes, as you shall see." So saying, he uncovered his left hand and his feet, and we saw that the left hand was even as the right and in like manner that each of his feet lacked its great toe. When we saw him after this fashion, our amazement waxed still greater and we said to him, "We have hardly patience enough to await thy history and to hear the manner of the cutting off of thy thumbs, and the reason of thy washing both hands one hundred and twenty times."

Know then, said he, that my father was chief of the merchants and the wealthiest of them all in Baghdad city during the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid; and he was much given to wine-drinking and listening to the lute and the other instruments of pleasaunce; so that when he died he left nothing. I buried him and had perlections of the Koran made for him, and mourned for him days and nights: then I opened his shop and found that he had left in it few goods, while his debts were many. However, I compounded with his creditors for time to settle their demands and betook myself to buying and selling, paying them something from week to week on account; and I gave not over doing this till I had cleared off his obligations in full and began adding to my principal.

[1] Arab. "Su'úd," an Alpinia with pungent rhizome like ginger: here used as a counter-odour.

One day, as I sat in my shop, suddenly and unexpectedly there appeared before me a young lady, than whom I never saw a fairer, wearing the richest raiment and ornaments and riding a she-mule, with one negro slave walking before her and another behind her. She drew rein at the head of the exchange-bazar and entered followed by an eunuch who said to her, "O my lady come out and away without telling anyone, lest thou light a fire which will burn us all up." Moreover, he stood before her guarding her from view whilst she looked at the merchants' shops. She found none open but mine; so she came up with the eunuch behind her and, sitting down in my shop, saluted me; never heard I aught fairer than her speech or sweeter than her voice. Then she unveiled her face, and I saw that she was like the moon and I stole a glance at her whose sight caused me a thousand sighs, and my heart was captivated with love of her.

She asked me, "O youth, hast thou any fair stuffs by thee?"; and I answered, "O my lady, thy slave is poor; but have patience till the merchants open their shops, and I will suit thee with what thou wilt." Then we sat talking, I and she (and I was drowned in the sea of her love, dazed in the desert of my passion for her), till the merchants opened their shops; when I rose and fetched her all she sought to the tune of five thousand dirhams. She gave the stuff to the eunuch and, going forth by the door of the Exchange, she mounted mule and went away, without telling me whence she came, and I was ashamed to speak of such trifle. When the merchants dunned me for the price, I made myself answerable for five thousand dirhams and went home, drunken with the love of her. They set supper before me and I ate a mouthful, thinking only of her beauty and loveliness, and sought to sleep, but sleep came not to me.

And such was my condition for a whole week, when the merchants required their monies of me, but I persuaded them to have patience for another week, at the end of which time she again appeared mounted on a she-mule and attended by her eunuch and two slaves. She saluted me and said, "O my master, we have been long in bringing thee the price of the stuffs; but now fetch the Shroff and take thy monies." So I sent for the money-changer and the eunuch counted out the coin before him and made it over to me. Then we sat talking, I and she,

till the market opened, when she said to me, "Get me this and that." So I got her from the merchants whatso she wanted, and she took it and went away without saying a word to me about the price. As soon as she was out of sight, I repented me of what I had done; for the worth of the stuffs bought for her amounted to a thousand dinars, and I said in my soul, "What manner of love is this? She hath brought me five thousand dirhams, and hath taken goods for a thousand dinars.[1] I feared lest I should be beggared through having to pay the merchants their money, and I said, "They know none other but me; this lovely lady is naught but a cheat and a swindler, who hath diddled me with her beauty and grace; for she saw that I was a mere youth and laughed at me for not asking her address." I ceased not to be troubled by these doubts and fears, as she was absent more than a month, till the merchants pestered me for their money and were so hard upon me that I put my property up for sale and stood on the very brink of ruin.

However, as I was sitting in my shop one day, drowned in melancholy musings, she suddenly rode up and, dismounting at the bazar gate, came straight towards me. When I saw her all my cares fell from me and I forgot every trouble. She came close up to me and greeted me with her sweet voice and pleasant speech and presently said, "Fetch me the Shroff and weigh thy money."[2] So she gave me the price of what goods I had gotten for her and more, and fell to talking freely with me, till I was like to die of joy and delight. Presently she asked me, "Hast thou a wife?"; and I answered, "No, indeed: I have never known woman"; and began to shed tears. Quoth she, "Why weepest thou?" Quoth I, "It is nothing!" Then giving the eunuch some of the gold pieces, I begged him to be go-between[3] in the matter; but he laughed and said, "She is more in love with thee than thou with her; she hath no occasion for the stuffs she hath bought of thee and did all this only for the love of thee; so ask of her what thou wilt and she will deny thee nothing." When she saw me giving the dinars to the eunuch, she returned and sat down again; and I said to her,

[1] *I.e.* £125 and £500.

[2] A large sum was weighed by a professional hand instead of being counted, the reason being that the coin is mostly old and worn.

[3] The eunuch is the best possible go-between on account of his almost unlimited power over the harim.

" Be charitable to thy slave and pardon him what he is about to say." Then I told her what was in my mind and she assented and said to the eunuch, " Thou shalt carry my message to him," adding to me, " And do thou whatso the eunuch biddeth thee." Then she got up and went away, and I paid the merchants their monies and they all profited; but as for me, regret at the breaking off of our intercourse was all my gain and I slept not the whole of that night.

However, before many days passed her eunuch came to me, and I entreated him honourably and asked him after his mistress. " Truly she is sick with love of thee," he replied and I rejoined, " Tell me who and what she is." Quoth he, " The Lady Zubaydah, Queen-consort of Harun al-Rashid, brought her up as a rearling and hath advanced her to be stewardess of the Harim, and gave her the right of going in and out of her own sweet will. She spoke to her lady of thee and begged her to marry her to thee; but she said: 'I will not do this, till I see the young man; and, if he be worthy of thee, I will marry thee to him.' So now we look for the moment to smuggle thee into the palace and if you succeed in entering privily thou wilt win thy wish to wed her; but if the affair get wind, the Lady Zubaydah will strike off thy head. What sayest thou to this?"

I answered, " I will go with thee and abide the risk whereof thou speakest." Then said he, " As soon as it is night, go to the mosque built by the Lady Zubaydah on the Tigris and pray the night-prayers and sleep there." " With love and gladness," cried I. So at nightfall I repaired to the mosque, where I prayed and passed the night. With earliest dawn, behold, came sundry eunuchs in a skiff with a number of empty chests which they deposited in the mosque, then all of them went their ways but one, and looking curiously at him, I saw he was our go-between. Presently in came the handmaiden, my mistress, walking straight up to us; and I rose to her and embraced her while she kissed me and shed tears.[1] We talked awhile; after which she made me get into one of the chests which she locked upon me. Presently the other eunuchs came back with a quantity of packages and she fell to stowing them in the chests, which she locked down, one by one, till all were shut. When all was done the eunuchs embarked the chests in the boat and made for the

[1] These tears are shed over past separation.

Lady Zubaydah's palace. With this, thought began to beset me and I said to myself, "Verily thy lust and wantonness will be the death of thee; and the question is after all shalt thou win to thy wish or not?" And I began to weep, boxed up as I was in the box and suffering from cramp; and I prayed Allah that He deliver me from the dangerous strait I was in, whilst the boat gave not over going on till it reached the palace gate where they lifted out the chests and amongst them that in which I was. Then they carried them in, passing through a troop of eunuchs, guardians of the harim and of the ladies behind the curtain, till they came to the post of the Eunuch-in-Chief[1] who started up from his slumbers and shouted to the damsel, "What is in those chests?"

"They are full of wares for the Lady Zubaydah!" "Open them, one by one, that I may see what is in them." "And wherefore wouldst thou open them?" "Give me no words and exceed not in talk! These chests must and shall be opened." So saying, he sprang to his feet, and the first which they brought to him to open was that wherein I was; and, when I felt his hands upon it, my senses failed me and I bepissed myself in my funk, the water running out of the box. Then said she to the Eunuch-in-Chief, "O Steward! thou wilt cause me to be killed and thyself too, for thou hast damaged goods worth ten thousand dinars. This chest contains coloured dresses, and four gallon flasks of Zemzem water;[2] and now one of them hath got unstoppered and the water is running out over the clothes and it will spoil their colours." The eunuch answered, "Take up thy boxes and get thee gone to the curse of God!"

So the slaves carried off all the chests, including mine;

[1] A most important Jack in office whom one can see with his smooth chin and blubber lips starting up from his lazy snooze in the shade and delivering his orders more peremptorily than any Dogberry. These epicenes are as curious and exceptional in character as in external formation. Disconnected, after a fashion, with humanity they are brave, fierce and capable of any villainy or barbarity (as Agha Mohammed Khan in Persia 1795–98). The frame is unnaturally long and lean, especially the arms and legs; with high, flat, thin shoulders; big protruding joints and a face by contrast extraordinarily large, a veritable mask; the Castrato is expert in the use of weapons and sits his horse admirably, riding well "home" in the saddle for the best of reasons; and his hoarse thick voice, which apparently does not break, as in the European "Cappone," invests him with all the circumstance of command.

[2] From the Meccan well, used by Moslems much like Eau de Lourdes by Christians.

and hastened on with them till suddenly I heard the voice of one saying, "Alack, and alack! the Caliph! the Caliph!" When that cry struck mine ears I died in my skin and said a saying which never yet shamed the sayer, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I and only I have brought this calamity upon myself." Presently I heard the Caliph say to my mistress, "A plague upon thee, what is in those boxes?"; and she answered, "Dresses for the

Lady Zubaydah"; whereupon he, "Open them before me!" When I heard this I died my death outright and said to myself, "By Allah, to-day is the very last of my days in this world: if I come safe out of this I am to marry her and no more words, but detection stares me in the face and my head is as good as stricken off." Then I repeated the profession of Faith, saying, "There is no god but *the* God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God!"

Now when I testified, "I bear witness that there is no god save *the* God, I heard my mistress the handmaid declare to the Caliph, "These chests, O Commander of the Faithful, have been committed to my charge by the Lady Zubaydah, and she

doth not wish their contents to be seen by anyone." "No matter!" quoth the Caliph, "needs must they be opened, I *will* see what is in them"; and he cried aloud to the eunuchs, "Bring the chests here before me." At this I made sure of death (without benefit of a doubt) and swooned away. Then the eunuchs brought the chests up to him one after another and he fell to inspecting the contents, but he saw in them only ottars and stuffs and fine dresses; and they ceased not opening the chests and he ceased not looking to see what was in them, finding only clothes and such matters, till none remained unopened but the box in which I was boxed. They put forth their hands to open it, but my mistress the handmaid made haste and said to the Caliph, "This one thou shalt see only in the presence of the Lady Zubaydah, for that which is in it is her secret." When he heard this he gave orders to carry in the chests; so they took up that wherein I was and bore it with the rest into the harim and set it down in the midst of the saloon; and indeed my spittle was dried up for very fear.

Then my mistress opened the box and took me out, saying, "Fear not: no harm shall betide thee now nor dread; but broaden thy breast and strengthen thy heart and sit thee down till the Lady Zubaydah come, and surely thou shalt win thy wish of me." So I sat down and, after a while, in came ten handmaidens, virgins like moons, and ranged themselves in two rows, five facing five; and after them twenty other damsels, high-bosomed virginity, surrounding the Lady Zubaydah who could hardly walk for the weight of her raiment and ornaments. As she drew near, the slave-girls dispersed from around her, and I advanced and kissed the ground between her hands. She signed to me to sit and, when I sat down before her chair, she began questioning me of my forbears and family and condition, to which I made such answers that pleased her, and she said to my mistress, "Our nurturing of thee, O damsel, hath not disappointed us." Then she said to me, "Know that this handmaiden is to us even as our own child and she is a trust committed to thee by Allah." I again kissed the ground before her, well pleased that I should marry my mistress, and she bade me abide ten days in the palace. So I abode there ten days, during which time I saw not my mistress nor anybody save one of the concubines, who brought me the morning and evening meals.

After this the Lady Zubaydah took counsel with the Caliph on the marriage of her favourite handmaid, and he gave leave and assigned to her a wedding portion of ten thousand gold pieces. So the Lady Zubaydah sent for the Kazi and witnesses who wrote our marriage contract, after which the women made ready sweetmeats and rich viands and distributed them among all the Odahs of the harim. Thus they did other ten days, at the end of which time my mistress went to the baths,[1] Meanwhile, they set before me a tray of food whereon were various meats and among those dishes, which were enough to daze the wits, was a bowl of cumin-ragout containing chickens' breasts, fricandoed and flavoured with sugar, pistachios, musk and rose-water. Then, by Allah, fair sirs, I did not long hesitate; but took my seat before the ragout and fell to and ate of it till I could no more. After this I wiped my hands, but forgot to wash them; and sat till it grew dark, when the wax candles were lighted and the singing women came in with their tambourines and proceeded to display the bride in various dresses and to carry her in procession from room to room all round the palace, getting their palms crossed with gold. Then they brought her to me and I disrobed her. When I found myself alone with her on the bed I embraced her, hardly believing in our union; but she smelt the strong odours of the ragout upon my hands and forthwith cried out with an exceeding loud cry, at which the slave-girls came running to her from all sides.

I trembled with alarm, unknowing what was the matter, and the girls asked her, "What aileth thee, O our sister?" She answered them, "Take this madman away from me: I had thought he was a man of sense!" Quoth I to her, "What makes thee think me mad?" Quoth she, "Thou madman! what made thee eat of cumin-ragout and forget to wash thy hand? By Allah, I will requite thee for thy misconduct. Shall the like of thee come to bed with the like of me with unclean hands?"[2] Then she took from her side a plaited scourge and came down with it on my back and the place where I sit, till her forearms were benumbed and I fainted away from the much beating; when she said to the handmaids, "Take him and

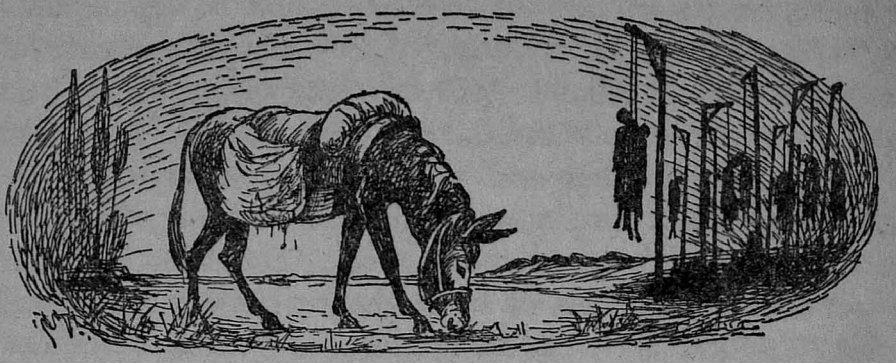
[1] Showing that her monthly ailment was over.

[2] The insolence and license of these palace girls was unlimited; especially when, as in the present case, they have to deal with a "softy."

carry him to the Chief of Police, that he may strike off the hand wherewith he ate of the cumin-ragout, and which he did not wash." When I heard this I said, " There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah ! Wilt thou cut off my hand, because I ate of the cumin-ragout and did not wash ? " The handmaidens also interceded with her and kissed her hand, saying, " O our sister, this man is a simpleton, punish him not for what he hath done this nonce " ; but she answered, " By Allah, there is no help but that I dock him of somewhat, especially the offending member." Then she went away and I saw no more of her for ten days, during which time she sent me meat and drink by a slave-girl who told me that she had fallen sick from the smell of the cumin-ragout.

After that time she came to me and said, " O black of face ! [1] I will teach thee how to eat cumin-ragout without washing thy hands ! " Then she cried out to the handmaids, who pinioned me ; and she took a sharp razor and cut off my thumbs and great toes ; even as you see, O fair assembly ! Thereupon I swooned away, and she sprinkled some powder of healing herbs upon the stumps and when the blood was staunched, I said, " Never again will I eat of cumin-ragout without washing my hands forty times with potash and forty times with galangale and forty times with soap ! " And she took of me an oath and bound me by a covenant to that effect. When, therefore, you brought me the cumin-ragout [2] my colour changed and I said to myself, " It was this very dish that caused the cutting off of my thumbs and great toes " ; and, when you forced me, I said, " Needs must I fulfil the oath I have sworn."

[1] *I.e.* by the fires of Jehannam.
[2] Meat dressed with vinegar, cumin-seed and hot spices.



THE STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE OLD CAIRO POLICE

I ONCE hanged ten thieves each on his own gibbet, and especially charged the guards to watch them and hinder the folk from taking any one of them down. Next morning when I came to look at them, I found two bodies hanging from one gallows and said to the guards, "Who did this, and where is the tenth gibbet?" But they denied all knowledge of it, and I was about to beat them till they owned the truth, when they said, "Know, O Emir, that we fell asleep last night, and when we awoke, we found that someone had stolen one of the bodies, gibbet and all; so we were alarmed and feared thy wrath. But, behold, up came a peasant-fellow driving his ass; whereupon we laid hands on him and killed him and hanged his body upon this gallows, in the stead of the thief who had been stolen." [1]

Now when I heard this, I marvelled and asked them, "What had he with him?"; and they answered, "He had a pair of saddle-bags on the ass." Quoth I, "What was in them?"; quoth they, "We know not." So I said, "Bring them hither"; and when they brought them to me I bade open them, behold, therein was the body of a murdered man, cut in pieces. Now as soon as I saw this, I marvelled at the case and said in myself, "Glory to God! The cause of the hanging of this peasant was none other but his crime against this murdered man; and thy Lord is not unjust towards His servants." [2]

[1] This would have passed for a peccadillo in the good old days. As late as 1840 the Arnaut soldiers used to "pot" any peasant who dared to ride (instead of walking) past their barracks.

[2] Koran, xli, 46—a passage expounding the doctrine of free will.

MA'ARUF THE COBBLER AND HIS WIFE FATIMAH

THERE dwelt once upon a time in the God-guarded city of Cairo a cobbler who lived by patching old shoes. His name was Ma'aruf and he had a wife called Fatimah, whom the folk had nicknamed "The Dung"; for that she was a whorish, worthless wretch, scanty of shame and mickle of mischief. She ruled her spouse and used to abuse him and curse him a thousand times a day; and he feared her malice and dreaded her misdoings; for that he was a sensible man and careful of his repute, but poor-conditioned. When he earned much, he spent it on her, and when he gained little, she revenged herself on his body that night, leaving him no peace and making his night black as her look. Amongst other afflictions which befell him from her one day she said to him, "O Ma'aruf, I wish thee to bring me this night a vermicelli-cake dressed with bees' honey." He replied, "So Allah Almighty aid me to its price, I will bring it thee. By Allah, I have no dirhams to-day, but our Lord will make things easy."[1] Rejoined she, "I wot naught of these words; whether He aid thee or aid thee not, look thou come not to me save with the vermicelli and bees' honey; and if thou come without it I will make thy night black as thy fortune whenas thou marriedst me and fellest into my hand."

[1] *I.e.* will send us aid. The shrew's rejoinder is highly impious in Moslem opinion.

Quoth he, " Allah is bountiful ! " and going out with grief scattering itself from his body, prayed the dawn-prayer and opened his shop, saying, " I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me the price of the Kunafah and ward off from me the mischief of yonder wicked woman this night ! " After which he sat in the shop till noon, but no work came to him and his fear of his wife redoubled. Then he arose and locking his shop, went out perplexed as to how he should do in the matter of the vermicelli-cake, seeing he had not even the wherewithal to buy bread. Presently he came to the shop of the Kunafah-seller and stood before it distraught, whilst his eyes brimmed with tears. The pastry-cook glanced at him and said, " O Master Ma'aruf, why dost thou weep ? Tell me what hath befallen thee." So he acquainted him with his case, saying, " My wife is a shrew, a virago who would have me bring her a Kunafah ; but I have sat in my shop till past mid-day and have not gained even the price of bread ; wherefore I am in fear of her." The cook laughed and said, " No harm shall come to thee. How many pounds wilt thou have ? " " Five pounds," answered Ma'aruf. So the man weighed him out five pounds of vermicelli-cake and said to him, " I have clarified butter, but no bees' honey. Here is drip-honey, however, which is better than bees' honey ; and what harm will there be, if it be with drip-honey ? "

Ma'aruf was ashamed to object, because the pastry-cook was to have patience with him for the price, and said, " Give it me with drip-honey." So he fried a vermicelli-cake for him with butter and drenched it with drip-honey, till it was fit to present to Kings. Then he asked him, " Dost thou want bread and cheese ? " ; and Ma'aruf answered, " Yes." So he gave him four half-dirhams' worth of bread and one of cheese, and the vermicelli was ten nusfs. Then said he, " Know, O Ma'aruf, that thou owest me fifteen nusfs ; so go to thy wife and make merry and take this nusf for the Hammam, and thou shalt have credit for a day or two or three till Allah provide thee with thy daily bread. And straiten not thy wife, for I will have patience with thee till such time as thou shalt have dirhams to spare." So Ma'aruf took the vermicelli-cake and bread and cheese and went away, with a heart at ease, blessing the pastry-cook and saying, " extolled be Thy perfection, O my Lord ! How bountiful art Thou ! "

When he came home, his wife inquired of him, "Hast thou brought the vermicelli-cake?"; and, replying "Yes," he set it before her. She looked at it and seeing that it was dressed with cane-honey, said to him, "Did I not bid thee bring it with bees' honey? Wilt thou contrary my wish and have it dressed with cane-honey?" He excused himself to her, saying, "I bought it not save on credit"; but said she, "This talk is idle; I will not eat Kunafah save with bees' honey." And she was wroth with it and threw it in his face, saying, "Begone, thou pimp, and bring me other than this!" Then she dealt him a buffet on the cheek and knocked out one of his teeth. The blood ran down upon his breast and for stress of anger he smote her on the head a single blow and a slight; whereupon she clutched his beard and fell to shouting out and saying, "Help, O Moslems!" So the neighbours came in and freed his beard from her grip; then they reproved and reproached her, saying, "We are all content to eat Kunafah with cane-honey. Why, then, wilt thou oppress this poor man thus? Verily, this is disgraceful in thee!" And they went on to soothe her till they made peace between her and him.

But, when the folk were gone, she sware that she would not eat of the vermicelli, and Ma'aruf, burning with hunger, said in himself, "She sweareth that she will not eat; so I will e'en eat." Then he ate, and when she saw him eating, she said, "Inshallah, may the eating of it be poison to destroy the fat one's body." Quoth he, "It shall not be at thy bidding," and went on eating, laughing and saying, "Thou swarest that thou wouldst not eat of this; but Allah is bountiful, and to-morrow night, an the Lord decree, I will bring thee Kunafah dressed with bees' honey, and thou shalt eat it alone." And he applied himself to appeasing her, whilst she called down curses upon him; and she ceased not to rail at him and revile him with gross abuse till the morning, when she bared her forearm to beat him. Quoth he, "Give me time and I will bring thee other vermicelli-cake." Then he went out to the mosque and prayed, after which he betook himself to his shop and opening it, sat down; but hardly had he done this when up came two runners from the Kazi's court and said to him, "Up with thee, speak with the Kazi, for thy wife hath complained of thee to him and her favour is thus and thus." He recognised her by their description; and

saying, "May Allah Almighty torment her!" walked with them till he came to the Kazi's presence, where he found Fatimah standing with her arm bound up and her face-veil besmeared with blood; and she was weeping and wiping away her tears.

Quoth the Kazi, "Ho man, hast thou no fear of Allah the Most High? Why hast thou beaten this good woman and broken her forearm and knocked out her tooth and entreated her thus?" And quoth Ma'aruf, "If I beat her or put out her tooth, sentence me to what thou wilt; but in truth the case was thus and thus and the neighbours made peace between me and her." And he told him the story from first to last. Now this Kazi was a benevolent man; so he brought out to him a quarter-dinar, saying, "O man, take this and get her Kunafah with bees' honey and do ye make peace, thou and she." Quoth Ma'aruf, "Give it to her." So she took it and the Kazi made peace between them, saying, "O wife, obey thy husband; and thou, O man, deal kindly with her." Then they left the court, reconciled at the Kazi's hands, and the woman went one way, whilst her husband returned by another way to his shop and sat there, when, behold, the runners came up to him and said, "Give us our fee." Quoth he, "The Kazi took not of me aught; on the contrary, he gave me a quarter-dinar." But quoth they, "'Tis no concern of ours whether the Kazi took of thee or gave to thee, and if thou give us not our fee, we will exact it in despite of thee." And they fell to dragging him about the market; so he sold his tools and gave them half a dinar, whereupon they let him go and went away, whilst he put his hand to his cheek and sat sorrowful, for that he had no tools wherewith to work.

Presently, up came two ill-favoured fellows and said to him, "Come, O man, and speak with the Kazi; for they wife hath complained of thee to him." Said he, "He made peace between us just now." But said they, "We come from another Kazi, and thy wife hath complained of thee to our Kazi." So he arose and went with them to their Kazi, calling on Allah for aid against her; and when he saw her, he said to her, "Did we not make peace, good woman?" Whereupon she cried, "There abideth no peace between me and thee." According he came forward and told the Kazi his story, adding, "And indeed the Kazi Such-an-one made peace between us this very hour." Whereupon the Kazi said to her, "O strumpet, since ye two have

made peace each with other, why comest thou to me complaining?" Quoth she, "He beat me after that"; but quoth the Kazi, "Make peace each with other, and beat her not again, and she will cross thee no more." So they made peace and the Kazi said to Ma'aruf, "Give the runners their fee." So he gave them their fee and going back to his shop, opened it and sat down, as he were a drunken man for excess of the chagrin which befell him. Presently, while he was still sitting, behold, a man came up to him and said, "O Ma'aruf, rise and hide thyself, for they wife hath complained of thee to the High Court and Abu Tabak is after thee." So he shut his shop and fled towards he Gate of Victory. He had five nusfs of silver left of the price of the lasts and gear; and therewith he bought four worth of bread and one of cheese, as he fled from her.

Now it was the winter season and the hour of mid-afternoon prayer; so, when he came out among the rubbish-mounds the rain descended upon him, like water from the mouths of water-skins, and his clothes were drenched. He therefore entered the 'Adiliyah, where he saw a ruined place and therein a deserted cell without a door; and in it he took refuge and found shelter from the rain. The tears streamed from his eyelids, and he fell to complaining of what had betided him and saying, "Whither shall I flee from this whore? I beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me one who shall conduct me to a far country, where she shall not know the way to me!" Now while he sat weeping, behold, the wall clave and there came forth to him therefrom one of tall stature, whose aspect caused his body-pile to bristle and his flesh to creep, and said to him, "O man, what aileth thee that thou disturbest me this night? These two hundred years have I dwelt here and have never seen any enter this place and do as thou dost. Tell me what thou wishest and I will accomplish thy need, as ruth for thee hath got hold upon my heart." Quoth Ma'aruf, "Who and what art thou?"; and quoth he, "I am the Haunter of this place." So Ma'aruf told him all that had befallen him with his wife and he said, "Wilt thou have me convey thee to a country where thy wife shall know no way to thee?" "Yes," said Ma'aruf; and the other, "Then mount my back."

So he mounted on his back and he flew with him from after supper-tide till daybreak, when he set him down on the top of a high mountain and said to him, "O mortal, descend this

mountain and thou wilt see the gate of a city. Enter it, for therein thy wife cannot come at thee." He then left him and went his way, whilst Ma'aruf abode in amazement and perplexity till the sun rose, when he said to himself, "I will up with me and go down into the city: indeed there is no profit in my abiding upon this highland." So he descended to the mountain-foot and saw a city girt by towering walls, full of lofty palaces and gold-adorned buildings which was a delight to beholders. He entered in at the gate and found it a place such as lightened the grieving heart; but, as he walked through the streets the townsfolk stared at him as a curiosity and gathered about him, marvelling at his dress, for it was unlike theirs. Presently, one of them said to him, "O man, art thou a stranger?" "Yes." "What countryman art thou?" "I am from the city of Cairo the Auspicious." "And when didst thou leave Cairo?" "I left it yesterday, at the hour of afternoon-prayer." Whereupon the man laughed at him and cried out, saying, "Come look, O folk, at this man and hear what he saith!" Quoth they, "What doth he say?"; and quoth the townsman, "He pretendeth that he cometh from Cairo and left it yesterday at the hour of afternoon-prayer!"

At this they all laughed and gathering round Ma'aruf, said to him, "O man, art thou mad to talk thus? How canst thou pretend that thou leftest Cairo at mid-afternoon yesterday and foundest thyself this morning here, when the truth is that between our city and Cairo lieth a full year's journey?" Quoth he, "None is mad but you. As for me, I speak sooth, for here is bread which I brought with me from Cairo, and see, 'tis yet new." Then he showed them the bread and they stared at it, for it was unlike their country bread. So the crowd increased about him and they said to one another, "This is Cairo bread: look at it"; and he became a gazing-stock in the city and some believed him, whilst others gave him the lie and made mock of him. Whilst this was going on, behold, up came a merchant riding on a she-mule and followed by two black slaves, and brake a way through the people, saying, "O folk, are ye not ashamed to mob this stranger and make mock of him and scoff at him?" And he went on to rate them till he drave them away from Ma'aruf, and none could make him any answer. Then he said to the stranger, "Come, O my brother, no harm shall betide thee from these folk. Verily they have no shame."

So he took him and carrying him to a spacious and richly adorned house, seated him in a speak-room fit for a King, whilst he gave an order to his slaves, who opened a chest and brought out to him a dress such as might be worn by a merchant worth a thousand. He clad him therewith and Ma'aruf, being a seemly man, became as he were Consul of the Merchants. Then his host called for food and they set before him a tray of all manner exquisite viands. The twain ate and drank and the merchant said to Ma'aruf, "O my brother, what is thy name?" "My name is Ma'aruf and I am a cobbler by trade and patch old shoes." "What countryman art thou?" "I am from Cairo." "What quarter?" "Dost thou know Cairo?" "I am of its children. I come from the Red Street." "And whom dost thou know in the Red Street?" "I know such an one and such an one," answered Ma'aruf and named several people to him. Quoth the other, "Knowest thou Shaykh Ahmad the druggist?" "He was my next neighbour, wall to wall." "Is he well?" "Yes." "How many sons hath he?" "Three, Mustafa, Mohammed and Ali." "And what hath Allah done with them?" "As for Mustafa, he is well and he is a learned man, and professor. Mohammed is a druggist and opened him a shop beside that of his father, after he had married, and his wife hath borne him a son named Hasan." "Allah gladden thee with good news!" said the merchant; and Ma'aruf continued, "As for Ali, he was my friend, when we were boys, and we always played together, I and he. We used to go in the guise of the children of the Nazarenes and enter the church and steal the books of the Christians and sell them and buy food with the price. It chanced once that the Nazarenes caught us with a book; whereupon they complained of us to our folk and said to Ali's father, 'An thou hinder not thy son from troubling us, we will complain of thee to the King.' So he appeased them and gave Ali a thrashing; wherefore he ran away none knew whither and he hath now been absent twenty years and no man hath brought news of him."

Quoth the host, "I am that very Ali, son of Shaykh Ahmad the druggist, and thou art my playmate Ma'aruf."[1] So they saluted each other and after the salam Ali said, "Tell me why,

[1] This thoroughly dramatic scene is told with a charming naïveté. No wonder that *The Nights* has been made the basis of a national theatre amongst the Turks.

O Ma'aruf, thou camest from Cairo to this city." Then he told him all that had befallen him of ill-doing with his wife Fatimah the Dung and said, " So, when her annoy waxed on me, I fled from her towards the Gate of Victory and went forth the city. Presently, the rain fell heavy on me; so I entered a ruined cell in the 'Adiliyah and sat there, weeping; whereupon there came forth to me the Haunter of the place, which was an Ifrit of the Jinn, and questioned me. I acquainted him with my case and he took me on his back and flew with me all night between heaven and earth, till he set me down on yonder mountain and gave me to know of this city. So I came down from the mountain and entered the city, when the people crowded about me and questioned me. I told them that I had left Cairo yesterday, but they believed me not, and presently thou camest up and driving the folk away from me, carriedst me to this house. Such, then, is the cause of my quitting Cairo; and thou, what object brought thee hither?"

Quoth Ali, " The giddiness of folly turned my head when I was seven years old, from which time I wandered from land to land and city to city, till I came to this city, the name whereof is Ikhtiyan al-Khatan. I found its people an hospitable folk and a kindly, compassionate for the poor man and selling to him on credit and believing all he said. So quoth I to them, 'I am a merchant and have preceded my packs and I need a place wherein to bestow my baggage.' And they believed me and assigned me a lodging. Then quoth I to them, 'Is there any of you will lend me a thousand dinars, till my loads arrive, when I will repay it to him; for I am in want of certain things before my goods come?' They gave me what I asked and I went to the merchants' bazar, where, seeing goods, I bought them and sold them next day at a profit of fifty gold pieces and bought others. And I consorted with the folk and entreated them liberally, so that they loved me, and I continued to sell and buy, till I grew rich. Know, O my brother, that the proverb saith, 'The world is show and trickery: and the land where none wotteth thee, there do whatso liketh thee.' Thou too, an thou say to all who ask thee, I'm a cobbler by trade and poor withal, and I fled from my wife and left Cairo yesterday, they will not believe thee and thou wilt be a laughing-stock among them as long as thou abidest in the city; whilst, an thou tell them, an Ifrit brought

me hither, they will take fright at thee and none will come near thee; for they will say, 'This man is possessed of an Ifrit and harm will betide whoso approacheth him.' And such public report will be dishonouring both to thee and to me, because they ken I come from Cairo."

Ma'aruf asked, "How then shall I do?"; and Ali answered, "I will tell thee how thou shalt do, Inshallah! To-morrow I will give thee a thousand dinars and a she-mule to ride and a black slave, who shall walk before thee and guide thee to the gate of the merchants' bazar; and do thou go into them. I will be there sitting amongst them, and when I see thee, I will rise to thee and salute thee with the salam and kiss thy hand and make a great man of thee. Whenever I ask thee of any kind of stuff, saying, 'Hast thou brought with thee aught of such a kind?' do thou answer, 'Plenty.' And if they question me of thee, I will praise thee and magnify thee in their eyes and say to them, 'Get him a storehouse and a shop.' I also will give thee out for a man of great wealth and generosity; and if a beggar come to thee, bestow upon him what thou mayst; so will they put faith in what I say and believe in thy greatness and generosity and love thee. Then will I invite thee to my house and invite all the merchants on thy account and bring together thee and them, so that all may know thee and thou know them, whereby thou shalt sell and buy and take and give with them; nor will it be long ere thou become a man of money."

Accordingly, on the morrow, he gave him a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a black slave and, mounting him on a she-mule, said to him, "Allah give thee quittance of responsibility for all this,[1] inasmuch as thou art my friend and it behoveth me to deal generously with thee. Have no care; but put away from thee the thought of thy wife's misways and name her not to any." "Allah requite thee with good!" replied Ma'aruf, and rode on, preceded by his blackamoor till the slave brought him to the gate of the merchants' bazar, where they were all seated, and amongst them Ali, who, when he saw him, rose and threw himself upon him, crying, "A blessed day, O Merchant Ma'aruf, O man of good works and kindness!" And he kissed his hand before the merchants and said to them, "Our brothers,

[1] *I.e.* "May the Lord soon make thee able to repay me but meanwhile I give it to thee for thy own free use."

ye are honoured by knowing the merchant Ma'aruf." So they saluted him, and Ali signed to them to make much of him, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes. Then Ali helped him to dismount from his she-mule and saluted him with the salam; after which he took the merchants apart, one after other, and vaunted Ma'aruf to them. They asked, "Is this man a merchant?"; and he answered, "Yes; and indeed he is the chiefest of merchants, there liveth not a wealthier than he; for his wealth and the riches of his father and forefathers are famous among the merchants of Cairo. He hath partners in Hind and Sind and Al-Yaman and is high in repute for generosity. So know ye his rank and exalt ye his degree and do him service, and wot also that his coming to your city is not for the sake of traffic, and none other save to divert himself with the sight of folk's countries; indeed, he hath no need of strangerhood for the sake of gain and profit, having wealth that fires cannot consume, and I am one of his servants." And he ceased not to extol him, till they set him above their heads and began to tell one another of his qualities.

Then they gathered round him and offered him junkets and sherbets, and even the Consul of the Merchants came to him and saluted him; whilst Ali proceeded to ask him, in the presence of the traders, "O my lord, haply thou hast brought with thee somewhat of such and such a stuff?"; and Ma'aruf answered, "Plenty." Now Ali had that day shown him various kinds of costly clothes and had taught him the names of the different stuffs, dear and cheap. Then said one of the merchants, "O my lord, hast thou brought with thee yellow broad cloth?"; and Ma'aruf said, "Plenty!" Quoth another, "And gazelles' blood red?"; and quoth the cobbler, "Plenty"; and as often as he asked him of aught, he made the same answer. So the other said, "O Merchant Ali, had thy countryman a mind to transport a thousand loads of costly stuffs, he could do so"; and Ali said, "He would take them from a single one of his storehouses, and miss naught thereof."

Now, whilst they were sitting, behold, up came a beggar and went the round of the merchants. One gave him a half-dirham and another a copper, but most of them gave him nothing, till he came to Ma'aruf who pulled out a handful of gold and gave it to him, whereupon he blessed him and went his ways.

The merchants marvelled at this and said, " Verily, this is a King's bestowal, for he gave the beggar gold without count, and were he not a man of vast wealth and money without end, he had not given a beggar a handful of gold." After a while, there came to him a poor woman and he gave her a handful of gold; whereupon she went away, blessing him, and told other beggars, who came to him, one after other, and he gave them each a handful of gold, till he disbursed the thousand dinars. Then he struck hand upon hand and said, " Allah is our sufficient aid and excellent is the Agent ! " Quoth the Consul, " What aileth thee, O Merchant Ma'aruf ? " ; and quoth he, " It seemeth that the most part of the people of this city are poor and needy; had I known their misery I would have brought with me a large sum of money in my saddle-bags and given largesse thereof to the poor. I fear me I may be long abroad and 'tis not in my nature to baulk a beggar; and I have no gold left; so, if a pauper come to me, what shall I say to him ? " Quoth the Consul, " Say, Allah will send thee thy daily bread ! " ; [1] but Ma'aruf replied, " That is not my practice and I am care-ridden because of this. Would I had other thousand dinars, wherewith to give alms till my baggage come ! " " Have no care for that," quoth the Consul, and sending one of his dependents for a thousand dinars, handed them to Ma'aruf, who went on giving them to every beggar who passed till the call to noon-prayer. Then they entered the cathedral-mosque and prayed the noon-prayers, and what was left him of the thousand gold pieces he scattered on the heads of the worshippers.

This drew the people's attention to him and they blessed him, whilst the merchants marvelled at the abundance of his generosity and openhandedness. Then he turned to another trader, and borrowing of him other thousand ducats gave these also away, while Merchant Ali looked on at what he did, but could not speak. He ceased not to do this till the call to mid-afternoon prayer, when he entered the mosque and prayed and distributed the rest of the money. On this wise, by the time they locked the doors of the bazar,[2] he had borrowed five thousand sequins and

[1] One of the many formulas of polite refusal.

[2] Each bazar, in a large city like Damascus, has its tall and heavy wooden doors which are locked every evening and opened in the morning by the Ghafir or guard The " silver key," however, always lets one in.

given them away, saying to everyone of whom he took aught, "Wait till my baggage come when, if thou desire gold I will give thee gold, and if thou desire stuffs, thou shalt have stuffs; for I have no end of them." At eventide Merchant Ali invited Ma'aruf and the rest of the traders to an entertainment and seated him in the upper end, the place of honour, where he talked of nothing but cloths and jewels, and whenever they made mention to him of aught, he said, "I have plenty of it." Next day, he again repaired to the market-street where he showed a friendly bias towards the merchants and borrowed of them more money, which he distributed to the poor; nor did he leave doing thus twenty days, till he had borrowed threescore thousand dinars and still there came no baggage, no, nor a burning plague.

At last folk began to clamour for their money and say, "The merchant Ma'aruf's baggage cometh not. How long will he take people's monies and give them to the poor?" And quoth one of them, "My rede is that we speak to Merchant Ali." So they went to him and said, "O Merchant Ali, Merchant Ma'aruf's baggage cometh not." Said he, "Have patience, it cannot fail to come soon." Then he took Ma'aruf aside and said to him, "O Ma'aruf, what fashion is this? Did I bid thee brown the bread or burn it? The merchants clamour for their coin and tell me that thou owest them sixty thousand dinars, which thou hast borrowed and given away to the poor. How wilt thou satisfy the folk, seeing that thou neither sellest nor buyest?" Said Ma'aruf, "What matters it, and what are threescore thousand dinars? When my baggage shall come, I will pay them in stuffs or in gold and silver, as they will." Quoth Merchant Ali, "Allah is Most Great! Hast thou then any baggage?"; and he said, "Plenty." Cried the other, "Allah and the Hallows requite thee thine impudence! Did I teach thee this saying, that thou shouldst repeat it to me? But I will acquaint the folk with thee." Ma'aruf rejoined, "Begone and prate no more! Am I a poor man? I have endless wealth in my baggage and as soon as it cometh, they shall have their money's worth, two for one. I have no need of them." At this Merchant Ali waxed wroth and said, "Unmannerly wight that thou art, I will teach thee to lie to me and be not ashamed!" Said Ma'aruf, "E'en work the worst thy hand can do! They must wait till my baggage come, when they shall have their due and more."

So Ali left him and went away, saying in himself, "I praised him whilome and if I blame him now, I make myself out a liar and become of those of whom it is said, 'Whoso praiseth and then blameth lieth twice.'" And he knew not what to do. Presently, the traders came to him and said, "O Merchant Ali, hast thou spoken to him?" Said he, "O folk, I am ashamed and, though he owe me a thousand dinars, I cannot speak to him. When ye lent him your money ye consulted me not; so ye have no claim on me. Dun him yourselves, and if he pay you not, complain of him to the King of the city, saying, 'He is an imposter who hath imposed upon us.' And he will deliver you from the plague of him." Accordingly, they repaired to the King and told him what had passed, saying, "O King of the Age, we are perplexed anent this merchant, whose generosity is excessive; for he doeth thus and thus, and all he borroweth he giveth away to the poor by handfuls. Were he a man of naught, his sense would not suffer him to lavish gold on this wise; and were he a man of wealth, his good faith had been made manifest to us by the coming of his baggage; but we see none of his luggage, although he avoucheth that he hath a baggage-train and hath preceded it. Now some time hath passed, but there appeareth no sign of his baggage-train, and he oweth us sixty thousand gold pieces, all of which he hath given away in alms." And they went on to praise him and extol his generosity.

Now this King was a very covetous man, a more covetous than Ash'ab; and when he heard tell of Ma'aruf's generosity and openhandedness, greed of gain got the better of him and he said to his Wazir, "Were not this merchant a man of immense wealth, he had not shown all this munificence. His baggage-train will assuredly come, whereupon these merchants will flock to him and he will scatter amongst them riches galore. Now I have more right to this money than they; wherefore I have a mind to make friends with him and profess affection for him, so that, when his baggage cometh whatso the merchants would have had I shall get of him; and I will give him my daughter to wife and join his wealth to my wealth." Replied the Wazir, "O King of the Age, methinks he is naught but an imposter, and 'tis the imposter who ruineth the house of the covetous"; and the King said, "O Wazir, I will prove him and soon know

if he be an imposter or a true man and whether he be a reading of Fortune or not." The Wazir asked, "And how wilt thou prove him?"; and the King answered, "I will send for him to the presence and entreat him with honour and give him a jewel which I have. An he know it and wot its price, he is a man of worth and wealth; but an he know it not, he is an imposter and an upstart and I will do him die by the foulest of deaths."

So he sent for Ma'aruf, who came and saluted him. The King returned his salam and, seating him beside himself, said to him, "Art thou the merchant Ma'aruf?"; and said he, "Yes." Quoth the King, "The merchants declare that thou owest them sixty thousand ducats. Is this true?" "Yes," quoth he. Asked the King, "Then why dost thou not give them their money?"; and he answered, "Let them wait till my baggage come and I will repay them twofold. An they wish for gold, they shall have gold; and should they wish for silver, they shall have silver; or an they prefer for merchandise, I will give them merchandise; and to whom I owe a thousand I will give two thousand in requital of that wherewith he hath veiled my face before the poor; for I have plenty." Then said the King, "O merchant, take this and look what is its kind and value." And he gave him a jewel the bigness of a hazel-nut, which he had bought for a thousand sequins and, not having its fellow, prized it highly. Ma'aruf took it and, pressing it between his thumb and forefinger, brake it, for it was brittle and would not brook the squeeze. Quoth the King, "Why hast thou broken the jewel?"; and Ma'aruf laughed and said, "O King of the Age, this is no jewel. This is but a bittock of mineral worth a thousand dinars; why dost thou style it a jewel? A jewel I call such as is worth threescore and ten thousand gold pieces and this is called but a piece of stone. A jewel that is not of the bigness of a walnut hath no worth in my eyes and I take no account thereof. How cometh it, then, that thou, who art King, stylest this thing a jewel, when 'tis but a bit of mineral worth a thousand dinars? But ye are excusable, for that ye are poor folk and have not in your possession things of price."

The King asked, "O merchant, hast thou jewels such as those whereof thou speakest?"; and he answered, "Plenty."

Whereupon avarice overcame the King and he said, "Wilt thou give me real jewels?" Said Ma'aruf, "When my baggage-train shall come, I will give thee no end of jewels; and all that thou canst desire I have in plenty and will give thee, without price." At this the King rejoiced and said to the traders, "Wend your ways and have patience with him, till his baggage arrive, when do ye come to me and receive your monies from me." So they fared forth and the King turned to his Wazir and said to him, "Pay court to Merchant Ma'aruf and take and give with him in talk and bespeak him of my daughter, Princess Dunya, that he may wed her and so we gain these riches he hath." Said the Wazir, "O King of the Age, this man's fashion misliketh me and methinks he is an imposter and a liar: so leave this whereof thou speakest lest thou lose thy daughter for naught." Now this Minister had sued the King aforetime to give him his daughter to wife and he was willing to do so, but when she heard of it she consented not to marry him. Accordingly, the King said to him, "O traitor, thou desirest no good for me, because in past time thou soughtest my daughter in wedlock, but she would none of thee; so now thou wouldst cut off the way of her marriage and wouldst have the Princess lie fallow, that thou mayst take her; but hear from me one word. Thou hast no concern in this matter. How can he be an imposter and a liar, seeing that he knew the price of the jewel, even that for which I bought it, and brake it because it pleased him not? He hath jewels in plenty, and when he goeth in to my daughter and seeth her to be beautiful, she will captivate his reason and he will love her and give her jewels and things of price: but, as for thee, thou wouldst forbid my daughter and myself these good things." So the Minister was silent, for fear of the King's anger, and said to himself, "Set the curs on the cattle!" [1]

Then with show of friendly bias he betook himself to Ma'aruf and said to him, "His highness the King loveth thee and hath a daughter, a winsome lady and a lovesome, to whom he is minded to marry thee. What sayst thou?" Said he, "No harm in that; but let him wait till my baggage come, for marriage settlements on Kings' daughters are large and their rank demandeth that they be not endowed save with a dowry befitting

[1] *I.e.* "Show a miser money and hold him back, if you can."

their degree. At this present I have no money with me till the coming of my baggage, for I have wealth in plenty and needs must I make her marriage portion five thousand purses. Then I shall need a thousand purses to distribute amongst the poor and needy on my wedding night, and other thousand to give to those who walk in the bridal procession and yet other thousand wherewith to provide provaunt for the troops and others;[1] and I shall want an hundred jewels to give to the Princess on the wedding morning and other hundred gems to distribute among the slave-girls and eunuchs, for I must give each of them a jewel in honour of the bride; and I need wherewithal to clothe a thousand naked paupers, and alms, too, needs must be given. All this cannot be done till my baggage come; but I have plenty and, once it is here, I shall make no account of all this outlay."

The Wazir returned to the King and told him what Ma'aruf said, whereupon quoth he, "Since this is his wish, how canst thou style him imposter and liar?" Replied the Minister, "And I cease not to say this." But the King chid him angrily and threatened him, saying, "By the life of my head, an thou cease not this talk, I will slay thee! Go back to him and fetch him to me and I will manage matters with him myself." So the Wazir returned to Ma'aruf and said to him, "Come and speak with the King." "I hear and I obey," said Ma'aruf and went in to the King, who said to him, "Thou shalt not put me off with these excuses, for my treasury is full; so take the keys and spend all thou needest and give what thou wilt and clothe the poor and do thy desire and have no care for the girl and the handmaids. When the baggage shall come, do what thou wilt with thy wife, by way of generosity, and we will have patience with thee anent the marriage portion till then, for there is no manner of difference betwixt me and thee; none at all." Then he sent for the Shaykh Al-Islam and bade him write out the marriage contract between his daughter and Merchant Ma'aruf, and he did so; after which the King gave the signal for beginning the wedding festivities and bade decorate the city.

The kettle-drums beat and the tables were spread with meats of all kinds and there came performers who paraded their tricks. Merchant Ma'aruf sat upon a throne in a parlour and the players

[1] He wants £40,000 to begin with.

and gymnasts and effiminates [1] and dancing-men of wondrous movements and posture-makers of marvellous cunning came before him, whilst he called out to the treasurer and said to him, "Bring gold and silver." So he brought gold and silver and Ma'aruf went round among the spectators and largessed each performer by the handful; and he gave alms to the poor and needy and clothes to the naked and it was a clamorous festival and a right merry. The treasurer could not bring money fast enough from the treasury, and the Wazir's heart was like to burst for rage; but he dared not say a word, whilst Merchant Ali marvelled at this waste of wealth and said to Merchant Ma'aruf, "Allah and the Hallows visit this upon thy head-sides! Doth it not suffice thee to squander the traders' money, but thou must squander that of the King to boot?" Replied Ma'aruf, "'Tis none of thy concern: whenas my baggage shall come, I will requite the King manifold." And he went on lavishing money and saying in himself, "A burning plague! What will happen will happen and there is no flying from that which is fore-ordained."

The festivities ceased not for the space of forty days, and on the one-and-fortieth day, they made the bride's cortège and all the Emirs and troops walked before her. When they brought her in before Ma'aruf, he began scattering gold on the people's heads, and they made her a mighty fine procession, whilst Ma'aruf expended in her honour vast sums of money. Then they brought him in to Princess Dunya and he sat down on the high divan; after which they let fall the curtains and shut the doors and withdrew, leaving him alone with his bride; whereupon he smote hand upon hand and sat awhile sorrowful and saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Quoth the Princess, "O my lord, Allah preserve thee! What aileth thee that thou art troubled?" Quoth he, "And how should I be other than troubled, seeing that thy father hath embarrassed me and done

[1] Arab. "Al-Jink" (from Turk.) are boys and youths, mostly Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Turks, who dress in woman's dress with long hair braided. Lane (M. E. chapters xix and xxv) gives same account of the customs of the "Gink" (as the Egyptians call them), but cannot enter into details concerning these catamites. Respectable Moslems often employ them to dance at festivals in preference to the Ghawazi-women, a freak of Mohammedan decorum. When they grow old they often preserve their costume, and a glance at them makes a European's blood run cold.

with me a deed which is like the burning of green corn ?" She asked, "And what hath my father done with thee ? Tell me !"; and he answered, "He hath brought me in to thee before the coming of my baggage, and I want at very least an hundred jewels to distribute among thy handmaids, to each a jewel, so that she might rejoice therein and say, 'My lord gave me a jewel on the night of his going in to my lady.' This good deed would I have done in honour of thy station and for the increase of thy dignity ; and I have no need to stint myself in lavishing jewels,

for I have of them great plenty." Rejoined she, "Be not concerned for that. As for me, trouble not thyself about me, for I will have patience with thee till thy baggage shall come, and as for my women have no care for them. Rise, doff thy clothes and take thy pleasure ; and when the baggage cometh we shall get the jewels and the rest."

So he arose and putting off his clothes sat down on the bed and sought love-liesse and they fell to toying with each other. He laid his hand on her knee and she sat down in his lap and thrust her lip like a tit-bit of meat into his mouth, and that hour was such as maketh a man to forget his father and his mother. So he clasped her in his arms and strained her fast to his breast and

sucked her lip, till the honey-dew ran out into his mouth; and he laid his hand under her left armpit, whereupon his vitals and her vitals yearned for coition. Then he clapped her between the breast and his hand slipped down between her thighs and she girded him with her legs, whereupon he made of the two parts proof amain and crying out, "O sire of the chin-veils twain!" applied the priming and kindled the match and set it to the touch-hole and gave fire and breached the citadel in its four corners; so there befell the mystery concerning which there is no inquiry; and she cried the cry that needs must be cried. Merchant Ma'aruf abated her maidenhead and that night was one not to be counted among lives for that which it comprised of the enjoyment of the fair, clipping and dallying *langue fourrée* and futtering till the dawn of day, when he arose and entered the Hammam whence, after donning a suit for sovrans suitable he betook himself to the King.

All who were there rose to him and received him with honour and worship, giving him joy and invoking blessings upon him; and he sat down by the King's side and asked, "Where is the treasurer?" They answered, "Here he is, before thee," and he said to him, "Bring robes of honour for all the Wazirs and Emirs and dignitaries and clothe them therewith." The treasurer brought him all he sought and he sat giving to all who came to him and lavishing largesse upon every man according to his station. On this wise he abode twenty days, whilst no baggage appeared for him nor aught else, till the treasurer was straitened by him to the uttermost and going in to the King, as he sat alone with the Wazir in Ma'aruf's absence, kissed the ground between his hands and said, "O King of the Age, I must tell thee somewhat, lest haply thou blame me for not acquainting thee therewith. Know that the treasury is being exhausted; there is none but a little money left in it and in ten days more we shall shut it upon emptiness." Quoth the King, "O Wazir, verily my son-in-law's baggage-train tarrieth long and there appeareth no news thereof." The Minister laughed and said, "Allah be gracious to thee, O King of the Age! Thou art none other but heedless with respect to this imposter, this liar. As thy head liveth, there is no baggage for him, no, nor a burning plague to rid us of him! Nay, he hath but imposed on thee without surcease, so that he hath wasted thy treasures and

married thy daughter for naught. How long therefore wilt thou be heedless of this liar?"

Then quoth the King, "O Wazir, how shall we do to learn the truth of his case?" and quoth the Wazir, "O King of the Age, none may come at a man's secret but his wife; so send for thy daughter and let her come behind the curtain, that I may question her of the truth of his estate, to the intent that she may make question of him and acquaint us with his case." Cried the King, "There is no harm in that; and as my head liveth, if it be proved that he is a liar and an imposter, I will verily do him die by the foulest of deaths!" Then he carried the Wazir into the sitting-chamber and sent for his daughter, who came behind the curtain, her husband being absent, and said, "What wouldst thou, O my father?" Said he "Speak with the Wazir." So she asked, "Ho thou, the Wazir, what is thy will?"; and he answered, "O my lady, thou must know that thy husband hath squandered thy father's substance and married thee without a dower; and he ceaseth not to promise us and break his promises, nor cometh there any tidings of his baggage; in short we would have thee inform us concerning him." Quoth she, "Indeed his words be many, and he still cometh and promiseth me jewels and treasures and costly stuffs; but I see nothing." Quoth the Wazir, "O my lady, canst thou this night take and give with him in talk and whisper to him, 'Say me sooth and fear from me naught, for thou art become my husband and I will not transgress against thee. So tell me the truth of the matter and I will devise thee a device whereby thou shalt be set at rest.' And do thou play near and far[1] with him in words and profess love to him and win him to confess and after tell us the facts of his case." And she answered, "O my papa, I know how I will make proof of him."

Then she went away and after supper her husband came in to her, according to his wont, whereupon Princess Dunya rose to him and took him under the armpit and wheedled him with winsomest wheedling (and all-sufficient are women's wiles whenas she would aught of men); and she ceased not to caress him and beguile him with speech sweeter than the honey till she stole his reason; and when she saw that he altogether inclined to her, she said to him, "O my beloved, O coolth of

[1] As we should say, "play fast and loose."

my eyes and fruit of my vitals, Allah never desolate me by less of thee nor Time sunder us twain me and thee! Indeed, the love of thee hath homed in my heart and the fire of passion hath consumed my liver, nor will I ever forsake thee or transgress against thee. But I would have thee tell me the truth, for that the sleights of falsehood profit not, nor do they secure credit at all seasons. How long wilt thou impose upon my father and lie to him? I fear lest thine affair be discovered to him, ere we can devise some device and he lay violent hands upon thee? So acquaint me with the facts of the case for naught shall befall thee save that which shall begladden thee; and, when thou shalt have spoken sooth, fear not harm shall betide thee. How often wilt thou declare that thou art a merchant and a man of money and hast a luggage-train? This long while past thou sayest, 'My baggage! my baggage!' but there appeareth no sign of thy baggage, and visible in thy face is anxiety on this account. So an there be no worthy in thy words, tell me and I will contrive thee a contrivance whereby thou shalt come off safe, Inshallah!"

He replied, "I will tell thee the truth, and then do thou whatso thou wilt." Rejoined she, "Speak and look thou speak soothly; for sooth is the ark of safety, and beware of lying, for it dishonoureth the liar. He said, "Know, then, O my lady, that I am no merchant and have no baggage, no, nor a burning plague; nay, I was but a cobbler in my own country and had a wife called Fatimah the Dung, with whom there befell me this and that." And he told her his story from beginning to end; whereat she laughed and said, "Verily, thou art clever in the practice of lying and imposture!" Whereto he answered, "O my lady, may Allah Almighty preserve thee to veil sins and countervail chagrins!" Rejoined she, "Know, that thou imposedst upon my sire and deceivedst him by dint of thy deluding vaunts, so that of his greed for gain he married me to thee. Then thou squanderedst his wealth and the Wazir beareth thee a grudge for this. How many a time hath he spoken against thee to my father, saying, 'Indeed, he is an imposter, a liar!' But my sire hearkened not to his say, for that he had sought me in wedlock and I consented not that he be baron and I femme. However, the time grew longsome upon my sire and he became straitened and said to me, 'Make him confess.' So I have made

thee confess and that which was covered is discovered. Now my father purposeth thee a mischief because of this; but thou art become my husband and I will never transgress against thee.

"An I told my father what I have learnt from thee, he would be certified of thy falsehood and imposture and that thou imposedst upon Kings' daughters and squanderest royal wealth: so would thine offence find with him no pardon and he would slay thee sans a doubt: wherefore it would be bruited among the folk that I married a man who was a liar, an imposter, and this would smirch mine honour. Furthermore an he kill thee, most like he will require me to wed another, and to such thing I will never consent; no, not though I die! So rise now and don a Mameluke's dress and take these fifty thousand dinars of my monies, and mount a swift steed and get thee to a land whither the rule of my father doth not reach. Then make thee a merchant and send me a letter by a courier who shall bring it privily to me, that I may know in what land thou art, so I may send thee all my hand can attain. Thus shall thy wealth wax great and if my father die, I will send for thee, and thou shalt return in respect and honour; and if we die, thou or I, and go to the mercy of God the Most Great, the Resurrection shall unite us. This, then, is the rede that is right: and while we both abide alive and well, I will not cease to send thee letters and monies. Arise ere the day wax bright and thou be in perplexed plight and perdition upon thy head alight!"

Quoth he, "O my lady, I beseech thee of thy favour to bid me farewell with thine embracement"; and quoth she, "No harm in that." So he embraced her and knew her carnally; after which he made the Ghusl-ablution; then, donning the dress of a white slave, he bade the syces saddle him a thorough-bred steed. Accordingly, they saddled him a courser and he mounted and farewelling his wife, rode forth the city at the last of the night, whilst all who saw him deemed him one of the Mamelukes of the Sultan going abroad on some business.

Next morning, the King and his Wazir repaired to the sitting-chamber and sent for Princess Dunya who came behind the curtain; and her father said to her, "O my daughter, what sayst thou?" Said she, "I say, Allah blacken thy Wazir's face, because he would have blackened my face in my husband's eyes!"

Asked the King, "How so?" and she answered, "He came in to me yesterday, but before I could name the matter to him, behold, in walked Faraj the Chief Eunuch, letter in hand, and said, 'Ten white slaves stand under the palace window and have given me this letter, saying, "Kiss for us the hands of our lord, Merchant Ma'aruf, and give him this letter, for we are of his Mamelukes with the baggage, and it hath reached us that he hath wedded the King's daughter, so we are come to acquaint him with that which befell us by the way."' Accordingly, I took the letter and read as follows: 'From the five hundred Mamelukes to his highness our lord Merchant Ma'aruf. But further. We give thee to know that, after thou quittedst us, the Arabs came out upon us and attacked us. They were two thousand horse and we five hundred mounted slaves and there befell a mighty sore fight between us and them. They hindered us from the road thirty days doing battle with them and this is the cause of our tarrying from thee. They also took from us of the luggage two hundred loads of cloth and slew of us fifty Mamelukes.'

"When the news reached my husband he cried, 'Allah disappoint them! What aileth them to wage war with the Arabs for the sake of two hundred loads of merchandise? What are two hundred loads? It behoved them not to tarry on that account, for verily the value of the two hundred loads is only some seven thousand dinars. But needs must I go to them and hasten them. As for that which the Arabs have taken, 'twill not be missed from the baggage, nor doth it weigh with me a whit, for I reckon it as if I had given it to them by way of alms.' Then he went down from me, laughing and taking no concern for the wastage of his wealth nor the slaughter of his slaves. As soon as he was gone, I looked out from the lattice and saw the ten Mamelukes who had brought him the letter, as they were moons, each clad in a suit of clothes worth two thousand dinars, there is not with my father a chattel to match one of them. He went forth with them to bring up his baggage and hallowed be Allah who hindered me from saying to him aught of that thou badest me, for he would have made mock of me and thee, and haply he would have eyed me with the eye of disparagement and hated me. But the fault is all with thy Wazir, who speaketh against my husband words that befit him not."

Replied the King, "O my daughter, thy husband's wealth is indeed endless and he recketh not of it; for, from the day he entered our city, he hath done naught but give alms to the poor. Inshallah, he will speedily return with the baggage, and good in plenty shall betide us from him." And he went on to appease her and menace the Wazir, being duped by her device.

So fared it with the King; but as regards Merchant Ma'aruf he rode on into waste lands, perplexed and knowing not to what quarter he should betake him; and for the anguish of parting he lamented and in the pangs of passion and love-longing he wept with sore weeping, for indeed the ways were walled up before his face and death seemed to him better than dreeing life, and he walked on like a drunken man for stress of distraction, and stayed not till noontide, when he came to a little town and saw a plougher hard by, ploughing with a yoke of bulls. Now hunger was sore upon him; and he went up to the ploughman and said to him, "Peace be with thee!"; and he returned his salam and said to him, "Welcome, O my lord! Art thou one of the Sultan's Mamelukes?" Quoth Ma'aruf, "Yes"; and the other said, "Alight with me for a guest-meal." Whereupon Ma'aruf knew him to be of the liberal and said to him, "O my brother, I see with thee naught with which thou mayst feed me: how is it, then, that thou invitest me?" Answered the husbandman, "O my lord, weal is well nigh. Dismount thee here: the town is near hand and I will go and fetch thee dinner and fodder for thy stallion." Rejoined Ma'aruf, "Since the town is near at hand, I can go thither as quickly as thou canst and buy me what I have a mind to in the bazar and eat." The peasant replied, "O my lord, the place is but a little village and there is no bazar there, neither selling nor buying. So I conjure thee by Allah, alight here with me and hearten my heart, and I will run thither and return to thee in haste."

Accordingly, he dismounted and the Fellah left him and went off to the village, to fetch dinner for him whilst Ma'aruf sat awaiting him. Presently he said in himself, "I have taken this poor man away from his work; but I will arise and plough in his stead, till he come back, to make up for having hindered him from his work." Then he took the plough and starting the bulls, ploughed a little, till the share struck against something and the beasts stopped. He goaded them on, but they could

not move the plough; so he looked at the share and finding it caught in a ring of gold, cleared away the soil and saw that it was set centre-most a slab of alabaster, the size of the nether millstone. He strave at the stone till he pulled it from its place, when there appeared beneath it a souterrain with a stair. Presently he descended the flight of steps and came to a place like a Hammam, with four daïses, the first full of gold, from floor to roof, the second full of emeralds and pearls and coral also from ground to ceiling; the third of jacinths and rubies and turquoises and the fourth of diamonds and all manner other preciousest stones. At the upper end of the place stood a coffer of clearest crystal, full of union-gems each the size of a walnut, and upon the coffer lay a casket of gold, the bigness of a lemon. When he saw this, he marvelled and rejoiced with joy exceeding and said to himself, "I wonder what is in this casket?"

So he opened it and found therein a seal-ring of gold, whereon were graven names and talismans, as they were the tracks of creeping ants. He rubbed the ring and behold a voice said, "Adsum! Here am I, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given unto thee. Wilt thou raise a city or ruin a capital or kill a king or dig a river-channel or aught of the kind? Whatso thou seekest, it shall come to pass, by leave of the King of All-might, Creator of day and night." Ma'afur asked, "O creature of my lord, who and what art thou?"; and the other answered, "I am the slave of this seal-ring standing in the service of him who possesseth it. Whatsoever he seeketh, that I accomplish for him, and I have no excuse in neglecting that he biddeth me do; because I am Sultan over two-and-seventy tribes of the Jinn, each two-and-seventy thousand in number every one of which thousand ruleth over a thousand Marids, each Marid over a thousand Ifrits, each Ifrit over a thousand Satans and each Satan over a thousand Jinn: and they are all under command of me and may not gainsay me. As for me, I am spelled to this seal-ring and may not thwart whoso holdeth it. Lo! thou hast gotten hold of it and I am become thy slave; so ask what thou wilt, for I hearken to thy word and obey thy bidding; and if thou have need of me at any time, by land or by sea, rub the signet-ring and thou wilt find me with thee. But beware of rubbing it twice in succession, or thou wilt consume me with the fire of the names graven thereon; and thus wouldst thou lose

me and after regret me. Now I have acquainted thee with my case and—the Peace!"

Ma'aruf asked him, "What is thy name?" and the Jinni answered, "My name is Abu al-Sa'adat." Quoth Ma'aruf, "O Abu al-Sa'adat what is this place and who enchanted thee in this casket?"; and quoth he, "O my lord, this is a treasure called the Hoard of Shaddad son of Ad, him who the base of 'Many-columned Iram laid, the like of which in the lands was never

made.' I was his slave in his lifetime and this is his seal-ring, which he laid up in his treasure; but it hath fallen to thy lot." Ma'aruf inquired, "Canst thou transport that which is in this hoard to the surface of the earth?"; and the Jinni replied, "Yes! Nothing were easier." Said Ma'aruf, "Bring it forth and leave naught." So the Jinni signed with his hand to the ground, which clave asunder, and he sank and was absent a little while. Presently, there came forth young boys full of grace, and fair of face bearing golden baskets filled with gold which they emptied out and going away, returned with more;

nor did they cease to transport the gold and jewels, till ere an hour had sped they said, "Naught is left in the hoard." Thereupon out came Abu al-Sa'adat and said to Ma'aruf, "O my lord, thou seest that we have brought forth all that was in the hoard." Ma'aruf asked, "Who be these beautiful boys?" and the Jinni answered, "They are my sons. This matter merited not that I should muster for it the Marids, wherefore my sons have done thy desire and are honoured by such service. So ask what thou wilt beside this."

Quoth Ma'aruf, "Canst thou bring me he-mules and chests and fill the chests with the treasure and load them on the mules?" Quoth Abu al-Sa'adat, "Nothing easier," and cried a great cry; whereupon his sons presented themselves before him, to the number of eight hundred, and he said to them, "Let some of you take the semblance of he-mules and others of muleteers and handsome Mamelukes, the like of the least of whom is not found with any of the Kings; and others of you be transmewed to muleteers, and the rest to menials." So seven hundred of them changed themselves into bât-mules and other hundred took the shape of slaves. Then Abu al-Sa'adat called upon his Marids, who presented themselves between his hands and he commanded some of them to assume the aspect of horses saddled with saddles of gold crusted with jewels. And when Ma'aruf saw them do as he bade he cried, "Where be the chests?" They brought them before him and he said, "Pack the gold and the stones, each sort by itself." So they packed them and loaded three hundred he-mules with them. Then asked Ma'aruf, "O Abu al-Sa'adat, canst thou bring me some loads of costly stuffs?"; and the Jinni answered, "Wilt thou have Egyptian stuffs or Syrian or Persian or Greek?" Ma'aruf said, "Bring me an hundred loads of each kind, on five hundred mules"; and Abu al-Sa'adat, "O my lord accord me delay that I may dispose my Marids for this and send a company of them to each country to fetch an hundred loads of its stuffs and then take the form of he-mules and return, carrying the stuffs." Ma'aruf inquired, "What time dost thou want?"; and Abu al-Sa'adat replied, "The time of the blackness of the night, and day shall not dawn ere thou have all thou desirest." Said Ma'aruf, "I grant thee this time," and bade them pitch him a pavilion.

So they pitched it and he sat down therein and they brought

him a table of food. Then said Abu al-Sa'adat to him, " O my lord, tarry thou in this tent and these my sons shall guard thee: so fear thou nothing; for I go to muster my Marids and despatch them to do thy desire." So saying, he departed, leaving Ma'aruf seated in the pavilion with the table before him and the Jinni's sons attending upon him, in the guise of slaves and servants and suite. And while he sat in this state behold, up came the husbandman, with a great porringer of lentils and a nosebag full of barley and seeing the pavilion pitched and the Mamelukes standing, hands upon breasts, thought that the Sultan was come and had halted on that stead. So he stood open-mouthed and said in himself, " Would I had killed a couple of chickens and fried them red with clarified cow-butter for the Sultan!" And he would have turned back to kill the chickens as a regale for the Sultan; but Ma'aruf saw him and cried out to him and said to the Mamelukes, " Bring him hither." So they brought him and his porringer of lentils before Ma'aruf, who said to him, " What is this?" Said the peasant, " This is thy dinner and thy horse's fodder! Excuse me, for I thought not that the Sultan would come hither; and, had I known that, I would have killed a couple of chickens and entertained him in goodly guise." Quoth Ma'aruf, " The Sultan is not come. I am his son-in-law and I was vexed with him. However, he hath sent his officers to make his peace with me, and now I am minded to return to the city. But thou hast made me this guest-meal without knowing me, and I accept it from thee, lentils though it be, and will not eat save of thy cheer."

Accordingly he bade him set the porringer amiddlemost the table and ate of it his sufficiency, whilst the Fellah filled his belly with those rich meats. Then Ma'aruf washed his hands and gave the Mamelukes leave to eat; so they fell upon the remains of the meal and ate; and, when the porringer was empty, he filled it with gold and gave it to the peasant, saying, " Carry this to thy dwelling and come to me in the city, and I will entreat thee with honour." Thereupon the peasant took the porringer full of gold and returned to the village, driving the bulls before him and deeming himself akin to the King. Meanwhile, they brought Ma'aruf girls of the Brides of the Treasure, who smote on instruments of music and danced before him, and he passed that night in joyance and delight, a night not to be reckoned among

lives. Hardly had dawned the day when there arose a great cloud of dust, which presently lifting discovered seven hundred mules laden with stuffs and attended by muleteers and baggage-tenders and cresset-bearers. With them came Abu al-Sa'adat, riding on a she-mule, in the guise of a caravan-leader, and before him was a travelling-litter, with four corner-terminals of glittering red gold, set with gems. When Abu al-Sa'adat came up to the tent, he dismounted and, kissing the earth, said to Ma'aruf, "O my lord, thy desire hath been done to the uttermost and in the litter is a treasure-suit which hath not its match among Kings' raiment; so don it and mount the litter and bid us do what thou wilt." Quoth Ma'aruf, "O Abu al-Sa'adat, I wish thee to go to the city of Ikhtiyan al-Khatan and present thyself to my father-in-law the King; and go thou not in to him but in the guise of a mortal courier"; and quoth he, "To hear is to obey."

So Ma'aruf wrote a letter to the Sultan and sealed it and Abu al-Sa'adat took it and set out with it; and when he arrived, he found the King saying, "O Wazir, indeed my heart is concerned for my son-in-law and I fear lest the Arabs slay him. Would Heaven I wot whither he was bound, that I might have followed him with the troops! Would he had told me his destination!" Said the Wazir, "Allah be merciful to thee for this thy heedlessness! As thy head liveth, the wight saw that we were awake to him and feared dishonour and fled, for he is nothing but an imposter—a liar." And behold, at this moment in came the courier and, kissing the ground before the King, wished him permanent glory and prosperity and length of life. Asked the King, "Who art thou and what is thy business?" "I am a courier," answered the Jinni, "and thy son-in-law, who is come with the baggage, sendeth me to thee with a letter, and here it is!" So he took the letter and read therein these words, "After salutations galore to our uncle[1] the glorious King! Know that I am at hand with the baggage-train; so come thou forth to meet me with the troops." Cried the King, "Allah blacken thy brow, O Wazir! How often wilt thou defame my son-in-law's name and call him liar and imposter? Behold, he is come with the baggage-train and thou art naught but a

[1] Arab. "Amm" = father's brother, courteously used for "father-in-law," which suggests having slept with his daughter and which is indecent in writing. Thus, by a pleasant fiction, the husband represents himself as having married his first cousin.

traitor." The Minister hung his head groundwards in shame and confusion and replied, " O King of the Age, I said not this save because of the long delay of the baggage and because I feared the loss of the wealth he had wasted." The King exclaimed, " O traitor, what are my riches ! Now that his baggage is come he will give me plenty in their stead." Then he bade decorate the city, and going in to his daughter said to her, " Good news for thee ! Thy husband will be here anon with his baggage; for he hath sent me a letter to that effect and here am I now going forth to meet him."

The Princess Dunya marvelled at this and said in herself, " This is a wondrous thing ! Was he laughing at me and making mock of me, or had he a mind to try me, when he told me that he was a pauper ? But Alhamdolillah, Glory to God, for that I failed not of my duty to him ! " On this wise fared it in the palace; but as regards Merchant Ali, the Cairene, when he saw the decoration of the city and asked the cause thereof, they said to him, " The baggage-train of Merchant Ma'aruf, the King's son-in-law, is come." Said he, " Allah is Almighty ! What a calamity is this man ! He came to me, fleeing from his wife, and he was a poor man. Whence then should he get a baggage-train ? But haply this is a device which the King's daughter hath contrived for him, fearing his disgrace, and Kings are not unable to do anything. May Allah the Most High veil his fame and not bring him to public shame ! " And all the merchants rejoiced and were glad for that they would get their monies. Then the King assembled his troops and rode forth, whilst Abu al-Sa'adat returned to Ma'aruf and acquainted him with the delivering of the letter. Quoth Ma'aruf, " Bind on the loads " ; and when they had done so, he donned the treasure-suit, and mounting the litter became a thousand times greater and more majestic than the King.

Then he set forward; but, when he had gone half-way, behold, the King met him with the troops, and seeing him riding in the Takhtrawan and clad in the dress aforesaid, threw himself upon him and saluted him, and giving him joy of his safety, greeted him with the greeting of peace. Then all the lords of the land saluted him and it was made manifest that he had spoken the truth and that in him there was no lie. Presently he entered the city in such state procession as would have caused

the gall-bladder of the lion to burst for envy, and the traders pressed up to him and kissed his hands, whilst Merchant Ali said to him, "Thou hast played off this trick and it hath prospered to thy hand, O Shaykh of Imposters! But thou deservest it and may Allah the Most High increase thee of His bounty!"; whereupon Ma'aruf laughed. Then he entered the palace, and sitting down on the throne said, "Carry the loads of gold into the treasury of my uncle the King and bring me the bales of cloth." So they brought them to him and opened them before him, bale after bale, till they had unpacked the seven hundred loads, whereof he chose out the best and said, "Bear these to Princess Dunya that she may distribute them among her slave-girls; and carry her also this coffer of jewels, that she may divide them among her handmaids and eunuchs."

Then he proceeded to make over to the merchants in whose debt he was stuffs by way of payment for their arrears, giving him whose due was a thousand, stuffs worth two thousand or more; after which he fell to distributing to the poor and needy, whilst the King looked on with greedy eyes and could not hinder him; nor did he cease largesse till he had made an end of the seven hundred loads, when he turned to the troops and proceeded to apportion amongst them emeralds and rubies and pearls and coral and other jewels by handfuls, without count, till the King said to him, "Enough of this giving, O my son! There is but little left of the baggage." But he said, "I have plenty." Then indeed, his good faith was become manifest and none could give him the lie; and he had come to reck not of giving, for that the Slave of the Seal-ring brought him whatsoever he sought. Presently, the treasurer came in to the King and said, "O King of the Age, the treasury is full indeed and will not hold the rest of the loads. Where shall we lay that which is left of the gold and jewels?" And he assigned to him another place. As for the Princess Dunya, when she saw this, her joy redoubled and she marvelled and said in herself, "Would I wot how came he by all this wealth!" In like manner the traders rejoiced in that which he had given them and blessed him; whilst Merchant Ali marvelled and said to himself, "I wonder how he hath lied and swindled, that he hath gotten him all these treasures? Had they come from the King's daughter, he had not wasted them on this wise!"

So far concerning him; but as regards the King, he also marvelled with passing marvel at that which he saw of Ma'aruf's generosity and openhandedness in the largesse of wealth. Then the merchant went in to his wife, who met him, smiling and laughing-lipped, and kissed his hand, saying, "Didst thou mock me or hadst thou a mind to prove me with thy saying, 'I am a poor man and a fugitive from my wife?' Praised be Allah for that I failed not of my duty to thee! For thou art my beloved and there is none dearer to me than thou, whether thou be rich or poor. But I would have thee tell me what didst thou design by these words." Said Ma'aruf, "I wished to prove thee and see whether thy love were sincere or for the sake of wealth and the greed of worldly good. But now 'tis become manifest to me that thine affection is sincere, and as thou art a true woman, so welcome to thee! I know thy worth." Then he went apart into a place by himself and rubbed the seal-ring, whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat presented himself and said to him, "Adsum, at thy service; Ask what thou wilt." Quoth Ma'aruf, "I want a treasure-suit and treasure-trinkets for my wife, including a necklace of forty unique jewels." Quoth the Jinni, "To hear is to obey," and brought him what he sought, whereupon Ma'aruf dismissed him, and carrying the dress and ornaments in to his wife, laid them before her and said, "Take these and put them on and welcome!" When she saw this, her wits fled for joy, and she found among the ornaments a pair of anklets of gold set with jewels of the handiwork of the magicians, and bracelets and ear-rings and a belt such as no money could buy. So she donned the dress and ornaments and said to Ma'aruf, "O my lord, I will treasure these up for holidays and festivals." But he answered, "Wear them always, for I have others in plenty." And when she put them on and her women beheld her, they rejoiced and bussed his hands.

Then he left them, and going apart by himself rubbed the seal-ring, whereupon its slave appeared and he said to him, "Bring me an hundred suits of apparel, with their ornaments of gold." "Hearing and obeying," answered Abu al Sa'adat and brought him the hundred suits, each with its ornaments wrapped up within it. Ma'aruf took them and called aloud to the slave-girls, who came to him and he gave them each a suit; so they donned them and became like the black-eyed girls of Paradise

whilst the Princess Dunyá shone amongst them as the moon among the stars. One of the handmaids told the King of this and he came in to his daughter and saw her and her women dazzling all who beheld them; whereat he wondered with passing wonderment. Then he went out, and calling his Wazir, said to him, "O Wazir, such and such things have happened; what sayst thou now of this affair?" Said he, "O King of the Age, this be no merchant's fashion; for a merchant keepeth a piece of linen by him for years and selleth it not but at a profit. How should a merchant have generosity such as this generosity, and whence should he get the like of these monies and jewels, of which but a slight matter is found with the Kings? So how should loads thereof be found with merchants? Needs must there be a cause for this; but, an thou wilt hearken to me, I will make the truth of the case manifest to thee." Answered the King, "O Wazir, I will do thy bidding." Rejoined the Minister, "Do thou foregather with thy son-in-law and make a show of affect to him and talk with him and say, 'O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, I and thou and the Wazir, but no more, to a flower garden that we may take our pleasure there. When we come to the garden, we will set on the table wine, and I will ply him therewith and compel him to drink; for, when he shall have drunken, he will lose his reason and his judgment will forsake him. Then we will question him of the truth of his case and he will discover to us his secrets, for wine is a traitor. Then we shall ken his case and may deal with him as we will; because I fear for thee the consequences of this his present fashion; haply he will covet the kingship and win over the troops by generosity and lavishing money and so depose thee and take the kingdom from thee."

"Thou hast spoken sooth!" said the King, and they passed the night on this agreement. And when morning morrowed the King went forth and sat in the guest-chamber, when, lo and behold! the grooms and serving-men came in to him in dismay. Quoth he, "What hath befallen you?"; and quoth they, "O King of the Age, the Syces curried the horses and foddered them and the he-mules which brought the baggage; but, when we arose in the morning, we found that thy son-in-law's Mamelukes had stolen the horses and mules. We searched the stables, but found neither horse nor mule; so we entered the lodging of the

Mamelukes and found none there nor know we how they fled."

The King marvelled at this, u[illegible]wing that the horses and Mamelukes were all Ifrits, the subjects of the Slave of the Spell, and asked the grooms, "O accursed, how could a thousand beasts and five hundred slaves and servants flee without your knowledge?" Answered they, "We know not how it happened"; and he cried, "Go, and when your lord cometh forth of the harim, tell him the case." So they went out from before the King and sat down bewildered, till Ma'aruf came out and, seeing them chagrined, inquired of them, "What may be the matter?" They told him all that had happened and he said, "What is their worth that ye should be concerned for them? Wend your ways." And he sat laughing and was neither angry nor grieved concerning the case; whereupon the King looked in the Wazir's face and said to him, "What manner of man is this, with whom wealth is of no worth? Needs must there be a reason for this!"

Then they talked with him awhile and the King said to him, "O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, I, thou and the Wazir, to a garden, where we may divert ourselves." "No harm in that," said Ma'aruf. So they went forth to a flower garden, wherein every sort of fruit was of kinds twain and its waters were flowing and its trees towering and its birds carolling. There they entered a pavilion, whose sight did away sorrow from the soul, and sat talking, whilst the Minister entertained them with rare tales and quoted merry quips and mirth-provoking sayings and Ma'aruf attentively listened, till the time of dinner came, when they set on a tray of meats and a flagon of wine. When they had eaten and washed hands, the Wazir filled the cup and gave it to the King, who drank it off; then he filled a second and handed it to Ma'aruf, saying, "Take the cup of the drink to which Reason boweth neck in reverence." Quoth Ma'aruf, "What is this, O Wazir?"; and quoth he, "This is the grizzled[1] virgin and the old maid long kept at home,[2] the giver of joy to hearts." And he ceased not to egg him on to the drink, naming to him such of the virtues of wine as he thought well, and

[1] Arab. "Shamta," one of the many names of wine, the "speckled" alluding to the bubbles which dance upon the freshly filled cup.

[2] *I.e.* in the cask. These "merry quips" strongly suggest the dismal toasts of our not remote ancestors.

reciting to him what occurred to him of poetry and pleasantries on the subject, till Ma'aruf addressed himself to sucking the cup-lips and cared no longer for aught else. The Wazir ceased not to fill for him and he to drink and enjoy himself and make merry, till his wits wandered and he could not distinguish right from wrong.

When the Minister saw that drunkenness had attained in him to utterest and the bounds transgressed, he said to him, "By Allah, O Merchant Ma'aruf, I admire whence thou gottest these jewels whose like the Kings of the Chosroës possess not! In all our lives never saw we a merchant that had heaped up riches like unto thine or more generous than thou, for thy doings are the doings of Kings and not merchants' doings. Wherefore, Allah upon thee, do thou acquaint me with this, that I may know thy rank and condition." And he went on to test him with questions and cajole him, till Ma'aruf, being reft of reason, said to him, "I'm neither merchant nor King," and told him his whole story from first to last. Then said the Wazir, "I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord Ma'aruf, show us the ring, that we may see its make." So, in his drunkenness, he pulled off the ring and said, "Take it and look upon it." The Minister took it and turning it over, said, "If I rub it, will its slave appear?" Replied Ma'aruf, "Yes. Rub it and he will appear to thee, and do thou divert thyself with the sight of him." Thereupon the Wazir rubbed the ring and behold forthright appeared the Jinni and said, "Adsum, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given to thee. Wilt thou ruin a city or raise a capital or kill a king? Whatso thou seekest, I will do for thee, sans fail."

The Wazir pointed to Ma'aruf and said, "Take up yonder wretch and cast him down in the most desolate of desert lands, where he shall find nothing to eat nor drink, so he may die of hunger and perish miserably, and none know of him." Accordingly, the Jinni snatched him up and flew with him betwixt heaven and earth, which when Ma'aruf saw, he made sure of destruction and wept and said, "O Abu al-Sa'adat, whither goest thou with me?" Replied the Jinni, "I go to cast thee down in the Desert Quarter, O ill-bred wight of gross wits. Shall one have the like of this talisman and give it to the folk to gaze at? Verily, thou deservest that which hath befallen thee; and but

that I fear Allah, I would let thee fall from a height of a thousand fathoms, nor shouldst thou reach the earth, till the winds had torn thee to shreds." Ma'aruf was silent[1] and did not again bespeak him till he reached the Desert Quarter and casting him down there, went away and left him in that horrible place.

So much for concerning him; but returning to the Wazir who was now in possession of the talisman, he said to the King, "How deemest thou now? Did I not tell thee that this fellow was a liar, an imposter, but thou wouldst not credit me?" Replied the King, "Thou wast in the right, O my Wazir, Allah grant thee weal! But give me the ring, that I may solace myself with the sight." The Minister looked at him angrily and spat in his face, saying, "O lack-wits, how shall I give it to thee and abide thy servant, after I am become thy master? But I will spare thee no more on life." Then he rubbed the seal-ring and said to the Slave, "Take up this ill-mannered churl and cast him down by his son-in-law the swindler-man." So the Jinni took him up and flew off with him, whereupon quoth the King to him, "O creature of my Lord, what is my crime?" Abu al-Sa'adat replied, "That wot I not, but my master hath commanded me and I cannot cross whoso hath compassed the enchanted ring." Then he flew on with him, till he came to the Desert Quarter and, casting him down where he had cast Ma'aruf, left him and returned. The King hearing Ma'aruf weeping, went up to him and acquainted him with his case; and they sat weeping over that which had befallen them and found neither meat nor drink.

Meanwhile the Minister, after driving father-in-law and son-in-law from the country, went forth from the garden and summoning all the troops held a Divan, and told them what he had done with the King and Ma'aruf and acquainted them with the affair of the talisman, adding, "Unless ye make me Sultan over you, I will bid the Slave of the Seal-ring take you up one and all and cast you down in the Desert Quarter, where you shall die of hunger and thirst." They replied, "Do us no damage, for we accept thee as Sultan over us and will not anywise gainsay thy bidding." So they agreed, in their own despite, to his being Sultan over them, and he bestowed on them rodes

[1] This is the noble resignation of the Moslem. What a dialogue there would have been in a European book between man and devil!

of honour, seeking all he had a mind to of Abu al-Sa'adat, who brought it to him forthwith. Then he sat down on the throne and the troops did homage to him; and he sent to Princess Dunya, the King's daughter, saying, "Make thee ready, for I mean to come in unto thee this night, because I long for thee with love." When she heard this, she wept, for the case of her husband and father was grievous to her, and sent to him saying, "Have patience with me till my period of widowhood[1] be ended: then draw up thy contract of marriage with me and go in to me according to law." But he sent back to say to her, "I know neither period of widowhood nor to delay have I a mood; and I need not a contract nor know I lawful from unlawful; but needs must I go in unto thee this night."

She answered him saying, "So be it, then, and welcome to thee!"; but this was a trick on her part. When the answer reached the Wazir, he rejoiced and his breast was broadened, for that he was passionately in love with her. He bade set food before all the folk, saying, "Eat; this is my bride-feast; for I purpose to go in to the Princess Dunya this night." Quoth the Shaykh al-Islam, "It is not lawful for thee to go in unto her till her days of widowhood be ended and thou have drawn up thy contract of marriage with her." But he answered, "I know neither days of widowhood nor other period; so multiply not words on me." The Shaykh Al-Islam was silent, fearing his mischief, and said to the troops, "Verily, this man is a Kafir, a Miscreant, and hath neither creed nor religious conduct." As soon as it was evenfall, he went in to her and found her robed in her richest raiment and decked with her goodliest adornments. When she saw him, she came to meet him, laughing and said, "A blessed night! But hadst thou slain my father and my husband, it had been more to my mind." And he said, "There is no help but I slay them."

Then she made him sit down and began to jest with him and make show of love, caressing him and smiling in his face so that his reason fled; but she cajoled him with her coaxing and cunning only that she might get possession of the ring and change

[1] Arab. "Al-'iddah," the period of four months and ten days which must elapse before she could legally marry again. But this was a palpable wile: she was not sure of her husband's death and he had not divorced her: so that although a "grass widow," a "Strohwitwe" as the Germans say, she could not wed again either with or without interval.

his joy into calamity on the mother of his forehead. When he saw her caress him and smile upon him, desire surged up in him and he besought her of carnal knowledge; but, when he approached her, she drew away from him and burst into tears, saying, "O my lord, seest thou not the man looking at us? I conjure thee by Allah screen me from his eyes! How canst thou know me what while he looketh on us?" When he heard this, he was angry and asked, "Where is the man?"; and answered she, "There he is, in the bezel of the ring! putting out his head and staring at us." He thought that the Jinni was looking at them and said laughing, "Fear not; this is the Slave of the Seal-ring, and he is subject to me." Quoth she, "I am afraid of Ifrits; pull it off and throw it afar from me." So he plucked it off and laying it on the cushion, drew near to her, but she dealt him a kick, her foot striking him full in the stomach, and he fell over on his back senseless; whereupon she cried out to her attendants, who came to her in haste, and said to them, "Seize him!" So forty slave-girls laid hold on him, whilst she hurriedly snatched up the ring from the cushion and rubbed it; whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat presented himself, saying, "Adsum, at thy service O my mistress."

Cried she, "Take up yonder Infidel and clap him in jail and shackle him heavily." So he took him and throwing him into the Prison of Wrath [1] returned and reported, "I have laid him in limbo." Quoth she, "Whither wentest thou with my father and my husband?"; and quoth he, "I cast them down in the Desert Quarter." Then cried she, "I command thee to fetch them to me forthwith." He replied, "I hear and I obey," and taking flight at once, stayed not till he reached the Desert Quarter, where he lighted down upon them and found them sitting weeping and complaining each to other. Quoth he, "Fear not, for relief is come to you"; and he told them what the Wazir had done, adding, "Indeed I imprisoned him with my own hands in obedience to her, and she hath bidden me bear you back." And they rejoiced in his news. Then he took them both up and flew home with them; nor was it more than an hour before he brought them in to Princess Dunya, who rose and saluted sire and spouse. Then she made them sit down and brought

[1] Arab. "Sijn al-Ghazab," the dungeons appropriated to the worst of criminals, where they suffer penalties far worse than hanging or guillotining.

them food and sweetmeats, and they passed the rest of the night with her.

On the next day she clad them in rich clothing and said to the King, "O my papa, sit thou upon thy throne and be King as before and make my husband thy Wazir of the Right and tell thy troops that which hath happened. Then send for the Minister out of prison and do him die, and after burn him, for that he is a Miscreant, and would have gone in unto me in the way of lewdness, without the rites of wedlock and he hath testified against himself that he is an Infidel and believeth in no religion. And do tenderly by thy son-in-law, whom thou makest thy Wazir of the Right." He replied, "Hearing and obeying, O my daughter. But do thou give me the ring or give it to thy husband." Quoth she, "It behoveth not that either thou or he have the ring. I will keep the ring myself, and belike I shall be more careful of it than you. Whatso ye wish seek it of me and I will demand it for you of the Slave of the Seal-ring. So fear no harm so long as I live and after my death, do what ye twain will with the ring." Quoth the King, "This is the right rede, O my daughter," and taking his son-in-law went forth to the Divan. Now the troops had passed the night in sore chagrin for Princess Dunya and that which the Wazir had done with her, in going in to her after the way of lewdness, without marriage-rites, and for his ill-usage of the King and Ma'aruf, and they feared lest the law of Al-Islam be dishonoured, because it was manifest to them that he was a Kafir. So they assembled in the Divan and fell to reproaching the Shaykh Al-Islam, saying, "Why didst thou not forbid him from going in to the Princess in the way of lewdness?" Said he, "O folk, the man is a Miscreant and hath gotten possession of the ring and I and you may not prevail against him. But Almighty Allah will requite him his deed, and be ye silent, lest he slay you."

And as the host was thus engaged in talk, behold the King and Ma'aruf entered the Divan. Then the King bade decorate the city and sent to fetch the Wazir from the place of duresse. So they brought him, and as he passed by the troops, they cursed him and abused him and menaced him, till he came to the King, who commanded to do him dead by the vilest of deaths. Accordingly, they slew him and after burned his body, and he went to Hell after the foulest of plights. The King made Ma'aruf his

Wazir of the Right and the times were pleasant to them and their joys were untroubled.

They abode thus five years till, in the sixth year, the King died and Princess Dunya made Ma'aruf Sultan in her father's stead, but she gave him not the seal-ring. During this time she had conceived by him and borne him a boy of passing loveliness, excelling in beauty and perfection, who ceased not to be reared in the laps of nurses till he reached the age of five, when his mother fell sick of a deadly sickness and calling her husband to her, said to him, "I am ill." Quoth he, "Allah preserve thee, O dearling of my heart!" But quoth she, "Haply I shall die and thou needest not that I commend to thy care thy son: wherefore I charge thee but be careful of the ring, for thine own sake and for the sake of this thy boy." And he answered, "No harm shall befall him whom Allah preserveth!" Then she pulled off the ring and gave it to him, and on the morrow she was admitted to the mercy of Allah the Most High, whilst Ma'aruf abode in possession of the Kingship and applied himself to the business of governing.

Now it chanced that one day, as he shook the handkerchief and the troops withdrew to their places that he betook himself to the sitting-chamber, where he sat till the day departed and the night advanced with murks bedight. Then came in to him his cup-companions of the notables according to their custom, and sat with him by way of solace and diversion, till midnight, when they craved permission to withdraw. He gave them leave and they retired to their houses; after which there came in to him a slave-girl affected to the service of his bed, who spread him the mattress and doffing his apparel, clad him in his sleeping-gown. Then he lay down and she kneaded his feet, till sleep overpowered him; whereupon she withdrew to her own chamber and slept. But suddenly he felt something beside him in the bed and awaking started up in alarm and cried, "I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the stoned!" Then he opened his eyes and seeing by his side a woman foul of favour, said to her, "Who art thou?" Said she, "Fear not, I am thy wife Fatimah al-Urrah." Whereupon he looked in her face and knew her by her loathly form and the length of her dog-teeth: so he asked her, "Whence camest thou in to me and who brought thee to this country?" "In what country art thou at this present?" "In the city of Ikhtiyan

al-Khatan. But thou, when didst thou leave Cairo?" "But now." "How can that be?"

"Know," said she, "that, when I fell out with thee and Satan prompted me to do thee a damage, I complained of thee to the magistrates, who sought for thee and the Kazis inquired of thee, but found thee not. When two days were past, repentance gat hold upon me and I knew that the fault was with me; but penitence availed me not, and I abode for some days weeping for thy loss, till what was in my hand failed and I was obliged to beg my bread. So I fell to begging of all, from the courted rich to the contemned poor, and since thou leftest me, I have eaten of the bitterness of beggary and have been in the sorriest of conditions. Every night I sat beweeping our separation and that which I suffered, since thy departure, of humiliation and ignominy, of abjection and misery." And she went on to tell him what had befallen her, whilst he stared at her in amazement, till she said, "Yesterday, I went about begging all day but none gave me aught; and as often as I accosted anyone and craved of him a crust of bread, he reviled me and gave me naught. When night came, I went to bed supperless, and hunger burned me and sore on me was that which I suffered: and I sat weeping when, behold, one appeared to me and said, 'O woman why weepest thou?' Said I, 'Erst I had a husband who used to provide for me and fulfil my wishes; but he is lost to me and I know not whither he went and have been in sore straits since he left me.' Asked he, 'What is thy husband's name?' and I answered, 'His name is Ma'aruf.' Quoth he, 'I ken him. Know that thy husband is now Sultan in a certain city, and if thou wilt, I will carry thee to him.' Cried I, 'I am under thy protection: of thy bounty bring me to him!' So he took me up and flew with me between heaven and earth, till he brought me to this pavilion and said to me, 'Enter yonder chamber, and thou shalt see thy husband asleep on the couch.' Accordingly I entered and found thee in this state of lordship. Indeed I had not thought thou wouldst forsake me, who am thy mate, and praised be Allah who hath united thee with me!"

Quoth Ma'aruf, "Did I forsake thee or thou me? Thou complainedst of me from Kazi to Kazi and endedst by denouncing me to the High Court and bringing down on me Abu Tabak from the Citadel: so I fled in mine own despite." And he went

on to tell her all that had befallen him and how he was become Sultan and had married the King's daughter and how his beloved Dunya had died, leaving him a son who was then seven years old. She rejoined, "That which happened was fore-ordained of Allah; but I repent me and I place myself under thy protection beseeching thee not to abandon me, but suffer me eat bread, with thee by way of an alms." And she ceased not to humble herself to him and to supplicate him till his heart relented towards her and he said, "Repent from mischief and abide with me, and naught shall betide thee save what shall pleasure thee: but, an thou work any wickedness, I will slay thee nor fear anyone. And fancy not that thou canst complain of me to the High Court and that Abu Tabak will come down on me from the Citadel; for I am become Sultan and the folk dread me: but I fear none save Allah Almighty, because I have a talismanic ring which when I rub, the Slave of the Signet appeareth to me. His name is Abu al-Sa'adat, and whatsoever I demand of him he bringeth to me. So, an thou desire to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall suffice thee all thy life long and will send thee thither speedily; but, an thou desire to abide with me, I will clear for thee a palace and furnish it with the choicest of silks and appoint thee twenty slave-girls to serve thee and provide thee with dainty dishes and sumptuous suits, and thou shalt be a Queen and live in all delight till thou die or I die. What sayest thou of this?" "I wish to abide with thee," she answered and kissed his hand and vowed repentance from frowardness.

Accordingly he set apart a palace for her sole use and gave her slave-girls and eunuchs, and she became a Queen. The young Prince used to visit her as he visited his sire; but she hated him for that he was not her son; and when the boy saw that she looked on him with the eye of aversion and anger, he shunned her and took a dislike to her. As for Ma'aruf, he occupied himself with the love of fair handmaidens and bethought him not of his wife Fatimah the Dung, for that she was grown a grizzled old fright, foul-favoured to the sight, a bald-headed blight, loathlier than the snake speckled black and white; the more that she had beyond measure evil entreated him aforetime; and as said the adage, "Ill-usage the root of desire disparts and sows hate in the soil of hearts." And indeed Ma'aruf had not

given her shelter by reason of any praiseworthy quality in her, but he dealt with her thus generously only of desire for the approval of Allah Almighty.

Now when she saw that he held aloof from her bed and occupied himself with other women, she hated him and jealousy gat the mastery of her and Iblis prompted her to take the seal-ring from him and slay him and make herself Queen in his stead. So she went forth one night from her pavilion, intending for that in which was her husband King Ma'aruf; and it chanced by decree of the Decreer and His written destiny, that Ma'aruf lay that night with one of his concubines; a damsel endowed with beauty and loveliness, symmetry and a stature all grace. And it was his wont, of the excellence of his piety, that, when he was minded to have to lie with a woman, he would doff the enchanted seal-ring from his finger, in reverence to the Holy Names graven thereon, and lay it on the pillow, nor would he don it again till he had purified himself by the Ghusl-ablution. Moreover, when he had lain with a woman, he was used to order her go forth from him before daybreak, of his fear for the seal-ring; and when he went to the Hammam he locked the door of the pavilion till his return, when he put on the ring, and after this, all were free to enter according to custom. His wife Fatimah the Dung knew of all this and went not forth from her place till she had certified herself of the case. So she sallied out, when the night was dark, purposing to go in to him, whilst he was drowned in sleep, and steal the ring, unseen of him.

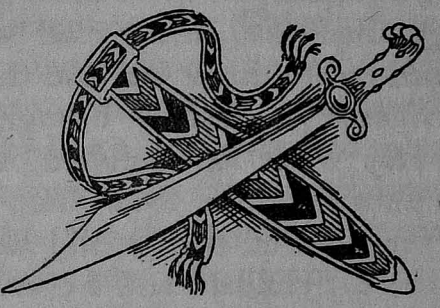
Now it chanced at this time that the King's son had gone out, without light, to the Chapel of Ease for an occasion, and sat down over the marble slab of the jakes in the dark, leaving the door open. Presently, he saw Fatimah come forth of her pavilion and make stealthily for that of his father and said in himself, "What aileth this witch to leave her lodging in the dead of night and make for my father's pavilion? Needs must there be some reason for this": so he went out after her and followed in her steps unseen of her. Now he had a short sword of watered steel, which he held so dear that he went not to his father's Divan, except he were girt therewith; and his father used to laugh at him and exclaim, "Mahallah! This is a mighty fine sword of thine, O my son! But thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head therewith." Whereupon the

boy would reply, "I will not fail to cut off with it some head which deserveth cutting." And Ma'aruf would laugh at his words. Now when treading in her track, he drew the sword from its sheath and he followed her till she came to his father's pavilion and entered, whilst he stood and watched her from the door. He saw her searching about and heard her say to herself, "Where hath he laid the seal-ring?"; whereby he knew that she was looking for the ring and he waited till she found it and said, "Here it is." Then she picked it up and turned to go out; but he hid behind the door. As she came forth, she looked at the ring and turned it about in her grasp. But when she was about to rub it, he raised his hand with the sword and smote her on the neck; and she cried a single cry and fell down dead.

With this Ma'aruf awoke and seeing his wife strown on the ground, with her blood flowing, and his son standing with the drawn sword in his hand, said to him, "What is this, O my son?" He replied, "O my father, how often hast thou said to me, 'Thou hast a mighty fine sword; but thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head'? And I have answered thee, saying, 'I will not fail to cut off with it a head which deserveth cutting.' And now, behold, I have therewith cut off for thee a head well worth the cutting!" And he told him what had passed. Ma'aruf sought for the seal-ring, but found it not; so he searched the dead woman's body till he saw her hand closed upon it; whereupon he took it from her grasp and said to the boy, "Thou art indeed my very son, without doubt or dispute; Allah ease thee in this world and the next, even as thou hast eased me of this vile woman! Her attempt led only to her own destruction."

Then King Ma'aruf called aloud to some of his attendants, who came in haste, and he told them what his wife Fatimah the Dung had done and bade them to take her and lay her in a place till the morning. They did his bidding, and next day he gave her in charge to a number of eunuchs, who washed her and shrouded her and made her a tomb and buried her. Thus her coming from Cairo was but to her grave. After this, King Ma'aruf sent for the husbandman, whose guest he had been when he was a fugitive, and made him his Wazir of the Right and his Chief Counsellor. Then, learning that he had a daughter of passing beauty and loveliness, of qualities nature-ennobled

at birth and exalted of worth, he took her to wife; and in due time he married his son. So they abode awhile in all solace of life and its delight and their days were serene and their joys untroubled, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Societies, the Depopulator of Populous Places and the Orphaner of Sons and Daughters. And glory be to the Living who dieth not and in whose hand are the Keys of the Seen and the Unseen!



CONCLUSION

NOW, during this time, Shahrazad had borne the King three boy-children: so, when she had made an end of the story of Ma'aruf, she rose to her feet and kissing the ground before him, said, "O King of the time and unique one of the age and the tide, I am thine handmaid and these thousand nights and a night have I entertained thee with stories of folk gone before and admonitory instances of the men of yore. May I then make bold to crave a boon of thy Highness?" He replied, "Ask, O Shahrazad, and it shall be granted to thee." Whereupon she cried out to the nurses and the eunuchs, saying, "Bring me my children." So they brought them to her in haste, and they were three boy-children, one walking, one crawling and one sucking. She took them and setting them before the King, again kissed the ground and said, "O King of the Age, these are thy children and I crave that thou release me from the doom of death, as a dole to these infants; for, an thou kill me, they will become motherless and will find none among women to rear them as they should be reared." When the King heard this, he wept and straining the boys to his bosom, said, "By Allah, O Shahrazad, I pardoned thee before the coming of these children, for that I found thee chaste, pure, ingenuous and pious! Allah bless thee and thy father and thy mother and thy root and thy branch! I take the Almighty to witness against me that I exempt thee from aught that can harm thee."

So she kissed his hands and feet and rejoiced with exceeding joy, saying, "The Lord make thy life long and increase thee in dignity and majesty!"; presently adding, "Thou marvellest

at that which befell thee on the part of women; yet there betided the Kings of the Chosroës before thee greater mishaps and more grievous than that which hath befallen thee, and indeed I have set forth unto thee that which happened to Caliphs and Kings and others with their women, but the relation is longsome and hearkening groweth tedious, and in this is all-sufficient warning for the man of wits and admonishment for the wise." Then she ceased to speak, and when King Shahryar heard her speech and profited by that which she said, he summoned up his reasoning powers and cleansed his heart and caused his understanding revert and turned to Allah Almighty and said to himself, "Since there befell the Kings of the Chosroës more than that which hath befallen me, never, whilst I live, shall I cease to blame myself for the past. As for this Shahrazad, her like is not found in the lands; so praise be to Him who appointed her a means for delivering His creatures from oppression and slaughter!" Then he arose from his seance and kissed her head, whereat she rejoiced, she and her sister Dunyazad, with exceeding joy.

When the morning morrowed, the King went forth and, sitting down on the throne of the Kingship, summoned the Lords of his land; whereupon the Chamberlains and Nabobs and Captains of the host went in to him and kissed the ground before him. He distinguished the Wazir, Shahrazad's sire, with special favour and bestowed on him a costly and splendid robe of honour and entreated him with the utmost kindness, and said to him, "Allah protect thee for that thou gavest me to wife thy noble daughter, who hath been the means of my repentance from slaying the daughters of folk. Indeed I have found her pure and pious, chaste and ingenuous, and Allah hath vouchsafed me by her three boy-children; wherefore praised be He for his passing favour." Then he bestowed robes of honour upon his Wazirs, and Emirs and Chief Officers and he set forth to them briefly that which had betided him with Shahrazad and how he had turned from his former ways and repented him of what he had done and purposed to take the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, to wife and let draw up the marriage contract with her. When those who were present heard this, they kissed the ground before him and blessed him and his betrothed Shahrazad, and the Wazir thanked her. Then Shahryar made an end of his sitting in all weal, whereupon the folk dispersed to their dwelling-places

and the news was bruited abroad that the King purposed to marry the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad. Then he proceeded to make ready the wedding-gear, and presently he sent after his brother, King Shah Zaman, who came, and King Shahryar went forth to meet him with the troops.

Furthermore, they decorated the city after the goodliest fashion and diffused scents from censers and burnt aloes-wood and other perfumes in all the markets and thoroughfares and rubbed themselves with saffron, what while the drums beat and the flutes sounded and mimes and mountebanks played and plied their arts and the King lavished on them gifts and largesse; and in very deed it was a notable day. When they came to the palace, King Shahryar commanded to spread the tables with beasts roasted whole and sweetmeats and all manner of viands and bade the crier cry to the folk that they should come up to the Divan and eat and drink and that this should be a means of reconciliation between him and them. So, high and low, great and small came up unto him and they abode on that wise, eating and drinking, seven days with their nights. Then the King shut himself up with his brother and related to him that which had betided him with the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, during the past three years and told him what he had heard from her of proverbs and parables, chronicles and pleasantries, quips and jests, stories and anecdotes, dialogues and histories, and elegies and other verses; whereat King Shah Zaman marvelled with the uttermost marvel and said, "Fain would I take her younger sister to wife, so we may be two brothers-german to two sisters-german, and they on like wise be sisters to us; for that the calamity which befell me was the cause of our discovering that which befell thee and all this time of three years past I have taken no delight in woman, save that I lie each night with a damsel of my kingdom, and every morning I do her to death; but now I desire to marry thy wife's sister Dunyazad."

When King Shahryar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced with joy exceeding and, arising forthright, went in to his wife Shahrazad and acquainted her with that which his brother purposed, namely, that he sought her sister Dunyazad in wedlock; whereupon she answered, "O King of the Age, we seek of him one condition, to wit, that he take up his abode with us, for that I cannot brook to be parted from my sister an hour, because we

were brought up together and may not endure separation each from other. If he accept this pact, she is his handmaid." King Shahriyar returned to his brother and acquainted him with that which Shahrazad had said; and he replied, "Indeed, this is what was in my mind, for that I desire nevermore to be parted from thee one hour. As for the kingdom, Allah the Most High shall send to it whomso He chooseth, for that I have no longer a desire for the kingship." When King Shahryar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced exceedingly and said, "Verily, this is what I wished, O my brother. So Alhamdolillah—Praised be Allah—who hath brought about union between us." Then he sent after the Kazis and Olema, Captains and Notables, and they married the two brothers to the two sisters. The contracts were written out and the two kings bestowed robes of honour of silk and satin on those who were present, whilst the city was decorated and the rejoicings were renewed.

The King commanded each Emir and Wazir and Chamberlain and Nabob to decorate his palace and the folk of the city were gladdened by the presage of happiness and contentment. King Shahriyar also bade slaughter sheep and set up kitchens and made bride-feasts and fed all comers, high and low; and he gave alms to the poor and needy and extended his bounty to great and small. Then the eunuchs went forth, that they might perfume the Hammam for the brides; so they scented it with rose-water and willow-flower-water and pods of musk and fumigated it with Kakili eagle-wood and ambergris. Then Shahrazad entered, she and her sister Dunyazad, and they cleansed their heads and clipped their hair. When they came forth of the Hammam bath, they donned raiment and ornaments, such as men were wont prepare for the Kings of the Chosroës; and among Shahrazad's apparel was a dress purfled with red gold and wrought with counterfeit presentments of birds and beasts. And the two sisters encircled their necks with necklaces of jewels of price, in the like whereof Iskander rejoiced not, for therein were great jewels such as amazed the wit and dazzled the eye; and the imagination was bewildered at their charms, for indeed each of them was brighter than the sun and the moon. Before them they lighted brilliant flambeaux of wax in candelabra of gold, but their faces outshone the flambeaux, for that they had eyes sharper than unsheathed swords and the lashes of their eyelids

bewitched all hearts. Their cheeks were rosy red and their necks and shapes gracefully swayed and their eyes wantoned like the gazelle's; and the slave-girls came to meet them with instruments of music. Then the two kings entered the Hammam bath, and when they came forth, they sat down on a couch set with pearls and gems, whereupon the two sisters came up to them and stood between their hands, as they were moons, bending and leaning from side to side in their beauty and loveli-

ness. Presently they brought forward Shahrazad and displayed her, for the first dress, in a red suit; whereupon King Shahryar rose to look upon her and the wits of all present, men and women, were bewitched for that she was even as saith of her one of her describers:

A sun on wand in knoll of sand she showed,
Clad in her cramoisy-hued chemisette:
Of her lips' honey-dew she gave me drink
And with her rosy cheeks quencht fire she set.

Then they attired Dunyazad in a dress of blue brocade and she became as she were the full moon when it shineth forth. So they displayed her in this, for the first dress, before King Shah Zaman, who rejoiced in her and wellnigh swooned away for love-longing and amorous desire; yea, he was distraught with passion for her, whenas he saw her, because she was as saith of her one of her describers in these couplets:

She comes apparelled in an azure vest
Ultramarine as skies are deckt and dight:
I view'd th' unparallel'd sight, which showed my eyes
A Summer-moon upon a Winter-night.

Then they returned to Shahrazad and displayed her in the second dress, a suit of surpassing goodliness, and veiled her face with her hair like a chin-veil. Moreover, they let down her side-locks and she was even as saith one of her describers in these couplets:

O hail to him whose locks his cheeks o'ershade,
Who slew my life by cruel hard despight:
Said I, "Hast veiled the Morn in Night?" He said,
"Nay I but veil Moon in hue of Night."

Then they displayed Dunyazad in a second and a third and a fourth dress and she paced forward like the rising sun, and swayed to and fro in the insolence of beauty; and she was even as saith the poet of her in these couplets:

The sun of beauty she to all appears
And, lovely coy she mocks all loveliness:
And when he fronts her favour and her smile
A-morn, the sun of day in clouds must dress.

Then they displayed Shahrazad in the third dress and the fourth and the fifth and she became as she were a Ban-branch snell or a thirsting gazelle, lovely of face and perfect in attributes of grace, even as saith of her one in these couplets:

She comes like fullest moon on happy night,
Taper of waist with shape of magic might:
She hath an eye whose glances quell mankind,
And ruby on her cheeks reflects his light:
Enveils her hips the blackness of her hair;
Beware of curls that bite with viper-bite!

Her sides are silken-soft, that while the heart
Mere rock behind that surface 'scapes our sight:
From the fringed curtains of her eyne she shoots
Shafts that at furthest range on mark alight.

Then they returned to Dunyazad and displayed her in the fifth dress and in the sixth, which was green, when she surpassed with her loveliness the fair of the four quarters of the world and outvied, with the brightness of her countenance, the full moon at rising tide; for she was even as saith of her the poet in these couplets:

A damsel 'twas the tirer's art had decked with snare and sleight,
And robed with rays as though the sun from her had borrowed light:
She came before us wondrous clad in chemisette of green,
As veilèd by his leafy screen Pomegranate hides from sight:
And when he said, "How callest thou the fashion of thy dress?"
She answered us in pleasant way with double-meaning dight,
"We call this garment *crève-cœur*; and rightly is it hight,
For many a heart wi' this we brake and harried many a sprite."

Then they displayed Shahrazad in the sixth and seventh dresses and clad her in youth's clothing, whereupon she came forward swaying from side to side and coquettishly moving, and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled all eyes with her glances. She shook her sides and swayed her haunches, then put her hair on sword-hilt and went up to King Shahryar, who embraced her as hospitable host embraceth guest, and threatened her in her ear with the taking of the sword; and she was even as saith of her the poet in these words:

Were not the Murk of gender male,
Than feminines surpassing fair,
Tirewomen they had grudged the bride,
Who made her beard and whiskers wear!

Thus also they did with her sister Dunyazad, and when they had made an end of the display the King bestowed robes of honour on all who were present and sent the brides to their own apartments. Then Shahrazad went in to King Shahryar, and Dunyazad to King Shah Zaman, and each of them solaced himself with the company of his beloved consort and the hearts of the folk were comforted. When morning morrowed, the Wazir came in to the two kings and kissed the ground before them; wherefore they thanked him and were large of bounty to him.

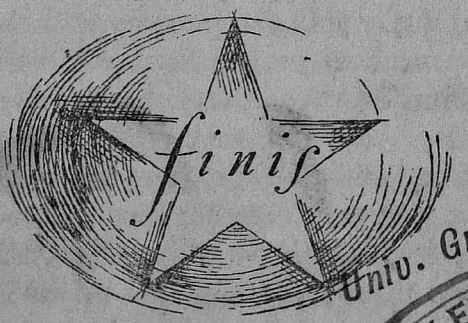
Presently they went forth and sat down upon couches of kingship, whilst all the Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees and Lords of the land presented themselves and kissed the ground. King Shahryar ordered them dresses of honour and largesse and they prayed for the permanence and prosperity of the King and his brother. Then the two sovrans appointed their sire-in-law the Wazir to be Viceroy in Samarcand and assigned him five of the Chief Emirs to accompany him, charging them attend him and do him service. The Minister kissed the ground and prayed that they might be vouchsafed length of life; then he went in to his daughters, whilst the Eunuchs and Ushers walked before him, and saluted them and farewelled them. They kissed his hands and gave him joy of the kingship and bestowed on him immense treasures; after which he took leave of them and, setting out, fared days and nights, till he came near Samarcand, where the townspeople met him at a distance of three marches and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy. So he entered the city and they decorated the houses and it was a notable day. He sat down on the throne of his kingship and the Wazirs did him homage and the Grandees and Emirs of Samarcand and all prayed that he might be vouchsafed justice and victory and length of continuance. So he bestowed on them robes of honour and entreated them with distinction and they made him Sultan over them.

As soon as his father-in-law had departed for Samarcand, King Shahryar summoned the Grandees of his realm and made them a stupendous banquet of all manner of delicious meats and exquisite sweetmeats. He also bestowed on them robes of honour and guerdoned them and divided the kingdoms between himself and his brother in their presence, whereat the folk rejoiced. Then the two kings abode, each ruling a day in turn, and they were ever in harmony each with other while on similar wise their wives continued in the love of Allah Almighty and in thanksgiving to Him; and the peoples and the provinces were at peace and the preachers prayed for them from the pulpits, and their report was bruited abroad and the travellers bore tidings of them to all lands. In due time King Shahryar summoned chroniclers and copyists and bade them write all that had betided him with his wife, first and last; so they wrote this and named it *The Stories of the Thousand Nights and a Night.* The book came to thirty volumes and these the King laid up in his treasury. And

the two brothers abode with their wives in all pleasance and solace of life and its delights, for that indeed Allah the Most High had changed their annoy into joy; and on this wise they continued till there took them the Destroyer of Delights and the Severer of Societies, the Desolator of Dwelling-places and Garnerer of Grave-yards, and they were translated to the ruth of Almighty Allah; their houses fell waste and their palaces lay in ruins and the kings inherited their riches.

Then there reigned after them a wise ruler, who was just, keen-witted and accomplished, and loved tales and legends, especially those which chronicle the doings of sovrans and sultans, and he found in the treasury these marvellous stories and wondrous histories, contained in the thirty volumes aforesaid. So he read in them a first book and a second and a third and so on to the last of them, and each book astounded and delighted him more than that which preceded it, till he came to the end of them. Then he admired whatso he had read therein of description and discourse and rare traits and anecdotes and moral instances and reminiscences and bade the folk copy them and dispread them over all lands and climes; wherefore their report was bruited abroad and the people named them *The Marvels and Wonders of the Thousand Nights and a Night.* This is all that hath come down to us of the origin of this book, and Allah is All-knowing.

So Glory be to Him whom the shifts of Time waste not away, nor doth aught of chance or change affect His sway; whom one case diverteth not from other case and Who is sole in the attributes of perfect grace. And prayer and peace be upon the Lord's Pontiff and Chosen One among His creatures, our Lord MOHAMMED, the Prince of Mankind through whom we supplicate Him for a goodly and a godly



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