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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT: NOW FIRST COMPLETELY DONE INTO ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE, FROM THE ORIGINAL ARABIC, BY JOHN PAYNE (AUTHOR OF "THE MASQUE OF SHADOWS," "INTAGLIOS: SONNETS," "SONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH," "LAUTREC," "THE POEMS OF MASTER FRANCIS VILLON OF PARIS," "NEW POEMS," ETC. ETC.). IN NINE VOLUMES: VOLUME THE FIRST.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE present is, I believe, the first complete translation of the great Arabic compendium of romantic fiction that has been attempted in any European language, comprising about four times as much matter as that of Galland and three times as much as that of any other translator known to myself; and a short statement of the sources from which it is derived may therefore be acceptable to my readers. Three printed editions, more or less complete, exist of the Arabic text of the Thousand and One Nights; namely, those of Breslau, Boulac (Cairo) and Calcutta (1839), besides an incomplete one, comprising the first two hundred nights only, published at Calcutta in 1814. Of these, the first is horribly corrupt and greatly inferior, both in style and completeness, to the others, and the second (that of Boulac) is also, though in a far less degree, incomplete, whole stories (as, for instance, that of the Envier and the Envied in the present volume) being omitted and hiatuses, varying in extent from a few lines to several pages, being of frequent occurrence, whilst in addition to these defects, the editor, a learned Egyptian, has played havoc with the style of his original, in an ill-judged attempt to improve it, producing a medley,

more curious than edifying, of classical and semi-modern diction and now and then, in his unlucky zeal, completely disguising the pristine meaning of certain passages. The third edition, that which we owe to Sir William Macnaghten and which appears to have been printed from a superior copy of the manuscript followed by the Egyptian editor, is by far the most carefully printed and edited of the three and offers, on the whole, the least corrupt and most comprehensive text of the work. I have therefore adopted it as my standard or basis of translation and have, to the best of my power, remedied the defects (such as hiatuses, misprints, doubtful or corrupt passages, etc.) which are of no infrequent occurrence even in this, the best of the existing texts, by carefully collating it with the editions of Boulac and Breslau (to say nothing of occasional references to the earlier Calcutta edition of the first two hundred nights), adopting from one and the other such variants, additions and corrections as seemed to me best calculated to improve the general effect and most homogeneous with the general spirit of the work, and this so freely that the present version may be said, in great part, to represent a variorum text of the original, formed by a collation of the different printed texts; and no proper estimate can, therefore, be made of the fidelity of the translation, except by those who are intimately acquainted with the whole of these latter. Even with the help of the

new lights gained by the laborious process of collation and comparison above mentioned, the exact sense of many passages must still remain doubtful, so corrupt are the extant texts and so incomplete our knowledge, as incorporated in dictionaries, etc., of the peculiar dialect, half classical and half modern, in which the original work is written.

One special feature of the present version is the appearance, for the first time, in English metrical shape, preserving the external form and rhyme-movement of the originals, of the whole of the poetry with which the Arabic text is so freely interspersed. This great body of verse, equivalent to at least ten thousand twelve-syllable English lines, is of the most unequal quality, varying from poetry worthy of the name to the merest doggrel, and as I have, in pursuance of my original scheme, elected to translate everything, good and bad (with a very few exceptions in cases of manifest mistake or misapplication), I can only hope that my readers will, in judging of my success, take into consideration the enormous difficulties with which I have had to contend and look with indulgence upon my efforts to render, under unusually irksome conditions, the energy and beauty of the original, where these qualities exist, and in their absence, to keep my version from degenerating into absolute doggrel.

The present translation being intended as a purely literary work, produced with the sole object of sup-

plying the general body of cultivated readers with a fairly representative and characteristic version of the most famous work of narrative fiction in existence, I have deemed it advisable to depart, in several particulars, from the various systems of transliteration of Oriental proper names followed by modern scholars, as, although doubtless admirably adapted to works having a scientific or non-literary object, they rest mainly upon devices (such as the use of apostrophes, accents, diacritical points and the employment of both vowels and consonants in unusual groups and senses) foreign to the genius of the English language and calculated only to annoy the reader of a work of imagination. Of these points of departure from established usage I need only particularize some of the more important; the others will, in general, be found to speak for themselves. One of the most salient is the case of the short vowel *fet-heh*, which is usually written *ă*, but which I have thought it better to render, as a rule, by *ĕ*, as in "bed" (a sound practically equivalent to that of *a*, as in "beggar," adopted by the late Mr. Lane to represent this vowel), reserving the English *a*, as in "father," to represent the *alif of prolongation* or long Arabic *a*, since I should else have no means of differentiating the latter from the former, save by the use of accents or other clumsy expedients, at once, to my mind, foreign to the purpose and vexatious to the reader of a work of pure literature. In like

manner, I have eschewed the use of the letter *q*, as an equivalent for the dotted or guttural *kaf* (choosing to run the risk of occasionally misleading the reader as to the original Arabic form of a word by leaving him in ignorance whether the *k* used is the dotted or undotted one,—a point of no importance whatever to the non-scientific public,—rather than employ an English letter in a manner completely unwarranted by the construction of our language, in which *q* has no power as a terminal or as moved by any vowel other than *u*, followed by one of the four others) and have supplied its place, where the dotted *kaf* occurs as a terminal or as preceding a hard vowel, by the hard *c*, leaving *k* to represent it (in common with the undotted *kaf* generally) in those instances where it is followed by a soft vowel. For similar reasons, I have not attempted to render the Arabic quasi-consonant *aïn*, save by the English vowel corresponding to that by which it is moved, preferring to leave the guttural element of its sound (for which we have no approach to an equivalent in English) unrepresented, rather than resort to the barbarous and meaningless device of the apostrophe. Again, the principle, in accordance with which I have rendered the proper names of the original, is briefly (and subject to certain variations on the ground of convenience and literary fitness) to preserve unaltered such names as Tigris, Bassora, Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, etc., which are familiar to us otherwise than by the

Arabian Nights and to alter which, for the sake of mere literality, were as gratuitous a piece of pedantry as to insist upon writing Copenhagen *Kjobenhavn*, or Canton *Kouang-tong*, and to transliterate the rest as nearly as may consist with a due regard to artistic considerations. The use of untranslated Arabic words, other than proper names, I have, as far as possible, avoided, rendering them, with very few exceptions, by the best English equivalents in my power, careful rather to give the general sense, where capable of being conveyed by reasonable substitution of idiom or otherwise, than to retain the strict letter at the expense of the spirit; nor, on the other hand, have I thought it necessary to alter the traditional manner of spelling certain words which have become incorporated with our language, where (as in the case of the words genie, houri, roc, khalif, vizier, cadi, Bedouin, etc. etc.) the English equivalent is fairly representative of the original Arabic.

I have to return my cordial thanks to Captain Richard F. Burton, the well-known traveller and author, who has most kindly undertaken to give me the benefit of his great practical knowledge of the language and customs of the Arabs in revising the manuscript of my translation for the press.

THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Praise be to God, the Lord of the two worlds,[1] and blessing and peace upon the Prince of the Prophets, our lord and master Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve with abiding and continuing peace and blessing until the Day of the Faith! Of a verity, the doings of the ancients become a lesson to those that follow after, so that men look upon the admonitory events that have happened to others and take warning, and come to the knowledge of what befell bygone peoples and are restrained thereby. So glory be to Him who hath appointed the things that have been done aforetime for an example to those that come after! And of these admonitory instances are the histories called the Thousand Nights and One Night, with all their store of illustrious fables and relations.

It is recorded in the chronicles of the things that have been done of time past that there lived once, in the olden days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the sons of Sasan, who reigned over the Islands[2] of India and China and was lord of armies and guards and servants and retainers. He had two sons, an elder and a

[1] *i.e.* The visible and the invisible. Some authorities make it *three* worlds (those of men, of the angels and of the Jinn or genii), and others more.

[2] The Arabic word for island (*jezireh*) signifies also "peninsula," and is doubtless here used in the latter sense. The double meaning of the word should be borne in mind, as it explains many apparent discrepancies in Oriental tales.

younger, who were both valiant cavaliers, but the elder was a stouter horseman than the younger. When their father died, he left his empire to his elder son, whose name was Shehriyar, and he took the government and ruled his subjects justly, so that the people of the country and of the empire loved him well; whilst his brother Shahzeman became King of Samarcand of Tartary. The two kings abode each in his own dominions, ruling justly over their subjects and enjoying the utmost prosperity and happiness, for the space of twenty years, at the end of which time the elder king yearned after his brother and commanded his Vizier to repair to the latter's court and bring him to his own capital. The Vizier replied, "I hear and obey," and set out at once and journeyed till he reached King Shahzeman's court in safety, when he saluted him for his brother and informed him that the latter yearned after him and desired that he would pay him a visit; to which King Shahzeman consented gladly and made ready for the journey and appointed his Vizier to rule the country in his stead during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with his guards and attendants, without the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's kingdom. In the middle of the night, it chanced that he bethought him of somewhat he had forgotten in his palace: so he returned thither privily and entered his apartments, where he found his wife asleep in his own bed, in the arms of one of his black slaves. When he saw this, the world grew black in his sight, and he said to himself, "If this is what happens whilst I am yet under the city walls, what will be the condition of this accursed woman during my absence at my brother's court?" Then he drew his sword and smote the twain and slew them and left them in the bed and returned presently to his camp, without telling any one what had happened. Then

he gave orders for immediate departure and set out at once and travelled till he drew near his brother's capital, when he despatched vaunt-couriers to announce his approach. His brother came forth to meet him and saluted him and rejoiced exceedingly and caused the city to be decorated in his honour. Then he sat down with him to converse and make merry; but King Shahzeman could not forget the perfidy of his wife and grief grew on him more and more and his colour changed and his body became weak. Shehriyar saw his condition, but attributed it to his separation from his country and his kingdom, so let him alone and asked no questions of him, till one day he said to him, "O my brother, I see that thou art grown weak of body and hast lost thy colour." And Shahzeman answered, "O my brother, I have an internal wound;" but did not tell him about his wife. Said Shehriyar, "I wish thou wouldst ride forth with me a-hunting; maybe it would lighten thy heart." But Shahzeman refused; so his brother went out to hunt without him. Now there were in King Shahzeman's apartments lattice-windows overlooking his brother's garden, and as the former was sitting looking on the garden, behold a gate of the palace opened, and out came twenty damsels and twenty black slaves, and among them his brother's wife, who was wonderfully fair and beautiful. They all came up to a fountain, where the girls and slaves took off their clothes and sat down together. Then the queen called out, "Ho, Mesoud!" And there came to her a black slave, who embraced her and she him. Then he lay with her, and on like wise did the other slaves with the girls. And they ceased not from kissing and clipping and clicketing and carousing until the day began to wane. When the King of Tartary saw this, he said to himself, "By Allah, my mischance was lighter than this!" And his grief and chagrin relaxed from him and he said, "This is more grievous than what

happened to me!" So he put away his melancholy and ate and drank. Presently, his brother came back from hunting and they saluted each other: and Shehriyar looked at Shahzeman and saw that his colour had returned and his face was rosy and he ate heartily, whereas before he ate but little. So he said to him, "O my brother, when I last saw thee, thou wast pale and wan; and now I see that the colour has returned to thy face. Tell me how it is with thee." Quoth Shahzeman, "I will tell thee what caused my loss of colour, but excuse me from acquainting thee with the cause of its return to me." Said Shehriyar, "Let me hear first what was the cause of thy pallor and weakness." "Know then, O my brother," rejoined Shahzeman, "that when thou sentest thy vizier to bid me to thee, I made ready for the journey and had actually quitted my capital city, when I remembered that I had left behind me a certain jewel, that which I gave thee. So I returned to my palace, where I found my wife asleep in my bed, in the arms of a black slave. I slew them both and came to thee: and it was for brooding over this affair, that I lost my colour and became weak. But forgive me if I tell thee not the cause of my restoration to health." When his brother heard this, he said to him, "I conjure thee by Allah, tell me the reason of thy recovery!" So he told him all that he had seen, and Shehriyar said, "I must see this with my own eyes." "Then," replied Shahzeman, "feign to go forth to hunt and hide thyself in my lodging and thou shalt see all this and have ocular proof of the truth." So Shehriyar ordered his attendants to prepare to set out at once; whereupon the troops encamped without the city and he himself went forth with them and sat in his pavilion, bidding his servants admit no one. Then he disguised himself and returned secretly to King Shahzeman's palace and sat with him at the lattice overlooking the garden, until the damsels and their mistress came out

with the slaves and did as his brother had reported, till the call to afternoon prayer. When King Shehriyar saw this, he was as one distraught and said to his brother, "Arise, let us depart hence, for we have no concern with kingship, and wander till we find one to whom the like has happened as to us: else our death were better than our life." Then they went out by a postern of the palace and journeyed days and nights till they came to a tree standing in the midst of a meadow, by a spring of water, on the shore of the salt sea: and they drank of the stream and sat down by it to rest. When the day was somewhat spent, behold, the sea became troubled and there rose from it a black column, that ascended to the sky and made towards the meadow. When the princes saw this, they were afraid and climbed up to the top of the tree which was a high one, that they might see what was the matter; and behold, it was a genie of lofty stature, broad-browed and wide-chested, bearing on his head a coffer of glass with seven locks of steel. He landed and sat down under the tree, where he set down the coffer, and opening it, took out a smaller one. This also he opened, and there came forth a damsel slender of form and dazzlingly beautiful, as she were a shining sun, as says the poet Uteyeh:

She shines out in the dusk, and lo! the day is here, And all the trees flower forth with blossoms bright and clear,
The sun from out her brows arises, and the moon, When she unveils her face, doth hide for shame and fear.
All living things prostrate themselves before her feet, When she unshrouds and all her hidden charms appear;
And when she flashes forth the lightnings of her glance, She maketh eyes to rain, like showers, with many a tear.

When the genie saw her, he said to her, "O queen of noble ladies, thou whom indeed I stole away on thy wedding night, I have a mind to sleep awhile." And he

laid his head on her knees and fell asleep. Presently the lady raised her eyes to the tree and saw the two kings among the branches: so she lifted the genie's head from her lap and laid it on the ground, then rose and stood beneath the tree and signed to them to descend, without heeding the Afrit.[1] They answered her, in the same manner, "God on thee![2] excuse us from this." But she rejoined by signs, as who should say, "If you do not come down, I will wake the Afrit on you, and he will kill you without mercy." So they were afraid and came down to her, whereupon she came up to them and offered them her favours, saying, "To it, both of you, and lustily; or I will set the Afrit on you." So for fear of him, King Shehriyar said to his brother Shahzeman, "O brother, do as she bids thee." But he replied, "Not I; do thou have at her first." And they made signs to each other to pass first, till she said, "Why do I see you make signs to each other? An you come not forward and fall to, I will rouse the Afrit on you." So, for fear of the genie, they lay with her one after the other; and when they had done, she bade them arise, and took out of her bosom a purse containing a necklace made of five hundred and seventy rings, and said to them, "Know ye what these are?" They answered, "No." And she said, "Every one of the owners of these rings has had to do with me in despite of this Afrit. And now give me your rings, both of you." So each of them took off a ring and gave it to her. And she said to them, "Know that this genie carried me off on my wedding night and laid me in a box and shut the box up in a glass chest, on which he clapped seven strong locks and sank it to the bottom of the roaring stormy sea,

[1] A powerful species of genie. The name is generally (but not invariably) applied to an *evil* spirit.

[2] *God on thee!* abbreviated form of "I conjure thee (or call on thee) by God!"

knowing not that nothing can hinder a woman, when she desires aught, even as says one of the poets:

I rede thee put no faith in womankind, Nor trust the oaths they lavish all in vain:
For on the satisfaction of their lusts Depend alike their love and their disdain.
They proffer lying love, but perfidy Is all indeed their garments do contain.
Take warning, then, by Joseph's history, And how a woman sought to do him bane;
And eke thy father Adam, by their fault, To leave the groves of Paradise was fain.

Or as another says:

Out on you! blame confirms the blamed one in his way. My fault is not so great indeed as you would say.
If I'm in love, forsooth, my case is but the same As that of other men before me, many a day.
For great the wonder were if any man alive From women and their wiles escape unharmed away!"

When the two kings heard this, they marvelled and said, "Allah! Allah! There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! We seek aid of God against the malice of women, for indeed their craft is great!" Then she said to them, "Go your ways." So they returned to the road, and Shehriyar said to Shahzeman, "By Allah, O my brother, this Afrit's case is more grievous than ours. For this is a genie and stole away his mistress on her wedding night and clapped her in a chest, which he locked with seven locks and sank in the midst of the sea, thinking to guard her from that which was decreed by fate; yet have we seen that she has lain with five hundred and seventy men in his despite, and now with thee and me to boot. Verily, this is a thing that never yet happened to any, and it should surely console us. Let us therefore return to our kingdoms and resolve never again to take a woman to wife; and as for me, I will show

thee what I will do." So they set out at once and presently came to the camp outside Shehriyar's capital, and entering the royal pavilion, sat down on their bed of estate. Then the chamberlains and amirs and grandees came in to them and Shehriyar commanded them to return to the city. So they returned to the city and Shehriyar went up to his palace, where he summoned his Vizier and bade him forthwith put his wife to death. The Vizier accordingly took the queen and killed her, whilst Shehriyar, going in to the slave girls and concubines, drew his sword and slew them all. Then he let bring others in their stead and took an oath that every night he would go in to a maid and in the morning put her to death, for that there was not one chaste woman on the face of the earth. As for Shahzeman, he sought to return to his kingdom at once; so his brother equipped him for the journey and he set out and fared on till he came to his own dominions. Meanwhile, King Shehriyar commanded his Vizier to bring him the bride of the night, that he might go in to her: so he brought him one of the daughters of the amirs and he went in to her, and on the morrow he bade the Vizier cut off her head. The Vizier dared not disobey the King's commandment, so he put her to death and brought him another girl, of the daughters of the notables of the land. The King went in to her also, and on the morrow he bade the Vizier kill her; and he ceased not to do thus for three years, till the land was stripped of marriageable girls, and all the women and mothers and fathers wept and cried out against the King, cursing him and complaining to the Creator of heaven and earth and calling for succour upon Him who heareth prayer and answereth those that cry to Him; and those that had daughters left fled with them, till at last there remained not a single girl in the city apt for marriage. One day the King ordered the Vizier to bring him a maid as of

wont: so the Vizier went out and made search for a girl, but found not one and returned home troubled and careful for fear of the king's anger. Now this Vizier had two daughters, the elder called Shehrzad and the younger Dunyazad, and the former had read many books and histories and chronicles of ancient kings and stories of people of old time: it is said indeed that she had collected a thousand books of chronicles of past peoples and bygone kings and poets. Moreover, she had read books of science and medicine; her memory was stored with verses and stories and folk-lore and the sayings of kings and sages, and she was wise, witty, prudent and well-bred. She said to her father, "How comes it that I see thee troubled and oppressed with care and anxiety? Quoth one of the poets:

> 'Tell him that is of care oppressed, That grief shall not endure alway,
> But even as gladness fleeteth by, So sorrow too shall pass away.'"

When the Vizier heard his daughter's words, he told her his case, and she said, "By Allah, O my father, marry me to this king, for either I will be the means of the deliverance of the daughters of the Muslims from slaughter or I will die and perish as others have perished." "For God's sake," answered the Vizier, "do not thus adventure thy life!" But she said, "It must be so." Whereupon her father was wroth with her and said to her, "Fool that thou art, dost thou not know that the ignorant man who meddles in affairs falls into grievous peril, and that he who looks not to the issue of his actions finds no friend in time of evil fortune? As says the byword, 'I was sitting at my ease, but my officiousness would not let me rest.' And I fear lest there happen to thee what happened to the ox and the ass with the husbandman." "And what happened to them?" asked she. Quoth the Vizier, "Know, O my daughter, that

STORY OF THE OX[1] AND THE ASS.

There was once a merchant who was rich in goods and cattle, and he had a wife and children and dwelt in the country and was skilled in husbandry. Now God had gifted him to understand the speech of beasts and birds of every kind, but under pain of death if he divulged his gift to any one; so he kept it secret for fear of death. He had in his byre an ox and an ass, each tied up in his stall, hard by the other. One day, as the merchant was sitting near at hand, he heard the ox say to the ass, 'I give thee joy, O Father Wakeful![2] Thou enjoyest rest and attention and they keep thy stall always swept and sprinkled, and thine eating is sifted barley and thy drink fresh water, whilst I am always weary, for they take me in the middle of the night and gird the yoke on my neck and set me to plough and I toil without ceasing from break of morn till sunset. I am forced to work more than my strength and suffer all kinds of indignities, such as blows and abuse, from the cruel ploughman; and I return home at the end of the day, and indeed my sides are torn and my neck is flayed. Then they shut me up in the cow-house and throw me beans and straw mixed with earth and husks, and I lie all night in dung and stale. But thy place is always swept and sprinkled and thy manger clean and full of sweet hay and thou art always resting, except that, now and then, our master hath occasion to ride thee and returns speedily with thee: and but for this thou art always resting and I toiling, and thou sleeping and I waking; thou art full and I hungry and thou honoured and I despised.' 'O broadhead,' answered the ass, 'he

[1] *lit.* bull.

[2] Epithet of the ass and the cock. The best equivalent would be the French "Père L'Eveillé."

was in the right who dubbed thee ox,[1] for thou art stupid in the extreme, nor is there in thee thought or craft, but thou showest zeal and dost thine utmost endeavour before thy master and tearest and killest thyself for the benefit of another. Thou goest forth at the time of morning prayer and returnest not till sundown and endurest all day all manner of afflictions, now blows, now fatigue and now abuse. When thou returnest, the ploughman ties thee to a stinking manger, and thou friskest and pawest the ground and buttest with thy horns and bellowest greatly, and they think thou art content. No sooner have they thrown thee thy fodder than thou fallest on it greedily and hastenest to fill thy belly with it. But if thou wilt follow my counsel, it will be the better for thee and thou wilt get twice as much rest as I. When thou goest forth to the furrow and they lay the yoke on thy neck, lie down, and do not rise, even if they beat thee, or only rise and lie down again: and when they bring thee home, fall prostrate on thy back and refuse thy fodder, when they throw it thee, and feign to be sick. Do this for a day or two and thou wilt have rest from toil and weariness.' The ox thanked the ass greatly for his advice and called down blessings on him: and the merchant heard all that passed between them.

Next day the ploughman took the ox and yoked him to the plough and set him to work as usual. The ox began to fall short in his work, and the ploughman beat him till he broke the yoke and fled, following out the ass's precepts: but the man overtook him and beat him till he despaired of life. Yet for all that, he did nothing but stand still and fall down till the evening. Then the ploughman took him home and tied him in his stall; but he withdrew from the manger and neither frisked nor stamped nor bellowed as usual: and the man wondered at this. Then he brought him the beans and straw, but he smelt at them and left

[1] *i.e.* stupid.

them and lay down at a distance and passed the night without eating. Next morning, the ploughman came and found the straw and beans untouched and the ox lying on his back, with his stomach swollen and his legs in the air: so he was concerned for him and said to himself, 'He has certainly fallen ill, and this is why he would not work yesterday.' Then he went to his master and told him that the ox was ill and would not touch his fodder. Now the farmer knew what this meant, for that he had overheard the talk between the ox and the ass as before mentioned. So he said, 'Take that knave of an ass and bind the yoke on his neck and harness him to the plough and try and make him do the ox's work.' So the ploughman took the ass and made him work all day beyond his strength to accomplish the ox's task: and he beat him till his skin and ribs were sore and his neck flayed with the yoke. When the evening came and the ass returned home, he could hardly drag himself along. But as for the ox, he had lain all day, resting, and had eaten his fodder cheerfully and with a good appetite; and all day long he had called down blessings on the ass for his good counsel, not knowing what had befallen him on his account. So when the night came and the ass returned to the stable, the ox arose and said to him, 'Mayst thou be gladdened with good news, O father Wakeful! Through thee, I have rested to-day and have eaten my food in peace and comfort.' The ass made him no answer, for rage and vexation and fatigue and the beating he had undergone; but he said to himself, 'All this comes of my folly in giving another good advice: as the saying goes, "I was lying at full length, but my officiousness would not let me be." But I will go about with him and return him to his place, else I shall perish.' Then he went to his manger, weary, whilst the ox thanked him and blessed him. And thou, O my daughter," said the Vizier, "like the ass, wilt

perish through thy lack of sense, so do thou sit quiet and cast not thyself into perdition; indeed I give thee good counsel and am affectionately solicitous for thee." "O my father," answered she, "nothing will serve me but I must go up to this king and become his wife." Quoth he, "An thou hold not thy peace and bide still, I will do with thee even as the merchant did with his wife." "And what was that?" asked she. "Know," answered he, "that the merchant and his wife and children came out on the terrace, it being a moonlit night and the moon at its full. Now the terrace overlooked the byre; and presently, as he sat, with his children playing before him, the merchant heard the ass say to the ox, 'Tell me, O father Stupid, what dost thou mean to do to-morrow?' 'What but that thou advisedst me?' answered the ox. 'Thine advice was as good as could be and has gotten me complete rest, and I will not depart from it in the least: so when they bring me my fodder, I will refuse it and feign sickness and swell out my belly.' The ass shook his head and said, 'Beware of doing that!' 'Why?' asked the ox, and the ass answered, 'Know that I heard our master say to the labourer, "If the ox do not rise and eat his fodder to-day, send for the butcher to slaughter him, and give his flesh to the poor and make a rug of his skin." And I fear for thee on account of this. So take my advice, ere ill-hap betide thee, and when they bring thee the fodder, eat it and arise and bellow and paw the ground with thy feet, or our master will assuredly slaughter thee.' Whereupon the ox arose and bellowed and thanked the ass, and said, 'To-morrow, I will go with them readily.' Then he ate up all his fodder, even to licking the manger with his tongue.

When the merchant heard this, he was amused at the ass's trick and laughed, till he fell backward. 'Why dost thou laugh?' asked his wife; and he said, 'I laughed at something that I saw and heard, but it is a secret and I

cannot disclose it, or I shall die.' Quoth she, 'There is no help for it but thou must tell me the reason of thy laughter, though thou die for it.' 'I cannot reveal it,' answered he, 'for fear of death.' 'It was at me thou didst laugh,' said she, and ceased not to importune him till he was worn out and distracted. So he assembled all his family and kinsfolk and summoned the Cadi and the witnesses, being minded to make his last dispositions and impart to her the secret and die, for indeed he loved her with a great love, and she was the daughter of his father's brother and the mother of his children. Moreover, he sent for all her family and the neighbours, and when they were all assembled, he told them the state of the case and announced to them the approach of his last hour. Then he gave his wife her portion and appointed guardians of his children and freed his slave girls and took leave of his people. They all wept, and the Cadi and the witnesses wept also and went up to the wife and said to her, 'We conjure thee, by Allah, give up this matter, lest thy husband and the father of thy children die. Did he not know that, if he revealed the secret, he would surely die, he would have told thee.' But she replied, 'By Allah, I will not desist from him, till he tell me, though he die for it.' So they forbore to press her. And all who were present wept sore, and there was a general mourning in the house. Then the merchant rose and went to the cow-house, to make his ablutions and pray, intending after to return and disclose his secret and die.

Now he had a cock and fifty hens and a dog; and he heard the latter say in his lingo to the cock, 'How mean is thy wit, O cock! May he be disappointed who reared thee! Our master is in extremity and thou clappest thy wings and crowest and fliest from one hen's back to another's! God confound thee! Is this a time for sport and diversion? Art thou not ashamed of thyself?' 'And

what ails our master, O dog?' asked the cock. The dog told him what had happened and how the merchant's wife had importuned him, till he was about to tell her his secret and die, and the cock said, 'Then is our master little of wit and lacking in sense; if he cannot manage his affairs with a single wife, his life is not worth prolonging. See: I have fifty wives. I content this one and anger that, stint one and feed another, and through my good governance they are all under my control. Now our master pretends to sense and accomplishment, and he has but one wife, and yet knows not how to manage her.' Quoth the dog, 'What, then, should our master do?' 'He should take a stick,' replied the cock, 'and beat her soundly, till she says, "I repent, O my lord! I will never again ask a question as long as I live." And when once he has done this, he will be free from care and enjoy life. But he has neither sense nor judgment.'

When the merchant heard what the cock said, he went to his wife (after he had hidden a rattan in an empty store-room) and said to her, 'Come with me into this room, that I may tell thee my secret and die and none see me.' So she entered gladly, thinking that he was about to tell her his secret, and he locked the door; then he took the rattan and brought it down on her back and ribs and shoulders, saying, 'Wilt thou ask questions about what is none of thy business?' He beat her till she was well-nigh senseless, and she cried out, 'By Allah, I will ask thee no more questions, and indeed I repent sincerely!' And she kissed his hands and feet. Then he unlocked the door and went out and told the company what had happened, whereat they rejoiced, and mourning was changed into joy and gladness. So the merchant learnt good management from a cock, and he and his wife lived happily until death. And thou, O my daughter," added the Vizier, "except thou desist from this thing, I

will do with thee even as the merchant did with his wife." "I will never desist," answered she, "nor is it this story that can turn me from my purpose; and an thou yield not to me, I will go up myself to the King and complain to him of thee, in that thou grudgest the like of me to the like of him." Quoth her father, "Must it be so?" And she answered "Yes." So being weary of striving with her and despairing of turning her from her purpose, he went up to King Shehriyar and kissing the earth before him, told him about his daughter and how she would have him give her to him that next night; whereat the King marvelled and said to him, "How is this? By Him who raised up the heavens, if thou bring her to me, I shall say to thee on the morrow, 'Take her and put her to death.' And if thou kill her not, I will kill thee without fail." "O king of the age," answered the Vizier, "it is she who will have it so; and I told her all this, but she will not hear me and insists upon passing this night with thy highness." "It is well," answered Shehriyar; "go and make her ready and to-night bring her to me." So the Vizier returned to his daughter and told her what had passed, saying, "May God not bereave us of thee!" But Shehrzad rejoiced with an exceeding joy and made ready all that she needed, and said to her sister Dunyazad, "O my sister, note well what I shall enjoin thee. When I go up to the Sultan, I will send after thee, and when thou comest to me and seest that the King has done his will of me, do thou say to me, 'O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us some of thy delightful stories, to pass away the watches of this our night.' Do this and (God willing) it shall be the means of my deliverance and of the ridding of the folk of this calamity, and by it I will turn the King from his custom.' Dunyazad answered, "It is well." And the Vizier carried Shehrzad to the King, who took her to his bed and fell to toying with her. But she wept, and he said to her, "Why

dost thou weep?" "O king of the age," answered she, "I have a young sister and I desire to take leave of her this night and that she may take leave of me before the morning." So he sent for Dunyazad, and she waited till the Sultan had done his desire of her sister and they were all three awake, when she coughed and said, "O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us one of thy pleasant stories, to beguile the watches of our night, and I will take leave of thee before the morning." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad, "if the good king give me leave." The King, being wakeful, was pleased to hear a story and said, "Tell on." Whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, "It is related, O august king, that

THE MERCHANT AND THE GENIE.

Night i.

There was once a merchant, who had much substance and traded largely in foreign countries. One day, as he was riding through a certain country, whither he had gone to collect what was due to him, there overtook him the heat of the day and presently he espied a garden[1] before him; so he made towards it for shelter and alighting, sat down under a walnut tree, by a spring of water. Then he put his hand to his saddle bags and took out a cake of bread and a date and ate them and threw away the date stone, when behold, there started up before him a gigantic Afrit, with a naked sword in his hand, who came up to him and said, 'Arise, that I may slay thee, even as thou hast slain my son.' 'How did I slay thy son?' asked the merchant, and the genie replied, 'When thou threwest away the date stone, it smote my son, who was passing at the time, on the breast, and he died forthright.' When the merchant

[1] The Arabic word for garden (*bustan*) applies to any cultivated or fertile spot, abounding in trees. An European would call such a place as that mentioned in the tale an oasis.

heard this, he said, 'Verily we are God's and to Him we return! There is no power and no virtue but in God, the most High, the Supreme! If I killed him, it was by misadventure, and I prithee pardon me.' But the genie said, 'There is no help for it but I must kill thee.' Then he seized him and throwing him down, raised his sword to strike him: whereupon the merchant wept and said, 'I commit my affair to God!' and recited the following verses:

Fate has two days, untroubled one, the other lowering, And life two parts, the one content, the other sorrowing.
Say unto him that taunteth us with fortune's perfidy, 'At whom but those whose heads are high doth Fate its arrows fling?'
If that the hands of Time have made their plaything of our life, Till for its long protracted kiss ill-hap upon us spring,
Dost thou not see the hurricane, what time the wild winds blow, Smite down the stately trees alone and spare each lesser thing?
Lo! in the skies are many stars, no one can tell their tale, But to the sun and moon alone eclipse brings darkening.
The earth bears many a pleasant herb and many a plant and tree: But none is stoned save only those to which the fair fruit cling.
Look on the sea and how the waifs float up upon the foam, But in its deepest depths of blue the pearls have sojourning.

'Cut short thy speech,' said the genie, 'for, by Allah, there is no help for it but I must kill thee.' 'Know, O Afrit,' replied the merchant, 'that I have a wife and children and much substance, and I owe debts and hold pledges: so let me return home and give every one his due, and I vow by all that is most sacred that I will return to thee at the end of the year, that thou mayest do with me as thou wilt, and God is witness of what I say.' The genie accepted his promise and released him, whereupon he returned to his dwelling-place and paid his debts and settled all his affairs. Moreover, he told his wife and children what had happened and made his last dispositions, and tarried with his family till the end of the year. Then

he rose and made his ablutions[1] and took his winding-sheet under his arm and bidding his household and kinsfolk and neighbours farewell, set out, much against his will, to perform his promise to the genie; whilst his family set up a great noise of crying and lamentation. He journeyed on till he reached the garden, where he had met with the genie, on the first day of the new year, and there sat down to await his doom. Presently, as he sat weeping over what had befallen him, there came up an old man, leading a gazelle by a chain, and saluted the merchant, saying, 'What ails thee to sit alone in this place, seeing that it is the resort of the Jinn?'[2] The merchant told him all that had befallen him with the Afrit, and he wondered and said, 'By Allah, O my brother, thy good faith is exemplary and thy story is a marvellous one! If it were graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a warning to those that can profit by example.' Then he sat down by his side, saying, 'By Allah, O my brother, I will not leave thee till I see what befalls thee with this Afrit.' So they sat conversing, and fear and terror got hold upon the merchant and trouble increased upon him, notwithstanding the old man's company. Presently another old man came up, leading two black dogs, and saluting them, inquired why they sat in a place known to be haunted by Jinn, whereupon the merchant repeated his story to him. He had not sat long with them when there came up a third old man leading a dappled she-mule, and after putting to them the same question and receiving a like answer, sat down with them to await the issue of the affair. They had sat but a little while longer, when behold, there arose a cloud of dust and a great whirling column approached from the heart of the desert. Then the dust lifted and discovered the genie, with a drawn sword in his hand and sparks of fire issuing from his eyes. He came up to them

[1] in preparation for death. [2] *Jinn*, plural of genie.

and dragged the merchant from amongst them, saying, 'Rise, that I may slay thee as thou slewest my son, the darling of my heart!' Whereupon the merchant wept and bewailed himself and the three old men joined their cries and lamentations to his. Then came forward the first old man, he of the gazelle, and kissed the Afrit's hand and said to him, 'O genie and crown of the kings of the Jinn, if I relate to thee my history with this gazelle and it seem to thee wonderful, wilt thou grant me a third of this merchant's blood?' 'Yes, O old man,' answered the genie, 'if thou tell me thy story and I find it wonderful, I will remit to thee a third of his blood.' Then said the old man, 'Know, O Afrit, that

THE FIRST OLD MAN'S STORY.

This gazelle is the daughter of my father's brother and my own flesh and blood. I married her whilst she was yet of tender age and lived with her near thirty years, without being blessed with a child by her. So I took me a concubine and had by her a son like the rising full moon, with eyes and eyebrows of perfect beauty; and he grew up and flourished till he reached the age of fifteen, when I had occasion to journey to a certain city, and set out thither with great store of merchandise. Now my wife had studied sorcery and magic from her youth: so, I being gone, she turned my son into a calf and his mother into a cow and delivered them both to the cowherd: and when, after a long absence, I returned from my journey and inquired after my son and his mother, my wife said to me, "Thy slave died and her son ran away, whither I know not." I abode for the space of a year, mournful-hearted and weeping-eyed, till the coming of the Greater Festival, when I sent to the herdsman and bade him bring me a fat cow for the purpose of sacrifice. So he brought me the

very cow into which my wife had changed my concubine by her art; and I tucked up my skirts and taking the knife in my hand, went up to the cow to slaughter her; but she lowed and moaned so piteously, that I was seized with wonder and compassion and held my hand from her and said to the herd, "Bring me another cow." "Not so!" cried my wife. "Slaughter this one, for we have no finer nor fatter." So I went up to her again, but she cried out, and I left her and ordered the herdsman to kill her and skin her. So he killed her and flayed her, but found on her neither fat nor flesh, only skin and bone. Then I was sorry for having slain her, when repentance availed me not; and I gave her to the herd and said to him, "Bring me a fat calf." So he brought me my son in the guise of a calf; and when he saw me, he broke his halter and came up to me and fawned on me and moaned and wept, till I took pity on him and said to the man, "Bring me a cow and let this calf go." But my wife cried out at me and said, "Not so: thou must sacrifice this calf and none other to-day: for it is a holy and a blessed day, on which it behoves us to offer up none but a good thing, and we have no calf fatter or finer than this one." Quoth I, "Look at the condition of the cow I slaughtered by thine order; we were deceived in her, and now I will not be persuaded by thee to slay this calf this time." "By the great God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," answered she, "thou must without fail sacrifice this calf on this holy day! Else thou art no longer my husband nor am I thy wife." When I heard this harsh speech from her, I went up to the calf, knowing not what she aimed at, and took the knife in my hand.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent; and her sister said to her, "What a charming and delightful story!" Quoth Shehrzad, "This is nothing to what I will tell thee to-morrow night, if the King let me live." And the King said to himself, "By

Allah, I will not kill her, till I hear the rest of the story!" So they lay together till morning, when the King went out to his hall of audience and the Vizier came in to him, with the winding-sheet under his arm. Then the King ordered and appointed and deposed, without telling the Vizier aught of what had happened, much to the former's surprise, until the end of the day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his apartments.

Night ii. *And when it was the second night*

Dunyazad said to her sister Shehrzad, "O my sister, finish us thy story of the merchant and the genie." "With all my heart," answered she, "if the King give me leave." The king bade her "Say on." So she began as follows: "It has reached me, O august king and wise governor, that the first old man continued his story as follows: 'O lord of the Kings of the Jinn, as I was about to kill the calf, my heart failed me and I said to the herdsman, "Keep this calf with the rest of the cattle." So he took it and went away. Next day the herd came to me, as I was sitting by myself, and said to me, "O my lord, I have that to tell thee will rejoice thee, and I claim a reward for good news." Quoth I, "It is well." And he said, "O merchant, I have a daughter, who learnt the art of magic in her youth from an old woman who lived with us, and yesterday, when I took home the calf that thou gavest me, she looked at it and veiled her face and fell a-weeping. Then she laughed and said to me, 'O my father, am I become of so little account in thine eyes that thou bringest in to me strange men?' 'Where are the strange men?' asked I. 'And why dost thou weep and laugh?' Quoth she, 'The calf thou hast there is our master's son, who has been enchanted, as well as his mother, by his father's wife. This is why I laughed: and I wept for his mother, because his father slaughtered her.' I wondered exceedingly at this and the day had no sooner broken than I came to tell thee." When (continued the old man) I heard the herdsman's story, O genie, I went out with him, drunken without wine for stress of joy and gladness, and accompanied him to his house, where his daughter welcomed me and kissed my hand; and the calf came up to me and fawned on me. Said I to the girl, "Is it true what I hear about this calf?" "Yes, O my lord," answered she, "this is indeed thy son and the darling of thy heart." So I said to her, "O damsel, if thou wilt release him, all that is under thy father's hand of beasts and goods shall be thine!" But she smiled and said, "O my lord, I care not for wealth, but I will do what thou desirest upon two conditions, the first that thou marry me to this thy son, and the second that thou permit me to bewitch the sorceress and imprison her (in the shape of a beast); else I shall not be safe from her craft." I answered, "Besides what thou seekest, thou shalt have all that is under thy father's hand, and as to my wife, it shall be lawful to thee to shed her blood, if thou wilt." When she heard this, she took a cup full of water and conjured over it; then sprinkled the calf with the water, saying, "If thou be a calf by the creation of the Almighty, abide in that form and change not: but if thou be enchanted, return to thine original form, with the permission of God the most High!" With that he shook and became a man: and I fell upon him and said to him, "For God's sake, tell me what my wife did with thee and thy mother." So he told me what had befallen them and I said to him, "O my son, God hath sent thee one to deliver and avenge thee." Then I married him to the herdsman's daughter, and she transformed my wife into this gazelle, saying to me, "I have given her this graceful form for thy sake, that thou mayst look on her without aversion." She dwelt with us days and nights and nights and days, till God took her to Himself; and after her death, my son set out

on a journey to the land of Ind, which is this merchant's native country; and after a while, I took the gazelle and travelled with her from place to place, seeking news of my son, till chance led me to this garden, where I found this merchant sitting weeping; and this is my story.' Quoth the genie, 'This is indeed a rare story, and I remit to thee a third part of his blood.' Then came forward the second old man, he of the two greyhounds, and said to the genie, 'I will tell thee my story with these two dogs, and if thou find it still rarer and more marvellous, do thou remit to me another third part of his blood.' Quoth the genie, 'I agree to this.' Then said the second old man, 'Know, O lord of the Kings of the Jinn, that

THE SECOND OLD MAN'S STORY.

These two dogs are my elder brothers. Our father died and left us three thousand dinars,[1] and I opened a shop that I might buy and sell therein, and my brothers did each the like. But before long, my eldest brother sold his stock for a thousand dinars and bought goods and merchandise and setting out on his travels, was absent a whole year. One day, as I was sitting in my shop, a beggar stopped before me and I said to him, "God assist thee!"[2] But he said to me, weeping, "Dost thou not recognize me?" I took note of him, and behold, it was my brother. So I rose and welcomed him and made him sit down by me and inquired how he came in such a case: but he answered, "Do not ask me: my wealth is wasted and fortune has turned her back on me." Then I carried him to the bath and clad him in one of my own suits and took him to live with me. Moreover, I cast up my accounts and found that I had made a thousand dinars profit, so

[1] A dinar (*Lat.* denarius) is a gold coin worth about 10*s.*

[2] *i.e.* I have nothing to give thee.

that my capital was now two thousand dinars. I divided this between my brother and myself, saying to him, "Put it that thou hast never travelled nor been abroad." He took it gladly and opened a shop with it. Presently, my second brother arose like the first and sold his goods and all that belonged to him and determined to travel. We would have dissuaded him, but he would not be dissuaded and bought merchandise with which he set out on his travels, and we saw no more of him for a whole year; at the end of which time he came to us as had done his elder brother, and I said to him, "O my brother, did I not counsel thee not to travel?" And he wept and said, "O my brother, it was decreed: and behold, I am poor, without a dirhem[1] or a shirt to my back." Then I carried him to the bath and clad him in a new suit of my own and brought him back to my shop, where we ate and drank together; after which, I said to him, "O my brother, I will make up the accounts of my shop, as is my wont once a year, and the increase shall be between thee and me." So I arose and took stock and found I was worth two thousand dinars increase, in excess of capital, wherefore I praised the Divine Creator and gave my brother a thousand dinars, with which he opened a shop. In this situation we remained for some time, till one day, my brothers came to me and would have me go on a voyage with them; but I refused and said to them, "What did your travels profit you, that I should look to profit by the same venture?" And I would not listen to them; so we abode in our shops, buying and selling, and every year they pressed me to travel, and I declined, until six years had elapsed. At last I yielded to their wishes and said to them, "O my brothers, I will make a voyage with you, but first let me see what you are worth." So I looked into their affairs and found they had nothing left, having wasted

[1] A dirhem (*Gr.* drachma) is a silver coin worth about 6*d.*

all their substance in eating and drinking and merry-making. However, I said not a word of reproach to them, but sold my stock and got in all I had and found I was worth six thousand dinars. So I rejoiced and divided the sum into two equal parts and said to my brothers, "These three thousand dinars are for you and me to trade with." The other three thousand I buried, in case what befell them should befall me also, so that we might still have, on our return, wherewithal to open our shops again. They were content and I gave them each a thousand dinars and kept the like myself. Then we provided ourselves with the necessary merchandise and equipped ourselves for travel and chartered a ship, which we freighted with our goods. After a month's voyage, we came to a city, in which we sold our goods at a profit of ten dinars on every one (of prime cost). And as we were about to take ship again, we found on the beach a damsel in tattered clothes, who kissed my hand and said to me, "O my lord, is there in thee kindness and charity? I will requite thee for them." Quoth I, "Indeed I love to do courtesy and charity, though I be not requited." And she said, "O my lord, I beg thee to marry me and clothe me and take me back to thy country, for I give myself to thee. Entreat me courteously, for indeed I am of those whom it behoves to use with kindness and consideration; and I will requite thee therefor: do not let my condition prejudice thee." When I heard what she said, my heart inclined to her, that what God (to whom belong might and majesty) willed might come to pass. So I carried her with me and clothed her and spread her a goodly bed in the ship and went in to her and made much of her. Then we set sail again and indeed my heart clove to her with a great love and I left her not night nor day and occupied myself with her to the exclusion of my brothers. Wherefore they were jealous of me and envied me my much substance; and they looked

upon it with covetous eyes and took counsel together to kill me and to take my goods, saying, "Let us kill our brother, and all will be ours." And Satan made this to seem good in their eyes. So they took me sleeping beside my wife and lifted us both up and threw us into the sea. When my wife awoke, she shook herself and becoming an Afriteh,[1] took me up and carried me to an island, where she left me for a while. In the morning, she returned and said to me, "I have paid thee my debt, for it is I who bore thee up out of the sea and saved thee from death, by permission of God the Most High. Know that I am of the Jinn who believe in God and His Apostle (whom God bless and preserve!) and I saw thee and loved thee for God's sake. So I came to thee in the plight thou knowest of and thou didst marry me, and now I have saved thee from drowning. But I am wroth with thy brothers, and needs must I kill them." When I heard her words, I wondered and thanked her for what she had done and begged her not to kill my brothers. Then I told her all that had passed between us, and she said, "This very night will I fly to them and sink their ship and make an end of them." "God on thee," answered I, "do not do this, for the proverb says, 'O thou who dost good to those who do evil, let his deeds suffice the evil doer!' After all, they are my brothers." Quoth she, "By Allah, I must kill them." And I besought her till she lifted me up and flying away with me, set me down on the roof of my own house, where she left me. I went down and unlocked the doors and brought out what I had hidden under the earth and opened my shop, after I had saluted the folk and bought goods. At nightfall, I returned home and found these two dogs tied up in the courtyard: and when they

[1] *Afriteh*, a female *Afrit*. *Afrit* means strictly an *evil* spirit; but the term is not unfrequently applied to benevolent Jinn, as will appear in the course of these stories.

saw me, they came up to me and wept and fawned on me. At the same moment, my wife presented herself and said to me, "These are thy brothers." "Who has done this thing unto them?" asked I; and she answered, "I sent to my sister, who turned them into this form, and they shall not be delivered from the enchantment till after ten years." Then she left me, after telling me where to find her; and now, the ten years having expired, I was carrying the dogs to her, that she might release them, when I fell in with this merchant, who acquainted me with what had befallen him. So I determined not to leave him, till I saw what passed between thee and him: and this is my story.' 'This is indeed a rare story,' said the genie, 'and I remit to thee a third part of his blood and his crime.' Then came forward the third old man, he of the mule, and said, 'O genie, I will tell thee a story still more astonishing than the two thou hast heard, and do thou remit to me the remainder of his blood and crime.' The genie replied, 'It is well.' So the third old man said, 'Know, O Sultan and Chief of the Jinn, that

THE THIRD OLD MAN'S STORY.

This mule was my wife. Some time ago, I had occasion to travel and was absent from her a whole year; at the end of which time I returned home by night and found my wife in bed with a black slave, talking and laughing and toying and kissing and dallying. When she saw me, she made haste and took a mug of water and muttered over it; then came up to me and sprinkled me with the water, saying, "Leave this form for that of a dog!" And immediately I became a dog. She drove me from the house, and I went out of the door and ceased not running till I came to a butcher's shop, where I stopped and began to eat the bones. The butcher took me and carried me into his house; but

when his daughter saw me, she veiled her face and said to her father, "How is it that thou bringest a man in to me?" "Where is the man?" asked he; and she replied, "This dog is a man, whose wife has enchanted him, and I can release him." When her father heard this, he said, "I conjure thee by Allah, O my daughter, release him!" So she took a mug of water and muttered over it, then sprinkled a little of it on me, saying, "Leave this shape and return to thy former one." And immediately I became a man again and kissed her hand and begged her to enchant my wife as she had enchanted me. So she gave me a little of the water and said to me, "When thou seest her asleep, sprinkle her with this water and repeat the words thou hast heard me use, naming the shape thou wouldst have her take, and she will become whatever thou wishest." So I took the water and returned home and went in to my wife. I found her asleep and sprinkled the water upon her, saying, "Quit this form for that of a mule." And she at once became a mule; and this is she whom thou seest before thee, O Sultan and Chief of the Kings of the Jinn!' Then he said to the mule, 'Is it true?' And she nodded her head and made signs as who should say, 'Yes, indeed: this is my history and what befell me.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent. And Dunyazad said to her, "O my sister, what a delightful story is this of thine!" "This is nothing," answered Shehrzad, "to what I will tell thee to-morrow night, if the King let me live." Quoth the King to himself, "By Allah, I will not put her to death till I hear the rest of her story, for it is wonderful." And they lay together till the morning. Then the King rose and betook himself to his audience-chamber, and the Vizier and the troops presented themselves and the Court was full. The King judged and appointed and deposed and ordered and forbade till the end of the day, when the Divan broke up and he returned to his apartments.

Night iii. *And when it was the third night* and the King had taken his will of the Vizier's daughter, Dunyazad said to her sister, "O my sister, finish us thy story." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "Know, O august King, that when the genie heard the third old man's story, he marvelled exceedingly and shook with delight and said, 'I remit to thee the remainder of his crime.' Then he released the merchant, who went up to the three old men and thanked them; and they gave him joy of his escape and returned, each to his own country. Nor is this more wonderful than the story of the Fisherman and the Genie." "What is that?" asked the King: and she said, "I have heard tell, O august King, that

THE FISHERMAN AND THE GENIE.

There was once a poor fisherman, who was getting on in years and had a wife and three children; and it was his custom every day to cast his net four times and no more. One day he went out at the hour of noon and repaired to the sea-shore, where he set down his basket and tucked up his skirts and plunging into the sea, cast his net and waited till it had settled down in the water. Then he gathered the cords in his hand and found it heavy and pulled at it, but could not bring it up. So he carried the end of the cords ashore and drove in a stake, to which he made them fast. Then he stripped and diving round the net, tugged at it till he brought it ashore. Whereat he rejoiced and landing, put on his clothes; but when he came to examine the net, he found in it a dead ass; and the net was torn. When he saw this, he was vexed and said: 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the most High, the Supreme! This is indeed strange luck!' And he repeated the following verses:

O thou that strivest in the gloom of darkness and distress, Cut short thine efforts, for in strife alone lies not success!
Seest not the fisherman that seeks his living in the sea, Midmost the network of the stars that round about him press!
Up to his midst he plunges in: the billows buffet him; But from the bellying net his eyes cease not in watchfulness;
Till when, contented with his night, he carries home a fish, Whose throat the hand of Death hath slit with trident pitiless,
Comes one who buys his prey of him, one who has passed the night, Safe from the cold, in all delight of peace and blessedness.
Praise be to God who gives to this and doth to that deny! Some fish, and others eat the fish caught with such toil and stress.

Then he said, 'Courage! I shall have better luck next time, please God!' And repeated the following verses:

If misfortune assail thee, clothe thyself thereagainst With patience, the part of the noble: 'twere wiselier done.
Complain not to men: that were indeed to complain, To those that have no mercy, of the Merciful One.

So saying, he threw out the dead ass and wrung the net and spread it out. Then he went down into the sea and cast again, saying, 'In the name of God!' and waited till the net had settled down in the water, when he pulled the cords and finding it was heavy and resisted more than before, thought it was full of fish. So he made it fast to the shore and stripped and dived into the water round the net, till he got it free. Then he hauled at it till he brought it ashore, but found in it nothing but a great jar full of sand and mud. When he saw this, he groaned aloud and repeated the following verses:

Anger of Fate, have pity and forbear, Or at the least hold back thy hand and spare!
I sally forth to seek my daily bread And find my living vanished into air.
How many a fool's exalted to the stars, Whilst sages hidden in the mire must fare!

Then he threw out the jar and wrung out and cleansed his net: after which he asked pardon of God the Most

High[1] and returning to the sea a third time, cast the net. He waited till it had settled down, then pulled it up and found in it potsherds and bones and broken bottles: whereat he was exceeding wroth and wept and recited the following verses:

Fortune's with God: thou mayst not win to bind or set it free: Nor letter-lore nor any skill can bring good hap to thee.
Fortune, indeed, and benefits by Fate are lotted out: One country's blest with fertile fields, whilst others sterile be.
The shifts of evil chance cast down full many a man of worth And those, that merit not, uplift to be of high degree.
So come to me, O Death! for life is worthless verily; When falcons humbled to the dust and geese on high we see.
'Tis little wonder if thou find the noble-minded poor, What while the losel by main force usurps his sovranty.
One bird will traverse all the earth and fly from East to West: Another hath his every wish, although no step stir he.

Then he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God, Thou knowest that I cast my net but four times a day; and now I have cast it three times and have taken nothing. Grant me then, O my God, my daily bread this time!' So he said, 'In the name of God!' and cast his net and waited till it had settled down in the water, then pulled it, but could not bring it up, for it was caught in the bottom. Whereupon, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God!' said he and repeated the following verses:

Away with the world, if it be like this, away! My part in it's nought but misery and dismay!
Though the life of a man in the morning be serene, He must drink of the cup of woe ere ended day.
And yet if one asked, 'Who's the happiest man alive?' The people would point to me and 'He' would say.

Then he stripped and dived down to the net and strove with it till he brought it to shore, where he opened it and

[1] for his impatience.

found in it a brazen vessel, full and stoppered with lead, on which was impressed the seal of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!). When he saw this, he was glad and said, 'I will sell this in the copper market, for it is worth half a score dinars.' Then he shook it and found it heavy and said to himself, 'I wonder what is inside! I will open it and see what is in it, before I sell it.' So he took out a knife and worked at the leaden seal, till he extracted it from the vessel and laid it aside. Then he turned the vase mouth downward and shook it, to turn out its contents; but nothing came out, and he wondered greatly and laid it on the ground. Presently, there issued from it a smoke, which rose up towards the sky and passed over the face of the earth; then gathered itself together and condensed and quivered and became an Afrit, whose head was in the clouds and his feet in the dust. His head was like a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs like masts, his mouth like a cavern, his teeth like rocks, his nostrils like trumpets, his eyes like lamps, and he was stern and lowering of aspect. When the fisherman saw the Afrit, he trembled in every limb; his teeth chattered and his spittle dried up and he knew not what to do. When the Afrit saw him, he said, 'There is no god but God, and Solomon is His prophet! O prophet of God, do not kill me, for I will never again disobey thee or cross thee, either in word or deed!' Quoth the fisherman, 'O Marid,[1] thou sayest, "Solomon is the prophet of God." Solomon is dead these eighteen hundred years, and we are now at the end of time. But what is thy history and how comest thou in this vessel?' When the Marid heard this, he said, 'There is no god but God! I have news for thee, O fisherman!' 'What news?' asked he, and the Afrit answered, 'Even that I am about to slay thee without mercy.'

[1] A Marid is a genie of the most powerful class. The name generally, though not invariably, denotes an *evil* spirit.

'O chief of the Afrits,' said the fisherman, 'thou meritest the withdrawal of God's protection from thee for saying this! Why wilt thou kill me and what calls for my death? Did I not deliver thee from the abysses of the sea and bring thee to land and release thee from the vase?' Quoth the Afrit, 'Choose what manner of death thou wilt die and how thou wilt be killed.' 'What is my crime?' asked the fisherman. 'Is this my reward for setting thee free?' The Afrit answered, 'Hear my story, O fisherman!' 'Say on and be brief,' quoth he, 'for my heart is in my mouth.' Then said the Afrit, 'Know, O fisherman, that I was of the schismatic Jinn and rebelled against Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), I and Sekhr the genie; and he sent his Vizier Asef ben Berkhiya, who took me by force and bound me and carried me, in despite of myself, before Solomon, who invoked God's aid against me and exhorted me to embrace the Faith[1] and submit to his authority: but I refused. Then he sent for this vessel and shut me up in it and stoppered it with lead and sealed it with the Most High Name and commanded the Jinn to take me and throw me into the midst of the sea. There I remained a hundred years, and I said in my heart, "Whoso releaseth me, I will make him rich for ever." But the hundred years passed and no one came to release me, and I entered on another century and said, "Whoso releaseth me, I will open to him the treasures of the earth." But none released me, and other four hundred years passed over me, and I said, "Whoso releaseth me, I will grant him three wishes." But no one set me free. Then I was exceeding wroth and said to myself, "Henceforth, whoso releaseth me, I will kill him and let him choose what death he will die." And now, thou hast released me, and I give

[1] Of Islam, which is fabled by the Muslims to have existed before Mohammed, under the headship, first of Abraham and afterwards of Solomon.

thee thy choice of deaths.' When the fisherman heard this, he exclaimed, 'O God, the pity of it that I should not have come to release thee till now!' Then he said to the Afrit, 'Spare me, that God may spare thee, and do not destroy me, lest God set over thee one who will destroy thee.' But he answered, 'There is no help for it, I must kill thee: so choose what death thou wilt die.' The fisherman again returned to the charge, saying, 'Spare me for that I set thee free.' 'Did I not tell thee,' replied the Marid, 'that is why I kill thee?' 'O head of the Afrits,' said the fisherman, 'I did thee a kindness, and thou repayest me with evil: indeed the proverb lieth not that saith:

"We did them good, and they the contrary returned: And this, upon my life, is what the wicked do!
Who helps those, that deserve it not, shall be repaid As the hyæna paid the man that helped her through."'

'Make no more words about it,' said the Afrit; 'thou must die.' Quoth the fisherman to himself, 'This is a genie, and I am a man; and God hath given me a good wit. So I will contrive for his destruction by my wit and cunning, even as he plotted mine of his craft and perfidy.' Then he said to the Afrit, 'Is there no help for it, but thou must kill me?' He answered, 'No,' and the fisherman said, 'I conjure thee, by the Most High Name graven upon the ring of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), answer me one question truly.' When the Afrit heard him mention the Most High Name, he was agitated and trembled and replied, 'It is well: ask and be brief.' Quoth the fisherman, 'This vessel would not suffice for thy hand or thy foot: so how could it hold the whole of thee?' Said the Afrit, 'Dost thou doubt that I was in it?' 'Yes,' answered the fisherman; 'nor will I believe it till I see it with my own eyes.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent.

Night *And when it was the fourth night*[1]

iv. Dunyazad said to her sister, "O sister, an thou be not asleep, finish us thy story." So Shehrzad began, "I have heard tell, O august King, that, when he heard what the fisherman said, the Afrit shook and became a smoke over the sea, which drew together and entered the vessel little by little, till it was all inside. Whereupon the fisherman made haste to take the leaden stopper and clapping it on the mouth of the vessel, called out to the Afrit, saying, 'Choose what death thou wilt die! By Allah, I will throw thee back into the sea and build myself a house hard by, and all who come hither I will warn against fishing here and say to them, "There is an Afrit in these waters, that gives those who pull him out their choice of deaths and how he shall kill them."' When the Afrit heard this and found himself shut up in the vessel, he knew that the fisherman had outwitted him and strove to get out, but could not, for Solomon's seal prevented him; so he said to the fisherman, 'I did but jest with thee.' 'Thou liest, O vilest and meanest and foulest of Afrits!' answered he, and rolled the vessel to the brink of the sea; which when the Afrit felt, he cried out, 'No! No!' And the fisherman said, 'Yes! Yes!' Then the Afrit made his voice small and humbled himself and said, 'What wilt thou do with me, O fisherman?' 'I mean to throw thee back into the sea,' replied he; 'since thou hast lain there already eighteen hundred years, thou shalt lie there now till the hour of judgment. Did I not say to thee, "Spare me, so God may spare thee; and do not kill me, lest God kill thee?" but thou spurnedst my prayers and wouldst deal with me no otherwise than perfidiously. So I used cunning with thee

[1] From this point I omit the invariable formula which introduces each night, as its constant repetition is only calculated to annoy the reader, and content myself with noting the various nights in the margin.

and now God has delivered thee into my hand.' Said the Afrit, 'Let me out, that I may confer benefits on thee.' The fisherman answered, 'Thou liest, O accursed one! Thou and I are like King Younan's Vizier and the physician Douban.' 'Who are they,' asked the Afrit, 'and what is their story?' Then said the fisherman, 'Know, O Afrit, that

STORY OF THE PHYSICIAN DOUBAN.

There was once in a city of Persia a powerful and wealthy king, named Younan, who had guards and troops and auxiliaries of every kind: but he was afflicted with a leprosy, which defied the efforts of his physicians and wise men. He took potions and powders and used ointments, but all to no avail, and not one of the doctors could cure him. At last, there came to the King's capital city a great physician, stricken in years, whose name was Douban: and he had studied many books, Greek, ancient and modern, and Persian and Turkish and Arabic and Syriac and Hebrew, and was skilled in medicine and astrology, both theoretical and practical. Moreover he was familiar with all plants and herbs and grasses, whether harmful or beneficial, and was versed in the learning of the philosophers; in brief, he had made himself master of all sciences, medical and other. He had not been long in the town before he heard of the leprosy with which God had afflicted the King, and of the failure of the physicians and men of science to cure him; whereupon he passed the night in study; and when the day broke and the morning appeared and shone, he donned his richest apparel and went in to the King and kissing the ground before him, wished him enduring honour and fair fortune, in the choicest words at his command. Then he told him who he was and said to him, "O King, I have learnt what has befallen thee in thy

person and how a multitude of physicians have failed to find a means of ridding thee of it: but I will cure thee, O King, and that without giving thee to drink of medicine or anointing thee with ointment." When the King heard this, he wondered and said to him, "How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou cure me, I will enrich thee, even to thy children's children, and I will heap favours on thee, and whatever thou desirest shall be thine, and thou shalt be my companion and my friend." Then he gave him a dress of honour and made much of him, saying, "Wilt thou indeed cure me without drugs or ointment?" "Yes," answered Douban, "I will cure thee from without." Whereat the King marvelled exceedingly and said, "O physician, when wilt thou do as thou hast said? Make haste, O my son!" Quoth Douban, "I hear and obey: it shall be done to-morrow." And he went down into the city and hired a house, in which he deposited his books and medicines. Then he took certain drugs and simples and fashioned them into a mall, which he hollowed out and made thereto a handle and a ball, adapted to it by his art. Next morning he presented himself before the King and kissing the ground before him, ordered him to repair to the tilting-ground and play at mall there. So the King mounted and repaired thither with his amirs and chamberlains and viziers, and hardly had he reached the appointed place when the physician Douban came up and presented him with the mall and ball he had prepared, saying, "Take this mall and grip the handle thus and drive into the plain and stretch thyself well and strike this ball till thy hand and thy body sweat, when the drugs will penetrate thy hand and permeate thy body. When thou hast done and the medicine has entered into thee, return to thy palace and enter the bath and wash. Then sleep awhile and thou wilt awake cured, and peace be on thee!" The King took the mall and mounting a swift horse, threw

the ball before him and drove after it with all his might and smote it: and his hand gripped the mall firmly. And he ceased not to drive after the ball and strike it, till his hand and all his body sweated, and Douban knew that the drugs had taken effect upon him and ordered him to return and enter the bath at once. So the King returned immediately and ordered the bath to be emptied for him. They turned the people out of the bath, and his servants and attendants hastened thither and made him ready change of linen and all that was necessary: and he went in and washed himself well and put on his clothes. Then he came out of the bath and went up to his palace and slept there. When he awoke, he looked at his body and found it clean as virgin silver, having no trace left of the leprosy: whereat he rejoiced exceedingly and his breast expanded with gladness. Next morning, he repaired to the Divan and sat down on his chair of estate, and the chamberlains and grandees attended on him. Presently, the physician Douban presented himself and kissed the earth before the king and repeated the following verses:

The virtues all exalted are, when thou art styled their sire: None else the title dares accept, of all that men admire.
Lord of the radiant brow, whose light dispels the mists of doubt From every goal of high emprize whereunto folk aspire,
Ne'er may thy visage cease to shine with glory and with joy, Although the face of Fate should gloom with unremitting ire!
Even as the clouds pour down their dews upon the thirsting hills, Thy grace pours favours on my head, outrunning my desire.
With liberal hand thou casteth forth thy bounties far and nigh, And so hast won those heights of fame thou soughtest to acquire.

The King rose to him in haste and embraced him and made him sit down and clad him in a splendid dress of honour. Then tables of rich food were brought in, and Douban ate with the King and ceased not to bear him company all that day. When it was night, the King gave

him two thousand dinars, besides other presents, and mounted him on his own horse; and the physician returned to his lodging, leaving the King astonished at his skill and saying, "This man cured me from without, without using ointments. By Allah, this is none other than consummate skill! And it behoves me to honour and reward him and make him my companion and bosom friend to the end of time." The King passed the night in great content, rejoicing in the soundness of his body and his deliverance from his malady. On the morrow, he went out and sat down on his throne; and the grandees stood before him, whilst the amirs and viziers sat on his right hand and on his left. Then he sent for the physician, who came and kissed the ground before him, whereupon the King rose to him and made him sit by his side and eat with him, and ceased not to converse with him and make much of him till night; when he commanded five dresses of honour and a thousand dinars to be given to him, and he returned to his house, well contented with the King. Next morning, the King repaired as usual to his council-chamber, and the amirs and viziers and chamberlains took their places round him. Now he had among his viziers one who was forbidding of aspect, sordid, avaricious and envious: a man of ill omen, naturally inclined to malevolence: and when he saw the esteem in which the King held Douban and the favours he bestowed on him, he envied him and plotted evil against him; for, as says the byword, "Nobody is free from envy"—and again—"Tyranny is latent in the soul: weakness hides it and strength reveals it." So he came to the King and kissed the earth before him and said to him, "O King of the age, thou in whose bounties I have grown up, I have a grave warning to give thee, which did I conceal from thee, I were a son of shame: wherefore, if thou command me to impart it to thee, I will do so." Quoth the King (and indeed the Vizier's words troubled him),

"What is thy warning?" "O illustrious King," answered the Vizier, "the ancients have a saying, 'Whoso looks not to the issue of events, fortune is no friend of his:' and indeed I see the King in other than the right way, in that he favours his enemy, who seeks the downfall of his kingdom, and makes much of him and honours him exceedingly and is beyond measure familiar with him: and of a truth I am fearful for the King." Quoth King Younan (and indeed he was troubled and his colour changed), "Of whom dost thou speak?" The Vizier answered, "If thou sleepest, awake. I mean the physician Douban." "Out on thee!" said the King. "He is my true friend and the dearest of all men to me; seeing that he medicined me by means of a thing I held in my hand and cured me of my leprosy, which the doctors were unable to cure; and there is not his like to be found in this time, no, not in the whole world, East nor West; and it is of him that thou speakest thus! But from to-day I will assign him stipends and allowances and appoint him a thousand dinars a month: and if I should share my kingdom with him, it were but a little thing. Methinks thou sayest this out of pure envy and wouldst have me kill him and after repent, as King Sindbad repented the killing of his falcon." Night
"Pardon me, O King of the age," said the Vizier, "but 6.
how was that?" Quoth the King, "It is said that

KING SINDBAD AND HIS FALCON.

There was once a King of Persia, who delighted in hunting; and he had reared a falcon, that left him not day or night, but slept all night long, perched upon his hand. Whenever he went out to hunt, he took the falcon with him; and he let make for it a cup of gold to hang round its neck, that he might give it to drink therein. One day, his chief falconer came in to him and said, 'O King,

now is the time to go a-hunting.' So the King gave orders accordingly and took the falcon on his wrist and set out, accompanied by his officers and attendants. They rode on till they reached a valley, where they formed the circle of the chase, and behold, a gazelle entered the ring; whereupon quoth the King, 'Whoso lets the gazelle spring over his head, I will kill him.' Then they drew the ring closelier round her, and behold, she came to the King's station and standing still, put her forelegs to her breast, as if to kiss the earth before him. He bowed to her, but she sprang over his head and was off into the desert. The King saw his attendants nodding and winking to one another about him and said to his Vizier, 'O Vizier, what say my men?' 'They say,' answered the Vizier, 'that thou didst threaten to kill him over whose head the gazelle should spring.' 'As my head liveth,' rejoined the King, 'I will follow her up, till I bring her back!' So he pricked on after her and followed her till he came to a mountain and she made for her lair; but the King cast off the falcon, which swooped down on her and pecked at her eyes, till he blinded her and dazed her; whereupon the King threw his mace at her and brought her down. Then he alighted and cut her throat and skinned her and made her fast to his saddle-bow. Now it was the hour of midday rest and the place, where he was, was desert, and the King was athirst and so was his horse. So he searched till he saw a tree, with water dripping slowly, like oil, from its branches. Now the King's hands were gloved with leather;[1] so he took the cup from the falcon's neck and filled it with the liquid and set it before himself, when behold, the falcon smote the cup and overturned it. The King took it and refilled it with the falling drops and set it before the bird, thinking that it was athirst: but it

[1] Probably the skin of some animal supposed to be a defence against poison.

smote it again and overturned it. At this, the King was vexed with the falcon and rose and filled the cup a third time and set it before the horse: but the falcon again overturned it with its wing. Then said the King, 'God confound thee, thou most mischievous of fowls, thou wilt neither drink thyself nor let me nor the horse drink!' And he smote it with his sword and cut off its wings: whereupon it erected its head and made signs as who should say, 'Look what is at the top of the tree.' The King raised his eyes and saw at the top of the tree a brood of snakes, and this was their venom dripping, which he had taken for water. So he repented him of having cut off the falcon's wings and mounting, rode on till he reached his tents and gave the gazelle to the cook to roast. Then he sat down on his chair, with the falcon on his wrist: and presently the bird gasped and died: whereupon the King cried out in sorrow and lament for having slain the bird that had saved him from death, and repented him when repentance availed him not. This, then, is the story of King Sindbad; and as for thee, O Vizier, envy hath entered into thee, and thou wouldst have me kill the physician and after repent, even as King Sindbad repented." "O mighty King," answered the Vizier, "what harm has this physician done me that I should wish his death? Indeed I only do this thing in compassion for thee and that thou mayst know the truth of the matter: else may I perish as perished the Vizier who plotted to destroy the king his master's son." "How was that?" asked the King, and the Vizier replied, "Know, O King, that

THE KING'S SON AND THE OGRESS.

There was once a King's son who was passionately fond of the chase; and his father had charged one of his Viziers to attend him wherever he went. One day, the prince

went out to hunt, accompanied by the Vizier, and as they were going along, they saw a great wild beast, whereupon the Vizier said to the prince, 'Up and after yonder beast!' So the prince rode after the beast and followed it, till he was lost to sight. After a while, the beast disappeared in the desert, and the prince found himself alone, not knowing which way to turn. Presently he came upon a damsel, weeping, and said to her, 'Who art thou?' Quoth she, 'I am the daughter of one of the Kings of India, and I was journeying through this country, with a company of people, when sleep overcame me and I fell from my horse, not knowing what I did. My people did not note my fall and went on and left me; and now I am alone and bewildered.' When the prince heard this, he had pity on her case and took her up behind himself and they rode on, till they came to some ruins; when she said to him, 'O my lord, I wish to do an occasion here.' So he put her down, and she entered the ruins and tarried there till he became impatient and went in search of her; when he was ware that she was an ogress, and heard her say to her children, 'O my children, I have brought you to-day a fat youth.' 'O mother,' answered they, 'bring him to us, that we may browse on him our bellyful.' When the prince heard this their talk, he trembled in every nerve and made sure of destruction and turned back. The ogress came out after him and finding him terrified and trembling, said to him, 'Why dost thou fear?' Quoth he, 'I have an enemy, of whom I am in fear.' 'Didst thou not say that thou wast a King's son?' asked she, and he answered, 'Yes.' 'Then,' said she, 'why dost thou not give thine enemy money and so appease him?' He replied, 'Indeed he will not be satisfied with money nor with aught but life; and I fear him and am an oppressed man.' 'If thou be oppressed as thou sayst,' rejoined she, 'ask help of God; surely He will protect thee from thine enemy and from the mischief

thou fearest from him.' So the prince raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O Thou that answerest the prayer of the distressed, when they call on Thee, and dispellest evil from them, O my God, succour me against mine enemy and turn him back from me, for Thou indeed canst do whatsoever Thou wilt.' When the ogress heard his prayer, she departed from him and he returned to the King his father and informed him of the Vizier's conduct: whereupon the King sent for the latter and put him to death. And thou, O King" (continued the envious Vizier), "if thou put thy trust in this physician, he will kill thee in the foulest fashion. He, verily, whom thou hast favoured and admitted to thy friendship, plots thy destruction: for know that he is a spy come from a far land with intent to destroy thee. Seest thou not that he cured thee of thy distemper from without, by means of a thing held in thy hand, and how canst thou be sure that he will not kill thee by some like means?" "Thou speakest sooth, O Vizier of good counsel!" said the King. "It must indeed be as thou sayst; this physician doubtless comes as a spy, seeking to destroy me; and indeed, if he could cure me by means of a handle held in my hand, he can kill me by means of something I shall smell. But what is to be done with him?" "Send after him at once," answered the Vizier, "and when he comes, strike off his head and play him false, ere he play thee false; and so shalt thou ward off his mischief and be at peace from him." "Thou art right, O Vizier," rejoined the King and sent for the physician, who came, rejoicing, for he knew not what the Compassionate had decreed unto him. As the saying runs:

Thou that fearest ill fortune, be of good heart and hope! Trust thine affairs to Him who fashioned the earth and sea!
What is decreed of God surely shall come to pass; That which is not decreed never shall trouble thee.

When Douban entered, he recited the following verses:

If all the thanks I speak come short of that which is your due, Say for whom else my verse and prose I make except for you?
You have indeed prevented me with many an unasked boon, Blest me, unhindered of excuse, with favours not a few.
How then should I omit to give your praise its full desert And celebrate with heart and voice your goodness ever new?
I will indeed proclaim aloud the boons I owe to you, Favours, that, heavy to the back, are light the thought unto.

And also the following:

Avert thy face from trouble and from care And trust in God to order thine affair.
Rejoice in happy fortune near at hand, In which thou shalt forget the woes that were.
Full many a weary and a troublous thing Is, in its issue, solaceful and fair.
God orders all according to His will: Oppose Him not in what He doth prepare.

And these also:

Trust thine affairs to the Subtle, to God that knoweth all, And rest at peace from the world, for nothing shall thee appal.
Know that the things of the world not, as thou wilt, befall, But as the Great God orders, to whom all kings are thrall!

And lastly these:

Take heart and rejoice and forget thine every woe, For even the wit of the wise is eaten away by care.
What shall thought-taking profit a helpless, powerless slave? Leave it and be at peace in joy enduring fore'er!

When he had finished, the King said to him, "Dost thou know why I have sent for thee?" And the physician answered, "None knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High." Quoth the King, "I have sent for thee to kill thee and put an end to thy life." Douban wondered greatly at these words and said, "O King, wherefore wilt thou kill me and what offence have I committed?" "I am told," replied Younan, "that thou art a spy and comest to kill me, but I will kill thee first." Then he cried out

to his swordbearer, saying, "Strike off the head of this traitor and rid us of his mischief!" "Spare me," said Douban; "so may God spare thee; and kill me not, lest God kill thee!" And he repeated these words to him, even as I did to thee, O Afrit, and thou wouldst not spare me, but persistedst in thine intent to put me to death. Then the King said to Douban, "Verily I shall not be secure except I kill thee: for thou curedst me by means of a handle I held in my hand, and I have no assurance but thou wilt kill me by means of perfumes or otherwise." "O King," said Douban, "is this my reward from thee? Thou returnest evil for good!" The King replied, "It boots not: thou must die and that without delay." When the physician saw that the King was irrevocably resolved to kill him, he wept and lamented the good he had done to the undeserving, blaming himself for having sown in an ungrateful soil and repeating the following verses:

Maimouneh has no wit to guide her by, Although her sire among the wise ranks high.
The man, who has no sense to rule his steps, Slips, be the ground he treads on wet or dry.

Then the swordbearer came forward and bandaged his eyes and baring his sword, said to the King, "Have I thy leave to strike?" Whereupon the physician wept and said, "Spare me, so God may spare thee: and kill me not, lest God kill thee!" And he recited the following verses:

I acted in good faith and they betrayed: I came to nought: They prospered, whilst my loyalty brought me to evil case.
If that I live, I will to none good counsel give again: And if I die, good counsellors be curst of every race!

And he said to the King, "Is this my reward from thee? Thou givest me the crocodile's recompense." Quoth the King, "What is the story of the crocodile?" "I cannot tell it," answered Douban, "and I in this case; but, God

on thee, spare me, so may He spare thee!" And he wept sore. Then one of the King's chief officers rose and said, "O King, grant me this man's life, for we see not that he has committed any offence against thee nor that he has done aught but cure thee of thy disorder, which baffled the doctors and sages." "Ye know not why I put him to death," answered the King: "it is because I believe him to be a spy, who hath been suborned to kill me and came hither with that intent: and verily he who cured me by means of a handle held in my hand can easily poison me in like manner. If I spare him, he will infallibly destroy me: so needs must I kill him, and then I shall feel myself safe." When the physician was convinced that there was no hope for him, but that the King would indeed put him to death, he said to the latter, "O King, if thou must indeed kill me, grant me a respite, that I may go to my house and discharge my last duties and dispose of my medical books and give my people and friends directions for my burial. Among my books is one that is a rarity of rarities, and I will make thee a present of it, that thou mayst lay it up in thy treasury." "And what is in this book?" asked the King. Quoth Douban, "It contains things without number: the least of its secret virtues is that if, when thou hast cut off my head, thou open the book, turn over six leaves and read three lines of the left-hand page, my head will speak and answer whatever questions thou shalt ask it." At this the King marvelled greatly and shook with delight and said, "O physician, will thy head indeed speak to me, after it is cut off?" And he answered, "Yes, O King." Quoth the King, "This is indeed wonderful!" And sent him under guard to his house, where Douban spent the remainder of the day in setting his affairs in order. Next day, the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and all the great officers and notables of the kingdom came to the court, and the presence-chamber was like a

flower garden. Presently the physician entered, bearing an old book and a small pot full of powder; and sitting down, called for a dish. So they brought him a dish, and he poured the powder therein and levelled it. Then he said, "O King, take this book, but do not open it till my head has been cut off, placed on this dish and pressed down on the powder, when the blood will cease to flow: then open the book and do as I have enjoined thee." The King took the book and gave the signal to the headsman, who rose and struck off the physician's head and set it on the dish, pressing it down upon the powder, when the blood immediately ceased to flow, and the head unclosed its eyes and said, "Open the book, O King!" Younan opened the book and found the leaves stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth and took of his spittle and loosened them therewith and turned over the pages in this manner, one after another, for the leaves would not come apart but with difficulty, till he came to the seventh page, but found nothing written thereon and said to the head, "O physician, there is nothing here." Quoth the head, "Open more leaves." So the King turned over more leaves in the same manner. Now the book was poisoned, and before long the poison began to work upon the King, and he fell back in convulsions and cried out, "I am poisoned!" Whereupon the head repeated the following verses:

Lo, these once were kings who governed with a harsh and haughty sway!
In a little, their dominion was as if it ne'er had been.
Had they swayed the sceptre justly, they had been repaid the like, But
they were unjust, and Fortune guerdoned them with dole and teen.
Now they're passed away, the moral of their case bespeaks them thus,
"This is what your sins have earnt you: Fate is not to blame, I ween."

No sooner had it done speaking, than the King fell down dead and the head also ceased to live. And know, O Afrit (continued the fisherman), that if King Younan

had spared the physician Douban, God would have spared him; but he refused and sought his death; so God killed him. And thou, O Afrit, if thou hadst spared me, I would spare thee; but nothing would serve thee but thou must put me to death; so now I will kill thee by shutting thee up in this vessel and throwing thee into the sea.' At this the Marid roared out and said, 'God on thee, O fisherman, do not do that! Spare me and bear me not malice for what I did, for men's wit is still better than that of Jinn. If I did evil, do thou good, in accordance with the adage, "O thou that dost good to him that does evil, the deed of the evil-doer suffices him." Do not thou deal with me as did Umameh with Aatikeh.' 'And what did Umameh with Aatikeh?' asked the fisherman. But the Afrit answered, 'This is no time to tell stories, and I in this duresse: let me out, and I will tell thee.' Quoth the fisherman, 'Leave this talk: I must and will throw thee into the sea, and thou shalt never win out again; for I besought thee and humbled myself to thee, but nothing would serve thee but thou must kill me, who had committed no offence against thee deserving this nor done thee any ill, but only kindness, in that I delivered thee from duresse. When thou didst thus by me, I knew thee for an incorrigible evil-doer; and know that, when I have thrown thee back into the sea, I will tell every one what happened between me and thee and warn him, to the end that whoever fishes thee up may throw thee in again; and thou shalt remain in the sea till the end of time and suffer all manner of torments.' Quoth the Afrit, 'Let me out, for this is the season of generosity; and I will make a compact with thee never to do thee hurt and to help thee to what shall enrich thee.' The fisherman accepted his proposal and unsealed the vessel, after he had taken the Afrit's pledge and made him swear by the Most High Name never to hurt him, but on the contrary to do him

Night bi.

service. Then the smoke ascended as before and gathered itself together and became an Afrit, who gave the vessel a kick and sent it into the sea. When the fisherman saw this, he let fly in his clothes and gave himself up for lost, saying, 'This bodes no good.' But he took courage and said to the Afrit, 'O Afrit, quoth God the Most High, "Be ye faithful to your covenants, for they shall be enquired of:" and verily thou madest a pact with me and sworest to me that thou wouldst do me no hurt. So play me not false, lest God do the like with thee: for indeed He is a jealous God, who delayeth to punish, yet letteth not the evil-doer escape. And I say to thee, as said the physician Douban to King Younan, "Spare me, so God may spare thee!"' The Afrit laughed and started off inland, saying to the fisherman, 'Follow me.' So he followed him, trembling and not believing that he should escape, and the Afrit led him to the backward of the town: then crossing a hill, descended into a spacious plain, in the midst of which was a lake of water surrounded by four little hills. He led the fisherman into the midst of the lake, where he stood still and bade him throw his net and fish. The fisherman looked into the water and was astonished to see therein fish of four colours, white and red and blue and yellow. Then he took out his net and cast and drawing it in, found in it four fish, one of each colour. At this he rejoiced, and the Afrit said to him, 'Carry them to the Sultan and present them to him, and he will give thee what shall enrich thee. And accept my excuse, for I know not any other way to fulfil my promise to thee, having lain in yonder sea eighteen hundred years and never seen the surface of the earth till this time. But do not fish here more than once a day; and I commend thee to God's care!' So saying, he struck the earth with his foot, and it opened and swallowed him up, whilst the fisherman returned, wondering at all that had befallen

him, to his house, where he took a bowl of water and laid therein the fish, which began to frisk about. Then he set the bowl on his head and going up to the palace, as the Afrit had bidden him, presented the fish to the King, who wondered at them greatly, for that he had never seen their like, in shape or kind, and said to his Vizier, 'Give these fish to the cookmaid that the King of the Greeks sent us, and tell her to fry them.' Now this was a damsel that he had received as a present from the King of the Greeks three days before and of whom he had not yet made trial in cookery. So the Vizier carried the fish to the cookmaid and said to her, 'These fish have been brought as a present to the Sultan and he says to thee, "O my tear, I have reserved thee against my stress!" So do thou show us to-day thy skill and the excellence of thy cookery.' Then he returned to the Sultan, who bade him give the fisherman four hundred dinars. So he gave them to him and he took the money in his lap and set off home, running and stumbling and falling and rising again and thinking that he was dreaming. And he bought what was needful for his family and returned to his wife, glad and happy. Meanwhile the cookmaid took the fish and cleaned them and set the frying-pan on the fire. Then she poured in oil of sesame and waited till it was hot, when she put in the fish. As soon as one side was done, she turned them, when lo, the wall of the kitchen opened and out came a handsome and well-shaped young lady, with smooth cheeks and liquid black eyes.[1] She was clad in a tunic of satin, garded with spangles of Egyptian gold, and on her head she had a silken kerchief, fringed with blue. She wore rings in her ears and bracelets on her wrists and rings on

[1] Literally, "eyes adorned with kohl:" but this expression is evidently used tropically to denote a natural beauty of the eye, giving it that liquid appearance which it is the object of the use of the cosmetic in question to produce.

her fingers, with beazels of precious stones, and held in her hand a rod of Indian cane. She came up to the brazier and thrust the rod into the frying-pan, saying, 'O fish, are you constant to your covenant?' And when the cookmaid heard this she swooned away. Then the damsel repeated her question a second and a third time; and the fish lifted up their heads and cried out with one voice, 'Yes, yes:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

With this the damsel overturned the frying-pan and went out by the way she had come, and the wall closed up again as before. Presently the cookmaid came to herself and seeing the four fish burnt black as coal, said, 'My arms are broken in my first skirmish!' And fell down again in a swoon. Whilst she was in this state, in came the Vizier, to seek the fish, and found her insensible, not knowing Saturday from Thursday. So he stirred her with his foot and she came to herself and wept and told him what had passed. He marvelled and said, 'This is indeed a strange thing!' Then he sent for the fisherman and said to him, 'O fisherman, bring us four more fish of the same kind.' So the fisherman repaired to the lake and cast his net and hauling it in, found in it four fish like the first and carried them to the Vizier, who took them to the cookmaid and said to her, 'Come, fry them before me, that I may see what happens.' So she cleaned the fish and setting the frying-pan on the fire, threw them into it: and they had not lain long before the wall opened and the damsel appeared, after the same fashion, and thrust the rod into the pan, saying, 'O fish, O fish, are you constant to the old covenant?' And behold the fish all lifted up their heads and cried out as before, 'Yes, yes:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

Then she overturned the pan and went out as she had come and the wall closed up again. When the Vizier saw this, he said, 'This is a thing that must not be kept from the King.' So he went to him and told him what he had witnessed; and the King said, 'I must see this with my own eyes.' Then he sent for the fisherman and commanded him to bring him other four fish like the first; and the fisherman went down at once to the lake and casting his net, caught other four fish and returned with them to the King, who ordered him other four hundred dinars and set a guard upon him till he should see what happened. Then he turned to the Vizier and said to him, 'Come thou and fry the fish before me.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I hear and obey.' So he fetched the frying-pan and setting it on the fire, cleaned the fish and threw them in: but hardly had he turned them, when the wall opened, and out came a black slave, as he were a mountain or one of the survivors of the tribe of Aad,[1] with a branch of a green tree in his hand: and he said, in a terrible voice, 'O fish, O fish, are you constant to the old covenant?' Whereupon they lifted up their heads and cried out, 'Yes, yes; we are constant:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

Then the slave went up to the pan and overturning it with the branch, went out as he had come, and the wall closed up as before. The King looked at the fish and found them black as coal; whereat he was bewildered and said to the Vizier, 'This is a thing about which it is impossible to keep silence; and indeed there must be some strange circumstance connected with these fish.' Then he sent for the fisherman and said to him, 'Hark ye, sirrah, whence hadst thou those fish?' 'From a lake between four hills,' answered he, 'on the thither side of the mountain behind

[1] A fabulous tribe of giants mentioned in the Koran.

the city.' 'How many days' journey hence?' asked the King; and the fisherman said, 'O my lord Sultan, half an hour's journey.' At this the King was astonished and ordering the troops to mount, set out at once, followed by his suite and preceded by the fisherman, who began to curse the Afrit. They rode on over the mountain and descended into a wide plain, that they had never before set eyes on, whereat they were all amazed. Then they fared on till they came to the lake lying between the four hills and saw the fish therein of four colours, red and white and yellow and blue. The King stood and wondered and said to his attendants, 'Has any one of you ever seen this lake before?' But they answered, 'Never did we set eyes on it in all our lives, O King of the age.' Then he questioned those stricken in years, and they made him the same answer. Quoth he, 'By Allah, I will not return to my capital nor sit down on my chair of estate till I know the secret of this pond and its fish!' Then he ordered his people to encamp at the foot of the hills and called his Vizier, who was a man of learning and experience, sagacious and skilful in business, and said to him, 'I mean to go forth alone to-night and enquire into the matter of the lake and these fish: wherefore do thou sit down at the door of my pavilion and tell the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and officers and all who ask after me that the Sultan is ailing and hath ordered thee to admit no one; and do thou acquaint none with my purpose.' The Vizier dared not oppose his design; so the King disguised himself and girt on his sword and going forth privily, took a path that led over one of the hills and fared on all that night and the next day, till the heat overcame him and he paused to rest. Then he set out again and fared on the rest of that day and all the next night, till on the morning of the second day, he caught sight of some black thing in the distance, whereat he rejoiced and said, 'Belike I shall

find some one who can tell me the secret of the lake and the fish.' So he walked on, till he came to the black object, when he found it a palace built of black stone, plated with iron; and one leaf of its gate was open and the other shut. At this the King rejoiced and went up to the gate and knocked lightly, but heard no answer. So he knocked a second time and a third time, with the same result. Then he knocked loudly, but still no one answered; and he said to himself, 'It must be deserted.' So he took courage and entering the vestibule, cried out, 'Ho, people of the palace! I am a stranger and a wayfarer and hungry. Have ye any victual?' He repeated these words a second and a third time, but none answered. So he took heart and went on boldly into the interior of the palace, which he found hung and furnished with silken stuffs, embroidered with stars of gold, and curtains let down before the doors. In the midst was a spacious courtyard, with four estrades, one on each side, and a bench of stone. Midmost the courtyard was a great basin of water, from which sprang a fountain, and at the corners stood four lions of red gold, spouting forth water as it were pearls and jewels; and the place was full of birds, which were hindered from flying away by a network of gold stretched overhead. The King looked right and left, but there was no one to be seen; whereat he marvelled and was vexed to find none of whom he might enquire concerning the lake and the fish and the palace itself. So he returned to the vestibule and sitting down between the doors, fell to musing upon what he had seen, when lo, he heard a moaning that came from a sorrowful heart, and a voice chanted the following verses:

I hid what I endured from thee: it came to light, And sleep was changed to wake thenceforward to my sight.
O Fate, thou sparest not nor dost desist from me; Lo, for my heart is racked with dolour and affright!
Have pity, lady mine, upon the great laid low, Upon the rich made poor by love and its despite!

Once, jealous of the breeze that blew on thee, I was, Alas! on whom Fate falls, his eyes are veiled with night.
What boots the archer's skill, if, when the foe draws near, His bow-string snap and leave him helpless in the fight?
So when afflictions press upon the noble mind, Where shall a man from Fate and Destiny take flight?

When the King heard this, he rose and followed the sound and found that it came from behind a curtain let down before the doorway of a sitting-chamber. So he raised the curtain and saw a young man seated upon a couch raised a cubit from the ground. He was a handsome well-shaped youth, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks and a black mole, like a grain of ambergris, on the table of his cheek, as says the poet:

The slender one! From his brow and the night of his jetty hair, The world in alternate gloom and splendour of day doth fare.
Blame not the mole on his cheek. Is an anemone's cup Perfect, except in its midst an eyelet of black it wear?

He was clad in a robe of silk, laced with Egyptian gold, and had on his head a crown set with jewels, but his face bore traces of affliction. The King rejoiced when he saw him and saluted him; and the youth returned his salute in the most courteous wise, though without rising, and said to him, 'O my lord, excuse me if I do not rise to thee, as is thy due; indeed, I am unable to do so.' 'I hold thee excused, O youth!' answered the King. 'I am thy guest and come to thee on a pressing errand, beseeching thee to expound to me the mystery of the lake and the fish and of this palace, and why thou sittest here alone and weeping.' When the young man heard this, the tears ran down his cheeks and he wept sore, till his breast was drenched, and repeated the following verses:

Say unto those that grieve, at whom doth fate her arrows cast, "How many an one hath she raised up but to lay low at last!
Lo, if ye sleep, the eye of God is never closed in sleep. For whom indeed is life serene, for whom is Fortune fast?"

Then he gave a heavy sigh and repeated the following:

Trust thine affair to the Ruler of all that be And put thought-taking and trouble away from thee:
Say not of aught that is past, "How came it so?" All things depend upon the Divine decree.

The King marvelled and said to him, 'What makes thee weep, O youth?' 'How should I not weep,' answered he, 'being in such a plight?' Then he put out his hand and lifted the skirt of his robe, and behold, he was stone from the waist downward. When the King saw this his condition, he grieved sore and lamented and cried out, 'Alas! alas!' and said, 'Verily, O youth, thou addest trouble to my trouble. I came to enquire concerning the fish; and now I am concerned to know thy history also. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Hasten therefore, O youth, and expound to me thy story.' Quoth the youth, 'Give me thine ears and understanding;' and the King replied, 'I am all attention.' Then said the youth, 'There hangs a strange story by these fish and by myself, a story which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye,[1] would serve as a warning to those who can profit by example.' 'How so?' asked the King; and the youth replied, 'Know, O my lord, that

STORY OF THE ENCHANTED YOUTH.

My father was king of the city that stood in this place, and his name was Mohammed, Lord of the Black Islands, which are no other than the four hills of which thou wottest. He reigned seventy years, at the end of which time God took him to Himself, and I succeeded to his throne and took to wife the daughter of my father's brother, who loved me with an exceeding love, so that,

[1] The word here translated "eye" may also be rendered "understanding." The exact meaning of the phrase (one of frequent recurrence in these stories) is doubtful.

whenever I was absent from her, she would neither eat nor drink till she saw me again. With her I lived for five years, till one day she went out to go to the bath, and I bade the cook hasten supper for us against her return. Then I entered the palace and lay down on the bed where we were wont to lie and ordered two slave-girls to sit, one at my head and the other at my feet, and fan me. Now I was disturbed at my wife's absence and could not sleep, but remained awake, although my eyes were closed. Presently I heard the damsel at my head say to the other one, "O Mesoudeh, how unhappy is our lord and how wretched is his youth, and oh, the pity of him with our accursed harlot of a mistress!" "Yes, indeed," replied Mesoudeh; "may God curse all unfaithful women and adulteresses! Indeed, it befits not that the like of our lord should waste his youth with this harlot, who lies abroad every night." Quoth the other, "Is our lord then a fool, that, when he wakes in the night and finds her not by his side, he makes no enquiry after her?" "Out on thee," rejoined Mesoudeh; "has our lord any knowledge of this or does she leave him any choice? Does she not drug him every night in the cup of drink she gives him before he sleeps, in which she puts henbane. So he sleeps like a dead man and knows nothing of what happens. Then she dresses and scents herself and goes forth and is absent till daybreak, when she returns and burns a perfume under his nose and he awakes." When I heard the girls' talk, the light in my eyes became darkness, and I thought the night would never come. Presently, my wife returned from the bath, and they served up supper and we ate and sat awhile drinking and talking as usual. Then she called for my sleeping-draught and gave me the cup: and I feigned to drink it, but made shift to pour it into my bosom and lay down at once and began to snore as if I slept. Then said she, "Sleep out thy night and never rise again! By Allah,

I hate thee and I hate thy person; I am sick of thy company and I know not when God will take away thy life!" Then she rose and donned her richest clothes and perfumed herself and girt on my sword and opened the palace gate and went out. I rose and followed her, and she passed through the streets of the city, till she came to the gate, when she muttered words I understood not: and straightway the locks fell off and the gate opened. She went forth and fared on among the rubbish heaps, I still following her without her knowledge, till she came to a reed fence, within which was a hut of brick. She entered the hut and I climbed up on the roof and looking down, saw my wife standing by a scurvy black slave, with blubber lips, one of which overlapped the other, like a coverlet, and swept up the sand from the gravel floor, lying upon a bed of sugar-cane refuse and wrapped in an old cloak and a few rags. She kissed the earth before him, and he raised his head to her and said, "Out on thee! why hast thou tarried till now? There have been some of my kinsmen the blacks here, drinking; and they have gone away, each with his wench; but I refused to drink on account of thine absence." "O my lord and my love and solace of my eyes," answered she, "dost thou not know that I am married to my cousin, and that I hate to look upon him and abhor myself in his company. Did I not fear for thy sake, I would not let the sun rise again till his city was a heap of ruins wherein the owl and the raven should hoot and wolves and foxes harbour; and I would transport its stones behind the mountain Caf."[1] "Thou liest, O accursed one!" said the black, "and I swear by the valour of the blacks (else may our manhood be as that of the whites!) that if thou tarry again till this hour, I will no longer keep thee company nor join my body to thine! O accursed one,

[1] A fabulous range of mountains which, according to Muslim cosmography, encompasses the world.

wilt thou play fast and loose with us at thy pleasure, O stinkard, O bitch, O vilest of whites?" When I heard and saw what passed between them, the world grew dark in my eyes and I knew not where I was; whilst my wife stood weeping and humbling herself to him and saying, "O my love and fruit of my heart, if thou be angry with me, who is left me, and if thou reject me, who shall shelter me, O my beloved and light of mine eyes?" And she ceased not to weep and implore him till he forgave her. Then she was glad and rose and putting off her clothes, said to the slave, "O my lord, hast thou aught here for thy handmaid to eat?" "Take the cover off yonder basin," answered he; "thou wilt find under it cooked rats' bones, and there is a little millet beer left in this pot. Eat and drink." So she ate and drank and washed her hands and mouth; then lay down, naked, upon the rushes, beside the slave, and covered herself with the rags. When I saw this, I became as one distraught and coming down from the roof, went in by the door. Then I took the sword she had brought and drew it, thinking to kill them both. I struck first at the slave's neck and thought I had made an end of him; but the blow only severed the flesh and the gullet, without dividing the jugulars. He gave a loud gurgling groan and roused my wife, whereupon I drew back, after I had restored the sword to its place, and returning to the palace, lay down on my bed till morning, when my wife came and awoke me, and I saw that she had cut off her hair and put on mourning garments. "O my cousin," said she, "do not blame me for this I have done; for I have news that my mother is dead, that my father has fallen in battle and that both my brothers are dead also, one of a snake-bite and the other of a fall from a precipice, so that I have good reason to weep and lament." When I heard this, I did not reproach her, but said to her, "Do what thou wilt: I will not baulk thee." She

Night biii.

ceased not to mourn and lament for a whole year, at the end of which time she said to me, "I wish to build me in thy palace a tomb with a cupola and set it apart for mourning and call it House of Lamentations." Quoth I, "Do what seemeth good to thee." So she built herself a house of mourning, roofed with a dome, and a monument in the midst like the tomb of a saint. Thither she transported the slave and lodged him in the tomb. He was exceeding weak and from the day I wounded him he had remained unable to do her any service or to speak or do aught but drink; but he was still alive, because his hour was not yet come. She used to visit him morning and evening in the mausoleum and carry him wine and broths to drink and weep and make moan over him; and thus she did for another year, whilst I ceased not to have patience with her and pay no heed to her doings, till one day I came upon her unawares and found her weeping and saying, "Why art thou absent from my sight, O delight of my heart? Speak to me, O my life! speak to me, O my love!" And she recited the following verses:

My patience fails me for desire: if thou forgettest me, My heart and all my soul can love none other after thee.
Carry me with thee, body and soul, wherever thou dost fare; And where thou lightest down to rest, there let me buried be.
Speak but my name above my tomb; the groaning of my bones, Turning towards thy voice's sound, shall answer drearily.

And she wept and recited the following:

My day of bliss is that whereon thou drawest near to me; And that, whereon thou turn'st away, my day of death and fear.
What though I tremble all the night and be in dread of death, Yet thine embraces are to me than safety far more dear.

And again the following:

Though unto me were given all that can make life sweet, Though the Chosroës' empire, yea, and the world were mine,
All were to me in value less than a midge's wing, If that mine eyes must never look on that face of thine!

When she had finished, I said to her, "O my cousin, let thy mourning suffice thee: for weeping profiteth nothing." She replied, "Thwart me not, or I will kill myself." So I held my peace and let her go her way: and she ceased not to mourn and weep for the space of another year. At the end of the third year, I came into the mausoleum one day, vexed at something that had crossed me and weary of this excessive affliction, and found her by the tomb under the dome, saying, "O my lord, I never hear thee speak to me, no, not one word. Why dost thou not answer me, O my lord?" And she recited the following verses:

O tomb, O tomb, have his beauties ceased, or does thy light indeed, The sheen of the radiant countenance, no more in thee abound?
O tomb, O tomb, thou art neither earth nor heaven unto me: How comes it then that sun and moon at once in thee are found?

When I heard this, it added wrath to my wrath, and I said, "Alas! how much more of this mourning?" and I repeated the following [parody of her] verses:

O tomb, O tomb, has his blackness ceased, or does thy light indeed, The sheen of the filthy countenance, no more in thee abound?
O tomb, thou art neither kitchen-stove nor sewer-pool for me! How comes it then that mire and coal at once in thee are found?

When she heard this, she sprang to her feet and said, "Out on thee, thou dog! it was thou that didst thus with me and woundedst the beloved of my heart and hast afflicted me and wasted his youth, so that these three years he hath lain, neither dead nor alive!" "O foulest of harlots and filthiest of whorish doxies of hired slaves," answered I, "it was indeed I who did this!" And I drew my sword and made at her to kill her; but she laughed and said, "Avaunt, thou dog! Thinkst thou that what is past can recur or the dead come back to life? Verily, God has given into my hand him who did this to me and against whom there was in my heart fire that might not be quenched

and insatiable rage." Then she stood up and pronouncing some words I did not understand, said to me, "Let one half of thee by my enchantments become stone and the other half remain man." And immediately I became as thou seest me and have remained ever since neither sitting nor standing and neither dead nor alive. Then she enchanted the city with all its streets and gardens and turned it into the lake thou wottest of, and the inhabitants, who were of four religions, Muslims, Christians, Magians and Jews, she changed to fish of various colours, the Muslims white, the Christians blue, the Magians red and the Jews yellow; and the four islands she turned into four mountains encompassing the lake. Moreover, the condition to which she has reduced me does not suffice her: but every day she strips me and gives me a hundred lashes with a whip, so that the blood runs down me and my shoulders are torn. Then she clothes my upper half in a shirt of hair-cloth and over that she throws these rich robes.' And he wept and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to Thee and eke to Fate, Content, if so Thou please, to suffer and to wait.
My enemies oppress and torture me full sore: But Paradise at last, belike, shall compensate.
Though Fate press hard on me, I trust in the Elect,[1] The Accepted One of God, to be my advocate.

With this the King turned to him and said, 'O youth, after having rid me of one trouble, thou addest another to me: but tell me, where is thy wife and where is the wounded slave?' 'The slave lies in the tomb under the dome,' answered the youth, 'and she is in the chamber over against the gate. Every day at sunrise, she comes out and repairs first to me and strips off my clothes and gives me a hundred strokes with the whip; and I weep and cry out, but cannot stir to keep her off. When she

[1] The prophet Mohammed.

has done torturing me, she goes down to the slave with the wine and broth on which she feeds him; and to-morrow at sunrise she will come.' 'O youth,' rejoined the King, 'by Allah, I will assuredly do thee a service by which I shall be remembered and which men shall chronicle to the end of time!' Then he sat down by the youth and talked with him till nightfall, when they went to sleep. At peep of day, the King rose and put off his clothes and drawing his sword, repaired to the mausoleum, where, after noting the paintings of the place and the candles and lamps and perfumes burning there, he sought for the slave till he came upon him and slew him with one blow of the sword; after which he took the body on his back and threw it into a well that was in the palace. Then he returned to the dome and wrapping himself in the black's clothes, lay down in his place, with his drawn sword by his side. After a while, the accursed enchantress came out and, going first to her husband, stripped him and beat him with the whip, whilst he cried out, 'Alas! The state I am in suffices me. Have mercy on me, O my cousin!' But she replied, 'Didst thou show me any mercy or spare my beloved?' And beat him till she was tired and the blood ran from his sides. Then she put the hair shirt on him and the royal robes over it, and went down to the dome with a goblet of wine and a bowl of broth in her hands. When she came to the tomb, she fell a-weeping and wailing and said, 'O my lord, speak to me!' And repeated the following verse:

How long ere this rigour pass away and thou relent? Is it not yet enough of the tears that I have spent?'

And she wept and said again, 'O my lord, speak to me!' The King lowered his voice and knotting his tongue, spoke after the fashion of the blacks and said, 'Alack! alack! There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' When she heard this, she screamed

out for joy and swooned away; and when she revived, she said, 'O my lord, can it be true and didst thou indeed speak to me?' The King made his voice small and said, 'O accursed woman, thou deservest not that I should speak to thee!' 'Why so?' asked she; and he replied, 'Because all day thou tormentest thy husband and his cries disturb me, and all night long he calls upon God for help and invokes curses on thee and me and keeps me awake from nightfall to daybreak and disquiets me; and but for this, I had been well long ago. This is what has hindered me from answering thee.' Quoth she, 'With thy leave, I will release him from his present condition.' 'Do so,' said the King, 'and rid us of his noise.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she, and going out into the palace, took a cup full of water and spoke over it certain words, whereupon the water began to boil and bubble as the cauldron bubbles over the fire. Then she went up to the young King and sprinkled him with it, saying, 'By the virtue of the words I have spoken, if thou art thus by my spells, quit this shape for thy former one.' And immediately he shook and rose to his feet, rejoicing in his deliverance, and said, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His apostle, may God bless and preserve him!' Then she said to him, 'Depart hence and do not return, or I will kill thee.' And she screamed out in his face. So he went out from before her, and she returned to the dome and going down into the tomb, said, 'O my lord, come forth to me, that I may see thy goodly form!' The King replied in a weak voice, 'What hast thou done? Thou hast rid me of the branch, but not of the root.' 'O my beloved, O my little black,' said she, 'what is the root?' 'Out on thee, O accursed one!' answered he. 'Every night, at the middle hour, the people of the city, whom thou by thine enchantments didst change into fish, lift up their heads from the water and cry to God

for help and curse thee and me; and this is what hinders my recovery: so do thou go quickly and set them free, and after return and take me by the hand and raise me up; for indeed health returns to me.' When she heard this speech of the King, whom she supposed to be the slave, she rejoiced and said, 'O my lord, on my head and eyes be it, in the name of God!' Then she went out, full of joy, and ran to the lake and taking a little of the water in her hand, spoke over it words that might not be understood, whereupon there was a great stir among the fish; and they raised their heads to the surface and stood upright and became men as before. Thus was the spell dissolved from the people of the city and the lake became again a populous city, with its streets and bazaars, in which the merchants bought and sold, and every one returned to his employment; whilst the four hills were restored to their original form of islands. Then the enchantress returned to the King and said to him, 'O my lord, give me thy noble hand and arise.' 'Come nearer to me,' answered he, in a faint voice. So she came close to him, and he took his sword and smote her in the breast, that the steel came forth, gleaming, from her back. He smote her again and cut her in twain, and she fell to the ground in two halves. Then he went out and found the young King standing awaiting him and gave him joy of his deliverance, whereupon the youth rejoiced and thanked him and kissed his hand. Quoth the Sultan, 'Wilt thou abide in this thy city or come with me to mine?' 'O King of the age,' rejoined he, 'dost thou know how far it is from here to thy capital?' And the Sultan replied, 'Two and a half days' journey.' 'O King,' said the other, 'if thou sleepest, awake! Between thee and thy capital is a full year's journey to a diligent traveller; and thou hadst not come hither in two days and a half, save that the city was enchanted. But, O King, I will never leave thee, no, not for the twinkling of

Night ix.

an eye!' The Sultan rejoiced at his words and said, 'Praised be God, who hath bestowed thee upon me! Thou shalt be my son, for in all my life I have never been blessed with a son.' And they embraced each other and rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Then they returned to the palace, and the young King bade his officers make ready for a journey and prepare his baggage and all that he required. The preparations occupied ten days, at the end of which time the young King set out in company of the Sultan, whose heart burned within him at the thought of his long absence from his capital, attended by fifty white slaves and provided with magnificent presents. They journeyed day and night for a whole year, and God ordained them safety, till they drew near the Sultan's capital and sent messengers in advance to acquaint the Vizier with his safe arrival. Then came out the Vizier and the troops, who had given up all hope of the Sultan's return, and kissed the ground before him and gave him joy of his safety. So he entered his palace and sat down on his throne and the Vizier came in to him, to whom he related all that had befallen him with the young King: and the Vizier gave the latter joy of his deliverance. Then all things being set in order, the Sultan gave largesse to many of his people and sending for the fisherman who had brought him the enchanted fish and had thus been the first cause of the delivery of the people of the Black Islands, bestowed on him a dress of honour and enquired of his condition and whether he had any children, to which he replied that he had three children, two daughters and one son. So the King sent for them and taking one daughter to wife, married the other to the young King and made the son his treasurer. Moreover, he invested his Vizier with the sovereignty of the Black Islands and despatched him thither with the fifty officers, who had accompanied the young King thence, giving him robes of

honour for all the amirs. So the Vizier kissed hands and set out for the Black Islands. The fisherman became the richest man of his time, and he and his daughters and the two Kings their husbands abode in peace till death came to them.

THE PORTER AND THE THREE LADIES OF BAGHDAD.

There was once a porter of Baghdad who was a bachelor. One day, as he stood in the market, leant upon his basket, there came to him a lady, swathed in a wrapper of gold-embroidered muslin, fringed with gold lace, and wearing embroidered boots and floating tresses plaited with silk and gold. She stopped before him and raising her kerchief, showed a pair of languishing black eyes of perfect beauty, bordered with long drooping lashes. Then she turned to the porter and said, in a clear sweet voice, 'Take thy basket and follow me.' No sooner had she spoken than he took up his basket in haste, saying, 'O day of good luck! O day of God's grace!' and followed her till she stopped and knocked at the door of a house, when there came out a Nazarene, to whom she gave a dinar, and he gave her in return an olive-green bottle, full of wine, which she put into the basket, saying to the porter, 'Hoist up and follow me.' Said he, 'By Allah, this is indeed a happy and fortunate day!' And shouldering the basket, followed her till she came to a fruiterer's, where she bought Syrian apples and Turkish quinces and Arabian peaches and autumn cucumbers and Sultani oranges and citrons, beside jessamine of Aleppo and Damascus water-lilies and myrtle and basil and henna-blossoms and blood-red anemones and violets and sweet-briar and narcissus and camomile and pomegranate flowers, all of which she put into the porter's basket, saying, 'Hoist up!' So he shouldered the basket and followed her, till she stopped

at a butcher's shop and said to him, 'Cut me off ten pounds of meat.' He gave her the meat, wrapped in a banana leaf, and she put it in the basket, saying, 'Hoist up, O porter!' and went on to a grocer's, of whom she took pistachio kernels and shelled almonds and hazelnuts and walnuts and sugar-cane and parched peas and Mecca raisins and all else that pertains to dessert. Thence to a pastry-cook's, where she bought a covered dish and put therein open-work tarts and honey-fritters and tri-coloured jelly and march-pane, flavoured with lemon and melon, and Zeyneb's combs and ladies' fingers and Cadi's mouthfuls and widow's bread and meat-and-drink[1] and some of every kind of sweetmeat in the shop, and laid the dish in the basket of the porter, who said to her, 'Thou shouldst have told me, that I might have brought a mule or a camel to carry all these good things.' She smiled and gave him a tap on the nape, saying, 'Make haste and leave chattering and God willing, thou shalt have a good wage.' She stopped next at the shop of a druggist, where she bought rose-water and water-lily water and orange-flower water and willow-flower water and six other kinds of sweet waters and a casting bottle of rose-water mingled with musk, besides two loaves of sugar and frankincense and aloes-wood and ambergris and musk and saffron and candles of Alexandrian wax, all of which she put into the basket. Then she went on to a greengrocer's, of whom she bought pickled safflower and olives, in brine and fresh, and tarragon and juncates and Syrian cheese and put them all into the basket and said to the porter, 'Take up thy basket and follow me.' So he shouldered his load and followed her till she came to a tall handsome house, with a spacious court before it and a two-leaved door of ebony, inlaid with plates of glittering gold. The lady went up to the door and throwing back her kerchief, knocked softly, whilst the

[1] Various kinds of cakes and sweetmeats.

porter stood behind her, musing upon her beauty and grace. After a while the door opened and both the leaves swung back; whereupon he looked to see who opened it, and behold, it was a damsel of dazzling beauty and symmetry, high-bosomed, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks, eyes like those of gazelles or wild oxen and eyebrows like the crescent of the new moon of Ramazan,[1] cheeks like blood-red anemones, mouth like Solomon's seal, lips red as coral and teeth like clustered pearls or camomile-petals, neck like an antelope's and bosom like a fountain, breasts like double pomegranates, belly like brocade and navel holding an ounce of benzoin ointment, even as says of her the poet:

Look at her, with her slender shape and radiant beauty! this Is she who is at once the sun and moon of palaces!
Thine eyes shall ne'er see grace combine so featly black and white As in her visage and the locks that o'er her forehead kiss.
She in whose cheeks the red flag waves, her beauty testifies Unto her name, if that to paint her sweet seductions miss.
With swimming gait she walks: I laugh for wonder at her hips, But weep to see her waist, that all too slight to bear them is.

When the porter saw her, his mind and heart were taken by storm, so that he well-nigh let fall the basket and exclaimed, 'Never in all my life saw I a more blessed day than this!' Then said the portress to the cateress, 'O my sister, why tarriest thou? Come in from the gate and ease this poor man of his burden.' So the cateress entered, followed by the portress and the porter, and went on before them to a spacious saloon, elegantly built and handsomely decorated with all manner of colours and carvings and geometrical figures, with balconies and gal-

[1] The appearance of which is the signal for the commencement of the fast. All eyes being on the watch, it naturally follows that the new moon of this month is generally seen at an earlier stage than are those of the other months of the year, and its crescent is therefore apparently more slender. Hence the comparison.

leries and cupboards and benches and closets with curtains drawn before them. In the midst was a great basin of water, from which rose a fountain, and at the upper end stood a couch of juniper wood, inlaid with precious stones and surmounted by a canopy of red satin, looped up with pearls as big as hazel-nuts or bigger. Thereon sat a lady of radiant countenance and gentle and demure aspect, moonlike in face, with eyes of Babylonian witchcraft and arched eyebrows, sugared lips like cornelian and a shape like the letter I. The radiance of her countenance would have shamed the rising sun, and she resembled one of the chief stars of heaven or a pavilion of gold or a high-born Arabian bride on the night of her unveiling, even as says of her the poet:

Her teeth, when she smiles, like pearls in a cluster show, Or shredded camomile-petals or flakes of snow:
Her ringlets seem, as it were, the fallen night, And her beauty shames the dawn and its ruddy glow.

Then she rose and coming with a stately gait to meet her sisters in the middle of the saloon, said to them, 'Why stand ye still? Relieve this poor porter of his burden.' So the cateress came and stood before and the portress behind him and with the help of the third damsel, lifted the basket from his head and emptying it, laid everything in its place. Then they gave him two dinars, saying, 'Go, O porter!' But he stood, looking at the ladies and admiring their beauty and pleasant manners, never had he seen goodlier, and wondering greatly at the profusion of wine and meat and fruits and flowers and so forth that they had provided and to see no man with them, and made no movement to go. So the eldest lady said to him, 'What ails thee that thou dost not go away? Belike, thou grudgest at thy pay?' And she turned to the cateress and said to her, 'Give him another dinar.' 'No, by Allah, O lady!' answered the porter. 'I do not indeed grudge at my pay,

for my right hire is scarce two dirhems; but of a truth, my heart and soul are taken up with you and how it is that ye are alone and have no man with you and no one to divert you, although ye know that women's sport is little worth without men, nor is an entertainment complete without four at the table, and ye have no fourth. What says the poet?

Dost thou not see that for pleasure four several things combine, Instruments four, harp, hautboy and gittern and psaltery?
And unto these, four perfumes answer and correspond, Violets, roses and myrtle and blood-red anemone.
Nor is our pleasure perfect, unless four things have we, Money and wine and gardens and mistress fair and free.

And ye are three and need a fourth, who should be a man, witty, sensible and discreet, one who can keep counsel.' When they heard what he said, it amused them and they laughed at him and replied, 'What have we to do with that, we who are girls and fear to entrust our secrets to those who will not keep them? For we have read, in such and such a history, what says Ibn eth Thumam:

Tell not thy secrets: keep them with all thy might. A secret revealed is a secret lost outright.
If thine own bosom cannot thy secrets hold, Why expect more reserve from another wight?

Or, as well says Abou Nuwas on the same subject:

The fool, that to men doth his secrets avow, Deserves to be marked with a brand on the brow.'

'By your lives,' rejoined the porter, 'I am a man of sense and discretion, well read in books and chronicles. I make known what is fair and conceal what is foul, and as says the poet:

None keeps a secret but the man who's trusty and discreet. A secret's ever safely placed with honest folk and leal;
And secrets trusted unto me are in a locked-up house Whose keys are lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal.

When the girls heard this, the eldest one said to him, 'Thou knowest that we have laid out much money in preparing this entertainment: hast thou aught to offer us in return? For we will not let thee sit with us and be our boon companion and gaze on our bright fair faces, except thou pay down thy share of the cost. Dost thou not know the saying:

Love without money
Is not worth a penny?'

'If thou have aught, my friend,' added the portress, 'then art thou something: but if thou have nothing, be off without anything.' Here the cateress interposed, saying, 'O sisters, let him be: for by Allah, he has not failed us to-day: another had not been so patient with us. I will pay his share for him.' Whereupon the porter, overjoyed, kissed the earth and thanked her, saying, 'By Allah, it was thou didst handsel me this day! Here are the two dinars I had of you: take them and admit me to your company, not as a guest, but as a servant.' 'Sit down,' answered they; 'thou art welcome.' But the eldest lady said, 'By Allah, we will not admit thee to our society but on one condition; and it is that thou enquire not of what does not concern thee; and if thou meddle, thou shalt be beaten.' Said the porter, 'I agree to this, O my lady, on my head and eyes! Henceforth I am dumb.' Then arose the cateress and girding her middle, laid the table by the fountain and set out the cups and flagons, with flowers and sweet herbs and all the requisites for drinking. Moreover, she strained the wine and set it on; and they sat down, she and her sisters, with the porter, who fancied himself in a dream. The cateress took the flagon of wine and filled a cup and drank it off. Then she filled again and gave it to one of her sisters, who drank and filled another cup and gave it to her other sister: then she filled a fourth time and gave it to the porter, saying:

Drink and fare well, and health attend thee still. This drink indeed's a cure for every ill.

He took the cup in his hand and bowed and returned thanks, reciting the following verses:

Quaff not the cup except with one who is of trusty stuff, One who is true of thought and deed and eke of good descent.
Wine's like the wind, that, if it breathe on perfume, smells as sweet, But, if o'er carrion it pass, imbibes its evil scent.

And again:

Drink not of wine except at the hands of a maiden fair, Who, like unto thee and it, is joyous and debonair.

Then he kissed their hands and drank and was merry with wine and swayed from side to side and recited the following verses:

Hither, by Allah, I conjure thee! Goblets that full of the grape juice be!
And brim up, I prithee, a cup for me, For this is the water of life, perdie!

Then the cateress filled the cup and gave it to the portress, who took it from her hand and thanked her and drank. Then she filled again and gave it to the eldest, who filled another cup and handed it to the porter. He gave thanks and drank and recited the following verses:

It is forbidden us to drink of any blood Except it be of that which gushes from the vine.
So pour it out to me, an offering to thine eyes, To ransom from thy hands my soul and all that's mine!

Then he turned to the eldest lady, who was the mistress of the house, and said to her, 'O my lady, I am thy slave and thy servant and thy bondman!' And repeated the following verses:

There is a slave of all thy slaves now standing at thy gate Who ceases not thy bounties all to sing and celebrate.
May he come in, O lady fair, to gaze upon thy charms? Desire and I from thee indeed may never separate.

And she said to him, 'Drink, and health and prosperity

attend thee!' So he took the cup and kissed her hand and sang the following verses:

I brought my love old wine and pure, the likeness of her cheeks, Whose glowing brightness called to mind a brazier's heart of red.
She touched the wine-cup with her lips, and laughing roguishly, "How canst thou proffer me to drink of my own cheeks?" she said.
"Drink!" answered I, "it is my tears; its hue is of my blood; And it was heated at a fire that by my sighs was fed."

And she answered him with the following verse:

If, O my friend, thou hast indeed wept tears of blood for me, I prithee, give them me to drink, upon thine eyes and head!

Then she took the cup and drank it off to her sisters' health; and they continued to drink and make merry, dancing and laughing and singing and reciting verses and ballads. The porter fell to toying and kissing and biting and handling and groping and dallying and taking liberties with them: whilst one put a morsel into his mouth and another thumped him, and this one gave him a cuff and that pelted him with flowers; and he led the most delightful life with them, as if he sat in paradise among the houris. They ceased not to drink and carouse thus, till the wine sported in their heads and got the better of their senses, when the portress arose and putting off her clothes, let down her hair over her naked body, for a veil. Then she threw herself into the basin and sported in the water, and swam about and dived like a duck and took water in her mouth and spurted it at the porter and washed her limbs and the inside of her thighs. Then she came up out of the water and throwing herself into the porter's lap, pointed to her commodity and said to him, 'O my lord, O my friend, what is the name of this?' 'Thy kaze,' answered he; but she said, 'Fie! art thou not ashamed?' And cuffed him on the nape of the neck. Quoth he, 'Thy catso.' And she dealt him a second cuff, saying, 'Fie! what an ugly word! Art thou not ashamed?' 'Thy

commodity,' said he; and she, 'Fie! is there no shame in thee?' And thumped him and beat him. Then said he, 'Thy coney.' Whereupon the eldest fell on him and beat him, saying, 'Thou shalt not say that.' And whatever he said, they beat him more and more, till his neck ached again; and they made a laughing-stock of him amongst them, till he said at last, 'Well, what is its name amongst you women?' 'The sweet basil of the dykes,' answered they. 'Praised be God for safety!' cried he. 'Good, O sweet basil of the dykes!' Then they passed round the cup and presently the cateress rose and throwing herself into the porter's lap, pointed to her kaze and said to him, 'O light of mine eyes, what is the name of this?' 'Thy commodity,' answered he. 'Art thou not ashamed?' said she, and dealt him a buffet that made the place ring again, repeating, 'Fie! Fie! art thou not ashamed?' Quoth he, 'The sweet basil of the dykes.' 'No! No!' answered she, and beat him and cuffed him on the nape. Then said he, 'Thy kaze, thy tout, thy catso, thy coney.' But they replied, 'No! No!' And he said again, 'The sweet basil of the dykes.' Whereupon they laughed till they fell backward and cuffed him on the neck, saying, 'No; that is not its name.' At last he said, 'O my sisters, what is its name?' And they answered, 'What sayst thou to the peeled barleycorn?' Then the cateress put on her clothes and they sat down again to carouse, whilst the porter lamented over his neck and shoulders. The cup passed round among them awhile, and presently the eldest and handsomest of the ladies rose and put off her clothes; whereupon the porter took his neck in his hand and said, 'My neck and shoulders are in the way of God!' Then she threw herself into the basin and plunged and sported and washed; whilst the porter looked at her, naked, as she were a piece of the moon or the full moon when she waxes or the dawn at its brightest, and noted her shape and breasts

and her heavy quivering buttocks, for she was naked as God created her. And he said, 'Alack! Alack!' and repeated the following verses:

If to the newly-budded branch thy figure I compare, I lay upon my heart a load of wrong too great to bear;
For that the branch most lovely is, when clad upon with green, But thou, when free of every veil, art then by far most fair.

When she heard this, she came up out of the water and sitting down on his knees, pointed to her kaze and said, 'O my little lord, what is the name of this?' 'The sweet basil of the dykes,' answered he; but she said, 'No! No!' Quoth he, 'The peeled barleycorn.' And she said, 'Pshaw!' Then said he, 'Thy kaze.' 'Fie! Fie!' cried she. 'Art thou not ashamed?' And cuffed him on the nape of the neck. And whatever name he said, they beat him, saying, 'No! No!' till at last he said, 'O my sisters, what is its name?' 'The khan[1] of Abou Mensour,' answered they. And he said, 'Praised be God for safety! Bravo! Bravo! O khan of Abou Mensour!' Then the damsel rose and put on her clothes and they returned to their carousing and the cup passed round awhile. Presently, the porter rose and putting off his clothes, plunged into the pool and swam about and washed under his chin and armpits, even as they had done. Then he came out and threw himself into the eldest lady's lap and putting his arms into the portress's lap and his feet into that of the cateress, pointed to his codpiece and said, 'O my mistresses, what is the name of this?' They laughed till they fell backward and one of them answered, 'Thy yard.' 'Art thou not ashamed?' said he. 'A forfeit!' and took of each a kiss. Quoth another, 'Thy pintle.' But he replied, 'No,' and gave each of them a bite in play. Then said they, 'Thy pizzle.' 'No,' answered he, and gave each of them a hug; and they kept saying, 'Thy yard, thy pintle, thy pizzle, thy

Night x.

[1] Caravanserai or public lodging-place.

codpiece!' whilst he kissed and hugged and fondled them to his heart's content, and they laughed till they were well-nigh dead. At last they said, 'O our brother, and what is its name?' 'Don't you know?' asked he; and they said, 'No.' Quoth he, 'This is the mule Break-all, that browses on the basil of the dykes and gobbles up the peeled barley-corn and lies by night in the khan of Abou Mensour.' And they laughed till they fell backward. Then they fell again to drinking and continued after this fashion till the night came upon them, when they said to the porter, 'In the name of God, put on thy sandals and be off and let us see the breadth of thy shoulders!' Quoth he, 'By Allah, the leaving life were easier to me than the leaving you! Let us join the night to the day, and to-morrow we will each go our own way.' 'My life on you!' said the cateress, 'let him pass the night with us, that we may laugh at him, for he is a pleasant rogue; and we may never again chance upon the like of him.' So the mistress of the house said to the porter, 'Thou shalt pass the night with us on condition that thou submit to our authority and that, whatever thou seest, thou ask no questions about it nor enquire the reason of it.' 'It is well,' answered he; and they said, 'Go and read what is written over the door.' So he went to the door and found the following words written thereon in letters of gold, 'He who speaks of what concerns him not, shall hear what will not please him.' And he said, 'Be ye witness against me that I will not speak of what concerns me not.' Then rose the cateress and prepared food, and they ate: after which they lighted the lamps and candles and strewed on the latter ambergris and aloes-wood; then changed the service and set on fresh fruits and flowers and wine and so forth and sat down again to drink. They ceased not to eat and drink and make merry, hob-nobbing and laughing and talking and frolicking, till there came a knocking at the door: whereupon one of them

rose and went to the door, without disturbing the party, and presently returned, saying, 'Verily, our pleasure is to be complete to-night.' 'How so?' asked the others, and she replied, 'There are three foreign Calenders[1] at the door, with shaven heads and chins and eyebrows and every one blind of the right eye, which is a most extraordinary coincidence. Apparently they are fresh from a journey and indeed the traces of travel are evident on them; and the reason of their knocking at the door is this. They are strangers to Baghdad and this is their first coming to our city: the night surprised them and they could not find a lodging in the city and know no one with whom to take shelter: so they said to each other, "Perhaps the owner of this house will give us the key of a stable or outhouse and let us sleep there." And, O my sisters, each of them is a laughing-stock after his own fashion; and if we let them in, they will make us sport this night, and on the morrow each shall go his own way.' And she ceased not to persuade them, till they said, 'Let them come in, on condition that they ask no questions of what does not concern them, on pain of hearing what will not please them.' So she rejoiced and going to the door, returned with the three Calenders, who saluted and bowed low and held back; but the ladies rose to them and welcomed them and gave them joy of their safety and made them sit down. The Calenders looked about them and seeing a pleasant place and a table elegantly spread with flowers and fruits and green herbs and dessert and wine, with candles burning and perfumes smoking, and the three maidens, with their faces unveiled, said with one voice, ''Fore Allah, it is good!' Then they turned to the porter and saw that he was tipsy and jaded with drinking and dalliance. So they took him for one of themselves and said, 'He is a Calender like ourselves, either an Arab or a

[1] A kind of religious mendicant.

foreigner.' When the porter heard this, he rose and fixing his eyes on them, said, 'Sit still and do not meddle. Have you not read what is written on the door? It befits not folk, like yourselves, who come to us as mendicants, to loose your tongues on us.' 'We ask pardon of God, O fakir!' answered they. 'Our heads are before thee.' The ladies laughed and making peace between them, set food before the Calenders. When they had eaten, they all sat down again to carouse, the portress serving the new comers, and the cup passed round awhile, till the porter said to the Calenders, 'O brothers, have ye no story or rare trait to divert us withal?' The Calenders, being warm with wine, called for musical instruments; so the portress brought them a tambourine and a lute and a Persian harp; and each Calender took one and tuned it and played and sang; and the girls joined in lustily and made a great noise. Whilst they were thus engaged, some one knocked at the gate and the portress rose and went to see who it was. Now the cause of this knocking was that, that very night, the Khalif Haroun er Reshid had gone down into the city, as was his wont, every now and then, to walk about for his diversion and hear what news was stirring, attended by his Vizier Jaafer and Mesrour his headsman, all three, as usual, disguised as merchants. Their way brought them to the house of the three ladies, where they heard the noise of musical instruments and of singing and merriment, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I have a mind to enter this house and listen to this music and see the singers.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'these people are certainly drunk, and I fear lest some mischief betide us at their hands.' 'It matters not,' rejoined the Khalif; 'I must and will go in and I desire that thou contrive some pretext to that end.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the Vizier and going up to the gate, knocked, whereupon the portress came down and opened. Jaafer came forward and kissing

the earth before her, said, 'O lady, we are merchants from Tiberias: we reached Baghdad ten days ago and sold our merchandise and took up our lodging at the khan of the merchants. Now we were bidden to-night to an entertainment at the house of a certain merchant, who set food before us and we ate and caroused with him awhile, till he gave us leave to depart and we went out, intending for our lodging; but being strangers in Baghdad, we lost ourselves and could not find our way back to our khan: so we hope, of your courtesy, that you will admit us to pass the night with you, and God will requite you.' The portress looked at them and saw that they were dressed like merchants and appeared respectable; so she returned to her sisters and repeated to them Jaafer's story, and they took compassion on the supposed strangers and bade her admit them. So she returned and opened the gate to them, and they said, 'Have we thy leave to enter?' 'Enter,' answered she; whereupon the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour entered; and when the girls saw them, they rose and welcomed them and made them sit down and served them, saying, 'Ye are welcome as our guests, but on one condition.' 'What is that?' asked they; and the mistress of the house answered, 'It is that you be eyes without tongues and that, whatever you see, you enquire not thereof nor speak of that which concerns you not, lest you hear what will not please you.' 'Good,' answered they: 'we are no meddlers.' Then they sat down to carouse; whilst the Khalif looked at the three Calenders and marvelled for that they were all blind of the right eye, and gazed upon the ladies and was amazed at their beauty and goodliness. They fell to drinking and talking and said to the Khalif, 'Drink.' But he answered, 'Excuse me, for I am vowed to the pilgrimage.'[1] Whereupon the portress rose and

[1] One condition of which is that no violation of the ceremonial law (which prohibits the use of intoxicating liquors) be committed by the pilgrim, from the time of his assuming the pilgrim's habit to that of his putting it off; and this is construed by the stricter professors to take effect from the actual formation of the intent to make the pilgrimage. Haroun er Reshid, though a voluptuary, was (at all events, from time to time) a rigid observer of Muslim ritual.

spreading a gold-embroidered cloth before him, set thereon a china bowl, into which she poured willow-flower water, with a spoonful of snow and some pounded sugar-candy. The Khalif thanked her and said to himself, 'By Allah, I will reward her to-morrow for her kind office!' Then they addressed themselves to carousal, till the wine began to work upon them, when the eldest lady rose and making an obeisance to her guests, took the cateress by the hand and said, 'Come, sisters, let us do our duty.' And they answered, 'It is well.' So the portress rose and cleared the middle of the saloon, after she had removed the table-service and thrown away the remains of the banquet. Then she renewed the perfumes in the censers and made the Calenders sit down on a sofa by the dais and the Khalif and his companions on a sofa at the other end: after which she called to the porter, saying, 'How dull and slothful thou art! Come and help us: thou art no stranger, but one of the household!' So he rose and girt his middle and said, 'What would you have me do?' And she answered, 'Stay where thou art.' Then the cateress rose and setting a chair in the middle of the room, went to a closet, which she opened, saying to the porter, 'Come and help me.' So he went to her and she brought out two black bitches, with chains round their necks, and gave them to him, saying, 'Take them.' So he took them and carried them to the middle of the saloon; whereupon the mistress of the house tucked up her sleeves and taking a whip, said to the porter, 'Bring me one of the bitches.' So he brought it to her by the chain: and the bitch wept and shook its head at the damsel, who brought the whip down on it,

whilst the porter held it by the chain. The bitch howled and whined, but the lady ceased not to beat it till her arm was tired; when she threw away the whip and pressing the bitch to her bosom, kissed it on the head and wiped away its tears. Then she said to the porter, 'Take it back and bring the other.' He did as she bade him, and she did with the second bitch as she had done with the first. The Khalif's mind was troubled at her doings and his breast contracted and he could not restrain his impatience to know the meaning of all this. So he winked to Jaafar to ask, but the latter turned and signed to him as who should say, 'Be silent: this is no time for impertinent curiosity.' Then said the portress to the mistress of the house, 'O my lady, rise and go up to thy place, that I in turn may do my part.' 'It is well,' answered she and went up and sat down on the couch of juniper-wood, at the upper end of the dais; whilst the portress sat down on a chair and said to the cateress, 'Do what thou hast to do.' So the latter rose and going to a closet, brought out a bag of yellow satin, with cords of green silk and tassels of gold, and came and sat down before the portress. Then she opened the bag and took out a lute, which she tuned, and sang the following verses, accompanying herself on the lute:

Thou art my wish, thou art my end; And in thy presence, O my friend,
There is for me abiding joy: Thine absence sets my heart a-flame.
For thee distraught, with thee possest, Thou reignest ever in my breast,
Nor in the love I bear to thee Is there for me reproach or shame.
Life's veil for me was torn apart, When Love gat hold upon my heart;
For Love still rends the veils in twain And brings dishonour on fair fame.
The cloak of sickness I did on: And straight my fault appeared and shone.
Since that my heart made choice of thee And love and longing on me came,
My eyes are ever wet with tears, And all my secret thought appears,
When with my tears' tumultuous flow Exhales the secret of thy name.
Heal thou my pains, for thou to me Art both disease and remedy.

Yet him, whose cure is in thy hand, Affliction shall for ever claim.
Thy glances set my heart on fire, Slay me with swords of my desire:
How many, truly, of the best Have fallen beneath Love's sword of flame?
Yet may I not from passion cease Nor in forgetting seek release;
For love's my comfort, pride and law, Public and private, aye the same.
Blest eyes that have of thee their fill And look upon thee at their will!
Ay, of my own unforced intent, The slave of passion I became.

When the portress heard this foursome song, she cried out, 'Alas! Alas! Alas!' and tore her clothes and fell down in a swoon; and the Khalif saw on her body the marks of beating with rods and whips, and wondered greatly. Then the cateress rose and sprinkled water upon her and brought her a fresh dress and put it on her. When the company saw this, their minds were troubled, for they understood not the reason of these things. And the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Didst thou not see the marks of beating with rods upon the girl's body! I cannot keep silence nor be at rest, except I come at the truth of all this and know the story of this damsel and the two bitches.' 'O my lord,' answered Jaafer, 'they made it a condition with us that we should not speak of what concerns us not, under pain of hearing what should not please us.' Then said the portress, 'By Allah! O my sister, come and complete thy service to me.' 'With all my heart!' answered the cateress and took the lute and leant it against her breasts. Then she swept the strings with her finger-tips and sang the following verses:

If we complain of absence, what alas! shall we say? Or if longing assail us, where shall we take our way?
If, to interpret for us, we trust to a messenger, How can a message rightly a lover's plaint convey?
Or if we put on patience, short is a lover's life, After his heart's belovéd is torn from him away.
Nothing, alas! is left me but sorrow and despair And tears that adown my cheeks without cessation stray.

Thou that art ever absent from my desireful sight, Thou that art yet a dweller within my heart alway,
Hast thou kept troth, I wonder, with one who loves thee dear, Whose faith, whilst time endureth, never shall know decay?
Or hast thou e'en forgotten her who for love of thee, In tears and sickness and passion, hath wasted many a day?
Alas! though Love unite us again in one embrace, Reproach for thy past rigour with me full long shall stay.

When the portress heard this second song, she gave a loud scream and exclaimed, 'By Allah! it is good!' and putting her hand to her clothes, tore them as before and fell down in a swoon. Whereupon the cateress rose and brought her another dress, after she had sprinkled water on her. Then she sat up again and said to the cateress, 'To it again and help me to do the rest of my duty; for there remains but one more song.' So the cateress took the lute and sang the following verses:

How long, ah me! shall this rigour last and this inhumanity? Are not the tears that I have shed enough to soften thee?
If thou, of thy relentless will, estrangement do prolong, Intending my despite, at last, I pray, contented be!
If treacherous fortune were but just to lovers and their woe, They would not watch the weary night in sleepless agony.
Have ruth on me, for thy disdain is heavy on my heart; Is it not time that thou relent at last, my king, to me?
To whom but thee that slayest me should I reveal my pain? What grief is theirs who love and prove the loved one's perfidy!
Love and affliction hour by hour redouble in my breast: The days of exile are prolonged; no end to them I see.
Muslims, avenge a slave of love, the host of wakefulness, Whose patience hath been trampled out by passion's tyranny!
Can it be lawful, O my wish, that thou another bless With thine embraces, whilst I die, in spite of Love's decree?
Yet in thy presence, by my side, what peace should I enjoy, Since he I love doth ever strive to heap despite on me?

When the portress heard this third song, she screamed out and putting forth her hand, tore her clothes even to the skirt and fell down in a swoon for the third time, and

there appeared once more on her body the marks of beating with rods. Then said the three Calenders, 'Would God we had never entered this house, but had slept on the rubbish-heaps! for verily our entertainment hath been troubled by things that rend the heart.' The Khalif turned to them and said, 'How so?' And they answered, 'Indeed, our minds are troubled about this matter.' Quoth he, 'Are you not then of the household?' 'No,' replied they; 'nor did we ever see the place till now.' Said the Khalif, 'There is the man by you: he will surely know the meaning of all this.' And he winked at the porter. So they questioned the latter and he replied, 'By the Almighty, we are all in one boat! I was brought up at Baghdad, but never in my life did I enter this house till to-day, and the manner of my coming in company with them was curious.' 'By Allah,' said they, 'we thought thee one of them, and now we see thou art but as one of ourselves.' Then said the Khalif, 'We are here seven men, and they are but three women: so let us question them of their case, and if they do not answer willingly, they shall do so by force.' They all agreed to this, except Jaafer, who said, 'This is not well-advised: let them be, for we are their guests, and as ye know, they imposed on us a condition, to which we all agreed. Wherefore it is better that we keep silence concerning this affair, for but a little remains of the night, and each go about his business.' And he winked to the Khalif and whispered to him, 'There is but a little longer to wait, and to-morrow I will bring them before thee and thou canst then question them of their story.' But the Khalif lifted his head and cried out angrily, 'I have not patience to wait till then: let the Calenders ask them.' And Jaafer said, 'This is not well-advised.' Then they consulted together, and there was much talk and dispute between them, who should put the question, before they fixed upon the porter. The noise drew the notice of the lady of the

house, who said to them, 'O guests, what is the matter and what are you talking about?' Then the porter came forward and said to her, 'O lady, the company desire that thou acquaint them with the history of the two bitches and why thou didst beat them and after fellest to kissing and weeping over them and also concerning thy sister and why she has been beaten with rods, like a man. This is what they charge me to ask thee, and peace be on thee.' When she heard this, she turned to the others and said to them, 'Is this true that he says of you?' And they all replied, 'Yes;' except Jaafer, who held his peace. Then said she, 'By Allah! O guests, ye have done us a grievous wrong, for we made it a previous condition with you that whoso spoke of what concerned him not, should hear what should not please him. Is it not enough that we have taken you into our house and fed you with our victual! But the fault is not so much yours as that of her who brought you in to us.' Then she tucked up her sleeves and smote three times on the floor, saying, 'Come quickly!' Whereupon the door of a closet opened and out came seven black slaves, with drawn swords in their hands, to whom said the lady, 'Bind these babblers' hands behind them and tie them one with another.' The slaves did as she bade, and said, 'O noble lady, is it thy will that we strike off their heads?' 'Hold your hands awhile,' answered she, 'till I question them of their condition, before ye strike off their heads. 'By Allah, O my lady,' exclaimed the porter, 'do not slay me for another's fault, for all have erred and offended save myself! And by Allah, our night would have been a pleasant one, had we not been afflicted with these Calenders, whose presence is enough to lay a flourishing city in ruins.' And he repeated the following verses:

How fair a thing is mercy to the great! And how much more to those of low estate!
By all the love that has between us been, Doom not the guiltless to the guilty's fate!

When the lady heard this, she laughed, in spite of her anger, and coming up to the guests, said to them, 'Tell me who you are, for ye have but a little while to live, and were you not men of rank and consideration, you had never dared to act thus.' Then the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Out on thee! Tell her who we are, or we shall be slain in a mistake, and speak her fair, ere an abomination befall us.' 'It were only a part of thy deserts,' replied Jaafer. Whereupon the Khalif cried out at him in anger and said, 'There is a time to jest and a time to be serious.' Then the lady said to the Calenders, 'Are ye brothers?' 'Not so,' answered they; 'we are only poor men and strangers.' And she said to one of them, 'Wast thou born blind of one eye?' 'No, by Allah!' replied he; 'but there hangs a rare story by the loss of my eye, a story which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve as a lesson to those that can profit by example.' She questioned the two other Calenders, and they made a like reply, saying, 'By Allah! O our mistress, each one of us comes from a different country and is the son of a king and a sovereign prince ruling over lands and subjects.' Then she turned to the others and said to them, 'Let each of you come forward in turn and tell us his history and the manner of his coming hither and after go about his business; but whoso refuses, I will cut off his head.' The first to come forward was the porter, who said, 'O my lady, I am a porter. This lady, the cateress, hired me and took me first to the vintner's, then to the butcher's, from the butcher's to the fruiterer's, from the fruiterer's to the grocer's, from the grocer's to the greengrocer's, from the greengrocer's to the confectioner's and the druggist's, and thence to this place, where there happened to me with you what happened. This is my story; and peace be on thee!' At this the lady laughed and said to him, 'Begone about thy business.' But he said, 'By Allah, I will not budge

till I hear the others' stories.' Then came forward the first Calender and said, 'Know, O lady, that

THE FIRST CALENDER'S STORY.

My father was a king, and he had a brother, who was also a king over another city. The latter had a son and a daughter, and it chanced that I and the son of my uncle were both born on the same day. In due time we grew up to man's estate and there was a great affection between us. Now it was my wont every now and then to visit my uncle and abide with him several months at a time. One day, I went to visit him as usual and found him absent a-hunting; but my cousin received me with the utmost courtesy and slaughtered sheep and strained wine for me, and we sat down to drink. When the wine had got the mastery of us, my cousin said to me, "O son of my uncle, I have a great service to ask of thee, and I beg of thee not to baulk me in what I mean to do." "With all my heart," answered I; and he made me swear by the most solemn oaths to do his will. Then he went away and returning in a little, with a lady veiled and perfumed and very richly clad, said to me, "Take this lady and go before me to the burial-ground and enter such and such a sepulchre," and he described it to me and I knew it, "and wait till I come." I could not gainsay him, by reason of the oath I had sworn to him; so I took the lady and carried her to the cemetery, and entering the tomb, sat down to await my cousin, who soon rejoined us, carrying a vessel of water, a bag containing plaster and an adze. He went up to the tomb in the midst of the sepulchre and loosening its stones with the adze, laid them on one side; after which he fell to digging with the adze in the earth till he uncovered a trap of iron, as big as a small door, and raised it, when there appeared beneath it a winding stair. Then he turned to the lady and said to her, "Up and make

thy choice." So she descended the stair and was lost to sight; and he said to me, "O my cousin, when I have descended, complete thy kindness to me by replacing the trap-door and throwing back the earth on it: then mix the plaster in the bag with the water in this vessel and build up the tomb again with the stones and plaster it over as before, lest any see it and say, 'This tomb has been newly opened, albeit it is an old one;' for I have been at work here a whole year, unknown to any save God. This then is the service I had to ask of thee, and may God never bereave thy friends of thee, O my cousin!" Then he descended the stair; and when he was out of sight, I replaced the trap-door and did as he had bidden me, till the tomb was restored to its original condition, and I the while in a state of intoxication; after which I returned to the palace, and found my uncle still absent. Next morning I called to mind what had happened and repented of having obeyed my cousin, when repentance was of no avail, but thought that it must have been a dream. So I fell to enquiring after my cousin; but none could give me any news of him; and I went out to the burial-ground and sought for the tomb where I had left him, but could not find it, and ceased not to go from sepulchre to sepulchre and from tomb to tomb, without success, till nightfall. Then I returned to the palace and could neither eat nor drink, for my heart was troubled about my cousin, seeing I knew not what was come of him; and I was extremely chagrined and slept not that night, but lay awake for anxiety till morning. As soon as it was day, I repaired again to the cemetery, pondering what my cousin had done and repenting me of having hearkened to him, and went round among all the tombs, but could not find the one I sought. Thus I did for the space of seven days, but with no better success, and my trouble and anxiety increased till I was well-nigh mad and could find nothing

for it but to return to my father. So I set out and journeyed till I reached his capital; but as I entered the gate of the city, a number of men sprang out on me and tied my hands behind me. At this I was beyond measure amazed, seeing that I was the son of the Sultan and that they were his servants and my own; and great fear fell on me, and I said to myself, "I wonder what has befallen my father!" Then I questioned my captors; but they returned me no answer. However, after a while, one of them, who had been my servant, said to me, "Fortune has played thy father false; and the troops deserted him. So the Vizier slew him and seized on his throne; and we laid wait for thee by his command." Then they took me and carried me before the Vizier, well-nigh distraught for this news of my father. Now between me and this Vizier was an old feud, the cause of which was as follows. I was fond of shooting with a pellet-bow, and one day, as I was standing on the terrace of my palace, a bird lighted on the terrace of the Vizier's house, where the latter chanced to be standing at the time. I let fly at the bird, but, as fate and destiny would have it, the pellet swerved and striking the Vizier on the eye, put it out. As says the poet:

Our footsteps follow on in their predestined way, Nor from the ordered track can any mortal stray:
And he whom Fate appoints in any land to die, No other place on earth shall see his dying day.

The Vizier dared say nothing, at the time, because I was the Sultan's son of the city, but thenceforward he nourished a deadly hatred against me. So when they brought me bound before him, he commanded my head to be smitten off; and I said, "For what crime wilt thou put me to death?" "What crime could be greater than this?" answered he, and pointed to his ruined eye. Quoth I, "That I did by misadventure." And he replied, "If thou didst it by misadventure, I will do the like with

intent." Then said he, "Bring him to me." So they brought me up to him, and he put his finger into my right eye and pulled it out; and thenceforward I became one-eyed as ye see me. Then he caused me to be bound hand and foot and put in a chest and said to the headsman, "Take this fellow and carry him forth of the city and slay him and leave him for the beasts and birds to eat." So the headsman carried me without the city to the midst of the desert, where he took me out of the chest, bound hand and foot as I was, and would have bandaged my eyes, that he might slay me. But I wept sore till I made him weep, and looking at him, repeated the following verses:

I counted on you as a coat of dart-proof mail to ward The foeman's arrows from my breast. Alas! ye are his sword!
I hoped in you to succour me in every evil chance, Although my right hand to my left no more should help afford.
Yet stand aloof nor cast your lot with those who do me hate, And let my foemen shoot their shafts against your whilom lord!
If you refuse to succour me against my enemies, At least be neutral, nor to me nor them your aid accord.

And these also:

How many of my friends, methought, were coats of mail! And so they were, indeed, but on my foeman's part.
Unerring shafts and true I deemed them; and they were Unerring shafts, indeed, alas, but in my heart!

When the headsman heard this (now he had been my father's headsman and I had done him kindness) he said, "O my lord, what can I do, being but a slave commanded?" Then he said, "Fly for thy life and never return to this country, or thou art lost and I with thee." As says one of the poets:

Escape with thy life, if oppression betide thee, And let the house tell of its builder's fate!
Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it; Life for life never, early or late.
It is strange men should dwell in the house of abjection, When the plain of God's world is so wide and so great!

I kissed his hands, hardly crediting my escape; and recked little of the loss of my eye, in consideration of my deliverance from death. Then I repaired to my uncle's capital and going in to him, told him what had befallen my father and myself; whereat he wept sore and said, "Verily, thou addest affliction to my affliction and sorrow to my sorrow; for thy cousin has been missing these many days; I know not what is become of him, and none can give me any news of him." Then he wept till he swooned away, and my heart was sore for him. When he revived, he would have medicined my eye, but found there was but the socket left and said, "O my son, it is well that it was thine eye and not thy life!" I could not keep silence about my cousin; so I told him all that had passed, and he rejoiced greatly at hearing news of his son and said, "Come, show me the tomb." "By Allah, O my uncle," answered I, "I know it not, for I went after many times to seek for it, but could not find it." However, we went out to the burial-ground and looked right and left, till at last I discovered the tomb. At this we both rejoiced greatly and entering, removed the earth, raised the trap-door and descended fifty steps, till we came to the foot of the stair, where we were met by a great smoke that blinded our eyes; and my uncle pronounced the words, which whoso says shall never be confounded, that is to say, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Then we went on and found ourselves in a saloon, raised upon columns, drawing air and light from openings communicating with the surface of the ground and having a cistern in its midst. The place was full of crates and sacks of flour and grain and other victual; and at the upper end stood a couch with a canopy over it. My uncle went up to the bed and drawing the curtains, found his son and the lady in each other's arms; but they were become black coal, as they had been cast

into a well of fire. When he saw this, he spat in his son's face and taking off his shoe, smote him with it, exclaiming, "Swine that thou art, thou hast thy deserts! This is thy punishment in this world, but there awaits thee a far sorer and more terrible punishment in the world to come!" His behaviour amazed me, and I mourned for my cousin, for that he was become a black coal, and said to the king, "O my uncle, is not that which hath befallen him enough, but thou must beat him with thy shoe?" "O son of my brother," answered my uncle, "this my son was from his earliest youth madly enamoured of his sister, and I forbade him from her, saying in myself, 'They are but children.' But, when they grew up, sin befell between them, notwithstanding that his attendants warned him to abstain from so foul a thing, which none had done before nor would do after him, lest the news of it should be carried abroad by the caravans and he become dishonoured and unvalued among kings to the end of time. I heard of this and believed it not, but took him and upbraided him severely, saying, 'Have a care lest this thing happen to thee; for I will surely curse thee and put thee to death.' Then I shut her up and kept them apart, but this accursed girl loved him passionately, and Satan got the upper hand of them and made their deeds to seem good in their eyes. So when my son saw that I had separated them, he made this place under ground and transported victual hither, as thou seest, and taking advantage of my absence a-hunting, came here with his sister, thinking to enjoy her a long while. But the wrath of God descended on them and consumed them; and there awaits them in the world to come a still sorer and more terrible punishment." Then he wept and I with him, and he looked at me and said, "Henceforth thou art my son in his stead." Then I bethought me awhile of the world and its chances and how the Vizier had slain my father and usurped his throne and

Night xii.

put out my eye and of the strange events that had befallen my cousin and wept again, and my uncle wept with me. Presently we ascended, and replacing the trap-door, restored the tomb to its former condition. Then we returned to the palace, but hardly had we sat down when we heard a noise of drums and trumpets and cymbals and galloping of cavalry and clamour of men and clash of arms and clank of bridles and neighing of horses, and the world was filled with clouds of dust raised by the horses' hoofs. At this we were amazed and knew not what could be the matter; so we enquired and were told that the Vizier, who had usurped my father's throne, had levied troops and hired the wild Arabs and was come with an army like the sands of the sea, none could tell their number nor could any avail against them. They assaulted the city unawares, and the people, being unable to withstand them, surrendered the place to them. My uncle was slain and I took refuge in the suburbs, knowing that, if I fell into the Vizier's hands, he would put me to death. Wherefore trouble was sore upon me and I bethought me of all that had befallen me and my father and uncle and knew not what to do, for if I showed myself, the people of the city and my father's troops would know me and hasten to win the usurper's favour by putting me to death; and I could find no means of escape but by shaving my face. So I shaved off my beard and eyebrows and donning a Calender's habit, left the town, without being known of any, and made for this city, in the hope that perhaps some one would bring me to the presence of the Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Two Worlds, that I might relate to him my story and lay my case before him. I arrived here to-day and was standing, perplexed where I should go, when I saw this second Calender; so I saluted him, saying, "I am a stranger," and he replied, "And I also am a stranger." Presently up came our comrade, this other

Calender, and saluted us, saying, "I am a stranger." "We also are strangers," answered we; and we walked on together, till darkness overtook us, and destiny led us to your house. This, then, is my history and the manner of the loss of my right eye and the shaving of my beard and eyebrows.' They all marvelled at his story, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'By Allah, I never heard or saw the like of what happened to this Calender.' Then the mistress of the house said to the Calender, 'Begone about thy business.' But he answered, 'I will not budge till I hear the others' stories.' Then came forth the second Calender and kissing the earth, said, 'O my lady, I was not born blind of one eye, and my story is a marvellous one; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a warning to those that can profit by example. It is this:

THE SECOND CALENDER'S STORY.

I am a king, son of a king. My father taught me to read and write, and I got the Koran by heart, according to the seven readings, and read all manner of books under the guidance of learned professors; I studied the science of the stars and the sayings of poets and applied myself to all branches of knowledge, till I surpassed all the folk of my time. In particular, my skill in handwriting excelled that of all the scribes, and my fame was noised abroad in all countries and at the courts of all the kings. Amongst others, the King of Ind heard of me and sent to my father to seek me, with gifts and presents such as befit kings. So my father fitted out six ships for me, and we put to sea and sailed for a whole month, till we reached the land. Then we brought out the horses that were with us in the ships, together with ten camels laden with presents for the King of Ind, and set out inland, but had not gone far, before there arose a great dust, that grew till it covered

the whole country. After awhile it lifted and discovered fifty steel-clad horsemen, as they were fierce lions, whom we soon found to be Arab highwaymen. When they saw that we were but a small company and had with us ten laden camels, they drove at us with levelled spears. We signed to them with our fingers to do us no hindrance, for that we were ambassadors to the mighty King of Ind; but they replied [in the same manner] that they were not in his dominions nor under his rule. Then they set on us and slew some of my attendants and put the rest to flight; and I also fled, after I had gotten a sore wound, whilst the Arabs were taken up with the baggage. I knew not whither to turn, being reduced from high to low estate; so I fled forth at a venture till I came to the top of a mountain, where I took shelter for the night in a cavern. On the morrow, I continued my journey and fared on thus for a whole month, till I reached a safe and pleasant city. The winter had passed away from it with its cold and the spring was come with its roses; its flowers were blowing and its streams welling and its birds warbling. As says the poet, describing the city in question:

A town, wherein who dwells is free from all affray; Security and peace are masters there alway.
Like Paradise itself, it seemeth, for its folk, With all its beauties rare, decked out in bright array.

I was both glad and sorry to reach the city, glad for that I was weary with my journey and pale for weakness and anxiety, and grieved to enter it in such sorry case. However, I went in, knowing not whither to betake me, and fared on till I came to a tailor sitting in his shop. I saluted him, and he returned my salute and bade me a kindly welcome, and seeing me to be a stranger and noting marks of gentle breeding on me, enquired how I came thither. I told him all that had befallen me; and he was concerned for me and said, "O my son, do not discover

thyself to any, for the King of this city is the chief of thy father's foes and hath a mortal feud against him." Then he set meat and drink before me, and I ate and he with me, and we talked together till night-fall, when he lodged me in a chamber beside his own, and brought me a bed and coverlet. I abode with him three days, at the end of which time he said to me, "Dost thou know any craft by which thou mayst earn thy living?" I replied, "I am a doctor of the law and a man of learning, a scribe, a grammarian, a poet, a mathematician and a skilled penman." Quoth he, "Thy trade is not in demand in this country nor are there in this city any who understand science or writing or aught but money-getting." "By Allah," said I, "I know nought but what I have told thee!" And he said, "Gird thy middle and take axe and cord and go and cut firewood in the desert for thy living, till God send thee relief, and tell none who thou art, or they will kill thee." Then he bought me an axe and a cord and gave me in charge to certain woodcutters; with whom I went out into the desert and cut wood all day and carried home a load on my head. I sold it for half a dinar, with part of which I bought victual and laid up the rest. On this wise I lived a whole year, at the end of which time I went out one day into the desert, according to my wont, and straying from my companions, happened on a tract full of trees and running streams, in which there was abundance of firewood; so I entered and coming on the gnarled stump of a great tree, dug round it with my axe and cleared the earth away from it. Presently, the axe struck upon a ring of brass; so I cleared away the earth, till I uncovered a wooden trap-door, which I raised and there appeared beneath it a stair. I descended the stair, till I came to a door, which I opened and found myself in a vaulted hall of goodly structure, wherein was a damsel like a pearl of great price, whose aspect banished pain and

care and anxiety from the heart and whose speech healed the troubled soul and captivated the wise and the intelligent. She was slender of shape and swelling-breasted, delicate-cheeked and bright of colour and fair of form; and indeed her face shone like the sun through the night of her tresses, and her teeth glittered above the snows of her bosom. As says the poet of her:

Slender of waist, with streaming hair the hue of night, is she; With hips like hills of sand and shape straight as the balsam-tree.

And as says another:

There are four things that ne'er unite, except it be To shed my heart's best blood and take my soul by storm.
And these are night-black locks and brow as bright as day, Cheeks ruddy as the rose and straight and slender form.

When I looked on her, I prostrated myself before her Maker, for the grace and beauty He had created in her: and she looked at me and said, "Art thou a man or a genie?" "I am a man," answered I; and she said, "And who brought thee to this place, where I have dwelt five-and-twenty years without seeing man?" Quoth I (and indeed her speech was sweet to me), "O my lady, my good star brought me hither for the dispelling of my grief and anxiety." And I told her all that had befallen me from first to last. My case was grievous to her and she wept: then she said, "I will tell thee my story in turn. I am the daughter of a King of Farther India, by name Efitamous, Lord of the Ebony Islands, who married me to my cousin; but on my wedding-night an Afrit called Jerjis ben Rejmous, the mother's sister's son of Iblis, carried me off and flying away with me, set me down in this place, whither he transported all that I needed of clothes and ornaments and furniture and meat and drink and so forth. Once in every ten days he comes to me and lies the night here, then goes his way; for he took me without the

consent of his family: and he has agreed with me that, in case I should ever have occasion for him in the interval between his visits, whether by night or by day, I have only to touch these two lines engraved upon the alcove, and he will be with me before I take away my hand. It is now four days since he was here, and there remain six before he comes again. Wilt thou therefore spend five days with me and depart the day before his coming?" "I will well," answered I. "O rare! if it be not all a dream." At this she rejoiced and taking me by the hand, led me through a vaulted doorway into a small but elegant bath-room, where we put off our clothes and she washed me. Then she clad me in a new suit and seated me by her side on a high divan and gave me to drink of sherbet of sugar flavoured with musk. Then she brought food, and we ate and conversed. After a while, she said to me, "Lie down and rest, for thou art weary." So I lay down and slept and forgot all that had befallen me. When I awoke, I found her rubbing my feet:[1] so I thanked her and blessed her, and we sat talking awhile. Quoth she, "By Allah, I was sad at heart, for that I have dwelt alone under ground these five-and-twenty years, without any to talk withal. So praised be God who hath sent thee to me!" Then she said, "O youth, art thou for wine?" And I answered, "As thou wilt." Whereupon she went to the cupboard and took out a sealed flask of old wine and decked the table with flowers and green herbs. Then she recited the following verses:

Had we thy coming known, we would for sacrifice Have poured thee forth heart's blood and blackness of the eyes:
Ay, and we would have laid our cheeks within thy way, That so thy feet might tread on eyelids, carpet-wise!

I thanked her, for indeed love of her had taken hold of

[1] It is a frequent practice, in the East, gently to rub and knead the feet, for the purpose of inducing sleep or gradually arousing a sleeper.

me, and my grief and anxiety left me. We sat carousing till nightfall, and I passed the night with her, never knew I such a night. On the morrow, delight succeeded delight till the middle of the day, when I drank wine, till I lost my senses and rose, staggering from side to side, and said to her, "Come, O fair one! I will carry thee up from under the earth and rid thee of this genie." She laughed and replied, "Be content and hold thy peace. One day in every ten is the genie's, and the other nine shall be thine." Quoth I (and indeed drunkenness had got the better of me), "This very moment will I break the alcove, on which is graven the talisman, and summon the Afrit hither, that I may kill him, for I am used to kill Afrits ten at a time." When she heard this, she conjured me by Allah to refrain and repeated the following verses:

This is a thing wherein thine own destruction lies: I rede thee keep thyself therefrom, if thou be wise.

And also these:

O thou that seek'st to hasten on the feet Of parting's steeds, the matchless swift of flight,
Forbear, for fortune's nature is deceit, And parting is the end of love-delight.

Night xiii. I paid no heed to her words, but kicked the alcove with all my might, and immediately the place grew dark; it thundered and lightened, the earth trembled and the world was wrapped in gloom. When I saw this, the fumes of the wine left my head and I said to the lady, "What is the matter?" "The Afrit is upon us," answered she. "Did I not warn thee of this! By Allah, thou hast ruined me! But fly for thy life and return whence thou camest." So I ascended the stair, but, in the excess of my fear, I forgot my sandals and hatchet. When I had mounted two steps, I turned to look, and behold, the ground clove in sunder and out came an Afrit of hideous aspect, who said to the lady, "What is this commotion with which

thou disturbest me? What misfortune has befallen thee?" "Nothing has befallen me," answered she, "except that I was heavy at heart and drank a little wine to hearten myself. Then I rose to do an occasion, but my head became heavy and I fell against the alcove." "Thou liest, O harlot!" said he, and looked right and left, till he caught sight of the axe and the sandals and said, "These are some man's gear. Who has been with thee?" Quoth she, "I never set eyes on them till this moment; they must have clung to thee as thou camest hither." But he said, "This talk is absurd and will not impose on me, O strumpet!" Then he stripped her naked and stretching her on the ground, tied her hands and feet to four stakes and proceeded to torture her to make her confess. I could not bear to hear her weeping; so I ascended the stair, quaking for fear. When I reached the top, I replaced the trap-door and covered it over with earth; and I thought of the lady and her beauty and what had befallen her through my folly and repented me sore of what I had done. Then I bethought me of my father and his kingdom and how I had become a wood-cutter, and how, after my life had been awhile serene, it had again become troubled, and I wept and repeated the following verse:

What time the cruelties of Fate o'erwhelm thee with distress, Think that one day must bring thee ease, another day duresse.

Then I went on till I reached the house of my friend, whom I found awaiting me, as he were on coals of fire on my account. When he saw me, he rejoiced and said, "O my brother, where didst thou pass the night? My heart has been full of anxiety on thine account, fearing for thee from the wild beasts or other peril: but praised be God for thy safety!" I thanked him for his solicitude, and retiring to my chamber, fell a musing on what had passed and reproached myself grievously for my meddle-

someness in kicking the alcove. Presently the tailor came in to me and said, "O my son, there is without an old man, a foreigner, who seeks thee. He has thine axe and sandals and came to the woodcutters and said to them, 'I went out at the hour of the call to morning prayer and happened on these and know not whose they are: direct me to their owner.' They knew thine axe and sent him to thee; and he is now sitting in my shop. So do thou go out to him and thank him and take thy gear." When I heard this, my colour changed and I was sick for terror; but before I could think, the floor clove asunder and up came the stranger, and lo, it was the Afrit! Now he had tortured the lady in the most barbarous manner, without being able to make her confess: so he took the axe and sandals, saying, "As sure as I am Jerjis of the lineage of Iblis, I will bring back the owner of this axe and these sandals!" So he went to the woodcutters with the tale aforesaid, and they directed him to me. He snatched me up without parley and flew high into the air, but presently descended and plunged into the ground with me, and I the while unconscious. Then he came up with me in the underground palace, where I saw the lady stretched out naked, with the blood running from her sides. At this sight, my eyes ran over with tears; but the Afrit unbound her and veiling her, said to her, "O wanton, is not this thy lover?" She looked at me and said, "I know not this man, nor have I ever seen him till now." Quoth he, "Wilt thou not confess after all this torture?" And she answered, "I never saw him in my life, and God forbid that I should lie against him and thou kill him." "Then," said he, "if thou know him not, take this sword and cut off his head." She took the sword and came and stood at my head; and I made signs to her with my eyebrows, whilst the tears ran down my cheeks. She understood me and signed to me with her eyes as who should say, "Thou

hast brought all this upon us." And I answered her, in the same fashion, that it was a time for forgiveness; and the tongue of the case spoke[1] the words of the poet:

My looks interpret for my tongue and tell of what I feel: And all the love appears that I within my heart conceal.
When as we meet and down our cheeks our tears are running fast, I'm dumb, and yet my speaking eyes my thought of thee reveal.
She signs to me; and I, I know the things her glances say: I with my fingers sign, and she conceives the mute appeal.
Our eyebrows of themselves suffice unto our intercourse: We're mute; but passion none the less speaks in the looks we steal.

Then she threw down the sword and said, "How shall I strike off the head of one whom I know not and who has done me no hurt? My religion will not allow of this." Quoth the Afrit, "It is grievous to thee to kill thy lover. Because he hath lain a night with thee, thou endurest this torture and wilt not confess upon him. It is only like that pities like." Then he turned to me and said, "O mortal, dost thou not know this woman?" "Who is she?" answered I. "I never saw her till now." "Then," said he, "take this sword and strike off her head and I will believe that thou knowest her not and will let thee go and do thee no hurt." Quoth I, "It is well;" and taking the sword, went up to her briskly and raised my hand. But she signed to me with her eyebrows, as who should say, "What hurt have I done thee? Is it thus thou requitest me?" I understood what she would say and replied in the same manner, "I will ransom thee with my life." And the tongue of the case repeated the following verses:

How many a lover with his eyelids speaks And doth his thought unto his mistress tell!
He flashes signals to her with his eyes, And she at once is ware of what befell.

[1] An expression frequent in Oriental works, meaning "The situation suggested such and such words or thoughts."

How swift the looks that pass betwixt the twain! How fair, indeed, and how delectable!
One with his eyelids writes what he would say: The other with her eyes the writ doth spell.

Then my eyes ran over with tears and I said, "O mighty Afrit and doughty hero! if a woman, lacking sense and religion, deem it unlawful to strike off my head, how can I, who am a man, bring myself to slay her whom I never saw in my life? Never will I do it, though I drink the cup of death and ruin!" And I threw the sword from my hand. Quoth the Afrit, "Ye show the good understanding between you, but I will let you see the issue of your doings." Then he took the sword and cut off the lady's hands and feet at four strokes; whilst I looked on and made sure of death; and she signed me a farewell with her eyes. Quoth he, "Thou cuckoldest me with thine eyes!" And struck off her head with a blow of his sword. Then he turned to me and said, "O mortal, by our law, when our wives commit adultery, it is lawful to us to put them to death. As for this woman, I stole her away on her wedding-night, when she was a girl of twelve, and she has known no one but myself. I used to come to her once in every ten days in the habit of a man, a foreigner, and pass one night with her; and when I was assured that she had played me false, I slew her. But as for thee, I am not sure that thou wast her accomplice: nevertheless, I must not let thee go unharmed; but I will grant thee a favour." At this I rejoiced greatly and said, "What favour wilt thou grant me?" "I will give thee thy choice," replied he, "whether I shall change thee into a dog, an ass or an ape." Quoth I (and indeed I had hoped that he would pardon me), "By Allah, spare me, and God will reward thee for sparing a true believer, who hath done thee no harm." And I humbled myself before him to the utmost and wept, saying, "Indeed, thou dost me injustice."

"Do not multiply words on me," answered he; "it is in my power to kill thee: but I give thee thy choice." "O Afrit," rejoined I, "it would best become thee to pardon me, even as the envied pardoned the envier." Quoth he, "And how was that?" "They say, O Afrit," answered I, "that

STORY OF THE ENVIER AND THE ENVIED.

There dwelt once in a certain city two men, who occupied adjoining houses, having a common party-wall; and one of them envied the other and looked on him with an evil eye and did his utmost endeavour to work him ill; and his envy grew on him till he could hardly eat or enjoy the delight of sleep for it. But the envied man did nought but prosper, and the more the other strove to do him hurt, the more he increased and throve and flourished. At last the hatred his neighbour bore him and his constant endeavour to do him hurt came to his knowledge and he said, 'By Allah, I will renounce the world on his account!' So he left his native place and settled in a distant city, where he bought a piece of land, in which was a dried-up well, that had once been used for watering the fields. Here he built him an oratory, which he fitted up with all that he required, and took up his abode therein, devoting himself with a sincere heart to the service of God the Most High. Fakirs[1] and poor folk soon flocked to him from all sides, and his fame spread abroad in the city, so that the notables resorted to him. After awhile, the news reached the envious man of the good fortune that had befallen his old neighbour and the high consideration in which he was held: so he set out for the town in which the latter dwelt and repaired to the hermitage, where the envied man welcomed him and

[1] Religious mendicants.

received him with the utmost honour. Quoth the envier, 'I have journeyed hither on purpose to tell thee a piece of good news. So order thy fakirs to retire to their cells and go with me apart, for I will not say what I have to tell thee, except privately where none may overhear us.' Accordingly the envied man ordered the fakirs to retire to their cells; and they did so. Then he took the other by the hand and walked on with him a little way, till they came to the deserted well, when the envious man gave the other a push and cast him into the well, unseen of any; after which, he went out and went his way, thinking that he had killed him. Now this well was haunted by Jinn, who bore up the envied man and let him down little by little, so that he reached the bottom, unhurt, and they seated him on a stone. Then said one of the Jinn to the others, 'Know ye who this is?' And they answered, 'No.' Quoth he, 'This is the envied man, who fled from him who envied him and settled in our city, where he built him this oratory and entertains us with his litanies and recitations of the Koran. But the envious man set out and journeyed till he rejoined him and contrived to throw him into this well. Now the news of him hath this very night come to the Sultan of the city, and he purposes to visit him to-morrow, on account of his daughter.' 'And what ails his daughter?' asked another. 'She is possessed of an evil spirit,' replied the first: 'for the genie Meimoun ben Demdem has fallen in love with her; but if the pious man knew the remedy, he could cure her; and it is the easiest of things.' 'And what is the remedy?" asked the other. Quoth the first speaker, 'The black cat that is with him in the oratory has a white spot, the size of a dirhem, at the end of her tail: he should take seven white hairs from this spot and fumigate the princess therewith; whereupon the Marid will leave her and never return, and she will be cured immediately.'

And the envied man heard all this. When the day broke and the morning appeared and shone, the fakirs came to seek their chief and found him rising from the well, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes; and he took the black cat and plucking seven white hairs from the spot at the end of her tail, laid them aside. The sun had hardly risen, when the King arrived and entered the hermitage, attended by his chief officers, leaving the rest of his suite without. The envied man bade him welcome and drawing near to him, said, 'Shall I tell thee the object of thy visit?' 'Yes,' answered the King. And he said, 'Thou comest to consult me concerning thy daughter.' Quoth the King, 'Thou sayst truly, O virtuous elder!' Then said the envied man, 'Send and fetch her, and (God willing) I trust to cure her at once.' The King rejoiced and sent for his daughter; and they brought her bound hand and foot. The envied man made her sit down behind a curtain and taking out the hairs, fumigated her with them; whereupon the Afrit that was in her roared out and departed from her. And she was restored to her right mind and veiled her face, saying, 'What has happened and who brought me hither?' At this, the Sultan rejoiced beyond measure and kissed her on the eyes and kissed the envied man's hand. Then he turned to his officers and said, 'How say you? What reward doth he deserve who cured my daughter?' They answered, 'He deserves to have her to wife;' and the King, 'Ye say well.' So he married him to her, and the envied man became the King's son-in-law. After a while, the Vizier died, and the King said, 'Whom shall we make Vizier in his stead?' 'Thy son-in-law,' answered the courtiers. So the envied man was made Vizier. Presently the Sultan also died, and the grandees determined to appoint the Vizier King in his place. So they made him Sultan, and he became King regnant. One day, as he

was riding forth in his royal state, surrounded by his Viziers and Amirs and grandees, his eyes fell on his old neighbour the envious man; so he turned to one of his viziers and said to him, 'Bring me yonder man and frighten him not.' So the Vizier went and returned with the envious man: and the King said, 'Give him a thousand dinars from my treasury and twenty loads of merchandise and send him under an escort to his own city.' Then he bade him farewell and sent him away and forbore to punish him for what he had done with him. See, O Afrit, how the envied man forgave his envier, who had always hated him and borne him malice and had journeyed to him and made shift to throw him into the well: yet did he not requite him his ill-doing, but on the contrary was bountiful to him and forgave him." Then I wept before him exceeding sore, and repeated the following verses:

I prithee, pardon mine offence: for men of prudent mind To pardon unto those that sin their sins are still inclined.
If I, alas! contain in me all fashions of offence, Let there in thee forgiveness fair be found in every kind.
For men are bound to pardon those that are beneath their hand, If they themselves with those that be above them grace would find.

Quoth the Afrit, "I will neither kill thee nor let thee go free, but I will assuredly enchant thee." Then he tore me from the ground and flew up with me into the air, till I saw the earth as it were a platter midmost the water. Presently he set me down on a mountain and took a little earth, over which he muttered some magical words, then sprinkled me with it, saying, "Quit this shape for that of an ape." And immediately I became an ape, a hundred years old. Then he went away and left me; and when I saw myself in this ugly shape, I wept, but resigned myself to the tyranny of fate, knowing that fortune is constant to no one, and descended to the foot of the mountain, where

I found a wide plain. I fared on for the space of a month till my course brought me to the shore of the salt sea: where I stood awhile and presently caught sight of a ship in the midst of the sea, making for the land with a fair wind. I hid myself behind a rock on the beach and waited till the ship drew near, when I sprang on board. Quoth one of the passengers, "Turn this unlucky brute out from amongst us!" And the captain said, "Let us kill him." And a third, "I will kill him with this sword." But I laid hold of the captain's skirts and wept, and the tears ran down my face. The captain took pity on me and said, "O merchants, this ape appeals to me for protection, and I will protect him: henceforth he is under my safeguard, and none shall molest or annoy him." Then he entreated me kindly and whatever he said I understood and ministered to all his wants and waited on him, so that he loved me. The ship sailed on with a fair wind for the space of fifty days, at the end of which time we cast anchor over against a great city, wherein were much people, none could tell their number save God. No sooner had we come to an anchor, than we were boarded by officers from the King of the city; who said to the merchants, "Our King gives you joy of your safety and sends you this scroll of paper, on which each one of you is to write a line. For know that the King's Vizier, who was an excellent penman, is dead and the King has sworn a solemn oath that he will make none Vizier in his stead who cannot write like him." Then they gave them a scroll, ten cubits long by one wide, and each of the merchants, who could write, wrote a line therein: after which I rose and snatched the scroll from their hands, and they cried out at me and rated me, fearing that I would tear it or throw it into the sea. But I made signs that I would write; whereat they marvelled, saying, "We never saw an ape write!" And the captain said to them, "Let him alone; if he scrabble, we

will drive him away and kill him; but if he write well, I will adopt him as my son, for I never saw so intelligent and well-mannered an ape; and would God my son had his sense and good breeding!" So I took the pen and dipping it in the inkhorn, wrote in an epistolary hand the following verses:—

Time hath recorded the virtues of the great: But thine have remained unchronicled till now.
May God not orphan the human race of thee, For sire and mother of all good deeds art thou.

Then I wrote the following in a running hand:

Thou hast a pen whose use confers good gifts on every clime; Upon all creatures of the world its happy favours fall.
What are the bounties of the Nile to thy munificence, Whose fingers five extend to shower thy benefits on all?

And in an engrossing hand the following:

There is no writer but he shall pass away: Yet what he writes shall last for ever and aye.
Write, therefore, nought but that which shall gladden thee, When as it meets thine eye on the Judgment Day.

And in a transcribing hand the following:

When separation is to us by destiny decreed And 'gainst the cruel chance of Fate our efforts are in vain,
Unto the inkhorn's mouth we fly that, by the tongues of pens, Of parting and its bitterness it may for us complain.

And in a large formal hand the following:

The regal state endureth not to any mortal man. If thou deny this, where is he who first on earth held sway?
Plant therefore saplings of good deeds, whilst that thou yet art great. Though thou be ousted from thy stead, they shall not pass away.

And in a court hand the following:

When thou the inkhorn op'st of power and lordship over men, Make thou thine ink of noble thoughts and generous purpose; then
Write gracious deeds and good therewith, whilst that thy power endures. So shall thy virtues blazoned be at point of sword and pen.

Then I gave the scroll to the officers, who took it and returned with it to the King. When he saw it, no writing pleased him but mine; so he said to his officers, "Go to the writer of these lines and dress him in a splendid robe; then mount him on a mule and bring him to me with a band of music before him." At this they smiled, and the King was wroth with them and said, "O accursed ones, I give you an order, and ye laugh at me!" "O King," answered they, "we have good cause to laugh." Quoth he, "What is it?" And they replied, "O King, thou orderest us to bring thee the man who wrote these lines: now he who wrote them is no man, but an ape, belonging to the captain of the ship." "Can this be true?" asked he; and they said, "Yea, by thy munificence!" The King was astonished at their report and shook with mirth and said, "I have a mind to buy this ape of the captain." Then he sent messengers to the ship and said to them, "Dress him none the less in the robe and mount him on the mule and bring him hither in state, with the band of music before him." So they came to the ship and took me and clad me in the robe and mounted me on the mule and carried me in procession through the city; whilst the people were astounded and crowded to gaze upon me, and the place was all astir on my account. When I reached the King's presence, I kissed the earth before him three times, and he bade me be seated; so I sat down on my heels; and all the bystanders marvelled at my good manners, and the King most of all. After a while the King dismissed his courtiers, and there remained but myself, his highness the King, an eunuch and a little white slave. Then the King gave orders and they brought the table of food, containing all kinds of birds that hop and fly and couple in the nests, such as grouse and quails and so forth. He signed to me to eat with him; so I rose and kissed the earth before him, then sat down and ate with him.

When we had done eating, the table was removed, and I washed my hands seven times. Then I took pen and ink and wrote the following verses:

Weep for the cranes that erst within the porringers did lie, And for the stews and partridges evanished heave a sigh!
Mourn for the younglings of the grouse; lament unceasingly, As, for the omelettes and the fowls browned in the pan, do I.
How my heart yearneth for the fish, that in its different kinds, Upon a paste of wheaten flour lay hidden in the pie!
Praisèd be God for the roast meat! As in the dish it lay, With pot-herbs, soaked in vinegar, in porringers hard by!
My hunger was appeased: I lay, intent upon the gleam Of arms that in the frumenty were buried bracelet high.
I woke my sleeping appetite to eat, as 'twere in jest, Of all the tarts that, piled on trays, shone fair unto the eye.
O soul, have patience! For indeed, Fate full of marvel is: If fortune straiten thee one day, the next relief is nigh.

Then I rose and seated myself at a distance, whilst the King read what I had written and marvelled and said, "Strange that an ape should be gifted with such fluency and skill in penmanship! By Allah, this is a wonder of wonders!" Then they set choice wine before the King in flagons of glass; and he drank, then passed the cup to me; and I kissed the earth and drank and wrote the following verses:

They burnt me[1] with fire, to make me speak, And found me patient and debonair.
For this I am borne on men's hands on high And kiss the rosy lips of the fair!

And these also:

Morn struggles through the dusk; so pour me out, I pray, Of wine, such wine as makes the saddest-hearted gay!
So pure and bright it is, that whether wine in glass Or glass in wine be held, i' faith, 'tis hard to say.

[1] Referring, of course, to the wine, which it appears to have been customary to drink warm or boiled (vinum coctum) as among several ancient nations and in Japan and China at the present day.

The King read them and said, with a sigh, "If a man had this quickness of wit, he would excel all the folk of his age and time." Then he called for a chess-board and said to me, "Wilt thou play with me?" I signed with my head as who should say, "Yes," and came forward and placed the men and played two games with him, each of which I won, much to his amazement. Then I took the pen and wrote the following verses:

Two hosts throughout the live-long day contend in deadly fight, That waxes ever till the shades of night upon them creep;
Then, when the darkness puts an end at last unto their strife, Upon one couch and side by side, they lay them down to sleep.

These verses filled the King with wonder and delight, and he said to the eunuch, "Go to thy mistress, the Lady of Beauty, and bid her come and amuse herself with the sight of this wonderful ape." So the eunuch went out and presently returned with the lady, who, when she saw me, veiled her face and said, "O my father, how comes it that thou art pleased to send for me and show me to strange men?" "O my daughter," said he, "there is none here save the little slave and the eunuch who reared thee and myself, thy father. From whom then dost thou veil thy face?" Quoth she, "This that thou deemest an ape is a wise and learned man, the son of a king; the Afrit Jergis of the lineage of Iblis enchanted him thus, after putting to death his own wife, the daughter of King Efitamous, Lord of the Ebony Islands." At this the King wondered and turning to me, said, "Is this true that she says of thee?" And I signed with my head, as who should say, "Yes;" and wept. Then said he to his daughter, "Whence knewest thou that he was enchanted?" "O my father," answered she, "there was with me, in my childhood, an old woman who was skilled in magic and taught me its rules and practice; and I became skilled therein and committed to memory a hundred and seventy magical formulas, by the

least of which I could transport the stones of thy city behind the mountain Caf and make its site an abyss of the sea and its people fishes swimming in its midst." "O my daughter," said her father, "I conjure thee, by my life, to disenchant this young man, that I may make him my Vizier, for he is a right pleasant and ingenious youth."

Night xiv. "With all my heart," replied she, and taking a knife, on which were engraved Hebrew characters, drew therewith a circle in the midst of the hall and wrote there in names and talismans and muttered words and charms, some of which we understood and others not. Presently the world darkened upon us, and the Afrit presented himself before us in his own shape and aspect, with hands like pitchforks, legs like masts and eyes like flames of fire. We were affrighted at him, but the princess said to him, "An ill welcome to thee, O dog!" Whereupon he took the form of a lion and said to her, "O traitress, thou hast broken thy compact with me! Did we not swear that neither of us should molest the other?" "O accursed one," answered she, "how could there be a compact between me and the like of thee?" "Then," said he, "take what thou hast brought on thyself." And opening his mouth, rushed upon her: but she made haste and plucked a hair from her head and waved it in the air, muttering the while; and it at once became a sharp sword, with which she smote the lion and cut him in two. His head became a scorpion; whereupon the princess transformed herself into a great serpent and fell upon the scorpion, and there befell a sore battle between them. Presently the scorpion changed to an eagle, and the serpent at once became a griffin, which pursued the eagle a long while, till the latter became a black cat. Thereupon the griffin became a piebald wolf, and they fought long and sore, till the cat finding itself beaten, changed into a worm and crept into a pomegranate which lay beside the fountain in the midst of the hall,

whereupon the pomegranate swelled till it was as big as a water-melon. The wolf ran to seize it, but it rose into the air and falling on the pavement, broke in pieces, and all the seeds fell out and rolled hither and thither, till the floor was covered with them. Then the wolf shook itself and became a cock, which fell to picking up the seeds, till they were all gone, except one that, by the decree of Fate, had rolled to the side of the basin and lay hidden there. The cock began to crow and clap its wings and signed to us with his beak, as who should say, "Are there any grains left?" But we understood him not; and he gave such a cry that we thought the palace would fall on us. Then he ran about all over the hall, till he saw the remaining pomegranate-seed, and rushed to pick it up, but it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish, which sank to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock became a big fish and plunged in after the other; and we saw nothing of them for a time, but heard a loud crying and screaming and trembled. Presently the Afrit rose out of the water, as he were one great flame, with fire and smoke issuing from his mouth and eyes and nostrils. Immediately after, the princess rose also, like a great coal of fire, and they fought till they were wrapped in flames and the hall was filled with smoke. As for us, we were well-nigh suffocated and hid ourselves and would have plunged into the water, fearing lest we be burnt up and destroyed: and the King said, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! We are God's and to Him we return! Would God I had not urged my daughter to attempt the delivery of this ape, whereby I have imposed on her this fearful labour with yonder accursed Afrit, against whom all the other Afrits in the world could not prevail! And would we had never seen this ape, may God's blessing not be on him nor on the hour of his coming! We thought to do him a kindness

for the love of God, by freeing him from this enchantment, and lo, we have brought this terrible travail upon ourselves!" But my tongue was tied and I could not say a word to him. Suddenly, the Afrit roared out from under the flames and coming up to us, as we stood on the dais, blew fire in our faces. The princess pursued him and blew flames at him, and the sparks from them both fell upon us; her sparks did us no hurt, but of his one lighted on my right eye and destroyed it; another fell on the King's face and scorched the lower part, burning away half his beard and making his under teeth drop out, and a third lighted on the eunuch's breast and set him on fire, so that he was consumed and died forthright. So we despaired of life and looked for nothing but death; but presently we heard a voice exclaiming, "God is most great! He giveth aid and victory to the true believer and abandoneth him who denieth the religion of Mohammed, the Moon of the Faith!" And lo, the King's daughter had burnt up the Afrit and he was become a heap of ashes! Then she came up to us and said, "Bring me a cup of water." They did so: and she spoke over the water words we understood not and sprinkled me with it, saying, "By the virtue of the Truth and of the Most Great Name of God, return to thine original shape!" And immediately I shook and became a man as before, save that I had lost my right eye. Then she cried out, "The fire! The fire! O my father, I have but an instant to live, for I am not used to fight with Jinn: had he been a man, I had slain him long ago. I had no travail till the time when the pomegranate burst asunder and I overlooked the seed in which was the genie's life. Had I picked it up, he would have died at once; but as fate and destiny would have it, I knew not of this, so that he came upon me unawares and there befell between us a sore strife under

the earth and in the air and in the water: and as often as I opened on him a gate[1] (of magic), he opened on me another, till at last he opened on me the gate of fire, and seldom does he on whom the gate of fire is opened escape alive. But Providence aided me against him, so that I consumed him first, after I had summoned him to embrace the faith of Islam. As for me, I am a dead woman and may God supply my place to you!" Then she called upon God for help and ceased not to implore relief from the fire, till presently a tongue of fierce flame broke out from her clothes and shot up to her breast and thence to her face. When it reached her face, she wept and said, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the apostle of God!" And we looked at her and behold, she was a heap of ashes beside those of the genie. We mourned for her and I wished I had been in her place, so had I not seen the fair-faced one who had done me this good office reduced to ashes; but there is no averting the decree of God. When the King saw what had befallen his daughter, he plucked out the rest of his beard and buffeted his face and rent his clothes; and I did the like, and we both wept for her. Then came in the chamberlains and grandees and were amazed to find two heaps of ashes and the Sultan in a swoon. So they stood round him till he revived and told them what had happened, whereat they were sore afflicted and the women and slave-girls shrieked aloud and kept up their lamentation for the space of seven days. Moreover, the King bade build a great dome over his daughter's ashes and burn therein candles and lamps: but the Afrit's ashes they scattered to the winds, committing them to the malediction of God. The King was sick, well-nigh unto death, for a month's space, after which health returned to

[1] Or chapter or formula.

him and his beard grew again. Then he sent for me and said to me, "O youth, verily we led the happiest of lives, safe from the vicissitudes of fortune, till thou camest to us, when troubles flocked upon us. O that we had never seen thee nor the ugly face of thee! For through our taking pity on thee, we are come to this state of bereavement. I have lost, on thine account, first, my daughter, who was worth a hundred men; secondly, I have suffered what befell me by the fire and the loss of my teeth, and my eunuch also is dead. I do not indeed blame thee for aught of this; for all was decreed of God to us and to thee; and praised be He that my daughter delivered thee, though at the cost of her own life! But now, O my son, depart from my city and let what has befallen us on thine account suffice. Depart in peace, and if I see thee again, I will kill thee." And he cried out at me. So I went forth from his presence, knowing not whither I should go, and hardly believing in my escape. And I recalled all that had befallen me from first to last and thanked God that it was my eye that I had lost and not my life. Before I left the town, I entered the bath and shaved my head and put on a hair-cloth garment. Then I fared forth at a venture, and every day I recalled all the misfortunes that had befallen me and wept and repeated the following verses:—

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed and know not where I go. Griefs flock on me from every side, I know not whence they grow.
I will endure till patience' self less patient is than I: I will have patience till it please the Lord to end my woe.
A vanquished man, without complaint, my doom I will endure, As the parched traveller in the waste endures the torrid glow.
I will endure till aloes'[1] self confess that I, indeed, Can 'gainst a bitt'rer thing abide than even it can show.

[1] A play upon words is here intended turning upon the double meaning ("aloes" and "patience") of the Arabic word *sebr*.

There is no bitt'rer thing; and yet if patience play me false, It were to me a bitt'rer thing than all the rest, I trow.
The wrinkles graven on my heart would speak my hidden pain If through my breast the thought could pierce and read what lies below.
Were but my load on mountains laid, they'd crumble into dust; On fire, it would be quenched outright; on wind, 'twould cease to blow.
Let who will say that life is sweet; to all there comes a day When they must needs a bitt'rer thing than aloes[1] undergo.

Then I journeyed through many lands and cities, intending for the Abode of Peace,[2] Baghdad, in the hope that I might get speech of the Commander of the Faithful and tell him all that had befallen me. I arrived here this night and found my brother, this first Calender, standing perplexed; so I saluted him and entered into converse with him. Presently up came our brother, this third Calender, and said to us, "Peace be on you! I am a stranger." "We also are strangers," answered we, "and have come hither this blessed night." So we all three walked on together, none of us knowing the others' story, till chance brought us to this door and we came in to you. This, then, is my story and the manner of the shaving of my face and the loss of my eye.' Quoth the mistress of the house, 'Thy story is indeed a rare one: and now begone about thy business.' But he replied, 'I will not stir till I hear the others' stories.' Then came forward the third Calender and said, 'O illustrious lady, my history is not like that of these my comrades, but still stranger and more marvellous, in that, whilst destiny and fore-ordained fate overcame them unawares, I with mine own hand drew fate and affliction upon myself, as thou shalt presently hear. Know that

STORY OF THE THIRD CALENDER.

I also am a king, the son of a king, and my name is Agib, son of Khesib. My father died, and I took the

[1] See note on p. 120. [2] Dar es Selam.

kingdom after him and ruled my subjects with justice and beneficence. My capital city stood on the shore of a wide-spreading sea, on which I had fifty merchant ships and fifty smaller vessels for pleasure and a hundred and fifty cruisers equipped for war; and near at hand were many great islands in the midst of the ocean. Now I loved to sail the sea and had a mind to visit the islands aforesaid; so I took ship with a month's victual and set out and took my pleasure in the islands and returned to my capital. Then, being minded to make a longer voyage upon the ocean, I fitted out half a score ships with provision for two months and sailed twenty days, till one night the wind blew contrary and the sea rose against us with great billows; the waves clashed together and there fell on us a great darkness. So we gave ourselves up for lost and I said, "He who perils himself is not to be commended, though he come off safe." Then we prayed to God and besought Him, but the wind ceased not to rage and the waves to clash together, till daybreak, when the wind fell, the sea became calm and the sun shone out. Presently we sighted an island, where we landed and cooked food and ate and rested two days. Then we set out again and sailed other twenty days, without seeing land; but the currents carried us out of our true course, so that the captain lost his reckoning and finding himself in strange waters, bade the watch go up to the mast-head and look out. So he climbed the mast and looked out and said, "O captain, I see nothing to right and left save sky and water, but ahead I see something looming afar off in the midst of the sea, now black and now white." When the captain heard the look-out's words, he cast his turban on the deck and plucked out his beard and buffeted his face and said, "O King, we are all dead men, not one of us can be saved." We all wept for his weeping and I said to him, "O captain, tell us what it is the look-out saw." "O

my lord," answered he, "know that we lost our way on the night of the storm and since then we have gone astray one-and-twenty days and there is no wind to bring us back to our true course. To-morrow, by the end of the day, we shall come to a mountain of black stone, called loadstone, for thither the currents bear us perforce. As soon as we come within a certain distance, all the nails in the ships will fly out and fasten to the mountain, and the ships will open and fall to pieces, for that God the Most High has gifted the loadstone with a secret virtue, by reason whereof all iron is attracted to it; and on this mountain is much iron, how much God only knows, from the many ships that have been wrecked there from old time. On its summit there stands a dome of brass, raised on ten columns and on the top of the dome are a horse and horseman of the same metal. The latter holds in his hand a brazen lance and on his breast is a tablet of lead, graven with names and talismans: and, O King, it is nought but this horseman that causeth the folk to perish, nor will the charm be broken till he fall from his horse." Then he wept sore and we all made sure of death and each took leave of his comrade and charged him with his last wishes, in case he should be saved. That night we slept not, and in the morning, we sighted the loadstone mountain, towards which the currents carried us with irresistible force. When the ships came within a certain distance, they opened and the nails started out and all the iron in them sought the loadstone and clove to it; so that by the end of the day, we were all struggling in the sea round the mountain. Some of us were saved, but the most part drowned, and even those who escaped knew not one of the other, being stupefied by the raging wind and the buffeting of the waves. As for me, God preserved me that I might suffer that which He willed to me of trouble and torment and affliction, for I got on a plank from one of the ships and

Night the wind driving it ashore, I happened on a pathway
xb. leading to the top, as it were a stair hewn out of the rock. So I called upon the name of God the Most High and besought His succour and clinging to the steps, addressed myself to climb up little by little. And God stilled the wind and aided me in my ascent, so that I reached the summit in safety. There I found nothing but the dome; so I entered, mightily rejoiced at my escape, and made my ablutions and prayed a two-bow prayer[1] in gratitude to God for my preservation. Then I fell asleep under the dome and saw in a dream one who said to me, "O son of Khesib, when thou awakest, dig under thy feet and thou wilt find a bow of brass and three leaden arrows, inscribed with talismanic characters. Take the bow and shoot the arrows at the horseman on the top of the dome and rid mankind of this great calamity. When thou shootest at him, he will fall into the sea, and the horse will drop at thy feet: take it and bury it in the place of the bow. This done, the sea will swell and rise till it is level with the top of the mountain, and there will appear on it a boat containing a man of brass (other than he whom thou shalt have thrown down), with an oar in his hands. He will come to thee, and do thou embark with him, but beware of naming God. He will row with thee for the space of ten days, till he brings thee to a port of safety, where thou shalt find those who will carry thee to thine own country: and all this shall be fulfilled to thee, so thou pronounce not the name of God." I started up from my sleep and hastening to do the bidding of the mysterious voice, found the bow and arrows and shot at the horseman and overthrew him; whereupon he fell into the sea, whilst the

[1] A certain fixed succession of prayers and acts of adoration is called a *rekah* (or bow) from the inclination of the body that occurs in it. The ordained prayers, occurring five times a day, consist of a certain number of *rekahs*.

horse dropped at my feet and I took it and buried it. Then the sea grew troubled and rose till it reached the top of the mountain; nor had I long to wait before I saw a boat in the midst of the sea coming towards me. So I gave thanks to God: and when the boat came up to me, I saw in it a man of brass, with a tablet of lead on his breast, inscribed with names and talismans; and I embarked without saying a word. The boatman rowed on with me for ten whole days, till I caught sight of islands and mountains and signs of safety; whereat I was beyond measure rejoiced and in the excess of my gladness, I called upon the name of the Almighty and exclaimed, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" When behold, the boat turned over and cast me out into the sea, then righted and sank beneath the water. Now, I knew how to swim, so I swam the whole day till nightfall, when my arms and shoulders failed me for fatigue, and I abode in mortal peril and made the profession of the Faith,[1] looking for nothing but death. Presently, the sea rose, for the greatness of the wind, and a wave like a great rampart took me and bearing me forward, cast me up on the land, that the will of God might be done. I clambered up the beach and putting off my clothes, wrung them and spread them out to dry, then lay down and slept all night. As soon as it was day, I put on my clothes and rose to look about me. Presently I came to a grove of trees and making a circuit round it, found that I was on a little island, surrounded on all sides by the sea; whereupon I said to myself, "No sooner do I escape from one peril than I fall into a worse." But as I was pondering my case and wishing for death, I spied a ship afar off making towards me; so I climbed up into a tree and hid myself among the branches. Presently, the ship came to an anchor, and ten slaves landed, bearing spades, and made for the middle

[1] *i.e.* "There is no god but God, etc."

of the island, where they dug till they uncovered a trap-door and raised it. Then they returned to the ship and brought thence bread and flour and oil and honey and meat and carpets and all else that was needed to furnish one dwelling there; nor did they leave going back and forth till they had transferred to the underground dwelling all that was in the ship: after which they again repaired to the vessel and returned, laden with wearing apparel of the finest kind and in their midst a very old man, whom time had mauled till he was wasted and worn, as he were a bone wrapped in a rag of blue cloth, through which the winds blew East and West. As says the poet of him:

Time makes us tremble, ah, how piteously! For full of violence and might is he.
Once on a time I walked and was not tired: Now am I tired, yet have not walked, ah me!

He held by the hand a youth cast in the mould of symmetry and perfection, so fair that his beauty might well be the subject of proverbs; for he was like a tender sapling, ravishing every heart with his beauty and seducing every wit with his amorous grace. It was of him the poet spoke, when he said:

Beauty they brought to liken it with him: But Beauty hung its head for shame and fear.
"O Beauty," said they, "dost thou know his like?" It answered, "Never have I seen his peer."

They proceeded to the underground, where they descended all and did not reappear for an hour or more, at the end of which time the old man and the slaves came up, without the youth, and replacing the trap-door, covered it again with earth; then returned to the ship and set sail. As soon as they were out of sight, I came down from the tree and going to the place I had seen them fill up, made shift to clear away the earth, till I came to the trap-door, which

was of wood, the shape and bigness of a mill-stone, and raised it, when there appeared underneath a winding stair of stone. At this I wondered and descending, came to a fair chamber, spread with various kinds of carpets and hung with silken stuffs, where I saw the youth sitting alone upon a raised couch and leant upon a cushion, with a fan in his hand and sweet-scented flowers and herbs and fruits before him. When he saw me, he turned pale; but I saluted him, saying, "Calm thyself and put away fear; no harm shall come to thee: I am a man like unto thee and a king's son, whom Providence hath sent to bear thee company in thy solitude. But now tell me thy history and why thou dwellest underground by thyself." When he was assured that I was of his kind, he was glad and his colour returned; then he made me draw near to him and said, "O my brother, my story is a strange one, and it is as follows. My father is a merchant jeweller, possessed of great wealth and having black and white slaves, who make trading voyages, on his account, in ships and on camels, to the most distant countries; and he has dealings with kings. Until my birth, he had never been blessed with a child, but one night he dreamt that a son had been born to him, who lived but a short time, and awoke weeping and crying out. The following night my mother conceived and he took note of the date of her conception. The days of her pregnancy were accomplished and she gave birth to myself, whereupon my father rejoiced and made banquets and fed the poor and the needy for that I had been vouchsafed to him in his old age. Then he assembled the astrologers and mathematicians of the day and those learned in nativities and horoscopes; and they drew my horoscope and said to my father, 'Thy son will live till the age of fifteen, at which date there is a break[1] in his line of life, which if he tide over in safety, he shall live

[1] or sinister conjunction of the planets.

long. The danger with which he is threatened is as follows. In the Sea of Peril stands a mountain called the Loadstone Mountain, on whose summit is a horseman of brass, seated on a horse of the same metal, with a tablet of lead on his breast. Fifty days after this horseman falls from his horse, thy son will die, and his slayer will be he who overthrows the statue, a king called Agib, son of Khesib.' My father was sore concerned at this prediction; but he brought me up and gave me a good education, till I attained my fifteenth year. Ten days ago, news came to him that the horseman had fallen into the sea and that he who overthrew him was Agib, son of King Khesib; whereat he was as one distraught and feared for my life. So he built me this place under the earth and stocking it with all that I need during the forty days that yet remain of the period of danger, transported me hither, that I might be safe from King Agib's hands. When the forty days are past, he will come back and fetch me; and this is my story and why thou findest me here alone." When I heard his story, I marvelled and said to myself, "I am that King Agib of whom he speaks; but, by Allah, I will assuredly not kill him!" And I said to him, "O my lord, God willing, thou shalt be spared suffering and death, nor shalt thou see trouble or sorrow or disquiet; for I will abide with thee and serve thee; and when I have borne thee company during the appointed days, I will go with thee to thy dwelling-place and thou shalt bring me to some of thy father's servants, with whom I may journey to my own country; and God shall requite thee for me." He rejoiced in my words and we sat conversing till nightfall, when I rose and lighted a great wax candle and fed the lamps and set on meat and drink and sweetmeats. We ate and drank and sat talking till late into the night, when he lay down to sleep and I covered him up and went to sleep myself. Next morning, I rose and heated a little

water, then woke him gently and brought him the warm water, with which he washed his face and thanked me, saying, "God requite thee with good, O youth! By Allah, if I escape from this my danger and from him they call Agib ben Khesib, I will make my father reward thee!" "May the day never come on which evil shall befall thee," answered I, "and may God appoint my last day before thine!" Then I set on food and we ate, and I made ready perfumes with which he scented himself. Moreover, I made him a backgammon board,[1] and we played and ate sweetmeats and played again till nightfall, when I rose and lighting the lamps, set on food; and we ate and sat talking till the night was far spent. Then he lay down to sleep and I covered him up and went to sleep myself. Thus I did with him, day and night, and the love of him got hold upon my heart and I forgot my troubles and said to myself, "The astrologers lied; by Allah, I will not kill him!" I ceased not to serve him and bear him company and entertain him thus, till nine-and-thirty days were passed and we came to the morning of the fortieth day, when he rejoiced and said to me, "O my brother, the forty days are up to-day, praised be God who hath preserved me from death, and this by thy blessing and the blessing of thy coming to me, and I pray Him to restore thee to thy country! But now, O my brother, I prithee heat me some water, that I may wash my body and change my clothes." "With all my heart," answered I; and heated water in plenty and carrying it in to him, washed his body well with lupin-meal[2] and rubbed him down and changed his clothes and spread him a high bed, on which he lay down to rest after the bath. Then said he, "O my brother, cut me a melon and sweeten it with sugar-candy." So I went

[1] *Menkalah*, a game played with a board and draughtmen, partaking of the character of backgammon, draughts and fox-and-geese.

[2] A common Oriental substitute for soap.

to the closet and bringing out a fine melon I found there on a platter, said to him, "O my lord, hast thou no knife?" "Here it is," answered he, "on the high shelf at my head." So I got up hurriedly and taking the knife, drew it from its sheath; but in stepping down backward, my foot slipped and I fell heavily on the youth, holding in my hand the knife, which hastened to fulfil that which was ordained and entered his heart, and he died forthright. When I saw that he was no more and that I had indeed killed him, I cried out grievously and buffeted my face and tore my clothes, saying, "We are God's and to Him we return! There remained for this youth but one day of the period of danger that the astrologers had foretold for him, and the death of this fair one was to be at my hand! Verily, my life is nought but disasters and afflictions! Would he had not asked me to cut the melon or would I had died before him! But what God decrees cometh to pass." When I was certain that there was no life left in him, I rose and ascending the stair, replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth. Then I looked out to sea and saw the ship cleaving the waters in the direction of the island. Whereat I was afeard and said, "They will be here anon and will find their son dead and know 'twas I killed him and will slay me without fail." So I climbed up into a high tree and hid myself among the leaves. Hardly had I done so, when the vessel came to an anchor and the slaves landed with the old man and made direct for the place, where they cleared away the earth and were surprised to find it soft.[1] Then they raised the trap-door and going down, found the boy lying dead, clad in clean clothes, with his face shining from the bath and the knife sticking in his breast. At this sight, they shrieked aloud and wept and buffeted their faces and cried out, "Alas! woe worth the day!" whilst the old man swooned

Night xvi.

[1] *i.e.* newly dug over.

away and remained so long insensible, that the slaves thought he would not survive his son. So they wrapped the dead youth in his clothes and carried him up and laid him on the ground, covering him with a shroud of silk. Then they addressed themselves to transport all that was in the place to the ship, and presently the old man revived and coming up after them, saw his son laid out, whereupon he fell on the ground and strewed dust on his head and buffeted his face and tore his beard; and his weeping redoubled, as he hung over his dead son, till he swooned away again. After awhile the slaves came back, with a silken carpet, and laying the old man thereon, sat down at his head. All this time I was in the tree above them, watching them; and indeed my heart became hoary before my head, for all the grief and affliction I had undergone. The old man ceased not from his swoon till nigh upon sundown, when he came to himself and looking upon his dead son, recalled what had happened and how what he had feared had come to pass: and he buffeted his face and head and recited the following verses:

My heart is cleft in twain for severance of loves; The burning tears pour down in torrents from my eye.
My every wish with him I loved is fled away: What can I do or say? what help, what hope have I?
Would I had never looked upon his lovely face! Alas, the ways on me are straitened far and nigh!
What charm can bring me peace, what drink forgetfulness, Whilst in my heart the fire of love burns fierce and high?
Would that my feet had trod with him the road of death! Then should I not, as now, in lonely sorrow sigh.
O God, that art my hope, have pity upon me! Unite us twain, I crave, in Paradise for aye!
How blessèd were we once, whilst one house held us both And twinned in pure content our happy lives passed by!
Till fortune aimed at us the shafts of severance And parted us; for who her arrows can defy?

For lo! the age's pearl, the darling of his folk, The mould of every grace, was singled out to die!
I call him back: "Would God thine hour had never come!" What while the case takes speech and doth forestall my cry.
Which is the speediest way to win to thee, my son? My soul had paid the price, if that thy life might buy.
The sun could not compare with him, for lo! it sets. Nor yet the moon, that wanes and wasteth from the sky.
Alas, my grief for thee and my complaint of fate! None can console for thee nor aught thy place supply.
Thy sire is all distraught with languishment for thee; Since death upon thee came, his hopes are gone awry.
Surely, some foe hath cast an envious eye on us: May he who wrought this thing his just deserts aby!

Then he sobbed once and gave up the ghost; whereupon the slaves cried out, "Alas, our master!" and strewed dust on their heads and wept sore. Then they carried the two bodies to the ship and set sail. As soon as they were out of sight, I came down from the tree and raising the trap-door, went down into the underground dwelling, where the sight of some of the youth's gear recalled him to my mind, and I repeated the following verses:

I see their traces and pine for longing pain; My tears rain down on the empty dwelling-place;
And I pray to God, who willed that we should part, One day to grant us reunion, of His grace!

Then I went up again and spent the day in walking about the island, returning to the underground dwelling for the night. Thus I lived for a month, during which time I became aware that the sea was gradually receding day by day from the western side of the island, till by the end of the month, I found that the water was become low enough to afford a passage to the mainland. At this I rejoiced, making sure of delivery, and fording the little water that remained, made shift to reach the mainland, where I found great heaps of sand, in which even a camel

would sink up to the knees. However, I took heart and making my way through the sand, espied something shining afar off, as it were a bright-blazing fire. So I made towards it, thinking to find succour and repeating the following verses:

It may be Fate at last shall draw its bridle-rein And bring me happy chance; for Fortune changes still;
And things shall happen yet, despite the things fordone, To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

When I drew near the supposed fire, behold, it was a palace, with a gate of brass, whereon, when the sun shone, it gleamed and glistened and showed from afar, as it were a fire. I rejoiced at the sight and sat down before the palace gate; but hardly had I done so, when there came up ten young men, sumptuously clad and all blind of the right eye. They were accompanied by an old man; and I marvelled at their appearance and at their being all blind of the same eye. They saluted me and questioned me of my condition, whereupon I told them all that had befallen me. They wondered at my story and carried me into the palace, where I saw ten couches, with beds and coverlets of blue stuff, ranged in a circle, with a like couch of smaller size in the midst. As we entered, each of the young men went up to his own couch, and the old man seated himself on the smaller one in the middle. Then said they unto me, "O youth, sit down on the ground and enquire not of our doings nor of the loss of our right eyes." Presently the old man rose and brought each one of the young men and myself his portion of meat and drink in separate vessels; and we sat talking, they questioning me of my adventures and I replying, till the night was far spent. Then said they to the old man, "O elder, wilt thou not bring us our ordinary? The time is come." "Willingly," answered he, and rose and entering a closet, disappeared and presently returned, bearing on

his head ten dishes, each covered with a piece of blue stuff. He set a dish before each youth and lighting ten wax-candles, set one upon each dish; after which he uncovered the dishes, and lo, they were full of ashes and powdered charcoal and soot. Then all the young men tucked up their sleeves and fell to weeping and lamenting; and they blackened their faces and rent their clothes and buffeted their cheeks and beat their breasts, exclaiming, "We were seated at our ease, but our impertinent curiosity would not let us be!" They ceased not to do thus till near daybreak, when the old man rose and heated water for them, and they washed their faces and put on fresh clothes. When I saw this, my senses left me for wonderment and my heart was troubled and my mind perplexed, for their strange behaviour, till I forgot what had befallen me and could not refrain from questioning them; so I said to them, "What makes you do thus, after our sport and merry-making together? Praised be God, ye are whole of wit, yet these are the doings of madmen! I conjure you, by all that is most precious to you, tell me why you behave thus and how ye came to lose each an eye!" At this, they turned to me and said, "O young man, let not thy youth beguile thee, but leave thy questioning." Then they slept and I with them, and when we awoke, the old man served up food; and after we had eaten and the vessels had been removed, we sat conversing till nightfall, when the old man rose and lit the candles and lamps and set meat and drink before us. We ate and sat talking and carousing till midnight, when they said to the old man, "Bring us our ordinary, for the hour of sleep is at hand." So he rose and brought them the dishes of soot and ashes, and they did as they had done on the preceding night. I abode with them on this wise for a month, during which time they blackened their faces every night, then washed them and changed their clothes:

and my trouble and amazement increased upon me till I could neither eat nor drink. At last, I lost patience and said to them, "O young men, if ye will not relieve my concern and acquaint me with the reason of your blackening your faces and the meaning of your words, 'We were seated at our ease, but our impertinent curiosity would not let us be,' let me leave you and return to my own people and be at rest from seeing these things, for as says the proverb,

'Twere wiser and better your presence to leave, For when the eye sees not, the heart does not grieve."

"O youth," answered they, "we have not concealed this thing from thee but in our concern for thee, lest what befell us befall thee and thou become like unto us." "It avails not," said I; "you must tell me." "We give thee good advice," rejoined they; "do thou take it and leave questioning us of our case, or thou wilt become one-eyed like unto us." But I still persisted in my demand and they said, "O youth, if this thing befall thee, we warn thee that we will never again receive thee into our company nor let thee abide with us." Then they took a ram and slaughtering it, skinned it and gave me a knife, saying, "Lie down on the skin and we will sew thee up in it and leave thee and go away. Presently there will come to thee a bird called the roc,[1] that will catch thee up in its claws and fly away with thee and set thee down on a mountain. As soon as thou feelest it alight with thee, slit the skin with the knife and come forth; whereupon the bird will take fright at thee and fly away and leave thee. Then rise and fare on half a day's journey, till thou comest to a palace rising high into the air, builded of khelenj[2] and aloes and sandal wood and plated with red gold, inlaid with all manner emeralds and

[1] lit. *rukh*. [2] A sweet-scented, variegated wood.

other jewels. There enter and thou wilt attain thy desire. We all have been in that place, and this is the cause of the loss of our right eyes and the reason why we blacken our faces. Were we to tell thee our stories, it would take too much time, for each lost his eye by a separate adventure." They then sewed me up in the skin and left me on the ground outside the palace; and the roc carried me off and set me down on the mountain. I cut open the skin and came out, whereupon the bird flew away and I walked on till I reached the palace. The door stood open; so I entered and found myself in a very wide and goodly hall, as big as a tilting-ground, round which were a hundred doors of sandal and aloes-wood, plated with red gold and furnished with rings of silver. At the upper end of the hall, I saw forty young ladies, sumptuously clad and adorned, as they were moons, one could never tire of gazing on them: and they all came up to me, saying, "Welcome and fair welcome, O my lord! This month past have we been expecting the like of thee; and praised be God who hath sent us one who is worthy of us and we of him!" Then they made me sit down on a high divan and said to me, "From to-day thou art our lord and master, and we are thy handmaids; so order us as thou wilt." And I marvelled at their case. Presently one of them arose and set food before me, and I ate, whilst others heated water and washed my hands and feet and changed my clothes, and yet others made ready sherbets and gave me to drink; and they were all full of joy and delight at my coming. Then they sat down and conversed with me till nightfall, when five of them arose and spreading a mat, covered it with flowers and fruits and confections in profusion and set on wine; and we sat down to drink, whilst some of them sang and others played the lute and psaltery and recorders and other instruments. So the cup went round amongst us and

such gladness possessed me that I forgot all the cares of the world and said, "This is indeed life, but that it is fleeting." We ceased not to drink and make merry till the night was far spent and we were warm with wine, when they said to me, "O our lord, choose from amongst us one who shall be thy bedfellow this night and not lie with thee again till forty days be past." So I chose a girl fair of face, with liquid black eyes and jetty hair, slightly parted teeth[1] and joining eyebrows, perfect in shape and form, as she were a palm-sapling or a stalk of sweet basil; such an one as troubles the heart and bewilders the wit, even as saith of her the poet:

'Twere vain to liken her unto the tender branch, And out on who compares her form to the gazelle!
Whence should gazelles indeed her shape's perfection get Or yet her honeyed lips, so sweet to taste and smell,
Or those great eyes of hers, so dire to those who love, That bind their victims fast in passion's fatal spell?
I dote on her with all the folly of a child. What wonder if he turn a child who loves too well!

And I repeated to her the following verses:

My eyes to gaze on aught but thy grace disdain, And none but thou in my thought shall ever reign.
The love of thee is my sole concern, my fair; In love of thee, I will die and rise again.

So I lay with her that night, never knew I a fairer, and when it was morning, the ladies carried me to the bath and washed me and clad me in rich clothes. Then they served up food and we ate and drank, and the cup went round amongst us till the night, when I chose from among them one who was fair to look upon and soft of sides, such an one as the poet describes, when he says:

[1] The Arabs consider a slight division of the two middle teeth a beauty.

I saw upon her breast two caskets snowy-white, Musk-sealed; she doth forbid to lovers their delight.
She guards them with the darts that glitter from her eyes; And those who would them press, her arrowy glances smite.

I passed a most delightful night with her; and to make a long story short, I led the goodliest life with them, eating and drinking and carousing and every night taking one or other of them to my bed, for a whole year, at the end of which time they came in to me in tears and fell to bidding me farewell and clinging to me, weeping and crying out; whereat I marvelled and said to them, "What ails you? Indeed, you break my heart." "Would we had never known thee!" answered they. "We have companied with many men, but never saw we a pleasanter or more courteous than thou: and now we must part from thee. Yet it rests with thee to see us again, and if thou hearken to us, we need never be parted: but our hearts forebode us that thou will not hearken to us; and this is the cause of our weeping." "Tell me how the case stands," said I; and they answered, "Know that we are the daughters of kings, who have lived here together for years past, and once in every year we are absent for forty days; then we return and abide here for the rest of the year, eating and drinking and making merry. We are now about to depart according to our custom, and we fear lest thou disobey our injunctions in our absence, in which case we shall never see thee again; but if thou do as we bid thee, all will yet be well. Take these keys: they are those of the hundred apartments of the palace, each of which contains what will suffice thee for a day's entertainment. Ninety-and-nine of these thou mayst open and take thy pleasure therein; but beware lest thou open the hundredth, that which has a door of red gold; for therein is that which will bring about a separation between us and thee." Quoth I, "I will assuredly not open the hundredth door, if therein be

separation from you." Then one of them came up to me and embraced me and repeated the following verses:

If but the days once more our severed loves unite, If but my eyes once more be gladdened by thy sight,
Then shall the face of Time smile after many a frown, And I will pardon Fate for all its past despite.

And I repeated the following:

When she drew near to bid farewell, upon our parting day, Whilst on her heart the double stroke of love and longing smote,
She wept pure pearls, and eke mine eyes did rain cornelians forth; And lo, they all combined and made a necklace for her throat!

When I saw her weeping, I said, "By Allah, I will never open the hundredth door!" Then they bade me farewell and departed, leaving me alone in the palace. When the evening drew near, I opened the first door and found myself in an orchard, full of blooming trees, laden with ripe fruit, and the air resounded with the loud singing of birds and the ripple of running waters. The sight brought solace to my soul, and I entered and walked among the trees, inhaling the odours of the flowers and listening to the warble of the birds, that sang the praises of God the One, the Almighty. I looked upon the apple, whose colour is parcel red and parcel yellow, as says the poet:

The apple in itself two colours doth unite, The loved one's cheek of red, and yellow of despite.

Then I looked upon the quince and inhaled its fragrance that puts musk and ambergris to shame, even as says the poet:

The quince contains all pleasant things that can delight mankind, Wherefore above all fruits that be its virtues are renowned.
Its taste is as the taste of wine, its breath the scent of musk; Its hue is that of virgin gold, its shape the full moon's round.

Thence I passed to the pear, whose taste surpasses rose-water and sugar, and the plum, whose beauty delights the eye, as it were a polished ruby. When I had taken my fill

of looking on the place, I went out and locked the door again. Next day, I opened the second door and found myself in a great pleasaunce, set with many palm-trees and watered by a running stream, whose borders were decked with bushes of rose and jessamine and henna[1] and camomile and marjoram and sweetbriar and carpeted with narcissus and ox-eye and violets and lilies and gillyflowers. The breeze fluttered over all these sweet-smelling plants and scattered their scents right and left, possessing me with complete delight. I took my pleasure in the place awhile, and my chagrin was somewhat lightened. Then I went out and locked the door and opening the third door, found therein a great hall paved with varicoloured marbles and other precious stones and hung with cages of sandal and aloes wood, full of singing-birds, such as the thousand-voiced nightingale[2] and the cushat and the blackbird and the turtle-dove and the Nubian warbler. My heart was ravished by the song of the birds and I forgot my cares and slept in the aviary till the morning. Then I opened the fourth door and saw a great hall, with forty cabinets ranged on either side. The doors of the latter stood open; so I entered and found them full of pearls and rubies and chrysolites and beryls and emeralds and corals and carbuncles and all manner of precious stones and jewels of gold and silver, such as the tongue fails to describe. I was amazed at what I saw and said in myself, "Methinks, if all the kings of the earth joined together, they could not produce the like of these treasures!" And my heart dilated and I exclaimed, "Now am I king of my time, for all these riches are mine by the favour of God, and I have forty young ladies under my hand, nor is there any with them but myself!" In short, I passed nine-and-thirty days after this fashion, exploring the riches of the place,

[1] The Egyptian privet; a plant whose flowers have a very delicious fragrance. [2] A kind of mocking-bird.

till I had opened all the doors, except that which the princesses had charged me not to open; but my thoughts ran ever on this latter and Satan urged me, for my ruin, to open it, nor had I patience to forbear; though there remained but one day of the appointed time. So I opened the hundredth door, that which was plated with red gold, and was met by a perfume, whose like I had never before smelt and which was of so subtle and penetrating a quality, that it invaded my head and I fell down, as if intoxicated, and lay awhile unconscious. Then I revived and took heart and entering, found myself in a place strewn with saffron and blazing with light shed by lamps of gold and candles, that diffused a scent of musk and aloes. In the midst stood two great censers, full of burning aloes wood and ambergris and other perfumes, and the place was full of their fragrance. Presently I espied a horse, black as night at its darkest, girt and bridled and saddled with red gold, standing before two mangers of white crystal, one full of winnowed sesame and the other of rose-water flavoured with musk. When I saw this, I was amazed and said to myself, "Surely this horse must be of extraordinary value:" and the devil tempted me, so that I took him out and mounted him, but he would not stir. So I spurred him with my heel, but he did not move; and I took a switch and struck him with it. When he felt the blow, he gave a neigh like the roaring thunder, and spreading a pair of wings, flew up with me high into the air. After a while, he descended and set me down on the terrace of a palace; then, shaking me off his back, he smote me on the face with his tail and struck out my right eye and flew away, leaving me there. I went down into the palace and found myself again among the ten one-eyed youths, who exclaimed, when they saw me, "An ill welcome to thee!" Quoth I, "Behold, I am become like unto you, and now I would have you give me a dish of soot, that I

may blacken my face withal, and admit me to your company." "By Allah," answered they, "thou shalt not abide with us! Depart hence!" And they drove me away. I was grieved at their rejection of me and went out from them, mourning-hearted and tearful-eyed, saying to myself, "Of a truth, I was sitting at my ease, but my impertinent curiosity would not let me be." Then I shaved my beard and eyebrows and renouncing the world, became a calender and wandered about God's earth, till by His blessing, I arrived at Baghdad in safety this evening and met with these two other Calenders standing bewildered. So I saluted them, saying, "I am a stranger;" to which they replied, "We also are strangers." And, as it chanced, we were all Calenders and each blind of the right eye. This, then, O my lady, is my story and the manner of the shaving of my face and the loss of my eye.' Quoth the mistress of the house, 'Begone about thy business.' But he said, 'By Allah, I will not go, till I hear the others' stories!' Then she turned to the Khalif and his companions and said, 'Give me an account of yourselves.' So Jaafer came forward and repeated the story he had told the portress; whereupon the lady said, 'I pardon you all: go your ways.' So they all went out; and when they reached the street, the Khalif said to the Calenders, 'O folk, whither are you bound now, seeing that it is not yet day?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered they, 'we know not where to go!' 'Then come and pass the rest of the night with us,' said the Khalif, and turning to Jaafer, said to him, 'Take them home with thee and to-morrow bring them before me, that we may cause their adventures to be recorded.' Jaafer did as the Khalif bade him, and the latter returned to his palace. Sleep did not visit him that night, but he lay awake, pondering the adventures of the three Calenders and full of impatience to know the history of the two ladies and the black bitches; and no sooner had the day

dawned than he went out and sat down on his chair of estate. Then his courtiers presented themselves and withdrew, whereupon he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me the three ladies and the bitches and the Calenders, and make haste.' So Jaafer went out and brought them all before him and seated the ladies behind a curtain; then turned to them and said, speaking for the Khalif, 'O women, we pardon you your rough usage of us, in consideration of your previous kindness and for that ye knew us not: and now I would have you to know that you are in the presence of the fifth of the sons of Abbas, the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, son of El Mehdi Mohammed, son of Abou Jaafer el Mensour. So do ye acquaint him with your stories and tell him nothing but the truth.' When the ladies heard Jaafer's speech, the eldest came forward and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, my story is one which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve for an example to those who can profit by example and a warning to those who can take warning. And it is that

Night xvii.

THE ELDEST LADY'S STORY.

These two bitches are my elder sisters by the same mother and father, and these two others, she on whom are the marks of blows and the cateress, are my sisters by another mother. When my father died, each took her portion of the heritage, and after a while my mother died also and left me and my sisters-german a thousand dinars each. After a while my two sisters married and lived with their husbands for a time; then the latter bought merchandise with their wives' money and set out on their travels, and I heard no more of them for five years: for their husbands spent their wives' fortunes and became bankrupt and deserted them in a foreign land. Presently, my eldest sister came back to me in the guise of a beggar,

with tattered clothes and a dirty old veil, and altogether in so sorry a plight, that at first I knew her not; but when I recognised her, I asked her how she came in such a state. "O my sister," answered she, "talking profits not now: the pen[1] hath written what was decreed." Then I sent her to the bath and clothed her in a suit of my own and entreated her kindly and said to her, "O my sister, thou standest to me in the stead of my father and mother; and God has blessed me in the share of the inheritance that fell to me and prospered it to me, so that I am now in flourishing case; and thou shalt share with me in my increase." So she abode with me a whole year, during which time we were much concerned to know what was become of our other sister. At last, she too came back to me, in a worse plight than the other, and I dealt still more kindly by her than by the first, and each of them had a share of my substance. After a while, they said to me, "O sister, we desire to marry again, for we can no longer endure to live without husbands." "O my dear ones,"[2] answered I, "there is no good in marriage, for now-a-days good men are rare to find; nor do I see the advantage of marrying again, since ye have already made trial of matrimony and it has profited you nothing." They would not listen to me, but married without my consent; nevertheless I equipped them and portioned them with my own money, and they went away with their husbands. After a little, the latter cheated them of all they had and went away and left them. Then they came to me, in abject case, and made their excuses to me, saying, "Do not reproach us; thou art younger than we, but riper of wit; so take us as thy handmaids, that we may eat our mouthful; and we will never again speak of marriage." Quoth I, "Ye are welcome, O my sisters: there is nothing dearer to me than you." And I took them in and redoubled in

[1] Of providence. [2] Literally, "O my eyes!"

kindness to them. We lived thus for a whole year, at the end of which time I was minded to travel. So I fitted out a great ship at Bassora and loaded her with merchandise and victual and other necessaries for a voyage, and said to my sisters, "Will you come with me or abide at home till I return?" "We will go with thee," answered they, "for we cannot endure to be parted from thee." So I took them and set sail, after dividing my money into two parts, one of which I deposited with a trusty person, saying, "Maybe ill-hap shall betide the ship and yet we remain alive; but now, if we return, we shall find what will be of service to us." We sailed days and nights, till the captain missed the true course and the ship went astray with us and entered a sea other than that we aimed at. We knew not of this awhile and the wind blew fair for us ten days, at the end of which time, the watch went up to the mast-head, to look out, and cried, "Good news!" Then he came down, rejoicing, and said to us, "I see a city in the distance as it were a dove." At this we rejoiced and before an hour of the day was past, the city appeared to us afar off: and we said to the captain, "What is the name of yonder city?" "By Allah!" replied he, "I know not, for I never saw it before nor have I ever sailed this sea in my life; but since the affair has issued in safety, ye have nought to do but to land your goods, and if ye find a market, sell and buy and barter, as the occasion serves; if not, we will rest here two days, re-victual and depart." So we entered the harbour and the captain landed and was absent awhile, after which he returned and said to us, "Arise, go up into the city and marvel at God's dealings with His creatures and seek to be preserved from His wrath." So we landed and going up to the city, saw at the gate men with staves in their hands; but when we drew near them, behold, they had been stricken by the wrath of God and were become

stones. Then we entered the city and found all its inhabitants changed into black stones: there was not a living soul therein, no, not a blower of the fire. At this we were amazed and passed on through the bazaars, where we found all the goods and gold and silver left lying in their places, and rejoiced and said, "Doubtless, there is some mystery in all this." Then we dispersed about the streets of the city and each busied himself with making prize of the wealth and stuffs lying about and took no heed of his comrades, whilst I went up to the citadel and found it goodly of fashion. I entered the king's palace and saw all the vessels of gold and silver and the king himself seated in the midst of his officers and grandees, clad in raiment such as confounded the wit. The throne on which he sat was encrusted with pearls and jewels and his robes were of cloth of gold, adorned with all manner jewels, that shone like stars. Around him stood fifty white slaves, with drawn swords in their hands and clad in divers sorts of silken stuffs; but when I drew near to them, behold, they were all black stones. My understanding was confounded at the sight, but I went on and came to the saloon of the harem, which I found hung with tapestries of gold-striped silk and spread with carpets of the same, embroidered with flowers of gold. Here I saw the queen lying, arrayed in a robe covered with fresh pearls as big as hazel-nuts and crowned with a diadem set with all manner jewels. Her neck was covered with collars and necklaces and all her clothes and ornaments were unchanged, but she herself had been smitten of God and was become black stone. Presently I spied an open door, with seven steps leading to it, and going up, found myself in a place paved with marble and hung and carpeted with gold-embroidered stuffs. At the upper end stood an alcove with drawn curtains and I saw a light issuing thence. So I went up to the alcove and found

therein a couch of juniper wood, inlaid with pearls and diamonds and set with bosses of emeralds, with silken coverings of bewildering richness and curtains of the same, looped up with pearls. At the head of the bed stood two lighted candles and in the midst of the alcove was a little stool, on which lay a jewel, the size of a goose's egg, that shone like a lamp and lighted the whole place; but there was no one to be seen. When I saw these things, I wondered and said, "Some one must have lighted these candles." Then I went out and came to the kitchen and thence to the buttery and the king's treasuries and continued to explore the palace and to go from place to place; and for wonderment at what I saw, I forgot myself and wandered on, lost in thought, till the night overtook me. Then I would have gone out, but lost my way and could not find the gate; so I returned to the alcove, where I lay down on the bed and covering myself with a quilt, repeated somewhat of the Koran and would have slept, but could not, for restlessness possessed me. In the middle of the night, I heard a low sweet voice reciting the Koran, whereat I rejoiced and rising, followed the sound, till it led me to a chamber with the door ajar. I looked through the chink of the door and saw an oratory, wherein was a prayer-niche,[1] with candles burning and lamps hanging from the ceiling. In the midst was spread a prayer-carpet, on which sat a handsome youth, with a copy of the Koran open before him, from which he was reading. I wondered to see him alone alive of all the people of the city and entered and saluted him; whereupon he raised his eyes and returned my salutation. Then said I, "I implore thee, by the truth of that thou readest from the book of God, to answer me

[1] A niche in the wall, which indicates the position the worshipper must assume, in order to face Mecca, in accordance with the ritual of prayer.

my questions." He looked at me with a smile and said, "O handmaid of God, tell me first how thou camest hither, and I will tell thee what has befallen me and the people of this city and the manner of my preservation." So I told him my story, at which he marvelled, and questioned him of the people of the city. Quoth he, "Have patience with me a little, O my sister!" and shutting the Koran, laid it in a bag of satin. Then he made me sit down by his side, and I looked at him and behold, he was like the moon at its full, bright-faced, soft-sided, well-shaped and fair to look upon, as he were a figure of sugar,[1] even as says the poet of the like of him:

A seer of the stars one night was reading the book of the skies, When lo, in his scroll he saw a lovely youth arise.
Saturn had dyed his hair the hue of the raven's wing And sprinkled upon his face the musk of Paradise:[2]
The rose of his cheeks from Mars its ruddy colour drew, And the Archer winged the shafts that darted from his eyes.
Hermes dowered the youth with his own mercurial wit, And the Great Bear warded off the baleful glance of spies.
Wonder seized on the sage at the sight of the lovely boy, For the full moon kissed the earth before him, servant-wise.

And indeed God the Most High had clad him in the garment of perfection and broidered it with the shining fringes of his cheeks, even as says the poet of him:

By the perfume of his eyelids and his slender waist I swear, By the arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,
By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen, By the whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,
By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from my eyes, With their yeas and noes that hold me 'twixt rejoicing and despair,
By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheeks, By his lips' incarnate rubies and his teeth's fine pearls and rare,

[1] cf. Germ. *Zuckerpüppchen.*
[2] i.e. moles, which are considered a great beauty in the East.

By his neck and by its beauty, by the softness of his breast And the pair of twin pomegranates that my eyes discover there,
By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose, And the slender waist above them, all too slim their weight to bear,
By his skin's unsullied satin and the quickness of his spright, By the matchless combination in his form of all things fair,
By his hand's perennial bounty and his true and trusty speech, By the stars that smile upon him, favouring and debonair,
Lo, the smell of musk none other than his very fragrance is, And the ambergris's perfume breathes around him everywhere.
Yea, the sun in all its splendour cannot with his grace compare, Seeming but a shining fragment that he from his nail doth pare.

I stole a look at him, which cost me a thousand sighs, for my heart was taken with his love, and I said to him, "O my lord, tell me what I asked thee." "I hear and obey," answered he. "Know, O handmaid of God, that this city was the capital of my father, who is the king thou sawest on the throne, changed to a black stone, and as for the queen on the bed, she was my mother; and they and all the people of the city were Magians, worshipping the fire, instead of the All-powerful King, and swearing by the fire and the light and the shade and the heat and the revolving sphere. My father had no child, till I was vouchsafed to him in his old age, and he reared me and I grew up and flourished. Now, as my good star would have it, there was with us an old woman stricken in years, who was at heart a Muslim, believing in God and His prophet, but conforming outwardly to the religion of my people. My father had confidence in her, supposing her to be of his own belief, and showed her exceeding favour, for that he knew her to be trusty and virtuous; so when I grew to a fitting age, he committed me to her charge, saying, 'Take him and do thy best to give him a good education and teach him the things of our faith.' So she took me and taught me the tenets of Islam and the ordinances of ablution and prayer and made me learn

the Koran by heart, bidding me worship none but God the Most High and charging me to keep my faith secret from my father, lest he should kill me. So I hid it from him, and I abode thus till, in a little while, the old woman died and the people of the city redoubled in their impiety and frowardness and in the error of their ways. One day, they heard a voice from on high, proclaiming aloud, with a noise like the resounding thunder, so that all heard it far and near, and saying, 'O people of the city, turn from your worship of the fire and serve God the Compassionate King!' At this, fear fell on the people of the city and they crowded to my father and said to him, 'What is this awful voice that we have heard and that has confounded us with the excess of its terror?' But he said, 'Let not a voice fright you nor turn you from your faith.' Their hearts inclined to his word and they ceased not to worship the fire, but redoubled in their frowardness, till the anniversary of the day on which they had heard the supernatural voice, when they heard it anew, and so again a third time at the end of the second year. Still they persisted in their evil ways, till one day, at break of dawn, judgment descended on them and wrath from heaven, and they were all turned into black stones, they and their beasts and cattle; and none was spared, save myself. From that day to this, I have remained as thou seest me, occupying myself with prayer and fasting and reading the Koran aloud; and indeed I am grown weary of solitude, having none to bear me company." Then said I to him (and indeed he had won my heart), "O youth, wilt thou go with me to the city of Baghdad and foregather with men of learning and theologians and grow in wisdom and understanding and knowledge of the Law? If so, I will be thy handmaid, albeit I am head of my family and mistress over men and slaves and servants. I have here a ship laden with merchandise; and indeed it

was providence drove us to this city, that I might come to the knowledge of these things, for it was fated that we should meet." And I ceased not to speak him fair and persuade him, till he consented to go with me, and I passed the night at his feet, beside myself for joy. When it was day, we repaired to the treasuries and took thence what was little of weight and great of value; then went down into the town, where we met the slaves and the captain seeking for me. When they saw me, they rejoiced and I told them all I had seen and related to them the story of the young man and of the curse that had fallen on the people of the city. At this they wondered: but when my sisters saw me with the prince, they envied me on his account and were enraged and plotted mischief against me in their hearts. Then we took ship again, beside ourselves for joy in the booty we had gotten, though the most of my joy was in the prince, and waited till the wind blew fair for us, when we set sail and departed. As we sat talking, my sisters said to me, "O sister, what wilt thou do with this handsome young man?" "I purpose to make him my husband," answered I; and I turned to the prince and said, "O my lord, I have that to propose to thee, in which I will not have thee cross me: and it is that, when we reach Baghdad, I will give myself to thee as a handmaid in the way of marriage, and thou shalt be my husband and I thy wife." Quoth he, "I hear and obey; thou art my lady and my mistress, and whatever thou dost, I will not cross thee." Then I turned to my sisters and said to them, "This young man suffices me; and those who have gotten aught, it is theirs." "Thou sayest well," replied they; but in their hearts they purposed me evil. We sailed on with a fair wind, till we left the sea of peril and came into safe waters, and in a few days, we came in sight of the walls of Bassora, even as night overtook us. My sisters waited till the prince and

Night xviii.

I were asleep, when they took us up, bed and all, and threw us into the sea. The prince, who could not swim, was drowned and God wrote him of the company of the martyrs. As for me, would I had been drowned with him! But God decreed that I should be of the saved; so He threw in my way a piece of wood and I got astride of it, and the waters tossed me about till they cast me up on an island. I landed and walked about the island the rest of the night, and when the day broke, I saw a footway, leading to the mainland. By this time, the sun had risen; so I dried my clothes in its rays and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters. Then I set out and fared on till I reached the mainland and found myself but two hours' distant from the city. So I sat down to rest and presently I saw a great serpent, the bigness of a palm-tree, come fleeing towards me, with all her might, whilst her tongue for weariness hung from her mouth a span's length and swept the dust as she went. She was pursued by a dragon, as long and thin as a spear, which presently overtook her and seized her by the tail, whereat the tears streamed from her eyes and she wriggled from side to side. I took pity on her and catching up a stone, threw it at the dragon's head and killed him on the spot. Then the serpent spread a pair of wings and flew away out of sight, leaving me wondering. Now I was tired and drowsiness overcoming me, I slept where I was for a while. When I awoke, I found a damsel sitting at my feet, rubbing them, and with her, two black bitches, and I was ashamed before her; so I sat up and said to her, "O my sister, who art thou?" "How quickly thou hast forgotten me!" answered she. "I am the serpent, whom thou didst deliver from my enemy by killing him, for I am a Jinniyeh[1] and the dragon was a genie; and I was only saved from him by thy kindness. As soon as

[1] A female genie.

thou hadst done me this service, I flew on the wind to your ship and transported all that was therein to thy house. Then I sank the vessel and changed thy sisters into two black bitches, for I know all that has passed between thee and them: but as for the young man, he is drowned." So saying, she flew up with me and the two bitches and presently set us down on the roof of my house, where I found all the goods that were in my ship, nor was aught missing. Then she said to me, "By that which is written on the seal of our Lord Solomon (on whom be peace!) except thou give each of these bitches three hundred lashes every day, I will come and make thee like unto them." "I hear and obey," answered I; and since then I have never failed to beat them thus, O Commander of the Faithful, pitying them the while; and they know it is no fault of mine that they are beaten and accept my excuse. And this is my story.' The Khalif marvelled at her story and said to the portress, 'And thou, how camest thou by the weals on thy body?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she:

STORY OF THE PORTRESS.

'My father died and left me great wealth, and soon after his death I married one of the richest men of Baghdad. At the end of a year he too died and I inherited from him fourscore thousand dinars, being my lawful share of his property; so that I became passing rich and the report of my wealth spread abroad, for I got me half a score suits of clothes, each worth a thousand dinars. One day, as I was sitting alone, there came in to me an old woman with sunken cheeks and worn eyebrows, bleared eyes and broken teeth, blotched face and bald head, grizzled hair and bent and mangy body, running nose and sallow complexion, even as says the poet of the like of her:

A right pernicious hag! Unshriven be her sins, Nor let her mercy find what time she comes to die!
So full of wile she is, that with a single thread Of spider's silk she'd curb a thousand mules that shy.

She saluted me and kissing the ground before me, said, "I have an orphan daughter whose wedding and unveiling[1] I celebrate to-night. We are strangers in the city and know none of its inhabitants, and verily our hearts are broken; so do thou earn through us a recompense and reward in the world to come by being present at her unveiling. When the ladies of the city hear that thou art to be present, they also will attend, and so wilt thou bring healing to her spirit, for now she is broken-hearted and has none to look to but God the Most High." Then she wept and kissed my feet, repeating the following verses:

Thy presence honoureth us, and we Confess thy magnanimity:
If thou forsake us, there is none Can stand to us in stead of thee.

I was moved to pity for her and said, "I hear and obey; and God willing, I will do more than this for her, for she shall not be unveiled but in my clothes and ornaments and jewellery." At this the old woman rejoiced and fell at my feet and kissed them, saying, "God requite thee with good and gladden thy heart as thou hast gladdened mine! But, O my lady, do not trouble thyself now, but be ready against the evening, when I will come and fetch thee." So saying, she kissed my hand and went away, whilst I attired myself and made my preparations. At the appointed time, the old woman returned, smiling, and kissed my hand, saying, "O my mistress, the most part of the ladies of the city are assembled; and I told them that thou hadst promised to be present, whereat they rejoiced and they are now awaiting

[1] The unveiling or displaying of the bride before her husband is the culminating ceremony of a Muslim wedding of the better class. The bride is always displayed in the richest clothes and ornaments that can be mustered or borrowed for the occasion.

thee and are looking eagerly for thy coming." So I veiled myself and taking my serving-maids with me, followed the old woman, till we came to a street swept and watered, through which blew a pleasant breeze. Here she stopped at a handsome portico vaulted with marble and leading to a palace that rose from the ground and took hold upon the clouds. The gateway was hung with a black curtain and lighted by a lamp of gold curiously wrought; and on the door were written the following verses:

I am a dwelling, builded for delight; My time is still for joyance day and night.
Right in my midst a springing fountain wells, Whose waters banish anguish and despite,
Whose marge with rose, narcissus, camomile, Anemone and myrtle, is bedight.

The old woman knocked at the gate, which opened, and we entered a carpeted vestibule hung with lighted lamps and candles and adorned with pendants of precious stones and minerals. Through this we passed into a saloon, whose like is not to be found in the world, hung and carpeted with silken stuffs and lighted by hanging lamps and wax candles in rows. At the upper end stood a couch of juniper-wood, set with pearls and jewels and canopied with curtains of satin, looped up with pearls. Hardly had I taken note of all this, when there came out from the alcove a young lady more perfect than the moon at its full, with a forehead brilliant as the morning, when it shines forth, even as says the poet:

Upon the imperial necks she walks, a loveling bright, For bride-chambers of kings and emperors bedight.
The blossom of her cheek is red as dragon's blood, And all her face is flowered with roses red and white.
Slender and sleepy-eyed and languorous of gait, All manner loveliness is in her sweetest sight.
The locks upon her brow are like a troubled night, From out of which there shines a morning of delight.

She came down from the dais and said to me, "Welcome, a thousand times welcome to the dear and illustrious sister!" and she recited the following verses:

If the house knew who visits it, it would indeed rejoice And stoop to kiss the happy place whereon her feet have stood;
And in the voice with which the case, though mute, yet speaks, exclaim, "Welcome and many a welcome to the generous and good!"

Then she sat down and said to me, "O my sister, I have a brother, who is handsomer than I; and he saw thee at certain festivals and assemblies and fell passionately in love with thee, for that thou art possessed of beauty and grace beyond thy share. He heard that thou wast thine own mistress, even as he also is the head of his family, and wished to make thine acquaintance; wherefore he used this device to bring thee in company with me; for he desires to marry thee according to the law of God and His prophet, and there is no shame in what is lawful." When I heard what she said, I bethought me that I was fairly entrapped and answered, "I hear and obey." At this she was glad and clapped her hands, whereupon a door opened and out came the handsomest of young men, elegantly dressed and perfect in beauty and symmetry and winning grace, with eyebrows like a bended bow and eyes that ravished hearts with lawful enchantments, even as says a poet, describing the like of him:

His face is like unto the new moon's face With signs,[1] like pearls, of fortune and of grace.

And God bless him who said:

He hath indeed been blest with beauty and with grace, And blest be He who shaped and fashioned forth his face!
All rarest charms that be unite to make him fair; His witching loveliness distracts the human race.
Beauty itself hath set these words upon his brow, "Except this youth, there's none that's fair in any place."

[1] Moles?

When I looked at him, my heart inclined to him and I loved him; and he sat down by me and talked with me awhile. Presently the young lady clapped her hands a second time, and behold, a side door opened and there came out a Cadi and four witnesses, who saluted and sitting down, drew up the contract of marriage between me and the young man and retired. Then he turned to me and said, "May our night be blessed! O my mistress, I have a condition to lay on thee." Quoth I, "O my lord, what is it?" Whereupon he rose and fetching a copy of the Koran, said to me, "Swear to me that thou wilt never look upon another man than myself, nor incline to him." I did as he wished and he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and embraced me and my whole heart was taken with love of him. Presently they set food before us and we ate and drank, till we were satisfied and night closed in upon us. Then he took me and went to bed with me and ceased not to kiss and embrace me till the morning. I lived with him in all delight and happiness for a month, at the end of which time I asked his leave to go to the bazaar to buy certain stuffs that I wanted, and he gave me leave. So I veiled myself and taking with me the old woman and a serving-maid, went to the bazaar, where I sat down in the shop of a young merchant, whom the old woman knew and had recommended to me, saying, "The father of this young man died, when he was a boy, and left him great wealth: he has great store of goods, and thou wilt find what thou seekest with him, for none in the bazaar has finer stuffs than he." So she said to him, "Show this lady thy finest stuffs." And he answered, "I hear and obey." Then she began to sound his praises; but I said, "I have no concern with thy praises of him; all I want is to buy what I need of him and return home." So he brought me what I sought, and I offered him the price, but he refused to take it, saying, "It is a guest-gift to thee on the occasion

of thy visit to me this day." Then I said to the old woman, "If he will not take the money, give him back the stuff." "By Allah!" said he, "I will take nothing from thee! I make thee a present of it all, in return for one kiss; for that is more precious to me than all that is in my shop." Quoth the old woman, "What will a kiss profit thee?" Then she said to me, "O my daughter, thou hearest what this young man says. What harm will it do thee, if he take from thee a kiss and thou get the stuffs for nothing?" "Dost thou not know," answered I, "that I am bound by an oath?" But she said, "Hold thy tongue and let him kiss thee, and thou shalt keep thy money and no harm shall betide thee." And she ceased not to persuade me till I put my head into the noose and consented. So I veiled my eyes and held up the edge of my veil between me and the street, that the passers-by might not see me; and he put his mouth to my cheek under the veil. But, instead of kissing me, he bit me so hard that he tore the flesh of my cheek, and I swooned away. The old woman took me in her arms and when I came to myself, I found the shop shut up and her lamenting over me and saying, "Thank God it was no worse!" Then she said to me, "Come, take courage and let us go home, lest the thing get wind and thou be disgraced. When thou returnest, do thou feign sickness and lie down and cover thyself up, and I will bring thee a remedy that will soon heal the wound." So, after a while, I arose, full of fear and anxiety, and went little by little, till I came to the house, where I lay down and gave out that I was ill. When it was night, my husband came in to me and said, "O my lady, what has befallen thee in this excursion?" Quoth I, "I am not well: I have a pain in my head." Then he lighted a candle and drew near and looked at me and said, "What is that wound on thy cheek, in the soft part?" Said I, "When I went out to-day to buy stuffs, with thy leave, a camel laden

with fire-wood jostled me and the end of one of the pieces of wood tore my veil and wounded my cheek, as thou seest; for indeed the ways are strait in this city." "To-morrow," rejoined he, "I will go to the governor and speak to him, that he may hang every firewood-seller in the city." "God on thee," cried I, "do not burden thy conscience with such a sin against any one! The truth is that I was riding on an ass, and it stumbled and threw me down, and my cheek fell on a piece of glass, which wounded it." "Then," said he, "to-morrow I will go to Jaafer the Barmecide and tell him the case, and he will kill every ass in the city." "Wilt thou ruin all the folk on my account," said I, "when this that befell me was decreed of God?" "There is no help for it," answered he and springing to his feet, plied me with questions and pressed me, till I was frightened and stammered in my speech, so that he guessed how the case stood and exclaimed, "Thou hast been false to thine oath!" Then he gave a great cry, whereupon a door opened and in came seven black slaves, whom he commanded to drag me from my bed and throw me down in the middle of the room. Moreover, he made one take me by the shoulders and sit upon my head and another sit on my knees and hold my feet and giving a third a naked sword, said to him, "Strike her, O Saad, and cut her in twain and let each take half and throw it into the Tigris, that the fish may eat her, for this is the reward of her who breaks her oath and is unfaithful to her love." And he redoubled in wrath and repeated the following verses:

If any other share with me in her whom I adore, I'll root out passion
from my heart, though longing me destroy;
And I will say unto my soul, "Death is the better part;" For love is
naught that men with me in common do enjoy.

Then he said to the slave, "Smite her, O Saad!" Whereupon the latter bent down to me and said, "O my lady, repeat the profession of the faith and tell us if there be

aught thou wouldst have done, for thy last hour is come." "O good slave," said I, "grant me a little respite, that I may give thee my last injunctions." Then I raised my head and considered my case and how I had fallen from high estate into abjection; wherefore the tears streamed from my eyes and I wept passing sore. He looked at me with angry eyes and repeated the following verses:

Say unto her who wronged us, on whom our kisses tire, Her that hath chosen another for darling of desire,
Lo, we will spurn thee from us, before thou cast us off! That which is past between us suffices to our ire.

When I heard this, I wept and looked at him and repeated the following verses:

You doom my banishment from love and all unmoved remain; You rob my wounded lids of rest and sleep whilst I complain.
You make mine eyes familiar with watching and unrest; Yet can my heart forget you not, nor eyes from tears refrain.
You swore to me that you would keep, for aye, your plighted faith; But when my heart was yours, you broke the oath that you had ta'en.
Are you secure against the shifts of time and evil chance, That you've no mercy on my love nor aught of pity deign?
If I must die, I prithee, write, 'fore God, upon my tomb, "A slave of passion lieth here, who died of love in vain."
It may be one shall pass that way, who knows the pangs of love, And looking on a lover's grave, take pity on her pain.

Then I wept; and when he heard what I said and saw my tears, his anger redoubled, and he repeated the following verses:

I left the darling of my heart, not from satiety; But she had sinned a sin that called aloud for punishment.
She would have ta'en another in to share with me her love, But the religion of my heart to share will not consent.[1]

[1] There is a play upon words in this line, founded upon the double meaning of the word *shirk*, sharing (or partnership) and polytheism or the attributing partners or equals to God (as in the Trinity), the one unpardonable sin of the Muslim religious code.

Then I wept again and implored him, saying to myself, "I will work on him with words; so haply he may spare my life, though he take all I have." So I complained to him of my sufferings and repeated the following verses:

If thou indeed wert just to me, thou wouldst not take my life. Alas! against the law of Death no arbiter is there!
Thou layst upon my back the load of passion and desire, When I for weakness scarce can lift the very gown I wear!
That so my soul should waste away, small wonder is to me; But oh! I wonder how my flesh can thine estrangement bear.

Then I wept again, and he looked at me and reviled and reproached me, repeating the following verses:

Thou hast forgotten my love in the arms of another than me; Thou shew'st me estrangement, though I was never unfaithful to thee.
So I will cast thee away, since thou wast the first to forsake, And by thy pattern, content to live without thee will I be.
And (like thyself) in the arms of another thy charms I'll forget; 'Tis thou that hast sundered our loves: thou canst not reproach it to me.

Then he called to the slave with the sword, saying, "Cut her in half and rid us of her, for we have no profit of her." So the slave drew near to me and I gave myself up for lost and committed my affair to God the Most High; but, at this moment, in came the old woman and threw herself at my husband's feet and kissed them, saying, "O my son, for the sake of my fosterage of thee and my service to thee, spare this young lady, for indeed she has done nothing deserving of death. Thou art a very young man, and I fear lest her death be laid to thy count, for it is said, 'He who kills shall be killed.' As for this wretched woman, put her away from thee and from thy thought and heart." And she ceased not to weep and implore him, till he relented and said, "I pardon her, but I will set a mark on her that shall stay with her all her life." Then he made the slaves strip off my clothes and hold me down, and taking a rod of quince-wood, beat me with it on the back and sides, till I lost my senses

for excess of pain and despaired of life. Then he commanded the slaves, as soon as it was dark, to carry me back to the house in which I had lived before my marriage with him, taking the old woman with them to guide them. They did as he bade them and cast me down in my house and went away. I did not recover from my swoon till the morning, when I applied myself to the dressing of my wounds, and medicined myself and kept my bed for four months, at the end of which time my body healed and I was restored to health; but my sides still bore the marks of the blows, as thou hast seen. As soon as I could walk, I went to the house where all this had happened, but found the whole street pulled down and nothing but heaps of rubbish where the house had stood, nor could I learn how this had come about. Then I betook myself to this my half-sister and found with her these two black bitches. I saluted her and told her what had befallen me; and she said, "O my sister, who is safe from the vicissitudes of fortune? Praised be God, who hath brought thee off with thy life!" And she repeated the following verse:

Fortune indeed was ever thus: endure it patiently, Whether thou suffer loss of wealth or friends depart from thee.

Then she told me her own story, and we abode together, she and I, never mentioning the name of marriage. After a while there came to live with us this our other sister, the cateress, who goes out every day and buys what we require for the day and night. We led this life till yesterday, when our sister went out as usual and fell in with the porter. Presently we were joined by these three Calenders and later on by three respectable merchants from Tiberias, all of whom we admitted to our company on certain conditions, which they infringed. But we forgave them their breach of faith, on condition that they should give us an account of themselves; so they told us their stories and went away; and we heard nothing

more till this morning, when we were summoned to appear before thee; and this is our story.' The Khalif wondered at her story, and ordered it and those of her sister and the Calenders to be recorded in the archives of his reign and laid up in the royal treasury. Then he said to the eldest lady, 'Knowst thou where to find the Afriteh who enchanted thy sisters?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'she gave me some of her hair, saying, "When thou wouldst see me, burn one or two of these hairs, and I will be with thee presently, though I be behind the mountain Caf."' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bring me the hair.' So she fetched it and he threw the whole lock into the fire, whereupon the palace shook and they heard a rumbling sound of thunder, and presently the Jinniyeh appeared and saluted the Khalif, saying, 'Peace be upon thee, O vicar of God!' 'And on thee be peace,' answered he, 'and the mercy of God and His blessing!' Quoth she, 'Know that this lady did me a service for which I cannot enough requite her, in that she saved me from death and slew my enemy. Now I had seen how her sisters dealt with her and felt bound to avenge her on them. At first, I was minded to kill them, but I feared it would be grievous to her, so I turned them into bitches; and now, O Commander of the Faithful, if thou wouldst have me release them, I will do so, out of respect to thee and to her, for I am of the true believers.' 'Release them,' said the Khalif; 'and after we will proceed to look into the affair of the beaten lady, and if her account prove true, we will avenge her on him who wronged her.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I will release them forthwith and bring thee to the knowledge of him who maltreated this lady and took her property; and he is the nearest of all men to thee.' So saying, she took a cup of water and muttered over it and spoke words that might not be understood. Then she threw some of the

Night xix.

water in the faces of the bitches, saying, 'Return to your former human shape;' whereupon they were restored to their original form, and the Afriteh said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he who beat this lady is thy son El Amin,[1] brother of El Mamoun,[1] who heard of her beauty and grace and laid a trap for her and married her; and indeed he is not to blame for beating her, for he laid a condition on her and took of her a solemn oath that she would not do a certain thing; but she was false to her vow; and he was minded to kill her, but was restrained by the fear of God the Most High and contented himself with beating her, as thou hast seen, and sending her back to her own place.' When the Khalif heard this, he wondered greatly and said, 'Glory be to God, the Most High, the Supreme, who hath vouchsafed me the delivery of these two damsels from enchantment and torment and hath granted me to know the secret of this lady's history! By Allah, I will do a thing that shall be chronicled after me!' Then he summoned his son El Amin and questioned him of the story of the portress, and he told him the truth; whereupon the Khalif sent for Cadis and witnesses and married the eldest lady and her two sisters-german to the three Calenders, whom he made his chamberlains, appointing them stipends and all that they needed and lodging them in his palace at Baghdad. Moreover, he returned the beaten girl to her husband, his son El Amin, renewing the marriage contract between them, and gave her great wealth and bade rebuild the house more handsomely than before. As for himself, he took to wife the cateress and lay with her that night; and on the morrow he assigned her a separate lodging in his seraglio, with a fixed allowance and serving-maids to wait on her; and the people marvelled at his equity and magnificence and generosity.

[1] Both afterwards Khalifs.

When Shehrzad had made an end of her story, Dunyazad said to her, "By Allah, this is indeed a pleasant and delightful story, never was heard its like! But now, O my sister, tell us another story, to beguile the rest of the waking hours of our night." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad, "if the King give me leave." And he said, "Tell thy story, and that quickly." Then said she, "They say, O King of the age and lord of the time and the day, that

THE THREE APPLES.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid summoned his Vizier Jaafer one night and said to him, 'I have a mind to go down into the city and question the common people of the conduct of the officers charged with its government; and those of whom they complain, we will depose, and those whom they commend, we will advance.' Quoth Jaafer, 'I hear and obey.' So the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour went down into the town and walked about the streets and markets till, as they were passing through a certain alley, they came upon an old man walking along at a leisurely pace, with a fishing-net and a basket on his head and a staff in his hand, and heard him repeat the following verses:

They tell me I shine, by my wisdom and wit, Midst the rest of my kind, as the moon in the night.
"A truce to your idle discourses!" I cry. "What's knowledge, indeed, unattended by might?"
If you offered me, knowledge and wisdom and all, With my inkhorn and papers, in pawn for a mite,
To buy one day's victual, the pledge they'd reject And cast, like an unread petition, from sight.
How sorry, indeed, is the case of the poor, And his life, what a load of chagrin and despite!
In summer, he's pinched for a living and cowers O'er the fire-pot, in winter, for warmth and for light.

The curs of the street dog his heels, as he goes, And the scurviest rascal may rail at the wight.
If he lift up his voice to complain of his case, He finds not a soul who will pity his plight.
Since such is the life and the lot of the poor, It were better he lay in the graveyard forthright!

When the Khalif heard this, he said to Jaafer, 'See yonder poor man and note his verses, for they show his necessity.' Then he went up to him and said, 'O old man, what is thy trade?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I am a fisherman, with a family to maintain; and I have been out since mid-day, but God has not vouchsafed me aught wherewith to feed them, and indeed I abhor myself and wish for death.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Wilt thou go back with me to the Tigris and cast thy net yet once more on my account, and I will buy of thee whatever comes up for a hundred dinars?' 'On my head be it!' answered the fisherman joyfully. 'I will go back with you.' So he returned with them to the river-bank and cast his net and waited awhile, then drew it up and found in it a chest, locked and heavy. The Khalif lifted it and found it weighty; so he gave the fisherman a hundred dinars, and he went his way; whilst Mesrour carried the chest to the palace, where he set it down before the Khalif and lighted the candles. Then Jaafer and Mesrour broke open the chest and found in it a basket of palm-leaves, sewn together with red worsted. This they cut open and found within a bundle wrapped in a piece of carpet. Under the carpet was a woman's veil and in this a young lady, as she were an ingot of silver, slain and cut in pieces. When the Khalif saw this, he was sore enraged and afflicted; the tears ran down his cheeks and he turned to Jaafer and said, 'O dog of a Vizier, shall folk be murdered in my capital city and thrown into the river and their death laid to my account on the Day of Judgment? I must avenge

this woman on her murderer and put him to death without mercy! And as surely as I am descended from the sons of Abbas, an thou bring me not him who slew her, that I may do her justice on him, I will hang thee and forty of thy kinsmen at the gate of my palace!' Quoth Jaafer, 'Grant me three days' respite.' And the Khalif said, 'I grant thee this.' So Jaafer went out from before him and returned to his house, full of sorrow and saying to himself, 'How shall I find him who killed the damsel, that I may bring him before the Khalif? If I bring other than the right man, it will be laid to my charge by God. Indeed, I know not what to do.' Then he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day, the Khalif sent one of his chamberlains for him and said to him, 'Where is the murderer of the damsel?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Vizier, 'am I inspector of murdered folk, that I should know who killed her?' The Khalif was enraged at his answer and commanded to hang him before his palace-gate and that proclamation should be made in the streets of Baghdad, 'Whoso hath a mind to witness the hanging of Jaafer the Barmecide, Vizier of the Khalif, and of forty of his kin, before the gate of the Khalif's palace, let him come out to see!' So the people came out from all quarters to witness the execution of Jaafer and his kinsmen, not knowing the reason. Then they set up the gallows and made Jaafer and the others stand underneath in readiness; but whilst they awaited the Khalif's signal for the execution and the people wept for Jaafer and his kinsmen, behold, a handsome and well-dressed young man, with shining face and bright black eyes, flower-white forehead, downy whiskers and rosy cheeks and a mole like a grain of ambergris, pressed through the crowd, till he stood before Jaafer and said to him, 'I come to deliver thee from this strait, O chief of the Amirs and refuge of the poor! I am he who killed the woman ye found in the

chest; so hang me for her and do her justice on me.' When Jaafer heard this, he rejoiced at his own deliverance, but grieved for the young man; and whilst they were yet talking, behold, a man far advanced in years made his way through the crowd, till he came to Jaafer and the youth, when he saluted them and said, 'O Vizier and noble lord, credit not what this young man says. None killed the damsel but I; so do thou avenge her on me, or I will accuse thee before God the Most High.' Then said the youth, 'O Vizier, this is a doting old man, who knows not what he says: it was I killed her, so do thou avenge her on me.' 'O my son,' said the old man, 'thou art young and desirest the things of the world, and I am old and weary of the world. I will ransom thee and the Vizier and his kinsmen with my life. None killed the damsel but I; so God on thee, make haste to hang me, for there is no living for me after her!' The Vizier marvelled at all this and taking the youth and the old man, carried them before the Khalif and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I bring thee the murderer of the damsel.' 'Where is he?' asked the Khalif; and Jaafer answered, 'This youth says he killed her, but this old man gives him the lie and affirms that he himself killed her: and behold, they are both in thy hands.' The Khalif looked at them and said, 'Which of you killed the damsel?' The youth replied, 'It was I.' And the old man, 'Indeed, none killed her but myself.' Then the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Take them and hang them both.' But the Vizier replied, 'If one of them be the murderer, to hang the other were unjust.' 'By him who vaulted the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet,' cried the youth, 'it was I killed her!' And he set forth the circumstance of her death and how they had found her body, so that the Khalif was certified that he was the murderer, whereat he wondered and said to him, 'Why

didst thou slay the damsel wrongfully and what made thee come and accuse thyself thus and confess thy crime without being beaten?' 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the young man, 'that this damsel was my wife and the daughter of this old man, who is my father's brother, and she was a virgin when I married her. God blessed me with three male children by her, and she loved me and served me, and I also loved her with an exceeding love and saw no evil in her. We lived happily together till the beginning of this month, when she fell grievously ill. I fetched the doctors to her and she recovered slowly; and I would have had her take a bath; but she said, "There is something I long for, before I go to the bath." "What is it?" asked I, and she replied, "I have a longing for an apple, that I may smell it and bite a piece of it." So I went out into the city at once and sought for apples, but could find none, though, had they been a dinar apiece, I would have bought them. I was vexed at this and went home and said to my wife, "By Allah, my cousin, I can find none." She was distressed, being yet weak, and her weakness increased greatly on her that night, and I passed the night full of anxiety. As soon as it was day, I went out again and made the round of the gardens, but could find no apples anywhere. At last I met an old gardener, of whom I enquired for them, and he said to me, "O my son, this fruit is rare with us and is not now to be found but in the garden of the Commander of the Faithful at Bassora, where the gardener keeps them for the Khalif's table." I returned home, troubled at my ill-success, and my love and concern for her moved me to undertake the journey to Bassora. So I set out and travelled thither and bought three apples of the gardener there for three dinars, with which I returned to Baghdad, after having been absent fifteen days and nights, going and coming. I went in to my wife and

gave her the apples; but she took no pleasure in them and let them lie by her side; for weakness and fever had increased on her and did not leave her for ten days, at the end of which time she began to mend. So I left the house and went to my shop, where I sat buying and selling. About midday a great ugly black slave came into the bazaar, having in his hand one of the three apples, with which he was playing; so I called to him and said, "Prithee, good slave, tell me whence thou hadst that apple, that I may get the fellow to it." He laughed and answered, "I had it of my mistress; for I had been absent and on my return I found her lying ill, with three apples by her side: and she told me that the cuckold her husband had made a journey for them to Bassora, where he had bought them for three dinars. So I ate and drank with her and took this one from her." When I heard this, the world grew black in my eyes, and I rose and shut my shop and went home, beside myself for excess of rage. I looked for the apples and finding but two of them, said to my wife, "Where is the third apple?" Quoth she, "I know not what is come of it." This convinced me of the truth of the slave's story, so I took a knife and coming behind her, without word said, got up on her breast and cut her throat; after which I hewed her in pieces and wrapping her in her veil and a piece of carpet, sewed the whole up hurriedly in the basket. Then I put the basket in the chest and locking it up, set it on my mule and threw it into the Tigris with my own hands. So, God on thee, O Commander of the Faithful, make haste to hang me, for I fear lest she sue for vengeance on me at the Day of Resurrection! For when I had thrown her into the river, unknown of any, I returned home and found my eldest boy weeping, though he knew not what I had done with his mother; and I said to him, "Why dost thou weep, my son?" He replied, "I took one of my mother's apples and went down with it into the

street, to play with my brothers, when lo, a tall black slave snatched it from my hand, saying, 'Whence hadst thou this?' Quoth I, 'My father journeyed to Bassora for it and brought it to my mother, who is ill, with two other apples for which he paid three dinars. Give it back to me and do not get me into trouble for it.' He paid no heed to my words and I demanded the apple a second and a third time; but he beat me and went away with it. I was afraid that my mother would beat me on account of the apple; so for fear of her, I went without the city with my brothers and abode there until night closed in upon us, and indeed I am in fear of her: so by Allah, O my father, say nothing to her of this, or it will add to her illness." When I heard what the child said, I knew that the slave was he who had forged a lie against my wife and was certified that I had killed her wrongfully. So I wept sore, and presently, this old man, her father, came in and I told him what had passed; and he sat down by my side and wept and we ceased not weeping half the night. This was five days ago and from that time to this, we have never ceased to bewail her and mourn for her, sorrowing sore for that she was unjustly put to death. All this came of the lying story of the slave, and this was the manner of my killing her; so I conjure thee, by the honour of thy forefathers, make haste to kill me and do her justice on me, for there is no living for me after her.' The Khalif wondered at his story and said, 'By Allah, the young man is excusable, and I will hang none but the accursed slave!' Then he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me the accursed slave, who was the cause of this calamity; and if thou bring him not in three days, thou shalt suffer in his stead.' And Jaafer went out, weeping and saying, 'Verily, I am beset by deaths; the pitcher does not come off for aye unbroken. I can do nothing in this matter; but He who saved me the first time may save me again. By

Night xx.

Allah, I will not leave my house during the three days that remain to me, and God who is the Truth shall do what He will.' So he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day, he summoned Cadis and witnesses and made his last dispositions and bade farewell to his children, weeping. Presently in came a messenger from the Khalif and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful is beyond measure wroth and sends to seek thee and swears that the day shall not pass without thy being hanged.' When Jaafer heard this, he wept and his children and slaves and all that were in the house wept with him. Then they brought him his little daughter, that he might bid her farewell. Now he loved her more than all his other children; so he pressed her to his breast and kissed her and wept over his separation from her; when lo, he felt something round in her bosom and said to her, 'What is this in thy bosom?' 'O my father,' answered she, 'it is an apple with the name of our Lord the Khalif written on it. Our slave Rihan brought it to me four days ago and would not let me have it, till I gave him two dinars for it.' When Jaafer heard this, he put his hand into her bosom and took out the apple and knew it and rejoiced, saying, 'O swift Dispeller of trouble!'[1] Then he sent for the slave and said to him, 'Harkye, Rihan, whence hadst thou this apple?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' replied he, 'though lying might get me off, yet is it safer to tell the truth![2] I did not steal it from thy palace nor from the palace of His Highness nor the garden of the Commander of the Faithful. The fact is that some days ago, I was passing along a certain alley of this city, when I saw some children playing and this apple in the hand of one of them. So I snatched it from him, and he wept and said, "O youth, this apple is my mother's and she is ill. She longed for apples, and my

[1] *i.e.* God. [2] *lit.* "though lying save, yet truth saves and saves."

father journeyed to Bassora and bought her three for three dinars, and I took one of them to play with." But I paid no heed to what he said and beat him and went off with the apple and sold it to my little mistress for two dinars.' When Jaafer heard this, he wondered that the death of the damsel and all this misery should have been caused by his slave and grieved for the relation of the slave to himself, whilst rejoicing over his own delivery: and he repeated the following verses:

If through a servant misfortune befall thee, Spare not to save thine own life at his cost.
Servants in plenty thou'lt find to replace him, Life for life never, once it is lost.

Then he carried the slave to the Khalif, to whom he related the whole story; and the Khalif wondered greatly and laughed till he fell backward and ordered the story to be recorded and published among the folk. Then said Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wonder not at this story, for it is not more marvellous than that of Noureddin Ali of Cairo and his son Bedreddin Hassan.' 'What is that?' asked the Khalif; 'and how can it be more marvellous than this story?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'I will not tell it thee except thou pardon my slave.' Quoth the Khalif, 'If it be indeed more marvellous that that of the three apples, I grant thee thy slave's life; but if not, I will kill him.' 'Know, then, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'that

NOUREDDIN ALI OF CAIRO AND HIS SON BEDREDDIN HASSAN.

There was once in the land of Egypt a just and pious King, who loved the poor and companied with the learned; and he had a Vizier, a wise and experienced man, well versed in affairs and in the art of government. This Vizier, who was a very old man, had two sons, as they

were two moons, never was seen their like for beauty and grace, the elder called Shemseddin Mohammed and the younger Noureddin Ali; but the younger excelled his brother in comeliness and fair favour, so that folk heard of him in distant lands and journeyed to Egypt to get sight of him. After a while the Vizier died, to the great grief of the Sultan, who sent for his two sons and invested them with robes of honour, saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for you shall stand in your father's stead and be joint Viziers of Egypt." At this they were glad and kissed the earth before him and mourned for their father a whole month, at the end of which time they entered upon the Vizierate and the government passed into their hands, as it had been in those of their father, each ruling for a week at a time. Whenever the Sultan went on a journey, they took it in turns to accompany him; and the two brothers lived in one house, and there was perfect accord between them. It chanced, one night, that the Sultan purposed setting out on a journey on the morrow and the elder, whose turn it was to attend him, was sitting talking with his brother and said to him, "O my brother, it is my wish that we both marry and go in to our wives on the same night." "O my brother," replied Noureddin, "do as thou wilt; I will conform to thee." So they agreed upon this and Shemseddin said, "If it be the will of God that we both marry on the same night and our wives be brought to bed on the same day and thy wife bear a boy and mine a girl, we will marry the children to one another, for they will be cousins." "O my brother," asked Noureddin, "What dowry wilt thou require of my son for thy daughter?" Quoth the other, "I will have of him three thousand dinars and three gardens and three farms, for it would not be fitting that he bring her a smaller dowry than this." When Noureddin heard this, he said, "What dowry is this thou wouldst impose on my

son? Knowest thou not that we are brothers and both by God's grace Viziers and equal in rank? It behoves thee to offer thy daughter to my son, without dowry: or if thou must have a dower, it should be something of nominal value, for mere show; for thou knowest the male to be more worthy than the female; and my son is a male, and our memory will be preserved by him, not by thy daughter: but I see thou wouldst do with me according to the saying, 'If thou wouldst drive away a purchaser, ask him a high price;' or as did one, who, being asked by a friend to do him a favour, replied, 'In the name of God; I will comply with thy request, but not till to-morrow.' Whereupon the other answered him with this verse:

'When one, of whom a favour's asked, postpones it till next day, 'Tis, to a man who knows the world, as if he said him nay.'"

Quoth Shemseddin, "Verily, thou errest in that thou wouldst make thy son more worthy than my daughter and it is plain that thou lackest both judgment and manners. Thou talkest of thy share in the Vizierate, when I only admitted thee to share with me, in pity for thee, not wishing to mortify thee, and that thou mightest help me. But since thou talkest thus, by Allah, I will not marry my daughter to thy son, though thou pay down her weight in gold!" When Noureddin heard this, he was angry and said, "And I, I will never marry my son to thy daughter." "I would not accept him as a husband for her," answered the other; "and were I not bound to attend the Sultan on his journey, I would make an example of thee: but when I return, I will let thee see what my dignity demands." When Noureddin heard this speech from his brother, he was beside himself for rage, but held his peace and stifled his vexation; and each passed the night in his own place, full of wrath against the other. As soon as it was day, the Sultan went out to Ghizeh and made for the Pyramids, accompanied by the Vizier Shemseddin,

whilst Noureddin arose, sore enraged, and prayed the morning-prayer. Then he went to his treasury, and taking a small pair of saddle-bags, filled them with gold. And he called to mind his brother's words and the contempt with which he had treated him and repeated the following verses:

Travel, for you shall find new friends in place of those you leave, And labour, for in toil indeed the sweets of life reside.
Nor gain nor honour comes to him who idly stays at home; So leave thy native land behind and journey far and wide.
Oft have I seen a stagnant pool corrupt with standing still; If water run, 'tis sweet, but else grows quickly putrefied.
If the full moon were always high and never waned nor set, Men would not strain their watchful eyes for it at every tide.
Except the arrow leave the bow, 'twill never hit the mark, Nor will the lion chance on prey, if in the copse he bide.
The aloes in its native land a kind of firewood is, And precious metals are but dust whilst in the mine they hide.
The one is sent abroad and grows more precious straight than gold; The other's brought to light and finds its value magnified.

Then he bade one of his people saddle him his mule with a padded saddle. Now she was a dapple mule, high-backed, like a dome builded upon columns; her saddle was of cloth of gold and her stirrups of Indian steel, her housings of Ispahan velvet, and she was like a bride on her wedding-night. Moreover, he bade lay on her back a carpet of silk and strap the saddle-bags on that and spread a prayer-rug over the whole. The man did as he bade him and Noureddin said to his servants, "I have a mind to ride out a-pleasuring towards Kelyoubiyeh, and I shall lie three nights abroad; but let none of you follow me, for my heart is heavy." Then he mounted the mule in haste and set out from Cairo, taking with him a little victual, and made for the open country. About mid-day, he reached the town of Belbeys, where he alighted and rested himself and the mule. Then he took out food and ate and fared on again

in the direction of the desert, after having bought victual and fodder for the mule in the town. Towards nightfall, he came to a town called Saadiyeh, where he alighted and took out food and ate, then spread the carpet on the ground and laying the saddle-bags under his head, slept in the open air, for he was still overcome with anger. As soon as it was day, he mounted and rode onward, till he reached the city of Jerusalem and thence to Aleppo, where he alighted at one of the khans and abode three days, to rest himself and the mule. Then, being still intent upon travel, he mounted and setting out again, he knew not whither, journeyed on without ceasing, till he reached the city of Bassora, where he alighted at a certain khan and spread out his prayer-carpet, after having taken the saddle-bags off the mule's back and given her to the porter that he might walk her about. As chance would have it, the Vizier of Bassora, who was a very old man, was sitting at a window of his palace opposite the khan and saw the porter walking the mule up and down. He remarked her costly trappings and took her to be a mule of parade, of such as are ridden by kings and viziers. This set him thinking and he became perplexed and said to one of his servants, "Bring me yonder porter." So the servant went and returned with the porter, who kissed the ground before the Vizier; and the latter said to him, "Who is the owner of that mule, and what manner of man is he?" "O my lord," replied the porter, "he is a comely young man of the sons of the merchants, grave and dignified of aspect." When the Vizier heard this, he rose at once and mounting his horse, rode to the khan and went in to Noureddin, who, seeing him making towards himself, rose and went to meet him and saluted him. The Vizier bade him welcome to Bassora and dismounting, embraced him and made him sit down by his side and said to him, "O my son, whence comest thou and what dost thou seek?" "O my lord," answered Noureddin,

"I come from the city of Cairo;" and told him his story from beginning to end, saying, "I am resolved not to return home, till I have seen all the towns and countries of the world." When the Vizier heard this, he said to him, "O my son, follow not the promptings of thy soul, lest they bring thee into peril; for indeed the lands are waste and I fear the issues of Fortune for thee." Then he let load the saddle-bags and the carpets on the mule and carried Noureddin to his own house, where he lodged him in a pleasant place and made much of him, for he had conceived a great affection for him. After a while, he said to him, "O my son, I am an old man and have no male child, but God has given me a daughter who is thy match for beauty, and I have refused many suitors for her hand. But love of thee has got hold upon my heart; so wilt thou accept of my daughter to thine handmaid and be her husband? If thou consent to this, I will carry thee to the Sultan of Bassora and tell him that thou art my brother's son and bring thee to be appointed Vizier in my stead, that I may keep the house, for, by Allah, O my son, I am a very old man and I am weary." When Noureddin heard the Vizier's proposal, he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and answered, "I hear and obey." At this the Vizier rejoiced and bade his servants decorate the great hall, in which they were wont to celebrate the marriages of nobles. Then he assembled his friends and the notables of the kingdom and the merchants of Bassora and said to them, "I had a brother who was Vizier in Cairo, and God vouchsafed him two sons, whilst to me, as you know, He has given a daughter. My brother proposed to me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, to which I consented; and when my daughter came at a marriageable age, he sent me one of his sons, this young man now present, to whom I purpose now to marry her, for he is better than a stranger, and that he shall go in to her in my house this night.

After, if he please, he shall abide with me, or if he please, he shall return with his wife to his father." The guests replied, "It is well seen of thee." And they looked at Noureddin and were pleased with him. So the Vizier sent for Cadis and witnesses, and they drew up the marriage contract; after which the servants perfumed the guests with incense and sprinkled rose-water on them, and they drank sherbet of sugar and went away. Then the Vizier bade his servants take Noureddin to the bath and sent him a suit of the best of his own clothes, besides cups and napkins and perfume-burners and all else that he required. So he went to the bath and when he came out and put on the suit, he was like the moon on the night of her full. Then he mounted his mule and returning to the Vizier's palace, went in to the latter and kissed his hands. The Vizier welcomed him and said to him, "Arise, go in to thy wife this night, and to-morrow I will carry thee to the Sultan; and I pray God to bless thee with all manner of good!" So Noureddin left him and went in to his wife, the Vizier's daughter. Night xxi.

To return to his brother Shemseddin. When he came back to Cairo, after having been absent awhile with the Sultan, he missed his brother and enquired of his servants, who said, "On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, thy brother mounted his mule, caparisoned as for state, saying, 'I am going towards El Kelyoubiyeh and shall be absent a day or two, for I am heavy of heart; and let none follow me.' Then he rode away, and from that time to this we have heard nothing of him." Shemseddin was concerned at his brother's absence and became exceedingly uneasy, when he found that he did not return, and said to himself, "This is because I spoke harshly to him that night and he has taken it to heart and gone away: but I must send after him." Then he went in to the King and acquainted him with what had happened, and he wrote letters and despatched couriers to his deputies in every

province; but after awhile they returned without having been able to come at any news of Noureddin, who had by this time reached Bassora. So Shemseddin despaired of finding his brother and said, "Indeed, I went beyond all bounds in what I said to him, with reference to the marriage of our children. Would it had not been so! This all comes of my lack of sense and judgment." Soon after this he sought in marriage the daughter of a merchant of Cairo and took her to wife and went in to her (as it happened by the will of God the Most High, that so He might carry out what He had decreed to His creatures) on the very night on which Noureddin went in to the Vizier's daughter of Bassora. Moreover, it was as the two brothers had said; for their wives conceived by them and were brought to bed on the same day, the wife of Shemseddin of a daughter, never was seen in Cairo a fairer than she, and the wife of Noureddin of a son, than whom a handsomer was never seen in his time. They named the boy Bedreddin Hassan, and his grandfather, the Vizier of Bassora, rejoiced in him and gave feasts and public entertainments, as for the birth of a king's son. Then he took Noureddin and went up with him to the Sultan. When Noureddin came in presence of the King, he kissed the ground before him and repeated the following verses; for he was facile of speech, firm of soul and abounding in good parts and natural gifts:

May all delights of life attend thee, O my lord, And mayst thou live as long as night and morning be!
Lo! when men's tongues recall thy magnanimity, The age doth leap for joy and Time claps hands for glee.

The Sultan rose to receive them and after thanking Noureddin for his compliment, asked the Vizier who he was. The Vizier replied, "This is my brother's son." And the Sultan said, "How comes it that we have never heard of him?" "O my lord the Sultan," answered the Vizier,

"Know that my brother was Vizier in Egypt and died, leaving two sons, whereof the elder became Vizier in his father's stead and the younger, whom thou seest, came to me. I had sworn that I would give my daughter in marriage to none but him; so when he came, I married him to her. Now he is young and I am old; my hearing grows dull and my judgment fails; wherefore I pray our lord the Sultan to make him Vizier in my room, for he is my brother's son and the husband of my daughter, and he is apt for the Vizierate, being a man of sense and judgment." The Sultan looked at Noureddin and was pleased with him, so granted the Vizier's request and appointed him to the Vizierate, presenting him with a splendid dress of honour and one of his choicest mules and allotting him stipends and allowances. Noureddin kissed the Sultan's hands and went home, he and his father-in-law, rejoicing greatly and saying, "This is of the good fortune of the new-born Hassan." Next day he presented himself before the King and repeated the following verses:

New favours attend thee each day of thy life, And fortune to counter the craft of thy foes!
May thy days with God's favour be white to the end, And black be their days with misfortune and woes!

The Sultan commanded him to sit in the Vizier's place; so he sat down and applied himself to the business of his office, examining into the folk's affairs and giving judgment on their suits, after the usage of Viziers, whilst the Sultan watched him and wondered at his wit and good sense and judgment: wherefore he loved him and took him into favour. When the Divan broke up, Noureddin returned to his house and related what had passed to his father-in-law, who rejoiced. Thenceforward Noureddin ceased not so to apply himself to the duties of the Vizierate, that he left not the Sultan day or night and the latter increased his stipends and allowances till he

amassed great wealth and became the owner of ships, that made trading voyages for his hand, as well as of slaves and servants, black and white, and laid out many estates and made irrigation-works and planted gardens. When his son Hassan was four years old, his father-in-law, the old Vizier, died, and he buried him with great pomp. Then he occupied himself with the education of his son and when he came to the age of seven, he brought him a doctor of the law, to teach him in his own house, and charged him to give him a good education and teach him good manners. So the tutor taught the boy to read and all manner of useful knowledge, after he had spent some years in committing the Koran to memory; and he grew in stature and beauty and symmetry, even as says the poet:

The moon in the heaven of his grace shines full and fair to see, And the sun of the morning glows in his cheeks' anemones.
He's such a compend of beauties, meseems, indeed, from him The world all beauty borrows that lives in lands and seas.

The professor brought him up in his father's palace, and all his years of youth he never left the house, till one day his father clad him in his richest clothes, and mounting him on one of the best of his mules, carried him to the Sultan, who was struck with his beauty and loved him. As for the people of the city, when he passed through the streets on his way to the palace, they were dazzled with his loveliness and sat down in the road, awaiting his return, that they might gaze their fill on his beauty and grace and symmetry. The Sultan made much of the boy and bade his father bring him with him, whenever his affairs called him to the palace. Noureddin replied, "I hear and obey," and ceased not to carry him to the Sultan's court, till he reached the age of fifteen, when his father sickened and calling his son, said to him, "Know, O my son, that this world is but a temporary abode, whilst the next is an

eternal one. Before I die, I wish to give thee certain last injunctions, so pay heed to my words and set thy mind to understand them." Then he gave him certain advice as to the proper way of dealing with folk and the conduct of his affairs; after which he called to mind his brother and his native land and wept for his separation from those he loved. Then he wiped away his tears and turning to his son, said to him, "Before I proceed to my parting exhortations, thou must know that thou hast an uncle who is Vizier in Cairo, and I left him and went away without his consent." Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote therein all that had happened to him from the day of the dispute, together with the dates of his marriage and going in to the Vizier's daughter and the birth of his son; after which he folded and sealed the paper and gave it to his son, saying, "Keep this paper carefully, for in it is written thy rank and lineage and origin, and if any mishap befall thee, go to Cairo and ask for thine uncle and give him this and tell him that I died in a foreign land, full of longing for him." So Bedreddin took the paper and wrapping it in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it into the lining of his skull cap and wound the muslin of his turban over it, weeping the while at the thought of losing his father, whilst himself but a boy. Then said Noureddin, "I have five behests to lay on thee; and the first is that thou be not too familiar with any one, neither frequent him nor foregather with him over-much; so shalt thou be safe from his mischief; for in retirement is safety, and I have heard it said by a poet:

There is no man in all the world, whose love is worth thy trust, No friend who, if fate play thee false, will true and constant be.
Wherefore I'd have thee live apart and lean for help on none. In this, I give thee good advice; so let it profit thee.

Secondly, O my son, oppress no one, lest Fortune oppress thee; for the fortune of this world is one day

for thee and another against thee, and its goods are but a loan to be repaid. As I have heard a poet say:

Be slow to move and hasten not to snatch thy heart's desire; Be merciful to all, as thou on mercy reckonest;
For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it, And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he oppress.

Thirdly, preserve silence and let thy faults distract thee from those of other men: for it is said that in silence is safety; and thereon I have heard the following verses:

Silence is fair and safety lies in taciturnity. So, when thou speak'st, I counsel thee, give not thy tongue the rein.
Since, for one time that thou repent the having held thy tongue, Thou shalt of having spoke repent again and yet again.

Fourthly, O my son, beware of drinking wine, for wine is the root of all evils and the thief of wit. Guard thyself from it, for the poet says:

Wine and the drinkers of wine I have put away, And am become of those that of it mis-say.
For wine indeed diverts from the road of right, And to all kinds of evil opens the way.

Lastly, O my son, keep thy wealth, that it may keep thee, and watch over it, that it may watch over thee. Squander not thy substance, or thou wilt come to need the meanest of folk. Guard well thy money, for it is a sovereign salve for the wounds of life, even as says the poet:

If wealth should fail, there is no friend will bear thee company, But whilst thy substance still abounds, all men are friends to thee.
How many a foe for money's sake hath companied with me! But when wealth failed beneath my hand, my dearest friend did flee."

And Noureddin ceased not to exhort his son till his spirit departed and his house became the abode of mourning. The King and all the Amirs grieved for him and buried him; but Bedreddin ceased not to bewail his father for two whole months, during which time he never left the house, nor did he attend the Divan or present himself

before the Sultan. At last the latter became wroth with him and made one of his chamberlains Vizier in his stead and bade him seize on all Noureddin's houses and goods and possessions and seal them up. So the new Vizier went forth to do this and take Bedreddin Hassan and bring him before the Sultan, that he might deal with him as he thought fit. Now there was among the troops one who had been a servant of the deceased Vizier, and when he heard this order, he spurred his steed and rode at full speed to Bedreddin's house, where he found him sitting at the gate, with downcast head, broken-hearted. So he dismounted and kissing his hand, said to him, "O my lord and son of my lord, hasten, ere destruction light on thee!" When Bedreddin heard this, he trembled and said, "What is the matter?" "The Sultan is wroth with thee," answered the other, "and has given orders for thine arrest, and calamity follows hard upon me; so flee for thy life." Quoth Bedreddin, "Is there time for me to go in and take somewhat to stand me in stead in my strangerhood?" But the other answered, "O my lord, rise at once and save thyself, whilst it is yet time, and leave thy house." So Bedreddin covered his face with his skirt and went out and walked on till he came without the city. On his way, he heard the people saying that the Sultan had sent the new Vizier to the late Vizier's house, to seize on his possessions and take his son Bedreddin Hassan and bring him before him, that he might put him to death, and they grieved for him by reason of his beauty and grace. When he heard this, he fled forth at hazard, not knowing whither, and chance led him to the cemetery where his father was buried. So he passed among the tombs, till he came to his father's sepulchre and entering, sat down and let fall from over his head the skirt of his cassock, which was made of brocade, with the following lines embroidered in gold on the hem:

Thou, whose face with the rainbow might vie, That art bright as the stars of the sky,
May thy fortune ne'er fail to be fair And thy glory for ever be high!

As he sat by his father's tomb, there came up a Jew, as he were a money-changer, with a pair of saddle-bags full of gold, and accosted him, saying, "Whither away, O my lord? It is near the end of the day and thou art lightly clad and bearest the marks of chagrin on thy countenance." "I was asleep but now," answered Bedreddin, "when my father appeared to me and reproached me for not having visited his tomb, and I awoke, trembling, and came hither at once, fearing lest the day should pass, without my paying him a visit, which would have been grievous to me." "O my lord," said the Jew, "thy father had many ships at sea, whereof some are now due; and it is my wish to buy of thee the cargo of the first that comes into port for a thousand dinars." "I will well," answered Bedreddin; whereupon the Jew took out a purse of gold and counted out a thousand dinars, which he gave to Bedreddin, saying, "Write me an acknowledgment and seal it." So Bedreddin took pen and paper and wrote the following in double: "The writer, Bedreddin Hassan, son of the Vizier Noureddin of Bassora, has sold to Isaac the Jew all the cargo of the first of his father's ships that comes into port, at the price of a thousand dinars, which he has received in advance." Then he gave one copy to the Jew, who took it and went away, and put the other in the purse, which he thrust into his waistcloth. And he bethought him of his former estate of honour and consideration and wept and repeated the following verses:

Home is no longer home to me, now ye are gone away, Nor are the neighbours neighbours now, after our parting-day.
The comrade, whom I loved whilere, no more a comrade is, And even the very sun and moon, no longer bright are they.
Ye went away and all the world was saddened for your loss, And all the hills and plains grew dark with sorrow and dismay.

O that the raven of ill-luck, that croaked our parting hour, May lose his plumes nor find a nest in which his head to lay!
My patience fails me for desire, my body wasteth sore: How many a veil the hands of death and parting rend in tway!
I wonder, will our happy nights come ever back again, Or one house hold us two once more, after the olden way!

Then he wept sore and laying his head on his father's tomb, remained plunged in melancholy thought, till drowsiness overcame him and he fell asleep. He slept on till the moon rose, when his head rolled off the tomb and he lay on his back, with his face gleaming in the moon. Now the cemetery was haunted by true-believing Jinn, and presently a Jinniyeh came out and seeing Bedreddin lying asleep, marvelled at his beauty and grace and said, "Glory be to God! This can be no other than one of the children of Paradise." Then she rose into the air to fly about, as was her wont, and met an Afrit flying, who saluted her, and she said to him, "Whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," replied he. Quoth she, "Wilt thou come with me and look on the beauty of a youth who sleeps in the burial-ground yonder?" And he said, "I will well." So they both flew down to the tomb and she showed him Bedreddin, saying, "Sawest thou ever the like of this young man?" The Afrit looked at him and exclaimed, "Blessed be God to whom there is none like! But, O my sister, shall I tell thee what I have seen this day?" "What is that?" asked she; and he answered, "I have seen a young lady in the land of Egypt, who is the counterpart of this youth. She is the daughter of the Vizier Shemseddin of Cairo and is possessed of beauty and grace and symmetry and perfection. When she reached the age of fifteen, the Sultan of Egypt heard of her and sending for the Vizier her father, said to him, 'O Vizier, it has come to my knowledge that thou hast a daughter and I wish to demand her of thee in marriage.' 'O my lord the Sultan,' replied the Vizier, 'I prithee

accept my excuse and take compassion on my grief, for thou knowest that my brother Noureddin, who was my partner in the Vizierate, left us many years ago and went I know not whither. Now the reason of his departure was that one night we were sitting talking of marriage and children, when we came to words on the subject and he was angry with me and went away in his anger. But on the day her mother bore her, fifteen years ago, I swore that I would marry my daughter to none but my brother's son. Now, a while ago, I heard that he is lately dead at Bassora, where he was Vizier, after having married the former Vizier's daughter and had by her a son; and I will not marry my daughter but to him, in honour of my brother's memory. Moreover, I recorded the date of my marriage and of the conception and birth of my daughter and drew her horoscope, and she is destined for her cousin; and there are girls in plenty for our lord the Sultan.' When the Sultan heard the Vizier's answer, he was exceeding wroth and said, 'When the like of me demands in marriage the daughter of the like of thee, he confers a favour on her, and thou puttest me off with idle excuses! As my head liveth, I will marry her to the meanest of my serving men, to spite thee!' Now the Sultan had a hunchbacked groom, with a hump behind and before, and he sent for him and married him to the Vizier's daughter, whether she would or no, and bade carry him in procession and bring him in to his bride this very night. Now I have just come from Cairo, where I left the hunchback at the door of the bath, surrounded by the King's servants, holding lighted flambeaux and making mock of him. As for the Vizier's daughter, she sits among her nurses and tirewomen, weeping, for they have forbidden her father access to her. Never, O my sister, saw I one more hideous than the hunchback, whilst the young lady is the likest of all folk to this youth, though she is even hand-

somer than he." "Thou liest," replied the Jinniyeh; "this youth is handsomer than any one of his day." "By Allah, O my sister," replied the Afrit, "the girl I speak of is handsomer than he, but none but he is worthy of her, for they resemble each other as they were brother and sister or brothers' children. Alas, the pity of her with that hunchback!" Then said she, "O my brother, let us take him up and carry him to Cairo, that we may compare him with the damsel and see whether of them is the handsomer." "I hear and obey," answered the Afrit; "this is right well advised, and I will carry him." So he took Bedreddin up and flew with him through the air, accompanied by the Afriteh, till he alighted in the city of Cairo and set him down on a stone bench. Then he aroused him; and when he found himself no longer on his father's tomb in Bassora, but in a strange city, he would have cried out; but the Afrit gave him a cuff and imposed silence on him. Then he brought him a splendid dress and made him put it on, and giving him a lighted flambeau, said to him, "Know that I have brought thee hither, meaning to do thee a good turn for the love of God; so take this torch and mingle with the people at the door of the bath and accompany them to the house of the wedding festival. Then advance and enter the hall and fear none, but sit down on the right hand of the humpbacked bridegroom; and as often as the tire-women and singers stop before thee, put thy hand into thy pocket and thou wilt find it full of gold. Take it out by handsful and give to all who come to thee and spare not, for as often as thou puttest thy hand into thy pocket, thou wilt find it without fail full of gold. So fear nothing, but put thy trust in Him who created thee, for all this is not by thine own strength but by that of God, that His decrees may take effect upon His creatures." Quoth Bedreddin to himself, "I wonder what is the meaning of all this!" And

Night xxii.

taking the torch, went to the bath, where he found the hunchback already on horseback. So he mixed with the people and moved on with the bridal-procession; and as often as the singing-women stopped to collect largesse from the people, he put his hand into his pocket and finding it full of gold, took out a handful and threw it into the singers' tambourine, till it was full of dinars. The singing-women were amazed at his munificence and they and the people wondered at his beauty and grace and the richness of his dress. He ceased not to do thus, till he reached the Vizier's palace, where the chamberlains drove back the people and forbade them to enter; but the singing-women said, "By Allah, we will not enter, unless this young man enter with us, for he has overwhelmed us with his bounties; nor shall the bride be displayed, except he be present." So the chamberlains let him pass, and he entered the bridal saloon with the singers, who made him sit down, in defiance of the humpbacked bridegroom. The wives of the Viziers and Amirs and chamberlains were ranged, each veiled to the eyes and holding a great lighted flambeau, in two ranks, extending right and left from the bride's throne[1] to the upper end of the dais, in front of the door from which she was to issue. When the ladies saw Bedreddin and noted his beauty and grace and his face that shone like the new moon, they all inclined to him, and the singers said to all the women present, "You must know that this handsome youth has handselled us with nought but red gold, so fail ye not to wait on him and comply with all that he says." So all the women crowded round Bedreddin, with their torches, and gazed on his beauty and envied him his grace; and each would gladly have lain in his bosom an hour or a year. In their intoxication, they let fall their veils from their faces and said, "Happy she who belongs to him or to whom he

[1] On which she sits to be displayed.

belongs!" And they cursed the humpbacked groom and him who was the cause of his marriage to that lovely lady; and as often as they invoked blessings on Bedreddin, they followed them up with imprecations on the hunchback, saying, "Indeed, this youth and he alone deserves our bride. Alas, the pity of her with this wretched hunchback, God's curse be on him and on the Sultan who will have her marry him!" Then the singers beat their tambourines and raised cries of joy, announcing the coming of the bride; and the Vizier's daughter entered, surrounded by her tire-women, who had perfumed her with essences and incensed her and decked her hair and dressed her in costly robes and ornaments such as were worn by the ancient kings of Persia. Over all she wore a robe embroidered in red gold with figures of birds and beasts with eyes and beaks of precious stones and feet and claws of red rubies and green beryl, and about her neck was clasped a necklace of Yemen work, worth many thousands of dinars, whose beazels were all manner jewels, never had Cæsar or King of Yemen its like. She seemed as it were the full moon, when it shines out on the fourteenth night, or one of the houris of Paradise, glory be to Him who made her so splendidly fair! The women encompassed her as they were stars, and she in their midst as the moon breaking through the clouds. As she came forward, swaying gracefully to and fro, the hunchback rose to kiss her, but she turned from him and seeing Bedreddin Hassan seated, with all the company gazing on him, went and stood before him. When the folk saw her thus attracted towards Bedreddin, they laughed and shouted and the singers raised their voices, whereupon he put his hand to his pocket and cast gold by handsful into the tambourines of the singing-women, who rejoiced and said, "Would this bride were thine!" At this he smiled, and the people came round him, with the flambeaux in their hands, whilst

the hunchback was left sitting alone, looking like an ape; for as often as they lighted a candle for him, it went out and he abode in darkness, speechless and confounded and grumbling to himself. When Bedreddin saw the bridegroom sitting moping alone and all the lights and people collected round himself, he was confounded and marvelled; but when he looked at his cousin, the Vizier's daughter, he rejoiced and was glad, for indeed her face was radiant with light and brilliancy. Then the tire-women took off the veil and displayed the bride in her first dress of red satin, and she moved to and fro with a languorous grace, till the heads of all the men and women were turned by her loveliness; for she was even as says the excellent poet:

Like a sun at the end of a cane in a hill of sand, She shines in a dress of the hue of pomegranate-flower.
She gives me to drink of her cheeks and her honeyed lips, And quenches the flaming fires that my heart devour.

Then they changed her dress and displayed her in a robe of blue; and she reappeared like the moon when it bursts through the clouds, with her coal-black hair and her smiling teeth, her delicate cheeks and her swelling bosom, even as says the sublime poet:

She comes in a robe the colour of ultramarine, Blue as the stainless sky unflecked with white.
I view her with yearning eyes, and she seems to me A moon of the summer set in a winter's night.

Then they clad her in a third dress and letting down her long black ringlets, veiled her face to her eyes with the superabundance of her hair, which vied with the murkiest night in length and blackness; and she smote all hearts with the enchanted arrows of her glances. As says the poet:

With hair that hides her rosy cheeks ev'n to her speaking eyes, She comes; and I her locks compare unto a sable cloud
And say to her, "Thou curtainest the morning with the night." But she, "Not so; it is the moon that with the dark I shroud."

Then they displayed her in the fourth dress, and she shone forth like the rising sun, swaying to and fro with amorous languor and turning from side to side with gazelle-like grace. And she pierced hearts with the arrows of her eyelashes; even as says the poet:

A sun of beauty she appears to all that look on her, Glorious in arch and amorous grace, with coyness beautified;
And when the sun of morning sees her visage and her smile, Conquered, he hasteneth his face behind the clouds to hide.

Then they displayed her in the fifth dress, with her ringlets let down. The downy hair crept along her cheeks, and she swayed to and fro, like a willow-wand or a gazelle bending down to drink, with graceful motions of the neck and hips. As says the poet, describing her:

Like the full moon she doth appear, on a calm night and fair; Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air.
She hath an eye, whose glances pierce the hearts of all mankind, Nor can cornelian with her cheeks for ruddiness compare.
The sable torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips; Beware the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee, beware!
Indeed, her glance, her sides are soft, but none the less, alas! Her heart is harder than the rock; there is no mercy there.
The starry arrows of her looks she darts above her veil; They hit and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.
When I clasp hands about her waist, to press her to my heart, The swelling apples of her breast compel me to forbear.
Alas, her beauty! it outdoes all other loveliness; Her shape transcends the willow-wand and makes the branch despair.

Then they unveiled her in the sixth dress, which was green. In this she reached the utmost bounds of loveliness, outvying in slender straightness the tawny spear-shaft, and in suppleness and flexile grace the bending branch, whilst the splendours of her face outshone the radiance of the full moon. Indeed, she transcended the fair of all quarters of the world and all hearts were broken by her loveliness; for she was even as says the poet:

A damsel made for love and decked with subtle grace; You'd say the very sun had borrowed from her face.
She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf That the pomegranate's flower doth in the bud encase.
"How call'st thou this thy dress?" we said to her: and she Made answer with a word full of malicious grace.
"Breaker of Hearts," quoth she, "I call it; for therewith I've broken many a heart among the human race."

Then they dressed her in the seventh dress, which was of a colour between saffron and orange, even as says the poet:

Scented with sandal and musk and ambergris, lo! she comes. The blended hues of her dress 'twixt orange and saffron show.
Slender and shapely she is: vivacity bids her arise, But the weight of her hips says, "Sit, or softly and slowly go."
When I solicit her kiss and sue for my heart's desire, "Be gracious," her beauty says, but her coquetry answers, "No."

They unveiled the bride, in all her seven dresses, before Bedreddin Hassan, leaving the hunchback sitting by himself; and when she opened her eyes, she said, "O my God, grant that this youth may be my husband and deliver me from this humpbacked groom." Then they dismissed the company and all who were present retired, except Bedreddin Hassan and the hunchback, whilst the tirewomen carried off the bride to undress her and prepare her for the bridegroom. Thereupon the hunchback came up to Bedreddin Hassan and said to him, "O my lord, thou hast cheered us with thy company to-night and overwhelmed us with thy favours. Wilt thou not now rise and depart?" "In the name of God," replied Bedreddin, and rising, went out of the door, where the Afrit met him and said to him, "Stay where thou art, and when the hunchback goes out to the draught-house, enter thou the bridechamber and do not hesitate, but sit down in the alcove, and when the bride comes, say to her, ''Tis I who am thy husband, for the King only played this trick on thee, to

conjure the evil eye from us; and he whom thou sawest is one of our grooms.' Then go up to her and uncover her face and fear nothing; for jealousy hath taken us of this affair and none is worthy to enjoy her youth but thyself." As he was yet speaking, the groom came out and entering the closet, sat down on the stool. Hardly had he done so, when the Afrit appeared to him in the shape of a mouse, issuing from the water-trough,[1] and cried, "Queek!" Quoth the hunchback, "What ails thee?" And the mouse increased till it became a cat and said, "Miaou! Miaou!" Then it grew still more and became a dog and cried, "Bow! Wow!" When the hunchback saw this, he was terrified and exclaimed, "Begone, O unlucky one!" The dog increased and became an ass-colt, that brayed and cried out in his face, "Heehaw! Heehaw!" Whereupon the hunchback quaked and cried out, "Come to my aid, O people of the house!" But the ass increased and swelled, till it became a buffalo and barred the way against him and said with a human voice, "Out on thee, hunchback, thou stinkard!" The groom was seized with a colic and sat down on the jakes with his clothes on and his teeth chattering. Quoth the Afrit, "Is the world so small that thou canst find none to marry but my mistress?" But he was silent, and the Afrit said, "Answer me, or I will make thee a dweller in the dust." "By Allah," replied the hunchback, "I am not to blame, for they forced me to marry her, and I knew not that she had a buffalo for a gallant; but I repent to God and to thee. What wilt thou have me do?" Quoth the Afrit, "I swear to thee that, if thou leave this place or speak before sunrise, I will wring thy neck! When the sun rises, go thy way and never return to this house." So saying, he seized the hunchback and set him upside down against the wall, with his head in the slit and his

[1] Placed there for the purpose of the ablution prescribed by the ceremonial law.

feet in the air, and said to him, "I will leave thee here and watch thee till sunrise; and if thou stir before then, I will seize thee by the feet and dash out thy brains against the wall." Meanwhile Bedreddin Hassan entered the bride-chamber and sat down in the alcove. Presently, in came the bride, attended by an old woman, who stopped at the door of the chamber and said, "O father of symmetry,[1] arise and take what God sends thee." Then the old woman went away, and the bride, whose name was the Lady of Beauty, entered, heart-broken and saying to herself, "By Allah, I will never yield myself to him, though he kill me!" When she came to the alcove, she saw Bedreddin sitting there and said, "O my friend, thou here at this hour! By Allah, I was wishing that thou wast my husband or that thou and the groom were partners in me!" "How should the groom have access to thee," asked Bedreddin, "and how should he share with me in thee?" Quoth she, "Who is my husband, thou or he?" "O Lady of Beauty," replied Bedreddin, "all this was only a device to conjure the evil eye from us. Thy father hired the hunchback for ten dinars to that end, and now he has taken his wage and gone away. Didst thou not see the singers and tirewomen laughing at him and how thy people displayed thee before me?" When the Lady of Beauty heard this, she smiled and rejoiced and laughed softly. Then she said to him, "Thou hast quenched the fire of my heart; so, by Allah, take me and press me to thy bosom." Now she was without clothes; so she threw open the veil in which she was wrapped and showed her hidden charms. At this sight, desire stirred in Bedreddin, and he rose and put off his clothes. The purse of a thousand dinars he had received of the Jew he wrapped in his trousers and laid them under the mattress; then took off his turban and hung it on the

[1] Speaking, of course, ironically and supposing Bedreddin to be the hunchback.

settle, remaining in a skull-cap and shirt of fine silk, laced with gold. With this arose the Lady of Beauty and drew him to her, and he did the like with her. Then he took her to his embrace and pointing the engine that batters down the fortalice of virginity, stormed the citadel and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly that none but he had ridden. So he took her maidenhead and enjoyed her flower of youth; nor did he stint to return to the assault, till he had furnished fifteen courses, and she conceived by him. Then he laid his hand under her head and she did the like, and they embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms, whilst the tongue of the case spoke the words of the poet:

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain, For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo! the Compassionate hath made no fairer thing to see Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their own delight, Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.
Lo! when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire, But on cold iron smite the folk that chide at them in vain.
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true, I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

As soon as Bedreddin was asleep, the Afrit said to the Afriteh, "Come, let us take up the young man and carry him back to his place, ere the dawn overtake us; for the day is near." So she took up Bedreddin, as he lay asleep, clad only in his shirt and skull-cap, and flew away with him, accompanied by the Afrit. But the dawn overtook them midway and the muezzins began to chant the call to morning-prayer. Then God let his angels cast at the Afrit with shooting-stars, and he was consumed; but the Afriteh escaped and lighted down with Bedreddin, fearing to carry him further, lest he should come to harm. Now as fate would have it, she had reached the city of Damascus, so she laid Bedreddin down before one of its

gates and flew away. As soon as it was day, the gate was thrown open and the folk came out, and seeing a handsome young man, clad in nothing but a shirt and skull-cap, lying on the ground, drowned in sleep by reason of his much swink of the night before, said, "Happy she with whom this youth lay the night! Would he had waited to put on his clothes!" Quoth another, "A sorry race are young men of family! Belike, this fellow but now came forth of the tavern on some occasion or other, but being overcome with drunkenness, missed the place he was making for and strayed till he came to the city gate, and finding it shut, lay down and fell asleep." As they were bandying words about him, the breeze blew on him and raising his shirt, showed a stomach and navel and legs and thighs, firm and clear as crystal and softer than cream; whereupon the bystanders exclaimed, "By Allah, it is good!" And made such a noise, that Bedreddin awoke and finding himself lying at the gate of a city, in the midst of a crowd of people, was astonished and said to them, "O good people, where am I, and why do you crowd round me thus?" "We found thee lying here asleep, at the time of the call to morning-prayer," replied they; "and this is all we know of the matter. Where didst thou lie last night?" "By Allah, good people," answered he, "I lay last night in Cairo!" Quoth one, "Thou hast eaten hashish." And another, "Thou art mad: how couldst thou lie yesternight in Cairo and awake this morning in Damascus?" "By Allah, good people," rejoined he, "I do not lie to you: indeed I lay last night in the city of Cairo and yesterday I was in Bassora." "Good," said one; and another, "This youth is mad." And they clapped their hands at him and said to each other, "Alack, the pity of his youth! By Allah, there is no doubt of his madness." Then said they to him, "Collect thyself and return to thy senses. How couldst

thou be in Bassora yesterday and in Cairo last night and yet awake in Damascus this morning?" But he said, "Indeed, I was a bridegroom in Cairo last night." "Doubtless thou hast been dreaming," rejoined they, "and hast seen all this in sleep." So he bethought himself awhile, then said to them, "By Allah, it was no dream! I certainly went to Cairo and they displayed the bride before me, in the presence of the hunchback. By Allah, O my brethren, this was no dream; or if it was a dream, where is the purse of gold I had with me and my turban and trousers and the rest of my clothes?" Then he rose and entered the town and passed through its streets and markets; but the people followed him and pressed on him, crying out, "Madman! Madman!" till he took refuge in a cook's shop. Now this cook had been a robber and a sharper, but God had made him repent and turn from his evil ways and open a cookshop; and all the people of Damascus stood in awe of him and feared his mischief. So when they saw Bedreddin enter his shop, they dispersed for fear of him and went their ways. The cook looked at Bedreddin and noting his beauty and grace, fell in love with him and said to him, "Whence comest thou, O youth? Tell me thy case, for thou art become to me dearer than my soul." So Bedreddin told him all that had befallen him from first to last; and the cook said, "O my lord Bedreddin, this is indeed a strange thing and a rare story; but, O my son, keep thy case secret, till God grant thee relief, and abide here with me meanwhile; for I am childless and will adopt thee as my son." And Bedreddin answered, "I will well, O uncle." With this the cook went to the bazaar, where he bought him a handsome suit of clothes and made him put it on; then carried him to the Cadi and formally acknowledged him as his son. So Bedreddin passed in Damascus for the cook's son and abode with him, sitting in the shop to take the money.

To return to the Lady of Beauty. When the day broke and she awoke from sleep, she missed Bedreddin from her side and thought he had gone to the lavatory, so lay expecting him awhile, when behold, her father entered. Now he was sore at heart by reason of what had passed between him and the Sultan and for that he had married his daughter by force to one of his servants, and he a lump of a hunchbacked groom; and he said to himself, "If she have suffered this damnable fellow to possess her, I will kill her." So he came to the door of the alcove and cried out, "Ho, Lady of Beauty!" She replied, "Here am I, O my lord;" and came out, tottering for joy, with a face whose brightness and beauty had redoubled for that she had lain in the arms of that gazelle,[1] and kissed the ground before her father. When the Vizier saw her thus, he said to her, "O accursed woman, dost thou rejoice in this groom?" At these words, the Lady of Beauty smiled and said, "O my lord, let what happened yesterday suffice, when all the folk were laughing at me and flouting me with that groom, who is not worth the paring of one of my husband's nails. By Allah, I never in all my life passed a pleasanter night! So do not mock me by reminding me of that hunchback." When her father heard this, he was filled with rage and glared at her, saying, "Out on thee! what words are these? It was the hunchbacked groom that lay with thee." "For God's sake," replied the Lady of Beauty, "do not mention him to me, may God curse his father! And mock me not, for the groom was only hired for ten dinars to conjure the evil eye from us, and he took his hire and departed. As for me, I entered the bridal chamber, where I found my true husband sitting in the alcove, him before whom the singers had unveiled me and who flung them the red gold by handsful, till he made all the poor there rich; and I

[1] Bedreddin.

passed the night in the arms of my sprightly husband, with the black eyes and joined eyebrows." When her father heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness, and he cried out at her, saying, "O wanton, what is this thou sayest? Where are thy senses?" "O my father," rejoined she, "thou breakest my heart with thy persistence in making mock of me! Indeed, my husband, who took my maidenhead, is in the wardrobe and I am with child by him." The Vizier rose, wondering, and entered the draught-house, where he found the hunchbacked groom with his head in the slit and his heels in the air. At this sight he was confounded and said, "This is none other than the hunchback." So he called to him, "Hallo, hunchback!" The groom made no answer but a grunt, thinking it was the Afrit who spoke to him. But the Vizier cried out at him, saying, "Speak, or I will cut off thy head with this sword." Then said the hunchback, "By Allah, O Chief of the Afrits, I have not lifted my head since thou didst set me here; so, God on thee, have mercy on me!" "What is this thou sayest?" quoth the Vizier. "I am no Afrit; I am the father of the bride." "It is enough that thou hast already gone nigh to make me lose my life," replied the hunchback; "go thy ways ere he come upon thee who served me thus. Could ye find none to whom to marry me but the mistress of an Afrit and the beloved of a buffalo? May God curse him who married me to her and him who was the cause of it!" Then said the Vizier to him, "Come, get up out of this place." "Am I mad," answered the groom, "that I should go with thee without the Afrit's leave? He said to me, 'When the sun rises, get up and go thy way.' So has the sun risen or no? for I dare not budge till then." "Who brought thee hither?" asked the Vizier; and the hunchback replied, "I came here last night to do an occasion, when behold, a mouse came out of the water

Night xxiii.

and squeaked and grew to a buffalo and spoke to me words that entered my ears. Then he left me here and went away, accursed be the bride and he who married me to her!" The Vizier went up to him and set him on his feet; and he went out, running, not crediting that the sun had risen, and repaired to the Sultan, to whom he related what had befallen him with the Afrit. Meanwhile, the Vizier returned to the bride's chamber, troubled in mind about his daughter, and said to her, "O my daughter, expound thy case to me." "O my father," answered she, "what more can I tell thee? Indeed, the bridegroom, he before whom they displayed me yesterday, lay with me all night and took my virginity, and I am with child by him. If thou believe me not, there is his turban, just as he left it, on the settle, and his trousers under the bed, with I know not what wrapped up in them." When her father heard this, he entered the alcove and found Bedreddin's turban; so he took it up and turning it about, said, "This is a Vizier's turban, except that it is of the Mosul cut.[1]" Then he perceived an amulet sewn in the cap of the turban; so he unsewed the lining and took it out; then took the trousers, in which was the purse of a thousand dinars. In the latter he found the duplicate of Bedreddin's docket of sale to the Jew, naming him as Bedreddin Hassan, son of Noureddin Ali of Cairo. No sooner had he read this, than he cried out and fell down in a swoon; and when he revived, he wondered and said, "There is no god but God the Omnipotent! O my daughter, dost thou know who took thy maidenhead?" "No," answered she; and he said, "It was thy cousin, my brother's son, and

[1] Mosul is a town of Mesopotamia, some two hundred miles N.E. of Baghdad. It is celebrated for its silk and muslin manufactories. The Mosulis doubtless set the fashion in turbans to the inhabitants of Baghdad and Bassora, and it would appear from the Vizier's remark that this fashion was notably different from that followed at Cairo.

these thousand dinars are thy dowry. Glory be to God! Would I knew how this had come about!" Then he opened the amulet and found therein a paper in the handwriting of his brother Noureddin; and when he saw his writing, he knew it and kissed it again and again, weeping and making moan for his brother. Then he read the scroll and found in it a record of the dates of Noureddin's marriage with the Vizier's daughter of Bassora, his going in to her, her conception and the birth of Bedreddin Hassan, and the history of his brother's life till his death. At this he wondered and was moved to joy and comparing the dates with those of his own marriage and the birth of his daughter, the Lady of Beauty, found that they agreed in all respects. So he took the scroll and carrying it to the Sultan, told him the whole story from first to last, at which the King wondered and commanded the case to be at once set down in writing. The Vizier abode all that day awaiting his nephew, but he came not; and when seven days were past and he could learn nothing of him, he said, "By Allah, I will do a thing that none has done before me!" So he took pen and ink and paper and drew a plan of the bride-chamber, showing the disposition of all the furniture therein, as that the alcove was in such a place, this or that curtain in another, and so on with all that was in the room. Then he folded the paper and laid it aside, and causing all the furniture to be taken up and stored away, took Bedreddin's purse and turban and clothes and locked them up with an iron padlock, on which he set a seal, against his nephew's coming. As for the Lady of Beauty, she accomplished the months of her pregnancy and bore a son like the full moon, resembling his father in beauty and grace. They cut his navel and blackened his eyelids with kohl[1] and committed him to the nurses,

[1] Eye-powder. The application of kohl to an infant's eyes is supposed to be beneficial.

naming him Agib. His day was as a month and his month as a year, and when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather sent him to school, bidding the master teach him to read the Koran and give him a good education; and he remained at the school four years, till he began to bully the little ones and beat them and abuse them, saying, "Which of you is like me? I am the son of the Vizier of Egypt." At last the children came, in a body, to complain to the monitor of Agib's behaviour to them, and he said, "I will tell you how to do with him, so that he shall leave coming to the school and you shall never see him again. It is this: when he comes to-morrow, sit down round him and let one of you say to the others, 'By Allah, none shall play at this game except he tell us the names of his father and mother; for he who knows not his parents' names is a bastard and shall not play with us.'" So next day, when Agib came to the school, they all assembled round him, and one of them said, "We will play a game, in which no one shall join except he tell us the names of his father and mother." And they all said, "By Allah, it is good." Then said one of them, "My name is Majid, my mother's name is Alawiyeh and my father's Izeddin." And the others said the like, till it came to Agib's turn and he said, "My name is Agib, my mother is the Lady of Beauty and my father Shemseddin, Vizier of Egypt." "By Allah," cried they, "the Vizier is not thy father." Said he, "He is indeed my father." Then they all laughed and clapped their hands at him, saying, "He does not know his father! Arise and go out from us, for none shall play with us, except he know his father's name." Thereupon they dispersed from around him and laughed him to scorn, leaving him choked with tears and mortification. Then said the monitor to him, "O Agib, knowst thou not that the Vizier is thy mother's father, thy grandfather and not thy father? As for thy

father, thou knowest him not nor do we; for the Sultan married thy mother to a humpbacked groom; but the Jinn came and lay with her, and thou hast no known father. Wherefore, do thou leave evening thyself with the boys in the school, till thou know who is thy father; for till then thou wilt pass for a misbegotten brat amongst them. Dost thou not see that the huckster's son knows his own father? Thy grandfather is the Vizier of Egypt; but as for thy father, we know him not, and we say, thou hast no father. So return to thy senses." When Agib heard the insulting words of the children and the monitor, he went out at once and ran to his mother, to complain to her; but his tears would not let him speak awhile. When she heard his sobs and saw his tears, her heart was on fire for him and she said to him, "O my son, why dost thou weep? Tell me what is the matter." So he told her what the children and the monitor had said and said to her, "Who is my father, O my mother?" "Thy father is the Vizier of Egypt," answered she; but he said, "Do not lie to me. The Vizier is thy father, not mine. Who then is my father? Except thou tell me the truth, I will kill myself with this dagger." When the Lady of Beauty heard him speak of his father, she wept, as she thought of her cousin and her bridal-night, and repeated the following verses:

Love in my breast, alas! they lit and went away: Far distant is the camp that holds my soul's delight!
Patience and reason fled from me, when they withdrew; Sleep failed me, and despair o'ercame me like a blight.
They left me, and with them departed all my joy: Tranquillity and peace with them have taken flight.
They made my lids run down with tears of love laid waste; My eyes for lack of them brim over day and night.
When as my sad soul longs to see them once again And waiting and desire are heavy on my spright;
Midmost my heart of hearts their images I trace, Love and desireful pain and longing for their sight.

O ye, the thought of whom clings round me like a cloak, Whose love is as a shirt about my body dight,
O my belovéd ones, how long will ye delay? How long must I endure estrangement and despite?

Then she wept and cried out and her son did the like, when in came the Vizier, whose heart burned within him at the sight of their weeping, and he said, "Why do ye weep?" The Lady of Beauty told him what had happened to Agib, and the Vizier also wept and called to mind his brother and all that had passed between them and what had befallen his daughter, and knew not the secret of the matter. Then he rose at once and going to the Divan, related the matter to the Sultan and begged his leave to travel eastward to the city of Bassora and enquire for his nephew. Moreover, he besought him for letters-patent, authorizing him to take Bedreddin, wherever he should find him. And he wept before the King, who took pity on him and wrote him royal letters-patent to his deputies in all his provinces; whereat the Vizier rejoiced and called down blessings on him. Then taking leave of him, he returned to his house, where he equipped himself and his daughter and grandson for the journey, and set out and travelled, till he came to the city of Damascus and found it rich in trees and waters, even as says the poet:

I mind me a night and a day spent in Damascus town, (Time swore 'twould ne'er again their like to man outmete).
We lay in its languorous glades, where the careless calm of the night And the morn, with its smiling eyes and its twy-coloured tresses, meet.
The dew to its branches clings like a glittering chain of pearl, Whose jewels the zephyr smites and scatters beneath his feet.
The birds on the branches chant from the open book of the lake; The breezes write on the scroll and the clouds mark the points, as they fleet.

The Vizier alighted without the city and pitched his tents in an open space called the Plain of Pebbles, saying to his servants, "We will rest here two days." So they went

down into the city upon their several occasions, this to sell, that to buy, another to go to the bath and a fourth to visit the Mosque of the Ommiades, whose like is not in the world. Agib also went into the city to look about him, followed by an eunuch, carrying a knotted cudgel of almond-tree wood, wherewith if one smote a camel, it would not rise again. When the people of the city saw Agib's beauty and symmetry (for he was a marvel of loveliness and winning grace, blander than the Northern zephyr,[1] sweeter than limpid water to the thirsty and more delightful than recovery to the sick), a great concourse of folk followed him, whilst others ran on before and sat down in the road, against he should come up, that they might gaze on him, till, as Fate would have it, the eunuch stopped before the shop of Bedreddin Hassan. Now the cook was dead and Bedreddin, having been formally adopted by him, had succeeded to his shop and property; and in the course of the twelve years that had passed over him, his beard had grown and his understanding ripened. When his son and the eunuch stopped before him, he had just finished preparing a mess of pomegranate-seed, dressed with sugar; and when he looked at Agib and saw how beautiful he was, his heart throbbed; blood drew to blood and his bowels yearned to him. So he called to him and said, "O my lord, O thou that hast gotten the mastery of my heart and my soul, thou to whom my bowels yearn, wilt thou not enter my shop and solace my heart by eating of my food?" And the tears welled up, uncalled, from his eyes, and he bethought him of his former estate and compared it with his present condition. When Agib heard his words, his heart yearned to him, and he said to the eunuch, "Indeed, my heart inclines to this cook, and meseems he hath lost a child: so let us enter and gladden his soul by partaking of

[1] The North wind holds the same place in Oriental metaphor and poetry as does the West wind in those of Europe.

his hospitality. Perhaps God may requite us our kindness to him by reuniting us with my father." "By Allah!" replied the eunuch, "it were a fine thing for a vizier's son to eat in a cookshop! Indeed, I keep off the folk with this stick, lest they look too closely on thee, and I dare not let thee enter a shop." When Bedreddin heard these words, he wondered and turned to the eunuch, with the tears running down his cheeks; and Agib said to the latter, "Indeed, my heart yearns for him." But he answered, "Leave this talk: indeed, thou shalt not go in." Then Bedreddin turned to the eunuch and said, "O noble sir, why wilt thou not gladden my soul by entering my shop? O thou who art as a chestnut, black without, but with a white heart,[1] thou of whom the poet says . . . . . ." The eunuch laughed and said, "What? Say on, by Allah, and be quick about it." So Bedreddin repeated the following verses:

Were he not polished and discreet and worthy of all trust, He in kings' houses would not be advanced to high estate.
O what a guardian he is for a seraglio! The very angels of the skies delight on him to wait.

This pleased the eunuch, who laughed and taking Agib by the hand, entered the shop with him. Bedreddin ladled out a dishful of pomegranate-seed, conserved with almonds and sugar, and set it before them, saying, "Ye do me honour. Eat and may health and enjoyment attend you!" And Agib said to him, "Sit down and eat with us, so haply God may unite us with him for whom we long." "O my son," said Bedreddin, "hast thou then suffered the loss of friends, at thy tender age?" "Yes, O uncle!" answered Agib, "My heart irks me for the loss of a beloved one, who is none other than my father; and indeed my grandfather and myself have come forth to seek for him throughout the world. Alas! how I sigh

[1] Or kernel.

to be united with him!" Then he wept sore, whilst Bedreddin wept at the sight of his tears and for his bereavement, which recalled to him his own separation from those he loved and from his father and mother, and the eunuch was moved to pity for him. Then they ate together till they were satisfied, and Agib and the eunuch rose and left the shop. At this, Bedreddin felt as if his soul had departed his body and gone with them, for he could not live a moment without their sight, albeit he knew not that Agib was his son. So he rose and shutting his shop, hastened after them and overtook them, before they went out at the great gate. The eunuch turned and said to him, "What dost thou want?" "When you left me," replied Bedreddin, "meseemed my soul had quitted my body; and as I had an occasion without the city, I thought to bear you company till I had done my business and so return." The eunuch was vexed and said to Agib, "This is what I feared. Because we entered this fellow's shop and ate that unlucky mouthful, he thinks he has a right to presume upon us, for see, he follows us from place to place." Agib turned and seeing the cook following him, reddened for anger and said to the eunuch, "Let him walk in the high road of the Muslims; but if he follow us when we turn aside to our tents, we will drive him away." Then he bowed his head and walked on, with the eunuch behind him. When they came to the Plain of Pebbles and drew near their tents, Agib turned and saw Bedreddin still following him; whereat he was enraged, fearing lest the eunuch should tell his grandfather and vexed that it should be said he had entered a cookshop and the cook had followed him. So he looked at Bedreddin and found his eyes fixed on him, for he was as it were a body without a soul; and it seemed to Agib that his eye was that of a knave or a lewd fellow. So his rage redoubled and he took up a stone and threw it at

Bedreddin. It struck him on the forehead and cut it open; and he fell down in a swoon, with the blood streaming down his face, whilst Agib and the eunuch made for the tents. When he came to himself, he wiped away the blood and tore off a piece of the muslin of his turban, with which he bound his head, blaming himself and saying, "I wronged the lad in closing my shop and following him, so that he thought I was some lewd fellow." Then he returned to his shop, where he busied himself with the sale of his meats; and he yearned after his mother at Bassora and wept over her and recited the following verses:

If thou demand fair play of Fate, therein thou dost it wrong; And blame it not, for 'twas not made, indeed, for equity.
Take what lies ready to thy hand and lay concern aside, For troubled days and days of peace in life must surely be.

Meanwhile, the Vizier, his uncle, tarried in Damascus three days, then departed for Hems, and passing through that city, fared on by way of Hemah and Aleppo and thence through Diarbekir, Maridin and Mosul, making enquiries at every place he came to, till he arrived at Bassora, where he halted and presented himself before the Sultan, who received him with honour and consideration and asked the reason of his coming. The Vizier related to him his history and told him that Noureddin Ali was his brother, whereupon the Sultan commended the latter's soul to the mercy of God and said, "Sir, he was my Vizier for fifteen years, and I loved him greatly. Then he died, leaving a son, who abode here but two months after his father's death; since which time he hath disappeared and we have never come upon any news of him. But his mother, who was the daughter of my former Vizier, is still with us." Shemseddin rejoiced to hear that his nephew's mother was still alive and said, "O King, I wish to see her." The King at once gave him leave to visit her; so he betook himself to his brother

Noureddin's house and went round about it and kissed its threshold. And he bethought him of his brother and how he had died in a strange land and wept and repeated the following verses:

I wander through the halls, the halls where Leila lived, And kiss the lifeless walls that of her passage tell.
It is not for the house that I with passion burn, But for the cherished ones that erst therein did dwell.

Then he entered the gate and found himself in a spacious courtyard, at the end whereof was a door vaulted over with hard stone, inlaid with varicoloured marbles. He walked round about the house, and casting his eyes on the walls, saw the name of his brother Noureddin written on them in letters of gold. So he went up to the inscription and kissed it and wept for his brother's loss and repeated the following verses:

I sue unto the rising sun, each morn, for news of thee, And of the lightning's lurid gleam I do for thee enquire.
The hands of passion and of pain sport with me all the night; Yet I complain not of the ills I suffer from desire.
O my belovéd, if the times be yet for me prolonged, My heart will sure be all consumed with separation's fire.
Lo! if thy sight one happy day should bless my longing eyes, There is no other thing on earth that I of Fate require.
Think not that other loves avail to solace me for thee: My heart can hold no love but thine, my faith can never tire.

Then he walked on till he came to the lodging of his brother's widow. Now from the day of her son's disappearance, she had given herself up to weeping and lamentation day and night: and when the years grew long upon her, she made him a tomb of marble midmost the saloon and there wept for him day and night, sleeping not but thereby. When the Vizier drew near her apartment, he heard her weeping and repeating verses; so he went in to her and saluting her, informed her that he was her husband's brother and told her all that had passed

between them, and how her son Bedreddin Hassan had spent a whole night with his daughter, twelve years ago, but had disappeared in the morning, and how she had conceived by him and borne a son, whom he had brought with him. When Bedreddin's mother heard this news of her son and grandson and that the former was haply still alive and saw her husband's brother, she threw herself at his feet and kissed them, repeating the following verses:

May God be good to him who brought me news that they were come;
For never more delightful news unto my ears were borne.
If he would take a worn-out wede for boon, I'd proffer him A heart
that at the parting hour was all to pieces torn.

Then the Vizier sent for Agib; and his grandmother embraced him and wept; but Shemseddin said to her, "This is no time for weeping: it behoves thee to make ready to go with us to Egypt: perhaps God will reunite us with thy son, my nephew." "I hear and obey," answered she, and rising at once, collected her goods and treasures and equipped herself and her hand-maids for the journey, whilst the Vizier went to take his leave of the Sultan of Bassora, who sent by him gifts and rarities to the Sultan of Egypt. Then he set out at once on his homeward journey and travelled till he came to Damascus, where he halted and pitched his tents as before, saying to his suite, "We will halt here a week, to buy presents and curiosities for the Sultan." Now the tie of blood drew Agib to his father, so he said to the eunuch, "O Laïc, I have a mind to go a-walking; so come, let us go down into the streets of Damascus and see what is become of the cook whose victuals we ate and whose head we broke; for indeed he was kind to us and we used him scurvily." The eunuch replied, "I hear and obey." So they left the tents and going down into the city, stayed not till they came to the cookshop, where they found

Bedreddin Hassan standing at the door. It was near the time of afternoon prayer, and as chance would have it, he had just prepared a mess of pomegranate-seed. Agib looked at him and saw the scar of the blow on his forehead; wherefore his heart yearned to him and he said, "Peace be on thee! Know that my heart is with thee." When Bedreddin saw him, his bowels were troubled and his heart throbbed; and he bowed his head and would have spoken, but could not. Then he raised his head and looked at his son humbly and imploringly and repeated the following verses:

I longed to look on him I love; but when I saw his face, I was as one
amazed and lost the use of tongue and eyes.
I bowed my head down to his feet for reverence and awe, And would
have hidden what I felt, but could it not disguise.
Volumes of plaining and reproach I had within my heart; Yet, when
we met, no word I spoke nor uttered aught but sighs.

Then he said to them, "Heal my heart and eat of my food, for, by Allah, I cannot look at you but my heart throbs! I should not have followed you the other day, but that I was beside myself." "By Allah," replied Agib, "thou art too fond of us! We ate with thee before and thou madest us repent of it, in that thou followedst us and wouldst have put us to shame; so we will not eat with thee, except thou swear not to go out after us nor follow us. Else we will not visit thee again during our present stay, for we abide here a week, that my grandfather may take presents for the King." And Bedreddin said, "I grant you this." So Agib and the eunuch entered, and Bedreddin set before them a dish of pomegranate-seed. Quoth Agib, "Sit down and eat with us; so haply God may grant us relief." At this Bedreddin was glad and sat down and ate with them, with his eyes fixed on Agib's face, for indeed his heart and entrails were taken with his love, till the boy said to him, "What a tiresome dotard

thou art! Leave thy staring in my face." When Bedreddin heard this, he repeated the following verses:

Thy face excites in all men's hearts a love they do not own; Folded in silence and concealed, it may not be made known.
O thou whose beauty puts to shame the splendour of the moon, Whose grace recalls the shining sight of morning newly blown,
In thy bright visage is a sign that may not be fulfilled, And there all beauties that incite to tenderness are shown.
Must I then die of thirst, what while thy lips with nectar flow? Thy face is Paradise to me; must I in hell-fire groan?

So they ate till they were satisfied, when Bedreddin rose and poured water on their hands, wiping them with a napkin of silk, which he loosed from his waist; after which he sprinkled rose-water on them from a casting-bottle he had by him. Then he went out and returned with a pitcher of sherbet, flavoured with rose-water and musk, which he set before them, saying, "Complete your favours to me, by drinking of this sherbet." So Agib took the pitcher and drank and passed it to the eunuch, and it went round amongst them till their stomachs were full, for they had eaten and drunken beyond their wont. Then they went away and made haste in walking till they reached the tents, and Agib went in to his grandmother, who kissed him, and thinking of her son Bedreddin Hassan, wept and repeated the following verses:

But for my hope that God would yet our severed loves unite, I had not lived, for life to me is void of all delight.
I swear there's nothing in my heart but love of thee alone, By God, who reads the heart and brings the hidden things to light!

And she said to Agib, "O my son, where hast thou been?" Quoth he, "We have been in the city of Damascus." Then she rose and set before him confection of pomegranate-seed and said to the eunuch, "Sit down and eat with thy young master." The eunuch said to himself, "By Allah, we have no mind to eat!" but he sat down;

and so did Agib, though his belly was full of what he had already eaten and drunk. Now the conserve lacked sugar, so he took a piece of bread and dipped it therein and ate, but found it insipid, for that he was already surfeited, and exclaimed, "Faugh! what is this nasty mess?" "O my son," said his grandmother, "dost thou find fault with my cookery? I cooked this myself, and there is not a cook in the land can compare with me, except it be thy father Bedreddin Hassan." "O my lady," replied Agib, "this thy dish is naught; for we saw but now in the city a cook who dresses pomegranate-seed, so that the very smell of it opens the heart and the taste would give a full man an appetite; and as for thy mess, compared with his, it is worth neither much nor little." When his grandmother heard this, she was exceeding wroth and said to the eunuch, "Out on thee, dost thou corrupt my grandson and take him into cookshops?" The eunuch was frightened and denied, saying, "We did not enter the shop, but only saw it in passing." "By Allah!" said Agib, "we went in and ate, and it was better than thine." Then his grandmother rose and went and told her brother-in-law, who was incensed against the eunuch and sending for him, said to him, "Why didst thou take my son into a cookshop?" "We did not go in," replied the eunuch. But Agib said, "We did go in and ate of pomegranate-seed, till we were full: and the cook gave us to drink of iced sherbet of sugar." At this, the Vizier's anger redoubled and he questioned the eunuch, but he still denied. Then said the Vizier, "If what thou sayest be true, sit down and eat before us." So he sat down and tried to eat, but could not and threw away the morsel, saying, "O my lord, indeed I am full since yesterday." By this, the Vizier knew that he had eaten at the cook's and bade his slaves throw him down and beat him. So they drubbed him, till he roared for mercy and said, "O

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my lord, do not beat me, and I will tell thee the truth." Whereupon the Vizier stopped the beating and said, "Speak the truth." Quoth the eunuch, "Know then that we did enter the shop of a cook, who was dressing pomegranate-seed, and he set some of it before us: by Allah, I never ate the like of it in my life, nor did I ever taste aught nastier than that which is before us!" Bedreddin's mother was enraged at this and said to the eunuch, "Thou must go back to the cook and fetch us a dish of his pomegranate-seed and show it to thy master, that he may say which is the better, his or mine." "Good," answered he. So she gave him a dish and half a dinar, and he returned to the shop and said to Bedreddin, "We have made a wager about thy cookery in our lord's household, for they have pomegranate-seed there also; so give me half a dinar's worth of thy confection and let it be of thy best, for I have eaten my bellyful of stick on account of thy cookery." Bedreddin laughed and answered, "By Allah, none can dress this dish aright but myself and my mother, and she is far away." Then he filled the dish with pomegranate-seed and finishing it off with musk and rose-water, gave it to the eunuch, who hastened back with it and delivered it to Bedreddin's mother. No sooner had she tasted it and remarked the excellence of its flavour and cookery, than she knew who had dressed it and shrieked and fell down in a swoon, to the amazement of the Vizier, who sprinkled rose-water on her, till she came to herself and said, "If my son be yet of this world, none made this conserve but he! Without doubt, this cook is my son Bedreddin Hassan, for none knew how to dress this dish but he and I; and I taught him." The Vizier rejoiced greatly at her words, and said, "O how I long to see my brother's son! I wonder if the days will indeed reunite us with him! But it is to God alone that we look for reunion with him." Then he went out forthright and said to his men, "Let

twenty of you go to the cook's shop and demolish it; then tie his hands behind him with the linen of his turban, saying, 'It was thou madest that vile mess of pomegranate-seed,' and bring him hither by force, but without doing him any hurt." And they replied, "It is well." Then he mounted and riding to the palace, foregathered with the Viceroy of Damascus and showed him the Sultan's letters-patent. He kissed them and laying them on his head, said to the Vizier, "Who is it hath offended against thee?" Quoth the Vizier, "He is a cook of this city." So the Viceroy at once despatched his chamberlains to the shop and they went thither and found it in ruins and everything in it broken; for whilst the Vizier was at the palace, his men had done his bidding and carried Bedreddin to the tents, where they were then awaiting their master's return, whilst Bedreddin said, "I wonder what they can have found in the pomegranate-seed to bring matters to this pass!" When the Vizier returned to the tents, after having gotten the Viceroy's permission to take his debtor and depart with him, he called for the cook, and they brought Bedreddin before him, with his hands bound behind his back. When he saw his uncle, he wept sore and said, "O my lord, what is my offence against thee?" "Art thou he who made the mess of pomegranate-seed?" asked Shemseddin. "Yes," replied Bedreddin; "didst thou find aught in it to call for the cutting off of my head?" Quoth the Vizier, "That were the least of thy desert." "O my lord," said Bedreddin, "wilt thou not tell me my crime and what ails the pomegranate-seed?" "Presently," answered the Vizier and called to his men, saying, "Bring the camels." So they struck camp and the Vizier caused Bedreddin to be put into a chest, which they locked and set on a camel. Then they departed and journeyed till nightfall, when they halted to eat and took Bedreddin out of his chest and fed him and locked him up again. Then they set out again

and travelled till they reached Kumreh, where they took him out of the chest and brought him before the Vizier, who said to him, "Art thou he who made the mess of pomegranate-seed?" "Yes, O my lord," answered he; and Shemseddin said, "Shackle him." So they shackled him and returned him to the chest and fared on again, till they arrived at Cairo and halted in the suburb of Er Reidaniyeh. Then the Vizier commanded to take Bedreddin out of his chest and sent for a carpenter, to whom he said, "Make a cross[1] of wood for this fellow." Quoth Bedreddin, "What wilt thou do with it?" "I mean to nail thee upon it," replied the Vizier, "and parade thee throughout the city." "And why wilt thou use me thus?" asked Bedreddin: and the Vizier answered, "Because of thy villainous mess of pomegranate-seed and for that it lacked pepper." "And because it lacked pepper," said Bedreddin, "wilt thou do all this to me? Is it not enough that thou hast laid my shop in ruins and smashed my gear and imprisoned me and fed me but once a day?" "It lacked pepper," answered the Vizier; "and nothing less than death is thy desert." At this Bedreddin wondered and mourned for himself, till the Vizier said to him, "Of what art thou thinking?" "I was thinking of crack-brains like unto thee," answered Bedreddin; "for hadst thou any sense, thou wouldst not treat me thus." Quoth the Vizier, "It behoves me to punish thee, lest thou do the like again." And Bedreddin said, "Verily, my offence were over-punished by the least of what thou hast already done to me." "It avails not," answered Shemseddin; "I must crucify thee." All this time the carpenter was shaping the cross, whilst Bedreddin looked on; and thus they did till nightfall, when the Vizier took him and clapped him in the chest, saying, "The thing shall be done to-morrow." Then he waited till he knew Bedreddin to be asleep, when he mounted and taking

[1] *lit.* puppet or lay figure.

the chest up before him, rode into the town to his own house, where he alighted and said to his daughter, the Lady of Beauty, "Praised be God who hath reunited thee with thy cousin! Arise and order the house as it was on thy wedding-night." So the servants arose and lit the candles, whilst the Vizier took out his plan of the bride-chamber and directed them what to do, till they had set everything in its place, so that whoever saw it would not doubt but it was the very night of the wedding. Then he made them lay Bedreddin's turban on the stool, where he had left it, and his trousers and purse under the mattress, and bade his daughter undress herself and go to bed, as on the wedding-night, adding, "When he comes in to thee, say to him, 'Thou hast tarried long in the wardrobe,' and call him to lie with thee and hold him in converse till the morning, when we will explain the whole matter to him." Then he took Bedreddin out of the chest and laid him in the vestibule, after he had unbound him and taken off his clothes, leaving him in a shirt of fine silk, and he still asleep and knowing nothing. Presently he turned over and awoke, and finding himself in a lighted vestibule, said to himself, "Surely, I am dreaming." Then he rose and opening the inner door, found himself in the chamber, where he had passed his wedding-night, and knew the alcove and the stool by the bed-side, with his turban and clothes. When he saw this, he was confounded and advanced one foot and drew the other back, saying, "Am I asleep or awake?" And he began to rub his forehead and say, wondering, "By Allah, this is the chamber of the bride that was unveiled before me! But where can I be? I was surely but now in a chest." Whilst he was debating with himself, the Lady of Beauty lifted the curtain of the alcove and said to him, "O my lord, wilt thou not come in? Thou hast tarried long in the wardrobe." When he heard what she said and saw her face,

he laughed and said, "This is certainly an imbroglio of dreams!" Then he entered, sighing, and recalled what had happened and was perplexed, and his affair became confused to him and he knew not what to think. Presently, he caught sight of his turban and trousers; so he handled the latter and feeling the purse of a thousand dinars, said, "God alone is all knowing! I am certainly in the mazes of a dream." Then said the Lady of Beauty to him, "What ails thee to stand agape and seem perplexed? Thou wast not thus the first part of the night." He laughed and said to her, "How long have I been absent from thee?" "God preserve thee!" exclaimed she. "The name of God encompass thee! Thou didst but go out an hour ago to do an occasion and return. Hast thou lost thy wits?" When Bedreddin heard this, he laughed and said, "Thou art right: but when I went out from thee, I forgot myself in the closet and dozed and dreamt that I was a cook in Damascus and abode there twelve years and that there came to me a boy, the son of some great man, and with him an eunuch." Here he put his hand to his forehead and feeling the scar made by the stone, said, "By Allah, O lady, it must have been true, for here is the scar made by the stone, with which he smote me and cut my forehead open. So it would seem as if it had really happened. But perhaps I dreamt it, when we embraced and fell asleep together: for meseemed I journeyed to Damascus without turban or drawers and set up as a cook there." Then he was perplexed and considered awhile and said, "By Allah, I fancied also that I made a mess of pomegranate-seed and put too little pepper in it. By Allah, I must have slept in the closet and dreamt all this!" "God on thee," said the Lady of Beauty, "tell me what else thou didst dream." "By Allah," replied he, "had I not woke up, they would have nailed me to a cross of wood!" "Wherefore?" asked

she; and he said, "Because of the lack of pepper in the pomegranate-seed. Meseemed they demolished my shop and broke my utensils in pieces and put me in a chest; then they sent for a carpenter to make a cross and would have crucified me thereon. But praised be God who caused all this to happen to me in sleep and not on wake!" The Lady of Beauty laughed and pressed him to her bosom, and he returned her caresses; then he thought again and said, "By Allah, I cannot help thinking it must have been a reality after all! Indeed I know not what to think of it all." Then he lay down and passed the night in a state of perplexity, saying now, "I was dreaming," and now, "I was awake," till the morning, when his uncle Shemseddin entered and saluted him. When Bedreddin saw him, he said to him, "By Allah, art thou not he who gave orders to bind me and demolish my shop and would have nailed me on a cross, and all because a mess of pomegranate-seed lacked pepper?" "O my son," replied the Vizier, "know that the truth has appeared and that which was hidden is divulged. Thou art my brother's son, and I did all this with thee but that I might certify myself that thou wast indeed he who lay with my daughter on her wedding-night. I could not be sure of this, till I saw that thou knewest the chamber and thy turban and clothes and purse and the scrolls in thy handwriting and that of my brother, for I had never seen thee and did not know thee: and I have brought thy mother with me from Bassora." So saying, he threw himself on him and they embraced and wept for excess of joy. Then said the Vizier to Bedreddin, "O my son, all this came of what passed between thy father and myself." And he told him what had taken place between them and the manner of his father's flight to Bassora: after which he sent for Agib; and when his father saw him, he exclaimed, "This is he who threw the stone at me!" Quoth the

Vizier, "This is thy son." And Bedreddin threw himself on Agib and repeated the following verses:

Long time have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves, With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two, My lips should never speak of severance again.
Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so, that for the very stress Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes! So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Presently, Bedreddin's mother came in and fell on him, repeating the following verses:

When we met, to each other we both did complain Of the manifold things that we each had to say;
For the lover's complaint of the anguish he feels The tongue of a messenger cannot convey.

Then she wept and related to him what had befallen her since his departure, and he told her what he had suffered, and they thanked God the Most High for their reunion with one another. Two days after his arrival, the Vizier went in to the Sultan and kissing the earth before him, saluted him after the fashion of salutation to kings. The Sultan rejoiced at his return and received him with distinguished favour. Then he desired to hear what had befallen him in his travels; so the Vizier told him all that had passed; and the Sultan said, "Praised be God for that thou hast attained thy desire and returned in safety to thy kinsfolk and family! I must see thy brother's son, so do thou bring him to the Divan to-morrow." Shemseddin replied, "God willing, thy slave shall be present to-morrow." Then he saluted him and returning to his own house, informed his nephew of the King's wish to see him, to which Bedreddin replied, "The slave is obedient to his lord's commands." So next day he accompanied his uncle to the Divan and after saluting the Sultan in the most punctilious and elegant manner, repeated the following verses:

All ranks and classes kiss the earth, in homage to thy state, For lo! through thee their every wish is crowned with happy fate.
For thou the fount of honour art for those that hope in thee, And from thy hand the bounties flow that make them rich and great.

The Sultan smiled and signed to him to sit down. So he sat down beside the Vizier, and the King enquired his name. Quoth Bedreddin, "The meanest of thy slaves is known as Bedreddin Hassan of Bassora, who prays for thee day and night." The Sultan was pleased at his words and being minded to try him and prove his knowledge and good-breeding, said to him, "Dost thou remember any verses in praise of a mole on the cheek?" "Yes," replied Bedreddin, and repeated the following:

When I think of my loved one, the sighs from my breast Burst up and the tears to my eyes quickly start.
She's a mole, that resembles, in beauty and hue, The black of the eye and the core of the heart.

The Sultan liked these verses and said, "Let us have some more. Heaven bless thy sire! May thy tongue never tire!" So he repeated the following:

The mole's black spot upon her cheek they liken to a grain Of musk; yet wonder not at that, for wonder were in vain.
But rather wonder at her face, wherein all beauty is: There is no particle of grace that it doth not contain.

The Sultan shook with delight and said to him, "More! God bless thy life!" So he repeated the following:

O thou, the moles upon whose cheek recall Globules of musk upon cornelian strewed,
Grant me thy favours, be not hard of heart, O thou, my heart's desire, my spirit's food!

Then said the King, "Thou hast done well, O Hassan, and hast acquitted thyself most excellently. But tell me how many meanings hath the word *khal*[1] in the Arabic language." "Fifty," replied Hassan, "and some say eight-

[1] Mole.

and-fifty." Quoth the King, "Thou art right. Canst thou tell me the points of excellence in beauty?" "Yes," answered Bedreddin: "Brightness of face, purity of skin, shapeliness in the nose, softness in the eyes, sweetness in the mouth, elegance in speech, slenderness of shape and quickness of wit; and the perfection of beauty is in the hair. And indeed Es Shihab el Hijazi has brought them all together in the following doggrel:

Say to the face, "Be bright," and to the skin, say, "See: I show thee what befits thee best: 'tis purity."
For elegance of shape the nose we chiefly prize, And languor soft it is, that best becomes the eyes.
Then say unto the mouth, "Sweetness: but mark thou me; Let fragrancy of breath fail never unto thee."
Chaste be the speech, the shape be slender and well knit, And quickness mark the thought, the manners and the wit.
Then say that in the hair is ever beauty's prime. Give ear to me and eke forgive my doggrel rhyme.

The Sultan rejoiced in his converse and said to him, "What is the meaning of the popular saying, 'Shureih is more cunning than the fox'?" "Know, O King," answered Bedreddin, "may God aid thee! that Shureih[1] was wont, during the days of the plague, to go out to Nejef, and whenever he stood up to pray, there came a fox, which would plant itself over against him and distract him from his devotions by mimicking his movements. This went on for some time, till the man became weary of it; so one day he took off his shirt and put it on a cane and shook out the sleeves. Then he set his turban on top of the cane and tied a girdle round the middle of the effigy and planted it in the place where he used to say his prayers. Presently up came the fox, according to his wont, and stood over against the figure; whereupon Shureih came behind him and took him: hence the saying." When the Sultan heard Bedreddin's explanation, he said to his

[1] A well-known legist and Cadi of Cufa in the seventh century.

uncle Shemseddin, "Verily, this thy nephew is perfect in all kinds of culture. I do not believe that his like is to be found in Egypt." At this, Bedreddin arose and kissed the earth and sat down again in the posture of a servant before his master. When the Sultan had thus assured himself of his proficiency in the liberal arts, he rejoiced greatly and bestowing on him a splendid dress of honour, invested him with an office, whereby he might better his condition. Then Bedreddin arose and kissing the earth before the King, wished him enduring glory and craved leave to retire. The Sultan gave him leave; so he returned home with his uncle and they set food before them and they ate; after which Bedreddin repaired to his wife's apartment and told her what had passed between the Sultan and himself. Quoth she, "He cannot fail to make thee his boon-companion and load thee with favours and presents; and by the grace of God, the splendours of thy perfections shall shine like the greater light,[1] wherever thou goest, by land or sea." Then said he, "I purpose to make an ode in the King's praise, that he may redouble in affection for me." "That is well thought," replied she. "Consider it well and word thy thought elegantly, and I doubt not but it will procure thee his favour." So Bedreddin shut himself up and composed the following verses, which he copied in an ornamental hand:

My King hath reached the height of lordlihead; The shining path of virtue he doth tread.
His justice blocks the ways against his foes And peace and plenty showers on every stead.
Bold as a lion, pious, quick of wit, Angel or King,[2] he's whichsoe'er is said.
He sends the suppliant content away. Words fail, indeed, to paint his goodlihead.

[1] The sun.

[2] The word *melik* 'king,' by changing the second (unwritten) vowel to *e*, becomes *melek* 'angel.'

In time of gifts, he's like the brilliant moon; Like night, in battle, lowering and dread.
Our necks are girt with his munificence; He rules by favours on the noble shed.
May God prolong his life for our behoof And ward the blows of Fortune from his head!

When he had finished transcribing the poem, he despatched it by one of his uncle's slaves to the King, who perused it, and it gladdened his heart: so he read it out to those present before him and they praised it exceedingly. Then he sent for Bedreddin to his sitting-chamber and said to him, "Henceforth thou art my boon-companion and I appoint thee a stipend of a thousand dirhems a month, over and above what I have already given thee." So he arose and kissing the earth three times before the Sultan, wished him abiding glory and length of life. Then Bedreddin increased in honour and estate, so that his report spread into all countries, and he abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, he and his uncle and family, till Death overtook him.'

When the Khalif Haroun er Reshid heard this story from the mouth of his Vizier Jaafer, he wondered and said, 'It behoves that these stories be written in letters of gold.' Then he set the slave at liberty and assigned the young man who had killed his wife such a monthly allowance as sufficed to make his life easy. Moreover he gave him one of his female slaves to wife; and he became one of his boon-companions.

STORY OF THE HUNCHBACK.

There lived once in the city of Bassora a tailor, who was openhanded and loved pleasure and merrymaking: and he was wont, he and his wife, to go out by times, a-pleasuring, to the public places of recreation. One day they went out as usual and were returning home in the evening, when they

fell in with a hunchback, the sight of whom would make the disappointed laugh and dispel chagrin from the sorrowful. So they went up to look at him and invited him to go home and make merry with them that night. He consented and accompanied them to their house; whereupon, the night being now come, the tailor went out to the market and buying fried fish and bread and lemon and conserve of roses by way of dessert, set them before the hunchback, and they ate. Presently, the tailor's wife took a great piece of fish and cramming it into the hunchback's mouth, clapped her hand over it, saying, 'By Allah, thou must swallow it at one gulp; and I will give thee no time to chew it.' So he bolted it; but there was a great bone in it, which stuck in his gullet, and his hour being come, it choked him and he died at once. When the tailor saw this, he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Alas, poor wretch, that he should have come by his death at our hands!' 'Why dost thou waste time in idle lamentation?' rejoined his wife. 'Hast thou not heard it said . . . . . ?' And she repeated the following verses: Night xxv.

What ails me that I waste the time in idle grief, Until I find no friend mishap for me to bear?
Who but a fool would sit upon an unquenched fire? To wait upon mischance as great a folly were.

'What is to be done?' asked he; and she replied, 'Rise and take the hunchback in thine arms and cover him with a silk handkerchief: then go out with him, and I will go before thee: and if thou meet any one, say, "This is my son: his mother and I are taking him to the doctor, that he may look at him."' So he rose and taking the hunchback in his arms, carried him along the streets, preceded by his wife, who kept saying, 'O my son, God keep thee! Where has this smallpox attacked thee and in what part dost thou feel pain?' So that all who saw them said, 'It is a child ill of smallpox.' They went

along, enquiring for a doctor, till the people directed them to the house of one, who was a Jew. They knocked at the gate, and a black servant-maid came down and opened the door and seeing a man carrying a child and a woman with him, said to them, 'What is your business?' 'We have a sick child here,' answered the tailor's wife, 'whom we want the doctor to look at: so take this quarter-dinar and give it to thy master, and let him come down and see my son.' The girl went up to tell her master, leaving the tailor and his wife in the vestibule, whereupon the latter said to her husband, 'Let us leave the hunchback here and be off.' So the tailor carried the dead man to the top of the stairs and propping him up against the wall, went away, he and his wife. Meanwhile the serving-maid went in to the Jew and said to him, 'There are a man and a woman at the gate, with a sick child; and they have given me a quarter-dinar for thee, that thou mayst go down and see the child and prescribe for him.' When the Jew saw the quarter-dinar, he was glad and rose hastily and went down in the dark. Hardly had he made a step, when he stumbled on the dead body and threw it down, and it rolled to the bottom of the stairs. So he cried out to the girl to make haste with the light, and she brought it, whereupon he went down and examining the hunchback, found that he was dead. 'O Esdras and Moses and the ten Commandments!' exclaimed he; 'O Aaron and Joshua, son of Nun! I have stumbled against the sick person and he has fallen downstairs and is dead! How shall I get the body out of my house?' Then he took it up and carrying it into the house, told his wife what had happened. Quoth she, 'Why dost thou sit still? If he be found here when the day rises, we shall both of us lose our lives. Let us carry him up to the roof and throw him over into the house of our neighbour the Muslim; for if he abide there a night, the dogs will come down on him from the terraces and eat him

all up.' Now the neighbour in question was controller of the Sultan's kitchen and was wont to bring home great store of fat and broken meats; but the cats and mice used to eat it, or, if the dogs scented a fat sheep's tail, they would come down from the roofs and tear at it; and in this way he lost much of what he brought home. So the Jew and his wife carried the hunchback up to the roof, and letting him down, through the windshaft, into the controller's house, stood him up against the wall and went away. Hardly had they done so, when the controller, who had been spending the evening with some of his friends, hearing a recitation of the Koran, came home and going up with a lighted candle, found a man standing in the corner, under the ventilator. When he saw this, he said, 'By Allah, this is a fine thing! He who steals my goods is none other than a man.' Then he turned to the hunchback and said to him, 'So it is thou that stealest the meat and fat! I thought it was the cats and dogs, and I kill the cats and dogs of the quarter and sin against them. And all the while it is thou comest down through the windshaft! But I will take my wreak of thee with my own hand.' So he took a great cudgel and smote him on the breast, and he fell down. Then he examined him and finding that he was dead, cried out in horror, thinking that he had killed him, and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Supreme, the Omnipotent!' And he feared for himself and said, 'May God curse the fat and the sheeps' tails, that have caused this man's death to be at my hand!' Then he looked at the dead man and seeing him to be humpbacked, said, 'Did it not suffice thee to be a hunchback, but thou must turn thief and steal meat and fat? O Protector, extend to me Thy gracious protection!' Then he took him up on his shoulders and going forth with him, carried him to the beginning of the market, where he set him on his feet against the wall of a

shop, at the corner of a dark lane, and went away. After a while, there came up a Christian, the Sultan's broker, who had sallied forth, in a state of intoxication, intending for the bath, for in his drunkenness he thought that matins were near. He came staggering along, till he drew near the hunchback and squatted down over against him to make water, when, happening to look round, he saw a man standing against the wall. Now some one had snatched off the broker's turban early in the night, and seeing the hunchback standing there, he concluded that he meant to play him the same trick. So he clenched his fist and smote him on the neck. Down fell the hunchback, whilst the broker called to the watchman of the market and fell on the dead man, pummelling and throttling him in the excess of his drunken rage. Presently, the watchman came up and finding a Christian kneeling on a Muslim and beating him, said to the former, 'What is the matter?' 'This fellow tried to snatch off my turban,' answered the broker; and the watchman said, 'Get up from him.' So he rose, and the watchman went up to the hunchback and finding him dead, exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is a fine thing that a Christian should kill a Muslim!' Then he seized the broker and tying his hands behind him, carried him to the house of the prefect of police, where they passed the night; and all the while the broker kept saying, 'O Messiah! O Virgin! how came I to kill this man? Indeed, he must have been in a great hurry to die of one blow with the fist!' And his drunkenness left him and reflection came in its stead. As soon as it was day, the prefect came out and commanded to hang the supposed murderer and bade the executioner make proclamation of the sentence. So they set up a gallows, under which they made the broker stand, and the hangman put the rope round his neck and was about to hoist him up, when behold, the controller of the Sultan's

kitchen, passing by, saw the broker about to be hanged, and pressing through the crowd, cried out to the executioner, saying, 'Stop! Stop! I am he who killed the hunchback.' Quoth the prefect, 'What made thee kill him?' And he replied, 'I came home last night and found this man who had come down the windshaft to steal my goods; so I struck him with a cudgel on the breast and he died. Then I took him up and carried him to the market and set him up against the wall in such a place. Is it not enough for me to have killed a Muslim, without burdening my conscience with the death of a Christian also? Hang, therefore, none but me.' When the prefect heard this, he released the broker and said to the executioner, 'Hang up this man on his own confession.' So he loosed the rope from the broker's neck and threw it round that of the controller, and placing him under the gallows, was about to hang him, when behold, the Jewish physician pushed through the press and cried out, 'Stop! It was I and none else who killed him! I was sitting at home last night, when a man and a woman knocked at the door, carrying this hunchback, who was sick, and gave my servant a quarter-dinar, bidding her give it to me and tell me to come down to see him. Whilst she was gone, they brought the hunchback into the house and setting him on the stairs, went away. Presently, I came down and not seeing him, stumbled on him in the dark, and he fell to the foot of the stair and died forthright. Then we took him up, I and my wife, and carried him on to the roof, whence we let him down, through the windshaft, into the house of this controller, which adjoins my own. When he came home and found the hunchback, he took him for a robber and beat him, so that he fell to the ground, and he concluded that he had killed him. So is it not enough for me to have killed one Muslim unwittingly, without burdening myself with the death of another wittingly?'

When the prefect heard the Jew's story, he said to the hangman, 'Let the controller go, and hang the Jew.' So the hangman took the Jew and put the rope round his neck, when behold, the tailor pressed through the folk and cried out to him, 'Hold thy hand! None killed him save I, and it fell out thus. I had been out a-pleasuring yesterday and coming back in the evening, met this hunchback, who was drunk and singing lustily to a tambourine. So I carried him to my house and bought fish, and we sat down to eat. Presently, my wife took a piece of fish and crammed it down the hunchback's throat; but it went the wrong way and stuck in his gullet and choked him, so that he died at once. So we lifted him up, I and my wife, and carried him to the Jew's house, where the girl came down and opened the door to us, and I said to her, "Give thy master this quarter-dinar and tell him that there are a man and a woman at the door, who have brought a sick person for him to see." So she went in to tell her master, and whilst she was gone, I carried the hunchback to the top of the stair, where I propped him up, and went away with my wife. When the Jew came out, he stumbled over him and thought that he had killed him.' Then he said to the Jew, 'Is not this the truth?' 'It is,' replied the Jew. And the tailor turned to the prefect and said, 'Let the Jew go, and hang me.' When the prefect heard the tailor's story, he wondered at the adventure of the hunchback and exclaimed, 'Verily, this is a matter that should be recorded in books!' Then he said to the hangman, 'Let the Jew go, and hang the tailor on his own confession.' So the hangman took the tailor and put the rope round his neck, saying, 'I am tired of taking this man and loosing that, and no one hanged after all.'

Now the hunchback in question was the favourite buffoon of the Sultan, who could not bear him out of his sight: so when he got drunk and did not make his appearance

that night or next day, the Sultan asked the courtiers about him and they replied, 'O our lord, the chief of the police has come upon him dead and ordered his murderer to be hanged: but, as the hangman was about to hoist him up, there came a second and a third and a fourth, each declaring himself to be the sole murderer and giving the prefect an account of the manner in which the crime had been committed.' When the King heard this, he cried out to one of his chamberlains, saying, 'Go down to the chief of the police and bring me all four of them.' So the chamberlain went down at once to the place of execution, where he found the hangman on the point of hanging the tailor and cried out to him to stop. Then he gave the King's order to the prefect, who took the tailor, the physician, the controller and the broker, and brought them all, together with the dead hunchback, before the King. When he came into the presence, he kissed the earth and told the King all that had passed; whereat he was moved to wonder and mirth and commanded the story to be written in letters of gold, saying to the courtiers, 'Did you ever hear a more wonderful story than that of this hunchback?' With this came forward the Christian broker and said, 'O King of the age, with thy leave, I will tell thee a thing that happened to myself and which is still stranger and more wonderful and pleasant than the story of the hunchback.' Quoth the King, 'Let us hear it.' Then said the broker, 'O King of the age, I came to this city with merchandise, and Fate made me settle here with you, but

THE CHRISTIAN BROKER'S STORY.

I am by birth a Copt and a native of Cairo, where I was brought up. My father was a broker, and when I came to man's estate, he died and I became a broker in his stead. One day, as I was sitting in my shop, there came up to

me a young man as handsome as could be, richly clad and riding on an ass. When he saw me, he saluted me, and I rose to do him honour. Then he pulled out a handkerchief, containing a sample of sesame, and said to me, "What is the worth of an ardebb[1] of this?" "A hundred dirhems," replied I; and he said, "Take porters and measurers and come to-morrow to the Khan of El Jaweli, by the Gate of Victory, where thou wilt find me." Then he went away, leaving with me the handkerchief containing the sample of sesame; and I went round to the buyers and agreed for a hundred and twenty dirhems an ardebb. Next day, I took four gaugers and carried them to the Khan, where I found him awaiting me. As soon as he saw me, he rose and opened his magazines, and we measured the contents and found them fifty ardebbs of sesame, making five thousand dirhems. Then said he to me, "Thou shalt have ten dirhems an ardebb to thy brokerage; so take the price and lay by four thousand five hundred dirhems for me; and when I have made an end of selling my other goods, I will come to thee and take the amount." "It is well," replied I, and kissed his hand and went away, having made that day a profit of a thousand dirhems, besides the brokerage. I saw no more of him for a month, at the end of which time he came to me and said, "Where is the money?" I rose and saluted him and said to him, "Wilt thou not eat somewhat with me?" But he refused, saying, "Get the money ready, and I will come back for it." So I brought out the money and sat down to await his return, but saw no more of him for another month, at the end of which time he came to me and said, "Where is the money?" I rose and saluted him and said, "Wilt thou not eat a morsel with me?" But he refused, saying, "Have the money ready against my return," and rode away. So I fetched the dirhems and

[1] A measure of about five bushels.

sat awaiting him; but he did not come near me for another month, and I said, "Verily, this young man is the incarnation of liberality." At the end of the month, he came up, riding on a mule and clad in sumptuous raiment. His face shone like the moon at its full and he seemed as if he had just come from the bath, with his rosy cheeks and flower-white forehead and mole like a grain of ambergris, even as says the poet:

Within one mansion of the sky the sun and moon combine; With all fair fortune and delight of goodliness they shine.
Their beauty stirs all those that see to passion and to love: Good luck to them, for that they move to ravishment divine!
In grace and beauty they increase and aye more perfect grow: All souls yearn out to them for love, all hearts to them incline.
Blesséd be God, whose creatures are so full of wonderment! Whate'er He wills He fashions forth, even as He doth design.

When I saw him, I rose and saluted him and kissed his hand, saying, "O my lord, wilt thou not take thy money?" "What hurry is there?" replied he; "wait till I have made an end of my business, when I will come and take it." Then he went away, and I said to myself, "By Allah, when he comes next time, I must press him to eat with me," for I had traded with his money and profited largely by it. At the end of the year he came again, dressed even more richly than before, and I conjured him to dismount and eat of my victual; and he said to me, "I consent, on condition that what thou expendest on me shall be of my money in thy hands." "So be it," replied I, and made him sit down, whilst I made ready what was needful of meat and drink and so forth and set the tray before him, saying, "In the name of God." So he came to the table and put out his left hand and ate with me; and I wondered at his using his left hand.[1] When we had

[1] The left hand is considered unclean, being used for certain ablutions, and it is therefore a breach of good manners to use it in eating.

done eating, I poured water on his hand and gave him wherewith to wipe it. Then we sat talking, after I had set sweetmeats before him, and I said to him, "O my lord, I prithee relieve my mind by telling me why thou eatest with thy left hand. Belike something ails thy right hand?" When he heard my words, he recited the following verses:

Ask not, I prithee, my friend, of the anguish that burns in my heart:
'Twould but the infirmities show that now in my bosom lie hid.
If with Selma I company now and harbour with Leila no more, Believe
me, 'tis none of my will; needs must, if necessity bid.

Then he drew his right arm out from his sleeve; and behold, it was a stump without a hand, the latter having been cut off at the wrist. I was astonished at this, and he said to me, "Thou seest that my eating with the left hand arose, not from conceit, but from necessity; and there hangs a strange story by the cutting off of my right hand." "And how came it to be cut off?" asked I. "Know," answered he, "that I am a native of Baghdad and the son of one of the principal men of that city. When I came to man's estate, I heard the pilgrims and travellers and merchants talk of the land of Egypt, and this abode in my thought till my father died, when I laid out a large sum of money in the purchase of stuffs of Baghdad and Mosul, with which I set out on my travels, and God decreed me safety, till I reached this your city." And he wept and recited the following verses:

It chances oft that the blind man escapes a pit, Whilst he that is clear
of sight falls into it:
The ignorant man can speak with impunity A word that is death to the
wise and the ripe of wit:
The true believer is pinched for his daily bread, Whilst infidel rogues
enjoy all benefit.
What is a man's resource and what shall he do? It is the Almighty's
will: we must submit.

"So I entered Cairo," continued he, "and put up at the

Khan of Mesrour, where I unpacked my goods and stored them in the magazines. Then I gave the servant money to buy me something to eat and lay down to sleep awhile. When I awoke, I went to the street called Bein el Kesrein[1] and presently returned and passed the night at the Khan. Next morning, I said to myself, 'I will walk through the bazaars and see the state of the market.' So I opened a bale and took out certain stuffs, which I gave to one of my servants to carry, then repaired to the Bazaar of Jergis, where I was accosted by the brokers, who had heard of my arrival. They took my stuffs and cried them for sale, but could not get the prime cost of them. I was vexed at this; but the chief of the brokers said to me, 'O my lord, I will tell thee how thou mayst make a profit of thy goods. Thou shouldst do as the other merchants do and sell thy goods on credit, for a fixed period, on a contract drawn up by a scrivener and duly witnessed, and employ a money-changer and take thy money every Monday and Thursday. So shalt thou profit two dirhems for every one; and besides this, thou canst amuse thyself meanwhile at leisure in viewing Cairo and the Nile.' Quoth I, 'This advice is good;' and carried the brokers to the Khan. They took my stuffs and transported them to the bazaar, where I sold them to various merchants, taking their bonds for the value. These bonds I deposited with a money-changer, who gave me an acknowledgment in writing, with which I returned to my Khan. Here I abode a month, breaking my fast with a cup of wine every morning and sending out for mutton and sweetmeats, till the time came when my receipts began to fall due. So, every Monday and Thursday, I used to repair to the bazaar and sit in the shop of one or other of the merchants, whilst the scrivener and money-changer went round to collect the money from the different merchants, till after the time of afternoon prayer, when they

[1] Between the two palaces.

brought me the amount, and I counted it and gave receipts for it, then took it and returned to my Khan. One day I went to the bath and returned to the Khan, where I broke my fast on a cup of wine, after which I slept a little. When I awoke, I ate a fowl, and scenting myself, repaired to the shop of a merchant called Bedreddin el Bustani, who welcomed me; and I sat talking with him till the market should open. Presently, there came up a lady of stately figure, wearing a magnificent head-dress and exhaling perfumes, as she walked along with a swimming gait. She stopped before Bedreddin and saluted him, raising her kerchief and showing a pair of large black eyes. He returned her salute and stood talking with her; and when I heard her speech, the love of her got hold upon my heart. Then she said to Bedreddin, 'Hast thou any stuffs of figured cloth of gold?' So he brought out to her a piece that he had had of me and she bought it of him for twelve hundred dirhems, saying, 'I will take it with me and send thee the price.' 'It may not be, O my lady,' answered he. 'This is the owner of the stuff and I owe him the price of it.' 'Out on thee!' said she. 'Do I not use to take great store of costly stuffs of thee, at a greater profit than thou askest, and send thee the money?' 'Yes,' rejoined he; 'but I am in pressing need of the price to-day.' With this she took the piece of stuff and threw it back into his lap, saying, 'You merchants have no respect for any one!' Then she turned to go, and I felt as if my soul went with her; so I rose and stopped her, saying, 'O my lady, favour me by retracing thy gracious steps!' She smiled and saying, 'For thy sake, I will return,' came back and sat down in the shop opposite me. Then I said to Bedreddin, 'What is the price set upon this piece?' And he replied, 'Eleven hundred dirhems.' 'The other hundred shall be thy profit,' rejoined I. 'Give me a piece of paper and I will write thee a discharge for

it.' So I wrote him a docket to that effect and gave the piece of stuff to the lady, saying, 'Take it and, if thou wilt, bring me the price next market-day; or, better still, accept it as a gift from me to thee.' 'May God requite thee with good,' answered she, 'and make thee my husband and master of my property!'[1] (And God heard her prayer.) 'O my lady,' replied I, 'this piece of stuff is thine and another like it, if thou wilt but let me see thy face.' So she lifted her veil, and I took one look at her face, that caused me a thousand regrets, and fell so violently in love with her, that I was no longer master of my reason. Then she let down her veil and taking the piece of stuff, said, 'O my lord, leave me not desolate!'[2] and went away, whilst I remained sitting in the shop till the time of afternoon prayer was past, lost to the world and fairly distraught for love; and the violence of my passion prompted me to make enquiries about her of the merchant, who replied, 'She is a lady of wealth, the daughter of an Amir, who died and left her a large fortune.' Then I took leave of him and returned to the Khan, where they set the evening-meal before me; but I could not eat, for thinking of her, and lay down to rest. But sleep came not to me and I lay awake till daylight, when I rose and changed my dress. I broke my fast on a cup of wine and a morsel of bread and going to the market, saluted Bedreddin and sat down by him in his shop. Presently up came the lady, followed by a slave-girl, and more richly dressed than before, and saluting me, instead of Bedreddin, said to me, in a voice than which I never heard a sweeter or softer, 'Send with me some one to take the twelve hundred dirhems, the price of the stuff.' 'What hurry is there?' asked I. And she said, 'May we never lose thee!' And gave me the money. Then I sat talking with her, and presently I made signs to her, by which she understood that I desired to

[1] Apparently said in jest. [2] *i.e.* do not forget me.

enjoy her and rose hastily, as if vexed with me, and went away. My heart clung to her and I rose and followed in her track; but as I went along, a slave-girl accosted me, saying, 'O my lord, my mistress would speak with thee.' At this I was astonished and said, 'There is no one who knows me here.' 'O my lord,' answered the slave, 'how quickly thou hast forgotten her! My mistress is she who was to-day at the shop of the merchant Bedreddin.' So I followed her to the money-changer's, where I found the lady, who drew me to her side and said to me, 'O my beloved, thou hast made prize of my heart, and love of thee has conquered my soul. Since the day I saw thee first, I have taken no delight in sleep nor in meat nor drink.' 'My sufferings have been still greater than thine,' answered I; 'and my state dispenses me from complaint.' Then said she, 'O my lord, shall I come to thee or wilt thou come to me?' Quoth I, 'I am a stranger here and have no lodging but the Khan; so by thy favour, it shall be at thy house.' 'It is well,' replied she; 'to-night is Friday eve, and nothing can be done; but to-morrow, after the morning-prayer, mount thine ass and enquire for the house of Berekat the Syndic, known as Abou Shameh, in the Hebbaniyeh quarter; for I live there; and do not delay, for I shall be expecting thee.' At this, I rejoiced greatly and took leave of her and returned to the Khan, where I passed a sleepless night. As soon as it was day, I rose and changed my clothes and perfumed myself with essences and sweet-scented smoke. Then I took fifty dinars in a handkerchief and went out to the Zuweyleh Gate, where I hired an ass, bidding the driver carry me to the Hebbaniyeh. So he set off with me and brought me in the twinkling of an eye to a by-street called El Munkeri, where I bade him go in and enquire for the Syndic's house. After a little he returned and said, 'Alight.' But I made him guide me to the house, where I dismounted and giving him a quarter-dinar, said, 'Come

back to-morrow at daybreak and fetch me away.' 'In the name of God,' answered he, and went away. Then I knocked at the gate and there came out two young girls, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons, and said to me, 'Enter, for our mistress awaits thee, and she slept not last night for joyance in thee.' So I entered and they brought me, through a vestibule, into an upper chamber with seven doors, paved with varicoloured marbles and furnished with hangings and carpets of coloured silk. The walls were plastered with stucco-royal, in which one might see his own face, and the roof was ribbed with gold and bordered with inscriptions emblazoned in ultramarine. All around were latticed windows overlooking a garden, full of fruits of all colours, with streams running and birds singing on the branches, and midmost the hall was a fountain, at whose angles stood birds fashioned in red gold, spouting forth water as it were pearls and jewels; and indeed the place comprised all kinds of beauty and dazzled the beholder with its radiance. I entered and sat down; but hardly had I done so, when the lady came up to me, crowned with a diadem of pearls and jewels and having her eyebrows pencilled and her hands stained with henna. When she saw me, she smiled on me and embraced me and pressed me to her bosom; and she set her mouth to mine and sucked my tongue, and I did the like with her. Then she said, 'Can it be true that thou art indeed come to me?' 'I am thy slave,' answered I; and she said, 'Welcome, a thousand times! By Allah, since I first saw thee, sleep has not been sweet to me nor food pleasant!' Quoth I, 'So has it been with me also.' Then we sat down to converse, and I bowed my head for bashfulness. Presently, she set before me a tray of the most exquisite meats, such as ragouts and fritters soaked in honey and fricassees and fowls stuffed with sugar and pistachio-nuts, and we ate till we were satisfied. Then they brought ewer

Night xxvi.

and basin and I washed my hands, after which we scented ourselves with rose-water mingled with musk and sat down again to converse. We complained to each other of the sufferings we had undergone, and my love for her took such hold on me, that all my wealth was of little account to me, in comparison with her. We passed the time in toying and kissing and dalliance, till nightfall, when the damsels set before us a banquet of food and wine and we sat carousing half the night. Then we went to bed and I lay with her till the morning, never in my life saw I the like of that night. As soon as it was day, I arose and took leave of her, after having slipped under the mattress the handkerchief containing the dinars; and she wept and said, 'O my lord, when shall I see that fair face again?' 'I will be with thee at eventide,' answered I, and going out, found the ass-man waiting for me at the door. So I mounted and rode to the Khan of Mesrour, where I alighted and gave the driver half a dinar, saying, 'Come back at sundown.' And he said, 'Good.' Then I broke my fast and went out to seek the price of my stuffs, after which I returned and taking a roast lamb and some sweetmeats, called a porter and despatched them by him to the lady, paying him his hire in advance. I occupied myself with my affairs till sunset, when the ass-driver came for me and I took fifty dinars in a handkerchief and rode to the house, where I found the marble floor swept, the brass burnished, the lamps filled and the candles lighted, the meats ready dished and the wine strained. When my mistress saw me, she threw her arms round my neck and exclaimed, 'Thou hast desolated me by thine absence!' Then they set the tables and we ate till we were satisfied, when the serving maids took away the tray of food and set on wine. We gave not over drinking till midnight, when we went to the sleeping-chamber and lay together till morning. Then I rose and went away, leaving the fifty dinars with her as

before. I found the ass-driver at the door and mounting, rode to the Khan, where I slept awhile, then went out to prepare the evening-meal. I took a brace of geese with broth on two platters of dressed rice, together with colocasia-roots,[1] fried and soaked in honey, and wax candles and fruits and conserves and flowers and nuts and almonds, and sent them all to her. As soon as it was night, I mounted the ass as usual, taking with me fifty dinars in a handkerchief, and rode to the house, where we ate and drank and lay together till morning, when I left the handkerchief and dinars with her and rode back to the Khan. I ceased not to lead this life, till one fine morning I found myself without a single dirhem and said, 'This is Satan's doing!' And I repeated the following verses:

When a rich man grows poor, his lustre dies away, Like to the setting sun that pales with ended day.
Absent, his name is not remembered among men: Present, he hath no part in life and its array.
He passes through the streets and fain would hide his head And pours out floods of tears in every desert way.
By Allah, when distress and want descend on men, But strangers midst their kin and countrymen are they.

Then I left the Khan and walked along Bein el Kesrein till I came to the Zuweyleh Gate, where I found the folk crowded together and the gate blocked up for the much people. As Fate would have it, I saw there a trooper, against whom I pressed, without meaning it, so that my hand came on his pocket and I felt a purse inside. I looked and seeing a string of green silk hanging from the pocket, knew that it belonged to the purse. The crowd increased every moment and just then, a camel bearing a load of wood jostled the trooper on the other side and he turned to ward it off from him, lest it should tear his clothes. When I saw this, Satan tempted me; so I pulled

[1] A kind of edible arum.

the string and drew out a little purse of blue silk, full of something that chinked like money. Hardly had I done so, when the soldier turned and feeling his pocket lightened, put his hand to it and found it empty; whereupon he turned to me and raising his mace, smote me on the head. I fell to the ground, whilst the people came round us and seizing the soldier's horse by the bridle, said to him, 'Is it because he pushed against thee in the throng, that thou smitest this young man such a blow?' But he cried out at them and said, 'This fellow is an accursed thief!' With this I came to myself and stood up, and the folk looked at me and said, 'This is a comely youth and would not steal aught.' Some took part for me and others against me and there was a great clamour, and the people pulled at me and would have rescued me from the trooper; but as fate would have it, the chief of the police and the captain and officers of the watch entered by the gate at this moment; and the prefect, seeing the crowd about the soldier and myself, enquired what was the matter. 'O my lord,' replied the soldier, 'this fellow is a thief. I had a blue purse in my pocket, containing twenty dinars, and he took it, whilst I was in the crush.' 'Was any one else by thee?' asked the magistrate, and the trooper answered, 'No.' Then the prefect cried out to the officers of the watch, who seized me and stripping me by his order, found the purse in my clothes. He took it and found in it twenty dinars, as the soldier had said, whereat he was wroth and calling to the officers to bring me before him, said to me, 'O young man, tell me the truth. Didst thou steal this purse?' At this, I hung down my head and said to myself, 'It is useless for me to say I did not steal the purse, for they found it in my clothes: and if I confess to the theft, I fall into trouble.' So I raised my head and said, 'Yes: I took it.' When the prefect heard what I said, he wondered and called for witnesses, who came forward and attested my confession.

Then he bade the hangman cut off my right hand, and he did so; after which he would have cut off my left foot also, but the trooper took pity on me and interceded for me with the prefect, who left me and went away; whilst the folk remained round me and gave me a cup of wine to drink. As for the trooper, he gave me the purse, saying, 'Thou art a comely youth, and it befits not that thou be a thief.' And I repeated the following verses:

By Allah, trusty brother mine, I am indeed no thief, Nor, O most bountiful of men, a highwayman am I.
But the vicissitudes of fate o'erthrew me suddenly, And care and stress and penury full sorely did me try.
It was not thou, but God who cast the fatal shaft at me, The shaft that made from off my head the crown of honour fly.

Then he left me, and I went away, after having wrapt my hand in a piece of rag and thrust it into my bosom. I betook me to my mistress's house, faint and ill at ease and pale by reason of what had befallen me, and threw myself on the couch. She saw that my colour was changed and said to me, 'What ails thee and why do I see thee thus changed?' 'My head irks me,' answered I; 'I am not well.' When she heard this, she was vexed and concerned for me and said to me, 'Fret not my heart, O my lord! Sit up and raise thy head and let me know what has happened to thee to-day, for thy face tells me a tale.' 'Spare me this talk,' replied I. But she wept and said, 'Meseems thou art tired of me, for I see that thou art contrary to thy wont.' But I was silent, and she continued to talk to me, though I made her no answer, till nightfall, when she brought me food: but I refused it, fearing to let her see me eat with my left hand, and said to her, 'I do not care to eat at present.' Quoth she, 'Tell me what has befallen thee to-day and what ails thee, that thou art troubled and broken in heart and spirit.' 'Presently,' replied I; 'I will tell thee at my leisure.' Then she

brought me wine, saying, 'Take it, for it will dispel thy care: thou must indeed drink and tell me what is the matter with thee.' 'Must I tell thee?' said I; and she answered 'Yes.' Then said I, 'If it must be so, give me to drink with thine own hand.' So she filled and drank, then filled again and gave me the cup. I took it from her with my left hand and repeated the following verses, with tears running from my eyes:

When God would execute His will in anything On one endowed with sight, hearing and reasoning,
He stops his ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling;
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back his wit, That therewithal he may receive admonishing.

At this she gave a loud cry and said to me, 'What makes thee weep? Thou settest my heart on fire. And what ails thee to take the cup with thy left hand?' 'I have a boil on my right hand,' answered I; and she said, 'Put it out, and I will lance it for thee.' 'It is not ripe for lancing,' answered I; 'so do not torment me, for I will not show it thee at present.' Then I drank off the cup, and she plied me with wine till I became drowsy and fell asleep in my place; whereupon she looked at my right arm and saw that it was but a stump without a hand. So she searched me and found the purse of gold and my severed hand wrapt in a piece of rag. With this, there overcame her such grief as none ever knew, and she ceased not to lament for my sake till the morning. When I awoke, I found she had made me a dish of broth of four boiled fowls, which she brought to me, together with a cup of wine. I ate and drank and laying down the purse, would have gone out; but she said to me, 'Whither goest thou?' 'Where my business calls me,' replied I; and she said, 'Thou shalt not go: sit down.' So I sat down, and she said, 'Has thy love for me brought thee to such

a pass, that thou hast wasted thy substance and lost thy hand on my account? Since this is so, I call God to witness against me that I will never part with thee: and thou shalt see the truth of my words.' Then she sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and said to them, 'Draw up a contract of marriage between me and this young man and bear witness that I have received the dowry.' So they drew up our marriage contract, and she said to them, 'Be witness that all my money that is in this chest and all that belongs to me and all my slaves, male and female, are the property of this young man.' So they took act of this and withdrew, after having received their fees. Then she took me by the hand and leading me to a closet, opened a large chest and said to me, 'See what is herein.' I looked and behold, it was full of handkerchiefs. Quoth she, 'This is the money I had of thee; for every time thou gavest me a handkerchief, with fifty dinars in it, I wrapped it together and threw it into this chest; so now take thy money, for indeed it returns to thee, and thou to-day art become of high estate. Fate afflicted thee, so that thou didst lose thy right hand for my sake, and I can never requite thee: nay, though I gave my life, it were little and I should still remain thy debtor.' Then she said to me, 'Take possession of thy property:' and transferred the contents of the other chest to that which contained the money I had given her. At this, my heart was gladdened and my grief forsook me, and I rose and kissed and thanked her. Quoth she, 'Thou hast lost thy hand for love of me, and how can I requite thee? By Allah, if I gave my life for thy love, it were far short of thy due!' Then she made over to me by deed all her clothes and jewels and other property and lay not down to sleep that night, being in sore concern on my account, till I told her all that had befallen me. I passed the night with her; but before we had lived together a month's time, she fell grievously ill and sickness

was sore upon her, by reason of her grief for the loss of my hand; and she endured but fifty days before she was numbered of the folk of the other world. So I laid her in the ground and had recitations of the Koran made over her tomb and gave much money in alms for her; after which I returned to the house and found that she had left much substance in money and houses and lands. Among her storehouses was one full of sesame, whereof I sold part to thee; and it was the fact of my being busied in selling the rest of my goods and all that was in the storehouses, that diverted my attention from thee; nor have I till now made an end of receiving the price. This, then, is the reason of the cutting off of my right hand and of my eating with the left. Now thou shalt not baulk me in what I am about to say, for that I have eaten of thy victual; and it is that I make thee a gift of the money that is in thy hands." "Indeed," replied I, "thou hast shown me the utmost kindness and liberality." Then said he, "Wilt thou journey with me to my native country, whither I am about to return with a lading of Cairo and Alexandria stuffs?" "I will well," answered I, and appointed with him for the end of the month. So I sold all I had and bought merchandise; then we set out, he and I, and journeyed till we came to this town, where he sold his goods, and buying others in their stead, set out again for Egypt. But it was my lot to abide here, so that there befell me in my strangerhood what befell last night. This, then, is my story, O King of the age. Is it not more marvellous than that of the hunchback?' 'Not so,' answered the King; 'and needs must you all be hanged.' Then came forward the controller of the Sultan's kitchen and said, 'With thy leave, I will tell thee what happened to me but lately: and if it be more marvellous than the story of the hunchback, do thou grant us our lives.' 'So be it,' answered the King. Then said the controller, 'Know, O King, that

Night xxbii.

THE CONTROLLER'S STORY.

I was the night before last in company with a number of persons who were assembled for the purpose of hearing a recitation of the Koran. The doctors of the law attended, and when the readers had made an end of reading, the table was spread, and amongst other things they set before us a ragout flavoured with cumin-seed. So we sat down to eat it; but one of our number held back and abstained from eating. We conjured him to eat of the ragout; but he swore that he would not, and we pressed him till he said, "Press me not; what has already befallen me through eating of this dish suffices me." And he repeated the following verses:

Shoulder thy tray, 'fore God! and get thee gone with it, And to thine eyes apply such salve as thou deem'st fit.[1]

"For God's sake," said we, "tell us the reason of thy refusal to eat of the ragout!" "If I must eat of it," replied he, "I will not do so, except I may wash my hands forty times with soap, forty times with potash and forty times with galingale, in all a hundred and twenty times." So the master of the house ordered his servants to bring water and all that he required; and the young man washed his hands as he had said. Then he sat down, as if afraid, and dipping his hand into the ragout, began to eat, though with evident repugnance and as if doing himself violence, whilst we regarded him with the utmost wonder; for his hand trembled and we saw that his thumb had been cut off and he ate with his four fingers only. So we said to him, "God on thee, what has become of thy thumb? Is thy hand thus by the creation of God or has it been mutilated

[1] This is apparently some proverbial saying. The meaning appears to be, "Let every man be judge of his own case."

by accident?" "O my brothers," answered he, "it is not this thumb alone that has been cut off, but also that of the other hand and the great toe of each of my feet, as ye shall see." Then he bared his left hand and his feet, and we saw that the left hand was even as the right and that each of his feet lacked the great toe. At this sight, our amazement increased and we said to him, "We are impatient to know thy history and the manner of the cutting off of thy thumbs and great toes and the reason of thy washing thy hands a hundred and twenty times." "Know then," answered he, "that my father was chief of the merchants of Baghdad in the time of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid; but he was given to drinking wine and listening to the lute and other instruments, so that when he died, he left nothing. I buried him and had recitations of the Koran made over him and mourned for him days and nights. Then I opened his shop and found he had left little but debts. However, I compounded with his creditors for time to pay and betook myself to buying and selling, paying them something week by week on account, till at last I succeeded in clearing off the debts and began to add to my capital. One day, as I sat in my shop, there came up to the entrance of the bazaar a lady, than whom my eyes never saw a fairer, richly clad and decked and riding on a mule, with one slave walking before and another behind her. She halted the mule at the entrance of the bazaar and entered, followed by an eunuch, who said to her, 'O my lady, come out, without telling any one, or thou wilt bring us into trouble.' And he stood before her,[1] whilst she looked at the shops. She found no shop open but mine, so came up, with the eunuch behind her, and sitting down in my shop, saluted me, never did I hear aught sweeter than her voice or more pleasant than her speech. Then she unveiled her face, and I saw she was like the moon and stole at her a glance

[1] That none might stare at or jostle her.

that cost me a thousand sighs. My heart was captivated with her love and I could not take my eyes off her face; and I repeated the following verses:

Say to the fairest fair, her in the dove-coloured veil, "Death would be welcome to me, to save me from thy bale:
Grant me thy favours, I pray! so I may live perchance. Lo! I stretch forth my palm: let not thy bounties fail."

When she heard this, she answered me by repeating the following verses:

Power to forget thee, for desire, fails even unto me: My heart and all my soul will love none other after thee.
If my eyes ever look on aught except thy loveliness, May union after severance ne'er brighten them with glee!
I've sworn an oath by my right hand ne'er to forget thy grace. My sad heart pineth for thy love and never may win free.
Passion hath given me to drink a brimming cup of love; Would it had given the self-same draught to drink, dear heart, to thee!
If thou shouldst ask me what I'd crave most earnestly of God, "The Almighty's favour first, then thine," I'd say, "my prayer shall be."

Then she said to me, 'O youth, hast thou any handsome stuffs?' 'O my lady,' answered I, 'thy slave is poor: but wait till the merchants open their shops, and I will get thee what thou wilt.' Then we sat talking, she and I, whilst I was drowned in the sea of her love and dazed with passion for her, till the merchants opened their shops, when I rose and fetched her all she sought, to the value of five thousand dirhems. She gave the stuffs to the slave and leaving the bazaar, mounted the mule and rode away, without telling me whence she came, and I was ashamed to ask her. So I became answerable to the merchants for the price of the goods and thus took on myself a debt of five thousand dirhems. Then I went home, drunken with love of her, and they set the evening meal before me. I ate a mouthful and lay down to rest, musing upon her beauty and grace: but sleep came not to me. A week

passed thus, and the merchants sought their money of me, but I persuaded them to wait another week, at the end of which time she came up, riding on the mule and attended by an eunuch and two slaves. She saluted me and said, 'O my lord, we have been long in bringing thee the price of the stuffs; but now fetch a money-changer and take the amount.' So I sent for the money-changer, and the eunuch counted me out the money, and we sat talking, the lady and I, till the market opened, when she said to me, 'Get me this and this.' So I got her from the merchants what 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 price of what I had bought for her was a thousand dinars, and I said to myself, 'What doting is this? She has brought me five thousand dirhems[1] and taken a thousand dinars'[2] worth of goods.' And I feared lest I should be beggared, through having to pay the merchants their money, and said, 'They know none but me and this woman is none other than a cheat, who hath cozened me with her beauty and grace, for she saw that I was young and laughed at me; and I did not ask her address.' She did not come again for more than a month, and I abode in constant distress and perplexity, till at last the merchants dunned me for their money and pressed me so that I put up my property for sale and looked for nothing but ruin. However, as I was sitting in my shop, one day, absorbed in melancholy thought, she rode up and dismounting at the gate of the bazaar, came in and made towards me. When I saw her, my anxiety ceased and I forgot my troubles. She came up to me and greeting me with her pleasant speech, said to me, 'Fetch the money-changer and take thy money.' So she gave me the price of the goods I had gotten for her

[1] About a hundred and twenty-five pounds.
[2] About five hundred pounds.

and more, and fell to conversing freely with me, till I was like to die of joy and delight. Presently, she said to me, 'Hast thou a wife?' 'No,' answered I; 'I have never known woman.' And fell a-weeping. Quoth she, 'Why dost thou weep?' 'It is nothing,' replied I; and giving the eunuch some of the dinars, begged him to use his influence with her for me; but he laughed and said, 'She is more in love with thee than thou with her. She had no occasion for the stuffs she bought of thee and did all this but out of love for thee. So ask of her what thou wilt; she will not deny thee.' When she saw me give the eunuch money, she returned and sat down again; and I said to her, '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.' Then to me, 'Do as the eunuch bids thee.' Then she rose and went away, and I paid the merchants what I owed them, and they all profited; but as for me, I gained nought but regret for the breaking off of our intercourse. I slept not all that night; but before many days were past, the eunuch came to me, and I made much of him and asked after his mistress. 'She is sick for love of thee,' replied he; and I said, 'Tell me who she is.' Quoth he, 'She is one of the waiting-women of the Lady Zubeideh, the wife of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, who brought her up and advanced her to be stewardess of the harem and granted her the right of going in and out at will. She told her mistress 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 wish to bring thee into the palace at once and if thou succeed in entering without being seen, thou wilt win to marry her; but if the affair get wind, thou wilt lose thy head. What sayst thou?' And I answered, 'I will go with thee and

abide the risk of which thou speakest.' Then said he, 'As soon as it is night, go to the Mosque built by the Lady Zubeideh on the Tigris and pray and pass the night there.' 'With all my heart,' answered I. So at nightfall I repaired to the mosque, where I prayed and passed the night. Just before daybreak, there came up some eunuchs in a boat, with a number of empty chests, which they deposited in the mosque and went away all, except one who remained behind and whom, on examination, I found to be he who served as our go-between. Presently, in came my mistress herself and I rose to her and embraced her. She kissed me, weeping, and we talked awhile; after which she made me get into one of the chests and locked it upon me. Then the eunuchs came back with a number of packages; and she fell to stowing them in the chests and locking the latter one by one, till she had filled them all. Then they embarked the chests in the boat and made for the Lady Zubeideh's palace. With this, reflection came to me and I said to myself, 'My lust will surely bring me to destruction, nor do I know whether I shall gain my end or no!' And I began to weep, shut up as I was in the chest, and to pray to God to deliver me from the peril I was in, whilst the boat ceased not going till it reached the palace gate, where they lifted out the chests and amongst them that in which I was. Then they carried them into the palace, passing through a troop of eunuchs, guardians of the harem and door-keepers, till they came to the post of the chief of the eunuchs, who started up from sleep and called out to the lady, saying, 'What is in those chests?' Quoth she, 'They are full of wares for the Lady Zubeideh.' 'Open them,' said he, 'one by one, that I may see what is in them.' 'Why wilt thou open them?' asked she: but he cried out at her, saying, 'Give me no words! They must and shall be opened.' Now the first that they brought to him to open was that in which I was: and when I felt

this, my senses failed me and I bepissed myself for terror, and the water ran out of the chest. Then said she to the eunuch, 'O chief, thou hast undone me and thyself also, for thou hast spoiled that which is worth ten thousand dinars. This box contains coloured dresses and four flasks of Zemzem water; and now one of the bottles has broken loose and the water is running out over the clothes and their colours will be ruined.' Then said the eunuch, 'Take up thy chests and begone with God's malison!' So the slaves took up the chests and hurried on with them, till suddenly I heard a voice saying, 'Alas! Alas! the Khalif! the Khalif!' When I heard this, my heart died within me and I spoke the words which whoso says shall not be confounded, that is to say, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I have brought this affliction on myself.' Presently I heard the Khalif say to my mistress, 'Harkye, what is in those chests of thine?' 'Clothes for the Lady Zubeideh,' answered she; and he said, 'Open them to me.' When I heard this, I gave myself up for lost and said, 'By Allah, this is the last of my worldly days!' and began to repeat the profession of the Faith. Night xxviii. Then I heard the lady say to the Khalif, 'These chests have been committed to my charge by the Lady Zubeideh, and she does not wish their contents to be seen of any one.' 'No matter,' said he; 'I must open them and see what is in them.' And he cried out to the eunuchs saying, 'Bring them to me.' At this, I made sure of death and swooned away. Then the slaves brought the chests up to him and opened them, one after another, and he saw in them perfumes and stuffs and rich clothes, till none remained unopened but that in which I was. They put their hands to it to open it, but the lady made haste and said to the Khalif, 'This one thou shalt see in the Lady Zubeideh's presence, for that which is in it is her secret.' When he heard this, he ordered them to carry in the

chests; so they took up that in which I was and carried it, with the rest, into the harem and set it down in the middle of the saloon; and indeed my spittle was dried up for fear. Then my mistress opened the chest and took me out, saying, 'Fear not: no harm shall befall thee, but be of good courage and sit down, till the Lady Zubeideh comes, and thou shalt surely win thy wish of me.' So I sat down, and after a while, in came ten maidens like moons and ranged themselves in two rows, one facing the other, and after them other twenty, high-bosomed maids, with the Lady Zubeideh, who could hardly walk for the weight of her dresses and ornaments. As she drew near, the damsels dispersed from around her, and I advanced and kissed the earth before her. She signed to me to be seated and questioned me of my condition and family, to which I made such answers as pleased her, and she said to my mistress, 'O damsel, our nurturing of thee has not been in vain.' Then she said to me, 'Know that this damsel is to us even as our own child, and she is a trust committed to thee by God.' I kissed the earth again before her, well pleased that I should marry my mistress, and she bade me sojourn ten days in the palace. So I abode there ten days, during which time I saw not my mistress nor any one save a serving-maid, who brought me the morning and evening meals. After this the Lady Zubeideh took counsel with the Khalif on the marriage of her favourite, and he gave leave and assigned her a wedding portion of ten thousand dinars. So the Lady Zubeideh sent for the Cadi and the witnesses, and they drew up our marriage contract, after which the women made sweetmeats and rich viands and distributed them among the inmates of the harem. Thus they did other ten days, at the end of which time my mistress entered the bath. Meanwhile, they set before me a tray of food, on which was a basin containing a ragout of fricasseed fowls' breasts, dressed with cumin-seed and

flavoured with sugar and rose-water, mixed with musk, and many another dish, such as amazed the wit; and by Allah, I did not hesitate, but fell upon the ragout and ate my fill of it. Then I wiped my hands, but forgot to wash them and sat till it grew dark, when they lit the candles and the singing-women came with tambourines and proceeded to display the bride and carry her in procession from room to room, receiving largesse of gold and pieces of silk, till they had made the round of the palace. Then they brought her to me and disrobed her. When I found myself alone in bed with her, I embraced her, hardly believing in my good fortune; but she smelt the odour of the ragout on my hands and gave a loud cry, at which the maids came running to her from all sides. I was alarmed and trembled, not knowing what was the matter, and the girls said to her, 'What ails thee, O sister?' Quoth she, 'Take this madman away from me: methought he was a man of sense.' 'What makes thee think me mad?' asked I. 'O madman,' answered she, 'what made thee eat of ragout of cumin-seed, without washing thy hands? By Allah, I will punish thee for thy misconduct! Shall the like of thee come to bed to the like of me, with unwashed hands?' Then she took from her side a whip of plaited thongs and laid on to my back and buttocks till I swooned away for the much beating; when she said to the maids, 'Take him and carry him to the chief of the police, that he may cut off the hand wherewith he ate of the ragout and washed it not.' When I heard this, I said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Wilt thou cut off my hand, because I ate of a ragout and did not wash?' And the girls interceded with her, saying, 'O our sister, forgive him this once!' But she said, 'By Allah, I must and will dock him of somewhat!' Then she went away and I saw no more of her for ten days, at the end of which time, she came in to me and said, 'O black-a-vice, I will not make peace

with thee, till I have punished thee for eating ragout of cumin-seed, without washing thy hands!' Then she cried out to the maids, who bound me; and she took a sharp razor and cut off my thumbs and toes, as ye have seen. Thereupon I swooned away and she sprinkled the severed parts with a powder which stanched the blood; and I said, 'Never again will I eat of ragout of cumin-seed without washing my hands forty times with potash, forty times with galingale and forty times with soap!' And she took of me an oath to that effect. So when the ragout was set before me, my colour changed and I said to myself, 'It was this that was the cause of the cutting off of my thumbs and toes.' And when ye forced me, I said, 'I must needs fulfil the oath I have taken.'" "And what befell thee after this?" asked the others. "After this," replied he, "her heart was appeased and I lay with her that night. We abode thus awhile, till she said to me, one day, 'It befits not that we continue in the Khalif's palace: for none ever came hither but thou, and thou wonst not in but by the grace of the Lady Zubeideh. Now she has given me fifty thousand dinars; so take this money and go out and buy us a commodious house.' So I went forth and bought a handsome and spacious house, whither she transported all her goods and valuables." Then (continued the controller) we ate and went away: and after, there happened to me with the hunchback that thou wottest of. This then is my story and peace be on thee.' Quoth the King, 'This story is not more agreeable than that of the hunchback: on the contrary, it is less so, and you must all be hanged.' Then came forward the Jewish physician and kissing the earth, said, 'O King of the age, I will tell thee a story more wonderful than that of the hunchback.' 'Tell on,' answered the King; and the Jew said, 'The strangest adventure that ever befell me was as follows:

THE JEWISH PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

In my younger days I lived at Damascus, where I studied my art; and one day, as I sat in my house, there came to me a servant with a summons from the governor of the city. So I followed him to the house and entering the saloon, saw, lying on a couch of juniper-wood, set with plates of gold, that stood at the upper end, a sick youth, never was seen a handsomer. I sat down at his head and offered up a prayer for his recovery. He made a sign to me with his eyes and I said to him, "O my lord, give me thy hand." So he put forth his left hand, at which I wondered and said to myself, "By Allah, it is strange that so handsome a young man of high family should lack good breeding! This can be nothing but conceit." However, I felt his pulse and wrote him a prescription and continued to visit him for ten days, at the end of which time he recovered and went to the bath, whereupon the governor gave me a handsome dress of honour and appointed me superintendent of the hospital at Damascus. I accompanied him to the bath, the whole of which they had cleared for his accommodation, and the servants came in with him and took off his clothes within the bath, when I saw that his right hand had been newly cut off, and this was the cause of his illness. At this I was amazed and grieved for him: then looking at his body, I saw on it the marks of beating with rods, for which he had used ointments. I was perplexed at this and my perplexity appeared in my face. The young man looked at me and reading my thought, said to me, "O physician of the age, marvel not at my case. I will tell thee my story, when we leave the bath." Then we washed and returning to his house, partook of food and rested awhile; after which he said to me, "What sayest thou to taking the air in the garden?"

"I will well," answered I; so he bade the slaves carry out carpets and cushions and roast a lamb and bring us some fruit. They did as he bade them, and we ate of the fruits, he using his left hand for the purpose. After a while, I said to him, "Tell me thy story." "O physician of the age," answered he, "hear what befell me. Know that I am a native of Mosul and my father was the eldest of ten brothers, who were all married, but none of them was blessed with children except my father, to whom God had vouchsafed me. So I grew up among my uncles, who rejoiced in me with exceeding joy, till I came to man's estate. One Friday, I went to the chief mosque of Mosul with my father and my uncles, and we prayed the congregational prayers, after which all the people went out, except my father and uncles, who sat conversing of the wonders of foreign lands and the strange things to be seen in various cities. At last they mentioned Egypt and one of my uncles said, 'Travellers say that there is not on the face of the earth aught fairer than Cairo and its Nile.' Quoth my father, 'Who has not seen Cairo has not seen the world. Its dust is gold and its Nile a wonder; its women are houris and its houses palaces: its air is temperate and the fragrance of its breezes outvies the scent of aloes-wood: and how should it be otherwise, being the mother of the world? Bravo for him who says . . . . . .' And he repeated the following verses:

Shall I from Cairo wend and leave the sweets of its delight? What sojourn after it indeed were worth a longing thought?
How shall I leave its fertile plains, whose earth unto the scent Is very perfume, for the land contains no thing that's naught?
It is indeed for loveliness a very Paradise, With all its goodly carpets spread and cushions richly wrought.
A town that maketh heart and eye yearn with its goodliness, Uniting all that of devout and profligate is sought
Or comrades true, by God His grace conjoined in brotherhood, Their meeting-place the groves of palms that cluster round about.

O men of Cairo, if it be God's will that I depart, Let bonds of friendship and of love unite us still in thought!
Name not the city to the breeze, lest for its rival lands It steal the perfumes, wherewithal its garden-ways are fraught.

'And if,' added my father, 'you saw its gardens in the evenings, with the tree-shadows sloping over them, you would behold a marvel and incline to them with delight.' And they fell to describing Cairo and the Nile. When I heard their accounts of Cairo, my mind dwelt on it and I longed to visit it; and when they had done talking, each went to his own dwelling. As for me, I slept not that night, for stress of yearning after Egypt, nor was meat nor drink pleasant to me. After a while, my uncles prepared to set out for Cairo, and I wept before my father, till he made ready for me merchandise and consented to my going with them, saying to them, 'Let him not enter Egypt, but leave him to sell his goods at Damascus.' Then I took leave of my father and we left Mosul and journeyed till we reached Aleppo, where we abode some days. Then we fared on, till we came to Damascus and found it a city as it were a paradise, abounding in trees and rivers and birds and fruits of all kinds. We alighted at one of the Khans, where my uncles tarried awhile, selling and buying: and they sold my goods also at a profit of five dirhems on every one,[1] to my great satisfaction; after which they left me and went on to Egypt, whilst I abode at Damascus, in a handsome house, such as the tongue fails to describe, which I had hired for two dinars a month. Here I remained, eating and drinking and spending the money in my hands, till, one day, as I sat at the door of my lodging, there came up a young lady, clad in costly apparel, never saw my eyes richer. I winked at her; and she entered without hesitation. I entered with her and shut the door, and she raised her kerchief and did off her veil, when I found her

[1] *i.e.* of prime cost.

of surpassing beauty, and love of her took hold upon my heart. So I rose and fetched a tray of the most delicate viands and fruits and all that was needed for a carouse, and we ate and sported and drank till we were warm with wine. Then I lay with her the most delightful of nights, till the morning, when I offered to give her ten dinars; but she frowned and knit her brows and said, 'For shame! Thinkest thou I covet thy money?' And she took out from the bosom of her shift ten dinars and laid them before me, saying, 'By Allah, except thou take them, I will never come back!' So I accepted them, and she said to me, 'O my beloved, expect me again in three days' time, when I will be with thee between sundown and nightfall; and do thou provide us with these dinars the like of yesterday's entertainment.' So saying, she bade me adieu and went away, taking my reason with her. At the end of the three days, she came again, dressed in gold brocade and wearing richer ornaments than before. I had made ready a repast; so we ate and drank and lay together, as before, till the morning, when she gave me other ten dinars and appointed me again for three days thence. Accordingly, I made ready as before, and at the appointed time she came again, more richly dressed than ever, and said to me, 'O my lord, am I not fair?' 'Yea, by Allah!' answered I. Then she said, 'Wilt thou give me leave to bring with me a young lady handsomer than I and younger, that she may frolic with us and that thou and she may laugh and make merry and rejoice her heart, for she has been sad at heart this long time past and has asked me to let her go out and spend the night abroad with me?' 'Ay, by Allah!' answered I; and we drank till we were warm with wine and slept together till the morning, when she gave me twenty dinars and said to me, 'Add to thy usual provision, on account of the young lady who will come with me.' Then she went away, and on the fourth day, I made ready as usual, and

soon after sundown she came, accompanied by another damsel, wrapped in a veil. They entered and sat down; and when I saw them, I repeated the following verses:

How lovely and how pleasant is our day! The railer's absent, reckless of our play;
Love and delight and wine with us abide, Each one enough to charm the wit away;
The full moon[1] glitters through the falling veil; Bough-like, the shapes within the vestments sway:
The rose blooms in the cheeks, and in the eyes Narcissus languishes, in soft decay.[2]
Delight with those I love fulfilled for me And life, as I would have it, fair and gay!

Then I lighted the candles and received them with joy and gladness. They put off their outer clothing, and the new damsel unveiled her face, when I saw that she was like the moon at its full, never beheld I one more beautiful. Then I rose and set meat and drink before them, and we ate and drank: and I began to feed the new damsel and to fill her cup and drink with her. At this the first lady was secretly jealous and said to me, 'Is not this girl more charming than I?' 'Ay, by Allah!' replied I. Quoth she, 'It is my intent that thou lie with her this night.' And I answered, 'On my head and eyes!' Then she rose and spread the bed for us, and I took the young lady and lay with her that night till the morning, when I awoke and found myself wet, as I thought, with sweat. I sat up and tried to rouse the damsel, but when I shook her by the shoulders, her head rolled off the pillow. Thereupon my reason fled and I cried out, saying, 'O gracious Protector, extend to me Thy protection!' Then I saw that she had been murdered, and the world became black in my sight and I sought the lady my first mistress, but could not find

[1] The face of a mistress.

[2] It is a common Oriental figure to liken a languishing eye to a dying narcissus.

her. So I knew that it was she who had murdered the girl, out of jealousy, and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! What is to be done?' I considered awhile, then rose and taking off my clothes, dug a hole midmost the court-yard, in which I laid the dead girl, with her jewellery and ornaments, and throwing back the earth over her, replaced the marble of the pavement. After this I washed and put on clean clothes and taking what money I had left, locked up the house and took courage and went to the owner of the house, to whom I paid a year's rent, telling him that I was about to join my uncles at Cairo. Then I set out and journeying to Egypt, foregathered with my uncles, who rejoiced in me and I found that they had made an end of selling their goods. They enquired the reason of my coming, and I said, 'I yearned after you;' but did not let them know that I had any money with me. I abode with them a year, enjoying the pleasures of the city and the Nile and squandering the rest of my money in feasting and drinking, till the time drew near for my uncles' departure, when I hid myself from them and they sought for me, but could hear no news of me and said, 'He must have gone back to Damascus.' So they departed, and I came out from my hiding and sojourned in Cairo three years, sending year by year the rent of the house at Damascus to its owner, until at last I had nothing left but one year's rent. At this my breast was straitened and I set out and journeyed till I reached Damascus, where my landlord received me with joy. I alighted at the house and found everything locked up as I had left it: so I opened the closets and took out what was in them and found under the bed, where I had lain with the murdered girl, a necklet of gold set with jewels. I took it up and cleansing it of her blood, examined it and wept awhile. Then I abode in the house two days and on the third day, I went to the

bath and changed my clothes. I had now no money left and the devil prompted me to sell the necklet, that destiny might be accomplished; so I took it to the market and handed it to a broker, who made me sit down in the shop of my landlord and waited till the market was full, when he took the necklet and offered it for sale privily without my knowledge. The price bidden for it was two thousand dinars; but the broker returned and said to me, 'This necklet is a brass counterfeit of Frank manufacture, and a thousand dirhems have been bidden for it.' 'Yes,' answered I; 'I knew it to be brass, for we had it made for such an one, that we might mock her: and now my wife has inherited it and we wish to sell it; so go and take the thousand dirhems.' When the broker heard this, his suspicions were roused; so he carried the necklet to the chief of the market, who took it to the prefect of police and said to him, 'This necklet was stolen from me, and we have found the thief in the habit of a merchant.' So the officers fell on me unawares and brought me to the prefect, who questioned me and I told him what I had told the broker: but he laughed and said, 'This is not the truth.' Then, before I knew what was toward, his people stripped me and beat me with rods on my sides, till for the smart of the blows I said, 'I did steal it,' bethinking me that it was better to confess that I stole it than let them know that she who owned it had been murdered in my house, lest they should put me to death for her. So they wrote down that I had stolen it and cut off my hand. The stump they seared with boiling oil and I swooned away: but they gave me wine to drink, and I revived and taking up my hand, was returning to my lodging, when the landlord said to me, 'After what has passed, thou must leave my house and look for another lodging, since thou art convicted of theft.' 'O my lord,' said I, 'have patience with me two or three days, till I look me out a new lodging.' 'So be

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it,' answered he; and I returned to the house, where I sat weeping and saying, 'How shall I return to my people with my hand cut off and they know not that I am innocent?' Then I abode in sore trouble and perplexity for two days, and on the third day the landlord came in to me, and with him some officers of police and the chief of the market, who had accused me of stealing the necklace. I went out to them and enquired what was the matter, but they seized on me, without further parley, and tied my hands behind me and put a chain about my neck, saying, 'The necklet that was with thee has been shown to the Governor of Damascus, and he recognizes it as one that belonged to his daughter, who has been missing these three years.' When I heard this, my heart sank within me, and I said to myself, 'I am lost without resource; but I must needs tell the governor my story; and if he will, let him kill me, and if he will, let him pardon me.' So they carried me to the governor's house and made me stand before him. When he saw me, he looked at me out of the corner of his eye and said to those present, 'Why did ye cut off his hand? This man is unfortunate and hath committed no offence; and indeed ye wronged him in cutting off his hand.' When I heard this, I took heart and said to him, 'By Allah, O my lord, I am no thief! But they accused me of this grave offence and beat me with rods in the midst of the market, bidding me confess, till for the pain of the beating, I lied against myself and confessed to the theft, although I am innocent.' 'Fear not,' said the governor; 'no harm shall come to thee.' Then he laid the chief of the market under arrest, saying to him, 'Give this man the price of his hand, or I will hang thee and seize on all thy goods.' And he cried out to the officers, who took him and dragged him away, leaving me with the governor, who made his people unbind me and take the chain off my neck. Then he

looked at me and said, 'O my son, speak the truth and tell me how thou camest by the necklet.' And he repeated the following verse:

To tell the whole truth is thy duty, although It bring thee to burn on the brasier of woe!

'By Allah, O my lord,' answered I, 'such is my intent!' And I told him all that had passed between me and the first lady and how she had brought the second one to me and had slain her out of jealousy. When he heard my story, he shook his head and beat hand upon hand; then putting his handkerchief to his eyes, wept awhile and repeated the following verses:

I see that Fortune's maladies are many upon me, For, every dweller in the world, sick unto death is he.
To every gathering of friends there comes a parting day: And few indeed on earth are those that are from parting free!

Then he turned to me and said, 'Know, O my son, that she who first came to thee was my eldest daughter. I brought her up in strict seclusion and when she came to womanhood, I sent her to Cairo and married her to my brother's son. After a while, he died and she came back to me: but she had learnt profligate habits from the natives of Cairo: so she visited thee four times and at last brought her younger sister. Now they were sisters by the same mother and much attached to each other; and when this happened to the elder, she let her sister into her secret, and she desired to go out with her. So she asked thy leave and carried her to thee; after which she returned alone, and I questioned her of her sister, finding her weeping for her; but she said, "I know nothing of her." However, after this, she told her mother privily what had happened and how she had killed her sister; and her mother told me. Then she ceased not to weep and say, "By Allah, I will never leave weeping for her,

till I die!" And so it fell out. This, O my son, is what happened, and now I desire that thou baulk me not in what I am about to say to thee; it is that I purpose to marry thee to my youngest daughter, for she is a virgin and born of another mother, and I will take no dower from thee, but on the contrary will appoint thee an allowance, and thou shalt be to me as my very son.' 'I will well,' replied I; 'how could I hope for such good fortune?' Then he sent at once for the Cadi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter, and I went in to her. Moreover, he got me a large sum of money from the chief of the market and I became in high favour with him. Soon after, news came to me that my father was dead; so the governor despatched a courier to fetch me the property he had left behind him, and now I am living in all prosperity. This is how I came to lose my right hand." His story amazed me (continued the Jew) and I abode with him three days, after which he gave me much money, and I set out and travelled, till I reached this thy city. The sojourn liked me well, so I took up my abode here and there befell me what thou knowest with the hunchback.' Quoth the King, 'This thy story is not more wonderful than that of the hunchback, and I will certainly hang you all. However, there still remains the tailor, who was the head of the offending.' Then he said to the tailor, 'O tailor, if thou canst tell me aught more wonderful than the story of the hunchback, I will pardon you all your offences.' So the tailor came forward and said, 'Know, O King of the age, that a most rare thing happened to me yesterday, before I fell in with the hunchback.

THE TAILOR'S STORY.

Yesterday morning early I was at an entertainment given by a friend of mine, at which there were assembled near twenty men of the people of the city, amongst them

tailors and silk-weavers and carpenters and other craftsmen. 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 comely young man, a stranger from Baghdad, dressed in the finest of clothes and perfectly handsome, except that he was lame. He saluted us, while we rose to receive him; and he was about to sit down, when he espied amongst us a certain barber; whereupon he refused to sit and would have gone away. But we stopped him and the host seized him and adjured him, saying, "What is the reason of thy coming in and going out again at once?" "By Allah, O my lord," answered he, "do not hinder me, for the cause of my turning back is yonder barber of ill-omen sitting there." When the host heard this, he wondered and said, "How comes this young man, who is from Baghdad, to be troubled in his mind about this barber?" Then we looked at the young man and said to him, "Tell us the reason of thine anger against the barber." "O company," replied he, "there befell me a strange adventure with this barber in my native city of Baghdad; he was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my lameness, and I have sworn that I will never sit in the same place with him nor tarry in any city of which he is an inhabitant. I left Baghdad, to be rid of him, and took up my abode in this city and lo, I find him with you! But now not another night shall pass, before I depart hence." So we begged him to sit down and tell us what had passed between him and the barber in Baghdad, whereat the latter changed colour and hung down his head. Then said the young man, "Know, O company, that my father was one of the chief merchants of Baghdad, and God had vouchsafed him no child but myself. When I grew up to man's estate, my father was translated to the mercy of God, leaving me great wealth in money and slaves and

servants, and I began to dress handsomely and feed daintily. Now God had made me a hater of women, and one day, as I was going along one of the streets of Baghdad, a company of women stopped the way before me; so I fled from them, and entering a by-street without an outlet, sat down upon a stone bench at the other end. I had not sat long, before the lattice of one of the houses in the street opened and a young lady, as she were the moon at its full, never in my life saw I her like, put forth her head and began to water some flowers she had on the balcony. Then she turned right and left and seeing me watching her, smiled and shut the window and went away. Therewithal, fire flamed up in my heart and my mind was taken up with her, and my hatred (of women) was changed to love. I continued sitting there, lost to the world, till sundown, when the Cadi of the city came riding up the street, with slaves before him and servants behind him, and alighting, entered the very house at which the young lady had appeared. By this I guessed that he was her father; so I went home, sorrowful, and fell on my bed, oppressed with melancholy thoughts. My women came in to me and sat round me, puzzled to know what ailed me; but I would not speak to them nor answer their questions, and they wept and lamented over me. Presently, in came an old woman, who looked at me and saw at once what was the matter with me. So she sat down at my head and spoke me fair and said, 'O my son, tell me what ails thee, and I will bring thee to thy desire.' So I told her what had happened to me, and she said, 'O my son, this girl is the Cadi's daughter of Baghdad; she is kept in strict seclusion, and the window at which thou sawest her is that of her apartment, where she dwells alone, her father occupying a great suite of rooms underneath. I often visit her, and thou shalt not come at her but through me; so gird thy middle and be of good

cheer.' So saying, she went away, whilst I took comfort at what she said and arose in the morning well, to the great satisfaction of my people. By and by the old woman came in, chopfallen, and said to me, 'O my son, do not ask how I have fared with her! When I opened the subject to her, she said to me, "An thou leave not this talk, pestilent hag that thou art, I will assuredly use thee as thou deservest." But needs must I have at her again.' When I heard this, it added sickness to my sickness: but after some days, the old woman came again and said to me, 'O my son, I must have of thee a present for good news.' With this, life returned to me, and I said, 'Whatever thou wilt is thine.' Then said she, 'O my son, I went yesterday to the young lady, who seeing me broken-spirited and tearful-eyed, said to me, "O my aunt, what ails thee that I see thy heart thus straitened?" Whereupon I wept and replied, "O my lady, I am just come from a youth who loves thee and is like to die for thy sake." Quoth she (and indeed her heart was moved to pity), "And who is this youth of whom thou speakest?" "He is my son," answered I, "and the darling of my heart. He saw thee, some days since, at the window, tending thy flowers, and fell madly in love with thee. I told him what passed between thee and me the other day, whereupon his disorder increased and he took to his bed and will surely die." At this her colour changed and she said, "Is all this on my account?" "Yea, by Allah!" answered I. "What wouldst thou have me do?" Then said she, "Go back to him and salute him for me and tell him that my sufferings are twice as great as his. And on Friday, before the time of prayer, let him come hither and I will come down and open the door to him. Then I will carry him to my chamber, where we can converse awhile and he can go away, before my father comes back from the mosque."' When I heard this, my

anguish ceased and my heart was comforted. So I took off the clothes I was wearing and gave them to the old woman; and she said, 'Be of good cheer.' 'There is no pain left in me,' answered I; and she went away. My household and friends rejoiced in my restoration to health, and I abode thus till Friday, when the old woman entered and asked me how I did, to which I replied that I was well and in good case. Then I dressed and perfumed myself and sat down to await the going in of the folk to the mosque, that I might betake myself to the young lady. But the old woman said to me, 'Thou hast time and to spare; so thou wouldst do well to go to the bath and have thy head shaved, to do away the traces of thy disorder.' 'It is well thought,' answered I; 'I will first have my head shaved and then go to the bath.' Then I said to my servant, 'Go to the market and bring me a barber, and look that he be no meddler, but a man of sense, who will not split my head with his much talk.' So he went out and returned with this wretched old man. When he came in, he saluted me, and I returned his salutation. Then said he, 'Surely, I see thee thin of body?' And I replied, 'I have been ill.' Quoth he, 'God cause affliction and trouble and anxiety to depart from thee!' 'May God hear thy prayer!' answered I: and he said, 'Be of good cheer, O my lord, for indeed recovery is come to thee. Dost thou wish to be polled or let blood? Indeed, it is reported, on the authority of Ibn Abbas[1] (whom God accept!), that the Prophet said, "Whoso is polled on a Friday, God shall avert from him threescore and ten diseases;" and again, "He who is cupped on a Friday is safe from loss of sight and a host of other ailments."' 'Leave this talk,' said I; 'come, shave my head at once, for I am yet weak.' With this he pulled out a handkerchief, from which he took an astrolabe with seven plates, mounted

[1] One of the companions of Mohammed.

in silver, and going into the courtyard, held the instrument up to the sun's rays and looked for some time. Then he came back and said to me, 'Know that eight degrees and six minutes have elapsed of this our day, which is Friday, the tenth of Sefer, in the six hundred and fifty-third year of the Flight of the Prophet (upon whom be the most excellent of blessing and peace!) and the seven thousand three hundred and twentieth year of the Alexandrian era, and the planet now in the ascendant, according to the rules of mathematics, is Mars, which being in conjunction with Mercury, denotes a favourable time for cutting hair; and this also indicates to me that thou purposest to foregather with some one and that your interview will be propitious; but after this there occurs a sign, respecting a thing which I will not name to thee.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed I, 'thou weariest me and pesterest me with thy foolish auguries, when I only sent for thee to shave my head! So come, shave me at once and give me no more talk.' 'By Allah,' rejoined he, 'if thou knewest what is about to befall thee, thou wouldst do nothing this day; and I counsel thee to do as I shall tell thee, by observation of the stars. 'By Allah,' said I, 'I never saw a barber skilled in astrology except thee: but I think and know that thou art prodigal of idle talk. I sent for thee to shave my head, and thou plaguest me with this sorry prate!' 'What more wouldst thou have?' replied he. 'God hath vouchsafed thee a barber, who is an astrologer, versed in the arts of alchemy and white magic, syntax, grammar and lexicology, rhetoric and logic, arithmetic, astronomy and geometry, as well as in the knowledge of the Law and the Traditions of the Prophet and in exegesis. Moreover, I have read many books and digested them and have had experience of affairs and understand them thoroughly. In short, I have examined into all things and studied all arts and crafts and sciences and mastered

them; and thy father loved me because of my lack of officiousness, for which reason my service is obligatory on thee. I am no meddler, as thou pretendest, and on this account I am known as the Silent, the Grave One. Wherefore it behoves thee to give thanks to God and not cross me, for I am a true counsellor to thee and take an affectionate interest in thee. I would I were in thy service a whole year, that thou mightst do me justice: and I would ask no hire of thee for this.' When I heard this, I said, 'Thou wilt certainly be the death of me this day!' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I am he whom the folk call the Silent, by reason of my few words, to distinguish me from my six brothers, the eldest of whom was called Becbac,[1] the second Heddar,[2] the third Fekic,[3] the fourth El Kouz el Aswani,[4] the fifth El Feshar,[5] the sixth Shecashic[6] and the seventh (myself) Samit.'[7] Whilst he thus overwhelmed me with his talk, I thought my gall-bladder would burst; so I said to the servant, 'Give him a quarter-dinar and let him go, for God's sake! I won't have my head shaved to-day.' 'What words are these, O my lord?' said he. 'By Allah, I will take no hire of thee till I have served thee; and needs must I serve thee, for indeed it is incumbent on me to do so and fulfil thy need; and I care not if I take no money of thee. If thou knowest not my worth, I know thine; and I owe thy father (may God the Most High have mercy on him!) many a kindness, for he was a generous man. By Allah, he sent for me one day, as it were this blessed day, and I went in to him and found a company of his friends with him. He would have had me let him blood; but I pulled out my astrolabe and taking an altitude for him, found the aspect inauspicious and the hour unfavourable for the letting of blood. I told him of this and he conformed to my advice

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[1] Prater. [2] Babbler. [3] Gabbler. [4] The Stone Mug. [5] The Braggart. [6] Noisy. [7] Silent.

and put off the operation to a more convenient season. So I recited the following verses in his honour:

I came one day unto my lord, that I might let him blood, But found that for his body's health the season was not good;
So sat me down and talked with him of many a pleasant thing And all the treasures of my mind before him freely strewed.
Well pleased, he listened, then, "O mine of knowledge!" he did say, "Thy wit and wisdom overpass the bounds of likelihood!"
"Not so," quoth I; "my wit indeed were little, but for thee, O prince of men, that pour'st on me thy wisdom like a flood!
Thou seem'st indeed the lord of grace, bounty and excellence, World's treasure-house of knowledge, wit, sense and mansuetude!"

Thy father was charmed and cried out to the servant, saying, "Give him a hundred and three dinars and a dress of honour." The servant did as he bade, and I waited till a favourable moment, when I let him blood; and he did not cross me, but thanked me, and all present also praised me. When the cupping was over, I could not help saying to him, "By Allah, O my lord, what made thee say to the servant, 'Give him a hundred and three dinars'?" Quoth he, "One dinar was for the astrological observation, another for thine entertaining converse, the third for the blood-letting and the remaining hundred and the dress for thy verses in my honour."' 'May God show no mercy to my father,' exclaimed I, 'for knowing the like of thee!' He laughed and said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle! Glory be to Him who changes but is not changed! I took thee for a man of sense; but I see thou dotest for illness. God says, in His precious Book, that Paradise is prepared for "those who restrain their wrath and forgive men"; and in any case thou art excused. But I am ignorant of the cause of thy haste, and thou must know that thy father and grandfather did nothing without consulting me, for indeed it is said that he with whom one takes counsel should be trustworthy and that he who takes counsel shall not be disappointed. It is said also that he

who hath not an elder (to advise him) will never be an elder himself; and indeed the poet says:

Ere thou decide to venture thyself in aught, Consult an experienced man and cross him not.

And indeed thou wilt find none better versed in affairs than I, and I am here standing on my feet to serve thee. I am not vexed with thee: why shouldst thou be vexed with me? But I will bear with thee for the sake of the favours I owe thy father.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed I, 'O (thou whose tongue is as long as a) jackass's tail, thou persistest in pestering me with talk and pelting me with words, when all I want of thee is to shave my head and take thyself off!' Then he lathered my head, saying, 'I know that thou art vexed with me, but I bear thee no malice; for thy wit is weak and thou art a boy: it was but yesterday I took thee on my shoulders and carried thee to the school.' 'O my brother,' cried I, 'for God's sake, do what I want and go thy way!' And I rent my clothes. When he saw me do this, he took the razor and fell to sharpening it and stinted not, till I was well-nigh distraught. Then he came up to me and shaved a part of my head, then held his hand and said, 'O my lord, hurry is of the Devil and deliberation of the Merciful One. Methinks thou knowest not my station; verily my hand falls on the heads of kings and amirs and viziers and sages and learned men; and it was of me the poet said:

All the trades are like necklets of jewels and gold, And this barber indeed's the chief pearl of the strings.
He excelleth all others that boast of their skill, And under his hand are the topknots of kings.'

'Leave what concerns thee not,' said I: 'indeed thou hast straitened my breast and troubled my mind.' Quoth he, 'Meseems thou art in haste.' 'Yes, yes, yes!' answered I: and he, 'Thou wouldst do well to proceed with deliberation, for haste is of the Devil and bequeaths repentance and disappointment. Verily he upon whom be blessing

and peace[1] hath said, "The best affair is that which is undertaken with deliberation." By Allah, thy case troubles me, and I would have thee let me know what it is thou art in such haste to do, for I fear me it is other than good.' Then said he, 'It wants three hours yet of the time of prayer. However, I do not wish to be in doubt as to this, but am minded to know the time for certain; for speech, when it is conjectural, is but faulty, especially in the like of me, whose merit is plain and known of all men; and it does not befit me to talk at random, as do the common sort of astrologers.' So saying, he threw down the razor and taking up the astrolabe, went out under the sun and stood a long while, after which he returned and said to me, 'It wants three hours of the time of prayer, neither more nor less.' 'By Allah,' answered I, 'hold thy tongue, for thou breakest my heart in pieces!' So he took his razor and after sharpening it as before, shaved another part of my head. Then he said, 'I am concerned about thy haste; and indeed thou wouldst do well to tell me the cause of it, for thou knowest that thy father and grandfather did nothing without my counsel.' When I saw that there was no getting rid of him, I said to myself, 'The time of prayer draws near and I wish to go to her before the folk come out from the mosque. If I am delayed much longer, I know not how I shall come at her.' Then I said to him, 'Be quick and leave this prating and officiousness, for I have to go to an entertainment at the house of one of my friends.' When he heard me speak of an entertainment, he said, 'This thy day is a blessed one for me! Verily, yesterday I invited a party of my intimate friends and I have forgotten to provide aught for them to eat. I bethought me of it but now, on hearing thee speak of an entertainment. Alack, how I shall be disgraced in their eyes!' 'Be in no concern for that,' answered I. 'Have I

[1] Mohammed.

not told thee that I am bidden abroad to-day? All the meat and drink in the house shall be thine, so thou despatch my affair and make haste to shave my head.' 'God requite thee with good!' rejoined he. 'Tell me what thou hast for my guests, that I may know.' Quoth I, 'I have five dishes of meat and ten fricasseed fowls and a roasted lamb.' 'Bring them out to me,' said he, 'that I may see them.' So I had all this brought, and when he saw it, he said, 'There lacks the wine.' 'I have a flagon or two in the house,' answered I; and he said, 'Have it brought out.' So I sent for it, and he exclaimed, 'God bless thee for a generous soul! But there are still the perfumes and the essences.' So I brought him a box, containing fifty dinars' worth of aloes-wood and ambergris and musk and other perfumes. By this, the time began to run short and my heart was straitened; so I said to him, 'Take it all and finish shaving my head, by the life of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!' 'By Allah,' said he, 'I will not take it till I see all that is in it.' So I made the servant open the box, and the barber threw down the astrolabe and sitting down on the ground, turned over the contents, till I was well-nigh distracted. Then he took the razor and coming up to me, shaved some little of my head and recited the following verse:

The boy after his father's guise grows up and follows suit As surely as the tree springs up from out its parent root.

Then said he, 'O my son, I know not whether to thank thee or thy father; for my entertainment to-day is all due to thy kindness and liberality, and none of my company is worthy of it; though I have none but men of consideration, such as Zentout the bath-keeper and Selya the corn-chandler and Silet the bean-seller and Akresheh the grocer and Hemid the scavenger and Saïd the camel-driver and Suweyd the porter and Abou Mukarish the bathman[1] and

[1] Or attendant on the people in the bath.

Cassim the watchman and Kerim the groom. There is not among them all one curmudgeon or make-bate or meddler or spoil-sport; each has his own dance that he dances and his own couplets that he repeats, and the best of them is that they are like thy servant, knowing not abundance of talk nor meddlesomeness. The bath-keeper sings enchantingly to the tambourine and dances and says, "I am going, O my mother, to fill my jar!" As for the corn-chandler, he brings more skill to it than any of them; he dances and says, "O mourner, my mistress, thou dost not fall short!" and draws the very heart out of one for laughing at him. Whilst the scavenger sings, so that the birds stop to listen to him, and dances and says, "News with my wife is not kept in a chest!" And indeed he is a witty, accomplished rogue, and of his excellence I use to say the following:

My life redeem the scavenger! I love him passing dear, For, in his goodly gait, he's like the zephyr-shaken bough.
Fate blessed my eyes with him one night; and I to him did say, (Whilst in my bosom, as I spoke, desire did ebb and flow,)
"Thou'st lit thy fire within my heart!" Whereto he answer made, "What wonder though the scavenger have turned a fire-man[1] now?"

And indeed each is perfection in all that can charm the wit with mirth and jollity. But hearing is not like seeing; and indeed if thou wilt join us and put off going to thy friends, it will be better both for us and for thee: for the traces of sickness are yet upon thee and belike thou art going amongst talkative folk, who will prate of what does not concern them, or there may be amongst them some impertinent busy-body who will split thy head, and thou still weak from illness.' 'This shall be for another day,' answered I and laughed in spite of my anger. 'Finish what thou hast to do for me and go in peace and enjoy thyself with thy friends, for they will be awaiting thy coming.' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I only seek to bring

[1] *i.e.* a stoker or man who keeps up the fire in the baths.

thee in company with these pleasant folk, amongst whom there is neither meddlesomeness nor excess of talk; for never, since I came to years of discretion, could I endure to consort with those who ask of what concerns them not, nor with any except those who are, like myself, men of few words. Verily, if thou wert once to see them and company with them, thou wouldst forsake all thy friends.' 'God fulfil thy gladness with them!' rejoined I. 'Needs must I foregather with them one of these days.' And he said, 'I would it were to be to-day, for I had made up my mind that thou shouldst make one of us: but if thou must indeed go to thy friends to-day, I will take the good things, with which thy bounty hath provided me for them, to my guests, and leave them to eat and drink, without waiting for me, whilst I return to thee in haste and accompany thee whither thou goest; for there is no ceremony between me and my friends to hinder me from leaving them.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried I. 'Go thou to thy friends and make merry with them and let me go to mine and be with them this day, for they expect me.' 'I will not let thee go alone,' replied he: and I said, 'None can enter where I am going but myself.' Then said he, 'I believe thou hast an assignation with some woman to-day; else thou wouldst take me with thee, for it is the like of me that furnishes a merry-making; or if thou go to any one with whom thou wouldst be private, I am the fittest of all men for thy purpose, for I would help thee to what thou desirest and look that none saw thee. I fear lest thou go in to some strange woman and lose thy life; for in this city one cannot do aught of the kind, especially on a day like this and under so keen and masterful a chief of the police as ours of Baghdad.' 'Out on thee, O wretched old man!' cried I. 'Avaunt! what words are these thou givest me?' 'O dolt!' rejoined he, 'thou

sayest to me what is not true and hidest thy mind from me; but I know that this is so and am certain of it, and I only seek to help thee this day.' I was fearful lest my people or the neighbours should hear the barber's talk, so kept silence, whilst he finished shaving my head; by which time the hour of prayer was come and it was well-nigh time for the exhortation.[1] When he had done, I said to him, 'Take the meat and drink and carry them to thy friends. I will await thy return.' For I thought it best to dissemble with the accursed fellow and feign compliance with his wishes, so haply he might go away and leave me. Quoth he, 'Thou art deceiving me and wilt go alone and cast thyself into some peril, from which there will be no escape for thee. For God's sake, do not go till I return, that I may accompany thee and see what comes of thine affair.' 'It is well,' answered I: 'do not be long absent.' Then he took all that I had given him and went out; but, instead of going home with it, the cursed fellow delivered it to a porter, to carry to his house, and hid himself in a by-street. As for me, I rose at once, for the Muezzins had already chanted the Salutation,[2] and, dressing myself in haste, went out and hurried to the house where I had seen the young lady. I found the old woman standing at the door, awaiting me, and went up with her to the young lady's apartment. Hardly had I done so, when the master of the house returned from the mosque and entering the saloon, shut the door. I looked out from the window and saw this barber (God's malison on him!) sitting over against the door, and said, 'How did this devil find me out?' At this moment, as God had decreed it for my undoing, it befell that a slave-girl belonging to the master of the house committed some offence, for

[1] A sort of sermon, which immediately follows the noontide call to prayer on Fridays.

[2] Preliminary to the call to prayer.

which he beat her. She cried out, and a male slave came in to deliver her, whereupon the Cadi beat him also, and he too cried out. The cursed barber concluded that it was I he was beating and fell to tearing his clothes and strewing dust on his head, shrieking and calling for help. So the folk came round him, and he said to them, 'My master is being murdered in the Cadi's house!' Then he ran, shrieking, to my house, with the folk after him, and told my people and servants: and before I knew what was forward, up they came, with torn clothes and dishevelled hair, calling out, 'Alas, our master!' and the barber at their head, in a fine pickle, tearing his clothes and shouting. They made for the house in which I was, headed by the barber, crying out, 'Woe is us for our murdered master!' And the Cadi, hearing the uproar at his door, said to one of his servants, 'Go and see what is the matter.' The man went out and came back, saying, 'O my lord, there are more than ten thousand men and women at the door, crying out, "Woe is us for our murdered master!" and pointing to our house.' When the Cadi heard this, he was troubled and vexed; so he went to the door and opening it, saw a great concourse of people; whereat he was amazed and said, 'O folk, what is the matter?' 'O accursed one, O dog, O hog,' replied my servants, 'thou hast killed our master!' Quoth he, 'And what has your master done to me that I should kill him? Behold, this my house is open to you!' 'Thou didst beat him but now with rods,' answered the barber; 'for I heard his cries.' 'What has he done that I should beat him?' repeated the Cadi; 'and what brings him into my house?' 'Be not a vile, perverse old man!' replied the barber; 'I know the whole story. The long and the short of it is that thy daughter is in love with him and he with her; and when thou knewest that he had entered the house, thou badest thy servants beat him, and

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they did so. By Allah, none shall judge between us and thee but the Khalif! So bring us out our master, that his people may take him, before I go and fetch him forth of thy house and thou be put to shame.' When the Cadi heard this, he was dumb for amazement and confusion before the people, but presently said to the barber, 'If thou speak truth, 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, but saw no hiding-place save a great chest that stood in the room. So I got into the chest and pulled the lid down on me and held my breath. Hardly had I done this, when the barber came straight to the place where I was and catching up the chest, set it on his head and made off with it in haste. At this, my reason forsook me and I was assured 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 of the house being opened, I saw without a great crowd of people. Now I had much gold in my sleeve, which I had provided against the like of this occasion; so I fell to scattering it among the people, to divert their attention from me; and whilst they were busy scrambling for it, I set off running through the by-streets of Baghdad, and this cursed barber, whom nothing could divert from me, after me. Wherever I went, he followed, crying out, 'They would have bereft me of my master and slain him who has been a benefactor to me and my family and friends! But praised be God who aided me against them and delivered my lord from their hands! Where wilt thou go now? Thou persistedst in following thine own evil devices, till thou broughtest thyself to this pass, and if God had not vouchsafed me to thee, thou hadst never won free from this strait, for they would have plunged thee into irremediable ruin. How long dost thou expect I shall live to save thee? By Allah, thou hast

well-nigh undone me by thy folly and thy perverseness in wishing to go by thyself! But I will not reproach thee with thine ignorance, for thou art little of wit and hasty.' 'Does not what thou hast brought upon me suffice thee,' replied I, 'but thou must pursue me with the like of this talk through the public streets?' And I well-nigh gave up the ghost for excess of rage against him. Then I took refuge in the shop of a weaver in the midst of the market and sought protection of the owner, who drove the barber away. I sat down in the back shop and said to myself, 'If I return home, I shall never be able to get rid of this accursed barber, for he will be with me night and day, and I cannot endure the sight of him.' So I sent out at once for witnesses and made a will, dividing the greater part of my money among my people, and appointed a guardian over them, to whom I committed the charge of great and small, directing him to sell my house and estates. Then I set out at once on my travels, that I might be free of this ruffian, and came to settle in your town, where I have lived for some time. When you invited me and I came hither, the first thing I saw was this accursed pimp seated in the place of honour. How, then, can I be at my ease and how can it be pleasant to me to consort with you, in company with this fellow, who brought all this upon me and was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my exile from my country and family?" And he refused to sit down and went away. When we heard the young man's story (continued the tailor), we were beyond measure amazed and diverted and said to the barber, "Is it true, that this young man says of thee?" "By Allah," replied he, "I dealt thus with him of my courtesy and good sense and humanity. But for me, he had perished and none but I was the cause of his escape. Well for him that it was in his leg that he suffered and not in his life! Were I a man of many words or a busybody, I had not done him this

kindness; but now I will tell you something that happened to me, that ye may know that I am indeed sparing of speech and no impertinent meddler, as were my six brothers; and it is this:

THE BARBER'S STORY.

I was living at Baghdad, in the time of the Khalif Mustensir Billah,[1] who loved the poor and needy and companied with the learned and the pious. One day, it befell that he was wroth with a band of highway robbers, ten in number, who infested the neighbourhood, and ordered the chief of the Baghdad police to bring them before him on the day of the Festival. So the prefect sallied out and capturing the robbers, embarked with them in a boat. I caught sight of them, as they were embarking, and said to myself, 'These people are surely bound on some party of pleasure; methinks they mean to spend the day in eating and drinking, and none shall be their messmate but I.' So, of the greatness of my courtesy and the gravity of my understanding, I embarked in the boat and mingled with them. They rowed across to the opposite bank, where they landed, and there came up soldiers and police-officers with chains, which they put round the necks of the robbers. They chained me with the rest, and, O company, is it not a proof of my courtesy and spareness of speech, that I kept silence and did not choose to speak? Then they took us away in chains and next morning they carried us all before the Commander of the Faithful, who bade strike off the heads of the ten robbers. So the headsman came forward and made us kneel before him on the carpet of blood;[2] then drawing his sword, struck off one head after another, till none was left but myself. The Khalif looked at me and said to the headsman, 'What

[1] A.H. 623-640.

[2] A leather rug on which they make criminals kneel to be beheaded.

ails thee that thou hast struck off but nine heads?' 'God forbid,' replied he, 'that I should behead only nine, when thou didst order me to behead ten!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Meseems, thou hast beheaded but nine and he who is before thee is the tenth.' 'By thy munificence,' replied the headsman, 'I have beheaded ten!' So they counted the dead men, and behold, they were ten. Then said the Khalif to me, 'What made thee keep silence at such a time and how camest thou in company with these men of blood? Thou art a man of great age, but assuredly thy wit is but little.' When I heard the Khalif's words, I replied, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am the Silent Elder, and am thus called to distinguish me from my six brothers. I am a man of great learning, whilst, as for the gravity of my understanding, the excellence of my apprehension and the spareness of my speech, there is no end to them; and by craft I am a barber. I went out early yesterday morning and saw these ten men making for a boat, and thinking they were bound on a party of pleasure, joined myself to them and embarked with them. After awhile, there came up the officers, who put chains round their necks and round mine amongst the rest, but in the excess of my courtesy, I kept silence and did not speak, nor was this other than generosity on my part. Then they brought us before thee and thou didst order the ten robbers' heads to be stricken off; yet did I not make myself known to thee, purely of my great generosity and courtesy, which led me to share with them in their death. But all my life have I dealt thus nobly with the folk, and they still requite me after the foulest fashion.' When the Khalif heard what I said and knew that I was a man of exceeding generosity and few words and no meddler (as this young man would have it, whom I rescued from horrors and who has so scurvily repaid me), he laughed so immoderately that he fell backward.

Then said he to me, 'O silent man, are thy six brothers like thee distinguished for wisdom and knowledge and spareness of speech?' 'Never were they like me,' answered I; 'thou dost me injustice, O Commander of the Faithful, and it becomes thee not to even my brothers with me: for, of the abundance of their speech and their lack of conduct and courtesy, each one of them has gotten some bodily defect. One is blind of an eye, another paralysed, a third blind, a fourth cropped of the ears and nose, a fifth crop-lipped and a sixth hunch-backed and a cripple. Thou must not think, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am a man of many words; but I must needs explain to thee that I am a man of greater worth and of fewer words than they. By each one of my brothers hangs a tale of how he came by his defect,[1] and these I will relate to thee. Know then, O Commander of the Faithful that

STORY OF THE BARBER'S FIRST BROTHER.

My first brother, the hunchback, was a tailor in Baghdad, and plied his craft in a shop, which he hired of a very rich man, who dwelt over against him and had a mill in the lower part of the house. One day, as my brother the hunchback was sitting in his shop, sewing, he chanced to raise his head and saw, at the bay-window of his landlord's house, a lady like the rising full moon, engaged in looking at the passers-by. His heart was taken with love of her and he passed the day gazing at her and neglecting his business, till the evening. Next day, he opened his shop and sat down to sew: but as often as he made a stitch, he looked at the bay-window and saw her as before; and his passion and infatuation for her redoubled. On the third

[1] It will be seen that the stories told by the barber do not account for the infirmities of all his brothers, as this would imply.

day, as he was sitting in his usual place, gazing on her, she caught sight of him, and perceiving that he had fallen a captive to her love, smiled in his face, and he smiled back at her. Then she withdrew and sent her slave-girl to him, with a parcel of red flowered silk. The girl accosted him and said to him, "My lady salutes thee and would have thee cut out for her, with a skilful hand, a shift of this stuff, and sew it handsomely." "I hear and obey," answered he; and cut out the shift and made an end of sewing it the same day. Next morning early, the girl came back and said to him, "My mistress salutes thee and would fain know how thou hast passed the night; for she has not tasted sleep by reason of her heart being taken up with thee." Then she laid before him a piece of yellow satin and said to him, "My mistress bids thee cut her two pairs of trousers of this stuff and sew them this day." "I hear and obey," answered he; "salute her for me with abundant salutation and say to her, 'Thy slave is obedient to thy commands, so order him as thou wilt.'" Then he applied himself to cut out the trousers and used all diligence in sewing them. Presently the lady appeared at the window and saluted him by signs, now casting down her eyes and now smiling in his face, so that he made sure of getting his will of her. She did not let him budge till he had finished the two pairs of trousers, when she withdrew and sent the slave-girl, to whom he delivered them, and she took them and went away. When it was night, he threw himself on his bed and tossed from side to side, till morning, when he rose and sat down in his shop. By and by, the slave-girl came to him and said, "My master calls for thee." When he heard this, he was afraid; but the girl, seeing his alarm, said to him, "Fear not: nought but good shall befall thee. My lady would have thee make acquaintance with my master." So my brother rejoiced greatly and went out with her. When he came into his landlord's presence, he kissed

the earth before him, and the latter returned his salute; then gave him a great piece of linen, saying, "Make this into shirts for me." "I hear and obey," replied my brother, and fell to work at once and cut out twenty shirts by nightfall, without stopping to taste food. Then said the husband, "What is thy hire for this?" "Twenty dirhems," answered my brother. So the man cried out to the slave-girl to give him twenty dirhems; but the lady signed to my brother not to take them, and he said, "By Allah, I will take nothing from thee!" And took his work and went away, though he was sorely in want of money. Then he applied himself to do their work, eating and drinking but little for three days, in his great diligence. At the end of this time, the slave-girl came to him and said, "What hast thou done?" Quoth he, "They are finished;" and carried the shirts to his landlord, who would have paid him his hire; but he said, "I will take nothing," for fear of the lady, and returning to his shop, passed the night without sleep for hunger. Now the lady had told her husband how the case stood, and they had agreed to take advantage of his infatuation to make him sew for them for nothing and laugh at him. Next morning, as he sat in his shop, the servant came to him and said, "My master would speak with thee." So he accompanied her to the husband, who said to him, "I wish thee to make me five cassocks." So he cut them out and took the stuff and went away. Then he sewed them and carried them to the man, who praised his work and offered him a purse of money. He put out his hand to take it, but the lady signed to him from behind her husband not to do so, and he replied, "O my lord, there is no hurry: by and by." Then he went out, more abject than an ass, for verily five things at once were sore upon him, love and beggary and hunger and nakedness and toil; nevertheless, he heartened himself with the hope of gaining the lady's favours. When he had made an end of all their work, they put a

cheat upon him and married him to their slave-girl: but when he thought to go in to her, they said to him, "Lie this night in the mill; and to-morrow all will be well." My brother concluded that there was some good reason for this and passed the night alone in the mill. Now the husband had set on the miller to make my brother turn the mill; so in the middle of the night, the miller came in and began to say, "This ox is lazy and stands still and will not turn, and there is much wheat to be ground. So I will yoke him and make him finish grinding it this night, for the folk are impatient for their flour." Then he filled the hoppers with grain and going up to my brother, with a rope in his hand, bound him to the yoke and said to him, "Come, turn the mill! Thou thinkest of nothing but eating and voiding." Then he took a whip and laid on to my brother, who began to weep and cry out; but none came to his aid, and he was forced to grind the wheat till near daylight, when the husband came in and seeing him yoked to the shaft and the miller flogging him, went away. At daybreak the miller went away and left him still yoked and well-nigh dead; and soon after in came the slave-girl, who unbound him and said to him, "I am grieved for what has befallen thee, and both I and my lady are full of concern for thee." But he had no tongue wherewith to answer her, for excess of beating and toil. Then he returned to his lodging, and presently the notary who had drawn up the marriage contract came to him and saluted him, saying, "God give thee long life! May thy marriage be blessed! Thou hast doubtless passed the night in clipping and kissing and dalliance from dusk to dawn." "May God curse thee for a liar, thousandfold cuckold that thou art!" replied my brother. "By Allah, I did nothing but turn the mill in the place of the ox all night!" Quoth the notary, "Tell me thy story." So my brother told him what had happened, and he said, "Thy star

agrees not with hers: but if thou wilt, I can alter the contract for thee." And my brother answered, "See if thou have another device." Then the notary left him and he sat down in his shop, till some one should bring him work by which he might earn his day's bread. Presently the slave-girl came to him and said, "My mistress would speak with thee." "Go, my good girl," replied he; "I will have no more to do with thy mistress." So the girl returned to her mistress and told her what my brother had said, and presently she put her head out of the window, weeping and saying, "O my beloved, why wilt thou have no more to do with me?" But he made her no answer. Then she swore to him that all that had befallen him in the mill was without her sanction and that she was guiltless of the whole affair. When he saw her beauty and grace and heard the sweetness of her speech, he forgot what had befallen him and accepted her excuse and rejoiced in her sight. So he saluted her and talked with her and sat at his sewing awhile, after which the servant came to him and said, "My mistress salutes thee and would have thee to know that her husband purposes to lie this night abroad with some intimate friends of his; so when he is gone, do thou come to us and pass the night with her in all delight till the morning." Now the man had said to his wife, "How shall we do to turn him away from thee?" Quoth she, "Let me play him another trick and make him a by-word in the city." But my brother knew nothing of the malice of women. As soon as it was night, the servant came to him and carried him to the house; and when the lady saw him, she said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, I have been longing for thee!" "By Allah," replied he, "make haste and give me a kiss first of all." Hardly had he spoken, when the master of the house came in from an inner room and seized him, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go, till I deliver thee to the chief of the police."

My brother humbled himself to him; but he would not listen to him and carried him to the prefect, who gave him a hundred lashes with a whip and mounting him on a camel, paraded him about the city, whilst the folk proclaimed aloud, "This is the punishment of those who violate people's harems!" Moreover, he fell off the camel and broke his leg and so became lame. Then the prefect banished him from the city and he went forth, not knowing whither to turn; but I heard of his mishap and going out after him, brought him back and took him to live with me.'

The Khalif laughed at my story and said, 'Thou hast done well, O Silent One, O man of few words!' and bade me take a present and go away. But I said, 'I will take nothing except I tell thee what befell my other brothers: and do not think me a man of many words. Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that

STORY OF THE BARBER'S SECOND BROTHER.

My second brother's name was Becbac and he was the paralytic. One day, as he was going about his business, an old woman accosted him and said to him, "Harkye, stop a little, that I may tell thee of somewhat, which, if it please thee, thou shalt do for me." My brother stopped and she went on, "I will put thee in the way of a certain thing, so thy words be not many." "Say on," replied my brother; and she, "What sayest thou to a handsome house and a pleasant garden, with running waters and fruits and wine and a fair-faced one to hold in thine arms from dark till dawn?" "And is all this in the world?" asked my brother. "Yes," answered she; "and it shall be thine, so thou be reasonable and leave impertinent curiosity and many words and do as I bid thee." "I will well, O my lady," rejoined my brother; "but what made thee choose me of all men for this affair and what is it

pleases thee in me?" Quoth she, "Did I not bid thee be sparing of speech? Hold thy peace and follow me. Thou must know that the young lady, to whom I shall carry thee, loves to have her own way and hates to be crossed; so if thou fall in with her humour, thou shalt come to thy desire of her." And my brother said, "I will not thwart her in aught." Then she went on and he followed her, eager to enjoy what she had promised him, till she brought him to a fine large house, richly furnished and full of servants, and carried him to an upper story. When the people of the house saw him, they said to him, "What dost thou here?" But the old woman bade them "Let him be and trouble him not; for he is a workman and we have occasion for him." Then she brought him into a fine great gallery, with a fair garden in its midst, and made him sit down upon a handsome couch. He had not sat long, before he heard a great noise and in came a troop of damsels, with a lady in their midst, as she were the moon on the night of its full. When he saw her, he rose and made an obeisance to her; whereupon she bade him welcome and ordered him to be seated. So he sat down and she said to him, "God advance thee! Is all well with thee?" "O my lady," replied my brother, "all is well." Then she called for food, and they brought her a table richly served. 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 keep from laughing: but as often as he looked at her, she signed towards the waiting-maids, as if she laughed at them. My ass of a brother understood nothing, but concluded, in the blindness of his doting, that the lady was in love with him and would admit him to his desire. When they had finished eating, they set on wine, and there came in ten damsels like moons, with strung lutes in their hands, and fell a singing right melodiously; whereupon delight got hold

upon him and he took the cup from the lady's hands and drank it off. Then she drank a cup of wine, and he rose and bowed to her, saying, "Health to thee!" She filled him another cup and he drank it off, and she gave him a cuff on the nape of his neck; whereupon he rose and went out in a rage; 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 speaking. Then she dealt him a second cuff, and nothing would serve her but she must make all her maids cuff him also. Quoth he to the old woman, "Never saw I aught finer than this!" And she kept saying, "Enough, enough, I conjure thee, O my lady!" The women cuffed him till he was well-nigh senseless, and he rose and went out again in a rage; but the old woman followed him and said, "Wait a little, and thou shalt come to what thou wishest." "How much longer must I wait?" asked he. "Indeed I am faint with cuffing." "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 damsels rose and the lady bade them fumigate him and sprinkle rose-water on his face. Then said she to him, "God advance thee! Thou hast entered my house and submitted to my conditions; for whoso thwarts me, I turn him away, but he who is patient has his desire." "O my lady," replied he, "I am thy slave and in the hollow of thy hand." "Know then," continued she, "that God has made me passionately fond of frolic, and whoso falls in with my humour comes by what he wishes." Then she ordered the damsels to sing with loud voices, and they sang, till the whole company was in ecstasy: after which she said to one of the maids, "Take thy lord and do what is wanting to him and bring him back to me forthright." So the damsel took my brother, who knew not what she would do with him; but the old woman came up to him

and said, "Be patient; there remains but little to do." At this his face cleared and he said, "Tell me what she would have the maid do with me." "Nothing but good," replied she, "as I am thy ransom. She only wishes to dye thine eyebrows and pluck out thy moustaches." Quoth he, "As for the dyeing of my eyebrows, that will come off with washing, but the plucking out of my moustaches will be irksome." "Beware of crossing her," said the old woman; "for her heart is set on thee." So my brother suffered them to dye his eyebrows and pluck out his moustaches, after which the damsel returned to her mistress and told her. Quoth she, "There is one thing more to be done; thou must shave his chin, that he may be beardless." So the maid went back and told my brother what her mistress bade her do, whereupon cried my fool of a brother, "How can I do what will dishonour me among the folk?" But the old woman said, "She only wishes to do thus with thee, that thou mayst be as a beardless youth and that no hair may be left on thy face to prick her; for she is passionately in love with thee. Be patient and thou shalt attain thy desire." So he submitted to have his beard shaved off and his face rouged, after which they carried him back to the lady. When she saw him with his eyebrows dyed, his whiskers and moustaches plucked out, his beard shaved off and his face rouged, she was affrighted at him, then laughed till she fell backward and said, "O my lord, thou hast won my heart with thy good nature!" Then she conjured him, by her life, to rise and dance; so he began to dance, and there was not a cushion in the place but she threw it at him, whilst the damsels pelted him with oranges and limes and citrons, till he fell down senseless. When he came to himself, the old woman said to him, "Now thou hast attained thy desire. There is no more beating for thee and there remains but one thing more. It is her wont,

when she is heated with wine, to let no one have to do with her till she put off her clothes and remain stark naked. Then she will bid thee strip, in like manner, and run before thee from place to place, as if she fled from thee, and thou after her, till thy yard be in good point, when she will stop and give herself up to thee. So now rise and put off thy clothes." So he rose, well-nigh beside himself, and stripped himself stark naked; whereupon the lady stripped also and saying to my brother, "Follow me, if thou desire aught," set off running, in at one place and out at another and he after her, transported for desire, till his yard rose, as he were mad. Presently she entered a dark passage, and in following her, he trod upon a soft place, which gave way with him, and before he knew where he was, he found himself in the midst of the market of the fell-mongers, who were calling skins for sale and buying and selling. When they saw him in this plight, naked, with yard on end, shaven face, dyed eyebrows and rouged cheeks, they cried out and clapped their hands at him and flogged him with skins upon his naked body, till he swooned away; when they set him on an ass and carried him to the chief of the police, who said, "What is this?" Quoth they, "This fellow came out upon us from the Vizier's house, in this plight." So the prefect gave him a hundred lashes and banished him from Baghdad. However, I went out after him and brought him back privily into the city and made him an allowance for his living, though, but for my generous disposition, I had not put up with such a fellow.

Night xxxii.

STORY OF THE BARBER'S THIRD BROTHER.

The name of my third brother was Fekic and he was blind. One day, chance and destiny led him to a great house, and he knocked at the door, desiring speech of the

owner, that he might beg of him somewhat. Quoth the master of the house, "Who is at the door?" But my brother was silent and heard him repeat, in a loud voice, "Who is there?" Still he made no answer and presently heard the master come to the door and open it and say, "What dost thou want?" "Charity," replied my brother, "for the love of God the Most High!" "Art thou blind?" asked the man; and my brother said, "Yes." Quoth the other, "Give me thy hand." So my brother put out his hand, thinking that he would give him something; but he took it and drawing him into the house, carried him up, from stair to stair, till they reached the housetop, my brother thinking the while that he would surely give him food or money. Then said he to my brother, "What dost thou want, O blind man?" "Charity, for the love of God!" repeated my brother. "God succour thee!"[1] answered the master of the house. "O man," answered my brother, "why couldst thou not tell me this downstairs?" "O losel," answered he, "why didst thou not answer me, when I asked who was at the door?" Quoth my brother, "What wilt thou with me now?" And the other replied, "I have nothing to give thee." "Then take me down again," said my brother. But he answered, "The way lies before thee." So my brother rose and made his way down the stairs, till he came within twenty steps of the door, when his foot slipped and he rolled to the bottom and broke his head. Then he went out, knowing not whither to turn, and presently fell in with other two blind men, comrades of his, who enquired how he had fared that day. He told them what had passed and said to them, "O my brothers, I wish to take some of the money in my hands and provide myself with it." Now the master of the house had followed him and heard what they said, but neither my brother nor his fellows knew of this. So my

[1] A formula of refusal.

brother went on to his lodging and sat down to await his comrades, and the owner of the house entered after him without his knowledge. When the other blind men arrived, my brother said to them, "Shut the door and search the house, lest any stranger have followed us." The intruder, hearing this, caught hold of a rope that hung from the ceiling and clung to it, whilst the blind men searched the whole place, but found nothing. So they came back and sitting down beside my brother, brought out their money, which they counted, and lo, it was twelve thousand dirhems. Each took what he wanted and the rest they buried in a corner of the room. Then they set on food and sat down to eat. Presently my brother heard a strange pair of jaws wagging at his side; so he said to his comrades, "There is a stranger amongst us;" and putting out his hand, caught hold of that of the intruder. Therewith they all fell on him and beat him, crying out, "O Muslims, a thief is come in to us, seeking to take our property!" So much people flocked to them, whereupon the owner of the house caught hold of the blind men and shutting his eyes, feigned to be blind like unto them, so that none doubted of it. Then he complained of them, even as they of him, crying out, "O Muslims, I appeal to God and the Sultan and the chief of the police! I have a grave matter to make known to the chief of the police." At this moment, up came the watch and seizing them all, dragged them before the chief of the police, who enquired what was the matter. Quoth the spy, "See here; thou shalt come at nought except by torture: so begin by beating me, and after me, beat this my captain." And he pointed to my brother. So they threw the man down and gave him four hundred strokes on the backside. The beating pained him, and he opened one eye; and as they redoubled their blows, he opened the other. When the chief of the police saw this, he said to him, "What is this, O accursed one?" "Give me the

seal-ring of pardon!" replied he. "We are four who feign ourselves blind and impose upon people, that we may enter houses and gaze upon women and contrive for their corruption. In this way, we have gotten much money, even twelve thousand dirhems. So I said to my comrades, 'Give me my share, three thousand dirhems.' But they fell on me and beat me and took away my money, and I appeal to God and thee for protection; better thou have my share than they. So, an thou wouldst know the truth of my words, beat each of the others more than thou hast beaten me and he will surely open his eyes." The prefect bade begin with my brother: so they bound him to the whipping-post,[1] and the prefect said, "O rascals, do ye abjure the gracious gifts of God and pretend to be blind?" "Allah! Allah!" cried my brother; "by Allah, there is not one amongst us who can see!" Then they beat him, till he fainted and the prefect said, "Leave him till he revives and then beat him again." And he caused each of the others to be beaten with more than three hundred blows, whilst the sham blind man stood by, saying to them, "Open your eyes, or you will be beaten anew." Then he said to the prefect, "Send some one with me to fetch the money; for these fellows will not open their eyes, lest they be put to shame before the folk." So the prefect sent to fetch the money and gave the impostor three thousand dirhems, to his pretended share. The rest he took for himself and banished the three blind men from the city. But, O Commander of the Faithful, I went out and overtaking my brother, questioned him of his case; whereupon he told me what I have told thee. So I carried him back privily into the city and appointed him in secret wherewithal to eat and drink.' The Khalif laughed at my story and said, 'Give him a present and let him go.' 'By

[1] *lit.* ladder; a sort of frame, like the triangles, to which they bound criminals sentenced to be flogged.

Allah,' rejoined I, 'I will take nothing till I have made known to the Commander of the Faithful what happened to my other brothers, for I am a man of few words.' Then I went on as follows:

STORY OF THE BARBER'S FOURTH BROTHER.

'My fourth brother, the one-eyed, was a butcher at Baghdad, who sold meat and reared rams; and the notables and men of wealth used to buy meat of him, so that he amassed much wealth and got him cattle and houses. He fared thus a long while, till one day, as he was sitting in his shop, there came up to him an old man with a long beard, who laid down some money and said, "Give me meat for this." So he gave him his money's worth of meat, and the old man went away. My brother looked at the money he had paid him, and seeing that it was brilliantly white, laid it aside by itself. The old man continued to pay him frequent visits for five months, and my brother threw the money he received from him into a chest by itself. At the end of this time, he thought to take out the money to buy sheep; so he opened the chest, but found in it nothing but white paper, cut round. When he saw this, he buffeted his face and cried out, till the folk came round him and he told them his story, at which they wondered. Then he rose, as of his wont, and slaughtering a ram, hung it up within the shop; after which he cut off some of the meat and hung it up outside, saying the while, "Would God that pestilent old man would come!" And surely before long up came the old man, with his money in his hand; whereupon my brother rose and caught hold of him, crying out, "Come to my help, O Muslims, and hear what befell me with this scoundrel!" When the old man heard this, he said to him, "An thou loose me not, I will expose thee before the folk!" "In what wilt thou

expose me?" asked my brother, and the other replied, "In that thou sellest man's flesh for mutton." "Thou liest, O accursed one!" cried my brother: and the old man said, "He is the accursed one who has a man hanging up in his shop." "If it be as thou sayest," rejoined my brother, "I give thee leave to take my property and my life." Then said the old man, "Ho, people of the city! an ye would prove the truth of my words, enter this man's shop." So they rushed into the shop, when they saw the ram was become a dead man hanging up and seized on my brother, crying out, "O infidel! O villain!" And his best friends fell to beating him and saying, "Dost thou give us man's flesh to eat?" Moreover, the old man struck him on the eye and put it out. Then they carried the carcase to the chief of the police, to whom said the old man, "O Amir, this fellow slaughters men and sells their flesh for mutton, and we have brought him to thee; so arise and execute the justice of God, to whom belong might and majesty!" My brother would have defended himself, but the prefect refused to hear him and sentenced him to receive five hundred blows with a stick and to forfeit all his property. And indeed, but for his wealth, they had put him to death. Then he banished him from the city and my brother fared forth at a venture, till he came to a great city, where he thought well to set up as a cobbler. So he opened a shop and fell to working for his living. One day, as he went on an occasion, he heard the tramp of horse, and enquiring the cause, was told that the King was going out to hunt and stopped to look on his state. It chanced that the King's eye met his, whereupon he bowed his head, saying, "I take refuge with God from the evil of this day!" And drawing bridle, rode back to his palace, followed by his retinue. Then he gave an order to his guards, who seized my brother and beat him grievously, till he was well-nigh

dead, without telling him the reason: after which he returned to his shop, in a sorry plight, and told one of the King's household, who laughed till he fell backward and said to him, "O my brother, know that the King cannot endure the sight of a one-eyed man; especially if he be blind of the left eye, in which case, he does not let him go without killing him." When my brother heard this, he resolved to fly that city, so went forth and repaired to another country, where he was known of none. Here he abode a long while, till one day, being heavy at heart for what had befallen him, he went out to divert himself. As he was walking along, he heard the tramp of horse behind him; whereupon he exclaimed, "The judgment of God is upon me!" and looked out for a hiding-place, but found none. At last he saw a closed door, and pushing against it, it yielded and he found himself in a long corridor, in which he took refuge. Hardly had he done so, when two men laid hold of him, exclaiming, "Praise be to God, who hath delivered thee into our hands, O enemy of Allah! These three nights thou hast bereft us of sleep and given us no peace and made us taste the agonies of death!" "O folk," said my brother, "what ails you?" And they answered, "Thou givest us the change and goest about to dishonour us and to murder the master of the house! Is it not enough that thou hast brought him to beggary, thou and thy comrades? But give us up the knife, wherewith thou threatenest us every night." Then they searched him and found in his girdle the knife he used to cut leather; and he said, "O folk, have the fear of God before your eyes and maltreat me not, for know that my story is a strange one." "What is thy story?" asked they. So he told them what had befallen him, hoping that they would let him go; however, they paid no heed to what he said, but beat him and tore off his

clothes, and finding on his sides the marks of beating with rods, said, "O accursed one, these scars bear witness to thy guilt!" Then they carried him to the chief of the police, whilst he said to himself, "I am undone for my sins and none can save me but God the Most High!" The prefect said to him, "O villain, what made thee enter their house with murderous intent?" "O Amir," replied my brother, "I conjure thee by Allah, hear my words and hasten not to condemn me!" But the two men said to the prefect, "Wilt thou listen to a robber, who beggars the folk and has the scars of beating on his back?" When the Amir saw the scars on my brother's sides, he said to him, "They had not done this to thee, save for some great crime." And he sentenced him to receive a hundred lashes. So they flogged him and mounting him on a camel, paraded him about the city, crying out, "This is the reward and the least of the reward of those who break into people's houses!" Then they thrust him forth the city, and he wandered at random, till I heard what had befallen him and going in search of him, questioned him of his case. So he told me all that passed and I carried him back privily to Baghdad, where I made him an allowance for his living.

STORY OF THE BARBER'S FIFTH BROTHER.

My fifth brother, he of the cropt ears, O Commmander of the Faithful, was a poor man, who used to ask alms by night and live by day on what he got thus. Now, our father, who was an old man, far advanced in years, fell sick and died, leaving us seven hundred dirhems. So we took each of us a hundred; but when my brother received his share, he was at a loss to know what to do with it, till he bethought him to buy glass of all sorts and sell it at a profit. So he bought a hundred dirhems' worth of glass

and putting it in a great basket, sat down, to sell it, on a raised bench, at the foot of a wall, against which he leant his back. As he sat, with the basket before him, he fell to musing in himself and said, "I have laid out a hundred dirhems on this glass and I will sell it for two hundred, with which I will buy other glass and sell it for four hundred; nor will I cease to buy and sell thus, till I have gotten much wealth. With this I will buy all kinds of merchandise and jewels and perfumes and gain great profit on them, till, God willing, I will make my capital a hundred thousand dirhems. Then I will buy a handsome house, together with slaves and horses and trappings of gold, and eat and drink, nor will I leave a singing-man or woman in the city but I will have them to sing to me. As soon as I have amassed a hundred thousand dirhems,[1] I will send out marriage-brokers to demand for me in marriage the daughters of kings and viziers; and I will seek the hand of the Vizier's daughter, for I hear that she is perfect in beauty and of surpassing grace. I will give her a dowry of a thousand dinars, and if her father consent, well: if not, I will take her by force, in spite of him. When I return home, I will buy ten little eunuchs and clothes for myself such as are worn by kings and sultans and get me a saddle of gold, set thick with jewels of price. Then I will mount and parade the city, with slaves before and behind me, whilst the folk salute me and call down blessings upon me: after which I will repair to the Vizier, the girl's father, with slaves behind and before me, as well as on my either hand. When he sees me, he will rise and seating me in his own place, sit down below me, for that I am his son-in-law. Now I will have with me two eunuchs with purses, in each a thousand

[1] Dinars? 100,000 dirhems would be only five thousand dinars and it will be seen from the sequel that El Feshar proposed to spend half that amount upon the dowry and presents to the tire-women alone.

dinars, and I will deliver him the thousand dinars of the dowry and make him a present of other thousand, that he may have cause to know my nobility and generosity and greatness of mind and the littleness of the world in my eyes; and for ten words he proffers me, I will answer him two. Then I will return to my house, and if one come to me on the bride's part, I will make him a present of money and clothe him in a robe of honour; but if he bring me a present, I will return it to him and will not accept it, that they may know that I am great of soul. Then I will command them to bring her to me in state and will order my house fittingly in the meantime. When the time of the unveiling is come, I will don my richest clothes and sit down on a couch of brocaded silk, leaning on a cushion and turning neither to the right nor to the left, for the haughtiness of my mind and the gravity of my understanding. My wife shall stand before me like the full moon, in her robes and ornaments, and I, of my pride and my disdain, will not look at her, till all who are present shall say to me, 'O my lord, thy wife and thy handmaid stands before thee: deign to look upon her, for standing is irksome to her.' And they will kiss the earth before me many times, whereupon I will lift my eyes and give one glance at her, then bend down my head again. Then they will carry her to the bride-chamber, and meanwhile I will rise and change my clothes for a richer suit. When they bring in the bride for the second time, I will not look at her till they have implored me several times, when I will glance at her and bow down my head; nor will I leave to do thus, till they have made an end of displaying her, when I will order one of my eunuchs to fetch a purse of five hundred dinars and giving it to the tire-women, command them to lead me to the bride-chamber. When they leave me alone with the bride, I will not look at her or speak to her, but will lie by her

Night xxxiii.

with averted face, that she may say I am high of soul. Presently her mother will come to me and kiss my head and hands and say to me, 'O my lord, look on thy handmaid, for she longs for thy favour, and heal her spirit.' But I will give her no answer; and when she sees this, she will come and kiss my feet repeatedly and say, 'O my lord, verily my daughter is a beautiful girl, who has never seen man; and if thou show her this aversion, her heart will break; so do thou incline to her and speak to her.' Then she will rise and fetch a cup of wine, and her daughter will take it and come to me; but I will leave her standing before me, whilst I recline upon a cushion of cloth of gold, and will not look at her for the haughtiness of my heart, so that she will think me to be a Sultan of exceeding dignity and will say to me, 'O my lord, for God's sake, do not refuse to take the cup from thy servant's hand, for indeed I am thy handmaid.' But I will not speak to her, and she will press me, saying, 'Needs must thou drink it,' and put it to my lips. Then I will shake my fist in her face and spurn her with my foot thus." So saying, he gave a kick with his foot and knocked over the basket of glass, which fell to the ground, and all that was in it was broken. "All this comes of my pride!" cried he, and fell to buffeting his face and tearing his clothes and weeping. The folk who were going to the Friday prayers saw him, and some of them looked at him and pitied him, whilst others paid no heed to him, and in this way my brother lost both capital and profit. Presently there came up a beautiful lady, on her way to the Friday prayers, riding on a mule with a saddle of gold and attended by a number of servants and filling the air with the scent of musk, as she passed along. When she saw the broken glass and my brother weeping, she was moved to pity for him; so she asked what ailed him and was told that he had a basket full of glass, by the sale of which he

thought to make his living, but it was broken, and this was the cause of his distress. So she called one of her attendants and said to him, "Give this poor man what is with thee." And he gave my brother a purse in which he found five hundred dinars, whereupon he was like to die for excess of joy and called down blessings on her. Then he returned to his house, a rich man; and as he sat considering, some one knocked at the door. So he rose and opened and saw an old woman whom he knew not. "O my son," said she, "the time of prayer is at hand, and I have not yet made the ablution; so I beg thee to let me do so in thy house." "I hear and obey," replied he, and bade her come in. So she entered and he brought her an ewer, wherewith to wash, and sat down, beside himself for joy in the dinars. When she had made an end of her ablutions, she came up to where he sat and prayed a two-bow prayer, after which she offered up a goodly prayer for my brother, who thanked her and putting his hand to the bag of money, gave her two dinars, saying in himself, "This is an alms from me." "Glory to God!" exclaimed she. "Why dost thou look on one, who loves thee, as if she were a beggar? Put up thy money: I have no need of it; or if thou want it not, return it to her who gave it thee, when thy glass was broken." "O my mother," asked he, "how shall I do to come at her?" "O my son," replied she, "she hath an inclination for thee, but she is the wife of a wealthy man of the city; so take all thy money with thee and follow me, that I may guide thee to thy desire: and when thou art in company with her, spare neither fair words nor persuasion, and thou shalt enjoy her beauty and her wealth to thy heart's content." So my brother took all his money and rose and followed the old woman, hardly believing in his good fortune. She led him on till they came to the door of a great house, at which she knocked, and a Greek slave-girl came out and opened to

them. Then the old woman took my brother and brought him into a great saloon, spread with magnificent carpets and hung with curtains, where he sat down, with his money before him and his turban on his knee. Presently in came a young lady richly dressed, never saw eyes handsomer than she; whereupon my brother rose to his feet, but she smiled upon him and welcoming him, signed to him to be seated. Then she bade shut the door and taking my brother by the hand, led him to a private chamber, furnished with various kinds of brocaded silk. Here he sat down and she seated herself by his side and toyed with him awhile; after which she rose and saying, "Do not stir till I come back," went away. After a while, in came a great black slave, with a drawn sword in his hand, who said to him, "Woe to thee! who brought thee hither and what dost thou want?" My brother could make no answer, being tongue-tied for fear; so the black seized him and stripping him of his clothes, beat him with the flat of his sword till he swooned away. Then the pestilent black concluded that he was dead, and my brother heard him say, "Where is the salt-wench?" Whereupon in came a slave-girl, with a great dish of salt, and the black strewed salt upon my brother's wounds; but he did not stir, lest he should know that he was alive and finish him. Then the salt-girl went away and the black cried out, "Where is the cellaress?" With this in came the old woman, and taking my brother by the feet, dragged him to an underground vault, where she threw him down upon a heap of dead bodies. There he remained two whole days, but God made the salt the means of saving his life, for it stayed the flow of blood. Presently, he found himself strong enough to move; so he rose and opening the trap-door, crept out fearfully; and God protected him, so that he went on in the darkness and hid himself in the vestibule till the morning, when he saw the cursed old woman sally forth in quest of other

prey. So he went out after her, without her knowledge, and made for his own house, where he dressed his wounds and tended himself till he was whole. Meanwhile he kept a watch upon the old woman and saw her accost one man after another and carry them to the house. However, he said nothing; but as soon as he regained health and strength, he took a piece of stuff and made it into a bag, which he filled with broken glass and tied to his middle. Then he disguised himself in the habit of a foreigner, that none might know him, and hid a sword under his clothes. Then he went out and presently falling in with the old woman, accosted her and said to her, with a foreign accent, "O dame, I am a stranger, but this day arrived here, and know no one. Hast thou a pair of scales wherein I may weigh nine hundred dinars? I will give thee somewhat of the money for thy pains." "I have a son, a money-changer," replied she, "who has all kinds of scales; so come with me to him, before he goes out, and he will weigh thy gold for thee." And he said, "Lead the way." So she led him to the house and knocked at the door; and the young lady herself came out and opened it; whereupon the old woman smiled in her face, saying, "I bring thee fat meat to-day." Then the damsel took him by the hand and carrying him to the same chamber as before, sat with him awhile, then rose and went out, bidding him stir not till she came back. Ere long in came the villainous black, with his sword drawn, and said to my brother, "Rise, O accursed one!" So he rose and as the slave went on before him, he drew the sword from under his clothes and smiting him with it, made his head fly from his body; after which he dragged the corpse by the feet to the vault and cried out, "Where is the salt-wench?" Up came the girl with the dish of salt, and seeing my brother sword in hand, turned to fly; but he followed her and smote her and struck off her head. Then he

called out, "Where is the cellaress?" And in came the old woman, to whom said he, "Dost thou know me, O pestilent old woman?" "No, my lord," replied she; and he said, "I am he of the five hundred dinars, to whose house thou camest to make the ablution and pray, and whom thou didst after lure hither." "Fear God and spare me!" exclaimed she. But he paid no heed to her and striking her with the sword, cut her in four. Then he went in search of the young lady; and when she saw him, her reason fled and she called out for mercy. So he spared her and said to her, "How camest thou to consort with this black?" Quoth she, "I was slave to a certain merchant and the old woman used to visit me, till I became familiar with her. One day she said to me, 'We have to-day a wedding at our house, the like of which was never beheld, and I wish thee to see it.' 'I hear and obey,' answered I, and rising, donned my handsomest clothes and jewellery and took with me a purse containing a hundred dinars. Then she brought me hither, and hardly had I entered the house, when the black seized on me, and I have remained in this case these three years, through the perfidy of the accursed old woman." Then said my brother, "Is there aught of his in the house?" "He had great store of wealth," replied she: "and if thou canst carry it away, do so, and may God prosper it to thee!" Then she opened to him several chests full of purses, at which he was confounded, and said to him, "Go now and leave me here and fetch men to carry off the money." So he went out and hired ten men, but, when he returned, he found the door open and the damsel gone, and nothing left but a little of the money and the household stuff. By this, he knew that she had cheated him; so he opened the closets and took what was in them, together with the rest of the money, leaving nothing in the house, and passed the night in all content. When he arose in the morning, he found at the

door a score of troopers, who seized him, saying, "The chief of the police seeks for thee." My brother implored them to let him return to his house, but they would grant him no delay, though he offered them a large sum of money, and binding him fast with cords, carried him off. On the way, there met them a friend of my brother, who clung to his skirts and implored him to stop and help to deliver him from their hands. So he stopped and enquired what was the matter; to which they replied, "The chief of the police has ordered us to bring this man before him, and we are doing so." The man interceded with them and offered them five hundred dinars to let my brother go, saying, "Tell the magistrate that ye could not find him." But they refused and dragged him before the prefect, who said to him, "Whence hadst thou these stuffs and money?" Quoth my brother, "Grant me indemnity." So the magistrate gave him the handkerchief of pardon, and he told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, including the flight of the damsel, adding, "Take what thou wilt, so thou leave me enough to live on." But the prefect took the whole of the stuff and money for himself and fearing lest the affair should reach the Sultan's ears, said to my brother, "Depart from this city, or I will hang thee." "I hear and obey," replied my brother, and set out for another town. On the way thieves fell on him and stripped him and beat him and cut off his ears. But I heard of his misfortunes and went out after him, taking him clothes, and brought him back privily to the city, where I made him an allowance for meat and drink.

STORY OF THE BARBER'S SIXTH BROTHER.

My sixth brother, he of the cropt lips, O Commander of the Faithful, was once rich, but after became poor. One day he went out to seek somewhat to keep life in him

and came presently to a handsome house, with a wide and lofty portico and servants and others at the door, ordering and forbidding. My brother enquired of one of those standing there and he told him that the house belonged to one of the Barmecide family. So he accosted the door-keepers and begged an alms of them. "Enter," said they, "and thou shalt get what thou seekest of our master." Accordingly, he entered and passing through the vestibule, found himself in a mansion of the utmost beauty and elegance, paved with marble and hung with curtains and having in the midst a garden whose like he had never seen. He stood awhile perplexed, knowing not whither to direct his steps: then seeing the door of a sitting-chamber, he entered and saw at the upper end a man of comely presence and goodly beard. When the latter saw my brother, he rose and welcomed him and enquired how he did; to which he replied that he was in need of charity. Whereupon the other showed great concern and putting his hand to his clothes, rent them, exclaiming, "Art thou hungry in a city of which I am an inhabitant? I cannot endure this!" and promised him all manner of good. Then said he, "Thou must eat with me." "O my lord," replied my brother, "I can wait no longer; for I am sore an hungred." So the Barmecide cried out, "Ho boy! bring the ewer and the basin!" and said to my brother, "O my guest, come forward and wash thy hands." My brother rose to do so, but saw neither ewer nor basin. However, the host made as if he were washing his hands and cried out, "Bring the table." But my brother saw nothing. Then said the Barmecide, "Honour me by eating of this food and be not ashamed." And he made as if he ate, saying the while, "Thou eatest but little: do not stint thyself, for I know thou art famished." So my brother began to make as if he ate, whilst the other said to him, "Eat and note the excellence of this bread and

its whiteness." My brother could see nothing and said to himself, "This man loves to jest with the folk." So he replied, "O my lord, never in my life have I seen whiter or more delicious bread." And the host said, "I gave five hundred dinars for the slave-girl who bakes it for me." Then he called out, "Ho, boy! bring the frumenty first and do not spare butter on it." And turning to my brother, "O my guest," said he, "sawst thou ever aught better than this frumenty? Eat, I conjure thee, and be not ashamed!" Then he cried out again, "Ho, boy! bring in the pasty with the fatted grouse in it." And he said to my brother, "Eat, O my guest, for thou art hungry and needest it." So my brother began to move his jaws and make as if he chewed; whilst the other ceased not to call for dish after dish and press my brother to eat, though not a thing appeared. Presently, he cried out, "Ho, boy! bring us the chickens stuffed with pistachio kernels!" And said to my brother, "These chickens have been fattened on pistachio-nuts; eat, for thou hast never tasted the like of them." "O my lord," replied my brother, "they are indeed excellent." Then the host feigned to put his hand to my brother's mouth, as if to feed him, and ceased not to name various dishes and expatiate upon their excellence. Meanwhile my brother was starving, and hunger was so sore on him that his soul lusted for a cake of barley bread. Quoth the Barmecide, "Didst thou ever taste aught more delicious than the seasoning of these dishes?" "Never, O my lord," replied my brother. "Eat heartily and be not ashamed," repeated the host. "O my lord," said my brother, "I have had enough of meat." So the Barmecide cried out, "Take away and bring the sweetmeats." Then he said, "Eat of this almond conserve, for it is excellent, and of these fritters. My life on thee, take this one before the syrup runs out of it!" "May I never be bereaved of thee, O my lord!" replied my brother, and asked him of

the abundance of musk in the fritters. "It is my custom," said the other, "to have three pennyweights of musk and half that quantity of ambergris put into each fritter." All this time my brother was wagging his jaws and moving his head and mouth, till the host said, "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 different kinds of dried fruits, "and be not ashamed." "O my lord," answered my brother, "indeed I am full: I can eat no more." "O my guest," repeated the other, "if thou have a mind to eat more, for God's sake do not remain hungry!" "O my lord," replied my brother, "how should one who has eaten of all these dishes be hungry?" Then he considered and said to himself, "I will do that which shall make him repent of having acted thus." Presently the host called out, "Bring me the wine," and making as if it had come, feigned to give my brother to drink, saying, "Take this cup, and if it please thee, let me know." "O my lord," replied he, "it has a pleasant smell, but I am used to drink old wine twenty years of age." "Then knock at this door,"[1] said his host; "for thou canst not drink of aught better." "O my lord, this is of thy bounty!" replied my brother and made as if he drank. "Health and pleasure to thee!" exclaimed the host, and feigned, in like wise, to fill a cup and drink it off and hand a second cup to my brother, who pretended to drink and made as if he were drunken. Then he took the Barmecide unawares and raising his arm, till the whiteness of his arm-pit appeared, dealt him such a buffet on the neck that the place rang to it. Then he gave him a second cuff and the host exclaimed, "What is this, O vile fellow?" "O my lord," replied my brother, "thou hast graciously admitted thy slave into thine abode and fed him with thy victual and plied him with old wine,

[1] *i.e.* try this.

till he became drunk and dealt unmannerly by thee; but thou art too noble not to bear with his ignorance and pardon his offence." When the Barmecide heard my brother's words, he laughed heartily and exclaimed, "Long have I used to make mock of men and play the fool with those who are apt at jesting and horseplay; but never have I come across any, who had patience and wit to enter into all my humours, but thee; so I pardon thee, and now thou shalt be my boon-companion, in very deed, and never leave me." Then he bade his servants lay the table in good earnest, and they set on all the dishes of which he had spoken, 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 kinds of musical instruments. There they remained, drinking, till drunkenness overcame them, and the host used my brother as a familiar friend, so that he became as it were his brother, and bestowed on him a dress of honour and loved him with an exceeding love. Next morning, they fell again to feasting and carousing, and ceased not to lead this life for twenty years, at the end of which time the Barmecide died and the Sultan laid hands on all his property and squeezed my brother, till he stripped him of all he had. So he left the city and fled forth at random, but the Arabs fell on him midway and taking him prisoner, carried him to their camp, where the Bedouin, his captor, tortured him, saying, "Ransom thyself with money, or I will kill thee." My brother fell a-weeping and replied, "By Allah, I have nought! I am thy prisoner; do with me as thou wilt." Thereupon the Bedouin took out a knife and cut off my brother's lips, still urging his demand. Now this Bedouin had a handsome wife, who used to make advances to my brother, in her husband's absence, and offer him her favours, but he held off from her. One day, she began to

tempt him as usual, and he toyed with her and took her on his knee, when lo, in came the Bedouin, and seeing this, cried out, "Woe to thee, thou villain! Wouldst thou debauch my wife?" Then he took out a knife and cut off my brother's yard, after which he set him on a camel and carried him to a mountain, where he threw him down and left him. Here he was found by some travellers, who recognized him and gave him meat and drink and acquainted me with his plight, whereupon I went forth to him and brought him back to Baghdad, where I provided him with enough to live on. This then, O Commander of the Faithful, is the history of my brothers, and I was unwilling to go away without relating it to thee, that I might disabuse thee of thine error in confounding me with them. And now thou knowest that I have six brothers and support them all.' When the Khalif heard my words, he laughed and said, 'Thou sayst sooth, O Silent One! Thou art neither a man of many words nor an impertinent meddler; but now go out from this city and settle in another.' And he banished me from the city; so I left Baghdad and travelled in foreign countries, till I heard of his death and the coming of another to the Khalifate. Then I returned to Baghdad, where I found my brothers dead and fell in with this young man, to whom I rendered the best of services, for without me he had been killed. Indeed he accuses me of what is foreign to my nature and what he relates of my impertinence is false; for verily I left Baghdad on his account and wandered in many countries, till I came to this city and happened on him with you; and was not this, O good people, of the generosity of my nature?"

When we heard the barber's story (continued the tailor) and saw the abundance of his speech and the way in which he had oppressed the young man, we laid hands on him and shut him up, after which we sat down in peace and ate and drank till the time of the call to afternoon prayer,

when I left the company and returned home. My wife was sulky and said to me, "Thou hast taken thy pleasure all day, whilst I have been moping at home. So now, except thou carry me abroad and amuse me for the rest of the day, it will be the cause of my separation from thee." So I took her out and we amused ourselves till nightfall, when we returned home and met the hunchback, brimming over with drunkenness and repeating the following verses:

The glass is pellucid, and so is the wine: So bring them together and see them combine:
'Tis a puzzle; one moment, all wine and no cup; At another, in turn, 'tis all cup and no wine.

So I invited him to pass the evening with us and went out to buy fried fish, after which we sat down to eat. Presently my wife took a piece of bread and fish and crammed them into his mouth, and he choked and died. Then I took him up and made shift to throw him into the house of the Jewish physician. He in his turn let him down into the house of the controller, who threw him in the way of the Christian broker. This, then, is my story. Is it not more wonderful than that of the hunchback?'

When the King heard the tailor's story, he shook his head for delight and showed astonishment, saying, 'This that passed between the young man and the meddlesome barber is indeed more pleasant and more wonderful than the story of that knave of a hunchback.' Then he bade the tailor take one of the chamberlains and fetch the barber out of his duresse, saying, 'Bring him to me, that I may hear his talk, and it shall be the means of the release of all of you. Then we will bury the hunchback, for he is dead since yesterday, and set up a tomb over him.' So the chamberlain and the tailor went away and presently returned with the barber. The King looked at him and behold, he was a very old man, more than ninety years of age, of a swarthy complexion and white beard and

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eyebrows, flap-eared, long-nosed and simple and conceited of aspect. The King laughed at his appearance and said to him, 'O silent man, I desire thee to tell me somewhat of thy history.' 'O King of the age,' replied the barber, 'why are all these men and this dead hunchback before thee?' Said the King, 'Why dost thou ask?' 'I ask this,' rejoined the barber, 'that your Majesty may know that I am no impertinent meddler and that I am guiltless of that they lay to my charge of overmuch talk; for I am called the Silent, and indeed I am the man of my name, as says the poet:

Thine eyes shall seldom see a man that doth a nickname bear, But, if thou search, thou'lt find the name his nature doth declare.

So the King said, 'Explain the hunchback's case to him and repeat to him the stories told by the physician, the controller, the broker and the tailor.' They did as he commanded, and the barber shook his head and exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is indeed a wonder of wonders!' Then said he, 'Uncover the hunchback's body, that I may see it.' They did so, and he sat down and taking the hunchback's head in his lap, looked at his face and laughed till he fell backward. Then said he, 'To every death there is a cause; but the story of this hunchback deserves to be recorded in letters of gold!' The bystanders were astounded at his words and the King wondered and said to him, 'O silent man, explain thy words to us.' 'O King of the Age,' replied the barber, 'by thy munificence, there is yet life in this hunchback.' Then he pulled out from his girdle a barber's budget, whence he took a pot of ointment and anointed therewith the neck of the hunchback and its veins. Then he took out a pair of tweezers and thrusting them down the hunchback's throat, drew out the piece of fish and its bone, soaked in blood. Thereupon the hunchback sneezed and sat up, and passing his hand over his face, exclaimed, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His Apostle!' At this all present wondered and the King laughed, till he fainted, and so did the others. Then said the King, 'By Allah, this is the most wonderful thing I ever saw! O Muslims, O soldiers all, did you ever in your lives see a man die and come to life again? For verily, had not God vouchsafed him this barber to be the cause of his preservation, he had been dead!' 'By Allah,' said they, 'this is a wonder of wonders!' Then the King caused the whole history to be recorded and laid up in the royal treasury; after which he bestowed splendid dresses of honour on the Jew, the broker and the controller and sent them away. Then he gave the tailor a costly dress of honour and appointed him his own tailor, with a suitable stipend, and made peace between him and the hunchback, on whom he also bestowed a rich and fair dress of honour and made him his boon-companion, appointing him due allowances. As for the barber, he made him a like present and appointed him state barber and one of his boon-companions, assigning him regular allowances and a fixed salary. And they all ceased not from the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there overtook them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of companies.

NOUREDDIN ALI AND THE DAMSEL ENIS EL JELIS.

There was once a King in Bassora who cherished the poor and needy and loved his subjects and bestowed of his wealth on those who believed in Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve!) and he was even as the poet hath described him:

A King who, when the hostile hosts assault him in the field, Smites them and hews them, limb from limb, with trenchant sword and spear;
Full many a character of red he writes upon the breasts What time the mailéd horsemen break before his wild career.

His name was King Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, and he had two Viziers, one called Muïn ben Sawa and

the other Fezl ben Khacan. Fezl was the most generous man of his time; noble and upright of life, all hearts concurred in loving him, and the wise complied with his counsel, whilst all the people wished him long life; for that he was a compend of good qualities, encouraging good and preventing evil and mischief. The Vizier Muïn, on the contrary, was a hater of mankind and loved not good, being indeed altogether evil; even as says of him the poet:

Look thou consort with the generous, sons of the gen'rous; for lo! The generous, sons of the gen'rous, beget the gen'rous, I trow.
And let the mean-minded men, sons of the mean-minded, go, For the mean-minded, sons of the mean, beget none other than so.

And as much as the people loved Fezl, so much did they hate Muïn. It befell one day, that the King, being seated on his throne, with his officers of state about him, called his Vizier Fezl and said to him, 'I wish to have a slave-girl of unsurpassed beauty, perfect in grace and symmetry and endowed with all praiseworthy qualities.' Said the courtiers, 'Such a girl is not to be had for less than ten thousand dinars:' whereupon the King cried out to his treasurer and bade him carry ten thousand dinars to Fezl's house. The treasurer did so, and the Vizier went away, after the King had charged him to go to the market every day and employ brokers and had given orders that no girl worth more than a thousand dinars should be sold, without being first shown to the Vizier. Accordingly, the brokers brought him all the girls that came into their hands, but none pleased him, till one day a broker came to his house and found him mounting his horse, to go to the palace; so he caught hold of his stirrup and repeated the following verses:

O thou whose bounties have restored the uses of the state, O Vizier helped of heaven, whose acts are ever fortunate!
Thou hast revived the virtues all were dead among the folk. May God's acceptance evermore on thine endeavours wait!

Then said he, 'O my lord, she for whom the august mandate was issued is here.' 'Bring her to me,' replied the Vizier. So he went away and returned in a little with a damsel of elegant shape, swelling-breasted, with melting black eyes and smooth cheeks, slender-waisted and heavy-hipped, clad in the richest of clothes. The dew of her lips was sweeter than syrup, her shape more symmetrical than the bending branch and her speech softer than the morning zephyr, even as says one of those who have described her:

A wonder of beauty! Her face full moon of the palace sky; Of a tribe of gazelles and wild cows the dearest and most high!
The Lord of the empyrean hath given her pride and state, Elegance, charm and a shape that with the branch may vie;
She hath in the heaven of her face a cluster of seven stars, That keep the ward of her cheek to guard it from every spy.
So if one think to steal a look, the imps of her glance Consume him straight with a star, that shoots from her gleaming eye.

When the Vizier saw her, she pleased him exceedingly, so he turned to the broker and said to him, 'What is the price of this damsel?' 'Her price is ten thousand dinars,' replied he, 'and her owner swears that this sum will not cover the cost of the chickens she hath eaten, the wine she hath drunk and the dresses of honour bestowed on her teachers; for she hath learnt penmanship and grammar and lexicology and the exposition of the Koran and the rudiments of law and theology, medicine and the calendar, as well as the art of playing on instruments of music.' Then said the Vizier, 'Bring me her master.' So the broker brought him at once, and behold, he was a foreigner, who had lived so long that time had worn him to bones and skin. Quoth the Vizier to him, 'Art thou content to sell this damsel to the Sultan for ten thousand dinars?' 'By Allah,' replied the merchant, 'if I made him a present of her, it were but my duty!' So the Vizier sent for the money and gave it to the slave-dealer, who said, 'By the

leave of our lord the Vizier, I have something to say.' 'Speak,' said the Vizier: and the slave-dealer said, 'If thou wilt be ruled by me, thou wilt not carry the damsel to the King to-day, for she is newly off a journey; the change of air has affected her and the journey has fretted her. But let her abide in thy palace ten days, that she may recover her good looks. Then send her to the bath and dress her in the richest of clothes and go up with her to the Sultan, and this will be more to thy profit.' The Vizier considered the man's advice and approved it; so he took her to his palace, where he appointed her a separate lodging and a daily allowance of meat and drink and so forth, and she abode thus awhile.

Now the Vizier Fezl had a son like the rising full moon, with shining visage, red cheeks covered with a tender down and a mole like a grain of ambergris; as says of him the poet and therein errs not:

A moon,[1] whose glances slay the folk, on whom he turns his eye; A branch, whose graces break all hearts, as he goes stately by.
Black as the night his browlocks are, his face the hue of gold; Fair is his person, and his shape the spear-shaft doth outvie.
Ah me, how hard his heart, how soft and slender is his waist! Why is the softness not transferred from this to that, ah why?
Were but the softness of his sides made over to his heart, He'd ne'er to lovers be unjust nor leave them thus to sigh.
O thou that blam'st my love of thee, excuse me rather thou, Nor chide me, if my body pine for languor like to die.
The fault, indeed, lies not with me, but with my heart and eye; So chide me not, but let me be in this my misery.

Now he knew not the affair of the damsel, and his father had lessoned her, saying, 'Know, O my daughter, that I have bought thee for the bed of the King Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, and I have a son who leaves no girl in the quarter but he has to do with her; so be on thy guard against him and beware of letting him see thy face or hear

[1] The moon is masculine in Arabic.

thy voice.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she; and the Vizier left her and went away. Some days after this it chanced, as Fate would have it, that the damsel went to the bath in the house, where some of the serving-women washed her, after which she arrayed herself in rich apparel, and her beauty and grace redoubled. Then she went in to the Vizier's wife and kissed her hand; and the lady said to her, 'May it profit thee, O Enis el Jelis! How didst thou find the bath?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I lacked but thy presence there.' Thereupon said the mistress to her waiting-women, 'Come with me to the bath, for it is some days since I went thither.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they; and rose and accompanied her to the bath, after Enis el Jelis had retired to her own chamber and the lady had set two little slave-girls to keep the door, charging them to let none go in to the damsel. Presently, as Enis el Jelis sat resting after the bath, in came the Vizier's son, whose name was Noureddin Ali, and asked after his mother and her women, to which the two little slaves replied that they had gone to the bath. The damsel heard Noureddin's voice and said to herself, 'I wonder what like is this youth, of whom his father says that there is not a girl in the quarter but he has had to do with her. By Allah, I long to see him!' So she rose, fresh as she was from the bath, and going to the door, looked at Noureddin and saw that he was like the moon at its full. The sight cost her a thousand sighs, and Noureddin, chancing to look that way, caught a glance of her that caused him also a thousand regrets, and each fell into the snare of the other's love. Then he went up to the two little slaves and cried out at them, whereupon they fled before him and stood afar off to see what he would do. And behold, he went up to the door of the damsel's chamber and entering, said to her, 'Art thou she whom my father bought for me?' 'Yes,' answered she: whereupon Noureddin, who

was heated with wine, went up to her and embraced her, whilst she wreathed her arms about his neck and met him with kisses and sighs and amorous gestures. Then he sucked her tongue and she his, and he did away her maidenhead. When the two little slaves saw their young master go in to the damsel, they cried out and shrieked. So, as soon as he had done his desire, he rose and fled, fearing the issue of his conduct. When the Vizier's wife heard the slaves' cries, she sprang up and came out of the bath, with the sweat dripping from her, saying, 'What is this clamour in the house?' Then she came up to the two little slaves and said to them, 'Out on you! what is the matter?' 'Our lord Noureddin came in and beat us,' answered they: 'so we fled and he went in to the damsel and embraced her, and we know not what he did after this: but when we cried out to thee, he fled.' Thereupon, the mistress went in to Enis el Jelis and enquired what had happened. 'O my lady,' answered she, 'as I was sitting here, there came in a handsome young man, who said to me, "Art thou she whom my father bought for me?" I answered, "Yes;" (for by Allah, O my lady, I believed that he spoke the truth!) and with this he came up to me and embraced me.' 'Did he nought else with thee?' asked the lady. 'Yes,' replied Enis el Jelis; 'he took of me three kisses.' 'He did not leave thee without deflowering thee!' cried the Vizier's wife, and fell to weeping and buffeting her face, she and her women, fearing that Noureddin's father would kill him. Whilst they were thus, in came the Vizier and asked what was the matter, and his wife said to him, 'Swear that thou wilt hearken to what I say.' 'It is well,' replied he. So she told him what his son had done, and he was greatly afflicted and tore his clothes and buffeted his face and plucked out his beard. 'Do not kill thyself,' said his wife: 'I will give thee the ten thousand dinars, her price,

of my own money.' But he raised his head and said to her, 'Out on thee! I have no need of her price, but I fear to lose both life and goods.' 'How so?' asked his wife, and he said, 'Dost thou not know that yonder is our enemy Muïn ben Sawa, who, when he hears of this affair, will go up to the Sultan and say to him, "Thy Vizier, who thou wilt have it loves thee, had of thee ten thousand dinars and bought therewith a slave-girl, whose like was never seen; but when he saw her, she pleased him and he said to his son, 'Take her: thou art worthier of her than the Sultan.' So he took her and did away her maidenhead, and she is now with him." The King will say, "Thou liest!" To which Muïn will reply, "With thy leave, I will fall on him at unawares and bring her to thee." The King will order him to do this, and he will come down upon the house and take the damsel and bring her before the King, who will question her and she will not be able to deny what has passed. Then Muïn will say, "O my lord, thou knowest that I give thee true counsel, but I am not in favour with thee." Thereupon the Sultan will make an example of me, and I shall be a gazing-stock to all the people and my life will be lost.' Quoth his wife, 'Tell none of this thing, which has happened privily, but commit thy case to God and trust in Him to deliver thee from this strait.' With this the Vizier's heart was set at rest, and his wrath and chagrin subsided.

Night xxxb.

Meanwhile, Noureddin, fearing the issue of the affair, spent the whole day in the gardens and came back by night to his mother's apartment, where he slept and rising before day, returned to the gardens. He lived thus for a whole month, not showing his face to his father, till at last his mother said to the Vizier, 'O my lord, shall we lose our own son as well as the damsel? If things continue thus for long, the lad will flee forth from us.' 'What is to be done?' said he: and she answered, 'Do thou watch this night,

and when he comes, seize on him and frighten him. I will rescue him from thee and do thou then make peace with him and give him the girl, for she loves him and he her; and I will pay thee her price.' So the Vizier watched that night and when his son came, he seized him and throwing him down, knelt on his breast and made as if he would cut his throat; but his mother came to his succour and said to her husband, 'What wilt thou do with him?' Quoth he, 'I mean to kill him.' And Noureddin said to his father, 'Am I of so little account with thee?' Whereupon the Vizier's eyes filled with tears and he replied, 'O my son, is the loss of my goods and my life of so little account in thine eyes?' Quoth Noureddin, 'Hear, O my father, what the poet says:

Pardon me: true, I have sinned: yet the sagacious man Ceases never to pardon freely the erring wight.
Surely, therefore, thy foe may hope for pardon from thee, Since he is in the abyss and thou on honour's height!'

Then the Vizier rose from off his breast, saying, 'O my son, I forgive thee!' for his heart was softened. Noureddin rose and kissed the hand of his father, who said to him, 'If I knew that thou wouldst deal fairly by Enis el Jelis, I would give her to thee.' 'O my father,' replied Noureddin, 'how should I not deal fairly by her?' Quoth the Vizier, 'O my son, I charge thee not to take another wife nor concubine to share with her nor sell her.' 'O my father,' answered Noureddin, 'I swear to thee that I will do none of these things.' Then he went in to the damsel and abode with her a whole year, whilst God caused the King to forget the affair. The matter, indeed, came to Muïn's ears, but he dared not speak of it, by reason of the favour in which the Vizier Fezl stood with the Sultan. At the end of the year, the Vizier Fezl went one day to the bath and coming out, whilst still in a sweat, the air smote him and he caught cold and took to his bed. His malady

gained upon him and sleeplessness was long upon him; so he called his son Noureddin and said to him, 'O my son, know that fortune is lotted out and the term of life fixed, and needs must every soul drain the cup of death.' And he repeated the following verses:

I'm dead: yet glory be to Him that dieth not! For that I needs must die, indeed, full well I wot.
He is no king, who dies with kingship in his hand, For sovranty belongs to Him that dieth not.

Then he continued, 'O my son, I have no charge to lay on thee, except that thou fear God and look to the issue of thine actions and cherish the damsel Enis el Jelis.' 'O my father,' said Noureddin, 'who is like unto thee? Indeed thou art renowned for the practice of virtue and the praying of the preachers for thee in the pulpits.' Quoth Fezl, 'O my son, I hope for acceptance from God the Most High.' Then he pronounced the two professions of the faith and was numbered among the blessed. The palace was filled with crying and lamentation, and the news of his death reached the King and the people of the city, and even the children in the schools wept for Fezl ben Khacan. Then his son Noureddin arose and took order for his funeral, and the Amirs and Viziers and grandees were present, amongst them the Vizier Muïn ben Sawa; and as the funeral train came forth of the palace, one of the mourners recited the following verses:

The fifth day I departed and left my friends alone: They laid me out and washed me upon a slab of stone;
Then stripped me of the raiment that on my body was, That they might put upon me clothes other than my own.
On four men's necks they bore me unto the place of prayer And prayed a prayer above me by no prostration known.
Then in a vaulted dwelling they laid me. Though the years Shall waste, its door will never be open to them thrown.

When they had laid him in the earth, Noureddin returned

with the folk; and he lamented with groans and tears and the tongue of the case repeated the following verses:

On the fifth day they departed in the eventide, and I Took of them the last leave-taking, when they went and left me here.
When they turned away and left me, lo! the soul with them did go, And I said, "Return." It answered, "Where, alas! should I recur?
Shall I come back to a body whence the life and blood are flown? Nothing now but bones are left it, rattling in the sepulchre.
Lo! my eyes, excess of weeping hath put out their sight, I trow, And a deafness eke is fallen on my ears: I cannot hear."

He abode a long while in great grief for his father, till one day, as he sat in his house, there came a knocking at the door; so he rose and opening the door, found there a man who had been one of his father's friends and boon-companions. He entered and kissing Noureddin's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, he who has left the like of thee is not dead; and to this pass (death) came even the lord of the first and the last.[1] O my lord, take comfort and leave mourning!' Thereupon Noureddin rose and going to the guest-chamber, transported thither all that he needed. Then his friends gathered together to him and he took his slave-girl again and collecting round him ten of the sons of the merchants, began to eat meat and drink wine, giving entertainment after entertainment and dispensing gifts and favours with a lavish hand, till one day his steward came to him and said, 'O my lord Noureddin, hast thou not heard the saying, "He who spends and does not reckon, becomes poor without knowing it"?' And he repeated the following verses:

I'll hold my money fast, knowing, as well as I know, That 'tis my sword and shield against my every foe.
If I should lavish it on those who love me not, My luck among the folk would change to grief and woe.
So I will eat and drink my wealth for my own good Nor upon any man a single doit bestow.

[1] Mohammed.

I will preserve with care my money from all those By nature base and true to none. 'Tis better so
Than that I e'er should say unto the mean of soul, "Lend me so much: I'll pay to-morrow five-fold mo,"
And see my friend avert his face and turn away, Leaving my soul cast down, as 'twere a dog's, I trow!
O what a sorry lot is his, who hath no pelf, E'en though his virtues bright like to the sun should show!

'O my lord,' continued the steward, 'this lavish expense and prodigal giving waste away wealth.' When Noureddin heard his steward's words, he looked at him and said, 'I will not hearken to one word of all thou hast said, for I have heard the following saying of the poet:

If I be blessed with wealth and be not liberal with it, May my hand wither and my foot eke paralysed remain!
Show me the niggard who hath won glory by avarice; Show me the liberal man his own munificence hath slain!

And he said, 'Know, O steward, it is my desire that so long as there remains in thy hands enough for my morning meal, thou trouble me not with taking care for my evening meal.' Therewith the steward went away and Noureddin continued his extravagant way of living; and if any of his boon-companions chanced to say to him, 'This thing is handsome,' he would answer, 'It is thine as a gift;' or if another said, 'O my lord, such and such a house is handsome,' he would say, 'Take it: it is thine.' In this manner he continued to live for a whole year, giving his friends a banquet in the morning and another in the evening, till one day as they were sitting together, the damsel Enis el Jelis repeated the following verses:

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, when that the days were fair, And fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring:
The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wast deceived by them, For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.

Just as she had finished, there came a knocking at the door; so Noureddin rose to open it, and one of his

companions followed him without his knowledge. At the door he found his steward and said to him, 'What is the matter?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'what I feared for thee has come to pass!' 'How so?' asked Noureddin; and the steward said, 'Know that there remains not a dirhem's worth, less nor more, in my hands. Here are registers containing an account of the original state of thy property and the way in which thou hast spent it.' At this, Noureddin bowed his head and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God!' When the man who had followed him secretly to spy on him heard what the steward said, he returned to his companions and said to them, 'Look what ye do; for Noureddin Ali is bankrupt.' When Noureddin returned, they read trouble in his face; so one of them rose and said to him, 'O my lord, maybe thou wilt give me leave to retire?' 'Why wilt thou go away to-day?' said he. 'My wife is brought to bed,' replied the other; 'and I cannot be absent from her; I wish to return and see how she does.' So Noureddin gave him leave, whereupon another rose and said, 'O my lord, I wish to go to my brother, for he circumcises his son to-day.' And each made some excuse to retire, till they were all gone and Noureddin remained alone. Then he called his slave-girl and said to her, 'O Enis el Jelis, hast thou seen what has befallen me?' And he related to her what the steward had told him. 'O my lord,' replied she, 'some nights ago I had it in my mind to speak with thee of this matter; but I heard thee reciting the following verses:

If fortune be lavish to thee, look thou be lavish with it Unto all classes of men, ere it escape from thy hand!
Munificence will not undo it, whilst it is constant to thee, Nor, when it turneth away, will avarice force it to stand.

When I heard thee speak thus, I held my peace and cared not to say aught to thee.' 'O Enis el Jelis,' said Noureddin, 'thou knowest that I have not expended my

substance but on my friends, who have beggared me, and I think they will not leave me without help.' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'they will not profit thee in aught.' Said he, 'I will rise at once and go to them and knock at their doors: maybe I shall get of them somewhat with which I may trade and leave pleasure and merry-making.' So he rose and repaired to a certain street, where all his ten comrades lived. He went up to the first door and knocked, whereupon a maid came out and said, 'Who art thou?' 'Tell thy master,' replied he, 'that Noureddin Ali stands at the door and says to him, "Thy slave kisses thy hands and awaits thy bounty."' The girl went in and told her master, who cried out at her, saying, 'Go back and tell him that I am not at home.' So she returned and said to Noureddin, 'O my lord, my master is from home.' With this, he went away, saying to himself, 'Though this fellow be a whoreson knave and deny himself, another may not be so.' Then he came to the second door and sent in a like message to the master of the house, who denied himself as the first had done, whereupon Noureddin repeated the following verse:

They're gone who, if before their door thou didst arrest thy feet, Would on thy poverty bestow both flesh and roasted meat!

And said, 'By Allah, I must try them all: there may be one amongst them who will stand me in the stead of the rest.' So he went round to all the ten, but not one of them opened his door to him or showed himself to him or broke a cake of bread in his face; whereupon he repeated the following verses:

A man in time of affluence is like unto a tree, Round which the folk collect, as long as fruit thereon they see,
Till, when its burden it hath cast, they turn from it away, Leave it to suffer heat and dust and all inclemency.
Out on the people of this age! perdition to them all! Since not a single one of ten is faithful found to be.

Then he returned to his slave-girl, and indeed his concern was doubled, and she said to him, 'O my lord, did I not tell thee that they would not profit thee aught?' 'By Allah,' replied he, 'not one of them would show me his face or take any notice of me!' 'O my lord,' said she, 'sell some of the furniture and household stuff, little by little, and live on the proceed, against God the Most High provide.' So he sold all that was in the house, till there was nothing left, when he turned to her and said, 'What is to be done now?' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'it is my advice that thou rise and take me down to the market and sell me. Thou knowest that thy father bought me for ten thousand dinars; perhaps God may help thee to near that price, and if it be His will that we be reunited, we shall meet again.' 'O Enis el Jelis,' replied Noureddin, 'by Allah, I cannot endure to be parted from thee for a single hour!' 'By Allah, O my lord,' rejoined she, 'nor is it easy to me; but necessity compels, as says the poet:

Necessity in life oft drives one into ways That to the courteous mind are foreign and abhorred.
We do not trust our weight unto a rope, unless It be to do some thing adapted to the cord.'

With this, he rose to his feet and took her, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks like rain and he recited with the tongue of the case what follows:

Stay and vouchsafe me one more look before our parting hour, To soothe the anguish of a heart well nigh for severance slain!
Yet, if it irk thee anywise to grant my last request, Far rather let me die of love than cause thee aught of pain!

Then he went down to the market and delivered the damsel to a broker, to whom he said, 'O Hajj[1] Hassan, I would have thee note the value of her thou hast to offer for

[1] Or *Hajji*, pilgrim; title given to those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

sale!' 'O my lord Noureddin,' replied the broker, 'I have not forgotten my business.[1] Is not this Enis el Jelis, whom thy father bought of me for ten thousand dinars?' 'Yes,' said Noureddin. Then the broker went round to the merchants, but found they were not all assembled; so he waited till the rest had arrived and the market was full of all kinds of female slaves, Turks and Franks and Circassians and Abyssinians and Nubians and Egyptians and Tartars and Greeks and Georgians and others; when he came forward and said, 'O merchants! O men of wealth! every round thing is not a walnut nor every long thing a banana; every thing red is not meat nor everything white fat. O merchants, I have here this unique pearl, this unvalued jewel! What price shall I set on her?' 'Say four thousand five hundred dinars,' cried one. So the broker opened the biddings for her at that sum and as he was yet calling, behold, the Vizier Muïn ben Sawa passed through the market and seeing Noureddin standing in a corner, said to himself, 'What doth the son of Khacan here? Has this gallows-bird aught left to buy girls withal?' Then he looked round and seeing the broker crying out and the merchants round him, said to himself, 'Doubtless he is ruined and has brought the damsel Enis el Jelis hither to sell her! What a solace to my heart!' Then he called the crier, who came up and kissed the ground before him, and he said to him, 'Show me the girl thou art crying for sale.' The broker dared not cross him, so he answered, 'O my lord, in the name of God!' And brought the damsel and showed her to him. She pleased him and he said, 'O Hassan, what is bidden for this damsel?' 'Four thousand five hundred dinars,' replied the broker, 'as an upset price.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I take that bid on myself.' When the merchants heard this, they hung back and dared not bid another dirhem, knowing what they did of

[1] *lit.* the fundamentals are remembered.

the Vizier's tyranny. Then Muïn looked at the broker and said to him, 'What ails thee to stand still? Go and offer four thousand dinars for her, and the five hundred shall be for thyself.' So the broker went to Noureddin and said to him, 'O my lord, thy slave is gone for nothing!' 'How so?' said he. The broker answered, 'We had opened the biddings for her at four thousand five hundred dinars, when that tyrant Muïn ben Sawa passed through the market and when he saw the damsel, she pleased him and he said to me, "Call me the buyer for four thousand dinars, and thou shall have five hundred for thyself." I doubt not but he knows she belongs to thee, and if he would pay thee down her price at once, it were well; but I know, of his avarice and unright, he will give thee a written order on some of his agents and will send after thee to say to them, "Give him nothing." So as often as thou shalt go to seek the money, they will say, "We will pay thee presently," and so they will put thee off day after day, for all thy high spirit, till at last, when they are tired of thine importunity, they will say, "Show us the bill." Then, as soon as they get hold of it, they will tear it up, and so thou wilt lose the girl's price.' When Noureddin heard this, he looked at the broker and said to him, 'What is to be done?' 'I will give thee a counsel,' answered he, 'which if thou follow, it will be greatly to thine advantage.' 'What is that?' asked Noureddin. 'Do thou come to me presently,' said the broker, 'when I am standing in the midst of the market and taking the girl from my hand, give her a cuff and say to her, "O baggage, I have kept my vow and brought thee down to the market, because I swore that I would put thee up for sale and make the brokers cry thee." If thou do this, it may be the device will impose upon the Vizier and the folk, and they will believe that thou broughtest her not to the market but for the quittance of thine oath.'

'This is a good counsel,' said Noureddin. Then the broker left him and returning to the midst of the market, took the damsel by the hand; then beckoned to Muïn and said to him, 'O my lord, here comes her owner.' With this up came Noureddin and snatching the girl from the broker, gave her a cuff and said to her, 'Out on thee, thou baggage! I have brought thee down to the market for the quittance of my oath; so now begone home and look that thou cross me not again. Out on thee! do I need thy price, that I should sell thee? The furniture of my house would fetch many times thy value, if I sold it.' When Muïn saw this, he said to Noureddin, 'Out on thee! Hast thou aught left to sell?' And he made to lay violent hands on him; but the merchants interposed, for they all loved Noureddin, and the latter said to them, 'Behold, I am in your hands, and ye all know his tyranny!' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the Vizier, 'but for you, I would have killed him!' Then all the merchants signed to Noureddin with their eyes as who should say, 'Work thy will of him; not one of us will come betwixt him and thee.' Whereupon Noureddin, who was a stout-hearted fellow, went up to the Vizier and dragging him from his saddle, threw him to the ground. Now there was in that place a mortar-pit, into the midst of which he fell, and Noureddin fell to cuffing and pummelling him, and one of the blows smote his teeth, dyeing his beard with his blood. There were with the Vizier ten armed slaves, who, seeing their master thus evil entreated, clapped their hands to their swords and would have drawn them and fallen on Noureddin, to kill him; but the bystanders said to them, 'This is a Vizier and that a Vizier's son; it may be they will make peace with one another anon, in which case you will have gotten the hatred of both of them. Or a blow may fall on your lord, and you will all die the foulest of deaths; so you would do wisely not to interfere.' So they held aloof

and when Noureddin had made an end of beating the Vizier, he took his slave-girl and went home; and Muïn rose, with his white clothes dyed of three colours with black mud, red blood and ashes. When he saw himself in this plight, he put a halter round his neck and taking a bundle of coarse grass in either hand, went up to the palace and standing under the King's windows, cried out, 'O King of the age, I am a man aggrieved!' So they brought him before the Sultan, who looked at him and knowing him for his chief Vizier, asked who had entreated him thus. Whereupon he wept and sobbed and repeated the following verses:

Shall fortune oppress me, and that in thy day, O King? Shall wolves devour me, whilst thou art a lion proud?
Shall all that are thirsty drink of thy water-tanks And shall I thirst in thy courts, whilst thou art a rain-fraught cloud?

'O my lord,' continued he, 'thus fare all who love and serve thee.' 'Make haste,' said the Sultan, 'and tell me how this happened and who hath dealt thus with thee, whose honour is a part of my own honour.' 'Know then, O my lord,' replied the Vizier, 'that I went out this day to the slave-market to buy me a cook-maid, when I saw in the bazaar a damsel, whose like for beauty I never beheld. She pleased me and I thought to buy her for our lord the Sultan; so I asked the broker of her and her owner, and he replied, "She belongs to Noureddin Ali son of Fezl ben Khacan." Now our lord the Sultan aforetime gave his father ten thousand dinars to buy him a handsome slave-girl, and he bought therewith this damsel, who pleased him, so that he grudged her to our lord the Sultan and gave her to his own son. When Fezl died, his son sold all that he possessed of houses and gardens and household stuff and squandered the price, till he became penniless. Then he brought the girl down to the market, to sell her, and handed her to the broker, who cried her and the

merchants bid for her, till her price reached four thousand dinars; whereupon I said to myself, "I will buy her for our lord the Sultan, for it was his money that paid for her." So I said to Noureddin, "O my son, sell her to me for four thousand dinars." He looked at me and replied, "O pestilent old man, I will sell her to a Jew or a Christian rather than to thee!" "I do not buy her for myself," said I, "but for our lord and benefactor the Sultan." When he heard my words, he flew into a passion and dragging me off my horse, for all I am an old man, beat me till he left me as thou seest; and all this has befallen me but because I thought to buy the girl for thee.' Then the Vizier threw himself on the ground and lay there, weeping and trembling. When the Sultan saw his condition and heard his story, the vein of anger started out between his eyes, and he turned to his guards, who stood before him, forty swordsmen, and said to them, 'Go down at once to the house of Noureddin ben Fezl, and sack it and raze it; then take him and the damsel and drag them hither with their hands bound behind them.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they: and arming themselves, set out for Noureddin's house. Now there was with the Sultan a man called Ilmeddin Senjer, who had aforetime been servant to Noureddin's father Fezl ben Khacan, but had left his service for that of the Sultan, who had advanced him to be one of his chamberlains. When he heard the Sultan's order and saw the enemies intent upon killing his master's son, it was grievous to him; so he went out from before the Sultan and mounting his steed, rode to Noureddin's house and knocked at the door. Noureddin came out and knowing him, would have saluted him: but he said, 'O my lord, this is no time for greeting or converse.' 'O Ilmeddin,' asked Noureddin, 'what is the matter?' 'Arise and flee for your lives, thou and the damsel,' replied he; 'for Muïn ben Sawa hath laid a snare for you; and if

you fall into his hands, he will kill you. The Sultan hath despatched forty swordsmen against you and I counsel you flee ere evil overtake you.' Then Senjer put his hand to his pouch and finding there forty dinars, took them and gave them to Noureddin, saying, 'O my lord, take these and journey with them. If I had more, I would give them to thee; but this is no time to take exception.' So Noureddin went in to the damsel and told her what had happened, at which she wrung her hands. Then they went out at once from the city, and God let down the veil of His protection over them, so that they reached the river-bank, where they found a ship about to sail. Her captain stood in the waist, saying, 'Whoso has aught to do, whether in the way of victualling or taking leave of his friends, or who has forgotten any necessary thing, let him do it at once and return, for we are about to sail.' And every one said, 'O captain, we have nothing left to do.' Whereupon he cried out to his crew, saying, 'Ho, there! cast off the moorings and pull up the pickets!' Quoth Noureddin, Night xxxvi. 'Whither bound, O captain?' 'To the Abode of Peace, Baghdad,' replied he. So Noureddin and the damsel embarked with him, and they launched out and spread the sails, and the ship sped forth, as she were a bird in full flight, even as says right well the poet:

Look at a ship, how ravishing a sight she is and fair! In her swift course she doth outstrip the breezes of the air.
She seems as 'twere a scudding bird that, lighting from the sky, Doth on the surface of the stream with outspread pinions fare.

Meanwhile the King's officers came to Noureddin's house and breaking open the doors, entered and searched the whole place, but could find no trace of him and the damsel; so they demolished the house and returning to the Sultan, told him what they had done; whereupon he said, 'Make search for them, wherever they are!' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then he bestowed

upon the Vizier Muïn a dress of honour and said to him, 'None shall avenge thee but myself.' So Muïn's heart was comforted and he wished the King long life and returned to his own house. Then the Sultan caused proclamation to be made in the town, saying, 'O all ye people! It is the will of our lord the Sultan that whoso happens on Noureddin Ali ben Khacan and brings him to the Sultan shall receive a dress of honour and a thousand dinars, and he who conceals him or knows his abiding-place and informs not thereof, deserves the exemplary punishment that shall befall him.' So search was made for Noureddin, but they could find neither trace nor news of him; and meantime he and the damsel sailed on with a fair wind, till they arrived safely at Baghdad and the captain said to them, 'This is Baghdad, and it is a city of safety: the winter hath departed from it, with its cold, and the season of the Spring is come, with its roses; its trees are in blossom and its streams flowing.' So Noureddin landed, he and the damsel, and giving the captain five dinars, walked on awhile, till chance brought them among the gardens and they came to a place swept and sprinkled, with long benches on either hand and hanging pots full of water. Overhead was a trellis-work of canes shading the whole length of the alley, and at the further end was the door of a garden; but this was shut. 'By Allah,' said Noureddin to the damsel, 'this is a pleasant place!' And she answered, 'O my lord, let us sit down on these benches and rest awhile.' So they mounted and sat down on the benches, after having washed their faces and hands; and the air smote on them and they fell asleep, glory be to Him who never sleeps! Now the garden in question was called the Garden of Delight and therein stood a pavilion called the Pavilion of Pictures, belonging to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, who used, when sad at heart, to repair thither and there sit. In this pavilion were fourscore windows and fourscore hanging lamps

and in the midst a great chandelier of gold. When the Khalif entered, he was wont to have all the windows opened and to order his boon-companion Isaac ben Ibrahim and the slave-girls to sing, till his care left him and his heart was lightened. Now the keeper of the garden was an old man by name Gaffer Ibrahim, and he had found, from time to time, on going out on his occasions, idlers taking their ease with courtezans in the alley leading to the door of the garden, at which he was sore enraged; so he complained to the Khalif, who said, 'Whomsoever thou findest at the door of the garden, do with him as thou wilt.' As chance would have it, he had occasion to go abroad that very day and found these two sleeping at the gate, covered with one veil; whereupon, 'By Allah,' said he, 'this is fine! These two know not that the Khalif has given me leave to kill any one whom I may catch at the door of the garden: but I will give them a sound drubbing, that none may come near the gate in future.' So he cut a green palm-stick and went out to them and raising his arm, till the whiteness of his armpit appeared, was about to lay on to them, when he bethought himself and said, 'O Ibrahim, wilt thou beat them, knowing not their case? Maybe they are strangers or wayfarers, and destiny hath led them hither. I will uncover their faces and look on them.' So he lifted up the veil from their faces and said, 'They are a handsome pair; it were not fitting that I should beat them.' Then he covered their faces again, and going to Noureddin's feet, began to rub them, whereupon the young man awoke, and seeing an old man of venerable appearance rubbing his feet, was abashed and drawing them in, sat up; then took Ibrahim's hand and kissed it. Quoth the old man, 'O my son, whence art thou?' 'O my lord,' replied Noureddin, 'we are strangers.' And the tears started to his eyes. 'O my son,' said Ibrahim, 'know that the Prophet (whom God

bless and preserve!) hath charged us to be hospitable to strangers. Wilt thou not rise, O my son, and pass into the garden and take thy pleasure therein and gladden thy heart?' 'O my lord,' said Noureddin, 'to whom does the garden belong?' And he replied, 'O my son, I inherited it from my family.' Now his object in saying this was to put them at their ease and induce them to enter the garden. So Noureddin thanked him and rose, he and the damsel, and followed him into the garden. They entered through a gateway, vaulted like a gallery and overhung with vines bearing grapes of various colours, the red like rubies and the black like ebony, and passing under a bower of trellised boughs, found themselves in a garden, and what a garden! There were fruit-trees growing singly and in clusters and birds warbling melodiously on the branches, whilst the thousand-voiced nightingale repeated the various strains: the turtle-dove filled the place with her cooing, and there sang the blackbird, with its warble like a human voice, and the ring-dove, with her notes like a drinker exhilarated with wine. The trees were laden with all manner of ripe fruits, two of each: the apricot in its various kinds, camphor and almond and that of Khorassan, the plum, whose colour is as that of fair women, the cherry, that does away discoloration of the teeth, and the fig of three colours, red and white and green. There bloomed the flower of the bitter orange, as it were pearls and coral, the rose whose redness puts to shame the cheeks of the fair, the violet, like sulphur on fire by night, the myrtle, the gillyflower, the lavender, the peony and the blood-red anemone. The leaves were jewelled with the tears of the clouds; the camomile smiled with her white petals like a lady's teeth, and the narcissus looked at the rose with her negro's eyes: the citrons shone like cups and the limes like balls of gold, and the earth was carpeted with flowers of all colours; for the

Spring was come and the place beamed with its brightness; whilst the birds sang and the stream rippled and the breeze blew softly, for the attemperance of the air. Ibrahim carried them up into the pavilion, and they gazed on its beauty and on the lamps aforesaid in the windows; and Noureddin called to mind his banquetings of time past and said, 'By Allah, this is a charming place!' Then they sat down and the gardener set food before them; and they ate their fill and washed their hands; after which Noureddin went up to one of the windows and calling the damsel, fell to gazing on the trees laden with all manner of fruits. Then he turned to the gardener and said to him, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, hast thou no drink here, for folk use to drink after eating?' The old man brought him some fresh sweet cold water, but he said, 'This is not the kind of drink I want.' 'Belike,' said Ibrahim, 'thou wishest for wine?' 'I do,' replied Noureddin. 'God preserve me from it!' said the old man. 'It is thirteen years since I did this thing, for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) cursed its drinker, its presser, its seller and its carrier.' 'Hear two words from me,' said Noureddin. 'Say on,' replied Ibrahim. 'If,' said Noureddin, 'that unlucky ass there be cursed, will any part of the curse fall on thee?' 'Not so,' replied the old man. 'Then,' said Noureddin, 'take this dinar and these two dirhems and mount the ass and stop at a distance (from the wineshop); then call the first man thou seest buying, and say to him, "Take these two dirhems and buy me this dinar's worth of wine and set it on the ass." Thus thou wilt be neither the purchaser nor the carrier of the wine and no part of the curse will fall on thee.' At this the gardener laughed and said, 'O my son, never have I seen one readier-witted than thou nor heard aught sweeter than thy speech.' So he did as Noureddin had said, and the latter thanked him, saying, 'We are dependent on thee,

and it is only fitting that thou comply with our wishes; so bring us what we require.' 'O my son,' replied he, 'there is my buttery before thee.' (Now this was the store-room provided for the Commander of the Faithful.) 'Enter and take what thou wilt; there is more there than thou needest.' So Noureddin entered the pantry and found therein vessels of gold and silver and crystal, incrusted with all kinds of jewels, and was amazed and delighted at what he saw. Then he took what he wanted and set it on and poured the wine into flagons and decanters, whilst Ibrahim brought them fruits and flowers and withdrew and sat down at a distance. So they drank and made merry, till the wine got the mastery of them, so that their cheeks flushed and their eyes sparkled and their hair became dishevelled. Then said Ibrahim to himself, 'What ails me to sit apart? Why should I not sit with them? When shall I find myself in company with the like of these two, who are like two moons?' So he came and sat down at the corner of the dais, and Noureddin said to him, 'O my lord, my life on thee, come and sit with us!' So he came and sat by them, and Noureddin filled a cup and said to him, 'Drink, that thou mayst know the flavour of it.' 'God forbid!' replied he. 'I have not done such a thing these thirteen years.' Noureddin did not press him, but drank off the cup, and throwing himself on the ground, feigned to be overcome with drunkenness. Then said the damsel, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, see how he serves me!' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'what ails him?' 'This is how he always treats me,' said she; 'he drinks awhile, then falls asleep and leaves me alone, with none to bear me company over my cup nor to whom I may sing whilst he drinks.' 'By Allah,' said he (and indeed her words touched his heart and made his soul incline to her), 'this is not well!' Then she looked at him and filling a cup, said to him, 'I conjure thee, on my life, not to

refuse me, but take this cup and drink it off and solace my heart.' So he took it and drank it off and she filled a second cup and set it on the chandelier, saying, 'O my lord, there is still this one left for thee.' 'By Allah, I cannot take it,' answered he; 'that which I have drunk suffices me.' 'By Allah,' said she, 'thou must indeed drink it.' So he took the cup and drank; and she filled him a third cup, which he took and was about to drink, when behold, Noureddin opened his eyes and sitting up, exclaimed, 'Hallo, Gaffer Ibrahim, what is this? Did I not adjure thee just now, and thou refusedst, saying, "I have not done such a thing these thirteen years"?' 'By Allah,' replied he (and indeed he was abashed), 'it is her fault, not mine.' Noureddin laughed and they sat down again to carouse, but the damsel turned to Noureddin and whispered to him, 'O my lord, drink and do not press him, and I will show thee some sport with him.' Then she began to fill her master's cup and he to fill to her, and so they did time after time, till at last Ibrahim looked at them and said, 'What manner of good fellowship is this? God's malison on the glutton who keeps the cup to himself! Why dost thou not give me to drink, O my brother? What manners are these, O Blessed One!' At this they laughed till they fell backward; then they drank and gave him to drink and ceased not to carouse thus, till a third part of the night was past. Then said the damsel, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, with thy leave, I will light one of these candles.' 'Do so,' said he; 'but light no more than one.' So she rose and beginning with one candle, lighted fourscore and sat down again. Presently Noureddin said, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, how stands my favour with thee? May I not light one of these lamps?' 'Light one,' replied he, 'and plague me no more.' So Noureddin rose and lighted one lamp after another, till he had lighted the whole eighty and the palace seemed to dance with light.

Night xxxvii.

Quoth Ibrahim (and indeed intoxication had mastered him), 'Ye are more active than I.' Then he rose and opened all the windows and sat down again; and they fell to carousing and reciting verses, till the place rang with their mirth.

Now as God the All-powerful, who appointeth a cause to every thing, had decreed, the Khalif was at that moment seated at one of the windows of his palace, overlooking the Tigris, in the light of the moon. He saw the lustre of the candles and lamps reflected in the river and lifting his eyes, perceived that it came from the garden-palace, which was in a blaze with light. So he called Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, 'O dog of a Vizier, has the city of Baghdad been taken from me and thou hast not told me?' 'What words are these?' said Jaafer. 'If Baghdad were not taken from me,' rejoined the Khalif, 'the Pavilion of Pictures would not be illuminated with lamps and candles, nor would its windows be open. Out on thee! Who would dare to do this except the Khalifate were taken from me?' Quoth Jaafer (and indeed he trembled in every limb), 'Who told thee that the pavilion was illuminated and the windows open?' 'Come hither and look,' replied the Khalif. So Jaafer came to the window and looking towards the garden, saw the pavilion flaming with light, in the darkness of the night, and thinking that this might be by the leave of the keeper, for some good reason of his own, was minded to make an excuse for him. So he said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, Gaffer Ibrahim said to me last week, "O my lord Jaafer, I desire to circumcise my sons during thy life and that of the Commander of the Faithful." "What dost thou want?" asked I; and he said, "Get me leave from the Khalif to hold the festival in the pavilion." So I said to him, "Go, circumcise them, and I will see the Khalif and tell him." So he went away and I forgot to tell thee.' 'O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'thou

hast committed two offences against me, first, in that thou didst not tell me, secondly, in that thou didst not give the old man what he sought; for he only came and told thee this, by way of hinting a request for some small matter of money, to help him out with the expenses; and thou gavest him nothing nor toldest me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'I forgot.' 'By the virtue of my forefathers,' rejoined the Khalif, 'I will not pass the rest of the night but with him, for he is a pious man, who consorts with the elders of the faith and the fakirs: doubtless they are now assembled with him and it may be that the prayer of one of them may profit us both in this world and the next. Besides, my presence will advantage him and he will be pleased.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' objected Jaafer, 'the night is far spent, and they will now be about to break up.' 'It matters not,' replied the Khalif; 'I must and will go to them.' And Jaafer was silent, being perplexed and knowing not what to do. Then the Khalif rose to his feet and taking with him Jaafer and Mesrour the eunuch, they all three disguised themselves as merchants and leaving the palace, walked on through the by-streets till they came to the garden. The Khalif went up to the gate and finding it open, was surprised and said to the Vizier, 'Look, Jaafer, how Gaffer Ibrahim has left the gate open to this hour, contrary to his wont!' They entered and walked on till they came under the pavilion, when the Khalif said, 'O Jaafer, I wish to look in upon them privily before I join them, that I may see what they are about, for up to now I hear no sound nor any fakir naming[1] God.' Then he looked about and seeing a tall walnut-tree, said to Jaafer, 'I will climb this tree, for its branches come near the windows, and so look in upon them.' So he mounted the

[1] *i.e.* chanting the ninety-nine names of God or repeating the words "There is no god but God."

tree and climbed from branch to branch, till he reached a bough that came up to one of the windows. On this he seated himself and looking in at the window, saw a young lady and a young man as they were two moons (glory be to Him who created them and fashioned them!), and by them Gaffer Ibrahim seated, with a cup in his hand, saying, 'O princess of fair ones, drink without music is nothing worth; indeed I have heard a poet say:

Pass round the wine in the great and the small cup too, And take the bowl from the hands of the shining moon.[1]
But without music, I charge you, forbear to drink, For sure I see even horses drink to a whistled tune.'

When the Khalif saw this, the vein of anger started out between his eyes and he descended and said to the Vizier, 'O Jaafer, never saw I men of piety in such a case! Do thou mount this tree and look upon them, lest the benisons of the devout escape thee.' So Jaafer climbed up, perplexed at these words, and looking in, saw Noureddin and the damsel and Gaffer Ibrahim with a cup in his hand. At this sight, he made sure of ruin and descending, stood before the Commander of the Faithful, who said to him, 'O Jaafer, praised be God who hath made us of those who observe the external forms of the Divine ordinances!' Jaafer could make no answer for excess of confusion, and the Khalif continued, 'I wonder how these people came hither and who admitted them into my pavilion! But the like of the beauty of this youth and this girl my eyes never beheld!' 'Thou art right, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied Jaafer, hoping to propitiate him. Then said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, let us both mount the branch that overlooks the window, that we may amuse ourselves with looking at them.' So they both climbed the tree and looking in, heard Ibrahim say, 'O my lady, I have laid aside gravity in drinking wine, but this is not thoroughly

[1] *i.e.* a fair-faced cup-bearer.

delectable without the melodious sound of the strings.' 'By Allah,' replied Enis el Jelis, 'if we had but some musical instrument, our joy would be complete!' When the old man heard what she said, he rose to his feet, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I wonder what he is going to do.' 'I know not,' replied Jaafer. Then Ibrahim went out and returned with a lute; and the Khalif looked at it and knew it for that of Isaac the boon-companion. 'By Allah,' said he, 'if this damsel sing ill, I will crucify you, all of you; but if she sing well, I will pardon them and crucify thee.' 'God grant she may sing ill!' said Jaafer. 'Why so?' asked the Khalif. 'Because,' replied Jaafer, 'if thou crucify us all together, we shall keep each other company.' The Khalif laughed at his speech; then the damsel took the lute and tuning it, played a measure which made all hearts yearn to her, then sang the following verses:

O ye that to help unhappy lovers are fain! We burn with the fire of love and longing in vain.
Whatever ye do, we merit it: see, we cast Ourselves on your ruth! Do not exult in our pain.
For we are children of sadness and low estate. Do with us what you will; we will not complain.
What were your glory to slay us within your courts? Our fear is but lest you sin in working us bane.

'By Allah,' said the Khalif, 'it is good, O Jaafer! Never in my life have I heard so enchanting a voice!' 'Belike,' said Jaafer, 'the Khalif's wrath hath departed from him.' 'Yes,' said the Khalif, 'it is gone.' Then they descended from the tree, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I wish to go in and sit with them and hear the damsel sing before me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'if thou go in to them, they will most like be troubled and Gaffer Ibrahim will assuredly die of fright.' 'O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'thou must teach me some device, whereby I may foregather with them, without being

known of them.' So they walked on towards the Tigris, considering of this affair, and presently came upon a fisherman standing fishing under the windows of the pavilion. Now some time before this, the Khalif (being in the pavilion) had called to Gaffer Ibrahim and said to him, 'What is this noise I hear under the windows?' 'It is the voices of the fishermen, fishing,' answered he; and the Khalif commanded him to go down and forbid them to resort thither; so the fishermen were forbidden to fish there. However, that night a fisherman named Kerim, happening to pass by and seeing the garden gate open, said to himself, 'This is a time of negligence: I will take advantage of it to fish.' So he went in, but had hardly cast his net, when the Khalif came up alone and standing behind him, knew him and called out to him, saying, 'Ho, Kerim!' The fisherman, hearing himself called by his name, turned round, and seeing the Khalif, trembled in every limb and exclaimed, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I did it not in mockery of the edict; but poverty and distress drove me to what thou seest.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Make a cast in my name.' At this the fisherman was glad and going to the bank, cast his net, then waiting till it had spread out to the utmost and settled down, pulled it up and found in it various kinds of fish. The Khalif was pleased and said, 'O Kerim, put off thy clothes.' So he put off a gown of coarse woollen stuff, patched in a hundred places and full of disgusting vermin, and a turban that had not been unwound for three years, but to which he had sewn every rag he came across. The Khalif pulled off his cassock and mantle and two vests of Alexandria and Baalbec silk and saying to the fisherman, 'Take these and put them on,' donned the latter's gown and turban and tied a chin band[1] round the lower part of

[1] Generally, the floating ends of the turban. This was for the purpose of concealment and is a common practice with the Bedouins.

his face. Then said he to the fisherman, 'Go about thy business.' So he kissed the Khalif's feet and thanked him and recited the following verses:

Thou hast heaped benefits on me, past all that I could crave! My tongue suffices not to praise thy goodness to thy slave.
So I will thank thee whilst I live; and when I come to die, My very bones shall never cease to thank thee in the grave.

Hardly had he finished, when the lice began to crawl over the skin of the Khalif, who fell to snatching them with either hand from his neck and throwing them down, exclaiming, 'Out on thee, O fisherman, this gown is swarming with vermin!' 'O my lord,' replied the fisherman, 'they torment thee just now, but before a week has passed, thou wilt not feel them nor think of them.' The Khalif laughed and said, 'Out on thee! Dost thou think I mean to leave this gown on my body?' 'O my lord,' said the fisherman, 'I desire to say one word to thee.' 'Say on,' answered the Khalif. 'It occurs to me, O Commander of the Faithful,' said the fisherman, 'that if thou wish to learn hunting, so thou mayst have an useful trade ready to thy hand, this gown will be the very thing for thee.' The Khalif laughed, and the fisherman went his way. Then the Khalif took up the basket of fish, and laying a little grass over it, carried it to Jaafer and stood before him. Jaafer, concluding that it was Kerim the fisherman, was alarmed for him and said, 'O Kerim, what brings thee hither? Flee for thy life, for the Khalif is in the garden to-night, and if he see thee, thou wilt lose thy head.' At this the Khalif laughed, and Jaafer knew him and said, 'Surely thou art our lord the Khalif?' 'Yes, O Jaafer,' replied he. 'And thou art my vizier and I came hither with thee; yet thou knewest me not; so how should Gaffer Ibrahim know me, and he drunk? Stay here, till I come back.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. Then the Khalif went up to the door of the pavilion and knocked

softly, whereupon said Noureddin, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, some one knocks at the door.' 'Who is at the door?' cried the old man; and the Khalif replied, 'It is I, O Gaffer Ibrahim!' 'Who art thou?' asked the gardener. 'I, Kerim the fisherman,' rejoined the Khalif. 'I hear thou hast company, so have brought thee some fine fish.' When Noureddin heard the mention of fish, he was glad, he and the damsel, and they both said to Ibrahim, 'O my lord, open the door and let him bring the fish in to us.' So he opened the door, and the Khalif entered, in his fisherman's disguise, and began by saluting them. Quoth Ibrahim, 'Welcome to the brigand, the robber, the gambler! Let us see thy fish.' So the Khalif showed them the fish and behold, they were still alive and moving, whereupon the damsel exclaimed, 'O my lord, these are indeed fine fish! Would that they were fried!' 'By Allah, O my mistress,' replied Ibrahim, 'thou art right.' Then said he to the Khalif, 'O fisherman, why didst thou not bring us the fish ready fried? Go now and fry them and bring them to us.' 'It shall be done at once,' answered he. Said they, 'Be quick about it.' So he went out, running, and coming up to Jaafer, cried out, 'Hallo, Jaafer!' 'Here am I, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied he. 'They want the fish fried,' said the Khalif. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'give it to me and I will fry it for them.' 'By the tombs of my forefathers,' said the Khalif, 'none shall fry it but I, with my own hand!' So he repaired to the keeper's hut, where he searched and found all that he required, even to salt and saffron and marjoram and so forth. Then he laid the fish on the frying pan and setting it on the brasier, fried them handsomely. When they were done, he laid them on a banana-leaf, and gathering some lemons from the garden, carried the dish to the pavilion and set it before them. So Noureddin and the damsel and Ibrahim came forward and ate, after which

they washed their hands and Noureddin said to the Khalif, 'O fisherman, thou hast done us a right welcome service this night!' Then he put his hand to his pouch and taking out three of the dinars that Senjer had given him, said, 'O fisherman, excuse me. By Allah, had I known thee before that which has lately befallen me, I had done away the bitterness of poverty from thy heart; but take this as an earnest of my good will!' Then he threw the dinars to the Khalif, who took them and kissed them and put them up. Now the Khalif's sole desire in all this was to hear the damsel sing; so he said to Noureddin, 'O my lord, thou hast rewarded me munificently, but I beg of thy great bounty that thou wilt let this damsel sing an air, that I may hear her.' So Noureddin said, 'O Enis el Jelis!' 'Yes,' replied she. And he said, 'My life on thee, sing us something for the sake of this fisherman, for he wishes to hear thee.' So she took the lute and struck the strings, after she had tuned them, and sang the following verses:

The fingers of the lovely maid went wandering o'er the lute, And many a soul to ravishment its music did compel.
She sang, and lo, her singing cured the deaf man of his ill, And he that erst was dumb exclaimed, "Thou hast indeed done well!"

Then she played again, so admirably that she ravished their wits, and sang the following verses:

Thou honour'dst us, when thou didst in our land alight; Thy lustre hath dispelled the moonless midnight gloom!
Wherefore with camphor white and rosewater and musk It e'en behoveth us our dwelling to perfume.

At this the Khalif was agitated and so overcome with emotion that he was not master of himself for excess of delight, and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is good!' Quoth Noureddin, 'O fisherman, doth this damsel please thee?' 'Ay, by Allah!' replied he. Whereupon said Noureddin, 'I make thee a present of her, the present of a generous man who does

not go back on his giving nor will revoke his gift.' Then he sprang to his feet and taking a mantle, threw it over the pretended fisherman and bade him take the damsel and begone. But she looked at him and said, 'O my lord, art thou going away without bidding me adieu? If it must be so, at least, stay whilst I bid thee farewell and make known my case.' And she repeated the following verses:

I am filled full of longing pain and memory and dole, Till I for languor am become a body without soul.
Say not to me, beloved one, "Thou'lt grow consoled for me;" When such affliction holds the heart, what is there can console?
If that a creature in his tears could swim as in a sea, I to do this of all that breathe were surely first and sole.
O thou, the love of whom doth fill my heart and overflow, Even as when wine, with water mixed, fills up the brimming bowl,
O thou for whom desire torments my body and my spright! This severance is the thing I feared was writ on fortune's scroll.
O thou, whose love from out my heart shall nevermore depart, O son of Khacan, thou my wish, my hope unshared and whole,
On my account thou didst transgress against our lord and king And left'st thy native land for me, to seek a foreign goal!
Thou givest me unto Kerim,[1] may he for aye be praised! And may th' Almighty for my loss my dearest lord console!

When she had finished, Noureddin answered her by repeating the following:

She bade me adieu on the day of our parting And said, whilst for anguish she wept and she sighed,
"Ah, what wilt thou do, when from me thou art severed?" "Ask that of the man who'll survive," I replied.

When the Khalif heard what she said in her verses, 'Thou hast given me to Kerim,' his interest in her redoubled and it was grievous to him to separate them; so he said to Noureddin, 'O my lord, verily the damsel said in her verses that thou hadst transgressed against her master and him who possessed her; so tell me, against

[1] The name *Kerim* means "generous."

whom didst thou transgress and who is it that has a claim on thee?' 'By Allah, O fisherman,' replied Noureddin, 'there hangs a rare story by me and this damsel, a story, which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve as a lesson to him who can profit by example.' Said the Khalif, 'Wilt thou not tell us thy story and acquaint us with thy case? Peradventure it may bring thee relief, for the help of God is near at hand.' 'O fisherman,' said Noureddin, 'wilt thou hear our story in prose or verse?' 'Prose is but words,' replied the Khalif, 'but verse is strung pearls.' Then Noureddin bowed his head and spoke the following verses:

O my friend, I have bidden farewell to repose, And the anguish of exile has doubled my woes!
I once had a father, who loved me right dear, But left me, to dwell in the tombs, where all goes.
There fell on me after him hardship and pain And Fate broke in pieces my heart with its blows.
He bought me a slave-girl, the fairest of maids; Her shape shamed the branch and her colour the rose.
I wasted the substance he left me, alas! And lavished it freely on these and on those,
Till for need I was minded to sell the fair maid, Though sorely I grudged at the parting, God knows!
But lo! when the crier 'gan call her for sale, A scurvy old skin-flint to bid for her chose.
At this I was angered beyond all control And snatched her away ere the crier could close;
Whereupon the old rancorous curmudgeon flamed up With despite and beset me with insults and blows.
In my passion I smote him with right hand and left, Till my wrath was assuaged; after which I arose
And returning, betook me in haste to my house, Where I hid me for fear of the wrath of my foes.
Then the king of the city decreed my arrest: But a kind-hearted chamberlain pitied my woes
And warned me to flee from the city forthright, Ere my enemies' springes my life should enclose.

So we fled from our house in the dead of the night And came to Baghdad for a place of repose.
I have nothing of value, nor treasures nor gold, Or I'd handsel thee, fisherman, freely with those!
But I give thee, instead, the belov'd of my soul, And in her thou hast gotten my heart's blood, God knows!

When he had finished, the Khalif said to him, 'O my lord Noureddin, explain to me thy case more fully!' So he told him the whole story from beginning to end, and the Khalif said to him, 'Whither dost thou now intend?' 'God's world is wide!' replied he. Quoth the Khalif, 'I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, which when he reads, he will do thee no hurt.' 'Who ever heard of a fisherman writing to kings?' said Noureddin. 'Such a thing can never be.' 'True,' replied the Khalif; 'but I will tell thee the reason. Know that he and I learnt in the same school, under one master, and that I was his monitor. Since that time, fortune has betided him and he is become a Sultan, whilst God hath abased me and made me a fisherman: yet I never send to him to seek aught, but he does my desire; nay, though I should ask of him a thousand favours a day, he would comply.' When Noureddin heard this, he said, 'Good: write that I may see.' So the Khalif took pen and inkhorn and wrote as follows: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! This letter is from Haroun er Reshid son of el Mehdi to His Highness Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, whom I have compassed about with my favour and made governor for me in certain of my dominions. The bearer of these presents is Noureddin son of Fezl ben Khacan the Vizier. As soon as they come to thy hand, do thou put off the kingly dignity and invest him therewith, and look thou oppose not my commandment, so peace be on thee.' Then he gave the letter to Noureddin, who took it and kissed it,

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then put it in his turban and set out at once on his journey. As soon as he was gone, Gaffer Ibrahim turned to the Khalif and said to him, 'O vilest of fishermen, thou hast brought us a couple of fish, worth a score of paras, and hast gotten three dinars for them; and thinkest thou to take the damsel also?' When the Khalif heard this, he cried out at him and made a sign to Mesrour, who discovered himself and rushed upon him. Now Jaafer had sent one of the gardeners to the doorkeeper of the palace for a suit of the royal raiment for the Commander of the Faithful; so he went and returning with the suit, kissed the earth before the Khalif and gave it to him. Then he threw off the clothes he had on and dressed himself in those which the gardener had brought, to the great amazement of Gaffer Ibrahim, who bit his nails in bewilderment and exclaimed, 'Am I asleep or awake?' 'O Gaffer Ibrahim,' said the Khalif, 'what state is this in which I see thee?' With this, he recovered from his drunkenness and throwing himself on the ground, repeated the following verses:

Forgive the error into which my straying feet did fall, For the slave sues for clemency from him to whom he's thrall!
Lo, by confessing I have done what the offence requires! Where then is that for which good grace and generous mercy call?

The Khalif forgave him and bade carry the damsel to the palace, where he assigned her a separate lodging and servants to wait upon her, saying to her, 'Know that we have sent thy master to be Sultan in Bassora, and God willing, we will despatch him a dress of honour and thee with it.'

Meanwhile, Noureddin fared on, till he reached Bassora, when he repaired to the Sultan's palace and gave a loud cry. The Sultan heard him and sent for him; and when he came into his presence, he kissed the earth before him and pulling out the letter, gave it to him. The Sultan, seeing that the superscription was in the handwriting of

the Khalif, rose to his feet and kissed the letter three times, then read it and said, 'I hear and obey God and the Commander of the Faithful!' Then he summoned the four Cadis and the Amirs and was about to divest himself of the kingly office, when in came the Vizier Muïn ben Sawa. The Sultan gave him the Khalif's letter, and he read it, then tore it in pieces and putting it in his mouth, chewed it and threw it away. 'Out on thee!' exclaimed the Sultan (and indeed he was angry); 'what made thee do that?' 'By thy life, O our lord the Sultan,' replied Muïn, 'this fellow hath never seen the Khalif nor his Vizier: but he is a gallows-bird, a crafty imp who, happening upon a blank[1] sheet in the Khalif's handwriting, hath written his own desire in it. The Khalif would surely not have sent him to take the Sultanate from thee, without a royal mandate and a patent appended thereto, nor would he have omitted to send with him a chamberlain or a vizier. But he is alone and hath never come from the Khalif, never! never!' 'What is to be done?' said the Sultan. 'Leave him to me,' replied the Vizier: 'I will send him in charge of a chamberlain to the city of Baghdad. If what he says be true, they will bring us back royal letters-patent and a diploma of investiture; and if not, I will pay him what I owe him.' When the Sultan heard the Vizier's words, he said, 'Take him.' So Muïn carried Noureddin to his own house and cried out to his servants, who threw him down and beat him, till he swooned away. Then he caused heavy shackles to be put on his feet and carried him to the prison, where he called the gaoler, whose name was Cuteyt, and said to him, 'O Cuteyt, take this fellow and throw him into one of the underground cells in the prison and torture him night and day.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he, and taking Noureddin into the prison, locked the door on him. Then he bade sweep a bench behind the door and laying

[1] Or perhaps "cancelled."

thereon a mattress and a leather rug, made Noureddin sit down. Moreover, he loosed his fetters and treated him kindly. The Vizier sent every day to the gaoler, charging him to beat him, but he abstained from this, and things abode thus forty days' time. On the forty-first day, there came a present from the Khalif: which when the Sultan saw, it pleased him and he took counsel about it with his Viziers, one of whom said, 'Mayhap this present was intended for the new Sultan.' Quoth Muïn, 'We should have done well to put him to death at his first coming;' and the Sultan said, 'By Allah, thou remindest me of him! Go down to the prison and fetch him, and I will strike off his head.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Muïn. 'With thy leave I will have proclamation made in the city, "Whoso hath a mind to look upon the beheading of Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, let him repair to the palace!" So, great and small will come out to gaze on him and I shall heal my heart and mortify those that envy me.' 'As thou wilt,' said the Sultan; whereupon the Vizier went out, rejoicing, and commanded the chief of the police to make the aforesaid proclamation. When the folk heard the crier, they all mourned and wept, even to the little ones in the schools and the traders in the shops, and some hastened to get them places to see the sight, whilst others repaired to the prison thinking to accompany him thence. Presently, the Vizier came to the prison, attended by ten armed slaves, and the gaoler said to him, 'What seekest thou, O our lord the Vizier?' 'Bring me that gallows-bird,' replied the Vizier; and the gaoler said, 'He is in the sorriest of plights for the much beating I have given him.' Then Cuteyt went into the prison, where he found Noureddin repeating the following verses:

Who shall avail me against the woes that my life enwind? Indeed my disease is sore and the remedy hard to find.
Exile hath worn my heart and my spirit with languishment, And evil fortune hath turned my very lovers unkind.

O folk, is there none of you all will answer my bitter cry! Is there never a merciful friend will help me of all mankind?
Yet death and the pains of death are a little thing to me; I have put off the hope of life and left its sweets behind.
O Thou that sentest the Guide, the Chosen Prophet to men, The Prince of the Intercessors, gifted to loose and bind,
I prithee, deliver me and pardon me my default, And put the troubles to flight that crush me, body and mind!

The gaoler took off his clean clothes and clothing him in two filthy garments, carried him to the Vizier. Noureddin looked at him, and knowing him for his enemy who still sought to compass his death, wept and said to him, 'Art thou then secure against Fate? Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet?—

Where are now the old Chosroës, tyrants of a bygone day? Wealth they gathered; but their treasures and themselves have passed away!

O Vizier,' continued he, 'know that God (blessed and exalted be He!) doth whatever He will!' 'O Ali,' replied the Vizier, 'dost thou think to fright me with this talk? Know that I mean this day to strike off thy head in despite of the people of Bassora, and let the days do what they will, I care not; nor will I take thought to thy warning, but rather to what the poet says:

Let the days do what they will, without debate, And brace thy spirit against the doings of Fate.

And also how well says another:

He who lives a day after his foe Hath compassed his wishes, I trow!'

Then he ordered his attendants to set Noureddin on the back of a mule, and they said to the youth (for indeed it was grievous to them), 'Let us stone him and cut him in pieces, though it cost us our lives.' 'Do it not,' replied Noureddin. 'Have ye not heard what the poet says?—

A term's decreed for me, which I must needs fulfil, And when its days are spent, I die, do what I will.
Though to their forest dens the lions should me drag, Whilst but an hour remains, they have no power to kill.'

Then they proceeded to proclaim before Noureddin, 'This is the least of the punishment of those who impose upon kings with forgery!' And they paraded him round about Bassora, till they came beneath the windows of the palace, where they made him kneel down on the carpet of blood and the headsman came up to him and said, 'O my lord, I am but a slave commanded in this matter: if thou hast any desire, let me know, that I may fulfil it; for now there remains of thy life but till the Sultan shall put his head out of the window.' So Noureddin looked in all directions and repeated the following verses:

I see the headsman and the sword, I see the carpet spread, And cry "Alas, my sorry plight! Alas, my humbled head!"
How is't I have no pitying friend to help me in my need? Will no one answer my complaint or heed the tears I shed?
My time of life is past away and death draws nigh to me: Will no one earn the grace of God by standing me in stead?
Will none take pity on my state and succour my despair With but a cup of water cold, to ease my torments dread?

The people fell to weeping for him, and the headsman rose and brought him a draught of water; but the Vizier smote the gugglet with his hand and broke it: then he cried out at the executioner and bade him strike off Noureddin's head. So he proceeded to bind the latter's eyes; whilst the people cried out against the Vizier and there befell a great tumult and dispute amongst them. At this moment there arose a great cloud of dust and filled the air and the plain; and when the Sultan, who was sitting in the palace, saw this, he said to his attendants, 'Go and see what is the meaning of that cloud of dust.' 'When we have cut off this fellow's head,' replied Muïn; but the Sultan said, 'Wait till we see what this means.'

Now the cloud of dust in question was raised by Jaafer the Barmecide, Vizier to the Khalif, and his retinue; and the reason of his coming was as follows. The Khalif passed thirty days without calling to mind the affair of

Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and none reminded him of it, till one night, as he passed by the apartment of Enis el Jelis, he heard her weeping and reciting the following verse, in a low and sweet voice:

Thine image is ever before me, though thou art far away, Nor doth my tongue give over the naming of thee aye!

And her weeping redoubled; when lo, the Khalif opened the door and entering the chamber, found her in tears. When she saw him, she fell to the earth and kissing his feet three times, repeated the following verses:

O thou pure of royal lineage and exalted in thy birth! O thou tree of fruitful branches, thou the all unstained of race!
I recall to thee the promise that thy noble bounty made: God forbid thou shouldst forget it or withhold the gifted grace!

Quoth the Khalif, 'Who art thou?' And she answered, 'I am she whom thou hadst as a present from Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and I crave the fulfilment of thy promise to send me to him with the dress of honour; for I have now been here thirty days, without tasting sleep.' Thereupon the Khalif sent for Jaafer and said to him, 'O Jaafer, it is thirty days since we had news of Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and I doubt me the Sultan has killed him; but by the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, if aught of ill have befallen him, I will make an end of him who was the cause of it, though he be the dearest of all men to myself! So it is my wish that thou set out at once for Bassora and bring me news of my cousin Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini and how he hath dealt with Noureddin; and do thou tell my cousin the young man's history and how I sent him to him with my letter, and if thou find that the King hath done otherwise than after my commandment, lay hands on him and his Vizier Muïn ben Sawa and bring them to us, as thou shalt find them. Nor do thou tarry longer on the road than shall suffice for the journey, or I will strike off thy head.' 'I hear and obey,' replied

Jaafer, and made ready at once and set out for Bassora, where he arrived in due course. When he came up and saw the crowd and turmoil, he enquired what was the matter and was told how it stood with Noureddin Ali, whereupon he hastened to go in to the Sultan and saluting him, acquainted him with his errand and the Khalif's determination, in case of any foul play having befallen Noureddin, to destroy whosoever should have been the cause of it. Then he seized upon the Sultan and his Vizier and laid them in ward, and commanding Noureddin to be released, seated him on the throne in the place of Mohammed ben Suleiman. After this Jaafer abode three days at Bassora, the usual guest-time, and on the morning of the fourth day, Noureddin turned to him and said, 'I long for the sight of the Commander of the Faithful.' Then said Jaafer to Mohammed ben Suleiman, 'Make ready, for we will pray the morning prayer and take horse for Baghdad.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So they prayed the morning prayer and set out, all of them, taking with them the Vizier Muïn ben Sawa, who began to repent of what he had done. Noureddin rode by Jaafer's side and they fared on without ceasing, till they arrived in due course at the Abode of Peace, Baghdad, and going in to the Khalif's presence, told him how they had found Noureddin nigh upon death. The Khalif said to Noureddin, 'Take this sword and strike off thine enemy's head.' So he took the sword and went up to Muïn ben Sawa, but the latter looked at him and said, 'I did according to my nature; do thou according to thine.' So Noureddin threw the sword from his hand and said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath beguiled me with his speech,' and he repeated the following verse:

Lo, with the cunning of his speech my heart he hath beguiled, For generous minds are ever moved by artful words and mild!

'Leave him, thou,' said the Khalif, and turning to Mesrour, commanded him to behead Muïn. So Mesrour drew his sword and smote off the Vizier's head. Then said the Khalif to Noureddin, 'Ask a boon of me.' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'I have no need of the sovereignty of Bassora: all my desire is to have the honour of serving thee and looking on thy face.' 'With all my heart,' replied the Khalif. Then he sent for Enis el Jelis and bestowed plentiful favours upon them both, assigning them a palace at Baghdad and regular allowances. Moreover, he made Noureddin one of his boon-companions, and the latter abode with him in the enjoyment of the most delectable life, till Death overtook him.

GHANIM BEN EYOUB THE SLAVE OF LOVE.

There lived once at Damascus, in the days of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, a wealthy merchant, who had a son like the moon at its full and withal sweet of speech, called Ghanim ben Eyoub, and a daughter called Fitneh, unique in her beauty and grace. Their father died and left them abundant wealth and amongst other things a hundred loads of silk and brocade and bladders of musk, on each of which was written, 'This is of the loads intended for Baghdad,' he having been about to make the journey thither, when God the Most High took him to Himself. After a while, his son took the loads and bidding farewell to his mother and kindred and townsfolk, set out for Baghdad with a company of merchants, committing himself to God the Most High, who decreed him safety, so that he arrived without hindrance at that city. Here he hired a handsome house, which he furnished with carpets and cushions and hangings, and stored his goods therein and put up his mules and camels. Then he abode awhile, resting, whilst the merchants and notables of Baghdad came and saluted him; after which he took a parcel con-

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taining ten pieces of costly stuffs, with the prices written on them, and carried it to the bazaar, where the merchants received him with honour and made him sit down in the shop of the chief of the market, to whom he delivered the parcel of stuffs. He opened it and taking out the stuffs, sold them for him at a profit of two dinars on every one of prime cost. At this Ghanim rejoiced and went on to sell his stuffs, little by little, for a whole year. On the first day of the following year, he repaired, as usual, to the bazaar in the market place, but found the gate shut and enquiring the reason, was told that one of the merchants was dead and that all the others had gone to walk in his funeral and was asked if he were minded to gain the favour of God by going with them. He assented and enquired where the funeral was to be held, whereupon they directed him to the place. So he made the ablution and repaired with the other merchants to the place of prayer, where they prayed over the dead, then went before the bier to the burial-place without the city and passed among the tombs till they came to the grave. Here they found that the dead man's people had pitched a tent over the tomb and brought thither lamps and candles. So they buried the dead and sat down to listen to the reading of the Koran over the tomb. Ghanim sat with them, being overcome with bashfulness and saying to himself, 'I cannot well go away till they do.' They sat listening to the recitation till nightfall, when the servants set the evening meal and sweetmeats before them and they ate till they were satisfied, then sat down again, after having washed their hands. But Ghanim was troubled for his house and property, being in fear of thieves, and said to himself, 'I am a stranger here and thought to be rich, and if I pass the night abroad, the thieves will steal the money and the goods.' So he arose and left the company, having first asked leave to go about a necessary business, and following the beaten track, came to the gate of the city, but found it shut and saw none going or coming nor heard aught but the dogs barking and the wolves howling, for it was now the middle of the night. At this he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I was in fear for my property and came back on its account, but now I find the gate shut and am become in fear for my life!' And he retraced his steps, seeking a place where he might pass the night, till he found a tomb enclosed by four walls, with a palm-tree in its midst and a gate of granite. The gate stood open; so he entered and lay down, but sleep came not to him and fright and oppression beset him, for that he was alone among the tombs. So he rose to his feet and opening the door, looked out and saw, in the distance, a light making for the tomb from the direction of the city-gate. At this he was afraid and hastening to shut the gate, climbed up into the palm-tree and hid himself among the branches. The light came nearer and nearer, till he could see three black slaves, two carrying a chest and the third a lantern, an adze and a basket of plaster. When they came to the tomb, one of those who were carrying the chest cried out to the other, 'Hallo, Sewab!' 'What ails thee, O Kafour?' said the other. 'Were we not here at nightfall,' asked the first, 'and did we not leave the gate open?' 'True,' replied Sewab. 'See,' said the other, 'it is now shut and barred.' 'How small is your wit!' broke in the bearer of the lantern, whose name was Bekhit. 'Do ye not know that the owners of the gardens use to come out of Baghdad to tend them, and when the night overtakes them, they enter this place and shut the gate, for fear the blacks like ourselves should catch them and roast them and eat them?' 'Thou art right,' replied the others; 'but, by Allah, none of us is less of wit than thou!' 'If you do not believe me,' said Bekhit, 'let us go into the tomb

and I will unearth the rat for you; I doubt not but that, when he saw the light and us making for the tomb, he took refuge in the palm-tree, for fear of us.' When Ghanim heard this, he said to himself, 'O most damnable of slaves, may God not have thee in His keeping for this thy craft and quickness of wit! There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! How shall I escape from these blacks?' Then said the two bearers to him of the lantern, 'Climb over the wall and open the door to us, O Bekhit, for we are tired of carrying the chest on our shoulders; and thou shalt have one of those that we seize inside, and we will fry him for thee so featly that not a drop of his fat shall be lost.' But he said, 'I am afraid of somewhat that my little sense has suggested to me: we should do better to throw the chest over the wall; for it is our treasure.' 'If we throw it over, it will break,' replied they. And he said, 'I fear lest there be brigands within who kill folk and steal their goods; for they are wont, when night falls on them, to enter these places and divide their spoil.' 'O thou of little wit!' rejoined they, 'how could they get in here?' Then they set down the chest and climbing the wall, got down and opened the gate, whilst Bekhit held the light for them, after which they shut the door and sat down. Then said one of them, 'O my brothers, we are tired with walking and carrying the chest, and it is now the middle of the night, and we have no breath left to open the tomb and bury the chest: so let us rest two or three hours, then rise and do what we have to do. Meanwhile each of us shall tell how he came to be an eunuch and all that befell him from first to last, to pass away the time, whilst we rest ourselves.' 'Good,' answered the others; and Bekhit said, 'O my brothers, I will begin.' 'Say on,' replied they. So he began as follows, 'Know, O my brothers, that

STORY OF THE EUNUCH BEKHIT.

I was brought from my native country, when I was five years old, by a slave-merchant, who sold me to one of the royal messengers. My master had a three-year-old daughter, with whom I was reared, and they used to make sport of me, letting me play with the girl and dance and sing to her, till I reached the age of twelve and she that of ten; and even then they did not forbid me from her. One day, I went in to her and found her sitting in an inner room, perfumed with essences and scented woods, and her face shone like the round of the moon on its fourteenth night, as if she had just come out of the bath that was in the house. She began to sport with me, and I with her. Now I had just reached the age of puberty, and my yard rose on end, as it were a great bolt. Then she threw me down and mounting my breast, pulled me hither and thither, till my yard became uncovered. When she saw this, and it in point, she seized it in her hand and fell to rubbing it against the lips of her kaze, outside her trousers. At this, heat stirred in me and I put my arms round her, whilst she wreathed hers about my neck and strained me to her with all her might, till, before I knew what I did, my yard thrust through her trousers, and entering her kaze, did away her maidenhead. When I saw what I had done, I fled and took refuge with one of my comrades. Presently, her mother came in to her, and seeing her in this state, was lost to the world. However, she smoothed the matter over and hid the girl's condition from her father, of the love they bore 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 father, and portioned and fitted her out of her own monies, whilst her father knew nothing of what

had passed. Then they took me unawares and gelded me: and when they brought her to her husband, they made me her eunuch, to go before her, wherever she went, whether to the bath or to her father's house. On the wedding-night, they slaughtered a young pigeon and sprinkled the blood on her shift;[1] and I abode with her a long while, enjoying her beauty and grace, by way of kissing and clipping and clicketing, till she died and her husband and father and mother died also; when they seized me for the Treasury and I found my way hither, where I became your comrade. This then, O my brothers, is my story and how I came to be docked of my cullions; and peace be on you.' Then said the second eunuch, 'Know, O my brothers, that

STORY OF THE EUNUCH KAFOUR.

From the time when I was eight years old, I was wont to tell the slave-merchants 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, delivered me to a broker and bade him cry me for sale, saying, "Who will buy this slave with his fault?" He did so, and it was asked him, "What is his fault?" Quoth he, "He tells one lie every year." Then came up one of the merchants and said to the broker, "How much have they bidden for this slave, with his fault?" "Six hundred dirhems," replied the broker. "And twenty dirhems for thyself," said the merchant. So he brought him to the slave-dealer, who took the money, and the broker carried me to my master's house and went away, after having received his brokerage. The merchant clothed me as befitted my condition, and I abode in his service the rest of the year, until the new

[1] To simulate the customary evidence of virginity.

year came in with good omen. It was a blessed season, rich in herbage and the fruits of the earth, and the merchants began to give entertainments every day, each bearing the cost in turn, till it came to my master's turn to entertain them in a garden without the city. So he and the other merchants repaired to the garden, taking with them all that they required of food and so forth, and sat, eating and drinking and carousing, till noon, when my master, having need of something from the house, said to me, "O slave, mount the mule and go to the house and get such and such a thing from thy mistress and return quickly." I did as he bade me and started for the house, but as I drew near, I began to cry out and weep copiously, 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. Quoth I, "My master and his friends were sitting beneath an old wall, and it fell on them: and when I saw what had befallen them, I mounted the mule and came hither, in haste, to tell you." When my master's wife and daughters heard this, they shrieked aloud and tore their clothes and buffeted their faces, whilst the neighbours came round them. Then my mistress overturned the furniture of the house, pell-mell, tore down the shelves, broke up the casements and the lattices and smeared the walls with mud and indigo. Presently she said to me, "Out on thee, O Kafour! Come and help me tear down these cupboards and break up these vessels and porcelain!" So I went to her and helped her break up all the shelves in the house, with everything on them, after which I went round about the roofs and every part of the house, demolishing all I could and leaving not a single piece of china or the like in the house unbroken, till I had laid waste the whole place, crying out the while, "Alas, my master!" Then my mistress sallied

forth, with her face uncovered and only her kerchief on, accompanied by her sons and daughters, and said to me, "Go thou before us and show us the place where thy master lies dead under the wall, that we may take him out from the ruins and lay him on a bier and carry him to the house and give him a goodly funeral." So I went on before them, crying out, "Alas, my master!" and they after me, bareheaded, crying out, "Alas! Alas for the man!" And there was not a man nor a woman nor a boy nor an old woman in the quarter but followed us, buffeting their faces and weeping sore. On this wise, I traversed the city with them, and the folk asked what was the matter, whereupon they told them what they had heard from me, and they exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" Then said one of them, "He was a man of consideration; so let us go to the chief of the police and tell him what has happened." So they repaired to the magis-
Night trate and told him, whereupon he mounted and taking
xl. with him workmen with spades and baskets, set out for the scene of the accident, following my track, with all the people after him. I ran on before them, buffeting my face and throwing dust on my head and crying out, followed by my mistress and her children, shrieking aloud. But I outran them and reached the garden before them, and when my master saw me in this state and heard me crying out, "Alas, my mistress! Alas! Alas! Who is left to take pity on me, now that my mistress is dead? Would God I had died instead of her!" he was confounded and his colour paled. Then said he to me, "What ails thee, O Kafour? What is the matter?" "O my lord," replied I, "when thou sentest me to the house, I found that the wall of the saloon had given way and the whole of it had fallen in upon my mistress and her children." "And did not thy mistress escape?" "No, by Allah, O my master!" answered I. "Not one of them was saved, and the first to

die was my mistress, thine elder daughter." "Did not my younger daughter escape?" asked he. "No," replied I; and he said, "What became of the mule I use to ride? Was she saved?" "No, by Allah," answered I; "the walls of the house and of the stable fell in on all that were in the dwelling, even to the sheep and geese and fowls, so that they all became a heap of flesh and the dogs ate them: not one of them is saved." "Not even thy master, my elder son?" asked he. "No, by Allah!" repeated I. "Not one of them was saved, and now there remains neither house nor inhabitants nor any trace of them: and as for the sheep and geese and fowls, the dogs and cats have eaten them." When my master heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he lost command of his senses and his reason, so that he could not stand upon his feet, for he was as one taken with the rickets and his back was broken. Then he rent his clothes and plucked out his beard and casting his turban from his head, buffeted his face, till the blood streamed down, crying out, "Alas, my children! alas, my wife! Alas, what a misfortune! To whom did there ever happen the like of what hath befallen me?" The other merchants, his companions, joined in his tears and lamentations and rent their clothes, being moved to pity of his case; and my master went out of the garden, buffeting his face and staggering like a drunken man, for stress of what had befallen him and the much beating he had given his face. As he came forth of the garden-gate, followed by the other merchants, behold, they saw a great cloud of dust and heard a great noise of crying and lamentation. They looked, and behold, it was the chief of the police with his officers and the townspeople who had come out to look on, and my master's family in front of them, weeping sore and shrieking and lamenting. The first to accost my master were his wife and children; and when he saw them, he was confounded and laughed and

said to them, "How is it with you all and what befell you in the house?" When they saw him, they exclaimed, "Praised be God for thy safety!" and threw themselves upon him, and his children clung to him, crying, "Alas, our father! Praised be God for thy preservation, O our father!" Then said his wife, "Thou art well, praised be God who hath shown us thy face in safety!" And indeed she was confounded and her reason fled, when she saw him, and she said, "O my lord, how did you escape, thou and thy friends the merchants?" "And how fared it with thee in the house?" asked he. "We were all in good health and case," answered they; "nor has aught befallen us in the house, save that thy slave Kafour came to us, bareheaded, with his clothes torn and crying out, 'Alas, my master! Alas, my master!' So we asked what was the matter, and he said, 'The wall of the garden has fallen on my master and his friends, and they are all dead.' "By Allah," said my master, "he came to me but now, crying out, 'Alas, my mistress! Alas, her children!' and said, 'My mistress and her children are all dead.'" Then he looked round and seeing me with my torn turban hanging down my neck, shrieking and weeping violently and strewing earth on my head, cried out at me. So I came to him and he said, "Woe to thee, O pestilent slave, O whoreson knave, O accurst of race! what mischiefs hast thou wrought! But I will strip thy skin from thy flesh and cut thy flesh off thy bones!" "By Allah," replied I, "thou canst do nothing with me, for thou boughtest me with my fault, with witnesses to testify against thee that thou didst so and that thou knewest of my fault, which is that I tell one lie every year. This is but half a lie, but by the end of the year, I will tell the other half, and it will then be a whole lie." "O dog, son of a dog," exclaimed my master, "O most accursed of slaves, is this but a half lie? Indeed, it is a great calamity! Go out from me; thou art free

before God!" "By Allah," rejoined I, "if thou free me, I will not free thee, till I have completed my year and told the other half lie. When that is done, take me down to the market and sell me, as thou boughtest me, to whosoever will buy me with my fault: but free me not, for I have no handicraft to get my living by: and this my demand is according to the law, as laid down by the doctors in the chapter of Manumission." Whilst we were talking, up came the people of the quarter and others, men and women, together with the chief of the police and his suite. So my master and the other merchants went up to him and told him the story and how this was but half a lie, at which the people wondered and deemed the lie an enormous one. And they cursed me and reviled me, whilst I stood laughing and saying, "How can my master kill me, when he bought me with this fault?" Then my master returned home and found his house in ruins, and it was I who had laid waste the most part of it, having destroyed things worth much money, as had also done his wife, who said to him, "It was Kafour who broke the vessels and the china." Thereupon his rage redoubled and he beat hand upon hand, exclaiming, "By Allah, never in my life did I see such a son of shame as this slave; and he says this is only half a lie! How if he had told a whole one? He would have laid waste a city or two!" Then in his rage he went to the chief of the police, who made me eat stick till I fainted: and whilst I was yet senseless, they fetched a barber, who gelded me and cauterized the parts. When I revived, I found myself an eunuch, and my master said to me, "Even as thou hast made my heart bleed for the most precious things I had, so will I grieve thy heart for that of thy members by which 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 to make trouble, wherever I came, and was shifted from Amir to Amir and notable to notable,

being bought and sold, till I entered the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, and now my spirit is broken and I have abjured my tricks, having lost my manhood.'

When the others heard his story, they laughed and said, 'Verily, thou art dung, the son of dung! Thou liedst most abominably!' Then said they to the third slave, 'Tell us thy story.' 'O my cousins,' replied he, 'all that ye have said is idle: I will tell you how I came to lose my cullions, and indeed, I deserved more than this, for I swived my mistress and my master's son: but my story is a long one and this is no time to tell it, for the dawn is near, and if the day surprise us with this chest yet unburied, we shall be blown upon and lose our lives. So let us fall to work at once, and when we get back to the palace, I will tell you my story and how I became an eunuch.' So they set down the lantern and dug a hole between four tombs, the length and breadth of the chest, Kafour plying the spade and Sewab clearing away the earth by baskets-ful, till they had reached a depth of half a fathom, when they laid the chest in the hole and threw back the earth over it: then went out and shutting the door, disappeared from Ghanim's sight. When he was sure that they were indeed gone and that he was alone in the place, his heart was concerned to know what was in the chest and he said to himself, 'I wonder what was in the chest!' However, he waited till break of day, when he came down from the palm-tree and scraped away the earth with his hands, till he laid bare the chest and lifted it out of the hole. Then he took a large stone and hammered at the lock, till he broke it and raising the cover, beheld a beautiful young lady, richly dressed and decked with jewels of gold and necklaces of precious stones, worth a kingdom, no money could pay their price. She was asleep and her breath rose and fell, as if she had been drugged. When Ghanim saw her, he knew that some one had plotted against her and

drugged her; so he pulled her out of the chest and laid her on the ground on her back. As soon as she scented the breeze and the air entered her nostrils and lungs, she sneezed and choked and coughed, when there fell from her mouth a pastille of Cretan henbane, enough to make an elephant sleep from night to night, if he but smelt it. Then she opened her eyes and looking round, exclaimed in a sweet and melodious voice, 'Out on thee, O breeze! There is in thee neither drink for the thirsty nor solace for him whose thirst is quenched! Where is Zehr el Bustan?'[1] But no one answered her; so she turned and cried out, 'Ho, Sebiheh, Shejeret ed Durr, Nour el Huda, Nejmet es Subh, Shehweh, Nuzheh, Hulweh, Zerifeh![1] Out on ye, speak!' But no one answered her; and she looked about her and said, 'Woe is me! they have buried me among the tombs! O Thou who knowest what is in the breasts and who wilt requite at the Day of Resurrection, who hath brought me out from among the screens and curtains of the harem and laid me between four tombs?' All this while Ghanim was standing by: then he said to her, 'O my lady, here are neither screens nor curtains nor palaces; only thy bond slave Ghanim ben Eyoub, whom He who knoweth the hidden things hath brought hither, that he might save thee from these perils and accomplish for thee all that thou desirest.' And he was silent. When she saw how the case stood, she exclaimed, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' Then she put her hands to her face and turning to Ghanim, said in a sweet voice, 'O blessed youth, who brought me hither? See, I am now come to myself.' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'three black eunuchs came hither, bearing this chest;' and told her all that had happened and how his being belated had proved the means of her preservation from death by suffocation. Then he asked

[1] Names of her waiting-women.

her who she was and what was her story. 'O youth,' said she, 'praised be God who hath thrown me into the hands of the like of thee! But now put me back into the chest and go out into the road and hire the first muleteer or horse-letter thou meetest, to carry it to thy house. When I am there, all will be well and I will tell thee my story and who I am, and good shall betide thee on my account.' At this he rejoiced and went out into the road. It was now broad day and the folk began to go about the ways: so he hired a muleteer and bringing him to the tomb, lifted up the chest, in which he had already replaced the young lady, and set it on the mule. Then he fared homeward, rejoicing, for that she was a damsel worth ten thousand dinars and adorned with jewels and apparel of great value, and love for her had fallen on his heart. As soon as he came to the house, he carried in the chest and opening it, took out the young lady, who looked about her, and seeing that the place was handsome, spread with carpets and decked with gay colours, and noting the stuffs tied up and the bales of goods and what not, knew that he was a considerable merchant and a man of wealth. So she uncovered her face and looking at him, saw that he was a handsome young man and loved him. Then said she to him, 'O my lord, bring us something to eat.' 'On my head and eyes,' replied he, and going to the market, bought a roasted lamb, a dish of sweetmeats, dried fruits and wax candles, besides wine and drinking gear and perfumes. With these he returned to the house, and when the damsel saw him, she laughed and kissed and embraced him. Then she fell to caressing him, so that love for her redoubled on him and got the mastery of his heart. They ate and drank, each in love with the other, for indeed they were alike in age and beauty, till nightfall, when Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and candles, till the place blazed with light; after which he brought the wine-service and set on the banquet.

Night xli.

Then they sat down again and began to fill and give each other to drink; and they toyed and laughed and recited verses, whilst joy grew on them and each was engrossed with love of the other, glory be to Him, who uniteth hearts! They ceased not to carouse thus till near upon daybreak, when drowsiness overcame them and they slept where they were till the morning. Then Ghanim arose and going to the market, bought all that they required in the way of meat and drink and vegetables and what not, with which he returned to the house; and they both sat down and ate till they were satisfied, when he set on wine. They drank and toyed with each other, till their cheeks flushed and their eyes sparkled and Ghanim's soul yearned to kiss the girl and lie with her. So he said to her, 'O my lady, grant me a kiss of thy mouth; maybe it will quench the fire of my heart.' 'O Ghanim,' replied she, 'wait till I am drunk: then steal a kiss from me, so that I may not know thou hast kissed me.' Then she rose and taking off her upper clothes, sat in a shift of fine linen and a silken kerchief. At this, desire stirred in Ghanim and he said to her, 'O my mistress, wilt thou not vouchsafe me what I asked of thee?' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'this may not be, for there is a stubborn saying written on the ribbon of my trousers.' Thereupon Ghanim's heart sank and passion grew on him the more that what he sought was hard to get; and he recited the following verses:

I sought of her who caused my pain A kiss to ease me of my woe.
"No, no!" she answered; "hope it not!" And I, "Yes, yes! It shall be so!"
Then said she, smiling, "Take it then, With my consent, before I know."
And I, "By force?" "Not so," said she: "I freely it on thee bestow."
So do not question what befell, But seek God's grace and ask no mo;
Think what thou wilt of us; for love Is with suspect made sweet, I trow.
Nor do I reck if, after this, Avowed or secret be the foe.

Then love increased on him, and the fires were loosed

in his heart, while she defended herself from him, saying, 'I can never be thine.' They ceased not to make love and carouse, whilst Ghanim was drowned in the sea of passion and distraction and she redoubled in cruelty and coyness, till the night brought in the darkness and let fall on them the skirts of sleep, when Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and candles and renewed the banquet and the flowers; then took her feet and kissed them, and finding them like fresh cream, pressed his face on them and said to her, 'O my lady, have pity on the captive of thy love and the slain of thine eyes; for indeed I were whole of heart but for thee!' And he wept a while. 'O my lord and light of my eyes,' replied she, 'by Allah, I love thee and trust in thee, but I know that I cannot be thine.' 'And what is there to hinder?' asked he. Quoth she, 'To-night, I will tell thee my story, that thou mayst accept my excuse.' Then she threw herself upon him and twining her arms about his neck, kissed him and wheedled him, promising him her favours; and they continued to toy and laugh till love got complete possession of them. They abode thus for a whole month, sleeping nightly on one couch, but whenever he sought to enjoy her, she put him off, whilst mutual love increased upon them, till they could hardly abstain from one another. One night, as they lay, side by side, both heated with wine, he put his hand to her breast and stroked it, then passed it down over her stomach to her navel. She awoke and sitting up, put her hand to her trousers and finding them fast, fell asleep again. Presently, he put out his hand a second time and stroked her and sliding down to the ribbon of her trousers, began to pull at it, whereupon she awoke and sat up. Ghanim also sat up beside her and she said to him, 'What dost thou want?' 'I want to lie with thee,' answered he, 'and that we may deal frankly one with the other.' Quoth she, 'I must now expound my case to

thee, that thou mayst know my condition and my secret and that my excuse may be manifest to thee.' 'It is well,' replied he. Then she opened the skirt of her shift, and taking up the ribbon of her trousers, said to him, 'O my lord, read what is on this ribbon.' So he took it and saw, wrought in letters of gold, the following words, 'I am thine, and thou art mine, O descendant of the Prophet's Uncle!' When he read this, he dropped his hand and said to her, 'Tell me who thou art.' 'It is well,' answered she; 'know that I am one of the favourites of the Commander of the Faithful and my name is Cout el Culoub. I was reared in his palace, and when I grew up, he looked on me, and noting my qualities and the beauty and grace that God had bestowed on me, conceived a great love for me; so he took me and assigned me a separate lodging and gave me ten female slaves to wait on me and all this jewellery thou seest on me. One day he went on a journey to one of his provinces and the Lady Zubeideh came to one of my waiting-women and said to her, "I have somewhat to ask of thee." "What is it, O my lady?" asked she. "When thy mistress Cout el Culoub is asleep," said Zubeideh, "put this piece of henbane up her nostrils or in her drink, and thou shalt have of me as much money as will content thee." "With all my heart," replied the woman, and took the henbane, being glad because of the money and because she had aforetime been in Zubeideh's service. So she put the henbane in my drink, and when it was night, I drank, and the drug had no sooner reached my stomach than I fell to the ground, with my head touching my feet, and knew not but that I was in another world. When Zubeideh saw that her plot had succeeded, she put me in this chest and summoning the slaves, bribed them and the doorkeepers, and sent the former to do with me as thou sawest. So my delivery was at thy hands, and thou broughtest me hither

and hast used me with the utmost kindness. This is my story, and I know not what is come of the Khalif in my absence. Know then my condition and divulge not my affair.' When Ghanim heard her words and knew that she was the favourite of the Commander of the Faithful, he drew back, being smitten with fear of the Khalif, and sat apart from her in one of the corners of the place, blaming himself and brooding over his case and schooling his heart to patience, bewildered for love of one who might not be his. Then he wept, for excess of longing, and bemoaned the injustice and hostility of Fortune (Glory be to Him who occupies hearts with love!), reciting the following verses:

The heart of the lover 's racked with weariness and care, For his reason ravished is for one who is passing fair.
'Twas asked me, "What is the taste of love?" I answer made, "Love is sweet water, wherein are torment and despair."

Thereupon Cout el Culoub arose and pressed him to her bosom and kissed him, for love of him mastered her heart, so that she discovered to him her secret and the passion that possessed her and throwing her arms about his neck, embraced him; but he held off from her, for fear of the Khalif. Then they talked awhile (and indeed they were both drowned in the sea of mutual love) till day, when Ghanim rose and going to the market as usual, took what was needful and returned home. He found her in tears; but when she saw him, she ceased weeping and smiled and said, 'Thou hast made me desolate, O beloved of my heart! By Allah, the hour that thou hast been absent from me has been to me as a year! I have let thee see how it is with me for the excess of my passion for thee; so come now, leave what has been and take thy will of me.' 'God forbid that this should be!' replied he. 'How shall the dog sit in the lion's place? Verily, that which is the master's is forbidden to the slave.' And he withdrew from her and sat down on a corner of the mat. Her passion

increased with his refusal; so she sat down beside him and caroused and sported with him, till they were both warm with wine, and she was mad for dishonour with him. Then she sang the following verses:

The heart of the slave of passion is all but broken in twain: How long shall this rigour last and this coldness of disdain?
O thou that turnest away from me, in default of sin, Rather to turn *towards* than *away* should gazelles be fain!
Aversion and distance eternal and rigour and disdain; How can a youthful lover these hardships all sustain?

Thereupon Ghanim wept and she wept because he did, and they ceased not to drink till nightfall, when he rose and spread two beds, each in its place. 'For whom is the second bed?' asked she. 'One is for me and the other for thee,' answered he. 'Henceforth we must lie apart, for that which is the master's is forbidden to the slave.' 'O my lord,' exclaimed she, 'let us leave this, for all things happen according to fate and predestination.' But he refused, and the fire was loosed in her heart and she clung to him and said, 'By Allah, we will not sleep but together!' 'God forbid!' answered he, and he prevailed against her and lay apart till the morning, whilst love and longing and distraction redoubled on her. They abode thus three whole months, and whenever she made advances to him, he held aloof from her, saying, 'Whatever belongs to the master is forbidden to the slave.' Then, when this was prolonged upon her and affliction and anguish grew on her, for the weariness of her heart she recited the following verses:

O marvel of beauty, how long this disdain? And who hath provoked thee to turn from my pain?
All manner of elegance in thee is found And all fashions of fairness thy form doth contain.
The hearts of all mortals thou stir'st with desire And on every one's lids thou mak'st sleeplessness reign.

I know that the branch has been plucked before thee; So, O capparis-branch, thou dost wrong, it is plain.
I used erst to capture myself the wild deer. How comes it the chase doth the hunter enchain?
But the strangest of all that is told of thee is, I was snared, and thou heard'st not the voice of my pain.
Yet grant not my prayer. If I'm jealous for thee Of thyself, how much more of myself? Nor again,
As long as life lasteth in me, will I say, "O marvel of beauty, how long this disdain?"

Meanwhile, the Lady Zubeideh, when, in the absence of the Khalif, she had done this thing with Cout el Culoub, abode perplexed and said to herself, 'What answer shall I make the Khalif, when he comes back and asks for her?' Then she called an old woman, who was with her, and discovered her secret to her, saying, 'What shall I do, seeing that Cout el Culoub is no more?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'the time of the Khalif's return is at hand; but do thou send for a carpenter and bid him make a figure of wood in the shape of a corpse. We will dig a grave for it and bury it in the middle of the palace: then do thou build an oratory over it and set therein lighted lamps and candles and command all in the palace to put on mourning. Moreover, do thou bid thy slave-girls and eunuchs, as soon as they know of the Khalif's approach, spread straw in the vestibules, and when the Khalif enters and asks what is the matter, let them say, "Cout el Culoub is dead, may God abundantly replace her to thee! and for the honour in which she was held of our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace." When the Khalif hears this, it will be grievous to him and he will weep: then will he cause recitations of the Koran to be made over her and will watch by night over her tomb. If he should say to himself, "My cousin Zubeideh has compassed the death of Cout el Culoub out of jealousy," or if love-longing should master him and he

order to take her forth of the tomb, fear thou not; for when they dig and come to the figure, he will see it as it were a human body, shrouded in costly grave-clothes; and if he desire to take off the swathings, do thou forbid him and say to him, "It is unlawful to look upon her nakedness." The fear of the world to come will restrain him and he will believe that she is dead and will cause the image to be restored to its place and thank thee for what thou hast done: and so, if it please God, thou shalt be delivered from this strait.' Her advice commended itself to Zubeideh, who bestowed on her a dress of honour and a sum of money, bidding her do as she had said. So she at once ordered a carpenter to make the aforesaid figure, and as soon as it was finished, she brought it to Zubeideh, who shrouded it and buried it and built a pavilion over it, in which she set lighted lamps and candles and spread carpets round the tomb. Moreover, she put on black and ordered her household to do the same, and the news was spread abroad in the palace that Cout el Culoub was dead. After a while, the Khalif returned from his journey and entered the palace, thinking only of Cout el Culoub. He saw all the pages and damsels and eunuchs in mourning, at which his heart quaked; and when he went in to the lady Zubeideh, he found her also clad in black. So he asked the cause of this and was told that Cout el Culoub was dead, whereupon he fell down in a swoon. As soon as he came to himself, he enquired of her tomb, and Zubeideh said to him, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that for the honour in which I held her, I have buried her in my own palace.' Then he repaired to her tomb, in his travelling dress, and found the place spread with carpets and lit with lamps. When he saw this, he thanked Zubeideh for what she had done and abode perplexed, halting between belief and distrust, till at last suspicion got the better of him and he ordered the grave to be opened

and the body exhumed. When he saw the figure and would have taken off the swathings to look upon the body, the fear of God the Most High restrained him, and the old woman (taking advantage of his hesitation) said, 'Restore her to her place.' Then he sent at once for readers and doctors of the Law and caused recitations of the Koran to be made over her grave and sat by it, weeping, till he lost his senses. He continued to frequent the tomb for a whole month, at the end of which time, he chanced one day, after the Divan had broken up and his Amirs and Viziers had gone away to their houses, to enter the harem, where he lay down and slept awhile, whilst one damsel sat at his head, fanning him, and another at his feet, rubbing them. Presently he awoke and opening his eyes, shut them again and heard the damsel at his head say to her at his feet, 'Hist, Kheizuran!' 'Well, Kezib el Ban?' answered the other. 'Verily,' said the first, 'our lord knows not what has passed and watches over a tomb in which there is only a carved wooden figure, of the carpenter's handiwork.' 'Then what is become of Cout el Culoub?' enquired the other. 'Know,' replied Kezib el Ban, 'that the lady Zubeideh bribed one of her waiting-women to drug her with henbane and laying her in a chest, commanded Sewab and Kafour to take it and bury it among the tombs.' Quoth Kheizuran, 'And is not the lady Cout el Culoub dead?' 'No,' replied the other; 'God preserve her youth from death! but I have heard the Lady Zubeideh say that she is with a young merchant of Damascus, by name Ghanim ben Eyoub, and has been with him these four months, whilst this our lord is weeping and watching anights over an empty tomb.' When the Khalif heard the girls' talk and knew that the tomb was a trick and a fraud and that Cout el Culoub had been with Ghanim ben Eyoub for four months, he was sore enraged and rising up, summoned his officers of state, whereupon

Night xlii.

the Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide came up and kissed the earth before him, and the Khalif said to him, 'O Jaafer, take a company of men with thee and fall upon the house of Ghanim ben Eyoub and bring him to me, with my slave-girl Cout el Culoub, for I will assuredly punish him.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer, and setting out with his guards and the chief of the police, repaired to Ghanim's house. Now the latter had brought home a pot of meat and was about to put forth his hand to eat of it, he and Cout el Culoub, when the damsel, happening to look out, found the house beset on all sides by the Vizier and the chief of the police and their officers and attendants, with drawn swords in their hands, encompassing the place, as the white of the eye encompasses the black. At this sight, she knew that news of her had reached the Khalif, her master, and made sure of ruin, and her colour paled and her beauty changed. Then she turned to Ghanim and said to him, 'O my love, fly for thy life!' 'What shall I do?' said he; 'and whither shall I go, seeing that my substance and fortune are in this house?' 'Delay not,' answered she, 'lest thou lose both life and goods.' 'O my beloved and light of my eyes,' rejoined he, 'how shall I do to get away, when they have surrounded the house?' 'Fear not,' said she: and taking off his clothes, made him put on old and ragged ones, after which she took the empty pot and put in it a piece of bread and a saucer of meat, and placing the whole in a basket, set it on his head and said, 'Go out in this guise and fear not for me, for I know how to deal with the Khalif.' So he went out amongst them, carrying the basket and its contents, and God covered him with His protection and he escaped the snares and perils that beset him, thanks to the purity of his intent. Meanwhile, Jaafer alighted and entering the house, saw Cout el Culoub, who had dressed and decked herself after the richest fashion and filled a chest with gold and jewellery

and precious stones and rarities and what else was light of carriage and great of value. When she saw Jaafer, she rose and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O my lord, the pen[1] hath written from of old that which God hath decreed.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined Jaafer, 'I am commanded to seize Ghanim ben Eyoub.' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'he made ready merchandise and set out therewith for Damascus and I know nothing more of him; but I desire thee to take charge of this chest and deliver it to me in the palace of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'I hear and obey,' said Jaafer, and bade his men carry the chest to the palace, together with Cout el Culoub, commanding them to use her with honour and consideration. And they did his bidding, after they had plundered Ghanim's house. Then Jaafer went in to the Khalif and told him what had happened, and he bade lodge Cout el Culoub in a dark chamber and appointed an old woman to serve her, thinking no otherwise than that Ghanim had certainly debauched her and lain with her. Then he wrote a letter to the Amir Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, the viceroy of Damascus, to the following purport, 'As soon as this letter reaches thee, lay hands on Ghanim ben Eyoub and send him to me.' When the letter came to the viceroy, he kissed it and laid it on his head, then caused proclamation to be made in the streets of Damascus, 'Whoso is minded to plunder, let him betake himself to the house of Ghanim ben Eyoub!' So they repaired to the house, where they found that Ghanim's mother and sister had made him a tomb midmost the house and sat by it, weeping for him, whereupon they seized them, without telling them the cause, and carried them before the Sultan, after having plundered the house. The viceroy questioned them of Ghanim, and they replied, 'This year or

[1] Of providence.

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

Meanwhile Ghanim, finding himself despoiled of his wealth and considering his case, wept till his heart was well-nigh broken. Then he fared on at random, till the end of the day, and hunger was sore on him and he was worn out with fatigue. Coming to a village, he entered a mosque, where he sat down on a mat, leaning his back against the wall, and presently sank to the ground, in extremity for hunger and weariness, and lay there till morning, his heart fluttering for want of food. By reason of his sweating, vermin coursed over his skin, his breath grew fetid and he became in sorry case. When the people of the town came to pray the morning prayer, they found him lying there, sick and weak with hunger, yet showing signs of gentle breeding. As soon as they had done their devotions, they came up to him and finding him cold and starving, threw over him an old mantle with ragged sleeves and said to him, 'O stranger, whence art thou and what ails thee?' He opened his eyes and wept, but made them no answer; whereupon, one of them, seeing that he was starving, brought him a saucerful of honey and two cakes of bread. So he ate a little and they sat with him till sunrise, when they went about their occupations. He abode with them in this state for a month, whilst sickness and infirmity increased upon him, and they wept for him and pitying his condition, took counsel together of his case and agreed to send him to the hospital at Baghdad. Meanwhile, there came into the mosque two beggar women, who were none other than Ghanim's mother and sister; 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 fetched a camel and said to the driver, 'Put this sick man on thy camel and carry him to Baghdad and set him down at the door

of the hospital, so haply he may be medicined and recover his health, and God will reward thee.' 'I hear and obey,' said the camel-driver. So they brought Ghanim, who was asleep, out of the mosque and laid him, mat and all, on the back of the camel; and his mother and sister came out with the rest of the people to look on him, but knew him not. However, after considering him, they said, 'Verily, he favours our Ghanim! Can this sick man be he?' Presently, he awoke and finding himself bound with ropes on the back of a camel, began to weep and complain, and the people of the village saw his mother and sister weeping over him, though they knew him not. Then they set out for Baghdad, whither the camel-driver forewent them and setting Ghanim down at the door of the hospital, went away. He lay there till morning, and when the people began to go about the ways, they saw him and stood gazing on him, for indeed he was become as thin as a skewer, till the syndic of the market came up and drove them away, saying, 'I will gain Paradise through this poor fellow; for if they take him into the hospital, they will kill him in one day.' Then he made his servants carry him to his own house, where he spread him a new bed, with a new pillow, and said to his wife, 'Tend him faithfully.' 'Good,' answered she; 'on my head be it!' Then she tucked up her sleeves and heating some water, washed his hands and feet and body, after which she clothed him in a gown belonging to one of her slave-girls and gave him a cup of wine to drink and sprinkled rose-water over him. So he revived and moaned, as he thought of his beloved Cout el Culoub, and sorrows were sore upon him.

Night xliii. Meanwhile, Cout el Culoub abode in duresse fourscore days, at the end of which time, the Khalif chancing one day to pass the place in which she was, heard her repeating verses and saying, 'O my beloved, O Ghanim, how

great is thy goodness and how chaste is thy nature! Thou didst good to him who hath injured thee, thou guardedst his honour who hath violated thine, and didst protect the harem of him who hath despoiled thee and thine! But thou wilt surely stand, with the Commander of the Faithful, before the Just Judge and be justified of him on the day when the judge shall be the Lord of all (to whom belong might and majesty) and the witnesses the angels!' When the Khalif heard her complaint, he knew that she had been wrongfully entreated and returning to his palace sent Mesrour the eunuch for her. She came before him, with bowed head, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and he said to her, 'O Cout el Culoub, I find thou taxest me with injustice and tyranny and avouchest that I have wronged him who did me good. Who is this that hath guarded my honour and whose honour I have violated, and who hath protected my harem, whilst I have enslaved his?' 'Ghanim ben Eyoub,' replied she; 'for by thy munificence, O Commander of the Faithful, he never approached me by way of lewdness nor with evil intent!' Then said the Khalif, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Ask what thou wilt of me, O Cout el Culoub, and it shall be granted to thee.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said she, 'I ask of thee my beloved Ghanim ben Eyoub.' The Khalif granted her prayer, and she said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, if I bring him to thee, wilt thou bestow me on him?' 'If he come,' replied the Khalif, 'I will bestow thee on him, the gift of a generous man who does not go back on his giving.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said she, 'suffer me to go in quest of him: it may be God will unite me with him.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' answered he. So she rejoiced and taking with her a thousand dinars, went out and visited the elders of the various religious orders and gave alms for Ghanim's sake. Next day she went to the merchants' bazaar and

told the chief of the market what she sought and gave him money, saying, 'Bestow this in alms on strangers.' The following week she took other thousand dinars and going to the market of the goldsmiths and jewellers, called the syndic and gave him the money, saying, 'Bestow this in alms on strangers.' The syndic, who was none other than Ghanim's benefactor, looked at her and said, 'O my lady, wilt thou go to my house and look upon a strange youth I have there and see how goodly and elegant he is?' (Now this stranger was Ghanim, but the syndic had no knowledge of him and thought him to be some unfortunate debtor, who had been despoiled of his property, or a lover parted from his beloved.) When she heard his words, her heart fluttered and her bowels yearned, and she said to him, 'Send with me some one who shall bring me to thy house.' So he sent a little boy, who led her thither, and she thanked him for this. When she reached the house, she went in and saluted the syndic's wife, who rose and kissed the ground before her, knowing her. Then said Cout el Culoub, 'Where is the sick man who is with thee?' 'O my lady,' replied she, weeping, 'here he is, lying on this bed. By Allah, he is a man of condition and bears traces of gentle breeding!' So Cout el Culoub turned and looked at him, but he was as if disguised in her eyes, being worn and wasted till he was become as thin as a skewer, so that his case was doubtful to her and she was not certain that it was he. Nevertheless, she was moved to compassion for him and wept, saying, 'Verily, strangers are unhappy, though they be princes in their own land!' And his case was grievous to her and her heart ached for him, though she knew him not to be Ghanim. Then she appointed him wine and medicines and sat by his head awhile, after which she mounted and returned to her palace and continued to make the round of the bazaars in search of Ghanim.

Meanwhile Ghanim's mother and sister arrived at Baghdad and fell in with the charitable syndic, who carried them to Cout el Culoub and said to her, 'O princess of benevolent ladies, there be come to our city this day a woman and her daughter, who are fair of face and the marks of gentle breeding and fortune are manifest upon them, though they are clad in hair garments and have each a wallet hanging to her neck; and they are tearful-eyed and sorrowful-hearted. So I have brought them to thee, that thou mayest shelter them and rescue them from beggary, for they are not fit to ask alms, and if God will, we shall enter Paradise through them.' 'O my lord,' exclaimed she, 'thou makest me long to see them! Where are they? Bring them to me.' So he bade the eunuch bring them in; and when she looked on them and saw that they were both possessed of beauty, she wept for them and said, 'By Allah, they are people of condition and show signs of former fortune.' 'O my lady,' said the syndic's wife, 'we love the poor and destitute, because of the recompense that God hath promised to such as succour them: as for these, belike the oppressors have done them violence and robbed them of their fortune and laid waste their dwelling-place.' Then Ghanim's mother and sister wept sore, recalling their former prosperity and contrasting it with their present destitute and miserable condition and thinking of Ghanim, whilst Cout el Culoub wept because they did. And they exclaimed, 'We beseech God to reunite us with him whom we desire, and he is none other than our son Ghanim ben Eyoub!' When Cout el Culoub heard this, she knew them to be the mother and sister of her beloved and wept till she lost her senses. When she revived, she turned to them and said, 'Have no care and grieve not, for this day is the first of your prosperity and the last of your adversity.' Then she bade the syndic take them to his own house and let his wife carry them to the

bath and clothe them handsomely. And she charged him to take care of them and treat them with all honour, and gave him a sum of money. Next day, she mounted and riding to his house, went in to his wife, who rose and kissed her hands and thanked her for her goodness. There she saw Ghanim's mother and sister, whom the syndic's wife had taken to the bath and clothed afresh, so that the traces of their former condition were now plainly apparent. She sat awhile, conversing with them, after which she enquired for the sick youth, and the syndic's wife replied, 'He is in the same state.' Then said Cout el Culoub, 'Come, let us go and visit him.' So they all went into the room where he lay and sat down by him. Presently, Ghanim heard them mention the name of Cout el Culoub, whereupon his life came back to him, wasted and shrunken as he was, and he raised his head from the pillow and cried out, 'O Cout el Culoub!' 'Yes, O friend!' answered she. 'Draw near to me,' said he. So she looked at him earnestly and knew him and said to him, 'Surely thou art Ghanim ben Eyoub?' 'I am indeed he,' replied he. At this, she fell down in a swoon, and when Ghanim's mother and sister heard their words, they both cried out, 'O joy!' and swooned away. When they recovered, Cout el Culoub exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath brought us together again and hath reunited thee with thy mother and sister!' Then she told him all that had befallen her with the Khalif and said, 'I have made known the truth to the Commander of the Faithful, who believed me and approved of thee; and now he wishes to see thee.' Then she told him how the Khalif had bestowed her on him, at which he was beyond measure rejoiced, and she returned to the palace at once, charging them not to stir till she came back. There she opened the chest that she had brought from Ghanim's house, and taking out some of the money, carried it to the syndic and bade him buy them each four

suits of the best stuffs and twenty handkerchiefs and what else they needed; after which she carried them all three to the bath and commanded to wash them and made ready for them broths and galingale and apple-water against their coming out. When they left the bath, they put on new clothes, and she abode with them three days, feeding them with fowls and broths and sherbet of sugar-candy, till their strength returned to them. After this, she carried them to the bath a second time, and when they came out and had changed their clothes, she took them back to the syndic's house and left them there, whilst she returned to the palace and craving an audience of the Khalif, told him the whole story and how her lord Ghanim and his mother and sister were now in Baghdad. When the Khalif heard this, he turned to his attendants and said, 'Bring hither to me Ghanim.' So Jaafer went to fetch him: but Cout el Culoub forewent him to the syndic's house and told Ghanim that the Khalif had sent for him and enjoined him to eloquence and self-possession and pleasant speech. Then she clad him in a rich habit and gave him much money, bidding him be lavish of largesse to the household of the Khalif, when he went in to him. Presently, Jaafer arrived, riding on his Nubian mule, and Ghanim met him and kissed the ground before him, wishing him long life. Now was the star of his good fortune risen and shone, and Jaafer took him and brought him to the Khalif. When he entered, he looked at the viziers and amirs and chamberlains and deputies and grandees and captains, Turks and Medes and Arabs and Persians, and then at the Khalif. Then he made sweet his speech and his eloquence and bowing his head, spoke the following verses:

Long life unto a King, the greatest of the great, Still following on good works and bounties without date!
Glowing with high resolves, a fountain of largesse, For ever full; 'tis said, of fire and flood and fate,

That they none else would have for monarch of the world, For sovran of the time and King in Kisra's gate.[1]
Kings, salutation-wise, upon his threshold's earth, For his acceptance lay the jewels of their state;
And when their eyes behold the glory of his might, Upon the earth, in awe, themselves they do prostrate.
This humbleness it is that profits them with thee And wins them wealth and power and rank and high estate.
Upon old Saturn's heights pitch thy pavilion, Since for thy countless hosts the world is grown too strait,
And teach the stars to know thine own magnificence, In kindness to the prince who rules the starry state.
May God with His consent for ever favour thee! For steadfastness of soul and sense upon thee wait:
Thy justice overspreads the surface of the earth, Till far and near for it their difference abate.

Night xlv. The Khalif was charmed with his eloquence and the sweetness of his speech and said to him, 'Draw near to me.' So he drew near and the Khalif said, 'Tell me thy story and expound to me thy case.' So Ghanim sat down and related to him all that had befallen him, from beginning to end. The Khalif was assured that he spoke the truth; so he invested him with a dress of honour and took him into favour. Then he said to him, 'Acquit me of the wrong I have done thee.' And Ghanim did so, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the slave and all that is his belong to his lord.' The Khalif was pleased with this and bade set apart a palace for Ghanim, on whom he bestowed great store of gifts and assigned him bountiful stipends and allowances, sending his mother and sister to live with him; after which, hearing that his sister Fitneh was indeed a seduction[2] for beauty, he demanded her in marriage of Ghanim, who replied, 'She is thy handmaid and I am thy servant.' The Khalif thanked him and gave him a hundred thousand dinars, then summoned the Cadi and the

[1] *i.e.* monarch of Persia, the realm of the ancient Kisras or Chosroës.
[2] *Fitneh.*

witnesses, who drew up the contracts of marriage between the Khalif and Fitneh on the one hand and Ghanim and Cout el Culoub on the other; and the two marriages were consummated in one and the same night. On the morrow, the Khalif ordered the history of Ghanim to be recorded and laid up in the royal treasury, that those who came after him might read it and wonder at the dealings of destiny and put their trust in Him who created the night and the day.

END OF VOL. I.

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