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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," "SONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH," "LAUTREC," "THE POEMS OF MASTER FRANCIS VILLON OF PARIS," "NEW POEMS," ETC. ETC.). IN NINE VOLUMES: VOLUME THE SECOND.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

THE HISTORY OF KING OMAR BEN ENNUMAN AND HIS SONS SHERKAN AND ZOULMEKAN.

There reigned once in the City of Peace, (Baghdad), before the Khalifate of Abdulmelik ben Merwan,[1] a king called Omar ben Ennuman, who was of the mighty giants and had subdued the kings of Persia and the Emperors of the East, for none could warm himself at his fire[2] nor cope with him in battle, and when he was angry, there came sparks out of his nostrils. He had gotten him the dominion over all countries, and God had subjected unto him all creatures; his commands were obeyed in all the great cities and his armies penetrated the most distant lands: the East and West came under his rule, with the regions between them, Hind and Sind and China and Hejaz and Yemen and the islands of India and China, Syria and Mesopotamia and the land of the blacks and the islands of the ocean and all the famous rivers of the earth, Jaxartes and Bactrus, Nile and Euphrates. He sent his ambassadors to the farthest parts of the earth, to fetch him true report, and they returned with tidings of justice and peace, bringing him assurance of loyalty and obedience and invocations of blessings on his head; for he was a right noble king and there came to him gifts and tribute from all parts of the world. He had a son called Sherkan, who was one of the prodigies of the age and the likest of all

[1] A.H. 65—86.

[2] *i.e.* none could approach him in the heat of fight.

men to his father, who loved him with an exceeding love and had appointed him to be king after him. The prince grew up till he reached man's estate and was twenty years old, and God subjected all men to him, for he was gifted with great might and prowess in battle, humbling the champions and destroying all who made head against him. So, before long, this Sherkan became famous in all quarters of the world and his father rejoiced in him: and his might waxed, till he passed all bounds and magnified himself, taking by storm the citadels and strong places.

Now King Omar had four lawful wives, but God had vouchsafed him no son by them, except Sherkan, whom he had gotten of one of them, and the rest were barren. Moreover he had three hundred and threescore concubines, after the number of the days of the Coptic year, who were of all nations, and he had lodged them all within his palace. For he had built twelve pavilions, after the number of the months of the year, in each thirty chambers, and appointed to each of his concubines a night, which he lay with her and came not to her again for a full year. As providence would have it, one of them conceived and her pregnancy was made known, whereupon the King rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "Mayhap it will be a son, in which case all my offspring will be males." Then he recorded the date of her conception and made much of her. But when the news came to Sherkan, he was troubled and it was grievous to him, for he said, "Verily, there cometh one who shall dispute the kingdom with me." So he said to himself, "If this damsel bear a male child, I will kill it." But he kept this his intent secret in his heart. Now the damsel in question was a Greek girl, by name Sufiyeh,[1] whom the King of Roum,[2] lord of Cæsarea, had sent to King Omar as a present, together with great store of rarities. She was the fairest of face and most

[1] Sophia. [2] Apparently Palestine (in this case).

graceful of all his women and the most careful of her honour and was gifted with abounding wit and surpassing loveliness. She had served the King on the night of his lying with her, saying to him, "O King, I desire of the god of the heavens that He grant thee of me a male child, so I may rear him well and do my utmost endeavour to educate him and preserve him from harm." And her words pleased the King. She passed the time of her pregnancy in devout exercises, praying fervently to God to grant her a goodly male child and make his birth easy to her, till her months were accomplished and she sat down on the stool of delivery. Now the King had given an eunuch charge to let him know if the child she should bring forth were male or female; and in like manner his son Sherkan had sent one to bring him news of this. In due time, Sufiyeh was delivered of a child, which the midwives took and found to be a girl with a face more radiant than the moon. So they announced this to the bystanders, whereupon the eunuch carried the news to the King and Sherkan's messenger did the like with his master, who rejoiced with exceeding joy; but after these two had departed, Sufiyeh said to the midwives, "Wait with me awhile, for I feel there is yet somewhat in my entrails." Then she moaned and the pains of labour took her again, but God made it easy to her and she gave birth to a second child. The midwives looked at it and found it a boy like the full moon, with flower-white forehead and rose-red cheeks; whereupon the damsel and her eunuchs and attendants rejoiced and she was delivered of the afterbirth, whilst all who were in the palace set up cries of joy. The other damsels heard of this and envied her; and the news came to Omar, who was glad and rejoiced. Then he rose and went to her and kissed her head, after which he looked at the boy and bending down to it, kissed it, whilst the damsels smote the tabrets and played on instruments of

music; and he commanded that the boy should be named Zoulmekan and the girl Nuzhet ez Zeman, which was done accordingly. Then he appointed nurses, wet and dry, and eunuchs and attendants to serve them and assigned them rations of sugar and liquors and oil and other necessaries, such as the tongue fails to set out. Moreover the people of Baghdad heard of the children that God had vouchsafed to the King; so they decorated the city and made proclamation of the good news. Then came the amirs and viziers and grandees and wished the King joy of his son and daughter, wherefore he thanked them and bestowed dresses of honour and favours and largesse on them and on all who were present, gentle and simple. Then he bade carry great store of jewellery and apparel and money to Sufiyeh and charged her to rear the children carefully and educate them well. After this wise, four years passed by, during which time the King sent every few days to seek news of Sufiyeh and her children; but all this while, his son Sherkan knew not that a male child had been born to his father, having news only of the birth of his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman, and they hid the thing from him, until years and days had passed by, whilst he was busied in contending with the men of war and tilting against the cavaliers.

One day, as the King was sitting on his throne, there came in to him his chamberlains, who kissed the earth before him and said, "O King, there be come ambassadors from the King of the Greeks, lord of Constantinople the mighty, and they desire to be admitted to pay their respects to thee: so if the King give them leave to enter, we will admit them, and if not, there is no appeal from his decree." He bade admit them, and when they entered, he turned to them and asked them how they did and the reason of their coming. They kissed the earth before him and replied, "O illustrious King and lord of the long arm,[1]

[1] *i.e.* man of might and munificence.

know that King Afridoun, lord of the lands of the Greeks and of the Nazarene armies, holding the empire of Constantinople, hath sent us to make known to thee that he is now waging grievous war with a fierce rebel, the lord of Cæsarea; and the cause of this war is as follows. One of the kings of the Arabs, awhile since, chanced, in one of his conquests, upon a treasure of the time of Alexander, from which he carried away countless riches and amongst other things, three round jewels, of the bigness of an ostrich's egg, from a mine of pure white jewels, never was seen the like. Upon each of these jewels were graven talismans in the Greek character, and they had many properties and virtues, amongst the rest that if one of them were hung round the neck of a new-born child, no ailment would hurt him nor would he moan or be fevered, so long as it was about his neck. When they came to the hands of the Arabian King and he knew their virtues, he sent the three jewels, together with other presents and rarities, as a gift to King Afridoun, and to that end fitted out two ships, one bearing the treasure and presents and the other men to guard them against whoso should offer them hindrance on the sea, being nevertheless assured that none would dare waylay them, for that he was King of the Arabs, more by token that their way lay through the sea in the dominions of the King of Constantinople and they were bound to him, nor were there on the shores of that sea any but subjects of the most mighty King Afridoun. The ships set out and sailed till they drew near our city, when there sallied out on them certain corsairs of the country and amongst them troops of the King of Cæsarea, who took all the treasures and rarities in the ships, together with the three jewels, and slew the men. When the news came to our King, he sent an army against them, but they defeated it; then he sent another army, stronger than the first, but they put this also to the rout; whereupon the

King was wroth and swore that he would go out against them in person at the head of his whole army and not turn back from them, till he had left Cæsarea in ruins and laid waste all the lands and cities over which its King held sway. So he craves of the lord of the age and the time, the King of Baghdad and Khorassan, that he succour us with an army, to the end that glory may redound to him; and he has sent by us somewhat of various kinds of presents and begs the King to favour him by accepting them and accord us his aid." Then they kissed the earth before King Omar and brought out the presents, which were fifty slave-girls of the choicest of the land of the Greeks, and fifty white male slaves in tunics of brocade, with girdles of gold and silver and in their ears pendants of gold and fine pearls, worth a thousand dinars each. The damsels were adorned after the same fashion and clad in stuffs worth much money. When the King saw them, he rejoiced in them and accepted them. Then he commanded that the ambassadors should be honourably entreated and summoning his viziers, took counsel with them of what he should do. Accordingly, one of them, an old man named Dendan, arose and kissing the earth before King Omar, said, "O King, thou wouldst do well to equip a numerous army and set over it thy son Sherkan, with us as his lieutenants; and to my mind it behoves thee to do thus, for two reasons: first, that the King of the Greeks hath appealed to thee for aid and hath sent thee presents, and thou hast accepted them; and secondly, that no enemy dares attack our country, and that if thy host succour the King of the Greeks and his foe be put to the rout, the glory will fall to thee and the news of it will be noised abroad in all cities and countries; and especially, when the tidings reach the islands of the ocean and the people of Western Africa, they will send thee presents and tribute." When the King heard the Vizier's speech, it pleased him

Night xlvi.

and he approved his counsel: so he bestowed on him a dress of honour and said to him, "It is with such as thee that kings take counsel and it befits that thou command the van of the army and my son Sherkan the main battle." Then he sent for Sherkan and expounded the matter to him, telling him what the ambassadors and the Vizier had said, and enjoined him to take arms and prepare to set out, charging him not to cross the Vizier Dendan in aught that he should do. Then he bade him choose from among his troops ten thousand horsemen armed cap-a-pie and inured to war and hardship. Accordingly, Sherkan rose at once and chose out ten thousand horsemen, in obedience to his father's commandment, after which he entered his palace and mustered his troops and distributed money to them, saying, "Ye have three days to make ready." They kissed the earth before him and proceeded at once to make their preparations for the campaign; whilst Sherkan repaired to the armouries and provided himself with all the arms and armour that he needed, and thence to the stables, whence he took horses of choice breeds and others. When the three days were ended, the troops marched out of Baghdad, and King Omar came forth to take leave of his son, who kissed the earth before him, and he gave him seven thousand purses.[1] Then he turned to the Vizier Dendan and commended to his care his son Sherkan's army and charged the latter to consult the Vizier in all things, to which they both promised obedience. After this, the King returned to Baghdad and Sherkan commanded the officers to draw out the troops in battle array. So they mustered them and the number of the army was ten thousand horsemen, besides footmen and followers. Then they loaded the beasts and beat the drums and blew the clarions and unfurled the banners and the standards, whilst Sherkan mounted, with the Vizier Dendan by his

[1] About £35,000.

side and the standards waving over them, and the army set out and fared on, with the ambassadors in the van, till the day departed and the night came, when they halted and encamped for the night. On the morrow, as soon as God brought in the day, they took horse and continued their march, nor did they cease to press onward, guided by the ambassadors, for the space of twenty days. On the twenty-first day, at nightfall, they came to a wide and fertile valley, whose sides were thickly wooded and covered with grass, and there Sherkan called a three days' halt. So they dismounted and pitched their tents, dispersing right and left in the valley, whilst the Vizier Dendan and the ambassadors alighted in the midst. As for Sherkan, when he had seen the tents pitched and the troops dispersed on either side and had commanded his officers and attendants to camp beside the Vizier Dendan, he gave reins to his horse, being minded to explore the valley and himself mount guard over the army, having regard to his father's injunctions and to the fact that they had reached the frontier of the land of Roum and were now in the enemy's country. So he rode on alone along the valley, till a fourth part of the night was passed, when he grew weary and sleep overcame him, so that he could no longer spur his horse. Now he was used to sleep on horseback; so when drowsiness got the better of him, he fell asleep and the horse paced on with him half the night and entered a forest; but Sherkan awoke not, till the steed smote the earth with his hoof. Then he started from sleep and found himself among trees; and the moon arose and lighted up the two horizons. He was troubled at finding himself alone in this place and spoke 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!" But as he rode on, in fear of the wild beasts, behold, the trees thinned and the moon shone out

upon a meadow as it were one of the meads of Paradise; and he heard therein a noise of talk and pleasant laughter, such as ravishes the wit of men. So King Sherkan dismounted and tying his horse to a tree, fared on a little way, till he espied a stream of running water and heard a woman talking and saying in Arabic, "By the virtue of the Messiah, this is not handsome of you! But whoso speaks a word, I will throw her down and bind her with her girdle." He followed in the direction of the voice and saw gazelles frisking and wild cattle pasturing and birds in their various voices expressing joy and gladness: and the earth was embroidered with all manner of flowers and green herbs, even as says of it the poet in the following verses:

Earth has no fairer sight to show than this its blossom-time, With all the gently running streams that wander o'er its face:
It is indeed the handiwork of God Omnipotent, The Lord of every noble gift and Giver of all grace!

Midmost the meadow stood a monastery, and within the enclosure was a citadel that rose high into the air in the light of the moon. The stream passed through the midst of the monastery and therenigh sat ten damsels like moons, high-bosomed maids, clad in dresses and ornaments that dazzled the eyes, as says of them the poet:

The meadow glitters with the troops Of lovely ones that wander there:
Its grace and beauty doubled are By these that are so passing fair;
Virgins that, with their swimming gait, The hearts of all that see ensnare;
Along whose necks, like trails of grapes, Stream down the tresses of their hair:
Proudly they walk, with eyes that dart The shafts and arrows of despair,
And all the champions of the world Are slain by their seductive air.

Sherkan looked at the ten girls and saw in their midst a lady like the moon at its full, with ringleted hair and

shining forehead, great black eyes and curling brow-locks, perfect in person and attributes, as says the poet:

Her beauty beamed on me with glances wonder-bright: The slender Syrian spears are not so straight and slight:
She laid her veil aside, and lo, her cheeks rose-red! All manner loveliness was in their sweetest sight.
The locks, that o'er her brow fell down, were like the night, From out of which there shines a morning of delight.

Then Sherkan heard her say to the girls, "Come on, that I may wrestle with you, ere the moon set and the dawn come." So they came up to her, one after another, and she overthrew them, one by one, and bound their hands behind them with their girdles. When she had thrown them all, there turned to her an old woman, who was before her, and said, as if she were wroth with her, "O wanton, dost thou glory in overthrowing these girls? Behold, I am an old woman, yet have I thrown them forty times! So what hast thou to boast of? But if thou have strength to wrestle with me, stand up that I may grip thee and put thy head between thy feet." The young lady smiled at her words, although her heart was full of anger against her, and said, "O my lady Dhat ed Dewahi, wilt indeed wrestle with me, or dost thou jest with me?" "I mean to wrestle with thee in very deed," replied she. "Stand up to me then," said the damsel, "if thou have strength to do so." When the old woman heard this, she was sore enraged and the hair of her body stood on end, like that of a hedge-hog. Then she sprang up, whilst the damsel confronted her, and said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, I will not wrestle with thee, except I be naked, O baggage!" So she loosed her trousers and putting her hand under her clothes, tore them off her body; then, taking a handkerchief of silk, she bound it about her middle and became as she were a bald Afriteh or a pied snake. Then she turned to the young lady and said to

Night xlvii.

her, "Do as I have done." All this time, Sherkan was watching them and laughing at the loathly favour of the old woman. So the damsel took a sash of Yemen stuff and doubled it about her waist, then tucked up her trousers and showed legs of alabaster and above them a hummock of crystal, soft and swelling, and a belly that exhaled musk from its dimples, as it were a bed of blood-red anemones, and breasts like double pomegranates. Then the old woman bent to her and they took hold of one another, whilst Sherkan raised his eyes to heaven and prayed to God that the damsel might conquer the old hag. Presently, the former bored in under the latter, and gripping her by the breech with the left hand and by the gullet with the right, hoisted her off the ground; whereupon the old woman strove to free herself and in the struggle wriggled out of the girl's hands and fell on her back. Up went her legs and showed her hairy tout in the moonlight, and she let fly two great cracks of wind, one of which smote the earth, whilst the other smoked up to the skies. At this Sherkan laughed, till he fell to the ground, and said, "He lied not who dubbed thee Lady of Calamities![1] Verily, thou sawest her prowess against the others." Then he arose and looked right and left, but saw none save the old woman thrown down on her back. So he drew near to hear what should pass between them; and behold, the young lady came up to the old one and throwing over her a veil of fine silk, helped her to dress herself, making excuses to her and saying, "O my lady Dhat ed Dewahi, I did not mean to throw thee so roughly, but thou wriggledst out of my hands; so praised be God for safety!" She returned her no answer, but rose in her confusion and walked away out of sight, leaving the young lady standing alone, by the other girls thrown down and bound. Then said Sherkan to himself, "To every fortune there is a

[1] *Dhat ed Dewahi.*

a cause. Sleep fell not on me nor did the steed bear me hither but for my good fortune; for of a surety this damsel and what is with her shall be my prize." So he turned back and mounted and drew his scimitar; then he gave his horse the spur and he started off with him, like an arrow from a bow, whilst he brandished his naked blade and cried out, "God is Most Great!" When the damsel saw him, she sprang to her feet and running to the bank of the river, which was there six cubits wide, made a spring and landed on the other side, where she turned and standing, cried out in a loud voice, "Who art thou, sirrah, that breakest in on our pastime, and that with thy whinger bared, as thou wert charging an army? Whence comest thou and whither art thou bound? Speak the truth, and it shall profit thee, and do not lie, for lying is of the losel's fashion. Doubtless thou hast strayed this night from thy road, that thou hast happened on this place. So tell me what thou seekest: if thou wouldst have us set thee in the right road, we will do so, or if thou seek help, we will help thee." When Sherkan heard her words, he replied, "I am a stranger of the Muslims, who am come out by myself in quest of booty, and I have found no fairer purchase this moonlit night than these ten damsels; so I will take them and rejoin my comrades with them." Quoth she, "I would have thee to know that thou hast not yet come at the booty: and as for these ten damsels, by Allah, they are no purchase for thee! Indeed, the fairest purchase thou canst look for is to win free of this place; for thou art now in a mead, where, if we gave one cry, there would be with us anon four thousand knights. Did I not tell thee that lying is shameful?" And he said, "The fortunate man is he to whom God sufficeth and who hath no need of other than Him." "By the virtue of the Messiah," replied she, "did I not fear to have thy death at my hand, I would give a cry that would fill the meadow

on thee with horse and foot; but I have pity on the stranger: so if thou seek booty, I require of thee that thou dismount from thy horse and swear to me, by thy faith, that thou wilt not approach me with aught of arms, and we will wrestle, I and thou. If thou throw me, lay me on thy horse and take all of us to thy booty; and if I throw thee, thou shalt be at my commandment. Swear this to me, for I fear thy perfidy, since experience has it that, as long as perfidy is in men's natures, to trust in every one is weakness. But if thou wilt swear, I will come over to thee." Quoth Sherkan (and indeed he lusted after her and said to himself, "She does not know that I am a champion of the champions"), "Impose on me whatever oath thou deemest binding, and I will swear not to draw near thee till thou hast made thy preparations and sayest, 'Come and wrestle with me.' If thou throw me, I have wealth wherewith to ransom myself, and if I throw thee, I shall get fine purchase." Then said she, "Swear to me by Him who hath lodged the soul in the body and given laws to mankind, that thou wilt not beset me with aught of violence, but by way of wrestling; else mayst thou die out of the pale of Islam." "By Allah," exclaimed Sherkan, "if a Cadi should swear me, though he were Cadi of the Cadis, he would not impose on me the like of this oath!" Then he took the oath she required and tied his horse to a tree, sunken in the sea of reverie and saying in himself, "Glory to Him who fashioned her of vile water!"[1] Then he girt himself and made ready for wrestling and said to her, "Cross the stream to me." Quoth she, "It is not for me to come to thee: if thou wilt, do thou cross over to me." "I cannot do that," replied he, and she said, "O boy, I will come to thee." So she gathered her skirts and making a spring, landed on the other side of the river by him; whereupon he drew near to her, wondering at

[1] *i.e.* sperma hominis.

her beauty and grace, and saw a form that the hand of Omnipotence had tanned with the leaves of the Jinn and which had been fostered by Divine solicitude, a form on which the zephyrs of fair fortune had blown and over whose creation favourable planets had presided. Then she called out to him, saying, "O Muslim, come and wrestle before the day break!" and tucked up her sleeves, showing a fore-arm like fresh curd; the whole place was lighted up by its whiteness and Sherkan was dazzled by it. Then he bent forward and clapped his hands and she did the like, and they took hold and gripped each other. He laid his hands on her slender waist, so that the tips of his fingers sank into the folds of her belly, and his limbs relaxed and he stood in the stead of desire, for there was displayed to him a body, in which was languishment of hearts, and he fell a-trembling like the Persian reed in the hurricane. So she lifted him up and throwing him to the ground, sat down on his breast with buttocks like a hill of sand, for he was not master of his reason. Then she said to him, "O Muslim, it is lawful among you to kill Christians; what sayst thou to my killing thee?" "O my lady," replied he, "as for killing me, it is unlawful; for our Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) hath forbidden the slaying of women and children and old men and monks." "Since this was revealed unto your prophet," rejoined she, "it behoves us to be even with him therein; so rise: I give thee thy life, for beneficence is not lost upon men." Then she got off his breast and he rose and brushed the earth from his head, and she said to him, "Be not abashed; but, indeed, one who enters the land of the Greeks in quest of booty and to succour kings against kings, how comes it that there is no strength in him to defend himself against a woman?" "It was not lack of strength in me," replied he; "nor was it thy strength that overthrew me, but thy beauty: so if thou wilt grant me another bout, it will be

of thy favour." She laughed and said, "I grant thee this: but these damsels have been long bound and their arms and shoulders are weary, and it were fitting I should loose them, since this next bout may peradventure be a long one." Then she went up to the girls and unbinding them, said to them in the Greek tongue, "Go and put yourselves in safety, till I have brought to nought this Muslim's craving for you." So they went away, whilst Sherkan looked at them and they gazed at him and the young lady. Then she and he drew near again and set breast against breast; but, when he felt her belly against his, his strength failed him, and she feeling this, lifted him in her hands, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, and threw him to the ground. He fell on his back, and she said to him, "Rise: I give thee thy life a second time. I spared thee before for the sake of thy prophet, for that he forbade the killing of women, and I do so this second time because of thy weakness and tender age and strangerhood; but I charge thee, if there be, in the army sent by King Omar ben Ennuman to the succour of the King of Constantinople, a stronger than thou, send him hither and tell him of me, for in wrestling there are divers kinds of strokes and tricks, such as feinting and the fore-hipe and the back-hipe and the leg-crick and the thigh-twist and the jostle and the cross-buttock." "By Allah, O my lady," replied Sherkan, (and indeed he was greatly incensed against her), "were I the chief Es Sefedi[1] or Mohammed Caïmal[1] or Ibn es Seddi,[1] I had not observed the fashions thou namest; for, by Allah, it was not by thy strength that thou overthrewest me, but by filling me with the desire of thy buttocks; because we people of Chaldæa love great thighs, so that nor wit nor foresight was left in me. But now if thou have a mind to try another fall with me, with my wits about me, I have a right to this one bout more, by the rules of the

[1] Apparently the names of noted wrestlers.

game, for my presence of mind has now returned to me." "Hast thou not had enough of wrestling, O conquered one?" rejoined she. "However, come, if thou wilt; but know that this bout must be the last." Then they took hold of each other and he set to in earnest and warded himself against being thrown down: so they strained awhile, and the damsel found in him strength such as she had not before observed and said to him, "O Muslim, thou art on thy guard!" "Yes," replied he; "thou knowest that there remaineth but this bout, and after each of us will go his own way." She laughed and he laughed too: then she seized the opportunity to bore in upon him unawares, and gripping him by the thigh, threw him to the ground, so that he fell on his back. She laughed at him and said, "Thou art surely an eater of bran; for thou art like a Bedouin bonnet, that falls at a touch, or a child's toy, that a puff of air overturns. Out on thee, thou poor creature! Go back to the army of the Muslims and send us other than thyself, for thou lackest thews, and cry us among the Arabs and Persians and Turks and Medes, "Whoso has might in him, let him come to us." Then she made a spring and landed on the other side of the stream and said to Sherkan, laughing, "It goes to my heart to part with thee; get thee to thy friends, O my lord, before the morning, lest the knights come upon thee and take thee on the points of their lances. Thou hast not strength enough to defend thee against women; so how couldst thou make head against men and cavaliers?" And she turned to go back to the monastery. Sherkan was confounded and called out to her, saying, "O my lady, wilt thou go away and leave the wretched stranger, the broken-hearted slave of love?" So she turned to him, laughing, and said, "What wouldst thou? I grant thy prayer." "Have I set foot in thy country and tasted the sweetness of thy favours," replied Sherkan, "and shall I return without eating of thy

victual and tasting thy hospitality? Indeed I am become one of thy servitors." Quoth she, "None but the base refuses hospitality; on my head and eyes be it! Do me the favour to mount and ride along the bank of the stream, abreast of me, for thou art my guest." At this Sherkan rejoiced and hastening back to his horse, mounted and rode along the river bank, keeping abreast of her, till he came to a drawbridge, that hung by pulleys and chains of steel, made fast with hooks and padlocks. Here stood the ten damsels awaiting the lady, who spoke to one of them in the Greek tongue and said to her, "Go to him; take his horse's rein and bring him over to the monastery." So she went up to Sherkan and led him over the bridge to the other side and he followed her, amazed at what he saw and saying in himself, "Would the Vizier Dendan were with me, to look on these fair faces with his own eyes!" Then he turned to the young lady and said to her, "O wonder of beauty, now art thou doubly bound to me, firstly, by the bond of comradeship, and secondly for that thou carriest me to thy house and I accept of thy hospitality and am at thy disposal and under thy protection. So do me the favour to go with me to the land of Islam, where thou shalt look upon many a lion-hearted prince and know who I am." His speech angered her and she said to him, "By the virtue of the Messiah, thou art keen of wit with me! But I see now what depravity is in thy heart and how thou allowest thyself to say a thing that proves thee a traitor. How should I do what thou sayest, when I know that, if I came to thy King Omar ben Ennuman, I should never win free of him? For he has not the like of me among his women nor in his palace, all lord of Baghdad and Khorassan as he is, with his twelve palaces, in number as the months of the year, and his concubines therein, in number as the days thereof; and if I come to him, he will not respect me, for that ye hold it lawful to take possession

of the like of me, as it is said in your scripture, 'That which your right hand possesses.'[1] So how canst thou speak thus to me? As for thy saying, 'Thou shalt look upon the champions of the Muslims,' by the Messiah, thou sayst that which is not true; for I saw your army, when it reached our country, these two days ago, and I did not see that your ordinance was that of kings, but beheld you only as a rabble of men collected together. And as for thy saying, 'Thou shalt know who I am,' I did not show thee courtesy of any intent to honour thee, but out of pride in myself; and the like of thee should not say this to the like of me, even though thou be Sherkan himself, King Omar ben Ennuman's son, who is renowned in these days." "And dost thou know Sherkan?" asked he. "Yes," replied she; "and I know of his coming with an army of ten thousand horse, for that he was sent by his father with these troops to the succour of the King of Constantinople." "O my lady," rejoined Sherkan, "I conjure thee, as thou believest in thy religion, tell me the cause of all this, that I may know truth from falsehood and with whom the fault lies." "By the virtue of thy faith," replied she, "were it not that I fear lest the news of me be bruited abroad that I am of the daughters of the Greeks, I would adventure myself and sally forth against the ten thousand horse and kill their chief, the Vizier Dendan, and take their champion Sherkan. Nor would there be any reproach to me in this, for I have read books and know the Arabic language and have studied good breeding and polite letters. But I have no need to vaunt my own prowess to thee, for thou hast tasted of my quality and proved my strength and skill and pre-eminence in wrestling; nor if Sherkan himself had been in thy place to-night and it had been said to him, 'Leap this river,' could he have done so. And I could wish

[1] A phrase of frequent occurrence in the Koran, meaning "your female slaves" or "the women ye have captured in war."

well that the Messiah would throw him into my hands here in this monastery, that I might go forth to him in the habit of a man and pull him from his saddle and take him prisoner and lay him in fetters." When Sherkan heard this, pride and heat and warlike jealousy overcame him and he was minded to discover himself and lay violent hands on her; but her beauty held him back from her, and he repeated the following verse: Night xlviii.

Their charms, whatever fault the fair commit, A thousand intercessors bring for it.

So she went up, and he after her; whilst he looked at her back and saw her buttocks smiting against each other, like the billows in the troubled sea; and he recited the following verses:

In her face an advocate harbours, who blots out her every fault From the hearts of mankind, for he is mighty to intercede.
Whenas I look at her face, I cry in my wonder aloud, "The moon of the skies in the night of her full is risen indeed!"
If the Afrit of Belkis[1] himself should wrestle a fall with her, Her charms would throw him forthright, for all his strength and speed.

They went on till they reached a vaulted gate, arched over with marble. This she opened and entered with Sherkan into a long vestibule, vaulted with ten arches, from each of which hung a lamp of crystal, shining like the rays of the sun. The damsels met her at the end of the vestibule, bearing perfumed flambeaux and having on their heads kerchiefs embroidered with all manner jewels, and went on before her, till they came to the inward of the monastery, where Sherkan saw couches set up all around, facing one another and overhung with curtains spangled with gold. The floor was paved with all kinds of variegated

[1] Quoth he (Solomon), "O chiefs, which of you will bring me her throne?" (*i.e.* that of Belkis, queen of Sheba) . . . . . "I," said an Afrit of the Jinn, "will bring it thee, ere thou canst rise from thy stead, for I am able thereto and faithful!"—*Koran*, xxvii. 38, 39.

marbles, and in the midst was a basin of water, with four-and-twenty spouts of gold around it, from which issued water like liquid silver; whilst at the upper end stood a throne covered with silks of royal purple. Then said the damsel, "O my lord, mount this throne." So he seated himself on it, and she withdrew: and when she had been absent awhile, he asked the servants of her, and they said, "She hath gone to her sleeping-chamber; but we will serve thee as thou shalt order." So they set before him rare meats, and he ate till he was satisfied, when they brought him a basin of gold and an ewer of silver, and he washed his hands. Then his mind reverted to his troops, and he was troubled, knowing not what had befallen them in his absence and thinking how he had forgotten his father's injunctions, so that he abode oppressed with anxiety and repenting of what he had done, till the dawn broke and the day appeared, when he lamented and sighed and became drowned in the sea of melancholy, repeating the following verses:

I lack not of prudence and yet in this case I've been fooled; so what shift shall avail unto me?
If any could ease me of love and its stress, Of my might and my virtue I'd set myself free.
But alas! my heart's lost in the maze of desire, And no helper save God in my strait can I see.

Hardly had he finished, when up came more than twenty damsels like moons, encompassing the young lady, who appeared amongst them as the full moon among stars. She was clad in royal brocade and girt with a woven girdle set with various kinds of jewels, that straitly clasped her waist and made her buttocks stand out as they were a hill of crystal upholding a wand of silver; and her breasts were like double pomegranates. On her head she wore a network of pearls, gemmed with various kinds of jewels, and she moved with a coquettish swimming gait, swaying

wonder-gracefully, whilst the damsels held up her skirts. When Sherkan saw her beauty and grace, he was transported for joy and forgot his army and the Vizier Dendan and springing to his feet, cried out, "Beware, beware of that girdle rare!" and repeated the following verses:

Heavy of buttocks, languorous of gait, With limber shape and breasts right delicate,
She hides what passion in her bosom burns; Yet cannot I my heat dissimulate.
Her maidens, like strung pearls, behind her fare, Now all dispersed, now knit in ordered state.

She fixed her eyes on him and considered him awhile, till she was assured of him, when she came up to him and said, "Indeed the place is honoured and illumined by thy presence, O Sherkan! How didst thou pass the night, O hero, after we went away and left thee? Verily, lying is a defect and a reproach in kings, especially in great kings; and thou art Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman; so henceforth tell me nought but truth and strive not to keep the secret of thy condition, for falsehood engenders hatred and enmity. The arrow of destiny hath fallen on thee, and it behoves thee to show resignation and submission." When Sherkan heard what she said, he saw nothing for it but to tell her the truth; so he said, "I am indeed Sherkan, son of Omar ben Ennuman, whom fortune hath afflicted and cast into this place: so now do whatsoever thou wilt." She bowed her head a long while, then turned to him and said, "Reassure thyself and be of good cheer; for thou art my guest and bread and salt have passed between us; so art thou in my safeguard and under my protection. Have no fear; by the virtue of the Messiah, if all the people of the earth sought to harm thee, they should not come at thee, till the breath had left my body for thy sake; for thou art under my protection and that of the Messiah." Then she

sat down by his side and began to sport with him, till his alarm subsided and he knew that, had she been minded to kill him, she would have done so on the past night. After a while, she spoke in the Greek tongue to one of her serving-women, who went away and returned in a little with a goblet and a tray of food; but Sherkan abstained from eating, saying in himself, "Maybe she hath put somewhat in this meat." She knew what was in his thought; so she turned to him and said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, the case is not as thou deemest, nor is there aught in this food of what thou suspectest! Were I minded to kill thee, I had done so before now." Then she came to the table and ate a mouthful of every dish, whereupon Sherkan came forward and fell to. She was pleased at this, and they both ate till they were satisfied, after which she let bring perfumes and sweet-smelling herbs and wines of all colours and kinds, in vessels of gold and silver and crystal. She filled a first cup and drank it off, before offering it to Sherkan, even as she had done with the food. Then she filled a second time and gave the cup to him. He drank and she said to him, "See, O Muslim, how thou art in the utmost delight and pleasure of life!" And she ceased not to drink and ply him with drink, till he took leave of his wits, for the wine and the intoxication of love for her. Presently she said to the serving-maid, "O Merjaneh, bring us some instruments of music." "I hear and obey," replied Merjaneh, and going out, returned immediately with a lute, a Persian harp, a Tartar flute and an Egyptian dulcimer. The young lady took the lute and tuning it, sang to it in a dulcet voice, softer than the zephyr and sweeter than the waters of Tesnim,[1] the following verses:

Night xlix.

May Allah assoilzie thine eyes! How much is the blood they have shed!
How great is the tale of the shafts thy pitiless glances have sped!

[1] One of the fountains of Paradise.

I honour the mistress, indeed, that harshly her suitor entreats; 'Tis sin
in the loved to relent or pity a lover misled.
Fair fortune and grace to the eyes that watch the night, sleepless, for thee,
And hail to the heart of thy slave, by day that is heavy as lead!
'Tis thine to condemn me to death, for thou art my king and my lord.
With my life I will ransom the judge, who heapeth unright on my head.

Then each of the damsels rose and taking an instrument, played and sang to it in the Greek language. The lady, their mistress, sang also, to Sherkan's delight. Then she said to him, "O Muslim, dost thou understand what I say?" "No," replied he; "it was the beauty of thy finger-tips that threw me into ecstacies." She laughed and said, "If I sang to thee in Arabic, what wouldst thou do?" "I should lose the mastery of my reason," replied he. So she took an instrument and changing the measure, sang the following verses:

Parting must ever bitter be; How shall one bear it patiently?
Three things are heavy on my heart, Absence, estrangement, cruelty.
I love a fair to whom I'm thrall, And severance bitter is to me.

Then she looked at Sherkan and found he had lost his senses for delight: and he lay amongst them insensible awhile, after which he revived and recalling the singing, inclined to mirth. Then they fell again to drinking and ceased not from sport and merriment till the day departed with the evening and the night let fall her wings. Thereupon she rose and retired to her chamber. Sherkan enquired after her and being told that she was gone to her bedchamber, said, "I commend her to the safe-keeping of God and to His protection!" As soon as it was day, a waiting-woman came to him and said, "My mistress bids thee to her." So he rose and followed her, and as he drew near her lodging, the damsels received him with smitten tabrets and songs of greeting and escorted him to a great door of ivory set with pearls and jewels. Here they entered and he found himself in a spacious saloon, at the upper

end of which was a great estrade, carpeted with various kinds of silk, and round it open lattices giving upon trees and streams. About the place were figures, so fashioned that the air entered them and set in motion instruments of music within them, and it seemed to the beholder as if they spoke. Here sat the young lady, looking on the figures; but when she saw Sherkan, she sprang to her feet, and taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her and asked him how he had passed the night. He blessed her and they sat talking awhile, till she said to him, "Knowest thou aught touching lovers and slaves of passion?" "Yes," replied he; "I know some verses on the subject." "Let me hear them," said she. So he repeated the following verses:

Pleasure and health, O Azzeh, and good digestion to thee! How with our goods and our names and our honours thou makest free!
By Allah, whene'er I blow hot, she of a sudden blows cold, And no sooner do I draw near, than off at a tangent flies she!
Indeed, as I dote upon Azzeh, as soon as I've cleared me of all That stands between us and our loves, she turns and abandons me;
As a traveller that trusts in the shade of a cloud for his noontide rest; But as soon as he halts, the shade flits and the cloud in the distance doth flee.

When she heard this, she said, "Verily Kutheiyir[1] was a poet of renown and a master of chaste eloquence and attained rare perfection in praise of Azzeh, especially when he says:

[1] Kutheiyir ibn Ali Juma, a well-known poet of the seventh and eighth centuries at Medina. He was celebrated for his love of Azzeh, in whose honour most of his poems were written. The writer (or copyist) of this tale has committed an anachronism in introducing these verses, as Kutheiyir was a contemporary of the Khalif Abdulmelik ben Merwan *before* whose time Sherkan and his father (both imaginary characters) are stated (see *supra*, p. 1) to have lived; but the whole narrative is full of the grossest anachronisms, too numerous, indeed, to notice.

If Azzeh should before a judge the sun of morning cite, Needs must the umpire doom to her the meed of beauty bright;
And women all, who come to me, at her to rail and flite, God make your cheeks the sandal-soles whereon her feet alight!

And indeed it is reported," added she, "that Azzeh was endowed with the extreme of beauty and grace." Then she said to Sherkan, "O king's son, dost thou know aught of Jemil's[1] verses to Butheineh?" "Yes," replied he; "none knows Jemil's verses better than I." And he repeated the following:

"Up and away to the holy war, Jemil!" they say; and I, "What have I to do with waging war except among the fair?"
For deed and saying with them alike are full of ease and cheer, And he's a martyr[2] who tilts with them and falleth fighting there.
If I say to Butheineh, "What is this love, that eateth my life away?" She answers, "'Tis rooted fast in thy heart and will increase fore'er."
Or if I beg her to give me back some scantling of my wit, Wherewith to deal with the folk and live, she answereth, "Hope it ne'er!"
Thou willst my death, ah, woe is me! thou willst nought else but that; Yet I, I can see no goal but thee, towards which my wishes fare.

"Thou hast done well, O king's son," said she, "and Jemil also did excellently well. But what would Butheineh have done with him that he says, 'Thou wishest to kill me and nought else?'" "O my lady," replied he, "she sought to do with him what thou seekest to do with me, and even that will not content thee." She laughed at his answer, and they ceased not to carouse till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then she rose and went to her sleeping-chamber, and Sherkan slept in his place till the morning. As soon as he awoke, the damsels came to him with tambourines and other instruments of music, according to their wont, and kissing the earth before him, said to him, "In the name of God, deign to

[1] Jemil ben Mamer, another celebrated Arabian poet and lover, a friend and contemporary of Kutheiyir.
[2] A person who dies for love is esteemed a martyr by the Arabs.

follow us; for our mistress bids thee to her." So he rose and accompanied the girls, who escorted him, smiting on tabrets and other instruments of music, to another saloon, bigger than the first and decorated with pictures and figures of birds and beasts, passing description. Sherkan wondered at the fashion of the place and repeated the following verses:

My rival plucks, of the fruits of the necklets branching wide, Pearls of the breasts in gold enchased and beautified
With running fountains of liquid silver in streams And cheeks of roses and beryl, side by side.
It seemeth, indeed, as if the violet's colour vied With the sombre blue of the eyes, with antimony dyed.[1]

When the lady saw Sherkan, she came to meet him, and taking him by the hand, said to him, "O son of King Omar ben Ennuman, hast thou any skill in the game of chess?" "Yes," replied he; "but do not thou be as says the poet." And he repeated the following verses:

I speak, and passion, the while, folds and unfolds me aye; But a draught of the honey of love my spirit's thirst could stay.
I sit at the chess with her I love, and she plays with me, With white and with black; but this contenteth me no way.
Meseemeth as if the king were set in the place of the rook And sought with the rival queens a bout of the game to play.
And if I looked in her eyes, to spy the drift of her moves, The amorous grace of her glance would doom me to death straightway.

Then she brought the chess-board and played with him; but instead of looking at her moves, he looked at her face and set the knight in the place of the elephant[2] and the elephant in the place of the knight. She laughed and said to him, "If this be thy play, thou knowest nothing of the game." "This is only the first bout," replied he; "take no count of it." She beat him, and he replaced the pieces

[1] I suspect these verses to have been introduced in error by some copyist. They appear utterly meaningless in this context.
[2] The bishop.

and played again with her; but she beat him a second time and a third and a fourth and a fifth. So she turned to him and said, "Thou art beaten in everything." "O my lady," answered he, "how should one not be beaten, who plays with the like of thee?" Then she called for food, and they ate and washed their hands, after which the maids brought wine, and they drank. Presently, the lady took the dulcimer, for she was skilled to play thereon, and sang to it the following verses:

Fortune is still on the shift, now gladness and now woe; I liken it to the tide, in its ceaseless ebb and flow.
So drink, if thou have the power, whilst it is yet serene, Lest it at unawares depart, and thou not know.

They gave not over carousing till nightfall, and this day was pleasanter than the first. When the night came, the lady went to her sleeping-chamber, leaving Sherkan with the damsels. So he threw himself on the ground and slept till the morning, when the damsels came to him with tambourines and other musical instruments, according to their wont. When he saw them, he sat up; and they took him and carried him to their mistress, who came to meet him and taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her side. Then she asked him how he had passed the night, to which he replied by wishing her long life; and she took the lute and sang the following verses:

Incline not to parting, I pray, For bitter its taste is alway.
The sun at his setting grows pale, To think he must part from the day.

Hardly had she made an end of singing, when there arose of a sudden a great clamour, and a crowd of men and knights rushed into the place, with naked swords gleaming in their hands, crying out in the Greek tongue, "Thou hast fallen into our hands, O Sherkan! Be sure of death!" When he heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, she hath laid a trap for me and held me in play,

till her men should come! These are the knights with whom she threatened me: but it is I who have thrown myself into this peril." Then he turned to the lady to reproach her, but saw that she had changed colour; and she sprang to her feet and said to the new comers, "Who are ye?" "O noble princess and unpeered pearl," replied the knight their chief, "dost thou know who is this man with thee?" "Not I," answered she. "Who is he?" Quoth the knight, "He is the despoiler of cities and prince of cavaliers, Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman. This is he who captures the citadels and masters the most impregnable strengths. The news of him reached King Herdoub, thy father, by the report of the old princess Dhat ed Dewahi; and thou hast done good service to the army of the Greeks by helping them to lay hands on this pestilent lion." When she heard this, she looked at the knight and said to him, "What is thy name?" And he answered, "My name is Masoureh son of thy slave Mousoureh ben Kasherdeh, chief of the nobles." Quoth she, "And how camest thou in to me without my leave?" "O our lady," replied he, "when I came to the gate, neither chamberlain nor porter offered me any hindrance; but all the gate-keepers rose and forewent me as of wont; though, when others come, they leave them standing at the gate, whilst they ask leave for them to enter. But this is no time for long talk, for the King awaits our return to him with this prince, who is the mainstay of the army of Islam, that he may kill him and that his troops may depart whence they came, without our having the toil of fighting them." "Thou sayest an ill thing," rejoined the princess. "Verily, the Lady Dhat ed Dewahi lied; and she hath avouched a vain thing, of which she knows not the truth; for by the virtue of the Messiah, this man who is with me is not Sherkan, nor is he a captive, but a stranger, who came to us, seeking hospitality, and we received him as a guest. So, even were

we assured that this was Sherkan and did we know that it was he beyond doubt, it would suit ill with my honour that I should deliver into your hands one who hath come under my safeguard. Betray me not, therefore, in the person of my guest, neither bring me into ill repute among men; but return to the King my father and kiss the earth before him and tell him that the case is not according to the report of the Lady Dhat ed Dewahi." "O Abrizeh," replied the knight Masoureh, "I cannot go back to the King without his enemy." Quoth she (and indeed she was angry), "Out on thee! Return to him with the answer, and no blame shall fall on thee." But he said, "I will not return without him." At this her colour changed and she exclaimed, "A truce to talk and idle words; for of a verity this man would not have come in to us, except he were assured that he could of himself make head against a hundred horse; and if I said to him, 'Art thou Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman?' he would answer, 'Yes.' Nathless, it is not in your power to hinder him; for if ye beset him, he will not turn back from you, till he have slain all that are in the place. Behold, he is with me and I will bring him before you, with his sword and buckler in his hands." "If I be safe from thy wrath," replied Masoureh, "I am not safe from that of thy father, and when I see him, I shall sign to the knights to take him prisoner, and we will carry him, bound and abject, to the King." When she heard this, she said, "The thing shall not pass thus, for it would be a disgrace. This man is but one and ye are a hundred. So, an ye be minded to attack him, come out against him, one after one, that it may appear to the King which is the valiant amongst you." "By the Messiah," rejoined Masoureh, "thou sayest sooth, and none but I shall go out against him first!" Then she said, "Wait till I go to him and tell him and hear what he says. If he consent, it is well: but if he refuse, ye shall not anywise come at

Night I.

him, for I and my damsels and all that are in the house will be his ransom." So she went to Sherkan and told him the case, whereat he smiled and knew that she had not betrayed him, but that the matter had been bruited abroad, till it came to the King, against her wish. So he laid all the blame on himself, saying, "How came I to venture myself in the country of the Greeks?" Then he said to her, "Indeed, to let them tilt against me, one by one, were to lay on them a burden more than they can bear. Will they not come out against me, ten by ten?" "That were knavery and oppression," replied she. "One man is a match for another." When he heard this, he sprang to his feet and made towards them, with his sword and battle-gear; and Masoureh also sprang up and rushed on him. Sherkan met him like a lion and smote him with his sword upon the shoulder, that the blade came out gleaming from his back and vitals. When the princess saw this, Sherkan's prowess was magnified in her eyes and she knew that she had not overthrown him by her strength, but by her beauty and grace. So she turned to the knights and said to them, "Avenge your chief!" Thereupon out came the slain man's brother, a fierce warrior, and rushed upon Sherkan, who delayed not, but smote him on the shoulders, and the sword came out, gleaming, from his vitals. Then cried the princess, "O servants of the Messiah, avenge your comrades!" So they ceased not to come out against him, one by one, and he plied them with the sword, till he had slain fifty knights, whilst the princess looked on. And God cast terror into the hearts of those who were left, so that they held back and dared not meet him in single combat, but rushed on him all at once; and he drove at them with a heart firmer than a rock and smote them as the thresher smiteth the corn, till he had driven sense and life forth of them. Then the princess cried out to her damsels, saying, "Who is left in the monastery?"

"None but the porters," replied they; whereupon she went up to Sherkan and embraced him, and he returned with her to the saloon, after he had made an end of the mellay. Now there remained a few of the knights hidden in the cells of the convent, and when Abrizeh saw this, she rose and going away, returned, clad in a strait-ringed coat of mail and holding in her hand a scimitar of Indian steel. And she said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, I will not be grudging of myself for my guest nor will I abandon him, though for this I abide a reproach in the land of the Greeks!" Then she counted the dead and found that he had slain fourscore of the knights and other twenty had taken flight. When she saw how he had dealt with them, she said to him, "God bless thee, O Sherkan! The cavaliers may well glory in the like of thee!" Then he rose and wiping his sword of the blood of the slain, repeated the following verses:

How often in battle I've cleft the array And given the champions to wild beasts a prey!
Ask all men what happened to me and to them, When I drove through the ranks on the sword-smiting day.
I left all their lions of war overthrown: On the sun-scorchéd sands of those countries they lay.

When he had finished, the princess came up to him and kissed his hand; then she put off her coat of mail, and he said to her, "O my lady, wherefore didst thou don that coat of mail and bare thy sabre?" "It was of my care for thee against yonder wretches," replied she. Then she called the porters and said to them, "How came you to let the king's men enter my house, without my leave?" "O princess," replied they, "we have not used to need to ask leave for the king's messengers, and especially for the chief of the knights." Quoth she, "I think you were minded to dishonour me and slay my guest." And she bade Sherkan strike off their heads. He did so and she

said to the rest of her servants, "Indeed, they deserved more than that." Then turning to Sherkan, she said to him, "Now that there hath become manifest to thee what was hidden, I will tell thee my story. Know, then, that I am the daughter of Herdoub, King of Roum; my name is Abrizeh and the old woman called Dhat ed Dewahi is my grandmother, my father's mother. She it was who told my father of thee, and she will certainly cast about to ruin me, especially as thou hast slain my father's men and it is noised abroad that I have made common cause with the Muslims. Wherefore it were wiser that I should leave dwelling here, what while Dhat ed Dewahi is behind me; but I claim of thee the like kindness and courtesy I have shown thee, for my father and I are now become at odds on thine account. So do not thou omit to do aught that I shall say to thee, for indeed all this hath fallen out through thee." At this, Sherkan was transported for joy and his breast dilated, and he said, "By Allah, none shall come at thee, whilst my life lasts in my body! But canst thou endure the parting from thy father and thy folk?" "Yes," answered she. So Sherkan swore to her and they made a covenant of this. Then said she, "Now my heart is at ease; but there is one other condition I must exact of thee." "What is that?" asked Sherkan. "It is," replied she, "that thou return with thy troops to thine own country." "O my lady," said he, "my father, King Omar ben Ennuman, sent me to make war upon thy father, on account of the treasure he took from the King of Constantinople, and amongst the rest three great jewels, rich in happy properties." "Reassure thyself," answered she; "I will tell thee the truth of the matter and the cause of the feud between us and the King of Constantinople. Know that we have a festival called the Festival of the Monastery, for which each year the kings' daughters of various countries and the wives and

daughters of the notables and merchants resort to a certain monastery and abide there seven days. I was wont to resort thither with the rest; but when there befell hostility between us, my father forbade me to be present at the festival for the space of seven years. One year, it chanced that amongst the young ladies who resorted to the Festival as of wont, there came the King's daughter of Constantinople, a handsome girl called Sufiyeh. They tarried at the monastery six days, and on the seventh, the folk went away; but Sufiyeh said, 'I will not return to Constantinople, but by sea.' So they fitted her out a ship, in which she embarked, she and her suite, and put out to sea; but as they sailed, a contrary wind caught them and drove the ship from her course, till, as fate and providence would have it, she fell in with a ship of the Christians from the Island of Camphor, with a crew of five hundred armed Franks, who had been cruising about for some time. When they sighted the sails of the ship in which were Sufiyeh and her maidens, they gave chase in all haste and coming up with her before long, threw grapnels on board and made fast to her. Then they made all sail for their own island and were but a little distant from it, when the wind veered and rent their sails and cast them on to a reef on our coast. Thereupon we sallied forth on them, and looking on them as booty driven to us by fate, slew the men and made prize of the ships, in which we found the treasures and rarities in question and forty damsels, amongst whom was Sufiyeh. We carried the damsels to my father, not knowing that the King's daughter of Constantinople was among them, and he chose out ten of them, including Sufiyeh, for himself, and divided the rest among his courtiers. Then he set apart Sufiyeh and four other girls and sent them to thy father, King Omar ben Ennuman, together with other presents, such as cloth and stuffs of wool and Grecian silks. Thy father accepted them and

chose out from amongst the five girls the princess Sufiyeh, daughter of King Afridoun; nor did we hear aught more of the matter till the beginning of this year, when King Afridoun wrote to my father in terms which it befits not to repeat, reproaching and menacing him and saying to him, 'Two years ago, there fell into thy hands a ship of ours, that had been seized by a company of Frankish corsairs and in which was my daughter Sufiyeh, attended by near threescore damsels. Yet thou sentest none to tell me of this and I could not make the case public, lest disgrace fall on my repute among the kings, by reason of my daughter's dishonour. So I kept the affair secret till this year, when I communicated with certain of the Frankish pirates and sought news of my daughter from the kings of the islands. They replied, "By Allah, we carried her not forth of thy realm, but we have heard that King Herdoub took her from certain pirates." And they told me all that had befallen her. So now, except thou wish to be at feud with me and design to disgrace me and dishonour my daughter, thou wilt forthright, as soon as this letter reaches thee, send my daughter back to me. But if thou pay no heed to my letter and disobey my commandment, I will assuredly requite thee thy foul dealing and the baseness of thine acts.' When my father read this letter, it was grievous to him and he regretted not having known that Sufiyeh, King Afridoun's daughter, was amongst the captured damsels, that he might have sent her back to her father; and he was perplexed about the affair, for that, after the lapse of so long a time, he could not send to King Omar ben Ennuman and demand her back from him, the more that he had lately heard that God had vouchsafed him children by this very Sufiyeh. So when we considered the matter, we knew that this letter was none other than a great calamity; and nothing would serve but that my father must write an answer to it,

making his excuses to King Afridoun and swearing to him that he knew not that his daughter was among the girls in the ship and setting forth how he had sent her to King Omar ben Ennuman and God had vouchsafed him children by her. When my father's reply reached King Afridoun, he rose and sat down and roared and foamed at the mouth, exclaiming, 'What! Shall he make prize of my daughter and she become a slave-girl and be passed from hand to hand and sent for a gift to kings, and they lie with her without a contract? By the virtue of the Messiah and the true faith, I will not desist till I have taken my revenge for this and wiped out my disgrace; and indeed I will do a deed that the chroniclers shall chronicle after me!' So he took patience till he had devised a plot and laid great snares, when he sent an embassy to thy father King Omar, to tell him that which thou hast heard; so that thy father equipped thee and an army with thee and sent thee to him, Afridoun's object being to lay hold of thee and thine army with thee. As for the three jewels, of which he told thy father, he spoke not the truth of them; for they were with Sufiyeh and my father took them from her, when she fell into his hands, she and her maidens, and gave them to me, and they are now with me. So go thou to thy troops and turn them back, ere they fare farther into the land of the Franks and the country of the Greeks; for as soon as you are come far enough into the inward of the country, they will stop the roads upon you, and there will be no escape for you from their hands till the day of rewards and punishments. I know that thy troops are still where thou leftest them, because thou didst order them to halt there three days; and they have missed thee all this time and know not what to do." When Sherkan heard her words, he was absent awhile in thought; then he kissed Abrizeh's hand and said, "Praise be to God who hath bestowed thee on me and appointed thee to be

the cause of my salvation and that of those who are with me! But it is grievous to me to part from thee and I know not what will become of thee after my departure." Quoth she, "Go now to thy troops and lead them back, whilst ye are yet near your own country. If the ambassadors are still with them, lay hands on them, that the case may be made manifest to thee, and after three days I will rejoin thee and we will all enter Baghdad together; but forget thou not the compact between us." Then she rose to bid him farewell and assuage the fire of longing: so she took leave of him and embraced him and wept sore; whereupon passion and desire were sore upon him and he also wept and repeated the following verses:

I bade her farewell, whilst my right hand was wiping my eyes, And still with my left, the while, I held her in close embrace.
Then, "Fearest thou not disgrace?" quoth she; and I answered, "No. Sure, on the parting-day, for lovers there's no disgrace!"

Then Sherkan left her and went without the monastery, where they brought him his horse and he mounted and rode down the bank of the stream, till he came to the bridge, and crossing it, entered the forest. As soon as he was clear of the trees and came to the open country, he was aware of three horsemen pricking towards him. So he drew his sword and rode on cautiously: but as they drew near, he recognized them and behold, it was the Vizier Dendan and two of his officers. When they saw him and knew him, they dismounted and saluting him, asked the reason of his absence, whereupon he told them all that had passed between him and the princess Abrizeh from first to last. The Vizier returned thanks to God the Most High for his safety and said, "Let us at once depart hence, for the ambassadors that were with us are gone to inform their king of our arrival, and belike he will hasten to fall on us and seize us." So they rode on in haste, till they came to the camp, when Sherkan commanded to

depart forthright, and the army set out and journeyed by forced marches for five days, at the end of which time they alighted in a thickly wooded valley, where they rested awhile. Then they set out again and fared on till they came to the frontiers of their own country. Here they felt themselves in safety and halted to rest; and the country people came out to them with guest-gifts and victual and fodder for the cattle. They lay there and rested two days; after which Sherkan bade the Vizier Dendan fare forward to Baghdad with his troops, and he did so. But Sherkan himself abode behind with a hundred horse, till the rest of the army had been gone a day, when he mounted, he and his men, and fared on two parasangs' space, till they came to a narrow pass between two mountains and behold, there arose a great cloud of dust in their front. So they halted their horses awhile, till the dust lifted and discovered a hundred cavaliers, as they were fierce lions, cased in complete steel. As soon as they came within earshot of Sherkan and his men, they cried out to them, saying, "By John and Mary, we have gotten what we hoped! We have been following you by forced marches, night and day, till we forewent you in this place. So alight and lay down your arms and yield yourselves, that we may grant you your lives." When Sherkan heard this, his eyes rolled and his cheeks flushed and he said, "O dogs of Nazarenes, how dare ye enter our country and set foot on our earth? And doth not this suffice you, but ye must adventure yourselves and give us such words as these? Do ye think to escape out of our hands and return to your country?" Then he cried out to his hundred horse, saying, "Up and at these dogs, for they are even as you in number!" So saying, he drew his sword and drove at them, without further parley, he and his hundred men. The Franks received them with hearts stouter than stone, and they met, man to man. Then fell champion upon champion and there befell

a sore strife and great was the terror and the roar of the battle; nor did they leave jousting and foining and smiting with swords, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness; when they drew apart, and Sherkan mustered his men and found them all unhurt, save four who were slightly wounded. Then said he to them, "By Allah, all my life I have waded in the surging sea of war and battle, but never saw I any so firm and stout in sword-play and shock of men as these warriors!" "Know, O King," replied they, "that there is among them a Frank cavalier, who is their leader, and indeed he is a man of valour and his strokes are terrible: but, by Allah, he spares us, great and small; for whoso falls into his hands, he lets him go and forbears to slay him. By Allah, an he would, he could kill us all!" When Sherkan heard this, he was confounded and said, "To-morrow, we will draw out and defy them to single combat, for we are a hundred to their hundred; and we will seek help against them from the Lord of the heavens." Meanwhile, the Franks came to their leader and said to him, "Of a truth, we have not come by our desire of these this day." "To-morrow," quoth he, "we will draw out and joust against them, one by one." So they passed the night in this mind, and both camps kept watch till the morning. As soon as God the Most High brought on the day, King Sherkan mounted, with his hundred horse, and they betook themselves to the field, where they found the Franks ranged in battle array, and Sherkan said to his men, "Verily, our enemies are of the same mind as we; so up and at them briskly!" Then came forth a herald of the Franks and cried out, saying, "Let there be no fighting betwixt us to-day, except by way of single combat, a champion of yours against one of ours!" Thereupon one of Sherkan's men came out from the ranks and spurring between the two parties, cried out, "Who is for jousting? Who is for fighting? Let no laggard nor weak-

ling come out against me to-day!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there sallied forth to him a Frankish horseman, armed cap-a-pie and clad in cloth of gold, riding on a gray horse, and he had no hair on his cheeks. He drove his horse into the midst of the field and the two champions fell to cutting and thrusting, nor was it long before the Frank smote the Muslim with his lance and unhorsing him, took him prisoner and bore him off in triumph. At this, his comrades rejoiced and forbidding him to go out again, sent forth another to the field, to whom sallied out a second Muslim, the brother of the first. The two drove at each other and fought for a little, till the Frank ran at the Muslim and throwing him off his guard by a feint, smote him with the butt end of his spear and unhorsed him and took him prisoner. After this fashion, the Muslims ceased not to come forth and the Franks to unhorse them and take them prisoner, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Now they had captured twenty cavaliers of the Muslims, and when Sherkan saw this, it was grievous to him, and he mustered his men and said to them, "What is this thing that hath befallen us? To-morrow morning, I myself will go out into the field and seek to joust with their chief and learn his reason for entering our country and warn him against fighting. If he persist, we will do battle with him, and if he proffer peace, we will make peace with him." They passed the night thus, and when God brought on the day, both parties mounted and drew out in battle array. Then Sherkan was about to sally forth, when behold, more than half of the Franks dismounted and marched on foot, before one of them, who was mounted, to the midst of the field. Sherkan looked at this cavalier and behold, he was their chief. He was clad in a tunic of blue satin and a close-ringed shirt of mail; his face was as the full moon at its rising and he had no hair on his cheeks. In his

hand he held a sword of Indian steel, and he was mounted on a black horse with a white star, like a dirhem, on his forehead. He spurred into the midst of the field and signing to the Muslims, cried out with fluent speech in the Arabic tongue, saying, "Ho, Sherkan! Ho, son of Omar ben Ennuman, thou that stormest the citadels and layest waste the lands, up and out to joust and battle with him who halves the field with thee! Thou art prince of thy people and I am prince of mine; and whoso hath the upper hand, the other's men shall come under his sway." Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when out came Sherkan, with a heart full of wrath, and spurring his horse into the midst of the field, drove like an angry lion at the Frank, who awaited him with calm and steadfastness and met him as a champion should. Then they fell to cutting and thrusting, nor did they cease to wheel and turn and give and take, as they were two mountains clashing together or two seas breaking one against the other, till the day departed and the night brought on the darkness, when they drew apart and returned, each to his people. As soon as Sherkan reached his comrades, he said to them, "Never in my life saw I the like of this cavalier; and he has one fashion I never yet beheld in any. It is that, when he has a chance of dealing his adversary a deadly blow, he reverses his lance and smites him with the butt. Of a truth, I know not what will be the issue between him and me; but I would we had in our army his like and the like of his men." Then he passed the night in sleep, and when it was morning, the Frank spurred out to the mid-field, where Sherkan met him, and they fell to fighting and circling one about the other, whilst all necks were stretched out to look at them; nor did they cease from battle and sword play and thrusting with spears, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness, when they drew asunder and returned each to his own camp. Then each related

to his comrades what had befallen him with his adversary, and the Frank said to his men, "To-morrow shall decide the matter." So they both passed the night in sleep, and as soon as it was day, they mounted and drove at each other and ceased not to fight till the middle of the day. Then the Frank made a shift, first spurring his horse and then checking him with the bridle, so that he stumbled and threw him; whereupon Sherkan fell on him and was about to smite him with his sword and make an end of the long strife, when the Frank cried out, "O Sherkan, this is not the fashion of champions! It is only the beaten[1] who deal thus with women." When Sherkan heard this, he raised his eyes to the Frank's face and looking straitly at him, knew him for none other than the princess Abrizeh, whereupon he threw the sword from his hand and kissing the earth before her, said to her, "What moved thee to do this thing?" Quoth she, "I was minded to prove thee in the field and try thy stoutness in battle. These that are with me are all of them my women, and they are all maids; yet have they overcome thy horsemen in fair fight; and had not my horse stumbled with me, thou shouldst have seen my strength and prowess." Sherkan smiled at her speech and said, "Praised be God for safety and for my reunion with thee, O queen of the age!" Then she cried out to her damsels to loose the prisoners and dismount. They did as she bade and came and kissed the earth before her and Sherkan, who said to them, "It is the like of you that kings treasure up against the hour of need." Then he signed to his comrades to salute the princess; so they dismounted all and kissed the earth before her, for they knew the story. After this, the whole two hundred mounted and rode day and night for six days' space, till they drew near to Baghdad, when they halted and Sherkan made Abrizeh and her com-

[1] Apparently referring in jest to her speech to him (see *supra*, p. 27), "Thou art beaten in everything."

Night panions put off their male attire and don the dress of the
li. women of the Greeks. Then he despatched a company of his men to Baghdad to acquaint his father with his arrival in company with the princess Abrizeh, daughter of King Herdoub, to the intent that he might send some one to meet her. They passed the night in that place, and when God the Most High brought on the day, Sherkan and his company took horse and fared on towards the city. On the way, they met the Vizier Dendan, who had come out with a thousand horse, by commandment of King Omar, to do honour to the princess Abrizeh and to Sherkan. When they drew near, the Vizier and his company dismounted and kissed the earth before the prince and princess, then mounted again and escorted them, till they reached the city and came to the palace. Sherkan went in to his father, who rose and embraced him and questioned him of what had happened. So he told him all that had befallen him, including what the princess Abrizeh had told him and what had passed between them and how she had left her father and her kingdom and had chosen to depart and take up her abode with them. And he said to his father, "Indeed, the King of Constantinople had plotted to do us a mischief, because of his daughter Sufiyeh, for that the King of Cæsarea had made known to him her history and the manner of her being made a gift to thee, he not knowing her to be King Afridoun's daughter; else would he have restored her to her father. And of a verity, we were only saved from these perils by the Lady Abrizeh, and never saw I a more valiant than she!" And he went on to tell his father of the wrestling and the jousting from beginning to end. When King Omar heard his son's story, Abrizeh was exalted in his eyes, and he longed to see her and sent Sherkan to fetch her. So Sherkan went out to her and said, "The king calls for thee." She replied, "I hear and obey;" and he took her and brought

her in to his father, who was seated on his throne, attended only by the eunuchs, having dismissed his courtiers and officers. The princess entered and kissing the ground before him, saluted him in choice terms. He was amazed at her fluent speech and thanked her for her dealing with his son Sherkan and bade her be seated. So she sat down and uncovered her face, which when the king saw, his reason fled and he made her draw near and showed her especial favour, appointing her a palace for herself and her damsels and assigning them due allowances. Then he asked her of the three jewels aforesaid, and she replied, "O King of the age, they are with me." So saying, she rose and going to her lodging, opened her baggage and brought out a box, from which she took a casket of gold. She opened the casket and taking out the three jewels, kissed them and gave them to the King and went away, taking his heart with her. Then the King sent for his son Sherkan and gave him one of the three jewels. Sherkan enquired of the other two, and the king replied, "O my son, I mean to give one to thy brother Zoulmekan and the other to thy sister Nuzhet ez Zeman." When Sherkan heard that he had a brother (for up to that time he had only known of his sister) he turned to his father and said to him, "O King, hast thou a son other than myself?" "Yes," answered Omar, "and he is now six years old." And he told him that his name was Zoulmekan and that he and Nuzhet ez Zeman were twins, born at a birth. This news was grievous to Sherkan, but he hid his chagrin and said, "The blessing of God the Most High be upon them!" And he threw the jewel from his hand and shook the dust off his clothes. Quoth his father, "What made thee change colour, when I told thee of this, seeing that the kingdom is assured to thee after me? For, verily, the troops have sworn to thee and the Amirs and grandees have taken the oath of succession to thee; and this one

of the three jewels is thine." At this, Sherkan bowed his head and was ashamed to bandy words with his father: so he accepted the jewel and went away, knowing not what to do for excess of anger, and stayed not till he reached the princess Abrizeh's palace. When she saw him, she rose to meet him and thanked him for what he had done and called down blessings on him and his father. Then she sat down and made him sit by her side. After a while, she saw anger in his face and questioned him, whereupon he told her that God had vouchsafed his father two children, a boy and a girl, by Sufiyeh, and that he had named the boy Zoulmekan and the girl Nuzhet ez Zeman. "He has given me one of the jewels," continued he, "and kept the other two for them. I knew not of Zoulmekan's birth till this day, and he is now six years old. So when I learnt this, wrath possessed me and I threw down the jewel; and I tell thee the reason of my anger and hide nothing from thee. But I fear lest the King take thee to wife, for he loves thee and I saw in him signs of desire for thee: so what wilt thou say, if he wish this?" "Know, O Sherkan," replied the princess, "that thy father has no dominion over me, nor can he take me without my consent; and if he take me by force, I will kill myself. As for the three jewels, it was not my intent that he should give them to either of his children and I had no thought but that he would lay them up with his things of price in his treasury; but now I desire of thy favour that thou make me a present of the jewel that he gave thee, if thou hast accepted it." "I hear and obey," replied Sherkan and gave her the jewel. Then said she, "Fear nothing," and talked with him awhile. Presently she said, "I fear lest my father hear that I am with you and sit not down with my loss, but do his endeavour to come at me; and to that end he may ally himself with King Afridoun and both come on thee with armies and so there befall a great

turmoil." "O my lady," replied Sherkan, "if it please thee to sojourn with us, take no thought of them, though all that be in the earth and in the ocean gather themselves together against us!" "It is well," rejoined she; "if ye entreat me well, I will tarry with you, and if ye deal evilly by me, I will depart from you." Then she bade her maidens bring food; so they set the tables, and Sherkan ate a little and went away to his own house, anxious and troubled.

Meanwhile, King Omar betook himself to the lodging of the Lady Sufiyeh, who rose to her feet, when she saw him, and stood till he was seated. Presently, his two children, Zoulmekan and Nuzhet ez Zeman, came to him, and he kissed them and hung a jewel round each one's neck, at which they rejoiced and kissed his hands. Then they went to their mother, who rejoiced in them and wished the King long life; and he said to her, "Why hast thou not told me, all this time, that thou art King Afridoun's daughter, that I might have advanced thee and enlarged thee in dignity and used thee with increase of honour and consideration?" "O King," replied Sufiyeh, "what could I desire greater or more exalted than this my standing with thee, overwhelmed as I am with thy favours and thy goodness? And God to boot hath blessed me by thee with two children, a son and a daughter." Her answer pleased the king and he set apart for her and her children a splendid palace. Moreover, he appointed for their service eunuchs and attendants and doctors and sages and astrologers and physicians and surgeons and in every way redoubled in favour and munificence towards them. Nevertheless, he was greatly occupied with love of the princess Abrizeh and burnt with desire of her night and day; and every night, he would go in to her, and talk with her and pay his court to her, but she gave him no answer, saying only, "O King of the age, I have no desire for

men at this present." When he saw that she repelled him, his passion and longing increased till, at last, when he was weary of this, he called his vizier Dendan and opening his heart to him, told him how love for the princess Abrizeh was killing him and how she refused to yield to his wishes and he could get nothing of her. Quoth the Vizier, "As soon as it is dark night, do thou take a piece of henbane, the bigness of a dinar, and go in to her and drink wine with her. When the hour of leave-taking draws near, fill a last cup and dropping the henbane in it, give it to her to drink, and she will not reach her sleeping-chamber, ere the drug take effect on her. Then do thou go in to her and take thy will of her." "Thy counsel is good," said the King, and going to his treasury, took thence a piece of concentrated henbane, which if an elephant smelt, he would sleep from year to year. He put it in his bosom and waited till some little of the night was past, when he betook himself to the palace of the princess, who rose to receive him; but he bade her sit down. So she sat down, and he by her, and he began to talk with her of drinking, whereupon she brought the table of wine and set it before him. Then she set on the drinking-vessels and lighted the candles and called for fruits and confections and sweetmeats and all that pertains to drinking. So they fell to drinking and ceased not to carouse, till drunkenness crept into the princess's head. When the King saw this, he took out the piece of henbane and holding it between his fingers, filled a cup and drank it off; then filled another cup, into which he dropped the henbane, unseen of Abrizeh, and saying, "Thy health!" presented it to her. She took it and drank it off; then rose and went to her sleeping-chamber. He waited awhile, till he was assured that the drug had taken effect on her and gotten the mastery of her senses, when he went in to her and found her lying on her back, with a lighted candle

at her head and another at her feet. She had put off her trousers, and the air raised the skirt of her shift and discovered what was between her thighs. When the King saw this, he took leave of his senses for desire and Satan tempted him and he could not master himself, but put off his trousers and fell upon her and did away her maidenhead. Then he went out and said to one of her women, by name Merjaneh, "Go in to thy mistress, for she calls for thee." So she went in to the princess and found her lying on her back, with the blood running down her thighs; whereupon she took a handkerchief and wiped away the blood and tended her mistress and lay by her that night. As soon as it was day, she washed the princess's hands and feet and bathed her face and mouth with rose-water, whereupon she sneezed and yawned and cast up the henbane. Then she revived and washed her hands and mouth and said to Merjaneh, "Tell me what has befallen me." So she told her what had passed and how she had found her, lying on her back, with the blood running down her thighs, wherefore she knew that the King had played the traitor with her and had undone her and taken his will of her. At this she was afflicted and shut herself up, saying to her damsels, "Let no one come in to me and say to all that I am ill, till I see what God will do with me." The news of her illness came to the King, and he sent her cordials and sherbet of sugar and confections. Some months passed thus, during which time the King's flame subsided and his desire for her cooled, so that he abstained from her. Now she had conceived by him, and in due time, her pregnancy appeared and her belly swelled, wherefore the world was straitened upon her and she said to her maid Merjaneh, "Know that it is not the folk who have wronged me, but I who sinned against myself in that I left my father and mother and country. Indeed, I abhor life, for my heart is broken and I have neither courage

nor strength left. I used, when I mounted my horse, to have the mastery of him, but now I have no strength to ride. If I be brought to bed in this place, I shall be dishonoured among my women, and every one in the palace will know that he has taken my maidenhead in the way of shame; and if I return to my father, with what face shall I meet him or have recourse to him? How well says the poet:

Wherewith shall I be comforted, that am of all bereft, To whom nor folk nor home nor friend nor dwelling-place is left?"

Quoth Merjaneh, "It is for thee to command; I will obey." And Abrizeh said, "I would fain leave this place privily, so that none shall know of me but thou, and return to my father and mother; for when flesh stinketh, there is nought for it but its own folk, and God shall do with me as He will." "It is well, O princess," replied Merjaneh. So she made ready in secret and waited awhile, till the King went out to hunt and Sherkan betook himself to certain of the fortresses to sojourn there awhile. Then she said to Merjaneh, "I wish to set out to-night, but how shall I do? For already I feel the pangs of labour, and if I abide other four or five days, I shall be brought to bed here, and how then can I go to my country? But this is what was written on my forehead." Then she considered awhile and said, "Look us out a man who will go with us and serve us by the way, for I have no strength to bear arms." "By Allah, O my lady," replied Merjaneh, "I know none but a black slave called Ghezban, who is one of the slaves of King Omar ben Ennuman; he is a stout fellow and keeps guard at the gate of our palace. The King appointed him to attend us, and indeed we have overwhelmed him with favours. I will go out and speak with him of the matter and promise him money and tell him that, if he have a mind to tarry with us, we will marry him to whom he will. He told me before to-day that he

had been a highwayman; so if he consent, we shall have our desire and come to our own country." "Call him, that I may talk with him," said the princess. So Merjaneh went out and said to the slave, "O Ghezban, God prosper thee, do thou fall in with what my lady says to thee." Then she took him by the hand and brought him to Abrizeh. He kissed the princess's hands and when she saw him, her heart took fright at him, but she said to herself, "Necessity is imperious," and to him, "O Ghezban, wilt thou help us against the perfidies of fortune and keep my secret, if I discover it to thee?" When the slave saw her, his heart was taken by storm and he fell in love with her forthright and could not choose but answer, "O my mistress, whatsoever thou biddest me do, I will not depart from it." Quoth she, "I would have thee take me and this my maid and saddle us two camels and two of the king's horses and set on each horse a saddle-bag of stuff and somewhat of victual, and go with us to our own country; where, if thou desire to abide with us, I will marry thee to her thou shalt choose of my damsels; or if thou prefer to return to thine own country, we will send thee thither, with as much money as will content thee." When Ghezban heard this, he rejoiced greatly and replied, "O my lady, I will serve thee faithfully and will go at once and saddle the horses." Then he went away, rejoicing and saying in himself, "I shall get my will of them; and if they will not yield to me, I will kill them and take their riches." But this his intent he kept to himself and presently returned, mounted on one horse and leading other two and two camels. He brought the horses to the princess, who mounted one and made Merjaneh mount the other, albeit she was suffering from the pains of labour and could scarce possess herself for anguish. Then they set out and journeyed night and day through the passes of the mountains, till there remained but a day's journey between

them and their own country, when the pangs of travail came upon Abrizeh and she could no longer sit her horse. So she said to Ghezban, "Set me down, for the pains of labour are upon me," and cried to Merjaneh, saying, "Do thou alight and sit down by me and deliver me." They both drew rein and dismounting from their horses, helped the princess to alight, and she aswoon for stress of pain. When Ghezban saw her on the ground, Satan entered into him and he drew his sabre and brandishing it in her face, said, "O my lady, vouchsafe me thy favours." With this, she turned to him and said, "It were a fine thing that I should yield to black slaves, after having refused kings and princes!" And she was wroth with him and said, "What words are these? Out on thee! do not talk thus in my presence and know that I will never consent to what thou sayst, though I drink the cup of death. Wait till I have cast my burden and am delivered of the after-birth, and after, if thou be able thereto, do with me as thou wilt; but, an thou leave not lewd talk at this time, I will slay myself and leave the world and be at peace from all this." And she recited the following verses:

Night lii.

O Ghezban, unhand me and let me go free! Sure fortune is heavy enough upon me.
My Lord hath forbidden me whoredom. "The fire Shall be the transgressor's last dwelling," quoth He:
So look not on me with the eye of desire, For surely to lewdness I may not agree;
And if thou respect not mine honour and God Nor put away filthy behaviour from thee,
I will call with my might on the men of my tribe And draw them all hither from upland and lea.
Were I hewn, limb from limb, with the Yemani sword, Yet never a lecher my visage should see
Of the freeborn and mighty; so how then should I Let a whoreson black slave have possession of me?

When Ghezban heard this, he was exceeding angry;

his eyes grew bloodshot and his face became of the colour of dust; his nostrils swelled, his lips protruded and the terrors of his aspect redoubled. And he repeated the following verses:

Abrizeh, have mercy nor leave me to sigh, Who am slain by the glance of thy Yemani eye![1]
My body is wasted, my patience at end, And my heart for thy cruelty racked like to die.
Thy glances with sorcery ravish all hearts; My reason is distant and passion is nigh.
Though thou drewst to thy succour the world full of troops, I'd not stir till my purpose accomplished had I.

Thereupon Abrizeh wept sore and said to him, "Out on thee, O Ghezban! How darest thou demand this of me, O son of shame and nursling of lewdness? Dost thou think all folk are alike?" When the pestilent slave heard this, he was enraged and his eyes reddened: and he came up to her and smote her with the sword on her neck and killed her. Then he made off into the mountains, driving her horse before him with the treasure. In the agonies of death, she gave birth to a son, like the moon, and Merjaneh took him and laid him by her side, after doing him the necessary offices; and behold, the child fastened to its mother's breast, and she dead. When Merjaneh saw this, she cried out grievously and rent her clothes and cast dust on her head and buffeted her cheeks, till the blood came, saying, "Alas, my mistress! Alas, the pity of it! Thou art dead by the hand of a worthless black slave, after all thy prowess!" As she sat weeping, there arose a great cloud of dust and darkened the plain; but, after awhile, it lifted and discovered a numerous army. Now this was the army of King Herdoub, the princess Abrizeh's father, who, hearing that his daughter had fled to Baghdad, she and

[1] He likens the glance of her eye to the blade of a Yemen sword,—a comparison of frequent occurrence in Arabic poetry.

her maidens, and that they were with King Omar ben Ennuman, had come out with his troops to seek tidings of her from travellers who might have seen her with King Omar at Baghdad. When he had gone a day's journey from his capital, he espied three horsemen afar off and made towards them, thinking to ask whence they came and seek news of his daughter. Now these three were his daughter and Merjaneh and Ghezban; and when the latter saw the troops drawing near, he feared for himself; so he killed Abrizeh and fled. When they came up and King Herdoub saw his daughter lying dead and Merjaneh weeping over her, he threw himself from his horse and fell down in a swoon. So all his company dismounted and pitching the tents, set up a great pavilion for the King, without which stood the grandees of the kingdom. At the sight of her lord the King, Merjaneh's tears redoubled, and when he came to himself, he questioned her and she told him all that had passed, how he that had slain his daughter was a black slave, belonging to King Omar ben Ennuman, and how the latter had dealt with the princess. When King Herdoub heard this, the world grew black in his sight and he wept sore. Then he called for a litter and laying his dead daughter therein, returned to Cæsarea and carried her into the palace. Then he went in to his mother Dhat ed Dewahi and said to her, "Shall the Muslims deal thus with my daughter? King Omar ben Ennuman despoiled her by force of her honour and after this, one of his black slaves slew her. By the Messiah, I will assuredly be revenged for her and clear away the stain from my honour! Else I shall kill myself with my own hand." And he wept passing sore. Quoth his mother, "It was none other than Merjaneh killed her, for she hated her in secret. But do not thou fret for taking revenge for thy daughter, for, by the virtue of the Messiah, I will not turn back from King Omar ben Ennuman, till I have slain him and his

sons; and I will assuredly do a deed, passing the power of wise men and champions, of which the chroniclers shall tell in all countries and places: but needs must thou obey me in all I shall direct, for he who is firmly set on aught shall surely compass his desire." "By the virtue of the Messiah," replied he, "I will not cross thee in aught that thou shalt say!" Then said she, "Bring me a number of damsels, high-bosomed maids, and summon the wise men of the time and let them teach them philosophy and the art of conversation and making verses and the rules of behaviour before kings, and let them talk with them of all manner of science and edifying knowledge. The sages must be Muslims, that they may teach the damsels the language and traditions of the Arabs, together with the history of the Khalifs and the pedigree of the Kings of Islam; and if we persevere in this for the space of four years, we shall attain our end. So possess thy soul in patience and wait; for, as one of the Arabs says, 'It is a little thing to wait forty years for one's revenge.' When we have taught the girls these things, we shall be able to do our will with our enemy, for he is a doting lover of women and has three hundred and threescore concubines, to which are now added a hundred of the flower of thy damsels, that were with thy late daughter. So, as soon as we have made an end of their education, I will take them and set out with them." When the King heard his mother's words, he rejoiced and came up to her and kissed her head. Then he rose at once and despatched messengers and couriers to the ends of the earth, to fetch him Muslim sages. So they betook them to distant lands and brought him thence the sages and doctors whom he sought. When they were before him, he made much of them and bestowed on them dresses of honour, appointing them stipends and allowances and promising them much money, whenas they should have taught the damsels. Then he committed the

Night liii.

latter to their charge, enjoining them to instruct them in all manner of knowledge, sacred and profane, and all polite accomplishments; and they set themselves to do his bidding.

As for King Omar ben Ennuman, when he returned from hunting, he sought the princess Abrizeh, but found her not nor could any give him news of her. This was grievous to him and he said, "How did she leave the palace, unknown of any? Had my kingdom been at stake in this, it were in a parlous case! Never again will I go a-hunting till I have sent to the gates those who shall keep good guard over them!" And he was sore vexed and heavy at heart for the loss of the princess Abrizeh. Presently, his son Sherkan returned from his journey; and he told him what had happened and how the princess had fled, whilst he was absent a-hunting, whereat he was greatly concerned. Then King Omar took to visiting his children every day and making much of them and brought them wise men and doctors, to teach them, appointing them stipends and allowances. When Sherkan saw this, he was exceeding wroth and jealous of his brother and sister, so that the signs of chagrin appeared in his face and he ceased not to languish by reason of this, till one day his father said to him, "What ails thee, that I see thee grown weak in body and pale of face?" "O my father," replied Sherkan, "every time I see thee fondle my brother and sister and make much of them, jealousy seizes on me, and I fear lest it grow on me, till I slay them and thou slay me in return. This is the reason of my weakness of body and change of colour. But now I crave of thy favour that thou give me one of thine outlying fortresses, that I may abide there the rest of my life, for as the byword says, 'It is better and fitter for me to be at a distance from my friend; for when the eye seeth not, the heart doth not grieve.'" And he bowed his head. When the King heard Sherkan's words and knew the cause of his ailment, he soothed him and said to

him, "O my son, I grant thee this. I have not in my realm a greater than the fortress of Damascus, and the government of it is thine from this time." So saying, he called his secretaries of state and bade them make out Sherkan's patent of investiture to the viceroyalty of Damascus of Syria. Then he equipped Sherkan and formally invested him with the office and gave him his final instructions, enjoining him to policy and good government; and the prince took leave of his father and the grandees and officers of state and set out for his government, taking with him the Vizier Dendan. When he arrived at Damascus, the townspeople beat the drums and blew the trumpets and decorated the city and came out to meet him in great state, whilst all the notables and grandees walked in procession, each according to his rank.

Soon after Sherkan's departure, the governors of King Omar's children presented themselves before him and said to him, "O our lord, thy children's education is now complete and they are versed in all polite accomplishments and in the rules of manners and etiquette." At this the King rejoiced with an exceeding joy and conferred bountiful largesse upon the wise men, seeing Zoulmekan grown up and flourishing and skilled in horsemanship. The prince had now reached the age of fourteen and occupied himself with piety and devout exercises, loving the poor and wise men and the students of the Koran, so that all the people of Baghdad loved him, men and women. One day, the procession of the Mehmil[1] of Irak passed round

[1] *Mehmil.* A decorated framework or litter borne by a camel, sent as an emblem of royalty with the caravan of pilgrims to Mecca, by way of honour to the occasion and to the sacred object of the pilgrimage, much as great people send their empty carriages to attend the funeral of a person for whose memory they wish to show their respect. The introduction of the Mehmil here is another of the many anachronisms of the story, as the custom is said not to have come into use till a much later period.

Baghdad, previously to the departure of the pilgrimage to the holy places[1] and tomb of the Prophet.[2] When Zoulmekan saw the procession, he was seized with longing to go on the pilgrimage; so he went in to his father and said to him, "I come to ask thy leave to make the pilgrimage." But his father forbade him, saying, "Wait till next year, and I will go with thee." When Zoulmekan saw that the fulfilment of his desire was postponed, he betook himself to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, whom he found standing at prayer. As soon as she had made an end of her devotions, he said to her, "I am dying of desire to see the Holy House of God at Mecca and to visit the Prophet's tomb. I asked my father's leave, but he forbade me: so I mean to take somewhat of money and set out privily on the pilgrimage, without his knowledge." "I conjure thee by Allah," exclaimed she, "to take me with thee and that thou forbid me not to visit the tomb of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve!" And he answered, "As soon as it is dark night, do thou leave this place, without telling any, and come to me." Accordingly, she waited till the middle of the night, when she donned a man's habit and went to the gate of the palace, where she found Zoulmekan with camels ready harnessed. So they mounted and riding after the caravan, mingled with the Irak pilgrims, and God decreed them a prosperous journey, so that they entered Mecca the Holy in safety, standing upon Arafat and performing the various rites of the pilgrimage. Then they paid a visit to the tomb of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) and thought to return with the pilgrims to their native land; but Zoulmekan said to his sister, "O my sister, it is in my mind to visit Jerusalem and the tomb of Abraham the friend of God (on whom be peace)." "I also desire to do this," replied she. So they agreed upon this, and he went out and took passage for himself and her and

[1] Mecca. [2] Medina.

they made ready and set out with a company of pilgrims bound for Jerusalem. That very night she fell sick of an ague and was grievously ill, but presently recovered, after which her brother also sickened. She tended him during the journey, but the fever increased on him and he grew weaker and weaker, till they arrived at Jerusalem, where they alighted at a khan and hired a lodging there. Here they abode some time, whilst Zoulmekan's weakness increased on him, till he was wasted with sickness and became delirious. At this, his sister was greatly afflicted and exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! It is He who hath decreed this." They sojourned there awhile, his sickness ever increasing and she tending him, till all their money was spent and she had not so much as a dirhem left. Then she sent a servant of the khan to the market, to sell some of her clothes, and spent the price upon her brother; and so she sold all she had, piece by piece, till she had nothing left but an old rug; whereupon she wept and exclaimed, "God is the Orderer of the past and the future!" Presently, her brother said to her, "O my sister, I feel recovery drawing near and I long for a little roast meat." "O my brother," replied she, "I am ashamed to beg; but tomorrow I will enter some rich man's house and serve him and earn somewhat for our living." Then she bethought herself awhile and said, "It is hard to me to leave thee and thou in this state, but I must perforce go." "God forbid!" rejoined he. "Thou wilt be put to shame; but there is no power and no virtue but in God!" And he wept and she wept too. Then she said, "O my brother, we are strangers and this whole year have we dwelt here, yet none hath knocked at our door. Shall we then die of hunger? I know no resource but that I go out and earn somewhat to keep us alive, till thou recover from thy sickness; when we will return to our native land." She sat

weeping with him awhile, after which she rose and veiling her head with a camel-cloth, which the owner had forgotten with them, embraced her brother and went forth, weeping and knowing not whither she should go. Zoulmekan abode, awaiting her return, till the evening; but she came not, and the night passed and the morning came, but still she returned not; and so two days went by. At this he was greatly troubled and his heart fluttered for her, and hunger was sore upon him. At last he left the chamber and calling the servant of the inn, bade him carry him to the bazaar. So he carried him to the market and laid him down there; and the people of Jerusalem came round him and were moved to tears at his condition. He signed to them for somewhat to eat; so they took money from some of the merchants and bought food and fed him therewith; after which they carried him to a shop, where they laid him on a mat of palm-leaves and set a vessel of water at his head. At nightfall, they all went away, sore concerned for him, and in the middle of the night, he called to mind his sister, and his sickness redoubled on him, so that he abstained from eating and drinking and became insensible. When the people of the market saw him thus, they took thirty dirhems for him from the merchants and hiring a camel, said to the driver, "Carry this sick man to Damascus and leave him at the hospital; peradventure he may be cured and recover his health." "On my head be it!" replied he; but he said to himself, "How shall I take this sick man to Damascus, and he nigh upon death?" So he carried him away and hid with him till the night, when he threw him down on the fuel-heap in the stokehole of a bath and went his way. In the morning, the stoker of the bath came to his work and finding Zoulmekan cast on his back on the fuel-heap, exclaimed, "Could they find no other place in which to throw this dead man?" So saying, he gave him a push with his foot, and he moved;

whereupon quoth the stoker, "This is some one who has eaten hashish and thrown himself down at hazard." Then he looked at him and saw that he had no hair on his face and was endowed with grace and comeliness; so he took pity on him and knew that he was sick and a stranger. "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" said he. "I have sinned against this youth; for indeed the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) enjoins hospitality to strangers." Then he lifted him up and carrying him to his own house, committed him to his wife and bade her tend him. So she spread him a bed and laid a cushion under his head, then heated water and washed his hands and feet and face. Meanwhile, the stoker went to the market and buying rose-water and sherbet of sugar, sprinkled Zoulmekan's face with the one and gave him to drink of the other. Then he fetched a clean shirt and put it on him. With this, Zoulmekan scented the breeze of recovery and life returned to him; and he sat up and leant against the pillow. At this the stoker rejoiced and exclaimed, "O my God, I beseech Thee, by Thy hidden mysteries, make the salvation of this youth to be at my hands!" And he nursed him assiduously for three days, giving him to drink of sherbet of sugar and willow-flower water and rose-water and doing him all manner of service and kindness, till health began to return to his body and he opened his eyes and sat up. Presently the stoker came in and seeing him sitting up and showing signs of amendment, said to him, "How dost thou now, O my son?" "Thanks be to God," replied Zoulmekan, "I am well and like to recover, if so He please." The stoker praised the Lord of All for this and going to the market, bought ten chickens, which he carried to his wife and said to her, "Kill two of these for him every day, one in the morning and the other at nightfall." So she rose and killed a fowl, then boiling it, brought it to him and fed him with the flesh and gave him the

Night liv.

broth to drink. When he had done eating, she brought hot water and he washed his hands and lay back upon the pillow; whereupon she covered him up and he slept till the time of afternoon prayer. Then she killed another fowl and boiled it; after which she cut it up and bringing it to Zoulmekan, said, "Eat, O my son!" Presently, her husband entered and seeing her feeding him, sat down at his head and said to him, "How is it with thee now, O my son?" "Thanks be to God for recovery!" replied he. "May He requite thee thy goodness to me!" At this the stoker rejoiced and going out, bought sherbet of violets and rose-water and made him drink it. Now his day's earnings at the bath were five dirhems, of which he spent every day two dirhems for Zoulmekan, one for sweet waters and sherbets and another for fowls; and he ceased not to entreat him thus kindly for a whole month, till the traces of illness ceased from him and he was quite recovered; whereupon the stoker and his wife rejoiced and the former said to him, "O my son, wilt thou go with me to the bath?" "Willingly," replied he. So the stoker went to the market and fetched an ass, on which he mounted Zoulmekan and supported him in the saddle, till they came to the bath. Then he made him alight and sit down, whilst he repaired to the market and bought lote-leaves[1] and lupin-meal,[1] with which he returned to the bath and said to Zoulmekan, "O my son, in the name of God, enter, and I will wash thy body." So they both entered the inner room of the bath, and the stoker fell to rubbing Zoulmekan's legs and was going on to wash his body with the lote-leaves and powder, when there came to them a bathman, whom the keeper of the bath had sent to Zoulmekan, and seeing the stoker rubbing and washing the latter, said to him, "This is trespassing on the keeper's rights." "By Allah," replied the stoker, "the master overwhelms us with his favours!"

[1] Oriental substitutes for soap.

Then the bathman proceeded to shave Zoulmekan's head, after which he and the stoker washed and returned to the latter's house, where he clad Zoulmekan in a shirt of fine stuff and a tunic of his own and gave him a handsome turban and girdle and wound a silken kerchief about his neck. Meanwhile the stoker's wife had killed two chickens and cooked them for him; so, as soon as Zoulmekan entered and seated himself on the couch, the stoker arose and dissolving sugar in willow-flower water, made him drink it. Then he brought the tray of food and cutting up the chickens, fed him with the meat and broth, till he was satisfied, when he washed his hands and praised God for recovery, saying to the stoker, "It is to thee, under God the Most High, that I owe my life!" "Leave this talk," replied the stoker, "and tell us the manner of thy coming to this city and whence thou art; for I see signs of gentle breeding in thy face." "Tell me first how thou camest to fall in with me," said Zoulmekan; "and after I will tell thee my story." "As for that," rejoined the stoker, "I found thee lying on the rubbish-heap, by the door of the stoke-house, as I went to my work, near the morning, and knew not who had thrown thee down there. So I carried thee home with me; and this is all I have to tell." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Glory to Him who quickens the bones, though they be rotten! Indeed, O my brother, thou hast not done good to one who is unworthy, and thou shalt reap the reward of this. But where am I now?" "In the city of Jerusalem," replied the stoker; whereupon Zoulmekan called to mind his strangerhood and his separation from his sister and wept. Then he discovered his secret to the stoker and told him his story, repeating the following verses:

They heaped up passion on my soul, beyond my strength to bear, And for their sake my heart is racked with weariness and care.
Ah, be ye pitiful to me, O cruel that ye are, For e'en my foes do pity me, since you away did fare!

Grudge not to grant unto mine eyes a passing glimpse of you, To ease the longing of my soul and lighten my despair.
I begged my heart to arm itself with patience for your loss. "Patience was never of my wont," it answered; "so forbear."

Then he redoubled his weeping, and the stoker said to him, "Weep not, but rather praise God for safety and recovery." Quoth Zoulmekan, "How far is it hence to Damascus?" "Six days' journey," answered the stoker. "Wilt thou send me thither?" asked Zoulmekan. "O my lord," replied the stoker, "how can I let thee go alone, and thou a young lad and a stranger? If thou be minded to make the journey to Damascus, I will go with thee; and if my wife will listen to me and accompany me, I will take up my abode there; for it goes to my heart to part with thee." Then said he to his wife, "Wilt thou go with me to Damascus or wilt thou abide here, whilst I bring this my lord thither and return to thee? For he is bent upon going to Damascus, and by Allah, it is hard to me to part with him, and I fear for him from the highway robbers." Quoth she, "I will go with you." And he said, "Praised be God for accord!" Then he rose and selling all his own and his wife's gear, bought a camel and hired an ass for Zoulmekan; and they set out and reached Damascus at nightfall after six days' journey. They alighted there, and the stoker went to the market and bought meat and drink. They had dwelt but five days in Damascus, when his wife sickened and after a few days' illness, was translated to the mercy of God. The stoker mourned for her with an exceeding grief, and her death was no light matter to Zoulmekan, for she had tended him assiduously and he was grown used to her. Presently, he turned to the stoker and finding him mourning, said to him, "Do not grieve, for we must all go in at this gate."[1] "God requite thee with good, O my son!" replied the stoker. "Surely He will

Night 16.

[1] *i.e.* death.

compensate us with His bounties and cause our mourning to cease. What sayst thou, O my son? Shall we walk abroad to view Damascus and cheer our spirits?" "Thy will is mine," replied Zoulmekan. So the stoker took him by the hand, and they sallied forth and walked on, till they came to the stables of the Viceroy of Damascus, where they found camels laden with chests and carpets and brocaded stuffs and saddle-horses and Bactrian camels and slaves, white and black, and folk running to and fro and a great bustle. Quoth Zoulmekan, "I wonder to whom all these camels and stuffs and servants belong!" So he asked one of the slaves, and he replied, "These are presents that the Viceroy of Damascus is sending to King Omar ben Ennuman, with the tribute of Syria." When Zoulmekan heard his father's name, his eyes filled with tears and he repeated the following verses:

Ye that are far removed from my desireful sight, Ye that within my heart are sojourners for aye,
Your comeliness is gone and life no more for me Is sweet, nor will the pains of longing pass away.
If God one day decree reunion of our loves, How long a tale of woes my tongue will have to say!

Then he wept and the stoker said to him, "O my son, thou art hardly yet recovered; so take heart and do not weep, for I fear a relapse for thee." And he applied himself to comfort him and cheer him, whilst Zoulmekan sighed and bemoaned his strangerhood and separation from his sister and his family and repeated the following verses, with tears streaming from his eyes:

Provide thee for the world to come, for needs must thou be gone; Or soon or late, for every one the lot of death is drawn.
Thy fortune in this world is but delusion and regret; Thy life in it but vanity and empty chaff and awn.
The world, indeed, is but as 'twere a traveller's halting-place, Who makes his camels kneel at eve and fares on with the dawn.

And he continued to weep and lament, whilst the stoker wept too for the loss of his wife, yet ceased not to comfort Zoulmekan till the morning. When the sun rose, he said to him, "Meseems thou yearnest for thy native land?" "Even so," replied Zoulmekan, "and I may not tarry here; so I will commend thee to God's care and set out with these people and journey with them, little by little, till I come to my country." "And I with thee," said the stoker; "for I cannot bear to part with thee. I have done thee service, and I mean to complete it by tending thee on the way." At this, Zoulmekan rejoiced and said, "May God abundantly requite thee for me!" Then the stoker went out and selling the camel, bought another ass, which he brought to Zoulmekan, saying, "This is for thee to ride by the way; and when thou art weary of riding, thou canst dismount and walk." "May God bless thee and help me to requite thee!" said Zoulmekan. "Indeed, thou hast dealt with me more lovingly than one with his brother." Then the stoker provided himself with victual for the journey, and they waited till it was dark night, when they laid their provisions and baggage on the ass and set out on their journey.

To return to Nuzhet ez Zeman. When she left her brother in the khan and went out to seek service with some one, that she might earn wherewith to buy him the roast meat he longed for, she fared on, weeping and knowing not whither to go, whilst her mind was occupied with concern for her brother and with thoughts of her family and her native land. And she implored God the Most High to do away these afflictions from them and repeated the following verses:

The shadows darken and passion stirs up my sickness amain, And longing rouses within me the old desireful pain.
The anguish of parting hath taken its sojourn in my breast, And love and longing and sorrow have maddened heart and brain.

Passion hath made me restless and longing consumes my soul And tears discover the secret that else concealed had lain.
I know of no way to ease me of sickness and care and woe, Nor can my weak endeavour reknit love's severed skein.
The fire of my heart with yearnings and longing grief is fed And for its heat, the lover to live in hell is fain.
O thou that thinkest to blame me for what betides me, enough; God knows I suffer with patience whate'er He doth ordain.
I swear I shall ne'er find solace nor be consoled for love, The oath of the children of passion, whose oaths are ne'er in vain!
Bear tidings of me, I prithee, O night, to the bards of love And that in thee I sleep not be witness yet again!

She walked on, weeping and turning right and left, as she went, till there espied her an old man who had come into the town from the desert with other five Bedouins. He took note of her and seeing that she was charming, but had nothing on her head but a piece of camel-cloth, marvelled at her beauty and said in himself, "This girl is pretty enough to dazzle the wit, but it is clear she is in poor case, and whether she be of the people of the city or a stranger, I must have her." So he followed her, little by little, till presently he came in front of her and stopping the way before her in a narrow lane, called out to her, saying, "Harkye, daughterling, art thou a freewoman or a slave?" When she heard this, she said to him, "By thy life, do not add to my troubles!" Quoth he, "God blessed me with six daughters, but five of them died and only one is left me, the youngest of them all; and I came to ask thee if thou wast of the people of this city or a stranger, that I might take thee and carry thee to her, to bear her company and divert her from mourning for her sisters. If thou hast no parents, I will use thee as one of them, and thou and she shall be as my two children." When she heard what he said, she bowed her head for bashfulness and said to herself, "Surely I may trust myself to this old man." Then she said to him, "O uncle, I am

a girl of the Arabs (of Irak) and a stranger, and I have a sick brother; but I will go with thee to thy daughter on one condition; that is, that I may spend the day only with her and go to my brother at night. I am a stranger and was high in honour among my people, yet am I become cast down and abject. I came with my brother from the land of Hejaz and I fear lest he know not where I am." When the Bedouin heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, I have gotten what I sought!" Then he turned to her and said, "There shall none be dearer to me than thou; I only wish thee to bear my daughter company by day, and thou shalt go to thy brother at nightfall. Or, if thou wilt, bring him to dwell with us." And he ceased not to give her fair words and coax her, till she trusted in him and agreed to serve him. Then he went on before her and she followed him, whilst he winked to his men to go on in advance and harness the camels and load them with food and water, ready for setting out as soon as he should come up. Now this Bedouin was a base-born wretch, a highway-robber and a brigand, a traitor to his friend and a past master in craft and roguery. He had no daughter and no son, and was but a wayfarer in Jerusalem, when, by the decree of God, he fell in with this unhappy girl. He held her in converse till they came without the city, where he joined his companions and found they had made ready the camels. So he mounted a camel, taking Nuzhet ez Zeman up behind him, and they rode on all night, making for the mountains, for fear any should see them. By this, she knew that the Bedouin's proposal was a snare and that he had tricked her; and she gave not over weeping and crying out the whole night long. A little before the dawn, they halted and the Bedouin came up to Nuzhet ez Zeman and said to her, "O wretch, what is this weeping? By Allah, an thou hold not thy peace, I will beat thee to death, city faggot that thou art!" When she heard this,

she abhorred life and longed for death; so she turned to him and said, "O accursed old man, O graybeard of hell, did I trust in thee and hast thou played me false, and now thou wouldst torture me?" When he heard her words, he cried out, "O insolent wretch, dost thou dare to bandy words with me?" And he came up to her and beat her with a whip, saying, "An thou hold not thy peace, I will kill thee." So she was silent awhile, but she called to mind her brother and her former happy estate and wept in secret. Next day, she turned to the Bedouin and said to him, "How couldst thou deal thus perfidiously with me and lure me into these desert mountains, and what wilt thou do with me?" When he heard her words, he hardened his heart and said to her, "O pestilent baggage, wilt thou bandy words with me?" So saying, he took the whip and brought it down on her back, till she well nigh fainted. Then she bowed down and kissed his feet; and he left beating her and began to revile her, saying, "By my bonnet, if I see or hear thee weeping, I will cut out thy tongue and thrust it up thy kaze, city strumpet that thou art!" So she was silent and made him no reply, for the beating irked her; but sat down, with her arms round her knees and bowing her head, fell a-musing on her case. Then she bethought her of her former ease and affluence and her present abasement, and called to mind her brother and his sickness and forlorn condition and how they were both strangers in a foreign land; whereat the tears coursed down her cheeks and she wept silently and repeated the following verses:

The tides of fate 'twixt good and ill shift ever to and fro, And no estate of life for men endureth evermo'.
All things that to the world belong have each their destined end And to all men a term is set, which none may overgo.
How long must I oppression bear and peril and distress? Ah, how I loathe this life of mine, that nought but these can show!
May God not prosper them, these days, wherein I am oppressed Of Fate, these cruel days that add abjection to my woe!

My purposes are brought to nought, my loves are reft in twain By exile's rigour, and my hopes are one and all laid low.
O ye, who pass the dwelling by, wherein my dear ones are, Bear them the news of me and say, my tears for ever flow.

When she had finished, the Bedouin came up to her and taking compassion on her, bespoke her kindly and wiped away her tears. Then he gave her a cake of barley-bread and said to her, "I do not love to be answered, when I am angry: so henceforth give me no more of these insolent words, and I will sell thee to an honest fellow like myself, who will use thee well, even as I have done." "It is well," answered she; and when the night was long upon her and hunger gnawed her, she ate a little of the barley cake. In the middle of the night, the Bedouin gave the signal for departure; so they loaded the camels and he mounted one of them, taking Nuzhet ez Zeman up behind him. Then they set out and journeyed, without stopping, for three days, till they reached the city of Damascus, where they alighted at the Sultan's khan, hard by the Viceroy's Gate. Now she had lost her colour and her charms were changed by grief and the fatigue of the journey, and she ceased not to weep. So the Bedouin came up to her and said, "Hark ye, city wench! By my bonnet, an thou leave not this weeping, I will sell thee to a Jew!" Then he took her by the hand and carried her to a chamber, where he left her and went to the bazaar. Here he went round to the merchants who dealt in slave-girls and began to parley with them, saying, "I have with me a slave-girl, whose brother fell ill, and I sent him to my people at Jerusalem, that they might tend him till he was cured. The separation from him was grievous to her, and since then, she does nothing but weep. Now I purpose to sell her, and I would fain have whoso is minded to buy her of me speak softly to her and say to her, 'Thy brother is with me in Jerusalem, ill;' and I will be easy with him about her

Night lvi.

price." Quoth one of the merchants, "How old is she?" "She is a virgin, just come to the age of puberty," replied the Bedouin, "and is endowed with sense and breeding and wit and beauty and grace. But from the day I sent her brother to Jerusalem, she has done nothing but grieve for him, so that her beauty is fallen away and her value lessened." When the merchant heard this, he said, "O chief of the Arabs, I will go with thee and buy this girl of thee, if she be as thou sayest for wit and beauty and accomplishments; but it must be upon conditions, which if thou accept, I will pay thee her price, and if not, I will return her to thee." "If thou wilt," said the Bedouin, "take her up to Prince Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorassan, and I will agree to whatever conditions thou mayst impose on me; for when he sees her, she will surely please him, and he will pay thee her price and a good profit to boot for thyself." "It happens," rejoined the merchant, "that I have just now occasion to go to him, that I may get him to sign me a patent, exempting me from customs-dues, and I desire of him also a letter of recommendation to his father King Omar. So, if he take the girl, I will pay thee down her price at once." "I agree to this," answered the Bedouin. So they returned together to the khan, where the Bedouin stood at the door of the girl's chamber and called out, saying, "Ho, Najiyeh!" which was the name he had given her. When she heard him, she wept and made no answer. Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "There she sits. Do thou go up to her and look at her and speak kindly to her, as I enjoined thee." So he went up to her courteously and saw that she was wonder-lovely and graceful, especially as she was acquainted with the Arabic tongue; and he said to the Bedouin, "Verily she is even as thou saidst, and I shall get of the Sultan what I will for her." Then he said to her, "Peace be on thee, O daughterling!

How dost thou?" She turned to him and replied, "This was written in the book of Destiny." Then she looked at him and seeing him to be a man of reverend appearance, with a handsome face, said to herself, "I believe this man comes to buy me. If I hold aloof from him, I shall abide with this tyrant, and he will beat me to death. In any case, this man is comely of face and makes me hope for better treatment from him than from this brute of a Bedouin. Mayhap he only comes to hear me talk; so I will give him a fair answer." All this while, she had kept her eyes fixed on the ground; then she raised them to him and said in a sweet voice, "And upon thee be peace, O my lord, and the mercy of God and His blessing! This is what is commanded of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve! As for thine enquiry how I do, if thou wouldst know my condition, it is such as thou wouldst not wish but to thine enemies." And she was silent. When the merchant heard what she said, he was beside himself for delight in her and turning to the Bedouin, said to him, "What is her price, for indeed she is illustrious?" At this the Bedouin was angry and said, "Thou wilt turn me the girl's head with this talk! Why dost thou say that she is illustrious,[1] for all she is of the scum of slave-girls and of the refuse of the people? I will not sell her to thee." When the merchant heard this, he knew he was dull-witted and said to him, "Calm thyself, for I will buy her of thee, notwithstanding the defects thou mentionest." "And how much wilt thou give me for her?" asked the Bedouin. "None should name the child but its father," replied the merchant. "Name thy price for her." "Not so," rejoined the Bedouin; "do thou say what thou wilt give."

[1] Apparently the Bedouin was angry with the merchant for praising the girl to her face and perhaps also alarmed at finding that he had kidnapped a young lady of consequence, where he only thought to have made prize of a pretty wench of humble condition and friendless.

Quoth the merchant in himself, "This Bedouin is an addle-pated churl. By Allah, I cannot tell her price, for she has mastered my heart with her sweet speech and her beauty: and if she can read and write, it will be the finishing touch to her good fortune and that of her purchaser. But this Bedouin does not know her value." Then he turned to the latter and said to him, "O elder of the Arabs, I will give thee two hundred dinars for her, in cash, clear of the tax and the Sultan's dues." When the Bedouin heard this, he flew into a violent passion and cried out at the merchant, saying, "Begone about thy business! By Allah, wert thou to offer me two hundred dinars for the piece of camel-cloth on her head, I would not sell it to thee! I will not sell her, but will keep her by me, to pasture the camels and grind corn." And he cried out to her, saying, "Come, thou stinkard, I will not sell thee." Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "I thought thee a man of judgment; but, by my bonnet, if thou begone not from me, I will let thee hear what will not please thee!" "Verily," said the merchant to himself, "this Bedouin is mad and knows not the girl's value, and I will say no more to him about her price for the present; for by Allah, were he a man of sense, he would not say, 'By my bonnet!' By Allah, she is worth the kingdom of the Chosroës and I will give him what he will, though it be all I have." Then he said to him, "O elder of the Arabs, calm thyself and take patience and tell me what clothes she has with thee." "Clothes!" cried the Bedouin; "what should the baggage want with clothes? The camel-cloth in which she is wrapped is ample for her." "With thy leave," said the merchant, "I will lift her veil and examine her as folk examine girls whom they think of buying." "Up and do what thou wilt," replied the other, "and God keep thy youth! Examine her, inside and out, and if thou wilt, take off her clothes and look at her naked." "God

forbid!" said the merchant; "I will but look at her face." Then he went up to her, confounded at her beauty and grace, and seating himself by her side, said to her, "O my mistress, what is thy name?" "Dost thou ask what is my name now," said she, "or what it was formerly?" "Hast thou then two names?" asked the merchant. "Yes," replied she, "my whilom name was Nuzhet ez Zeman;[1] but my name at this present is Ghusset ez Zeman.[2] When the merchant heard this, his eyes filled with tears, and he said to her, "Hast thou not a sick brother?" "Indeed, my lord, I have," answered she; "but fortune hath parted us, and he lies sick in Jerusalem." The merchant's heart was confounded at the sweetness of her speech, and he said to himself, "Verily, the Bedouin spoke the truth of her." Then she called to mind her brother and how he lay sick in a strange land, whilst she was parted from him and knew not what was become of him; and she thought of all that had befallen her with the Bedouin and of her severance from her father and mother and native land; and the tears ran down her cheeks and she repeated the following verses:

Night lvii.

May God keep watch o'er thee, belov'd, where'er thou art, Thou that, though far away, yet dwellest in my heart!
Where'er thy footsteps lead, may He be ever near, To guard thee from time's shifts and evil fortune's dart!
Thou'rt absent, and my eyes long ever for thy sight, And at thy thought the tears for aye unbidden start.
Would that I knew, alas! what country holds thee now, In what abode thou dwell'st, unfriended and apart!
If thou, in the green o' the rose, still drink o' the water of life, My drink is nought but tears, since that thou didst depart.
If sleep e'er visit thee, live coals of my unrest, Strewn betwixt couch and side, for aye my slumbers thwart.
All but thy loss to me were but a little thing, But that and that alone is sore to me, sweetheart.

[1] Delight of the age. [2] Affliction (or wrath) of the age.

When the merchant heard her verses, he wept and put out his hand to wipe away her tears; but she let down her veil, saying, "God forbid, O my master!" The Bedouin, who was sitting at a little distance, watching them, saw her cover her face and concluded that she would have hindered him from handling her: so he rose and running to her, dealt her such a blow on the shoulders with a camel's halter he had in his hand, that she fell to the ground on her face. Her eyebrow smote against a stone, which cut it open, and the blood streamed down her face; whereupon she gave a loud scream and fainted away. The merchant was moved to tears for her and said in himself, "I must and will buy this damsel, though I pay down her weight in gold, and deliver her from this tyrant." And he began to reproach the Bedouin, whilst Nuzhet ez Zeman lay insensible. When she came to herself, she wiped away her tears and bound up her head: then, raising her eyes to heaven, she sought her Lord with a sorrowful heart and repeated the following verses:

Have ruth on one who once was rich and great, Whom villainy hath brought to low estate.
She weeps with never-ceasing tears and says, "There's no recourse against the laws of Fate."

Then she turned to the merchant and said to him, in a low voice, "By Allah, do not leave me with this tyrant, who knows not God the Most High! If I pass this night with him, I shall kill myself with my own hand: save me from him, and God will save thee from hell-fire." So the merchant said to the Bedouin, "O chief of the Arabs, this girl is none of thine affair; so do thou sell her to me for what thou wilt." "Take her," said the Bedouin, "and pay me down her price, or I will carry her back to the camp and set her to feed the camels and gather their droppings."[1] Quoth the merchant, "I will give thee fifty thousand dinars

[1] For fuel.

for her." "God will open,"[2] replied the Bedouin. "Seventy thousand," said the merchant. "God will open," repeated the other; "she hath cost me more than that, for she hath eaten barley-bread with me to the value of ninety thousand dinars." Quoth the merchant, "Thou and all thy people and thy whole tribe in all your lives have not eaten a thousand dinars' worth of barley: but I will make thee one offer, which if thou accept not, I will set the Viceroy of Damascus on thee, and he will take her from thee by force." "Say on," rejoined the Bedouin. "A hundred thousand," said the merchant. "I will sell her to thee at that price," answered the Bedouin; "I shall be able to buy salt with that." The merchant laughed and going to his house, returned with the money and gave it to the Bedouin, who took it and made off, saying, "I must go to Jerusalem: it may be I shall happen on her brother, and I will bring him here and sell him." So he mounted and journeyed to Jerusalem, where he went to the khan and enquired for Zoulmekan, but could not find him.

Meanwhile, the merchant threw his gaberdine over Nuzhet ez Zeman and carried her to his house, where he dressed her in the richest clothes he could buy. Then he carried her to the bazaar, where he bought her what jewellery she chose and put it in a bag of satin, which he laid before her, saying, "This is all for thee, and I ask nothing of thee in return but that, when thou comest to the Viceroy of Damascus, thou tell him what I gave for thee and that it was little compared with thy value: and if he buy thee, tell him how I have dealt with thee and ask of him for me a royal patent, with a recommendation to his father King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad, to the intent that he may forbid the taking toll on my stuffs or other goods in which I traffic." When she heard his

Night lviii.

[1] *i.e.* "God will open on me another gate (or means) of making my living." A common formula, meaning, "It is not enough."

words, she wept and sobbed, and the merchant said to her, "O my mistress, I note that, every time I mention Baghdad, thine eyes fill with tears: is there any one there whom thou lovest? If it be a merchant or the like, tell me; for I know all the merchants and so forth there; and an thou wouldst send him a message, I will carry it for thee." "By Allah," replied she, "I have no acquaintance among merchants and the like! I know none there but King Omar ben Ennuman." When the merchant heard this, he laughed and was greatly rejoiced and said in himself, "By Allah, I have gotten my desire!" Then he said to her, "Hast thou then been shown to him?" "No," answered she; "but I was brought up with his daughter and he holds me dear and I have much credit with him; so if thou wouldst have him grant thee a patent of exemption, give me ink-horn and paper, and I will write thee a letter, which, when thou reachest Baghdad, do thou deliver into the King's own hand and say to him, 'Thy handmaid Nuzhet ez Zeman salutes thee and would have thee to know that the changing chances of the nights and days have smitten her, so that she has been sold from place to place and is now with the Viceroy of Damascus.'" The merchant wondered at her eloquence and his affection for her increased and he said to her, "I cannot think but that men have abused thine understanding and sold thee for money. Tell me, dost thou know the Koran?" "I do," answered she; "and I am also acquainted with philosophy and medicine and the Prolegomena and the commentaries of Galen the physician on the Canons of Hippocrates, and I have commented him, as well as the Simples of Ibn Beitar, and have studied the works of Avicenna, according to the canon of Mecca, as well as other treatises. I can solve enigmas and establish parallels[1] and discourse upon geometry and am skilled in anatomy. I have read the

[1] Or state problems.

books of the Shafiy[1] sect and the Traditions of the Prophet. I am well read in grammar and can argue with the learned and discourse of all manner of sciences. Moreover I am skilled in logic and rhetoric and mathematics and the making of talismans and calendars and the Cabala, and I understand all these branches of knowledge thoroughly. But bring me ink-horn and paper, and I will write thee a letter that will profit thee at Baghdad and enable thee to dispense with passports." When the merchant heard this, he cried out, "Excellent! Excellent! Happy he in whose palace thou shalt be!" Then he brought her ink-horn and paper and a pen of brass and kissed the earth before her, to do her honour. She took the pen and wrote the following verses:

"What ails me that sleep hath forsaken my eyes and gone astray? Have you then taught them to waken, after our parting day?
How comes it your memory maketh the fire in my heart to rage? Is't thus with each lover remembers a dear one far away?
How sweet was the cloud of the summer, that watered our days of yore! 'Tis flitted, before of its pleasance my longing I could stay.
I sue to the wind and beg it to favour the slave of love, The wind that unto the lover doth news of you convey.
A lover to you complaineth, whose every helper fails. Indeed, in parting are sorrows would rend the rock in tway.

"These words are from her whom melancholy destroys and whom watching hath wasted; in her darkness there are no lights found, and she knows not night from day. She tosses from side to side on the couch of separation and her eyes are blackened with the pencils of sleeplessness; she watches the stars and strains her sight into the darkness: verily, sadness and emaciation have consumed her and the setting forth of her case would be long. No helper hath she but tears and she reciteth the following verses:

[1] One of the four great Muslim sects or schools of theology, taking its name from the Imam es Shafi (see post, p. 131, note).

"No turtle warbles on the branch, before the break of morn, But stirs in me a killing grief, a sadness all forlorn.
No lover, longing for his loves, complaineth of desire, But with a doubled stress of woe my heart is overborne.
Of passion I complain to one who hath no ruth on me. How soul and body by desire are, one from other, torn!"

Then her eyes brimmed over with tears, and she wrote these verses also:

"Love-longing, the day of our parting, my body with mourning smote, And severance from my eyelids hath made sleep far remote.
I am so wasted for yearning and worn for sickness and woe, That, were it not for my speaking, thou'dst scarce my presence note."

Then she wept and wrote at the foot of the scroll, "This is from her who is far from her people and her native land, the sorrowful-hearted Nuzhet ez Zeman." She folded the letter and gave it to the merchant, who took it and reading what was written in it, rejoiced and exclaimed, "Glory to Him who fashioned thee!" Then he redoubled in kindness and attention to her all that day; and at nightfall, he sallied out to the market and bought food, wherewith he fed her; after which he carried her to the bath and said to the tire-woman, "As soon as thou hast made an end of washing her head, clothe her and send and let me know." Meanwhile he fetched food and fruit and wax candles and set them on the dais in the outer room of the bath; and when the tire-woman had done washing her, she sent to tell the merchant, and Nuzhet ez Zeman went out to the outer room, where she found the tray spread with food and fruit. So she ate, and the tire-woman with her, and gave what was left to the people and keeper of the bath. Then she slept till the morning, and the merchant lay the night in a place apart. When he awoke, he came to her and waking her, presented her with a shift of fine silk, a kerchief worth a thousand dinars, a suit of Turkish brocade and boots embroidered with red gold and set with

Night lix.

pearls and jewels. Moreover, he hung in each of her ears a circlet of gold, with a fine pearl therein, worth a thousand dinars, and threw round her neck a collar of gold, with bosses of garnet and a chain of amber beads, that hung down between her breasts to her middle. Now this chain was garnished with ten balls and nine crescents and each crescent had in its midst a beazel of ruby and each ball a beazel of balass ruby. The worth of the chain was three thousand dinars and each of the balls was worth twenty thousand dirhems, so that her dress in all was worth a great sum of money. When she had put these on, the merchant bade her make her toilet, and she adorned herself to the utmost advantage. Then he bade her follow him and walked on before her through the streets, whilst the people wondered at her beauty and exclaimed, "Blessed be God, the most excellent Creator! O fortunate man to whom she shall belong!" till they reached the Sultan's palace; when he sought an audience of Sherkan and kissing the earth before him, said, "O august King, I have brought thee a rare gift, unmatched in this time and richly dowered with beauty and good qualities." "Let me see it," said Sherkan. So the merchant went out and returning with Nuzhet ez Zeman, made her stand before Sherkan. When the latter beheld her, blood drew to blood, though he had never seen her, having only heard that he had a sister called Nuzhet ez Zeman and a brother called Zoulmekan and not having made acquaintance with them, in his jealousy of them, because of the succession. Then said the merchant, "O King, not only is she without peer in her time for perfection of beauty and grace, but she is versed to boot in all learning, sacred and profane, besides the art of government and the abstract sciences." Quoth Sherkan, "Take her price, according to what thou gavest for her, and go thy ways." "I hear and obey," replied the merchant; "but first I would have thee write me a patent, exempting

me for ever from paying tithe on my merchandise." "I will do this," said Sherkan; "but first tell me what you paid for her." Quoth the merchant, "I bought her for a hundred thousand dinars, and her clothes cost me as much more." When the Sultan heard this, he said, "I will give thee more than this for her," and calling his treasurer, said to him, "Give this merchant three hundred and twenty thousand dinars; so will he have a hundred and twenty thousand dinars profit." Then he summoned the four Cadis and paid him the money in their presence; after which he said to them, "I call you to witness that I free this my slave-girl and purpose to marry her." So the Cadis drew up the act of enfranchisement, and the Sultan scattered much gold on the heads of those present, which was picked up by the pages and eunuchs. Then they drew up the contract of marriage between Sherkan and Nuzhet ez Zeman, after which he bade write the merchant a perpetual patent, exempting him from tax and tithe upon his merchandise and forbidding all and several to do him let or hindrance in all his government, and bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour. Then all who were present retired, and there remained but the Cadis and the merchant; whereupon quoth Sherkan to the former, "I wish you to hear such discourse from this damsel as may prove her knowledge and accomplishment in all that this merchant avouches of her, that we may be certified of the truth of his pretensions." "Good," answered they; and he commanded the curtains to be drawn before Nuzhet ez Zeman and her attendants, who began to wish her joy and kiss her hands and feet, for that she was become the Viceroy's wife. Then they came round her and easing her of the weight of her clothes and ornaments, began to look upon her beauty and grace. Presently the wives of the Amirs and Viziers heard that King Sherkan had bought a damsel unmatched for

Night lx.

beauty and accomplishments and versed in all branches of knowledge, at the price of three hundred and twenty thousand dinars, and that he had set her free and married her and summoned the four Cadis to examine her. So they asked leave of their husbands and repaired to the palace. When they came in to her, she rose and received them with courtesy, welcoming them and promising them all good. Moreover, she smiled in their faces and made them sit down in their proper stations, as if she had been brought up with them, so that their hearts were taken with her and they all wondered at her good sense and fine manners, as well as at her beauty and grace, and said to each other, "This damsel is none other than a queen, the daughter of a king." Then they sat down, magnifying her, and said to her, "O our lady, our city is illumined by thy presence, and our country and kingdom are honoured by thee. The kingdom indeed is thine and the palace is thy palace, and we all are thy handmaids; so do not thou shut us out from thy favours and the sight of thy beauty." And she thanked them for this. All this while the curtains were drawn between Nuzhet ez Zeman and the women with her, on the one side, and King Sherkan and the Cadis and merchant seated by him, on the other. Presently, Sherkan called to her and said, "O queen, the glory of thine age, this merchant describes thee as being learned and accomplished and asserts that thou art skilled in all branches of knowledge, even to astrology: so let us hear something of all this and give us a taste of thy quality." "O King," replied she, "I hear and obey. The first subject of which I will treat is the art of government and the duties of kings and what behoves governors of lawful commandments and what is incumbent on them in respect of pleasing manners. Know then, O King, that all men's works tend either to religion or to worldly life, for none attains to religion save through this world, because it is

indeed the road to the next world. Now the world is ordered by the doings of its people, and the doings of men are divided into four categories, government (or the exercise of authority), commerce, husbandry (or agriculture) and craftsmanship. To government are requisite perfect (knowledge of the science of) administration and just judgment; for government is the centre (or pivot) of the edifice of the world, which is the road to the future life, since that God the Most High hath made the world to be to His servants even as victual to the traveller for the attainment of the goal: and it is needful that each man receive of it such measure as shall bring him to God, and that he follow not in this his own mind and desire. If the folk would take of the goods of the world with moderation and equity, there would be an end of contentions; but they take thereof with violence and iniquity and persist in following their own inclinations; and their licentiousness and evil behaviour in this give birth to strife and contention. So they have need of the Sultan, that he may do justice between them and order their affairs prudently, and if he restrain not the folk from one another, the strong will get the mastery over the weak. Ardeshir says that religion and the kingship are twin; religion is a treasure and the king its keeper; and the divine ordinances and men's own judgment indicate that it behoves the folk to adopt a ruler to hold the oppressor back from the oppressed and do the weak justice against the strong and to restrain the violence of the proud and the unjust. For know, O King, that according to the measure of the ruler's good morals, even so will be the time; as says the apostle of God (on whom be peace and salvation), 'There are two classes, who if they be virtuous, the people will be virtuous, and if they be depraved, the people also will be depraved: even princes and men of learning.' And it is said by a certain sage, 'There are three kinds of kings, the king of

the Faith, the king who watches over and protects those things that are entitled to respect and honour, and the king of his own inclinations. The king of the Faith constrains his subjects to follow the laws of their faith, and it behoves that he be the most pious of them all, for it is by him that they take pattern in the things of the Faith; and the folk shall do obedience to him in what he commands in accordance with the Divine ordinances; but he shall hold the discontented in the same esteem as the contented, because of submission to the Divine decrees. As for the king of the second order, he upholds the things of the faith and of the world and compels the folks to follow the Law of God and to observe the precepts of humanity; and it behoves him to conjoin the sword and the pen; for whoso goeth astray from what the pen hath written, his feet slip, and the king shall rectify his error with the edge of the sword and pour forth his justice upon all men. As for the third kind of king, he hath no religion but the following his own lusts and fears not the wrath of his Lord, who set him on the throne; so his kingdom inclines to ruin, and the end of his arrogance is in the House of Perdition.' And another sage says, 'The king has need of many people, but the folk have need of but one king; wherefore it behoves that he be well acquainted with their natures, to the end that he may reduce their difference to concord, that he may encompass them one and all with his justice and overwhelm them with his bounties.' And know, O King, that Ardeshir, styled Jemr Shedid, third of the Kings of Persia, conquered the whole world and divided it into four parts and let make for himself four seal-rings, one for each division of his realm. The first seal was that of the sea and the police and of prohibition, and on it was written, 'Alternatives.' The second was the seal of revenue and of the receipt of monies, and on it was written, 'Culture.' The third was the seal of the commissariat, and on it was

written, 'Plenty.' The fourth was the seal of (the Court of Enquiry into) abuses, and on it was written, 'Justice.' And these remained in use in Persia until the revelation of Islam. King Chosroës, also, wrote to his son, who was with the army, 'Be not over-lavish to thy troops, or they will come to have no need of thee; neither be niggardly with them, or they will murmur against thee. Do thy giving soberly and confer thy favours advisedly; be liberal to them in time of affluence and stint them not in time of stress.' It is said that an Arab of the desert came once to the Khalif Mensour[1] and said to him, 'Starve thy dog and he will follow thee.' When the Khalif heard his words, he was enraged, but Aboulabbas et Tousi said to him, 'I fear that, if some other than thou should show him a cake of bread, the dog would follow him and leave thee.' Thereupon the Khalif's wrath subsided and he knew that the Bedouin had meant no offence and ordered him a present. And know, O King, that Abdulmelik ben Merwan wrote to his brother Abdulaziz, when he sent him to Egypt, as follows: 'Pay heed to thy secretaries and thy chamberlains, for the first will acquaint thee with necessary matters and the second with matters of etiquette and ceremonial observance, whilst the tribute that goes out from thee will make thy troops known to thee.' Omar ben el Khettab[2] (whom God accept) was in the habit, when he engaged a servant, of laying four conditions on him, the first that he should not ride the baggage-beasts, the second that he should not wear fine clothes, the third that he should not eat of the spoil and the fourth that he should not delay to pray after the proper time. It is said that there is no wealth better than understanding and no understanding

Night lxi.

[1] Second of the Abbasside Khalifs, A.H. 136–158.

[2] The second Khalif after Mohammed (A.H. 13–23) and the most renowned for piety and just government of all the holders of the office, except perhaps his descendant Omar ben Abdulaziz (A.H. 99–102).

like common sense and prudence and no prudence like the fear of God; that there is no offering like good morals and no measure like good breeding and no profit like earning the Divine favour;[1] that there is no piety like the observance of the limits of the Law and no science like that of meditation, no devotion like the performance of the Divine preçepts, no safeguard like modesty, no calculation like humility and no nobility like knowledge. So guard the head and what it contains and the body and what it comprises and remember death and calamity. Says Ali[2] (whose face God honour!), 'Beware of the wickedness of women and be on thy guard against them. Consult them not in aught, but be not grudging of complaisance to them, lest they be tempted to have recourse to intrigue.' And also, 'He who leaves the path of moderation and sobriety, his wits become perplexed.' And Omar (whom God accept) says, 'There are three kinds of women, first, the true-believing, God-fearing woman, loving and fruitful, helping her husband against fate, not helping fate against her husband; secondly, she who loves and tenders her children, but no more; and thirdly, the woman who is as a shackle that God puts on the neck of whom He will. Men also are three: the first, who is wise, when he exercises his judgment; the second, wiser than he, who, when there falls on him somewhat of which he knows not the issue, seeks folk of good counsel and acts by their advice; and the third, who is addle-headed, knowing not the right way nor heeding those who would instruct him.' Justice is indispensable in all things; even slave-girls have need of justice; and highway robbers, who live by violence, bear witness of this, for did they not deal equitably among themselves and observe fairness in their divisions, their order would fall to pieces. For the rest, the chief of

[1] As a reward (in the next world) for good deeds.

[2] The fourth Khalif.

noble qualities is generosity and benevolence. How well says the poet:

By largesse and mildness the youth chief of his tribe became, And it were easy for thee to follow and do the same.

And quoth another:

In mildness stability lies and clemency wins us respect, And safety in soothfastness is for him who is soothfast and frank;
And he who would get himself praise and renown for his wealth from the folk, In the racecourse of glory must be, for munificence, first in the rank."

And Nuzhet ez Zeman discoursed upon the policy and behaviour of kings, till the bystanders said, "Never heard we one reason of the duties of kings like this damsel! Mayhap she will favour us with discourse upon some subject other than this." When she heard this, she said, "As for the chapter of good breeding,[1] it is wide of scope, for it is a compend of perfections. There came in one day to the Khalif Muawiyeh[2] one of his boon-companions, who spoke of the people of Irak and the goodness of their wit; and the Khalif's wife Meisoun, mother of Yezid, heard him. So, when he was gone, she said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, prithee let some of the people of Irak come in to thee and talk with them, that I may hear their discourse.' So the Khalif said to his attendants, 'Who is at the door?' And they answered, 'The Benou Temim.' 'Let them come in,' said he. So they came in and with them Ahnaf ben Caïs.[3] Now Muawiyeh had drawn a curtain between himself and Meisoun, that she might hear what they said without being seen herself;

[1] The word rendered "good breeding" may also be translated "polite accomplishments" or "mental discipline" and has a great number of other meanings.

[2] Sixth Khalif and founder of the Ommiade dynasty (A.H. 41-60).

[3] One of the most notable men of the day, chief of the great tribe of the Benou Temim. He was a contemporary of the Prophet and was held in much esteem by Muawiyeh.

and he said to Ahnaf, 'O Abou Behr,[1] draw near and tell me what counsel thou hast for me.' Quoth Ahnaf, 'Part thy hair and trim thy moustache and clip thy nails and pluck out the hair of thine armpits and shave thy pubes and be constant in the use of the toothstick, for therein are two-and-seventy virtues, and make the Friday (complete) ablution as an expiation for what is between the two Fridays.' 'What is thy counsel to thyself?' asked Muawiyeh. 'To plant my feet firmly on the ground,' replied Ahnaf, 'to move them with deliberation and keep watch over them with my eyes.' 'How,' asked the Khalif, 'dost thou carry thyself, when thou goest in to the common folk of thy tribe?' 'I lower my eyes modestly,' replied Ahnaf, 'and salute them first, abstaining from what does not concern me and being sparing of words.' 'And how, when thou goest in to thine equals?' asked Muawiyeh. 'I give ear to them, when they speak,' answered the other, 'and do not assail them, when they err.' 'And how dost thou,' said the Khalif, 'when thou goest in to thy chiefs?' 'I salute without making any sign,' answered Ahnaf, 'and await the response: if they bid me draw near, I do so, and if they bid me stand aloof, I withdraw.' 'How dost thou with thy wife?' asked the Khalif. 'Excuse me from answering this, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied he; but Muawiyeh said, 'I conjure thee to answer.' Then said Ahnaf, 'I entreat her kindly and show her pleasant familiarity and am large in expenditure, for women were created of a crooked rib.' 'And how,' asked the Khalif, 'dost thou when thou hast a mind to lie with her?' 'I speak to her to perfume herself,' answered the other, 'and kiss her till she is moved to desire; then, if it be as thou knowest, I throw her on her back. If the seed abide in her womb, I say, "O my God, make it blessed and let it not be a castaway, but fashion it into a goodly shape!"

Night lxii.

[1] Surname of Ahnaf.

Then I rise from her and betake myself to the ablution, first pouring water over my hands and then over my body and returning thanks to God for the delight He hath given me.' 'Thou hast answered excellently well,' said Muawiyeh; 'and now tell me what thou wouldst have.' Quoth Ahnaf, 'I would have thee rule thy subjects in the fear of God and do equal justice amongst them.' So saying, he withdrew from the Khalif's presence, and when he had gone, Meisoun said, 'Were there but this man in Irak, he would suffice to it.' This (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman) is a small fraction of the chapter of good breeding. Know, O King, that Muyekib was intendant of the treasury during the Khalifate of Omar ben Khettab, 'One day (quoth he) the Khalif's son came to me and I gave him a dirhem from the treasury. Then I returned to my own house, and presently, as I was sitting, there came to me a messenger, bidding me to the Khalif. So I was afraid and went to him, and when I came into his presence, I saw in his hand the dirhem I had given his son. "Hark ye, Muyekib," said he, "I have found somewhat concerning thy soul." "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked I; and he answered, "It is that thou wilt have to render an account of this dirhem to the people of Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation) on the Day of Resurrection."' This same Omar wrote a letter to Abou Mousa el Ashari,[1] to the following purport, 'When these presents reach thee, give the people what is theirs and send the rest to me.' And he did so. When Othman succeeded to the Khalifate, he wrote a like letter to Abou Mousa, who did his bidding and sent him the tribute accordingly, and with it came Ziad.[2] When the latter laid the tribute before Othman, the Khalif's son came in and took a dirhem, whereupon

Night lxiii.

[1] Governor of Bassora and other places under the first four Khalifs.

[2] Ziad ben Abou Sufyan, illegitimate brother of the Khalif Muawiyeh, afterwards governor of Bassora, Cufa and the Hejaz.

Ziad fell a-weeping. 'Why dost thou weep?' asked Othman. Quoth Ziad, 'I once brought Omar ben Khettab the like of this, and his son took a dirhem, whereupon Omar bade snatch it from his hand. Now thy son hath taken of the tribute, yet have I seen none rebuke him nor take the money from him.' And Othman said, 'Where wilt thou find the like of Omar?' Again, Zeid ben Aslam relates of his father that he said, 'I went out one night with Omar, and we walked on till we espied a blazing fire in the distance. Quoth Omar, "This must be travellers, who are suffering from the cold: let us join them." So we made for the fire, and when we came to it, we found a woman who had lighted a fire under a cauldron, and by her side were two children, crying. "Peace on you, O folk of the light!" said Omar, for he misliked to say, "folk of the fire;"[1] "what ails you?" Quoth she, "The cold and the night irk us." "What ails these children that they weep?" asked he. "They are hungry," replied she. "And what is in this cauldron?" asked Omar. "It is what I quiet them with," answered she, "and God will question Omar ben Khettab of them, on the Day of Resurrection." "And what," rejoined the Khalif, "should Omar know of their case?" "Why then," said she, "should he undertake the governance of the people's affairs and yet be unmindful of them?" Then Omar turned to me and said, "Come with me." So we both set off running till we reached the treasury, where he took out a sack of flour and a pot of fat and said to me, "Put these on my back." "O Commander of the Faithful," said I, "I will carry them for thee." "Wilt thou bear my burden for me on the Day of Resurrection?" replied he. So I put the things on his back, and we set off, running, till we came to the woman, when he threw down the sack. Then he took out some of the flour and put it in the cauldron and saying to the

[1] Because it might have been taken to mean, "inhabitants of hell."

woman, "Leave it to me," fell to blowing the fire. Now he had a great beard and I saw the smoke issuing from the interstices thereof, till the flour was cooked, when he threw in some of the fat and said to the woman, "Do thou feed the boys whilst I cool the food for them." So they ate their fill and he left the rest with her. Then he turned to me and said, "O Aslam, I see it was indeed hunger made them weep; and I am glad I did not go away without finding out the reason of the light I saw."' It is said that Omar passed, one day, by a flock of sheep, kept by a slave, and asked the latter to sell him a sheep. 'They are not mine,' replied the shepherd. 'Thou art the man I sought,' said Omar and buying him of his master, set him free, whereupon the slave exclaimed, 'O my God, thou hast bestowed on me the lesser emancipation; vouchsafe me now the greater!'[1] They say also, that Omar ben Khettab was wont to give his servants sweet milk and eat coarse fare himself and to clothe them softly and wear himself coarse garments. He gave all men their due and exceeded in his giving to them. He once gave a man four thousand dirhems and added thereto yet a thousand, wherefore it was said to him, 'Why dost thou not favour thy son as thou favourest this man?' He answered, 'This man's father stood firm in fight on the day of Uhud.'[2] El Hassan relates that Omar once came (back from an expedition) with much money and that Hefseh[3] came to him and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, be mindful of the due of kinship!' 'O Hefseh,' replied he, 'God hath indeed enjoined us to satisfy the dues of kinship, but of our own monies, not those of the true believers. Indeed, thou pleasest thy family, but angerest thy father.' And

Night Irib.

[1] *i.e.* death.

[2] A battle fought near Medina, A.D. 625, in which Mohammed was defeated by the Meccans under Abou Sufyan.

[3] One of Mohammed's widows and Omar's own daughter.

she went away, dragging her skirts. Says Omar's son, 'I implored God one year (after Omar's death) to show me my father, till at last I saw him wiping the sweat from his brow and said to him, "How is it with thee, O my father?" "But for God's mercy," answered he, "thy father had perished."'" Then said Nuzhet ez Zeman, "Hear, O august King, the second division of the first chapter of the instances of the followers of the Prophet and other pious men. Says El Hassan of Bassora,[1] 'Not a soul of the sons of Adam goes forth of the world, without grieving for three things, failure to enjoy what he has amassed, failure to compass what he hoped and failure to provide himself with sufficient provision for that to which he goes.'[2] It was said to Sufyan,[3] 'Can a man be devout and yet possess wealth?' 'Yes,' replied he, 'so he be patient under affliction and return thanks, when God giveth to him.' When Abdallah ben Sheddad was on his death-bed, he sent for his son Mohammed and admonished him, saying, 'O my son, I see the messenger of death calling me and so I charge thee to cherish the fear of God, both in public and private. Praise God and be true in thy speech, for the praise of God brings increase of prosperity, and piety in itself is the best of provision,[4] even as says one of the poets:

I see not that bliss lies in filling one's chest; The God-fearing man can alone be called blest.
For piety aye winneth increase of God; So of all men's provision 'tis surely the best.'

When Omar ben Abdulaziz[5] succeeded to the Khalifate, he went to his own house and laying hands on all that his

[1] A well-known man of letters and theologian of the seventh and eighth centuries.
[2] *i.e.* to prepare himself by good works, etc., for the world to come.
[3] A celebrated Cufan theologian of the eighth century.
[4] *i.e.* for the next world.
[5] The eighth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty, a rival in piety and single-mindedness of Omar ben Khettab.

family and household possessed, put it into the public treasury. So the Ommiades[1] betook themselves for aid to his father's sister, Fatimeh, daughter of Merwan, and she sent to Omar, saying, 'I must needs speak with thee.' So she came to him by night, and when he had made her alight from her beast and sit down, he said to her, 'O aunt, it is for thee to speak first, since it is at thine instance that we meet; tell me, therefore, what thou wouldst with me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'it is thine to speak first, for thy judgment perceives that which is hidden from the senses.' Then said the Khalif, 'Of a verity God sent Mohammed as a mercy to some and a punishment to others; and He chose out for him what was with him and withdrew him to Himself, leaving the people a river, whereof the thirsty of them might drink. After him he made Abou Bekr the Truth-teller Khalif and he left the river in its pristine state, doing what was pleasing to God. Then arose Omar and worked a work and furnished forth a strife, of which none might do the like. When Othman came, he diverted a stream from the river, and Muawiyeh in his turn sundered several streams from it. In like manner, Yezid and the sons of Merwan, Abdulmelik and Welid and Suleiman,[2] ceased not to take from the river and dry up the main stream, till the commandment devolved upon me, and now I am minded to restore the river to its normal condition.' When Fatimeh heard this, she said, 'I came, wishing only to speak and confer with thee, but if this be thy word, I have nothing to say to thee.' Then she returned to the Ommiades and said to them, 'See what you have brought on you by allying yourselves with Omar ben Khettab.'[3] When Omar was on his death-bed,

Night lxb.

[1] The descendants of Umeyyeh and kinsmen of the reigning house.
[2] The second, fifth, sixth and seventh Khalifs of the Ommiade dynasty.
[3] The mother of Omar ben Abdulaziz was a granddaughter of Omar ben Khettab.

he gathered his children round him, and Meslemeh[1] ben Abdulmelik said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou leave thy children beggars and thou their protector? None can hinder thee from giving them in thy lifetime what will suffice them out of the treasury; and this indeed were better than leaving it to revert to him who shall come after thee.' Omar gave him a look of wrath and wonder and replied, 'O Meslemeh, I have defended them all the days of my life, and shall I make them miserable after my death? My sons are like other men, either obedient to God the Most High or disobedient: if the former, God will prosper them, and if the latter, I will not help them in their disobedience. Know, O Meslemeh, that I was present, even as thou, when such an one of the sons of Merwan was buried, and I fell asleep by him and saw him in a dream given over to one of the punishments of God, to whom belong might and majesty. This terrified me and made me tremble, and I vowed to God that, if ever I came to the throne, I would not do as the dead man had done. This vow I have striven to fulfil all the days of my life, and I hope to be received into the mercy of my Lord.' Quoth Meslemeh, 'A certain man died and I was present at his funeral. I fell asleep and meseemed I saw him, as in a dream, clad in white clothes and walking in a garden full of running waters. He came up to me and said, "O Meslemeh, it is for the like of this that governors (or men who bear rule) should work."' Many are the instances of this kind, and quoth one of the men of authority, 'I used to milk the ewes in the Khalifate of Omar ben Abdulaziz, and one day, I met a shepherd, among whose sheep were wolves. I thought them to be dogs, for I had never before seen wolves; so I said to the shepherd, "What dost thou with these dogs?" "They are not dogs, but wolves," replied he. Quoth I, "Can wolves be with sheep and not

[1] Brother of Omar's successor, Yezid II.

hurt them?" "When the head is whole," replied he, "the body is whole also."' Omar ben Abdulaziz preached once from a mud pulpit, and after praising and glorifying God the Most High, said three words and spoke as follows, 'O folk, make clean your hearts, that your outward lives may be clean to your brethren, and abstain from the things of the world. Know that from Adam to this present, there is no one man alive among the dead. Dead are Abdulmelik and those who forewent him, and Omar also will die, and those who come after him.' Quoth Meslemeh (to this same Omar, when he was dying), 'O Commander of the Faithful, shall we set a pillow behind thee, that thou mayest lean on it a little?' But Omar answered, 'I fear lest it be a fault about my neck on the day of Resurrection.' Then he gasped for breath and fell back in a swoon; whereupon Fatimeh cried out, saying, 'Ho, Meryem! Ho, Muzahim! Ho, such an one! Look to this man!' And she began to pour water on him, weeping, till he revived, and seeing her in tears, said to her, 'O Fatimeh, why dost thou weep?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I saw thee lying prostrate before us and thought of thy prostration before God the Most High in death and of thy departure from the world and separation from us. This is what made me weep.' 'Enough, O Fatimeh,' answered he; 'indeed thou exceedest.' Then he would have risen, but fell down, and Fatimeh strained him to her, saying, 'Thou art to me as my father and my mother, O Commander of the Faithful! We cannot speak to thee, all of us.'[1] Again (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman), Omar ben Abdulaziz wrote to the people of the festival at Mecca, as follows, 'I call God to witness, in the Holy Month, in the Holy City and

Night lxbi.

[1] This passage apparently belongs to the previous account of Omar's death-bed; but I have left it as it stands in the text, as it would be a hopeless task to endeavour to restore this chaos of insipid anecdote and devotional commonplace to anything like symmetry.

on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, that I am innocent of your oppression and of the wickedness of him that doth you wrong, in that I have neither commanded this nor purposed it, neither hath any report of aught thereof reached me (till now) nor have I had knowledge of it; and I trust therefore that God will pardon it to me. None hath authority from me to do oppression, for I shall assuredly be questioned (at the Last Day) concerning every one who hath been wrongfully entreated. So if any one of my officers swerve from the right and act without law or authority,[1] ye owe him no obedience, till he return to the right way.' He said also (may God accept of him), 'I do not wish to be relieved from death, for that it is the supreme thing for which the true believer is rewarded.' Quoth one of authority, 'I went one day to the Commander of the Faithful, Omar ben Abdulaziz, who was then Khalif, and saw before him twelve dirhems, which he bade take to the treasury. So I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou impoverishest thy children and reducest them to beggary, leaving nothing for them. Thou wouldst do well to appoint somewhat by will to them and to those who are poor of the people of thy house." "Draw near to me," answered he. So I drew near to him and he said, "As for thy saying, 'Thou beggarest thy children; provide for them and for the poor of thy household,' it is without reason, for God will replace me to my children and to those who are poor of the people of my house, and He will be their guardian. Verily, they are like other men; he who fears God, God will provide him a happy issue, and he that is addicted to sin, I will not uphold him in his disobedience." Then he called his sons before him, and they were twelve in number. When he beheld them, his eyes filled with tears and he said to them, "Your father is between two things; either

[1] *Lit.* with (or by) neither book (*i.e.* Koran) nor Sunneh (*i.e.* the Traditions of the Prophet).

ye will be rich and he will enter the fire, or ye will be poor and he enter Paradise; and your father's entry into Paradise is liefer to him than that ye should be rich. So go, God be your helper, for to Him I commit your affair."' Quoth Khalid ben Sefwan,[1] 'Yusuf ben Omar[2] accompanied me to Hisham ben Abdulmelik,[3] and I met him as he came forth with his kinsmen and attendants. He alighted and a tent was pitched for him. When the people had taken their seats, I came up to the side of the carpet (on which the Khalif was reclining) and waiting till my eyes met his, bespoke him thus, "May God fulfil His bounty to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, and direct into the right way the affairs He hath committed to thy charge, and may no harm mingle with thy cheer! O Commander of the Faithful, I have an admonition for thee, which I have gleaned from the history of the kings of time past!" At this, he sat up and said to me, "O son of Sefwan, say what is in thy mind." "O Commander of the Faithful," quoth I, "one of the kings before thee went forth, in a time before thy time, to this very country and said to his companions, 'Saw ye ever any in the like of my state or to whom hath been given even as it hath been given unto me?' Now there was with him one of those who survive to bear testimony to the Faith and are upholders of the Truth and walkers in its highway, and he said, 'O King, thou askest of a grave matter. Wilt thou give me leave to answer?' 'Yes,' replied the King, and the other said, 'Dost thou judge thy present state to be temporary or enduring?' 'It is a temporary thing,' replied the King. 'Why then,' asked the man, 'do I see thee exult in that

[1] Chief of the tribe of Temim and one of the most elegant orators of the eighth century.

[2] Surnamed Eth Thekefi, Governor of Yemen and Irak: also a well-known orator, but a most cruel and fantastic tyrant.

[3] Tenth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty (A.D. 723-742).

which thou wilt enjoy but a little while and whereof thou wilt be questioned at length and for the rendering an account whereof thou wilt be as a pledge?' 'Whither shall I flee,' asked the King, 'and where is that I must seek?' 'Abide in thy kingship,' replied the other, 'and apply thyself to obey the commandments of God the Most High; or else don thy worn-out clothes and devote thyself to the service of thy Lord, till thine appointed hour come to thee.' Then he left him, saying, 'I will come to thee again at daybreak.' So he knocked at his door at dawn and found that the King had put off his crown and resolved to become an anchorite, for the stress of his exhortation." When Hisham heard this, he wept till his beard was drenched and putting off his rich apparel, shut himself up in his palace. Then the grandees and courtiers came to me and said, "What is this thou hast done with the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast marred his cheer and troubled his life!"' But (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman, addressing herself to Sherkan) how many admonitory instances are there not that bear upon this branch of the subject! Indeed, it is beyond my power to report all that pertains to this head in one sitting; but, with length of days, O King of the age, all will be well."

Night lxvii.

Then said the Cadis, "O King, of a truth this damsel is the wonder of the time and the unique pearl of the age! Never in all our lives heard we the like." And they called down blessings on Sherkan and went away. Then said he to his attendants, "Prepare the wedding festivities and make ready food of all kinds." So they addressed themselves to do his bidding, and he bade the wives of the amirs and viziers and grandees depart not until the time of the wedding-banquet and of the unveiling of the bride. Hardly was the time of afternoon-prayer come, when the tables were spread with roast meats and geese and fowls and all that the heart can desire or that can delight the eye; and all

the people ate till they were satisfied. Moreover, the King had sent for all the singing-women of Damascus and they were present, together with all the slave-girls of the King and the notables who knew how to sing. When the evening came and it grew dark, they lighted flambeaux, right and left, from the gate of the citadel to that of the palace, and the amirs and viziers and grandees defiled before King Sherkan, whilst the singers and the tire-women took Nuzhet ez Zeman, to dress and adorn her, but found she needed no adorning. Meantime King Sherkan went to the bath and coming out, sat down on his bed of estate, whilst they unveiled the bride before him in seven different dresses; after which they eased her of the weight of her dresses and ornaments and gave such injunctions as are usually given to girls on their wedding-night. Then Sherkan went in to her and took her maidenhead; and she at once conceived by him, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and commanded the sages to record the date of her conception. On the morrow, he went forth and seated himself on his throne, and the grandees came in to him and gave him joy. Then he called his private secretary and bade him write to his father, King Omar ben Ennuman, a letter to the following effect: "Know that I have bought me a damsel, who excels in learning and accomplishment and is mistress of all kinds of knowledge. I have set her free and married her and she has conceived by me. And needs must I send her to Baghdad to visit my brother Zoulmekan and my sister Nuzhet ez Zeman." And he went on to praise her wit and salute his brother and sister, together with the Vizier Dendan and all the amirs. Then he sealed the letter and despatched it to his father by a courier, who was absent a whole month, after which time he returned with the old King's answer. Sherkan took it and read as follows, after the usual preamble, "In the name of God," etc., "This is from the afflicted and distraught, him who

hath lost his children and is (as it were) an exile from his native land, King Omar ben Ennuman, to his son Sherkan. Know that, since thy departure from me, the place is become contracted upon me, so that I can no longer have patience nor keep my secret: and the reason of this is as follows. It chanced that Zoulmekan sought my leave to go on the pilgrimage, but I, fearing for him the shifts of fortune, forbade him therefrom until the next year or the year after. Soon after this, I went out to hunt and was absent a whole month. When I returned, I found that thy brother and sister had taken somewhat of money and set out by stealth with the caravan of pilgrims. When I knew this, the wide world became strait on me, O my son; but I awaited the return of the caravan, hoping that they would return with it. Accordingly, when the caravan came back, I questioned the pilgrims of them, but they could give me no news of them; so I put on mourning apparel for them, being heavy at heart and sleepless and drowned in the tears of my eyes." Then followed these verses:

Night lxviii.

Their image is never absent a breathing-while from my breast; I have made it within my bosom the place of the honoured guest,
But that I look for their coming, I would not live for an hour, And but that I see them in dreams, I ne'er should lie down to rest.

The letter went on (after the usual salutations to Sherkan and those of his court), "Do not thou therefore neglect to seek news of them, for indeed this is a dishonour to us." When Sherkan read the letter, he mourned for his father, but rejoiced in the loss of his brother and sister. Now Nuzhet ez Zeman knew not that he was her brother nor he that she was his sister, although he paid her frequent visits, both by day and by night, till the months of her pregnancy were accomplished and she sat down on the stool of delivery. God made the delivery easy to her and she gave birth to a daughter, whereupon she sent for Sherkan and said to him, "This is thy daughter: name her as thou

wilt." Quoth he, "Folk use to name their children on the seventh day." Then he bent down to kiss the child and saw, hung about her neck, a jewel, which he knew at once for one of those that the princess Abrizeh had brought from the land of the Greeks. At this sight, his senses fled, his eyes rolled and wrath seized on him, and he looked at Nuzhet ez Zeman and said to her, "O damsel, whence hadst thou this jewel?" When she heard this, she replied, "I am thy lady and the lady of all in thy palace. Art thou not ashamed to say to me, 'O damsel'?[1] Indeed, I am a queen, the daughter of a king; and now concealment shall cease and the truth be made known. I am Nuzhet ez Zeman, daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman." When Sherkan heard this, he was seized with trembling and bowed his head towards the earth, whilst his heart throbbed and his colour paled, for he knew that she was his sister by the same father. Then he lost his senses; and when he revived, he abode in amazement, but did not discover himself to her and said to her, "O my lady, art thou indeed the daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman?" "Yes," replied she; and he said, "Tell me how thou camest to leave thy father and be sold for a slave." So she told him all that had befallen her, from first to last, how she had left her brother sick in Jerusalem and how the Bedouin had lured her away and sold her to the merchant. When Sherkan heard this and was certified that she was indeed his sister, he said to himself, "How can I have my sister to wife? By Allah, I must marry her to one of my chamberlains; and if the thing get wind, I will avouch that I divorced her before consummation and married her to my chief chamberlain." Then he raised his head and said, "O Nuzhet ez Zeman, thou art my very sister; for I am Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, and may God forgive us the sin into which we have fallen!" She looked

Night lxix.

[1] *i.e.* slave-girl.

at him and seeing that he spoke the truth, became as one bereft of reason and wept and buffeted her face, exclaiming, "There is no power and no virtue but in God! Verily we have fallen into grievous sin! What shall I do and what answer shall I make my father and my mother, when they say to me, 'Whence hadst thou thy daughter'?" Quoth Sherkan, "I purpose to marry thee to my chief chamberlain and let thee bring up my daughter in his house, that none may know thee to be my sister. This that hath befallen us was ordained of God for a purpose of His own, and there is no way to cover ourselves but by thy marriage with the chamberlain, ere any know." Then he fell to comforting her and kissing her head, and she said to him, "What wilt thou call the child?" "Call her Kuzia Fekan,"[1] replied he. Then he gave her in marriage to the chief chamberlain, and they reared the child in his house, on the laps of the slave-girls, till, one day, there came to King Sherkan a courier from his father, with a letter to the following purport, "In the name of God, etc. Know, O puissant King, that I am sore afflicted for the loss of my children: sleep fails me and wakefulness is ever present with me. I send thee this letter that thou mayst make ready the tribute of Syria and send it to us, together with the damsel whom thou hast bought and taken to wife; for I long to see her and hear her discourse; because there has come to us from the land of the Greeks a devout old woman, with five damsels, high-bosomed maids, endowed with knowledge and accomplishments and all fashions of learning that befit mortals; and indeed the tongue fails to describe this old woman and her companions. As soon as I saw the damsels, I loved them and wished to have them in my palace and at my commandment, for none of the kings possesses the like of them; so I asked the old woman their price, and she replied, 'I will not sell them

[1] *i.e.* It was decreed, so it was.

but for the tribute of Damascus.' And by Allah, this is but little for them, for each one of them is worth the whole price. So I agreed to this and took them into my palace, and they remain in my possession. Wherefore do thou expedite the tribute to us, that the old woman may return to her own country; and send us the damsel, that she may strive with them before the doctors; and if she overcome them, I will send her back to thee with the year's revenue of Baghdad." When Sherkan read this letter, he went in to his brother-in-law and said to him, "Call the damsel to whom I married thee." So she came, and he showed her the letter and said to her, "O my sister, what answer wouldst thou have me make to this letter?" "It is for thee to judge," replied she. Then she recalled her people and her native land and yearned after them; so she said to him, "Send me and my husband the Chamberlain to Baghdad, that I may tell my father how the Bedouin seized me and sold me to the merchant, and how thou boughtest me of him and gavest me in marriage to the Chamberlain, after setting me free." "Be it so," replied Sherkan. Then he made ready the tribute in haste and gave it to the Chamberlain, bidding him make ready for Baghdad, and furnished him with camels and mules and two travelling litters, one for himself and the other for the princess. Moreover, he wrote a letter to his father and committed it to the Chamberlain. Then he took leave of his sister, after he had taken the jewel from her and hung it round his daughter's neck by a chain of fine gold; and she and her husband set out for Baghdad the same night. Now their caravan was the very one to which Zoulmekan and his friend the stoker had joined themselves, as before related, having waited till the Chamberlain passed them, riding on a dromedary, with his footmen around him. Then Zoulmekan mounted the stoker's ass and said to the latter, "Do thou mount with me." But he said, "Not so: I will be

Night lxx.

thy servant." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Needs must thou ride awhile," "It is well," replied the stoker; "I will ride when I grow tired." Then said Zoulmekan, "O my brother, thou shalt see how I will do with thee, when I come to my own people." So they journeyed on till the sun rose, and when it was the hour of the noonday rest, the Chamberlain called a halt, and they alighted and rested and watered their camels. Then he gave the signal for departure and they journeyed for five days, till they came to the city of Hemah, where they made a three days' halt; then set out again and fared on, till they reached the province of Diarbekir. Here there blew on them the breezes of Baghdad, and Zoulmekan bethought him of his father and mother and his native land and how he was returning to his father without his sister: so he wept and sighed and complained, and his regrets increased on him, and he repeated the following verses:

Night lxxi.

How long wilt thou delay from me, beloved one? I wait: And yet there comes no messenger with tidings of thy fate.
Alack, the time of love-delight and peace was brief indeed! Ah, that the days of parting thus would of their length abate!
Take thou my hand and put aside my mantle and thou'lt find My body wasted sore; and yet I hide my sad estate.
And if thou bid me be consoled for thee, "By God," I say, "I'll ne'er forget thee till the Day that calls up small and great!"

"Leave this weeping and lamenting," said the stoker, "for we are near the Chamberlain's tent." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Needs must I recite somewhat of verse, so haply it may allay the fire of my heart." "God on thee," cried the stoker, "leave this lamentation, till thou come to thine own country; then do what thou wilt, and I will be with thee, wherever thou art." "By Allah," replied Zoulmekan, "I cannot forbear from this!" Then he set his face towards Baghdad and began to repeat verses. Now the moon was shining brightly and shedding her light on the place, and Nuzhet ez Zeman could not sleep that night, but was

wakeful and called to mind her brother and wept. Presently, she heard Zoulmekan weeping and repeating the following verses:

The southern lightning gleams in the air And rouses in me the old despair,
The grief for a dear one, loved and lost, Who filled me the cup of joy whilere.
It minds me of her who fled away And left me friendless and sick and bare.
O soft-shining lightnings, tell me true, Are the days of happiness past fore'er?
Chide not, O blamer of me, for God Hath cursed me with two things hard to bear,
A friend who left me to pine alone, And a fortune whose smile was but a snare.
The sweet of my life was gone for aye, When fortune against me did declare;
She brimmed me a cup of grief unmixed, And I must drink it and never spare.
Or ever our meeting 'tide, sweetheart, Methinks I shall die of sheer despair,
I prithee, fortune, bring back the days When we were a happy childish pair;
The days, when we from the shafts of fate, That since have pierced us, in safety were!
Ah, who shall succour the exiled wretch, Who passes the night in dread and care,
And the day in mourning for her whose name, Delight of the Age,[1] bespoke her fair?
The hands of the baseborn sons of shame Have doomed us the wede of woe to wear.

Then he cried out and fell down in a swoon, and when Nuzhet ez Zeman heard his voice in the night, her heart was solaced and she rose and called the chief eunuch, who said to her, "What is thy will?" Quoth she, "Go and fetch me him who recited verses but now." "I did not hear him," replied he; "the people are all asleep." And she said, "Whomsoever thou findest awake, he is the man." So he went out and sought, but found none awake but the stoker; for Zoulmekan was still insensible, and

Night lxxii.

[1] *Nuzhet ez Zeman.*

going up to the former, said to him, "Art thou he who recited verses but now, and my lady heard him?" The stoker concluded that the lady was wroth and was afraid and replied, "By Allah, 'twas not I!" "Who then was it?" rejoined the eunuch. "Point him out to me. Thou must know who it was, seeing that thou art awake." The stoker feared for Zoulmekan and said in himself, "Maybe the eunuch will do him some hurt." So he answered, "I know not who it was." "By Allah," said the eunuch, "thou liest, for there is none awake here but thou! So needs must thou know him." "By Allah," replied the stoker, "I tell thee the truth! It must have been some passer-by who recited the verses and disturbed me and aroused me, may God requite him!" Quoth the eunuch, "If thou happen upon him, point him out to me and I will lay hands on him and bring him to the door of my lady's litter; or do thou take him with thine own hand." "Go back," said the stoker, "and I will bring him to thee." So the eunuch went back to his mistress and said to her, "None knows who it was; it must have been some passer-by." And she was silent. Meanwhile, Zoulmekan came to himself and saw that the moon had reached the zenith and felt the breath of the breeze that goes before the dawn; whereupon his heart was moved to longing and sadness, and he cleared his throat and was about to recite verses, when the stoker said to him, "What wilt thou do?" "I have a mind to repeat somewhat of verse," answered Zoulmekan, "that I may allay therewith the fire of my heart." Quoth the other, "Thou knowest not what befell me, whilst thou wast aswoon, and how I only escaped death by beguiling the eunuch." "Tell me what happened," said Zoulmekan. "Whilst thou wast aswoon," replied the stoker, "there came up to me but now an eunuch, with a long staff of almond-tree wood in his hand, who looked in all the people's faces, as they lay asleep, and finding

none awake but myself, asked me who it was recited the verses. I told him it was some passer-by; so he went away and God delivered me from him; else had he killed me. But first he said to me, 'If thou hear him again, bring him to us.'" When Zoulmekan heard this, he wept and said, "Who is it would forbid me to recite? I will surely do so, come what may; for I am near my own country and care for no one." "Dost thou wish to destroy thyself?" asked the stoker; and Zoulmekan answered, "I cannot help reciting verses." "Verily," said the stoker, "I see this will bring about a parting between us here, though I had promised myself not to leave thee, till I had brought thee to thy native city and re-united thee with thy mother and father. Thou hast now been with me a year and a half, and I have never baulked thee or harmed thee in aught. What ails thee then, that thou must needs recite, seeing that we are exceeding weary with travel and watching and all the folk are asleep, for they need sleep to rest them of their fatigue?" But Zoulmekan answered, "I will not be turned from my purpose." Then grief moved him and he threw off disguise and began to repeat the following verses:

Halt by the camp and hail the ruined steads by the brake, And call on her name aloud; mayhap she will answer make.
And if for her absence the night of sadness darken on thee, Light in its gloom a fire with longings for her sake.
Though the snake of the sand-hills hiss, small matter is it to me If it sting me, so I the fair with the lips of crimson take.
O Paradise, left perforce of the spirit, but that I hope For ease in the mansions of bliss, my heart would surely break!

And these also:

Time was when fortune was to us even as a servant is, And in the loveliest of lands our happy lives did kiss.
Ah, who shall give me back the abode of my belov'd, wherein The Age's Joy[1] and Place's Light[2] erst dwelt in peace and bliss?

[1] *Nuzhet ez Zeman.* [2] *Zoulmekan.*

Then he cried out three times and fell down senseless, and the stoker rose and covered him. When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard the first verses, she called to mind her mother and father and brother; and when she heard the second, mentioning the names of herself and her brother and their sometime home, she wept and calling the eunuch, said to him, "Out on thee! But now I heard him who recited the first time do so again, and that hard by. So, by Allah, an thou fetch him not to me, I will rouse the Chamberlain on thee, and he shall beat thee and turn thee away. But take these hundred dinars and give them to him and do him no hurt, but bring him to me gently. If he refuse, give him this purse of a thousand dinars and leave him and return to me and tell me, after thou hast informed thyself of his place and condition and what countryman he is. Return quickly and do not linger, and beware lest thou come back and say, 'I could not find him.'" So the eunuch went out and fell to examining the people and treading amongst them, but found none awake, for the folk were all asleep for weariness, till he came to the stoker and saw him sitting up, with his head uncovered. So he drew near him and seizing him by the hand, said to him, "It was thou didst recite the verses!" The stoker was affrighted and replied, "No, by Allah, O chief of the people, it was not I!" But the eunuch said, "I will not leave thee till thou show me who it was; for I fear to return to my lady without him." Thereupon the stoker feared for Zoulmekan and wept sore and said to the eunuch, "By Allah, it was not I, nor do I know who it was. I only heard some passer-by recite verses: so do not thou commit sin on me, for I am a stranger and come from Jerusalem, and Abraham the Friend of God be with thee!" "Come thou with me," rejoined the eunuch, "and tell my lady this with thine own mouth, for I see none awake but thee." Quoth the stoker, "Hast thou not seen me sitting

Night lxxiii.

here and dost thou not know my station? Thou knowest none can stir from his place, except the guards seize him. So go thou to thy mistress and if thou hear any one reciting again, whether it be near or far, it will be I or some one whom I shall know, and thou shalt not know of him but by me." Then he kissed the eunuch's head and spoke him fair, till he went away; but he made a circuit and returning secretly, came and hid himself behind the stoker, fearing to go back to his mistress empty-handed. As soon as he was gone, the stoker aroused Zoulmekan and said to him, "Awake and sit up, that I may tell thee what has happened." So Zoulmekan sat up, and the stoker told him what had passed, and he answered, "Let me alone; I will take no heed of this and I care for none, for I am near my own country." Quoth the stoker, "Why wilt thou obey thine own inclinations and the promptings of the devil? If thou fearest no one, I fear for thee and myself; so God on thee, recite no more verses, till thou come to thine own country! Indeed, I had not thought thee so self-willed. Dost thou not know that this lady is the wife of the Chamberlain and is minded to chide thee for disturbing her. Belike, she is ill or restless for fatigue, and this is the second time she hath sent the eunuch to look for thee." However, Zoulmekan paid no heed to him, but cried out a third time and repeated the following verses:

The carping tribe I needs must flee; Their railing chafes my misery.
They blame and chide at me nor know They do but fan the flame in me.
"She is consoled," they say. And I, "Can one consoled for country be?"
Quoth they, "How beautiful she is!" And I, "How dear-belov'd is she!"
"How high her rank!" say they; and I, "How base is my humility!"
Now God forfend I leave to love, Deep though I drink of agony!
Nor will I heed the railing race, Who carp at me for loving thee.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses when the eunuch, who had heard him from his hiding, came up to him; whereupon the stoker fled and stood afar off, to see

what passed between them. Then said the eunuch to Zoulmekan, "Peace be on thee, O my lord!" "And on thee be peace," replied Zoulmekan, "and the mercy of God and His blessing!" "O my lord," continued the eunuch, "this is the third time I have sought thee this night, for my mistress bids thee to her." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Whence comes this bitch that seeks for me? May God curse her and her husband too!" And he began to revile the eunuch, who could make him no answer, because his mistress had charged him to do Zoulmekan no violence nor bring him, save of his free will, and if he would not come, to give him the thousand dinars. So he began to speak him fair and say to him, "O my lord, take this (purse) and go with me. We will do thee no unright nor wrong thee in aught; but we would have thee bend thy gracious steps with me to my mistress, to speak with her and return in peace and safety; and thou shalt have a handsome present." When Zoulmekan heard this, he arose and went with the eunuch, stepping over the sleeping folk, whilst the stoker followed them at a distance, saying to himself, "Alas, the pity of his youth! To-morrow they will hang him. How base it will be of him, if he say it was I who bade him recite the verses!" And he drew near to them and stood, watching them, without their knowledge, till they came to Nuzhet ez Zeman's tent, when the eunuch went in to her and said, "O my lady, I have brought thee him whom thou soughtest, and he is a youth, fair of face and bearing the marks of gentle breeding." When she heard this, her heart fluttered and she said, "Let him recite some verses, that I may hear him near at hand, and after ask him his name and extraction." So the eunuch went out to Zoulmekan and said to him, "Recite what verses thou knowest, for my lady is here hard by, listening to thee, and after I will ask thee of thy name and extraction and condition." "Willingly," replied he;

Night lxxiv.

"but as for my name, it is blotted out and my trace among men is passed away and my body wasted. I have a story, the beginning of which is not known nor can the end of it be described, and behold, I am even as one who hath exceeded in drinking wine, till he hath lost the mastery of himself and is afflicted with distempers and wanders from his right mind, being perplexed about his case and drowned in the sea of melancholy." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she broke out into loud weeping and sobbing and said to the eunuch, "Ask him if he have lost a beloved one, such as his father or mother." The eunuch did as she bade him, and Zoulmekan replied, "Yes, I have lost all whom I loved: but the dearest of all to me was my sister, from whom Fate hath parted me." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she exclaimed, "May God the Most High reunite him with those he loves!" Then said she to the eunuch, "Tell him to let me hear somewhat on the subject of his separation from his people and his country." The eunuch did so, and Zoulmekan sighed heavily and repeated the following verses:

Night lxxv.

Ah, would that I knew they were ware Of the worth of the heart they have won!
Would I knew through what passes they fare, From what quarter they look on the sun!
Are they living, I wonder, or dead? Can it be that their life's race is run?
Ah, the lover is ever distraught And his life for misgivings undone!

And also these:

I vow, if e'er the place shall bless my longing sight, Wherein my sister dwells, the age's dear delight,[1]
I'll take my fill of life and all the sweets of peace, Midst trees and flowing streams and maidens fair and bright.
The lute's enchanting tones shall soothe me to repose, What while I quaff full cups of wine like living light
And honeyed dews of love suck from the deep-red lips Of lovelings sleepy-eyed, with tresses black as night.

[1] *Nuzhet ez Zeman.*

When he had finished, Nuzhet ez Zeman lifted up a corner of the curtain of the litter and looked at him. As soon as her eyes fell on him, she knew him for certain and cried out, "O my brother! O Zoulmekan!" He looked at her and knew her and cried out, "O my sister! O Nuzhet ez Zeman!" Then she threw herself upon him, and he received her in his arms, and they both fell down in a swoon. When the eunuch saw this, he wondered and throwing over them somewhat to cover them, waited till they should recover. After awhile, they came to themselves, and Nuzhet ez Zeman rejoiced exceedingly: grief and anxiety left her and joys flocked upon her and she repeated the following verses:

Fate swore 'twould never cease to plague my life and make me rue.
Thou hast not kept thine oath, O Fate; so look thou penance do.
Gladness is come and my belov'd is here to succour me; So rise unto the summoner of joys, and quickly too.
I had no faith in Paradise of olden time, until I won the nectar of its streams from lips of damask hue.

When Zoulmekan heard this, he pressed his sister to his breast, whilst, for the excess of his joy, the tears streamed from his eyes and he 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 alike for gladness and for pain.

They sat awhile at the door of the litter, conversing, till she said to him, "Come with me into the litter and tell me all that has befallen thee, and I will do the like." So they entered and Zoulmekan said, "Do thou begin." Accordingly, she told him all that had happened to her since

their separation and said, "Praised be God who hath vouchsafed thee to me and ordained that, even as we left our father together, so we shall return to him together! Now tell me how it has fared with thee since I left thee." So he told her all that had befallen him and how God had sent the stoker to him, and how he had journeyed with him and spent his money on him and tended him night and day. She praised the stoker for this, and Zoulmekan added, "Indeed, O my sister, the man hath dealt with me in such benevolent wise as would not a lover with his mistress or a father with his son, for that he fasted and gave me to eat, and went afoot, whilst he made me ride; and I owe my life to him." "God willing," said she, "we will requite him for all this, according to our power." Then she called the eunuch, who came and kissed Zoulmekan's hand, and she said, "Take thy reward for glad tidings, O face of good omen! It was thy hand reunited me with my brother; so the purse I gave thee and its contents are thine. But now go to thy master and bring him quickly to me." The eunuch rejoiced and going to the Chamberlain, summoned him to his mistress. Accordingly, he came in to his wife and finding Zoulmekan with her, asked who he was. So she told him all that had befallen them, first and last, and added, "Know, O Chamberlain, that thou hast gotten no slave-girl to wife, but the daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman: for I am Nuzhet ez Zeman, and this is my brother Zoulmekan." When the Chamberlain heard her story, he knew it for the manifest truth and was certified that he was become King Omar ben Ennuman's son-in-law and said to himself, "I shall surely be made governor of some province." Then he went up to Zoulmekan and gave him joy of his safety and re-union with his sister, and bade his servants forthwith make him ready a tent and one of the best of his own horses to ride. Then said Nuzhet ez Zeman,

"We are now near my country and I would fain be alone with my brother, that we may enjoy one another's company and take our fill of each other, before we reach Baghdad; for we have been long parted." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the Chamberlain and going forth, sent them wax candles and various kinds of sweetmeats, together with three costly suits of clothes for Zoulmekan. Then he returned to the litter, and Nuzhet ez Zeman said to him, "Bid the eunuch find the stoker and give him a horse to ride and provide him a tray of food morning and evening, and let him be forbidden to leave us." The Chamberlain called the eunuch and charged him accordingly; so he took his pages with him and went out in search of the stoker, whom he found at the tail of the caravan, saddling his ass and preparing for flight. The tears were running down his cheeks, out of fear for himself and grief for his separation from Zoulmekan, and he was saying to himself, "Indeed, I warned him for the love of God, but he would not listen to me. O that I knew what is become of him!" Before he had done speaking, the eunuch came up and stood behind him, whilst the pages surrounded him. The stoker turned and seeing the eunuch and the pages round him, changed colour and trembled in every nerve for affright, exclaiming, "Verily, he knows not the value of the good offices I have done him! I believe he has denounced me to the eunuch and made me an accomplice in his offence." Then the eunuch cried out at him, saying, "Who was it recited the verses? Liar that thou art, why didst thou tell me that thou knewest not who it was, when it was thy companion? But now I will not leave thee till we come to Baghdad, and what betides thy comrade shall betide thee." Quoth the stoker, "Verily, what I feared has fallen on me." And he repeated the following verse:

Night lxxvi.

'Tis e'en as I feared it would be: We are God's and to Him return we.

Then said the eunuch to the pages, "Take him off the ass." So they took him off the ass and setting him on a horse, carried him along with the caravan, surrounded by the pages, to whom said the eunuch, "If a hair of him be missing, it shall be the worse for you." But he bade them privily treat him with consideration and not humiliate him. When the stoker saw himself in this case, he gave himself up for lost and turning to the eunuch, said to him, "O chief, I am neither this youth's brother nor anywise akin to him; but I was a stoker in a bath and found him lying asleep on the fuel-heap." Then the caravan fared on and the stoker wept and imagined a thousand things in himself, whilst the eunuch walked by his side and told him nothing, but said to him, "You disturbed our mistress by reciting verses, thou and the lad: but have no fear for thyself." This he said, laughing at him the while in himself. When the caravan halted, they brought them food, and he and the eunuch ate from one dish. Then the eunuch let bring a gugglet of sherbet of sugar and after drinking himself, gave it to the stoker, who drank; but all the while his tears ceased not flowing, out of fear for himself and grief for his separation from Zoulmekan and for what had befallen them in their strangerhood. So they travelled on with the caravan, whilst the Chamberlain now rode by the door of his wife's litter, in attendance on Zoulmekan and the princess, and now gave an eye to the stoker, and Nuzhet ez Zeman and her brother occupied themselves with converse and mutual condolence; and so they did till they came within three days' journey of Baghdad. Here they alighted at eventide and rested till the morning, when they woke and were about to load the beasts, when behold, there appeared afar off a great cloud of dust, that obscured the air, till it became as dark as night. Thereupon the Chamberlain cried out to them to stay their preparations for departure, and mounting with his officers, rode forward

in the direction of the dust-cloud. When they drew near it, they perceived under it a numerous army, like the full-flowing sea, with drums and flags and standards and horsemen and footmen. The Chamberlain marvelled at this: and when the troops saw him, there came forth from amongst them a troop of five hundred horse, who fell upon him and his suite and surrounded them, five for one; whereupon said he to them, "What is the matter and what are these troops, that ye use us thus?" "Who art thou?" asked they. "Whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" And he answered, "I am the Chamberlain of the Viceroy of Damascus, King Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, Lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorassan, and I bring tribute and presents from him to his father in Baghdad." When the horsemen heard speak of King Omar, they let their kerchiefs fall over their faces and wept, saying, "Alas! King Omar is dead, and he died poisoned. But fare ye on,—no harm shall befall you,—and join his Grand Vizier Dendan." When the Chamberlain heard this, he wept sore and exclaimed, "Alas, our disappointment in this our journey!" Then he and his suite rode on, weeping, till they reached the main body of the army and sought access to the Vizier Dendan, who called a halt and causing his pavilion to be pitched, sat down on a couch therein and commanded to admit the Chamberlain. Then he bade him be seated and questioned him; and he replied that he was the Viceroy's Chamberlain of Damascus and was bound to King Omar with presents and the tribute of Syria. The Vizier wept at the mention of King Omar's name and said, "King Omar is dead by poison, and the folk fell out amongst themselves as to whom they should make king after him, so that they were like to come to blows on this account; but the notables and grandees interposed and restored peace, and the people agreed to refer the matter to the

decision of the four Cadis, who adjudged that we should go to Damascus and fetch thence the late king's son Sherkan and make him king over his father's realm. Some of them would have chosen his second son Zoulmekan, were it not that he and his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman set out five years ago for Mecca, and none knows what is become of them." When the Chamberlain heard this, he knew that his wife had told him the truth and grieved sore for the death of King Omar, what while he was greatly rejoiced, especially at the arrival of Zoulmekan, for that he would now become King of Baghdad in his father's room. So he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "Verily, your affair is a wonder of wonders! Know, O chief Vizier, that here, where you have encountered me, God giveth you rest from fatigue and bringeth you that you desire after the easiest of fashions, in that He restoreth to you Zoulmekan and his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, whereby the matter is settled and made easy." When the Vizier heard this, he rejoiced greatly and said, "O Chamberlain, tell me their story and the reason of their having been so long absent." So he repeated to him the whole story and told him that Nuzhet ez Zeman was his wife. As soon as he had made an end of his tale, the Vizier sent for the amirs and viziers and grandees and acquainted them with the matter; whereat they rejoiced greatly and wondered at the happy chance. Then they went in to the Chamberlain and did their service to him, kissing the earth before him; and the Vizier Dendan also rose and stood before him, in token of respect. After this, the Chamberlain held a great council, and he and the Vizier sat upon a throne, whilst all the amirs and officers of state took their places before them, according to their several ranks. Then they dissolved sugar in rose-water and drank, after which the amirs sat down to hold council and bade the rest mount and ride forward leisurely, till they should make an end

Night lxxbii.

of their deliberations and overtake them. So the officers kissed the earth before them and mounting, rode onward, preceded by the standards of war. When the amirs had finished their conference, they mounted and rejoined the troops; and the Chamberlain said to the Vizier Dendan, "I think it well to ride on before you, that I may notify Zoulmekan of your coming and choice of him as Sultan over the head of his brother Sherkan, and that I may make him ready a place befitting his dignity." "It is well thought," answered the Vizier. Then the Chamberlain rose and Dendan also rose, to do him honour, and brought him presents, which he conjured him to accept. On like wise did all the amirs and officers of state, calling down blessings on him and saying to him, "Mayhap thou will make mention of our case to King Zoulmekan and speak to him to continue us in our dignities." The Chamberlain promised what they asked and the Vizier Dendan sent with him tents and bade the tent-pitchers set them up at a day's journey from the city. Then the Chamberlain mounted and rode forward, full of joy and saying in himself, "How blessed is this journey!" And indeed his wife was exalted in his eyes, she and her brother Zoulmekan. They made all haste, till they reached a place distant a day's journey from Baghdad, where he called a halt and bade his men alight and make ready a sitting place for the Sultan Zoulmekan, whilst he rode forward with his pages and alighting at a distance from Nuzhet ez Zeman's litter, commanded the eunuchs to ask the princess's leave to admit him. They did so and she gave leave; whereupon he went in to her and her brother and told them of the death of their father, King Omar ben Ennuman, and how the heads of the people had made Zoulmekan king over them in his stead; and he gave them joy of the kingdom. When they heard this, they both wept for their father and asked the manner of his death.

"The news rests with the Vizier Dendan," replied the Chamberlain, "who will be here to-morrow with all the troops; and it only remains for thee, O prince, to do what they counsel, since they have chosen thee King; for if thou do not this, they will crown another, and thou canst not be sure of thyself with another king. Haply he will kill thee, or discord may befall between you and the kingdom pass out of your hands." Zoulmekan bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, "I accept;" for indeed he saw that the Chamberlain had counselled him rightly and that there was no refusing; "but, O uncle, how shall I do with my brother Sherkan?" "O my son," replied the Chamberlain, "thy brother will be Sultan of Damascus, and thou Sultan of Baghdad; so gird up thy resolution and prepare to do what befits thy case." Then he presented him with a suit of royal raiment and a dagger of state, that the Vizier Dendan had brought with him, and leaving him, returned to the tent-pitchers and bade them choose out a spot of rising ground and pitch thereon a spacious and splendid pavilion, wherein the Sultan might sit to receive the amirs and grandees. Then he ordered the cooks to make ready rich food and serve it up and the water-carriers to set up the water-troughs. They did as he bade them and presently there arose a cloud of dust and spread till it obscured the horizon. After awhile, the breeze dispersed it, and there appeared under it the army of Baghdad and Khorassan, led by the Vizier Dendan, all rejoicing in the accession of Zoulmekan. Now Zoulmekan had donned the royal robes and girt himself with the sword of state: so the Chamberlain brought him a steed and he mounted, surrounded by the rest of the company on foot, and rode between the tents, till he came to the royal pavilion, where he entered and sat down, with the royal dagger across his thighs, whilst the Chamberlain stood in attendance on him and his servants stationed themselves

Night lxxviii.

in the vestibule of the pavilion, with drawn swords in their hands. Presently, up came the troops and sought admission to the King's presence; so the Chamberlain went in to Zoulmekan and asked his leave, whereupon he bade admit them, ten by ten. Accordingly, the Chamberlain went out to them and acquainted them with the King's orders, to which they replied, "We hear and obey." Then he took ten of them and carried them, through the vestibule, into the presence of the Sultan, whom when they saw, they were awed; but he received them with the utmost kindness and promised them all good. So they gave him joy of his safe return and invoked God's blessing upon him, after which they took the oath of fealty to him, and kissing the earth before him, withdrew. Then other ten entered and he received them in the same manner; and they ceased not to enter, ten by ten, till none was left but the Vizier Dendan. So he went in and kissed the earth before Zoulmekan, who rose to meet him, saying, "Welcome, O noble Vizier and father! Verily, thine acts are those of a precious counsellor, and judgment and foresight are in the hands of the Subtle, the All Wise." Then he commanded the Chamberlain to go out and cause the tables to be spread at once and bid the troops thereto. So they came and ate and drank. Moreover, he bade Dendan call a ten days' halt of the army, that he might be private with him and learn from him the manner of his father's death. Accordingly, the Vizier went forth and transmitted the King's wishes to the troops, who received his commands with submission and wished him eternity of glory. Moreover, he gave them leave to divert themselves and ordered that none of the lords in waiting should go in to the king for his service for the space of three days. Then Zoulmekan waited till nightfall, when he went in to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman and said to her, "Dost thou know the fashion of my father's death or not?" "I have

no knowledge of it," replied she, and drew a silken curtain before herself, whilst Zoulmekan seated himself without the curtain and sending for the Vizier, bade him relate to him in detail the manner of King Omar's death. "Know then, O King," replied Dendan, "that King Omar ben Ennuman, when he returned to Baghdad from his hunting excursion, enquired for thee and thy sister, but could not find you and knew that you had gone on the pilgrimage, whereat he was greatly concerned and angered, and his breast was contracted. He abode thus a whole year, seeking news of you from all who came and went, but none could give him any tidings of you. At the end of this time, as we were one day in attendance upon him, there came to us an old woman, as she were a devotee, accompanied by five damsels, high-bosomed maids, like moons, endowed with such beauty and grace as the tongue fails to describe; and to crown their perfections, they knew the Koran by heart and were versed in various kinds of learning and in the histories of bygone peoples. The old woman sought an audience of the King, and he bade admit her; whereupon she entered and kissed the ground before him. Now I was then sitting by his side, and he, seeing in her the signs of devoutness and asceticism, made her draw near and sit down by him. So she sat down and said to him, 'Know, O King, that with me are five damsels, whose like no king possesses, for they are endowed with beauty and grace and wit. They know the Koran and the traditions and are skilled in all manner of learning and in the history of bygone peoples. They are here before thee, at thy disposal; for it is by proof that folk are prized or disdained.' Thy late father looked at the damsels and their favour pleased him; so he said to them, 'Let each of you tell me something of what she knows of the history of bygone folk and peoples of times past.' Thereupon one of them came forward and kissing the earth before

Night lxxix.

him, spoke as follows, 'Know, O King, that it behoves the man of good breeding to eschew impertinence and adorn himself with excellencies, observing the Divine precepts and shunning mortal sins; and to this he should apply himself with the assiduity of one who, if he stray therefrom, is lost; for the foundation of good breeding is virtuous behaviour. Know that the chief reason of existence is the endeavour after life everlasting and the right way thereto is the service of God: so it behoves thee to deal righteously with the people; and swerve not from this rubrick, for the mightier folk are in dignity, the more need they have of prudence and foresight; and indeed kings need this more than common folk, for the general cast themselves into affairs, without taking thought to the issue of them. Be thou prodigal both of thyself and thy treasure in the way of God and know that, if an enemy dispute with thee, thou mayst litigate with him and refute him with proof and ward thyself against him; but as for thy friend, there is none can judge between thee and him but righteousness and fair-dealing. Wherefore, choose thy friend for thyself, after thou hast proved him. If he be a man of religion, let him be zealous in observing the external letter of the Law and versed in its inner meaning, as far as may be: and if he be a man of the world, let him be free-born, sincere, neither ignorant nor perverse, for the ignorant man is such that even his parents might well flee from him, and a liar cannot be a true friend, for the word "friend"[1] is derived from "truth,"[2] that emanates from the bottom of the heart; and how can this be the case, when falsehood is manifest upon the tongue? Know, therefore, that the observance of the Law profits him who practises it: so love thy brother, if he be after this fashion, and do not cast him off, even if thou see in him that which thou mislikest; for a friend is not like a wife, whom one

[1] *Sedic.* [2] *Sidc.*

can divorce and take again; but his heart is like glass: once broken, it cannot be mended. And God bless him who says:

Be careful not to hurt men's hearts nor work them aught of dole, For
hard it is to bring again a once estrangéd soul;
And hearts, indeed, whose loves in twain by discord have been rent,
Are like a broken glass, whose breach may never be made whole.

The wise say (continued she), "The best of friends is he who is the most assiduous in good counsel, the best of actions is that which is fairest in its result, and the best of praise is (not) that which is in the mouths of men." It is said also, "It behoves not the believer to neglect to thank God, especially for two favours, health and reason." Again, "He who honoureth himself, his lust is a light matter to him, and he who makes much of small troubles, God afflicts him with great ones: he who obeys his own inclination neglects his duties and he who listens to the slanderer loses the true friend. He who thinks well of thee, do thou fulfil his thought of thee. He who exceeds in contention sins, and he who does not beware of unright is not safe from the sword."

Now will I tell thee somewhat of the duties of judges. Know, O King, that no judgment serves the cause of justice except it be given after deliberation, and it behoves the judge to treat all people alike, to the intent that the rich and noble may not be encouraged to oppression nor the poor and weak despair of justice. He should extract proof from him who complains and impose an oath upon him who denies; and compromise is lawful between Muslims, except it be a compromise sanctioning an unlawful or forbidding a lawful thing. If he have done aught during the day, of which he is doubtful, the judge should reconsider it and apply his discernment to elucidating it, that (if he have erred) he may revert to the right, for to do justice is a religious obligation and to return to that which is right is

better than perseverance in error. Then he should study the precedents and the law of the case and do equal justice between the suitors, fixing his eye upon the truth and committing his affair to God, to whom belong might and majesty. Let him require proof of the complainant, and if he adduce it, let him put the defendant to his oath; for this is the ordinance of God. He should receive the testimony of competent Muslim witnesses, one against another, for God the Most High hath commanded judges to judge by externals, He Himself taking charge of the secret things. It behoves the judge also to avoid giving judgment, whilst suffering from stress of pain or hunger, and that in his decisions between the folk he seek to please God, for he whose intent is pure and who is at peace with his conscience, God shall guarantee him against what is between him and the people. Quoth Ez Zuhri,[1] "There are three things, which if they be found in a Cadi, he should be deposed; namely, if he honour the base, love praise and fear dismissal." It is related that Omar ben Abdulaziz once deposed a Cadi, who asked him why he had done so. "It has come to my knowledge," replied Omar, "that thy speech is greater than thy condition." It is said also that Iskender[2] said to his Cadi, "I have invested thee with this function and committed to thee in it my soul and my honour and manhood; so do thou guard it with thy soul and thine understanding." To his cook he said, "Thou art the governor of my body; so look thou tender it." To his secretary he said, "Thou art the controller of my wit: so do thou watch over me in what thou writest for me."'

Night lxxx. With this the first damsel retired and a second one came forward and kissing the earth seven times before the King

[1] Mohammed Ibn Shihab ez Zuhri, a celebrated traditionist and jurisconsult of Medina in the seventh and eighth centuries.

[2] Alexander.

thy father, spoke as follows: 'The sage Lucman[1] said to his son, "There are three men whom thou shalt not know, but in three several cases; thou shalt not know the merciful man but in time of anger, nor the brave man but in time of war nor thy friend but when thou hast need of him." It is said that the oppressor shall repent, though the people praise him, and that the oppressed is safe, though the people blame him. Quoth God the Most High,[2] "Think not that those who rejoice in their deeds and love to be praised for that which they have not done, shall escape punishment; indeed there is reserved for them a grievous punishment." Quoth Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation), "Works are according to intentions, and to each man is attributed that which he intends." He saith also, "There is a part of the human body, which being whole, all the rest is whole, and which being corrupt, the whole body is corrupt; it is the heart. And indeed the heart is the most marvellous part of man, since it is that which ordereth his whole affair: if covetise stir in it, desire destroys him, and if affliction master it, anguish slays him: if anger rage in it, danger is sore upon him, and if it be blest with contentment, he is safe from discontent; if fear overtake it, he is filled with mourning, and if calamity smite it, affliction betideth him. If a man gain wealth, his heart is peradventure diverted thereby from the remembrance of his Lord, and if poverty afflict him, his heart is distracted by care, or if disquietude waste his heart, weakness reduces him to impotence. So, in any case, there is nothing will profit him but that he be mindful of God and occupy himself with gaining his living and securing his place in Paradise." It was asked of a certain wise man, "Who is the most ill-conditioned of men?" "He," replied the sage,

[1] The celebrated fabulist, said to have been a black slave of the time of David, but supposed by some to be identical with Æsop.

[2] Koran, iii. 185.

"whose lusts master his manhood and whose mind exceeds in the pursuit of objects of high emprise, so that his knowledge increases and his excuse diminishes; and how excellent is what the poet says:

The freest of all men from need of the arrogant meddler am I, The fool
who's unguided of God and judges the folk all awry;
For wealth and good gifts are a loan and each man at last shall be clad,
As it were in a mantle, with that which hid in his bosom doth lie.
If thou enter on aught by a door that is other than right, thou wilt err;
But the right door will lead thee aright, for sure, if thou enter
thereby."

As for anecdotes of devotees (continued the maiden), quoth Hisham ben Besher, "I said to Omar ben Ubeid, 'What is true devoutness?' and he answered, 'The prophet (whom God bless and preserve) hath expounded it, when he says, "The devout is he who takes thought to death and calamity and prefers that which is eternal to that which passes away, who counts not the morrow as of his days, but reckons himself among the dead."'" And it is related that Abou Dherr[1] used to say, "Poverty is dearer to me than riches and sickness than health." Quoth one of the listeners, "May God have mercy on Abou Dherr! For my part, I say, 'He who puts his trust in the goodness of the election of God the Most High should be content with that condition of which the Almighty hath made choice for him.'" Quoth one of the Companions (of the Prophet), "Ibn Ali Awfa[2] prayed with us the morning prayer one day. When he had done, he read the seventy-fourth chapter (of the Koran), beginning, 'O thou that coverest thyself!' till he came to where God says, 'When the trumpet is blown,' and fell down dead." It is said that Thabit el Benani wept till he well-

[1] One of the Companions of the Prophet.
[2] One of the contemporaries of Mohammed and a noted Traditionist (or repeater of the sayings of the Prophet) at Cufa in the seventh century.

nigh lost his eyes. They brought him a man to tend him, who said to him, "I will cure thee, provided thou do my bidding." "In what respect?" asked Thabit. "In that thou leave weeping," replied the physician. "What is the use of my eyes," rejoined Thabit, "if they do not weep?" Said a man to Mohammed ibn Abdallah, "Exhort me." Night
"I exhort thee," replied he, "to be an abstinent possessor lxxxi.
in this world and a greedy slave in the next." "How so?" asked the other; and Mohammed said, "The abstinent man in this world possesses both this world and the world to come." Quoth Ghauth ben Abdallah, "There were two brothers among the people of Israel, one of whom said to the other, 'What is the worst thing thou hast done?' 'One day,' answered the other, 'I came upon a nest of young birds; so I took out one and threw it back into the nest; but the others drew apart from it. This is the worst thing I ever did; so now tell me what is the worst thing thou hast ever done.' 'When I betake myself to prayer,' rejoined the first, 'I am fearful to have done so only for the sake of the reward. This is the worst thing I have done.' Now their father heard what they said and exclaimed, 'O my God, if they speak the truth, take them to Thyself!' Quoth one of the wise men, 'Verily these were of the most virtuous of children.'" Quoth Saïd ben Jubeir,[1] "I was once in company with Fuzaleh ibn Ubeid and said to him, 'Give me some good counsel.' 'Bear in mind these two things,' replied he. 'Attribute no partner to God, and do no hurt to any of His creatures.' And he repeated the following verses:

Be as thou wilt and banish dread and care, For God is bountiful and
debonair;
So of two things, the doing hurt to men And giving God a partner, thou
beware."

[1] A noted Traditionist and expounder of the Koran in the first century of the Muslim era. He was a black and a native of Cufa.

And how well saith the poet:

If thou neglect with pious works for death to furnish thee And after meet with one equipped with store of piety,
Thou wilt, when all too late, repent that thou wast not like him And didst not for the other world make ready as did he.'

Then the second damsel withdrew and a third came forward and spoke as follows. 'Indeed, the chapter of piety is a very wide one; but I will mention what occurs to me thereof, concerning pious men of old time. Quoth a certain holy man, "I rejoice in death, though I am not assured of ease therein, save that I know death interposes between a man and his works; so I hope for multiplication of good works and cessation of evil ones." Itaa es Selemi, when he had made an end of an exhortation, was wont to tremble and weep sore. It was asked him why he did this and he replied, "I purpose (or am about) to enter upon a grave matter, and it is the standing up before God the Most High, to do in accordance with my exhortation." In like manner Zein el Aabidin[1] was wont to tremble when he rose to pray. Being asked the reason of this, he replied, "Do ye not know before whom I stand and to whom I address myself?" It is said that there lived near Sufyan eth Thauri[2] a blind man who, when the month of Ramazan came, went out with the folk to pray, but remained silent and hung back (in repeating the prayers). Said Sufyan, "On the Day of Resurrection, he shall come with the people of the Koran[3] and they will be distinguished from their fellows by excess of honour." Quoth Sufyan, "Were the soul stablished in the heart as it befits, it would fly away, for joy and longing for Paradise and grief and fear

[1] Son of the martyr Hussein and grandson of the Khalif Ali.

[2] A very eminent doctor of the law and traditionist of the eighth century. He was a native of Cufa and was regarded as one of the great exemplars of the true believers.

[3] *i.e.* those who love and obey the precepts of the Koran.

of hell-fire." It is related also of Sufyan that he said, "To look upon the face of a tyrant is a sin."'

Then the third damsel retired and a fourth came forward, who said, 'I will treat of sundry traditions of pious men. It is related that Bishr el Hafi[1] said, "I once heard Khalid say, 'Beware of secret hypocrisy.' Quoth I, 'What is secret hypocrisy?' He answered, 'When one of you, in praying, prolongs his inclinations and prostrations till a cause of impurity[2] come upon him.'" Quoth one of the sages, "The doing of good works expiates evil deeds." Quoth Ibrahim ben Adhem,[3] "I sought assiduously of Bishr el Hafi that he should acquaint me with some of the theological mysteries; but he said, 'O my son, it behoves us not to teach this knowledge to every one; of every hundred, five, even as the poor-rate upon money.' I thought his answer excellent, and when I went to pray, I saw Bishr praying: so I stood behind him, inclining myself in prayer, till the Muezzin made his call. Then rose a man of poor appearance and said, 'O folk, beware of truth, when it is hurtful, for there is no harm in beneficial falsehood, and in compulsion is no choice: speech profits not in the absence of good qualities nor is there any hurt in silence, when they exist.' Presently I saw Bishr drop a danic:[4] so I picked it up and exchanged it for a dirhem, which I gave him. 'I will not take it,' said he. Quoth I, 'It is a fair exchange;' but he answered, 'I cannot barter the riches of the world to come for those of this world.'" It is reported also that Bishr's sister once went to Ahmed ben Hembel[5] and said to him, "O Imam of the Faith, we are a family that

Night lxxxii.

[1] *i.e.* Barefoot. A native of Merv and a famous ascetic of the eighth and ninth centuries.

[2] Necessitating a fresh ablution, before the prayer can be ended.

[3] Another noted ascetic of the time.

[4] About a penny.

[5] A well-known legist and devotee of the eighth and ninth centuries at Baghdad, founder of one of the four great orthodox Muslim schools.

work for our living by day and spin thread by night; and oftentimes, the cressets of the watch of Baghdad pass by and we on the roof spinning by their light. Is this forbidden to us?" "Who art thou?" asked Ahmed. "I am the sister of Bishr el Hafi," replied she. "O household of Bishr," rejoined the Imam, "I shall never cease to quaff full draughts of piety and continence from your hearts." Quoth one of the learned, "When God wills well to any man, he opens upon him the gate of action." Malik ibn Dinar,[1] when he passed through the bazaar and saw aught that he wished for, was wont to say, "O soul, take patience, for I will not accord to thee what thou desirest." He said also (may God accept of him), "The salvation of the soul lies in resistance to its desires and its ruin in submission to them." Quoth Mensour ben Ammar,[2] "I set out one year on the pilgrimage and was making for Mecca by way of Cufa, when, one overcast night, I heard a voice crying out from the womb of the night and saying, 'O my God, by Thy power and Thy glory, I meant not by my disobedience to transgress against Thee, for indeed I am not ignorant of Thee; but my fault is one Thou didst foreordain to me from all eternity; so do Thou pardon me my sin, for indeed I disobeyed Thee of my ignorance!' When he had made an end of his prayer, he recited aloud the verse, 'O ye who believe, keep yourselves and your households from the fire whose fuel is men and stones!'[3] Then I heard a fall, but knew not what it was and passed on. On the morrow, as we went our way, we fell in with a funeral train, followed by an old woman, whose strength had left her. I questioned her of the dead, and she replied, 'This is the funeral of a man who passed by us yesterday, whilst my son was standing at prayer.

[1] A famous theologian and devotee of the eighth century at Bassora.
[2] A noted preacher and traditionist of Khorassan in the ninth century.
[3] Koran, lxvi. 6.

The latter recited a verse from the Book of God the Most High, when behold the man's gall-bladder burst and he fell dead.'"'

Therewith the fourth damsel retired and the fifth, coming forward, spoke as follows: 'I also will repeat what occurs to me in the way of devotional anecdotes. Meslemeh ben Dinar used to say, "The making sound the secret thoughts covers sins, both great and small, and when the believer is resolved to leave sinning, help comes to him." Also, "Every piece of good fortune, that does not draw one nearer to God, is a calamity, for a little of this world distracts from a great deal of the world to come and a great deal of the first makes thee forget the whole of the latter." It was asked of Abou Hazim,[1] "Who is the most fortunate of men?" "He who spends his life in the service of God," replied he. "And who is the most foolish of mankind?" asked the other. "He who sells his part in the world to come for the worldly goods of others," answered Abou Hazim. It is reported that Moses (on whom be peace), when he came to the waters of Midian, exclaimed, "O my Lord, indeed I am in need of that which Thou sendest down to me of good!" And he asked of his Lord and not of his folk. There came two damsels and he drew water for them and gave not precedence to the shepherds. When they returned to their father Jethro (on whom be peace!) they told him, and he said to one of them, "Haply, he is hungry: go back to him and bid him hither." So she covered her face and returning to Moses, said to him, "My father bids thee to him, that he may reward thee for having drawn water for us." Moses was averse to this and unwilling to follow her. Now she was a woman large in the buttocks, and the wind blowing upon her gown, discovered this; which when Moses saw, he lowered his eyes and said to her, "Do thou walk behind me." So she fol-

[1] A traditionist of Medina, who flourished in the eighth century.

Night lxxxiii. lowed him, till he came to Jethro's house, where the evening meal was ready. "O Moses," said Jethro, "I desire to reward thee for having drawn water for them." But he answered, "I am of a people who sell nothing of the fashion of the next world for earthly gold and silver." "O youth," rejoined Jethro, "nevertheless thou art my guest, and it is my wont and that of my fathers to do honour to the guest by setting food before him." So Moses sat down and ate. Then Jethro hired Moses for eight pilgrimages, that is to say, eight years, and appointed to him for hire the hand of his daughter, and Moses' service to him was to stand for her dowry. As says the Holy Writ of him (quoth Jethro), "I am minded to marry thee to one of these my daughters, on condition that thou serve me eight years, and if thou serve out the ten, it will be of thine own will, for I do not wish to press hardly on thee."[1] A certain man once said to one of his friends, "Thou hast made me desolate, for that I have not seen thee this long while." Quoth the other, "I have been distracted from thee by Ibn Shihab; dost thou know him?" "Yes," replied the first; "he hath been my neighbour these thirty years, but I have never spoken to him." "Indeed," rejoined his friend, "thou forgettest God in forgetting thy neighbour! If thou lovedst God, thou wouldst love thy neighbour. Knowst thou not that a neighbour has a claim upon his neighbour, even as the right of kindred?" Quoth Hudheifeh, "We entered Mecca with Ibrahim ben Adhem,[2] and whilst making the prescribed circuits about the Kaabeh, we met with Shekic the Balkhi. Quoth Ibrahim to Shekic, 'What is your fashion in your country?' 'When we are vouchsafed [food],' replied he, 'we eat, and when we suffer hunger, we take patience.' 'This is the fashion of the

[1] This paragraph is part extract from and part paraphrase of the Koran, xxviii. 22-27.

[2] A well-known pietist of the eighth century.

dogs of Balkh,' rejoined Ibrahim. 'But we, when we are blest with plenty, we do honour to God, and when we suffer famine, we praise Him.' And Shekic seated himself before Ibrahim and said to him, 'Thou art my master.'" Quoth Mohammed ben Amran, "A man once asked of Hatim el Asemm,[1] 'What maketh thee to trust in God?' 'Two things,' replied he. 'I know that what God has appointed for my daily bread shall be eaten by none but myself; so my heart is at rest as to that; and I know that I was not created without God's knowledge and am abashed before Him.'"'

Then the fifth damsel retired and the old woman came forward and kissing the earth before thy father nine times, spoke as follows: 'Thou hast heard, O King, what these all have said on the subject of piety; and I will follow their example in relating what I have heard of the famous men of times past. It is said that the Imam Es Shafi[2] divided the night into three portions, the first for study, the second for sleep and the third for prayer. The Imam Abou Henifeh[2] was wont also to pass half the night in prayer. One day a man pointed him out to another, as he passed, and said, "Yonder man watches the whole night." Quoth Abou Henifeh, "When I heard this, I was abashed before God, to hear myself praised for what was not in me; so, after this, I used to watch the whole night." Er Rebya relates that Es Shafi used to recite the whole Koran seventy times over during the month of Ramazan, and that in prayer. Quoth Es Shafi (may God accept of him!) "For ten years I never ate my fill of barley-bread, for satiety hardens the heart and deadens the wit and induces sleep and enfeebles one from standing up (to pray)." It is reported of Abdallah ben Mohammed es Sekra that he said,

[1] Abou Hatim el Asemm (the Deaf), a famous Balkhi theologian of the ninth century.

[2] Two of the most famous theologians of the second century of the Hegira, and the founders of two of the four great Mohammedan schools.

"I was once talking with Omar, and he said to me, 'Never saw I a more God-fearing or eloquent man than Mohammed ben Idris es Shafi. I went out one day with El Harith ben Lebib es Suffar, who was a disciple of El Muzeni[1] and had a fine voice, and he read the saying of the Most High, "On that day, they shall not speak nor shall it be permitted to them to excuse themselves."'[2] I saw Es Shafi's colour change; his skin shuddered, and he was violently moved and fell down senseless. When he revived, he said, 'I seek refuge with God from the stead of the liars and the fate of the negligent! O my God, the hearts of the wise abase themselves before Thee. O my God, of Thy goodness, accord to me the remission of my sins, adorn me with Thy protection and pardon me my shortcomings, by the magnanimity of Thine essence!' Then I rose and went away." Quoth one of the pious, "When I entered Baghdad, Es Shafi was there. I sat down on the river-bank, to make the ablution before prayer; and as I was thus occupied, there came up one who said to me, 'O youth, make thine ablution well and God will make it well for thee in this world and the world to come.' I turned and saw a man, with a company of people after him. So I hastened to finish my ablutions and followed him. Presently, he turned and said to me, 'Dost thou want aught?' 'Yes,' answered I; 'I desire that thou teach me somewhat of that which God the Most High hath taught thee.' 'Know, then,' said he, 'that he who believes in God the Most High shall be saved and he who is jealous of his faith shall be delivered from destruction, and he who practises abstinence in this world, his eyes shall be solaced on the morrow (of death). Shall I tell thee any more?' 'Assuredly,' replied I. 'Abstain

[1] Ismail ibn Yehya el Muzeni, a famous Egyptian doctor of the law, a pupil of Es Shafi and Imam of the Shafiyite school in the ninth century.

[2] Koran, lxxvii. 35, 36.

from the things of this world,' continued he, 'and be greedy of the good of the world to come. Be sincere and faithful in all thy dealings, and thou shalt be saved with the elect.' Then he went on and I asked about him and was told that he was the Imam es Shafi." Es Shafi was wont to say, "I would have the folk profit by this wisdom (of mine), on condition that none of it be attributed to me." Also, "I never disputed with any one, but I would that God the Most High should give him the knowledge of the Truth and aid him to expound it; nor did I ever dispute with any, but for the showing forth of the Truth, and I recked not whether God should manifest it by my lips or his." He said also (may God accept of him!), "If thou fear to grow conceited of thy learning, bethink thee Whose grace thou seekest and what good it is thou yearnest after and what punishment thou dreadest." It was told to Abou Henifeh that the Commander of the Faithful Abou Jaafer el Mensour had named him Cadi and ordered him a present of ten thousand dirhems; but he would not accept of this; and when the day came on which the money was to be paid, he prayed the morning prayer, then covered his head with his cloak and spoke not. When the Khalif's messenger came with the money, he went in to the Imam and accosted him, but he would not speak to him. Quoth the messenger, "This money is lawfully thine." "I know that it is lawfully mine," replied the Imam; "but I abhor that the love of tyrants should take hold upon my heart." "Canst thou not go in to them and guard thyself from loving them?" asked the other. "Can I look to enter the sea, without wetting my clothes?" answered Abou Henifeh. Another of Es Shafi's sayings is as follows:

Night lxxxiv.

O soul, if thou be fain to do as I shall say, Thou shalt be free from need and great of grace for aye.
Put far away from thee ambitions and desires, For lo, how oft a wish to death hath led the way!

Among the sayings of Sufyan eth Thauri, with which he admonished Ali ben el Hassan es Selemi, was the following, "Look that thou practise sincerity and beware of falsehood and treachery and hypocrisy and presumption, for God annuls good works with either of these things. Borrow not but of Him who is merciful to His debtors and let thy comrade be one who will cause thee to abstain from the world. Let the thought of death be ever present with thee and be constant in asking pardon of God and beseeching of Him peace for what remains of thy life. Give loyal counsel to every true-believer, when he asks thee concerning the things of his faith, and beware of betraying a believer, for he who betrays a believer betrays God and His apostle. Avoid dissension and litigation and leave that which awakens doubt in thee, betaking thyself rather to those things that will not disquiet thee; so shalt thou be at peace. Enjoin that which is just and forbid that which is evil, so shalt thou be beloved of God. Make fair thine inner man, and God shall make fair thine outer man. Accept the excuse of him who excuses himself to thee and hate none of the true-believers. Draw near unto those that reject thee and forgive those that oppress thee; so shalt thou be the companion of the prophets. Commit thine affair to God, both in public and in private, and fear Him with the fear of one who knows that he must die and be raised again to stand before the Almighty, remembering that thou art destined for one of two dwellings, either Paradise the glorious or the flaming fire."' Having spoken thus, the old woman sat down beside the damsels.

When the late King thy father heard their discourse, he knew that they were the most accomplished of the people of their time and seeing their beauty and grace and the greatness of their learning, he showed them all favour. Moreover, he turned to the old woman and entreated her with honour, setting apart for her and her damsels the

palace that had been the lodging of the Princess Abrizeh, to which he let carry all that they needed of the best. Here they abode ten days, and whenever the King visited them, he found the old woman absorbed in prayer, watching by night and fasting by day; wherefore love of her took hold upon his heart and he said to me, 'O Vizier, verily this old woman is a pious soul, and reverence for her is strong in my heart.' On the eleventh day, the King visited her, that he might pay her the price of the five damsels; but she said to him, 'O King, know that the price of these passes the competence of men, for I seek for them neither gold nor silver nor jewels, be it little or much.' The King wondered at this and said, 'O my lady, what is their price?' 'I will not sell them to thee,' replied she, 'save on condition that thou fast a whole month, watching by night and fasting by day for the love of God the Most High: but if thou wilt do this, they are thine, to use as thou pleasest.' The King wondered at the perfectness of her piety and devotion and abnegation and she was magnified in his eyes, and he said, 'May God make this pious old woman to profit us!' So he agreed to her proposal, and she said to him, 'I will help thee with my prayers.' Then she called for a gugglet of water and muttered over it words in an unknown language and abode awhile, speaking over it things that we understood not. Then she covered it with a cloth and sealing it up, gave it to the King, saying, 'When thou hast fasted ten days, break thy fast on the eleventh night with what is in this cup, for it will root out the love of the world from thy heart and fill it with light and faith. As for me, I purpose to go out to-morrow to visit my brethren of the invisible world, for I yearn after them, and I will return to thee when the ten days are past.' So the King took the gugglet and setting it apart in a closet of his palace, locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Next day, the old woman departed and the

Night lxxv. King entered upon his fast. When he had accomplished the first ten days thereof, he opened the gugglet and drank what was therein and found it cordial to his stomach. Within the next ten days, the old woman returned, bringing sweetmeats wrapped in a green leaf, like no leaf of a tree. She went in to the King and saluted him; and when he saw her, he rose to meet her, saying, 'Welcome, O pious lady!' 'O King,' said she, 'the spirits salute thee, for I told them of thee, and they rejoiced in thee and have sent thee this cake, which is of the sweetmeats of the other world. Do thou break thy fast on it at the end of the day.' The King rejoiced greatly at this and exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath given me brethren of the invisible world!' And he thanked the old woman and kissed her hands and entreated her and the damsels with exceeding honour. Then he fasted till twenty days were past, at the end of which time the old woman came to him and said, 'Know, O King, that I told the spirits of the love that is between thee and me and how I had left the damsels with thee, and they were glad that the damsels should belong to a King like thee; for they were wont, when they saw them, to be strenuous in offering up effectual prayer on their behalf. So I would fain carry them to the spirits, that they may benefit by their favours, and they shall surely not return to thee without some treasure of the treasures of the earth, that thou, after the completion of thy fast, mayst occupy thyself with their dress and help thyself to the fulfilment of thy wishes with that which they shall bring thee.' The King thanked her and said, 'But that I fear to cross thee, I would not accept the treasure or aught else: but when wilt thou set out with them?' 'On the seven-and-twentieth night,' replied she; 'and I will bring them back to thee at the end of the month, by which time thou wilt have accomplished thy fast and they will have had their courses and be free from impurity. Then they

shall become thine and be at thy disposal. By Allah, each one of them is worth many times thy kingdom!' 'I know it, O pious lady,' replied the King. Then said the old woman, 'If there be any one in thy palace who is dear to thee, thou wouldst do well to send her with me, that she may find solace and seek a blessing of the spirits.' Quoth the King, 'I have a Greek slave called Sufiyeh, by whom God hath vouchsafed me two children, a son and a daughter: but they were lost years ago. Take her with thee, that she may get the spirits' blessing: it may be they will pray God for her, that her children may be restored to her.' 'It is well,' replied the old woman; for indeed this was what she most desired. The King gave not over fasting till the seven-and-twentieth night, when the old woman said to him, 'O my son, I am about to go to the spirits; so bring me Sufiyeh.' Accordingly, he sent for her and delivered her to the old woman, who placed her with the other damsels. Then she went in to her chamber and bringing out a sealed cup, presented it to the King, saying, 'On the thirtieth day, do thou go to the bath and when thou comest out, enter one of the closets in thy palace and drink the liquor that is in this cup. Then sleep, and thou shalt attain what thou seekest, and peace be on thee!' The King was glad and thanked her and kissed her hands. Quoth she, 'I commend thee to God;' and he said, 'When shall I see thee again, O pious lady? Indeed I love not to part with thee.' Then she called down blessings on him and departed with the five damsels and the Princess Sufiyeh; whilst the King fasted other three days, till the end of the month, when he went to the bath and coming out, shut himself up in a closet, commanding that none should go in to him. Then he drank what was in the cup and lay down to sleep. We sat awaiting him till the end of the day, but he did not come out and we said, 'Belike he is tired with the bath and with watching

Night lxxvi.

by night and fasting by day, and sleepeth.' So we waited till next day; but still he did not come out. Then we stood at the closet-door and cried aloud, so haply he might awake and ask what was the matter. But nothing came of this: so at last we lifted the door off its hinges and going in, found the King dead, with his flesh torn into strips and his bones broken in pieces. When we saw him in this case, it was grievous to us, and we took up the cup and found in its cover a piece of paper, on which was written the following, 'He who does evil leaves no regrets behind him. This is the reward of him who plays the traitor with kings' daughters and debauches them: and we make known to all who happen upon this scroll that Sherkan, when he came to our country, debauched our Princess Abrizeh; nor did this suffice him, but he must take her from us and bring her to you. Then he [Omar ben Ennuman] [debauched her and] sent her away, in company of a black slave, who slew her and we found her lying dead in the desert. This is none of kings' fashion, and he who did this is requited with nought but his deserts. So do ye suspect none of having killed him, for none slew him but the cunning witch, whose name is Dhat ed Dewahi. And behold, I have taken the King's wife Sufiyeh and have carried her to her father King Afridoun of Constantinople. Moreover, we will assuredly make war upon you and kill you and take your land from you, and ye shall be cut off even to the last man, nor shall there be left of you a living soul, no, nor a blower of the fire, except he serve the Cross and the Girdle.' When we read this, we knew that the old woman had cheated us and carried out her plot against us: so we cried out and buffeted our faces and wept sore. However, weeping availed us nothing and the troops fell out as to whom they should make Sultan. Some would have thee and others thy brother Sherkan; and we ceased not to wrangle about this for the space of a month, at the end

of which time certain of us drew together and agreed to repair to thy brother Sherkan. So we set out and journeyed on till we fell in with thee: and this is the manner of the death of King Omar ben Ennuman."

When the Vizier had made an end of his story, Zoulmekan and his sister wept, and the Chamberlain wept also. Then said the latter to Zoulmekan, "O King, weeping will profit thee nothing; nor will aught avail thee but that thou fortify thy heart and strengthen thy resolution and stablish thy power; for verily he is not dead who leaves the like of thee behind him." So Zoulmekan gave over weeping and causing his throne to be set up without the pavilion, commanded the army to pass in review before him. Then he sat down on the throne, with the Chamberlain by his side and all the arm-bearers behind him, whilst the Vizier Dendan and the rest of the amirs and grandees stood before him, each in his several room. Then said Zoulmekan to Dendan, "Acquaint me with the particulars of my father's treasures." Dendan answered, "I hear and obey," and gave him to know the amount and nature of the late King's treasure and what was in the treasury of money and jewels and other precious things. So Zoulmekan gave largesse to the army and bestowed a sumptuous dress of honour on the Vizier Dendan, saying, "I confirm thee in thine office." Whereupon Dendan kissed the earth before him and wished him long life. Then he bestowed dresses of honour on the Amirs, after which he turned to the Chamberlain and said, "Bring out before us the tribute of Damascus, that is with thee." So he laid before him the chests of money and jewels and rarities, and he took them and divided them all amongst the troops, till there was nothing left. And the amirs kissed the ground before him and wished him long life, saying, "Never saw we a king, who gave the like of these gifts." Then they all went away to their own tents, and when it was morning, Night lxxxii.

Zoulmekan gave orders for departure. So they set out and journeyed for three days, till on the fourth day they drew near to Baghdad. When they entered the city, they found it decorated, and King Zoulmekan went up to his father's palace and sat down on the throne, whilst the amirs of the army and the Vizier Dendan and the Chamberlain of Damascus stood before him. Then he bade his private secretary write a letter to his brother Sherkan, acquainting him with all that had passed and adding, "As soon as thou hast read this letter, make ready thine affair and join us with thine army, that we may make war upon the infidels and take vengeance on them for our father and wipe out the stain upon our honour." Then he folded the letter and sealed it and said to Dendan, "None shall carry this letter but thou; and I would have thee speak my brother fair and say to him, 'If thou have a mind to thy father's kingdom, it is thine, and thy brother shall be Viceroy for thee in Damascus; for to this effect am I instructed by him.'" So the Vizier went out from before him and proceeded to make ready for his journey. Then Zoulmekan set apart a magnificent house for the stoker and furnished it with sumptuous furniture and lodged him therein. One day, he went out a-hunting and as he was returning to Baghdad, one of the amirs presented him with horses of fine breeds and damsels whose beauty beggars description. One of the damsels pleased him: so he went in to her and lay with her, and she conceived by him forthright. After a while, the Vizier Dendan returned from Damascus, bringing him news of his brother Sherkan and that he was then on his way to him, and said to him, "Thou wouldst do well to go out to meet him." Zoulmekan replied, "I hear and obey;" and riding forth with his grandees a day's journey from Baghdad, pitched his tents and halted to await the coming of his brother. Next morning, the army of Syria appeared, with King Sherkan in its midst, a bold

cavalier, a fierce lion and a warrior against whom none might make head. As the squadrons drew nigh and the dust-clouds neared and the troops came up with banners flying, Zoulmekan and his attendants rode forward to meet Sherkan; and when the King saw his brother, he would have dismounted, but Sherkan conjured him not to do so and himself set foot to the ground and walked towards him. As soon as he reached Zoulmekan, the latter threw himself upon him, and they embraced and wept and condoled with one another. Then they mounted and rode onward, they and their troops, till they reached Baghdad, where they alighted and went up to the royal palace and passed the night there. Next morning, Zoulmekan went forth and bade proclaim a holy war and summon the troops from all parts. They abode a whole month, awaiting the coming of the levies, whilst the folk poured in from all parts of the kingdom, and every one who came they entreated with honour and munificence and promised him all manner of good. Then Sherkan said to Zoulmekan, "O my brother, tell me thy history." So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, including the benevolent dealing of the stoker with him. "Hast thou requited him his kindness to thee?" asked Sherkan. "Not yet," replied Zoulmekan, "but, God willing, I will surely do so, as soon as I return from this expedition and am at leisure to attend to him." Therewith, Sherkan was certified that his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman had told him the truth; but he concealed what had passed between them and contented himself with sending his salutation to her by her husband the Chamberlain. She returned his greeting in the same fashion, calling down blessings on him and enquiring after her daughter Kuzia Fekan, to which he replied that the child was well and in all health and safety. Then he went to his brother to take counsel with him for departure; and Zoulmekan said, "O my brother, we will set out as soon

Night lxxxviii.

as the army is complete and the Arabs have come in from all parts." So he bade make ready the wheat and other provisions and munitions of war and went in to his wife, who was now five months gone with child; and he put under her hand mathematicians and astrologers, to whom he appointed stipends and allowances. Then, three months after the arrival of the army of Syria, as soon as the troops were all assembled and the Arabs had come in, he set out, at the head of his troops, with his brother Sherkan on his right and his brother-in-law the Chamberlain on his left hand. The name of the general of the army of the Medes was Rustem and that of the general of the army of the Turks Behram. So the squadrons broke up and marched forward and the companies and battalions filed past in battle array, till the whole army was in motion. They ceased not to fare on for the space of a month, halting three days a week to rest, by reason of the greatness of the host, till they came to the country of the Greeks; and as they drew near, the people of the villages and hamlets took fright at them and fled to Constantinople.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she reached her own country and felt herself in safety, she said to her son, King Herdoub, "Be consoled; for I have avenged thy daughter Abrizeh and killed King Omar ben Ennuman and brought back the Princess Sufiyeh. So now let us go to the King of Constantinople and carry him back his daughter and tell him what has happened, that he may be on his guard and prepare his forces and that we may do the like; for I know that the Muslims will not delay to attack us." "Let us wait till they draw near our country," replied Herdoub, "that we may make us ready meantime and assemble our power." Accordingly they fell to levying their forces and preparing for war, so that by the time the news of the Muslims' advance reached them, they were ready for defence. Then King Herdoub and his mother set

out for Constantinople, and King Afridoun, hearing of the arrival of the King of the Greeks, came forth to meet him and asked how it was with him and the cause of his visit. So Herdoub acquainted him with the doings of his mother Dhat ed Dewahi, how she had slain the Muslim king and recovered the Princess Sufiyeh, and that the Muslims had assembled their forces and were on their way to attack them, wherefore it behoved that they two should join powers and meet them. King Afridoun rejoiced in the recovery of his daughter and the death of King Omar and sent to all countries, to seek succour and acquaint the folk with the reason of the slaying of King Omar. So the Christian troops flocked to him from all quarters, and before three months were past, the army of the Greeks was complete, besides which there joined themselves to him the French and Germans and Ragusans and Genoese and Venetians and all the hosts of the Pale Faces and warriors from all the lands of the Franks, and the earth was straitened on them by reason of their multitude. Then Afridoun the Great King commanded to depart; so they set out from Constantinople and ceased not to defile through the city for the space of ten days. They fared on till they reached a spacious valley, hard by the salt sea, where they halted three days; and on the fourth day, they were about to set out again, when news came to them of the approach of the Army of Islam and the defenders of the faith of the Best of Men.[1] So they halted other three days, and on the seventh day, they espied a great cloud of dust, which spread till it covered the whole country; nor was an hour of the day past, before the dust lifted and melted away into the air, and its darkness was pierced and dispersed by the starry sheen of lance-points and spear-heads and the flashing of sword-blades. Presently, there appeared the banners of Islam and the Mohammedan ensigns and

[1] Mohammed.

the mailed horsemen surged forward, like the letting loose of the billows of the sea, clad in cuirasses as they were clouds girdled about moons. Thereupon the Christian horsemen rode forward and the two hosts met, like two seas clashing together, and eyes fell upon eyes. The first to spur into the fight was the Vizier Dendan, with the army of Syria, thirty thousand cavaliers, followed by Rustem, the general of the Medes, and Behram, the general of the Turks, with other twenty thousand horse, behind whom came the men of the sea-coast, sheathed in glittering mail, as they were full moons passing through a night of clouds. Then the Christian host called upon Jesus and Mary and the defiled Cross, and fell upon the Vizier Dendan and the army of Syria. Now this was in pursuance of a stratagem devised by Dhat ed Dewahi; for, before his departure, King Afridoun had gone in to her and said, "It is thou hast brought this great stress on us; so do thou advise me how I shall do and what plan I shall follow." "O great King and mighty priest," replied she, "I will teach thee a shift, which would baffle Iblis himself, though he should call to his aid against it all his grisly hosts. It is that you send fifty thousand men in ships to the Mountain of Smoke and there let them land and stir not till the standards of Islam come upon you, when do you up and at them. Then let the troops from the seaward sally out upon the Muslims and take them in rear, whilst you confront them from the landward. So not one of them shall escape, and our stress shall cease and abiding peace enure to us." Her counsel commended itself to King Afridoun and he replied, "It is well; thy counsel shall be followed, O princess of cunning old women and recourse of kings warring for their blood-revenge!" So when the army of Islam came upon them in that valley, of a sudden the flames began to run among the tents and the swords to play upon men's bodies. Then came up the army of Baghdad and Khorassan, six score

Night lxxxix.

thousand horse, with Zoulmekan at their head. When the host of the infidels that lay by the sea saw them, they came out and followed in their steps, and Zoulmekan, seeing this, cried out to his men, saying, "Turn back to the infidels, O people of the Chosen Prophet, and fall upon those who deny and transgress the authority of the Compassionate, the Merciful!" So they turned and fought with the Christians, and Sherkan came up with another wing of the Muslim army, near six score thousand men, whilst the infidels numbered nigh upon sixteen hundred thousand. When the Muslims mingled in the mellay, their hearts were strengthened and they cried out, saying, "God hath promised to succour us and abandon the infidels!" And they clashed together with swords and spears. As for Sherkan, he made himself a passage through the ranks and raged among the masses of the foe, fighting so fierce a battle that it would have made children grow grey for fear; nor did he leave to tourney among the infidels and work havoc upon them with the keen-edged scimitar, shouting, "God is most great!" till he drove them back to the brink of the sea. Then the strength of the foe failed and God gave the victory to the faith of Submission,[1] and they fought, drunken without wine, till they slew of the infidels forty and five thousand in that encounter, whilst of the Muslims but three thousand and five hundred fell. Moreover, the Lion of the Faith, King Sherkan, and his brother Zoulmekan slept not that night, but occupied themselves with looking to the wounded and heartening their men with assurance of victory and salvation and promise of a recompense in the world to come.

Meanwhile King Afridoun assembled the captains of his host and said to them, "Verily, we had accomplished our intent and had solaced our hearts, but for our over-confidence in our numbers: it was that which undid us." But

[1] *Islam.*

Dhat ed Dewahi said to them, "Assuredly nought shall profit you, except ye seek the favour of the Messiah and put your trust in the True Faith; for by the virtue of the Messiah, the whole strength of the Muslims lies in that devil, King Sherkan!" "To-morrow," said Afridoun, "I will draw out in battle array and send out against them the famous cavalier, Luca ben Shemlout; for if King Sherkan come out to joust with him, he will slay him and the other champions of the Muslims, till not one is left; and I purpose this night to sacre you all by fumigation with the Holy Incense." When the amirs heard this, they kissed the earth before him. Now the incense in question was the excrement of the Chief Patriarch, which was sought for with such instance and so highly valued, that the high priests of the Greeks used to mix it with musk and ambergris and send it to all the countries of the Christians in silken sachets; and kings would pay a thousand dinars for every drachm of it, for they sought it to perfume brides withal and the chief of them were wont to use a little of it in ointment for the eyes and as a remedy in sickness and colic. But the priests used to mix their own excrement with it, for that the excrement of the Chief Patriarch could not suffice for half a score countries. So, as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its lights and shone, the horsemen ran to arms, and King Afridoun summoned the chief of his knights and nobles and invested them with dresses of honour. Then he made the sign of the cross on their foreheads and incensed them with the incense aforesaid; after which he called for Luca ben Shemlout, surnamed the Sword of the Messiah, and after incensing him and rubbing his palate with the holy excrement, daubed and smeared his cheeks and anointed his moustaches with the remainder. Now there was no stouter champion in the land of the Greeks than this accursed Luca, nor any doughtier at bowshot or smiting with swords

Night xc.

or thrusting with spears in the mellay; but he was foul of favour, for his face was as the face of a jackass, his shape that of an ape and his look as the look of a malignant serpent, and the being near unto him was more grievous than parting from the beloved. Moreover, he was black as night and his breath was fetid as that of the lion; he was crooked as a bow and grim-visaged as the pard, and he was branded with the mark of the infidels. He kissed Afridoun's feet and the King said to him, "It is my wish that thou go out against Sherkan, King of Damascus, and hasten to deliver us from this affliction." Quoth Luca, "I hear and obey." And the King made the sign of the cross on his forehead and felt assured of speedy help from heaven, whilst Luca went out and mounted a sorrel horse. Now he was clad in a red tunic and a hauberk of gold set with jewels and bore a three-barbed spear, as he were Iblis the accursed on the day of marshalling his hosts to battle. Then he rode forward, he and his troop of infidels, as they were driving to the Fire, preceded by a herald, crying aloud in the Arabic tongue and saying, "Ho, followers of Mohammed, let none of you come out this day but your champion Sherkan, the Sword of Islam, lord of Damascus of Syria!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there arose a mighty tumult in the plain, all the people heard its voice, that called to mind the Day of Weeping. The cowards trembled and all necks turned towards the sound, and behold, it was King Sherkan. For, when Zoulmekan saw that accursed infidel spur out into the plain, he turned to Sherkan and said to him, "Of a surety they seek for thee." "Should it be so," replied Sherkan, "it were pleasing to me." So when they heard the herald, they knew Luca to be the champion of the Greeks. Now he was one of the greatest of villains, one who made hearts to ache, and had sworn to clear the land of the Muslims; and indeed the Medes and Turks and Kurds feared his

mischief. So Sherkan drove at him like an angry lion, mounted on a courser like a wild gazelle, and coming nigh to him, shook his javelin in his hand, as it were a darting viper, and recited the following verses:

I have a sorrel horse, right swift and eath to guide, Shall give thee of its might what thou mayst ill abide.
Ay, and a limber spear I have, full keen of point, As 'twere the dam of deaths upon its shaft did ride;
And eke a trenchant sword of Ind, which when I draw, Thou'dst deem that levins flashed and darted far and wide.

Luca understood not what he said nor did he apprehend the vehemence of the verse; but he smote his forehead with his hand, in honour of the cross drawn thereon, and kissed it, then ran at Sherkan with lance pointed at him. When he came within spear-shot, he threw the javelin into the air, till it was lost to sight, and catching it with the other hand, as do the jugglers, hurled it at Sherkan. It sped from his hand, like a shooting star, and the people clamoured and feared for Sherkan: but as it drew near him, he put out his hand and caught it in full flight, to the amazement of the beholders. Then he shook it, till it was well-nigh broken, and hurled it up into the air, till it disappeared from sight. As it descended, he caught it again, in less than the twinkling of an eye, and cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying, "By the virtue of Him who created the seven heavens, I will make this accursed fellow the byword of the world!" Then he hurled the javelin at Luca ben Shemlout, who thought to do as Sherkan had done and catch it in mid-flight; but Sherkan made haste and sped another dart at him, which smote him on the forehead, amiddleward the sign of the cross, and God hurried his soul to the Fire and the Ill Stead.[1] When the infidels saw Luca fall dead, they buffeted their faces,

[1] "In Hell shall they (the unbelievers) burn, and ill shall be (their) stead."—*Koran*, xiv. 34.

crying, "Alas!" and "Woe worth the day!" and called for aid upon the priests of the monasteries, saying, "Where are the crosses?" So the monks offered up prayers and the Christians all drew together against Sherkan and brandishing their swords and lances, rushed forward to the attack. Army met army and men's breasts fell under the hoofs of the horses, whilst the sword and the spear ruled and arms and wrists grew weak and it was as if the horses had been made without legs; nor did the herald of war cease to call to battle, till all arms were weary and the day departed and the night came with the darkness. So the two hosts drew apart, whilst every warrior staggered like a drunken man, for stress of war and much thrusting and smiting, and the ground was hidden with the slain; sore were the wounds and the hurt knew not by whom he died. Then Sherkan joined his brother and the Chamberlain and the Vizier Dendan and said to them, "Verily God hath opened a door for the destruction of the infidels, praised be the Lord of the Two Worlds!" "Let us never cease to praise God," replied Zoulmekan, "for that he hath dispelled trouble from the Arabs and the Persians. Indeed the folk, generation after generation, shall tell of thy prowess against the accursed Luca, the falsifier of the Evangel,[1] of thy catching the javelin in mid-flight and smiting the enemy of God among men; and thy report shall endure until the end of time." Then said Sherkan, "Harkye, O grand Chamberlain and doughty captain!" "At thy service," answered he. Quoth Sherkan, "Take the Vizier Dendan and twenty thousand men and lead them, by a forced march, seven parasangs towards the sea, till ye come near the shore, at two parasangs' distance from the foe. Then hide

[1] Mohammed pretended that his coming had been foretold in the Gospels and that the Christians had falsified the passage (John xvi. 7) promising the advent of the Comforter (παράκλητος) by substituting the latter word for περικλυτός, glorious, renowned, praised, *i.e.* Mohammed.

in the hollows of the ground, till ye hear the tumult of the infidels disembarking from the ships; and when the swords have begun to play between us and them and ye see our troops falling back, as if defeated, and all the infidels following them, as well those in front as those from the seaward and the tents, do ye lie in wait for them: and as soon as ye see the standard with the words, 'There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His Apostle!' up with the green banner and fall on their rear, shouting, 'God is most great!' and do your endeavour, that they may not interpose between the retreating army and the sea." The Chamberlain agreed to this, and he and the Vizier Dendan took twenty thousand men and set out at once, even as Sherkan had commanded. As soon as it was morning, the troops donned their armour and drawing their swords, set their spears in rest and sprang to horse. Then the Christians drew out in battle array upon the hills and plains and the priests cried out and all heads were uncovered. Moreover, those who were in the ships hoisted the cross at their mast-heads and making from all sides towards the shore, landed their horses and addressed them to the fray, whilst the swords glittered and the javelins glanced like levins against the cuirasses. So they all joined battle and the mill-wheels of death rushed round over footmen and horsemen: heads flew from bodies and tongues grew mute and eyes dim; gall-bladders burst and skulls were cloven in sunder and wrists shorn in twain; whilst the horses plashed in pools of blood and men gripped each other by the beards. The host of Islam called out, "Peace and blessing on the Prince of Mankind and glory and praise in the highest to the Compassionate One!" whilst the infidels shouted, "Glory to the Cross and the Girdle and the Vine-juice and the Presser and the Priests and the Monks and the Festival of Palms and the Metropolitan!" Presently, Zoulmekan and Sherkan held back and their troops gave

way and feigned to retreat before the infidels, who pursued them, deeming them routed, and made ready to cut and thrust. Then the host of the Muslims began to chant the first verses of the Chapter of the Cow,[1] whilst the slain were trampled under the hoofs of the horses and the heralds of the Greeks cried out, "Ho, servants of the Messiah! Ho, people of the True Faith! Ho, followers of the Pope! Verily the divine grace shines upon you, for see, the hosts of Islam incline to flee! So turn ye not your backs to them, but let your swords bite on their necks, and hold not your hands from them, else are ye outcasts from the Messiah, son of Mary, who spoke even in the cradle!" Thereupon Afridoun thought that the infidels were victorious, knowing not that this was but a stratagem of the Muslims, and sent to King Herdoub, to give him the glad tidings of success, adding, "It was nought but the excrement of the Arch-Patriarch that availed us, in that the fragrance of it exhaled from the beards and moustaches of the servants of the Cross near and far; and I swear, by the Miracles of the Messiah and by the Waters of Baptism, that I will not leave upon the earth a single defender of Islam!"[2] So the messenger betook himself to King Herdoub whilst the infidels called to each other saying, "Let us take our wreak for Luca!" and King Herdoub cried out, "Vengeance for Abrizeh!" With this, King Zoulmekan cried out to his men, saying, "Ho, servants of the Requiting King, up and smite the children of blasphemy and disobedience with the white of the sword and the brown of the spear!" So the Muslims turned upon the infidels and plied them with the keen-edged scimitar, whilst their herald cried aloud, "Up, ye lovers of the chosen prophet and at the enemies

Night xcii.

[1] The second chapter of the Koran, beginning, "This is the Book, etc."

[2] It appears by what follows that Afridoun, supposing the victory to be gained, returned to Constantinople immediately after sending this message and left the command of the army to King Herdoub.

of the Faith! Now is the time for those, who hope for salvation on the Day of Fear, to win the favour of the Bountiful, the Forgiving One, for verily Paradise is under the shadow of swords!" So Sherkan and his men fell upon the infidels and cut off their retreat and tourneyed among the ranks, when lo, a cavalier of goodly presence opened a passage through the army of the Greeks and circled hither and thither amongst them, cutting and thrusting and covering the ground with heads and bodies, so that the infidels feared him and their necks bent under his blows. He was girt with two swords, that of his glances and a scimitar, and armed with two lances, one of cane and the other the straightness of his shape; over his shoulders flowed down his hair, whose beauty might have stood him in stead of many warriors, even as says the poet:

Flowing hair, as I deem, is not fair to the sight, Except it be spread, on the day of the fight,
O'er a youth with a spear that he giveth to drink Of the blood of full many a beard-bearing knight.

Or as says another:

I turned to him, what while he girt his faulchion on, and said, "Surely, the sabres of thy looks should stand thee in sword's stead."
Quoth he, "The sabres of my looks I keep for those who love, My sword for those who have no wit of passion's goodlihead."

When Sherkan saw him, he said to him, "Ho, champion of the champions! I conjure thee, by the Koran and the attributes of the Compassionate One, tell me who thou art: for verily by thy deeds this day thou hast pleased the Requiting King, whom one thing distracts not from another, in that thou hast discomfited the children of impiety and disbelief." Quoth the horseman, "Thou art he who sworest brotherhood to me but yesterday: how quickly thou hast forgotten me!" Then he uncovered his face, so that what was hidden of his beauty was disclosed, and lo, it was none

other than Zoulmekan! When Sherkan knew his brother, he rejoiced in him, except that he feared for him from the throng of adversaries and the onslaught of the champions; and this for two reasons, the first, his tender age and exposure to the evil eye, and the second, that his life was the mainstay of the empire. So he said to him, "O King, thou adventurest thy life, and indeed I am in fear for thee from the foe; so join thy horse to mine, and thou wouldst do well not to hazard thyself forth of these squadrons, that we may shoot at the enemy with thine unerring shaft." Quoth Zoulmekan, "I wish to equal thee in battle and I will not spare myself before thee in fight." Then the host of Islam rushed upon the infidels and encompassing them on all sides, waged a right holy war on them and broke the power of the children of impiety and pride and corruption. King Herdoub sighed when he saw the evil case that had fallen on the Greeks, and they turned their backs and addressed themselves to flight, making for the ships, when lo, there came out upon them from the sea-shore a new army, led by the Vizier Dendan, him who was wont to make the champions bite the dust, and the Chamberlain of Syria, with twenty thousand doughty cavaliers, and fell upon their rear with sword and spear, whilst the army of Islam pressed them in front and flank. Then some of the Muslims turned against those that were in the ships and rained perditions on them, till they threw themselves into the sea, and they slew of them much people, more than a hundred thousand knights, nor did one of their champions escape, great or small. Moreover, they took their ships, with all the baggage and treasure therein, and the Muslims got that day booty, the like of which was never gotten of time past; nor did ever ear hear of such a battle. But twenty of the ships escaped, and amongst the booty were fifty thousand horses, besides treasure and spoil past count or reckoning, whereat the Muslims rejoiced with an ex-

ceeding joy and thanked God for the aid and protection He had vouchsafed them.

Meanwhile, the news reached Constantinople that King Afridoun had gotten the victory over the Muslims, and Dhat ed Dewahi said, "I know that my son King Herdoub is no runagate and that he has nought to fear from the hosts of Islam, but will bring the whole world to the Nazarene faith." Then she commanded the city to be decorated, and the people held high festival and drank wines, knowing not what God had decreed to them. Whilst they were in the midst of their rejoicings, behold, the raven of affliction croaked against them and up came the twenty ships of fugitives, amongst them the King of Cæsarea. King Afridoun met them on the sea-shore, and they told him all that had befallen them, weeping sore and lamenting, whereupon rejoicing was turned into dismay, and King Afridoun was filled with consternation and knew that there was no repairing their mischance. The women gathered together to make moan and lament; and the city was filled with mourning; all hearts failed, whilst the hired mourners cried aloud and weeping and wailing arose on all sides. When King Herdoub met King Afridoun, he told him the truth of the case and how the flight of the Muslims was but a stratagem and said to him, "Look not to see any of the troops, save those that have already reached thee." When Afridoun heard this, he fell down in a swoon, with his nose under his feet; and as soon as he revived, he exclaimed, "Surely the Messiah was wroth with the army, that he delivered them thus into the hands of the Muslims!" Then came the Arch-Patriarch sadly to King Afridoun, who said to him, "O our father, destruction hath overtaken our army and the Messiah hath punished us!" "Grieve not nor be concerned," replied the Patriarch; "for it cannot be but that one of you has sinned against the Messiah, and all have been punished for his sin; but now

we will read prayers for you in the churches, that the Mohammedan hosts may be repelled from you." After this, Dhat ed Dewahi came to Afridoun and said to him, "O King, verily the Muslims are many, and we shall never prevail against them, save by wile: wherefore I purpose to work upon them by stratagem and repair to the army of Islam, haply I may be able to carry out my intent against their leader and slay their champion, even as I slew his father. If I succeed, not one of them shall return to his native land, for all their strength lies in him; but I wish to have some Christians of Syria, such as go out from time to time to sell their goods, to help me in carrying out my plan." "Be it so, whenas thou wilt," replied the King. So she bade fetch a hundred men, natives of Nejran in Syria, and said to them, "Ye have heard what has befallen the Christians with the Muslims?" "Yes," replied they; and the King said, "This woman has devoted herself to the Messiah and purposes to go forth with you, disguised as Mohammedans, to work out a device, which shall profit us and hinder the Muslim host from us: so if ye also are willing to devote yourselves to Christ, I will give you a quintal of gold. Those of you who escape shall have the money, and those of you who are slain Christ will reward." "O King," replied they, "we devote ourselves to the Messiah, and we will be thy sacrifice." Then the old woman took drugs and simples and boiled them in water, till the black essence of them was extracted. She waited till it was cold, then dipped the end of a handkerchief therein [and coloured her face therewith]. Moreover, she put on, over her clothes, a long gaberdine with an embroidered border and taking in her hand a rosary, went in to King Afridoun, who knew her not nor did any of his companions know her, till she discovered herself to them, when they all praised her for her cunning and her son rejoiced and said, "May the Messiah never fail thee!"

Night xciii.

Then she took with her the Syrian Christians, and set out for the army of Baghdad. Now this accursed old woman was a witch of the witches, past mistress in sorcery and deception, knavish, crafty, debauched and perfidious, with foul breath, red eyelids, sallow cheeks, pale face, bleared eyes, mangy body, grizzled hair, humped back, withered complexion and running nostrils. She had studied the scriptures of Islam and made the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God,[1] to come to the knowledge of the Mohammedan ordinances and the doctrines of the Koran; and she had professed Judaïsm in Jerusalem two years' space, that she might perfect herself in the magical arts of men and Jinn; so that she was a plague of plagues and a calamity of calamities, utterly depraved and having no religion. Now the chief reason of her sojourn with her son, King Herdoub, was on account of the maidens at his court: for she was given to tribadism and could not exist without it: so if any damsel pleased her, she was wont to teach her the art and rub saffron on her, till she fainted away for excess of pleasure. Whoso obeyed her, she used to favour and make interest for her with her son; and whoso repelled her, she would contrive to destroy. This was known to Merjaneh and Rihaneh and Utriyeh, the handmaids of Abrizeh, and the princess loathed the old woman and abhorred to lie with her, because of the ill smell from her armpits and the stench of her wind, more fetid than carrion, and the roughness of her body, coarser than palm fibre. She was wont to bribe those who served her desires with jewels and instruction; but Abrizeh held aloof from her and sought refuge with the All-Wise, the Omniscient; for well does the poet say:

O thou that abasest thyself to those that are rich and great And lordest it with disdain o'er those of low estate,
Thou that thinkest to gild thy baseness by gathering gold, The scenting of aught that's foul skills not its stench to abate!

[1] At Mecca.

To continue. As soon as Dhat ed Dewahi had departed, her son went in to Afridoun and said to him, "O King, we have no need of the Chief Patriarch nor of his prayers, but will act according to my mother's counsel and await what she will do, of her craft without end, with the Muslim host, for they are on the march hither with all their strength and will quickly be with us." When King Afridoun heard this, terror took hold upon his heart and he wrote letters forthright to all the countries of the Christians, saying, "It behoves none of the followers of the Messiah or soldiers of the Cross to hold back, especially the folk of the citadels and strong places: but let them all come to us, foot and horse and women and children, for the Muslim hosts already tread our soil. So hasten, hasten, ere what we fear come to pass."

Now Dhat ed Dewahi had clad her companions in the habit of Muslim merchants and had provided herself with a hundred mules laden with stuffs of Antioch, such as gold-woven satin and royal brocade and so forth, and with a letter from King Afridoun to the following effect: "These are merchants from the land of Syria, who have been with us: so it behoves none to do them let or hindrance nor take tithe of them, till they reach their own country and the place of their security, for by merchants a country flourishes and grows rich, and these are no men of war nor evil-doers." So, as soon as she came without the city, she said to them, "O folk, I wish to work out a plot for the destruction of the Muslims." "O princess," replied they, "command us what thou wilt; we are at thy disposal, and may the Messiah prosper thy dealing!" Then she donned a gown of fine white wool and rubbing her forehead, till she made a great mark (as of a scar), anointed it with an ointment of her own fashion, so that it shone greatly. Now she was lean-bodied and hollow-eyed, and she bound her legs tightly round with cords just above

her feet, till she drew near the Muslim camp, when she unwound them, leaving the marks of the cords deeply embedded in the flesh. Then she anointed the weals with dragon's blood and bade her companions beat her severely and lay her in a chest. "How can we beat thee," replied they, "who art our sovereign lady and mother of the supreme King?" Quoth she, "We blame not nor reproach him who goeth to the jakes, and in time of necessity, forbidden things become lawful. When ye have laid me in the chest, set it on the back of one of the mules and pass on with it and the other goods through the Muslim camp, crying aloud the profession of the Faith of Unity.[1] If any hinder you, give up the mules and their lading and betake yourselves to their king Zoulmekan and cast yourselves on his protection, saying, 'We were in the country of the infidels and they took nothing from us, but wrote us a passport, that none should hinder us: so why do ye seize upon our goods? See, here is the letter of the King of the Greeks, commanding that none shall do us let or hindrance.' If he say to you, 'What profit had ye of your commerce in the land of the Greeks?' answer him, 'We profited in that it was given us to accomplish the deliverance of a pious man, who had lain nigh fifteen years in a dungeon under the earth, crying out for help, yet none helped him. On the contrary, the infidels tortured him night and day. We knew not of this: but after we had sojourned awhile in Constantinople, having sold our goods and bought others in their stead, we made ready to set out and return to our native land. We spent the night before our departure, conversing about our journey, and when the day broke, we saw a figure painted upon the wall; and behold, as we drew nigh it, it moved and said, "O Muslims, is there amongst you one who is minded to gain the favour of the Lord of the two worlds?" "How so?" asked we.

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

"Know," replied the figure, "that God hath made me speak to you, to the intent that your belief may be fortified and that your faith may inspire you and that you may go forth of the country of the infidels and repair to the camp of the Muslims, where ye shall find the Sword of the Compassionate One, the Champion of the Age, King Sherkan, him by whom He shall conquer Constantinople and destroy the followers of the Christian heresy. On the third day of your journey, you will come to [a town, in which stands] a hermitage known as the hermitage of Metrouhena. Make for it with a pure intent and do your utmost endeavour to come into the hermitage, for therein is a true believer from Jerusalem, by name Abdallah, one of the holiest of men, whom God hath blessed with supernatural powers, such as dispel doubts and obscurity. Him certain of the monks seized by fraud and shut in an underground dungeon, where he has lain many a year. So, if ye desire to gain the favour of the Lord of the Faithful, ye cannot accomplish a more acceptable work than the deliverance of this holy man." When we heard what the figure said, we knew that this holy man was indeed of the chiefest of the devotees and heart-whole servants of God; so we set out and after three days' journey, came in sight of the town, and making for it, passed the day in buying and selling, as is the wont of merchants. As soon as the day had departed and the night was come with the darkness, we repaired to the hermitage, wherein was the dungeon, and presently heard the holy man chant some verses of the Koran and repeat the following lines:

Night xciv.

I strive with my heart, for anguish that's well-nigh cleft in twain, And there ebbs and flows in my bosom a flooding sea of pain.
Indeed, there is no deliv'rance, and death is near at hand; Yet death than long affliction were kinder and more fain.
O lightning, if thou visit my native land and folk, If for the fair ones' lustre thine own red brilliance wane,

Carry my salutation to those I love and say, I lie in a far Greek dungeon
and cry for help in vain.
How can I win to join them, since that the ways with wars Are blocked
and the gate of succour is barred with many a chain?'

When once ye have brought me into the Muslim camp," added the old woman, "I know how I will make shift to beguile them and slay them all, even to the last man." When the Christians heard what she said, they kissed her hands and laid her in a chest, after they had beaten her grievously, in obedience to her commands, seeing it to be incumbent on them to do her bidding in this, then made for the Muslim camp.

Meanwhile, the Muslims sat down to converse with each other, after they had made an end of the battle and the pillage, and Zoulmekan said to his brother, "Verily, God hath given us the victory, because of our just dealing and concord amongst ourselves; wherefore, O Sherkan, do thou continue to obey my commandment, in submission to God (to whom belong might and majesty), for I mean to slay ten kings and fifty thousand of the Greeks, in revenge for my father, and enter Constantinople." "My life be thy ransom against death!" replied Sherkan. "Needs must I follow forth the Holy War, though I tarry many a year in the infidels' country. But, O my brother, I have in Damascus a daughter called Kuzia Fekan, who is one of the marvels of the time, and I love her heartily." "And I also," said Zoulmekan, "have left my wife with child and near her time, nor do I know what God will vouchsafe me by her. But, O my brother, promise me that, if she bring me a son, thou wilt grant me thy daughter for my son and pledge me thy faith thereon." "With all my heart," replied Sherkan and put out his hand to his brother, saying, "If thou be blessed with a son, I will give him my daughter Kuzia Fekan to wife." At this Zoulmekan rejoiced, and they fell to giving each other joy of the victory, whilst the

Vizier Dendan also congratulated them and said to them, "Know, O Kings, that God hath given us the victory, for that we have devoted ourselves to Him (to whom belong might and majesty) and have left our homes and families: and it is my counsel that we follow up the foe and press upon them and harass them; it may be God shall bring us to our desire and we shall destroy our enemies. If it please you, do ye embark in the ships and sail upon the sea, whilst we fare forward by land and bear the brunt of the battle." And he ceased not to urge them to action, repeating the following verses:

The goodliest of delights it is one's foes to slay And on the backs of
steeds the spoil to bear away.
Oft comes a messenger with promise of a friend, And the friend comes
himself without a trysting-day.

And these also:

As I live, I will make of war my mother and the spear My brother and
the sword my father, and for fere
I will take each shag-haired warrior that meets death with a smile, As
if to die in battle were e'en his wish most dear!

"Glory be to God," continued he, "Who hath vouchsafed us His almighty aid and hath given us spoil of silver and fine gold!" Then Zoulmekan commanded to depart; and the army set out and fared on, by forced marches, towards Constantinople, till they came to a wide and blooming champaign, full of all things fair, with wild cattle frisking and gazelles passing to and fro. Now they had traversed great deserts and had been six days cut off from water, when they drew near this meadow and saw therein waters welling and trees laden with ripe fruits and the land as it were Paradise; it had donned its adornments and decked itself.[1] The branches of its trees swayed gently to and fro, drunken with the new wine of the dew, and therein were conjoined the fresh sweetness of the fountains of

[1] Koran, x. 25.

Paradise and the soft breathings of the zephyr. Mind and eye were confounded with its beauty, even as says the poet:

Look on the verdant smiling mead, with flowers and herbs beseen, As 'twere the Spring thereon had spread a mantle all of green.
If thou behold it with the eye of sense alone, thou'lt see Nought but as 'twere a lake wherein the water waves, I ween:
But with thy mind's eye look; thou'lt see a glory in the trees And lo, amidst the boughs above, the waving banners' sheen!

Or as another says:

The river's a cheek that the sun has rosy made; For ringlets it borrows the cassia's creeping shade.
The water makes anklets of silver about the legs Of the boughs, and the flowers for crowns o'er all are laid.

When Zoulmekan saw this champaign, with its thick-leaved trees and its blooming flowers and warbling birds, he turned to his brother Sherkan and said to him, "O my brother, verily Damascus hath not in it the like of this place. We will abide here three days, that we may rest ourselves and that the troops may regain strength and their souls be fortified to encounter the accursed infidels." So they halted and pitched their camp there. Presently, they heard a noise of voices afar, and Zoulmekan enquiring the cause thereof, was told that a caravan of Syrian merchants had halted there to rest and that the Muslim troops had come on them and had haply seized some of their goods, that they had brought from the country of the infidels. After a while, up came the merchants, crying out and appealing to the King for redress. So Zoulmekan bade bring them before him, and they said to him, "O King, we have been in the country of the infidels and they spoiled us of nothing: why then do our brothers the Muslims despoil us of our goods, and that in their own country? When we saw your troops, we went up to them, thinking

no evil, and they robbed us of what we had with us." Then they brought out to him the letter of the King of Constantinople, and Sherkan took it and reading it, said to them, "We will restore you what has been taken from you; but it behoved you not to carry merchandise to the country of the infidels." "O our lord," replied they, "of a truth, God moved us to go thither, that we might win what never champion won the like of, no, not even thou in all thy battles." "What was it that ye won?" asked Sherkan. "O King," replied they, "we will not tell thee, except in private; for if this thing be noised among the folk, it may come to the ears of the King of Constantinople, and this will be the cause of our ruin and of the ruin of all Muslims that resort to the land of the Greeks." (Now they had hidden the chest wherein was Dhat ed Dewahi.) So Zoulmekan and his brother brought them to a private place, where they repeated to him the story of the devotee, even as the old woman had lessoned them, and wept till they made the two kings weep. Therewithal Sherkan's heart yearned to the devotee and he was moved to pity for him and zeal for the service of God the Most High. So he said to the Syrians, "Did ye rescue the holy man or is he still in the hermitage?" Quoth they, "We delivered him and slew the hermit, fearing for ourselves; after which we made haste to fly, for fear of death; but a trusty man told us that in this hermitage are quintals of gold and silver and jewels." Then they fetched the chest and brought out the accursed old woman, as she were a cassia[1] pod, for excess of blackness and leanness, and laden with fetters and shackles. When Zoulmekan and the bystanders saw her, they took her for a man of the flower of God's servants and the most excellent of devotees, more by token of the shining of her forehead for the ointment with which she had anointed it. So Zoul-

Night xcv.

[1] Cassia fistularis, a kind of carob.

mekan and Sherkan wept sore and kissed her hands and feet, sobbing aloud: but she signed to them and said, "Give over weeping and hear my words." So they left weeping, in obedience to her, and she said, "Know that I was content to accept what my Lord did unto me, knowing that the affliction that befell me was a trial from Him (to whom belong might and majesty); since that for him who is not patient under trial and affliction there is no coming to the delights of Paradise. I had indeed besought Him that I might return to my native land, yet not for impatience of the sufferings decreed to me, but that I might die under the hoofs of the horses of the warriors of the Faith, who, being slain in battle, live again without suffering death;"[1] and she repeated the following couplets:

The fortress[2] is Sinai's self and the fire of war burns free, And thou art Moses and this the time appointed to thee.
Throw down thy rod, for lo, it shall swallow up all they make! And fear not; I trow the ropes of the folk no serpents be.[3]
Read thou the lines of the foe for chapters,[4] the day of the fight, And let thy sword mark on their necks the verses, what while they flee.

Then her eyes ran over with tears and her forehead shone like gleaming light, and Sherkan rose and kissed her hand and caused food to be set before her: but she refused it, saying, "I have not broken my fast (till sunset) for fifteen years; and how should I do so now, whenas my Lord hath been bountiful to me in delivering me from the captivity of the infidels and doing away from me that which was more grievous than the fiery torment? I will wait till sun-

[1] "Say not of those who are slain in the way (service) of God that they are dead; nay, they are living."—*Koran*, ii. 149.

[2] Apparently Constantinople.

[3] This verse alludes to the garbled version of the miracle of Aaron's rod given in the Koran, which attributes the act to Moses and makes the Egyptian sorcerers throw down *ropes*, to which by their art they give the appearance of serpents.

[4] *i.e.* of the Koran.

down." So at nightfall Sherkan and Zoulmekan came to her with food and said, "Eat, O pious man." But she said, "This is no time for eating; it is the hour for doing my service to the Requiting King." Then she took up her station in the prayer-niche and stood praying till the night was spent; and she ceased not to do thus for three days and nights, sitting not but at the time of salutation.[1] When Zoulmekan saw this her behaviour, belief in her took firm hold upon his heart and he said to Sherkan, "Cause a tent of perfumed leather to be pitched for this holy man and appoint a servant to wait upon him." On the fourth day, she called for food; so they brought her all kinds of meats that could allure the sense or delight the eye; but of all this she ate but one cake of bread with salt. Then she turned again to her fast, and when the night came, she rose anew to pray: and Sherkan said to Zoulmekan, "Verily, this man carries renunciation of the world to the utmost extreme, and were it not for this holy war, I would join myself to him and worship God in his service, till I came before His presence. And now I would fain enter his tent and talk with him awhile." "And I also," said Zoulmekan. "To-morrow we sally forth against Constantinople, and we shall find no time like the present." "And I also," said the Vizier Dendan, "desire to see this holy man; haply he will pray for me that I may find my death in this holy war and come to the presence of my Lord, for I am weary of the world." So as soon as night had darkened on them, they repaired to the tent of the witch Dhat ed Dewahi and finding her standing praying, fell a-weeping, for pity of her: but she paid no heed to them, till the night was half spent, when she ended her devotions by pronouncing the salutation (to the guardian angels). Then she turned to them and greeted them, saying,

[1] A certain formula, invoking peace on the Prophet and all men, recurring at the end of the five daily prayers and pronounced sitting.

"Wherefore come ye?" "O holy man," said they, "didst thou not hear us weeping round thee?" "To him who stands before God," replied she, "there remains nor sight nor hearing for the things of this world." Quoth they, "We would have thee tell us the manner of thy captivity and offer up prayer for us this night, for that will profit us more than the possession of Constantinople." "By Allah," answered she, "were ye not the leaders of the Muslims, I would not tell you aught of this; for I complain not but to God alone. However, to you I will relate the circumstance of my captivity. Know, then, that I was in Jerusalem with certain saints and ecstatics, and did not magnify myself among them, for that God had endowed me with humility and abnegation, till one night I chanced to go down to the lake and walked upon the water. Therewithal there entered into me pride, whence I know not, and I said to myself, 'Who can walk upon the water, like unto me?' And from that time my heart became hardened and God afflicted me with the love of travel. So I journeyed to the land of the Greeks and visited it in every part during a whole year, leaving no place but I worshipped God therein. When I came to the place (where the Syrians found me) I ascended the mountain and saw there a hermitage, inhabited by a monk called Metrouhena. When he saw me, he came out to me and kissed my hands and feet, saying, 'Verily, I have seen thee, since thou camest into the land of the Greeks, and thou hast filled me with longing for the land of Islam.' Then he took my hand and carrying me into the hermitage, brought me to a dark place, where he took me unawares and locking the door on me, left me there forty days, without meat or drink; for it was his intent to kill me by starvation. One day, it chanced that a knight called Decianus came to the hermitage, accompanied by ten squires and his daughter Temathil, a girl of incomparable beauty. The monk told them of me, and

Decianus said, 'Bring him out, for surely there is not a bird's meal of flesh left on him.' So they opened the door of the dungeon and found me standing erect in the niche, praying and reciting the Koran and glorifying God and humbling myself to Him. When they saw this, the monk exclaimed, 'This man is indeed a sorcerer of the sorcerers!' Then they all came in on me, and Decianus and his company beat me grievously, till I desired death and reproached myself, saying, 'This is the reward of him who glorifies himself and takes credit for that which God hath bestowed upon him, beyond his own competence! For, indeed, O my soul, pride and arrogance have crept into thee. Dost thou not know that pride angers the Lord and hardens the heart and brings men to the fire?' Then they laid me in fetters and returned me to my place, which was a dungeon under the earth. Every three days, they threw me down a cake of barley bread and a draught of water; and every month or two, came Decianus to the hermitage, with his daughter Temathil, who is now grown up, for when I first saw her, she was nine years old, and I abode fifteen years in the dungeon, so that she must be now four-and-twenty years of age. There is not in our land nor in the land of the Greeks a fairer than she, and her father feared lest the King (of Constantinople) should take her from him; for she had vowed herself to the service of the Messiah and rode with Decianus in the habit of a cavalier, so that none who saw her knew her for a woman. In this hermitage her father had laid up his treasures, for all who had aught of price were wont to deposit it there, and I saw there all manner of gold and silver and jewels and precious vessels and rarities, none may keep count of them save God the Most High. Ye are more worthy of these riches than the infidels; so do ye lay hands on that which is in the hermitage and divide it among the Muslims, and especially among those who wage the holy war. When these mer-

chants came to Constantinople and sold their merchandise, the image on the wall spoke to them, by God's special grace to me; so they made for the hermitage and tortured Metrouhena, after the most grievous fashion, and dragged him by the beard, till he showed them where I was, when they took me and fled for fear of death. To-morrow, Temathil will visit the hermitage as of wont, and her father and his squires will come after her, to protect her: so, an ye would be witness of these things, take me with you and I will deliver to you the treasure and the riches of the knight Decianus, that are stored up in that mountain; for I saw them bring out vessels of gold and silver to drink in and heard a damsel of their company sing to them in Arabic. Alas, that so sweet a voice should not be busied in reciting the Koran! So, an ye will, I will bring you to the hermitage and ye shall hide there, against the coming of Decianus and his daughter. Then take her, for she is only fit for the king of the age, Shevkan, or for King Zoulmekan." When they heard her words, they all rejoiced, with the exception of the Vizier Dendan, who put no faith in her story, for her words took no hold on his reason and he was confounded at her discourse and signs of doubt and disbelief appeared in his face; but he feared to speak with her, for awe of the King. Then she said, "I fear lest Decianus come and seeing the troops encamped here, be afraid to enter the hermitage." So Zoulmekan resolved to despatch the army towards Constantinople and said, "I mean to take a hundred horse and many mules and make for the mountain, where we will load the mules with the treasure." Then he sent for the Chamberlain and for the captains of the Turks and Medes and said to them, "As soon as it is day, do ye strike camp and set out for Constantinople. Thou, O Chamberlain, shalt fill my place in council and command, and thou, O Rustem, shalt be my brother's deputy in battle. Let none know that we are not

with you, and after three days we will rejoin you." Then he chose out a hundred of the stoutest cavaliers, and he and Sherkan and Dendan set out for the hermitage, with mules and chests for the transport of the treasure. As soon as it was morning, the Chamberlain gave the signal for departure, and the troops set out, thinking that the two Kings and the Vizier were with them. Now the Syrians that were with Dhat ed Dewahi had taken their departure privily, after they had gone in to her and kissed her hands and feet and gotten her leave and taken her orders. Then she waited till it was dark night and going in to Zoulmekan and his companions, said to them, "Come, let us set out for the mountain, and take with you a few men." They obeyed her and left five horsemen at the foot of the mountain, whilst the rest rode on before Dhat ed Dewahi, to whom new strength seemed given for excess of joy, so that Zoulmekan said to his companions, "Glory be to God who sustains this holy man, whose like we never saw!" Now she had written a letter to the King of Constantinople and despatched it by a carrier-pigeon, acquainting him with what had passed and adding, "Do thou send me ten thousand horsemen of the stoutest of the Greeks and let them come stealthily along the foot of the mountains, lest the Muslim host get sight of them, to the hermitage and hide themselves there, till I come to them with the Muslim King and his brother, for I have inveigled them and will bring them thither, together with the Vizier Dendan and a hundred horse, no more, that I may deliver to them the crosses that are in the hermitage. I am resolved to slay the monk Metrouhena, since my scheme cannot be carried out but at the cost of his life. If my plot work well, not one of the Muslims shall return to his own country, no, not a living soul nor a blower of the fire; and Metrouhena shall be a sacrifice for the followers of the Christian faith and the servants of the Cross, and praise be to the

Night xcvi.

Messiah, first and last!" When this letter reached Constantinople, the keeper of the pigeons carried it to King Afridoun, who read it and forthwith equipped ten thousand cavaliers with horses and dromedaries and mules and victual and bade them repair to the hermitage and hide there; and they did as he commanded them. Meanwhile, when Zoulmekan and his companions reached the hermitage, they entered and met the monk Metrouhena, who came out to see who they were; whereupon quoth Dhat ed Dewahi, "Slay this accursed fellow." So they fell on him with their swords and made him drink the cup of death. Then the accursed old woman carried them to the place of offerings[1] and brought out to them treasures and precious things, more than she had promised them, which they laid in chests and loaded the mules therewith. As for Temathil and her father, they came not, for fear of the Muslims, and Zoulmekan tarried there, awaiting her, the whole of that day and two more, till Sherkan said to him, "By Allah, I am troubled at heart for the army of Islam, for I know not what is come of them." "And I also am concerned for them," replied Zoulmekan. "We have come by a great treasure and I do not believe that Témathil or any one else will come to the hermitage, after that which has befallen the host of the Christians. So we should do well to content ourselves with what God has given us and depart; and haply He will help us break open Constantinople." So they came down from the mountain, for Dhat ed Dewahi dared not gainsay them, for fear of betraying herself, and rode on till they reached the head of a defile, in which the old woman had laid an ambush for them with the ten thousand horse. As soon as the latter saw them, they made at them from all sides, couching their lances and baring their sabres, whilst they shouted the watchword of their infidel faith and set the arrows of their mischief to the strings.

[1] ex voto.

When Zoulmekan saw them, he was ware that they were a mighty host and said, "Who can have given these troops advice of us?" "O my brother," replied Sherkan, "this is no time for talking, but for smiting with swords and shooting with arrows; so gird up your courage and strengthen your hearts, for this pass is like a street with two gates: though, by the virtue of the Lord of the Arabs and the Persians, were not the place so strait, I would bring them to nought, though they were a hundred thousand men!" "Had we known this," said Zoulmekan, "we would have brought with us five thousand horse." "If we had ten thousand," rejoined the Vizier, "they would avail us nothing in this narrow place: but God will succour us against them. I know this defile and its straitness, and there are many places of refuge in it; for I have been here on an expedition with King Omar ben Ennuman, what while we laid siege to Constantinople. We camped in this place, and there is here water colder than snow. So come, let us win out of this pass, ere the infidels increase on us and get the start of us to the mountain-top, that they may hurl down rocks upon us and we be powerless to come at them." So they hurried on, to get out of the defile: but Dhat ed Dewahi looked at them and said, "What is it ye fear, ye who have vowed yourselves to God the Most High, to work His will? By Allah, I was imprisoned underground for fifteen years, yet never gainsaid I God in aught He did with me! Fight ye in the way of God; whoso of ye is killed, Paradise shall be his abode, and whoso kills, his endeavour shall be for his glory." When they heard her words, their concern and anxiety ceased from them and they stood firm, awaiting the onset of the infidels, who fell on them from all sides, whilst the swords played upon their necks and the cup of death went round amongst them. The Muslims fought right valiantly for the service of God and wrought upon His enemies with stroke of sword and

push of pike; whilst Zoulmekan smote upon the men and made the champions bite the dust and their heads fly from their bodies, five by five and ten by ten, till he had done to death a number of them past count. Presently, he looked at the old woman and saw her waving her sword and heartening them, and all who feared fled to her for shelter; but (in secret) she was beckoning to the infidels to kill Sherkan. So troop after troop rushed on him to slay him: but each troop he charged and drove back, with the sword in their loins; and indeed he thought it was the holy man's blessing that gave him the victory over them and said in himself, "Verily God looks on this holy man with eyes of favour and strengthens my prowess against the infidels with the purity of his intent: for I see that they fear me and cannot stand against me, but every one who attacks me turns tail and flees." So they battled the rest of the day, and when the night fell, the Muslims took refuge in a cave, being hard pressed and weary with stress of battle; and five-and-forty of them were slain that day by rocks that the infidels rolled down on them. When they were gathered together, they sought the devotee, but could find no trace of him. This was grievous to them and they said, "Belike, he hath died a martyr." Quoth Sherkan, "I saw him heartening the men with divine instances and sacring them with verses of the Koran." Whilst they were talking, behold, the accursed old woman stood before them, with the head of the captain of the ten thousand horse, a noble knight, a fierce champion and an obstinate devil, in her hand. Now one of the Turks had slain him with an arrow, and God hurried his soul to the fire: and when the infidels saw what the Muslim had done with their leader, they all fell on him and hewed him in pieces with their swords, and God hastened with his soul to Paradise. Then the old woman cut off the knight's head and carrying it to Sherkan and Zoulmekan and the Vizier, threw it at their

feet; whereupon Sherkan exclaimed, "Praised be God that we see thee in safety, O holy man and devout champion of the Faith!" "O my son," replied she, "I have sought a martyr's death this day, throwing myself midmost the host of the infidels, but they feared me. When ye separated, a holy jealousy seized me for you; so I rushed on the knight their captain, though he was reckoned a match for a thousand horse, and smote him and severed his head from his body. Not one of the infidels could come near me; so I took his head and have brought it to you, that you may be heartened in the holy strife and work out the will of the Lord of the Faithful with your swords. And now I will leave you to strive against the infidels, whilst I go to your army, though they be at the gates of Constantinople, and return with twenty thousand horse to destroy these unbelievers." Quoth Sherkan, "How wilt thou win to them, O holy man, seeing that the valley is blocked up by the infidels on all sides?" "God will veil me from their eyes," replied she, "and they shall not see me; nor if any saw me, would he dare to attack me, for I shall be absorbed in God and He will fend off His enemies from me." "Thou sayst sooth, O holy man," rejoined Sherkan, "for indeed I have been witness of this; so, if thou canst set out at the first of the night, it will be the better for us." "I will set out forthright," replied she; "and, an thou wilt, thou shalt go with me, and none shall see thee. If thy brother also have a mind to go, we will take him, but none else; for the shadow of a saint can cover but two." "As for me," said Sherkan, "I will not leave my comrades; but, if my brother please, he will do well to go with thee and win free of this strait; for he is the stronghold of the Muslims and the sword of the Lord of the two worlds; and if it be his pleasure, let him take with him the Vizier Dendan, or whom else he may choose, and send us ten thousand horse to succour us against these villains." So

Night xcbii.

they agreed to this and Dhat ed Dewahi said, "Wait till I go on before you and look if the infidels be asleep or awake." Quoth they, "We will go with thee and trust our affair to God." "If I do your bidding," replied she, "do not blame me, but blame yourselves; for it is my counsel that you wait till I have spied you out the state of the case." Then said Sherkan, "Go and return quickly, for we shall be awaiting thee." So she went out and Sherkan turned to his brother and said, "Were not this holy man a miracle-worker, he had never slain yonder doughty knight. This is a sufficient measure of his power; and indeed the strength of the infidels is broken by the slaying of their leader, for he was a fierce warrior and a stubborn devil." Whilst they were thus devising of the power of the devotee, behold, the cursed old woman returned and promised them victory over the unbelievers; whereupon they thanked her, and she said, "Where is the king of the age, Zoulmekan?" "Here am I," replied he. "Take thy Vizier," said she, "and follow me, that we may win out to Constantinople." Now she had acquainted the infidels with the cheat she had put on the Muslims, and they rejoiced mightily and said, "We shall not be content till we have slain their king in return for the death of our general; for we had no stouter cavalier than he: but when thou bringest him to us, we will carry him to King Afridoun." Then she went out with Zoulmekan and Dendan and walked on before them, saying, "Fare on with the blessing of the Most High God!" They did as she bade them, for the arrow of fate and destiny had fallen on them, and she led them on, through the midst of the Christian camp, till they came to the narrow pass aforesaid, whilst the enemy watched them, but did them no hindrance; for the old woman had enjoined this on them. When Zoulmekan and Dendan saw that the infidels did them no hindrance, the Vizier exclaimed, "By Allah, this is one of the holy man's

miracles! Without doubt he is of the elect." "By Allah," said Zoulmekan, "I think the infidels must be blind, for we see them, and they see us not." Whilst they were thus praising the holy man and recounting his virtues, behold, the infidels fell upon them from all sides and seized them, saying, "Is there any one else with you, that we may seize upon him?" Quoth Dendan, "See ye not yon other man that is before us?" "By the Messiah and the Monks and the Primate and the Metropolitan," replied they, "we see none but you!" And Zoulmekan said, "By Allah, this is a chastisement decreed to us by God!" Then the Christians laid shackles on their feet and set men to guard them during the night, whilst Dhat ed Dewahi fared on and disappeared from their sight. So they fell to lamenting and said, "Verily, the gainsaying of pious men leads to greater stress than this, and we are punished by the strait into which we have fallen." Night xcviii.

Meanwhile, Sherkan passed the night in the cavern with his companions, and when the day broke, he arose and prayed the morning prayer. Then he and his men made ready to do battle with the infidels, and he encouraged them and promised them all good. Then they sallied out against the Christians, who cried out to them from afar, as soon as they saw them, saying, "O Muslims, we have taken your Sultan and your Vizier that has the ordering of your affairs; and except ye leave fighting us, we will slay you to the last man, but if ye yield to us, we will take you to our king, who will make peace with you, on condition that you leave our country and return to your own land and do us no harm, and we will do you no harm. If you accept, it will be well for you; but if you refuse, you have nothing to hope for but death. So now we have told you, and this is our last word to you." When Sherkan heard this and was certified of the captivity of his brother and the Vizier Dendan, he was greatly troubled and wept; his strength

failed him and he made sure of death, saying inwardly, "I wonder what was the cause of their capture? Did they fail of respect to the holy man or disobey him, or what?" Then they rushed upon the unbelievers and slew great plenty of them. The valiant, that day, was known from the faint-hearted, and the swords and spears were dyed with blood; for the infidels flocked on them from all sides, as flies flock to wine; but Sherkan and his men ceased not to wage the fight of those who fear not death nor let it hinder them from the pursuit of victory, till the valley ran with blood and the earth was full of the slain. So fought they on till nightfall, when the two parties separated, each to his own place, and the Muslims returned to the grotto, where both victory and loss were manifest to them, and there was no dependence for them but on God and the sword. That day there had been slain of them five-and-thirty men of the chief amirs, and they had put to the sword thousands of the infidels, both horse and foot. When Sherkan saw this, the case was grievous to him, and he said to his comrades, "What shall we do?" "That which God wills," replied they. On the morning of the second day, Sherkan said to the remnant of his troop, "If ye go forth to fight, not one of you will remain alive and we have but little food and water left; so meseems ye would do better to draw your swords and stand at the door of the cavern, to hinder any from entering. Peradventure the holy man may have traversed the Christian host, without being seen of the unbelievers, and may win to Constantinople and return with ten thousand horse, to succour us against the infidels." "This is the better course," replied they, "and there is no doubt of its expediency." So they went out and held the opening of the grotto, standing in its sides; and every one of the infidels who sought to come in, they slew. Thus did they fend off the enemy from the door of the cavern and make head against

all their assaults, till the day departed and the night came with the shadows, by which time King Sherkan had but five-and-twenty men left. Then said the Christians to each other, "When shall these battles have an end? We are weary of fighting the Muslims." And one of them said, "Up and let us fall on them, for there be but five-and-twenty of them left. If we cannot prevail on them to fight, let us light a fire upon them; and if they submit and yield themselves up, we will take them prisoners: else we will leave them to serve as fuel to the fire, so that they shall become a warning to men of understanding. May the Messiah not have mercy on their fathers and may the sojourn of the Christians be no abiding place for them!" So they repaired to the cavern and heaping up faggots in the door-way, set fire to them. Thereupon, Sherkan and his companions made sure of death and yielded themselves up. The unbelievers thought to kill them, but the knight their captain said to those who counselled this, "It is for none but King Afridoun to kill them, that he may quench thereby his thirst for vengeance; wherefore it behoves us to keep them prisoners till the morrow, when we will journey with them to Constantinople and deliver them to King Afridoun, who shall deal with them as he pleases." "This is the right course," replied they; and he commanded to pinion the prisoners and set guards over them. Then, as soon as it was dark, the infidels gave themselves up to feasting and merry-making and called for wine and drank, till they all fell backward. Presently, Sherkan turned to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him, "O my brother, how shall we get free?" "By Allah," replied Zoulmekan, "I know not; for we are here like birds in a cage." At this Sherkan was angry and sighed for excess of wrath and stretched himself, till his bonds broke; whereupon he went up to the captain of the guard, and taking from his bosom the keys of the fetters, freed Zoul-

mekan and Dendan and the rest of the prisoners. Then said he, "Let us slay three of these infidels and don their clothes, we three; so shall we be disguised as Greeks and pass through them, without their knowing us, and win out to our army." "This is no safe counsel," replied Zoulmekan, "for if we kill them, I fear some of their comrades may hear their groans and the enemy be roused upon us and kill us. It were better to make our way out of the pass." So they agreed upon this and set out. When they had left the head of the defile a little way behind, they saw horses picketed and their riders sleeping by them: and Sherkan said to his brother, "Let us each take one of these steeds." So they took five-and-twenty horses, one for each man, and mounted and rode on till they were out of reach, whilst God sent sleep upon the infidels for a secret purpose of His own. Meanwhile, Sherkan gathered as many swords and spears as he could from the sleepers and faring on after his comrades, found them awaiting him, on coals of fire on his account, and said to them, "Have no fear, since God protects us. I have that to propose, which meseems will advantage us." "What is it?" asked they, and he said, "It is that we all climb to the mountain top and cry out with one voice, 'God is most great! The army of Islam is upon you! God is most great!' If we do this, their company will surely be dissolved, for they are too drunken to find out the trick, but will think that the Muslim troops have encompassed them on all sides and have become mingled with them; so they will fall on one another with their swords, in the confusion of drunkenness and sleep, and we will cleave them in sunder with their own brands and the sword will go round amongst them till the morning." "This plan is not good," replied Zoulmekan. "We should do better to make our way to our army and keep silence; for, if we cry out, 'God is most great!' they will wake and fall on us, and not one

of us will escape." "By Allah," rejoined Sherkan, "though they be roused on us, I desire urgently that ye fall in with my plan, for nothing but good can come of it!" So they agreed and ascending the mountain, shouted out, "God is most great!" And the hills and trees and stones cried out with them, "God is most great!" for the fear of the Almighty. When the unbelievers heard this, they started up from sleep and did on their armour, crying out to one another and saying, "By the Messiah, the enemy is upon us!" Then they fell on each other and slew of their own men more than any knows save God the Most High. As soon as it was day, they sought for the captives, but found them not, and their captains said, "It was the prisoners who did this; so up and hasten after them, till ye overtake them, when we will make them quaff the cup of punishment; and let not trouble nor panic possess you." So they sprang to horse and rode after the fugitives, nor was it long before they overtook them and surrounded them. When Zoulmekan saw this, he was seized with terror and said to his brother, "What I feared is come upon us, and now it only remains for us to fight for the faith." But Sherkan held his peace. Then Zoulmekan and his companions rushed down from the hill top, crying out, "God is most great!" and addressed themselves to fight and sell their lives in the service of the Lord of the Faithful, when, behold, they heard many voices crying out, "There is no god but God! God is most great! Peace and salvation upon the Bringer of Glad Tidings, the Admonisher of Mankind!"[1] So they turned towards the sound and saw a company of Muslims pricking towards them, whereupon their courage revived and Sherkan ran at the Christians, crying out, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" so that the earth shook as with an earthquake and the unbelievers broke asunder and fled into the moun-

Night c.

[1] *i.e.* Mohammed.

tains, whither the Muslims followed them with sword and spear and made their heads fly from their bodies, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then the Muslims drew together and passed the night rejoicing; and when the day broke and the morning arose with its light and shone, they saw Behram, the captain of the Medes, and Rustem, the captain of the Turks, advancing to join them, with twenty thousand cavaliers, as they were fierce lions. As soon as they saw Zoulmekan, the chiefs dismounted and saluting him, kissed the earth before him; and he said to them, "Rejoice ye in the glad news of the victory of the Muslims and the discomfiture of the unbelievers!" Then they gave each other joy of their deliverance and of the greatness of the reward that awaited them in the world to come.

Now the manner of the coming of the succours was as follows. When Behram and Rustem and the Chamberlain came in sight of Constantinople, with the Muslim army, they saw that the Christians had manned the walls and towers and set all their strengths in order of defence, for that they knew of the approach of the host of Islam, through the craft and perfidy of the old woman Dhat ed Dewahi. So, when they heard the clash of arms and tramp of horse-hoofs and saw the Mohammedan standards and the ensigns of the Faith of the Unity of God emerging from the dust-clouds and heard the voices of the Muslims chanting the Koran aloud and glorifying the Compassionate One, and the army of Islam drew near, as it were the swollen sea, for the multitude of footmen and horsemen and women and children, they poured forth like a flight of locusts or the streaming of water from the rain-clouds; and the captain of the Turks said to the captain of the Medes, "O Amir, of a truth, we are in jeopardy from the multitude of the foe on the walls. Look at yonder forts and at the folk like the tempestuous sea with its clashing billows. Indeed the infidels out-

number us a hundred times and we cannot be sure but that some spy may inform them that we are without a leader. Verily, we are in peril from these enemies, whose number may not be told and whose extent is limitless, especially in the absence of King Zoulmekan and his brother Sherkan and the illustrious Vizier Dendan. If they know of this, they will be emboldened to attack us in their absence and will cut off us to the last man; not one of us will escape alive. So it is my counsel that we each take ten thousand horse and repair to the hermitage of Metrouhena and the meadow of Meloukhna in quest of our brothers and our chiefs. If thou follow my counsel, it may be we shall be the cause of their deliverance, in case they be hard pressed by the infidels; and if not, no blame will rest on me. But, if we go, it were well that we return quickly, for suspicion is part of prudence." The other fell in with his counsel; so they chose twenty thousand horse and set out for the hermitage by cross roads.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she had delivered Zoulmekan and his companions into the hands of the infidels, she mounted a swift horse, saying to the Christians, "I mean to rejoin the Muslim army before Constantinople and contrive for their destruction; for I will tell them that their chiefs are dead, and when they hear this, their alliance will be dissolved and their confederation broken up and their host dispersed. Then will I go to King Afridoun and my son King Herdoub, and they will sally forth on them with their troops and destroy them, nor leave one of them alive." So she mounted and fared on across country all that night, and at daybreak, she sighted the army of Behram and Rustem advancing towards her. So she turned aside into a wayside copse and alighting there, hid her horse among the trees, saying to herself, "Belike they are returning, routed, from the assault of Constantinople." However, as she drew near, she saw

that their standards were not reversed and knew that they were not retreating because of defeat, but that they feared for their king and their chiefs. When she was assured of this, she hastened up to them, running at the top of her speed, like a stubborn Satan as she was, and cried out, "Hasten, O soldiers of the Merciful One, hasten to the holy war against the hosts of Satan!" When Behram saw her, he dismounted and kissing the earth before her, said, "What is behind thee, O friend of God!"[1] "Do not ask of evil case and sore disasters," answered she. "Know that, when our comrades had taken the treasure from the hermitage and were on their way back to Constantinople, there came out on them a great host and a fierce of unbelievers." And she repeated to them the story, in such wise as to fill them with trouble and terror, and added, "The most of them are dead, and there are but five-and-twenty left." "O holy man," said Behram, "when didst thou leave them?" "But last night," replied she. "Glory be to God," exclaimed he, "Who hath rolled up the distance for thee like a carpet, so that thou hast sped thus, walking upon thy feet and leant upon a palm-tree staff! But thou art one of the friends of God, that fly like birds, when possessed by the stress of His commandment!" Then he mounted his horse, perplexed and confounded for that which he had heard from the lying old beldam and saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High! Verily our labour is lost and our hearts are heavy within us, for our king is a prisoner and those who are with him!" Then they fared on in haste and stayed not the whole of that day and night, till at daybreak they reached the head of the pass and heard Zoulmekan and Sherkan shouting, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" Whereupon they drove at the unbelievers and overwhelmed them, as the torrent overwhelms the plains,

[1] *i.e.* "What news bringest thou, O saint?"

shouting out their war-cries, till the stoutest champions were affrighted and the mountains were cloven by the noise. On the morrow, they foregathered with Zoulmekan, and each recognised the other as has been before set out. Then they kissed the earth before the King and his brother Sherkan, and the latter told them all that had befallen him and his men in the grotto, whereat they marvelled and said, "Hasten back with us to Constantinople, for we left our companions there, and our hearts are with them." So they made haste to depart, commending themselves to the Subtle, the Allwise; and Zoulmekan exhorted the Muslims to steadfastness, reciting the following verses:

To thee be the praise, O Thou that meritest thanks and praise! And mayest Thou never cease to succour me all my days!
I grew up in exile, but Thou, my God, wast ever my friend. 'Twas Thou didst decree me success and broughtest me forth of the maze.
Thou hast given me lordship and wealth and fortune and girded my midst With the falchion of valour and wreathed my forehead with victory's bays.
Thou hast shadowed me under Thy wings and made me to prosper amain And hast graced me with favours untold, of Thy bounties abounding always:
Thou hast saved me from all that I feared, by the counsel of him whom I trust, The Vizier and chief of the chiefs, the hero and pride of our days.
By Thy favour we fell on the Greeks and smote them with sword and with spear; But again to the fight they returned, in garments blood-red for affrays.
So I feigned to be routed and flee and give back from the fight; then I turned On the foe, as the fierce lion turns on the hunters, that find him at gaze.
I left them laid low on the plain, as 'twere they were drunken with wine, Not the wine that is pressed from the grape, but that of death's cup of amaze;
Whilst their ships all fell under our hand and ours was the empery grown: From the East to the West, sea and shore, we were lords of the lands and the ways.
Then there came to our camp the recluse, the saint, whose miraculous power Is blazoned in desert and town, wherever the sun sheds its rays.

He joined us, his vengeance to wreak on all that believe not in God;
Indeed, it is known to the folk what came of our strife and our frays.
They slew of us some, but they woke on the morrow in Paradise, Each
lodged in a palace on high, whereunder a river strays.

When Zoulmekan had made an end of reciting these verses, his brother Sherkan gave him joy of his safety and praise for that he had done; after which they set out by forced marches to rejoin their army.

Night ci.

Meanwhile, Dhat ed Dewahi, after she had spoken with Rustem and Behram, returned to the coppice, where she took her horse and mounting, sped on, till she drew near the host of the Muslims that lay leaguer before Constantinople, when she lighted down from her steed and led it to the Chamberlain's pavilion. When he saw her, he signed to her with his hand and said, "Welcome, O pious recluse!" Then he questioned her of what had befallen, and she repeated to him her disquieting and deluding report, saying, "Indeed I fear for the Amirs Rustem and Behram, for that I met them on the way and sent them and their following to the King and his companions. They are but twenty thousand horse, and the unbelievers are more in number than they; so I would now have thee send of the rest of thy troops in haste to their succour, lest they be slain to the last man." And she said to them, "Hasten! Hasten!" When the Chamberlain and the Muslims heard these her words, their hearts sank within them and they wept; but she said to them, "Ask aid of God and be patient under this affliction, taking example by those that have been before you of the people of Islam; for God hath prepared Paradise, with its palaces, for those who die martyrs; and needs must all die, but death is most praiseworthy, when it comes in fighting for the Faith." When the Chamberlain heard this speech of the accursed old woman, he called for the Amir Behram's brother, a cavalier named Terkash, and choosing out for him ten

thousand intrepid veterans, bade him set out at once. So he departed forthright and marched all that day and the next night, till he neared the Muslims. When the day dawned, Sherkan saw the dust of them and feared for his companions, saying, "If these troops that are nearing us be Muslims, our victory is assured; but if they be Christians, there is no gainsaying the decrees of Fate." Then he turned to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him, "Fear not, for I will ransom thee with my life from destruction. If these be Muslim troops, then were it an increase of God's favours; but if they be our foes, there is nothing for it but to fight them. Yet do I long to see the holy man once again before I die, so he may pray for me that I may not die except a martyr." Whilst he was thus speaking, behold, there appeared the banners with the words, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle," inscribed on them, and he cried out to the new-comers, saying, "How is it with the Muslims?" "They are in weal and safety," replied they; "and we come not hither but out of concern for you." Then the chief of the succours dismounted and kissing the earth before Sherkan, said, "O my lord, the Sultan and the Vizier Dendan and Rustem and my brother Behram, are they all in safety?" "They are all well," answered the prince; "but who brought thee tidings of us?" "It was the holy man," said Terkash. "He told us that he had met my brother Behram and Rustem and had sent them to you and also that the infidels had encompassed you and were more in number than you; yet meseems the case is the contrary of this and that you are victorious." "And how did the holy man reach you?" asked Sherkan. "Walking on his feet," replied the Amir; "and he had compassed, in the space of a single day and night, ten days' journey for a diligent horseman." "Verily, he is a friend of God," said Sherkan; "but where is he now?" Quoth Terkash, "We left him with our troops,

the people of the Faith, encouraging them to do battle with the infidels and rebels." Therewith Sherkan was glad and thanked God for their own deliverance and that of the holy man and commended the dead to the mercy of God, saying, "This was written in the Book of Fate." Then they set out for Constantinople by forced marches, and whilst they were on the road thither, behold, a cloud of dust arose before them and spread till the prospect was hidden and the day darkened by it. Sherkan looked at it and said, "Verily, I fear lest this be the infidels who have routed the army of Islam, for that this dust covers the country and blots out the two horizons." Presently there appeared midmost the dust a pillar of darkness and came towards them, blacker than the blackness of (evil) fortune and more dreadful than the terrors of the Day of Judgment. Horse and foot hastened up to look at it and know its meaning, when, behold, they saw it to be the recluse aforesaid; so they crowded round him to kiss his hands, and he cried out, "O people of the best of men,[1] the lamp of the darkness, the infidels have overcome the Muslims by craft, for they fell upon them in their tents, whilst they deemed themselves in safety, and made a sore slaughter of them; so hasten to the aid of the believers in the unity of God and deliver them from those that deny Him!" When Sherkan heard this, his heart was sore troubled and he alighted from his horse, in amazement, and kissed the recluse's hands and feet. In like wise did his brother Zoulmekan and the rest of the troops, except the Vizier Dendan, who dismounted not, but said, "By Allah, my heart revolts from this devotee, for I never knew aught but evil come of these that make a show of devotion to religion. Leave him and hasten to rejoin your comrades, for this fellow is of those that are outcast from the gate of the mercy of the Lord of the Two Worlds! How often

[1] *i.e.* Mohammed.

have I come out to war with King Omar ben Ennuman and trodden the earth of these lands!" "Put away from thee this foul thought," said Sherkan. "Hast thou not seen this holy man excite the faithful to battle, recking nought of spears and swords? Wherefore, slander him not, for slander is blameworthy and the flesh of pious folk is poisoned. Look how he encourages us to battle, and did not God love him, He had not rolled up the distance for him (like a carpet), after He had aforetime cast him into grievous torment." Then Sherkan let bring a Nubian mule for her riding and said to her, "Mount, O pious man, God-fearing and holy!" But she refused, feigning self-denial, that she might attain her end; and they knew not that the pretended devotee was such an one as he of whom the poet says:

He prayeth and fasteth amain for an end that he hath in view. When once he has gained his end, fasting and prayer, adieu!

So she walked among the horsemen and the footmen, like a crafty fox meditating an assault, and began to uplift her voice, chanting the Koran aloud and celebrating the praises of the Compassionate One. Then they pressed forward till they reached the Mohammedan camp, where Sherkan found the Muslims in a state of confusion and the Chamberlain upon the brink of retreat, whilst the sword wrought havoc among the faithful, good and bad. Now the cause of this weakness among the Muslims was that the accursed old woman Dhat ed Dewahi, when she saw that Behram and Rustem had set forward with their troops to join Sherkan and Zoulmekan, repaired to the camp of the Muslims before Constantinople and wrought upon the Chamberlain to despatch the Amir Terkash, as hath been before set out, to the further succour of the princes, purposing in this to divide the Muslim forces and weaken them. Then she left them and going to the walls of Constantinople, called with a loud voice on the knights of the

Night cii.

Greeks, saying, "Throw me down a cord that I may tie thereto this letter, which do ye carry to King Afridoun and my son King Herdoub, that they may read it and do as is written therein." So they let down a string and she tied thereto a letter, to the following purport, "From the chiefest of calamities and the greatest of afflictions,[1] Dhat ed Dewahi, to King Afridoun. Know that I have contrived a device for the destruction of the Muslims; so rest you quiet. I made their Sultan and the Vizier Dendan prisoners and returned to their camp and acquainted them therewith, whereupon their power was broken and their strength weakened. Moreover, I have wrought on them to send ten thousand men under the Amir Terkash to the succour of the captives, and there be now but few men left with the besiegers. Wherefore, it is my counsel that ye sally forth, with all your power, whilst it is yet day, and fall on them in their tents and slay them to the last man; for the Messiah looks down upon you and the Virgin favours you; and I hope that the Messiah will not forget this that I have done." When this letter came to King Afridoun, he rejoiced greatly and sending at once for King Herdoub, read the letter to him, whereat he was exceeding glad and said, "See the craft of my mother; verily it dispenses with swords, and her aspect stands in stead of the terrors of the Day of Fear." "May the Messiah not bereave us of her," rejoined Afridoun, "nor deprive her of her craft and knavery!" Then he gave orders for the sally, and the news was noised abroad in the city. So the Christian troops and soldiers of the Cross drew their keen sabres and sallied forth of the city, shouting out their impious war-cries and blaspheming the Lord of all creatures. When the Chamberlain saw them, he said, "Behold, the Christians are upon us, whilst the most part of our troops are gone to the succour of King Zoulmekan! They surely know of the absence of our Sultan and most like they will attack us." Therewith he waxed angry and cried out, "Ho, soldiers of Islam and defenders of the True Faith, if you flee, you are lost, and if you stand fast, you will conquer! Know that courage lies in endurance and that no case is so desperate but that God is able to bring about its relief, may He bless you and look upon you with eyes of compassion!" Then the Muslims cried out, "God is most great!" and the believers in the Divine Unity shouted the profession of the Faith and the two hosts joined battle. The mill-wheels of war whirled round, with cutting and thrusting; the swords and spears played and the plains and valleys were filled with blood. The priests and monks prayed aloud, girding on their girdles and uplifting the crosses, whilst the Muslims shouted out the praises of the Requiting King and chanted verses of the Koran. The hosts of the Compassionate God fought against the legions of Satan and heads flew from bodies, what while the good angels hovered above the people of the Chosen Prophet, nor did the sword cease to play, till the day departed and the night came with the shadows. Now the unbelievers had encompassed the Muslims and made sure of overcoming the host of the True Faith with the dawn, deeming not that they could escape destruction. As soon as it was light, the Chamberlain mounted, he and his men, trusting that God would help them, and the two armies came together and joined battle. The fight raged all along the line and heads flew from bodies, whilst the brave stood fast and the faint-hearted turned their backs and fled; and the Judge of death judged and gave sentence, so that the champions fell from their saddles and the meadows were heaped with the slain. Then the Muslims began to give back and the Greeks took possession of some of their

[1] These epithets are often applied by the Arabs, in a complimentary sense, to any one who works great havoc among his enemies by his prowess and cunning.

tents; whereupon the Muslims were about to break and retreat, when behold, up came Sherkan, with the rest of their troops and the standards of the believers in the Unity of God, and fell upon the infidels, followed by Zoulmekan and the Vizier Dendan and the Amirs Behram and Rustem and Terkash. When the Christians saw this, they lost their senses and their reason fled, and the dust clouds rose till they covered the country, whilst the true believers joined their pious comrades. Then Sherkan accosted the Chamberlain and praised him for his steadfastness, and he in turn gave him joy of his timely succour. Therewith the Muslims rejoiced and their hearts were fortified; so they rushed upon the foe and devoted themselves to God, in the battle for the Faith. When the infidels saw the Mohammedan standards and read thereon the words proclaiming the Unity of God, they shrieked aloud and said, "Woe!" and "Ruin!" and besought succour of the priests and monks. Moreover they fell to calling upon Jesus and Mary and the abhorrent Cross and stayed their hands from the battle, whilst King Afridoun went up to King Herdoub (to consult with him), for the two kings stood one at the head of each wing. Now there was with them also a famous cavalier named Lawiya, who was in command of the centre, and the infidels drew out in battle-array; but indeed they were full of alarm and disquiet. Meanwhile, the Muslims arrayed their forces and Sherkan came to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him, "O king of the age, doubtless they mean to joust, and that is also what we desire; but it is my wish to set in our van-ward battle the stoutest-hearted of our men; for wise ordering is the half of life." "As thou wilt, O man of good counsel," replied the Sultan. "It is my wish," added Sherkan, "to be myself in the centre of the line, with the Vizier Dendan on my left and thee on my right, whilst Behram and Rustem command the right and

left wings; and thou, O mighty King, shalt be under the standards and the ensigns, for that thou art our stay and upon thee, after God, is our dependence, and we will all be thy ransom from aught that can harm thee." Zoulmekan thanked him and the battle-cries arose and the sabres were drawn, when, behold, there came forth a cavalier from the Grecian ranks; and as he drew near, they saw that he was mounted on a slow-paced mule, fleeing with her master from the shock of swords. Her housings were of white silk, surmounted by a carpet of Cashmere stuff, and on her back sat a grey-bearded old man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in a gown of white wool. He spurred her on till he came to the Muslims, to whom said he, "I am an ambassador to you, and all an ambassador has to do is to deliver his message; so give me a safe conduct and the right of speech, that I may do my errand to you." "Thou art in safety," replied Sherkan; "fear neither stroke of sword nor thrust of lance." Thereupon the old man dismounted and taking the cross from his neck, (laid it) before the Sultan and carried himself humbly to him, after the fashion of one who hopes for fair treatment. Then said the Muslims to him, "What is thy news?" He answered, "I am an ambassador from King Afridoun, whom I counselled to avert the destruction of all these manly bodies and images of the Compassionate; and it seemed good to him to stop the shedding of blood and limit the strife to the encounter of two horsemen in battle; so he agreed to this and says to you, 'Verily, I will ransom my troops with my life; so let the Muslim king do likewise and ransom his army with his life. If he kill me, there will be no stability left in the army of the Greeks, and if I kill him, it will be the like with the Muslims.'" When Sherkan heard this, he said, "O monk, we agree to this, for it is just; and behold I will joust with him, for I am champion of the Muslims, even

as he of the Christians; and if he slay me, he will have gained the victory and there will remain for the Muslim army nothing but flight. So return to him, O monk, and tell him that the combat shall be for to-morrow, seeing that to-day we are weary with our journey; but after rest there shall be neither reproach nor blame." So the monk returned, rejoicing, to King Afridoun and King Herdoub and told them what Sherkan had said, whereat Afridoun was exceeding glad and lightened of anxiety and trouble and said in himself, "No doubt but this Sherkan is the hardest hitter of them with the sword and the dourest at push of pike; and when I have slain him, their hearts will fail them and their strength will be broken." Now Dhat ed Dewahi had written to King Afridoun of this and told him that Sherkan was a cavalier of cavaliers and a champion of champions and had warned him against him; but Afridoun was a stalwart cavalier, who fought in many a fashion; he could hurl stones and javelins and smite with the iron mace and feared not the doughtiest of prowess in the dint of war. So when he heard from the monk that Sherkan agreed to joust, he well-nigh lost his reason for stress of joy, for that he had confidence in himself and deemed that none could stand against him. Then the infidels passed the night in joy and merry-making and wine-drinking, and as soon as it was day, the two armies drew out in battle array, with their brown spears and white swords. Presently, they saw a cavalier prick out into the plain, mounted on a stout and swift charger equipped for war: he was of great stature and was clad in a cuirass of steel made for stress of battle. On his breast he wore a jewelled mirror and in his hand he bore a keen scimitar and a lance of khelenj wood[1] of curious Frankish workmanship. He uncovered his face and cried out, saying, "Whoso knoweth me hath enough of me, and whoso

[1] See Vol. I. p. 135, note.

knoweth me not shall see who I am. I am Afridoun, he who is overborne by the blessing of Shewahi Dhat ed Dewahi." Before he had made an end of speaking, Sherkan, the champion of the Muslims, spurred out to meet him, mounted on a sorrel horse worth a thousand [dinars] of red gold, with housings embroidered in pearls and jewels, and girt with a sword of watered Indian steel, that shore through necks and made hard ventures easy. He drove his charger between the two armies, whilst the horsemen all gazed on him, and cried out to Afridoun, saying, "Out on thee, O accursed one, dost thou think me as one of the horsemen thou hast met, that cannot stand against thee in the mellay?" Then they rushed upon one another and came together like two mountains crashing or two seas breaking each against each. So they advanced and retreated and drew together and parted and ceased not to joust and battle with stroke of sword and thrust of spear, whilst the two armies looked on. Some said, "Afridoun will conquer," and other some, "Sherkan;" and they stayed not their hands from the battle, till the clamour of the bystanders subsided and the dust-clouds rose and the day waned and the sun began to grow pale. Then King Afridoun cried out to Sherkan, saying, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, thou art a doughty horseman and a stalwart fighting man, but thou art guileful and thy nature is not that of the free-born and meseemeth thy fashion is other than praiseworthy nor is thy fighting that of a prince; for see, thy people even thee with slaves[1] and bring thee out a charger other than thine, that thou mayst (mount him and) return to the battle. But by the virtue of the Messiah, thy fighting fatigues me and I am weary of cutting and thrusting with thee; and if thou wert purposed to do battle with me to-

[1] *i.e.* Deal with thee as if thou wert slave-born and therefore not used to knightly fashions nor able to endure stress of battle.

night, thou wouldst not change aught of thy harness nor thy horse, till thou hadst shown the cavaliers thy valour and skill in fight." When Sherkan heard him say that his own folk evened him with slaves, he was angry and turned towards his men, meaning to sign to them and bid them not prepare him change of armour or horse, when, behold, Afridoun shook his javelin in the air and hurled it at Sherkan. Now, when the latter turned, he found none behind him and knew that this was a trick of the accursed infidel; so he wheeled round in haste and seeing the javelin coming at him, swerved from it, till his head was level with the pommel of his saddle. The javelin grazed his breast and pierced the skin, for Sherkan was high-bosomed: so he gave one cry and swooned away. Then the accursed Afridoun was glad, thinking that he had slain him, and called to the Christians to rejoice, whereat the infidels were encouraged and the true believers wept. When Zoulmekan saw his brother reeling from side to side in his saddle, so that he had well-nigh fallen, he sent cavaliers to his succour; whereupon the infidels drove at the Muslims and the two hosts joined battle, whilst the keen Yemen blades played among them. The first to reach Sherkan were Dendan and Rustem and Behram, who found him on the point of falling off his horse; so they stayed him in his saddle and carried him to Zoulmekan; then giving him in charge to his servants, returned to the battle. Then the strife redoubled and the weapons clashed, and there was nought to be heard but the roar of the battle nor to be seen but blood flowing and necks bending beneath the blows; nor did the swords cease to play on men's necks nor the strife to rage more and more, till the most part of the night was past and the two hosts were weary of battle. So they called a truce and each army returned to its tents, whilst all the infidels repaired to King Afridoun and kissed the earth before him, and the priests and monks wished

Night ciii.

him joy of his victory over Sherkan. Then he went up into Constantinople and sat down upon his throne; and King Herdoub came to him and said, "May the Messiah strengthen thine arm and cease never to be thy helper and hearken to the prayers of my pious mother on thy behalf! Know that the Muslims can make no stand, now they have lost Sherkan." "To-morrow," replied Afridoun, "shall end the war, for I will seek out Zoulmekan and slay him, and their army shall turn tail and take to flight."

Meanwhile, Zoulmekan returned to his tent thinking of nothing but his brother, and going in to the latter's pavilion, found him in evil plight; whereat he was sore troubled and sent for the Vizier Dendan and the Amirs Behram and Rustem, that he might take counsel with them. When they entered, they were all of accord to summon the physicians to treat Sherkan, and they wept and said, "The age will not lightly afford his like!" They watched by him all that night, and towards morning there came to them the pretended recluse, weeping. When Zoulmekan saw her, he rose to receive her; and she stroked Sherkan's wound with her hand, chanting somewhat of the Koran and repeating some of the signs of the Compassionate One. Then she kept watch over him till the day, when he came to himself and opening his eyes, moved his tongue in his mouth and spoke. At this Zoulmekan rejoiced, saying, "Verily the blessing of the holy man hath taken effect on him!" And Sherkan said, "Praised be God for recovery; indeed, I am well now. Yonder accursed one played me false, and but that I swerved aside quicklier than lightning, the javelin had pierced me through and through. So praised be God for my safety! How is it with the Muslims?" "They weep for thee," answered Zoulmekan. Quoth Sherkan, "I am well and in good case; but where is the holy man?" Now she was sitting by him and said, "At thy head." So he turned to her

and kissed her hand; and she said, "O my son, it behoves thee to arm thyself with patience, and God shall make great thy reward; for the guerdon is measured by that which has been endured." Quoth Sherkan, "Pray for me," and she did so. As soon as it was morning and the day arose and shone, the Muslims sallied out into the field, and the Christians made ready to cut and thrust. Then the host of the Muslims advanced and offered battle; and Zoulmekan and Afridoun made ready to tilt at one another. But when Zoulmekan sallied out into the field, there came with him Dendan and Behram and the Chamberlain, saying, "We will be thy sacrifice." "By the Holy House and the Well Zemzem and the Stead of Abraham,"[1] exclaimed he, "I will not be hindered from going forth against these barbarians!" So he rode out into the field and played with sword and spear, till both armies wondered; then he rushed upon the right wing of the Greek army and slew two knights and in like manner dealt he with the left wing. Then he stayed his steed in the midst of the field and cried out, "Where is Afridoun, that I may make him drink the cup of humiliation?" But King Herdoub conjured Afridoun not to budge from the field, saying, "O King, it was thy turn yesterday: to-day it is mine. I reck not of his prowess." So he pricked out towards Zoulmekan, with a sabre in his hand and under him a jet black horse, swift as he were Abjer, he that was Antar's horse, even as says the poet:

He vies with the glance of the eye on a swift-footed steed, That fares as it had a mind to outstrip Fate.
The hue of his hide is the blackest of all things black, Like night, when the shadows shroud it in sable state.
The sound of his neighing troubles the hearts of men, As it were thunder that echoes in heaven's gate.
If he run a race with the wind, he leads the way, Nor can the lightning outstrip him, early or late.

[1] A chapel so called in the Temple at Mecca.

Then each rushed upon the other, guarding himself from his blows and showing the rare qualities that were in him and the wonders of his prowess; and they fell to advancing and retreating and ceased not to flee and return to the attack and wheel hither and thither, till the breasts of the bystanders were straitened (for anxiety) and they were weary of waiting for the event. At last, Zoulmekan cried out and rushing upon Herdoub, King of Cæsarea, dealt him such a blow that he shore his head from his body and made an end of him. When the infidels saw this, they all rushed at Zoulmekan, who met them in mid-field, and they fell to cutting and thrusting, till the blood ran in streams. Then the Muslims cried out, "God is most great!" and "There is no god but God!" and invoked blessings on the Giver of Good Tidings, the Admonisher of Mankind,[1] and there befell a great battle. But God sent help to the faithful and confusion to the infidels. The Vizier Dendan shouted, "Avenge King Omar ben Ennuman and his son Sherkan!" and baring his head, cried out to the Turks. Now there were beside him more than twenty thousand horse, who all charged with him as one man, and the unbelievers found nothing for it but flight. So they turned their backs to flee, whilst the keen sabres wrought havoc amongst them and the Muslims slew of them that day more than fifty thousand cavaliers and took more than that: and much people also were slain at the going in of the gates, by reason of the greatness of the crowd, whilst the Christians mounted the walls, fearing an assault. Then the Muslims returned to their tents, fortified and victorious, and King Zoulmekan went in to his brother, whom he found in the most joyous case. So he returned thanks to the Bountiful, the Exalted One and gave Sherkan joy of his deliverance. "Verily," answered he, "we are all under the benediction of this holy and God-fearing man, Night

[1] *i.e.* Mohammed.

nor would you have been victorious, but for his effectual prayers; for all day he hath never ceased to invoke victory on the Muslims. I found strength return to me, when I heard you cry, 'God is most great!' for then I knew you had gotten the better of your enemies. But now tell me, O my brother, what befell thee." So he told him all that had passed, how he had slain the accursed Herdoub and he had gone to the malediction of God; and Sherkan praised his prowess. When Dhat ed Dewahi heard tell of her son's death, the blood fled from her face and her eyes ran over with streaming tears; however, she kept her counsel and feigned to the Muslims that she was glad and wept for excess of joy: but she said in herself, "By the virtue of the Messiah, there remains no profit of my life, if I make not his heart bleed for his brother Sherkan, even as he has made mine bleed for King Herdoub, the mainstay of the Christian faith and the hosts of the Cross!"

The Vizier Dendan and Zoulmekan and the Chamberlain abode with Sherkan, till they had dressed his wound and anointed it; after which they gave him medicines and he began to recover his strength; whereat they were exceeding glad and told the troops, who rejoiced greatly, saying, "To-morrow he will ride with us and take part in the siege." Then said Sherkan to them, "You have fought all day and are weary, and it behoves that you return to your tents and sleep and not watch." So they went away all to their tents and there remained none with Sherkan but Dhat ed Dewahi and a few servants. He talked with her awhile, then lay down to rest, he and his servants, and soon sleep overcame them all and they were as dead men. But the old woman abode awake and looking at Sherkan, saw that he was drowned in sleep. So she sprang to her feet, as she were a bald she-bear or a speckled snake, and drew from her girdle a poisoned knife, that would have melted a rock, if laid thereon; then going up to Sherkan,

she drew the knife across his throat and cut off his head. After this, she went up to the sleeping servants and cut off their heads also, lest they should awake. Then she left the tent and made for the Sultan's pavilion, but finding the guards awake, turned to that of the Vizier. He was reading the Koran and seeing her, said, "Welcome, O holy man!" When she heard this, her heart trembled and she said, "The reason of my coming hither at this time is that I heard the voice of a friend of God and am going to him." Then she went away, but the Vizier said to himself, "By Allah, I will follow the holy man to-night!" So he rose and went after her: but the accursed old woman heard his footsteps and knew that he was following her: wherefore she feared discovery and said in herself, "Except I put him off with some trick, he will discover me." So she turned and said to him from afar, "Harkye, Vizier, I am going after this saint, that I may know who he is; and after I will ask his leave for thee to join him. Then I will come back and tell thee; for I fear to let thee accompany me, without his leave, lest he take umbrage at seeing thee with me." When the Vizier heard this, he was abashed and knew not what to answer; so he left her and returning to his tent, would have slept; but sleep was not favourable to him and the world was straitened upon him. So he rose and went out, saying in himself, "I will go talk with Sherkan till the morning." But when he came to Sherkan's tent, he found the blood running like a rivulet and saw the servants lying dead. At this he gave a cry that aroused all who were asleep, and they hastened to him and seeing the blood streaming, set up a clamour of weeping and lamentation. The noise awoke the Sultan, who enquired what was the matter, and they said to him, "Sherkan and his servants are murdered." So he rose in haste and entering the tent, saw his brother's headless trunk and the Vizier by it shrieking aloud. At this sight, he swooned away and all

the troops stood round him, weeping and crying aloud, till he came to himself, when he looked at Sherkan and wept sore, whilst all who were present did the like. Then said Zoulmekan, "Know ye who did this, and how is it I see not the recluse, him who hath put away the things of the world?" Quoth the Vizier, "And who should have been the cause of this our affliction, save that devotee of Satan? By Allah, my heart shrank from him from the first, because I know that all who profess to be absorbed in the things of the faith are corrupt and treacherous!" And he told the King how he would have followed the devotee, but he forbade him; whereupon the folk broke out into weeping and lamentation and besought Him who is ever near at hand, Him who answereth prayer, to cause the false recluse, who denied His evidences, to fall into their hands. Then they laid Sherkan out and buried him in the mountain aforesaid, mourning over his renowned virtues, after which they looked for the opening of the city-gate; but it opened not and none appeared to them on the walls; whereat they wondered exceedingly, and King Zoulmekan said, "By Allah, I will not turn back from them, though I tarry here years and years, till I take my wreak of my brother Sherkan and lay Constantinople in ruins and slay the King of the Nazarenes, even if death overcome me and I be at rest from this sorry world!" Then he brought out the treasure he had taken from the hermitage of Metrouhena and mustering the troops, divided it amongst them, nor was there one of them but he gave him what contented him. Moreover, he called together three hundred horse of every division and said to them, "Do ye send succours to your families, for I am resolved to camp here, till I have taken my revenge for my brother Sherkan, even if I die in this place." Then he summoned couriers and gave them letters and charged them to do the soldiers' errands to their families and let them know that they were safe and

Night 16.

in good heart, but that they were encamped before Constantinople, resolved either to destroy it or perish, and that, though they should abide there months and years, they would not depart thence till they had taken the city. Moreover, he bade Dendan write to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, acquainting her with what had befallen them and with their situation and commending his child to her care, since that, when he went out to war, his wife was near her delivery and must needs by that time have been brought to bed; and if she had given birth to a son, he charged the messengers to hasten their return and bring him the news. Then he gave them money and they set out at once, and all the people came out to take leave of them and entrust them with the money and the messages they wished to send to their families. After they had departed, Zoulmekan turned to the Vizier and commanded him to push forward with the army against the city walls. So the troops advanced, but found none on the walls, whereat they marvelled and Zoulmekan was troubled.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she had slain Sherkan, she hastened to the walls of Constantinople and called out in the Greek tongue to the guards, to throw her down a rope. Quoth they, "Who art thou?" and she said, "I am the princess Dhat ed Dewahi." They knew her and threw her down a rope, to which she tied herself, and they drew her up into the city. Then she went in to King Afridoun and said to him, "What is this I hear from the Muslims? They say that my son King Herdoub is slain." He answered, "It is true;" and when she heard this, she shrieked out and wept so grievously, that she made Afridoun and all who were present weep also. Then she told the King how she had slain Sherkan and thirty of his servants, whereat he rejoiced and thanked her and kissed her hands and exhorted her to resignation for the loss of her son. "By the Messiah," said she, "I will not rest content with

killing one of the Muslim dogs in revenge for my son, a king of the kings of the age! But I will assuredly make shift to kill the Sultan Zoulmekan and the Vizier Dendan and the Chamberlain and Rustem and Behram and ten thousand cavaliers of the army of Islam to boot; for it shall never be that my son's head be paid with the blood-wit of Sherkan's head only." Then said she to Afridoun, "It is my wish that mourning be made for my son Herdoub and that the girdle be cut and the crosses broken." "Do what thou wilt," replied Afridoun; "I will not gainsay thee in aught. And if thou prolong thy mourning, it were a little thing; for though the Muslims beleaguer us years and years, they will never compass their will of us nor get aught of us but trouble and weariness." Then she took ink-horn and paper and wrote the following letter: "Shewahi Dhat ed Dewahi to the host of the Muslims. Know that I entered your country and duped your nobles and slew your king Omar ben Ennuman in the midst of his palace. Moreover, I slew, in the battle of the mountain-pass and of the grotto, many of your men; and the last I killed were Sherkan and his servants. And if fortune favour me and Satan obey me, I will assuredly kill your Sultan and the Vizier Dendan, for I am she who came to you in the disguise of a recluse and ye were the dupes of my tricks and devices. Wherefore, if you be minded to be in safety, depart at once; and if you covet your own destruction, abide where you are; for though ye abide here years and years, ye shall not come by your desire of us; and so peace be on you." Then she devoted three days to mourning for her son King Herdoub, and on the fourth day, she called a knight and bade him make the letter fast to an arrow and shoot it into the Muslim camp; after which she entered the church and gave herself up to weeping and lamentation for the loss of her son, saying to him who took the kingship after him, "Nothing will

serve me but I must kill Zoulmekan and all the princes of Islam."

Meanwhile, the Muslims passed three days in concern and anxiety, and on the fourth day, they saw a knight on the wall, holding a bow and about to shoot an arrow to which was fastened a letter. So they waited till he had shot, and the King bade the Vizier Dendan take the letter and read it. He did so, and when Zoulmekan heard its purport, his eyes filled with tears and he shrieked for anguish at the old woman's perfidy, and Dendan said, "By Allah, my heart shrank from her!" "How could this traitress impose upon us twice?" exclaimed Zoulmekan. "By Allah, I will not depart hence till I fill her kaze with molten lead and set her in a cage, as men do birds, then bind her with her hair and crucify her at the gate of Constantinople." Then he addressed himself again to the leaguer of the city, promising his men that, if it should be taken, he would divide its treasures equally among them. After this, he bethought him of his brother and wept sore; and his tears ceased not to flow, till his body was wasted with grief, as it were a bodkin. But the Vizier Dendan came in to him and said, "Take comfort and be consoled; thy brother died not but because his hour was come, and there is no profit in this mourning. How well says the poet:

That which is not to be shall by no means be brought To pass, and that which is to be shall come, unsought,
Even at the time ordained: but he that knoweth not The truth is still deceived and finds his hopes grown nought.

Wherefore do thou leave this weeping and lamentation and strengthen thy heart to bear arms." "O Vizier," replied Zoulmekan, "my heart is heavy for the death of my brother and father and our absence from our native land, and my mind is concerned for my subjects." Thereupon the Vizier and the bystanders wept; but they ceased not

from the leaguer of Constantinople, till, after awhile, news arrived from Baghdad, by one of the Amirs, that the Sultan's wife had given birth to a son and that the princess Nuzhet ez Zeman had named him Kanmakan. Moreover, his sister wrote to him that the boy bid fair to be a prodigy and that she had commanded the priests and preachers to pray for them from the pulpits; also, that they were all well and had been blessed with abundant rains and that his comrade the stoker was in the enjoyment of all prosperity, with slaves and servants to attend upon him; but that he was still ignorant of what had befallen him. Zoulmekan rejoiced greatly at this news and said to the Vizier Dendan, "Now is my hope fulfilled and my back strengthened, in that I have been vouchsafed a son. Wherefore I am minded to leave mourning and let make recitations of the Koran over my brother's tomb and do almsdeeds on his account." Quoth the Vizier, "It is well." Then he caused tents to be pitched over his brother's tomb and they gathered together such of the troops as could repeat the Koran. Some fell to reciting the Koran, whilst others chanted the litanies of the praise of God, and thus they did till the morning, when Zoulmekan went up to the tomb of his brother Sherkan and shedding copious tears, repeated the following verses:

Night cvi.

They bore him forth, whilst all who went behind him wept and cried
Such cries as Moses gave, when God broke down the mountain side,
Till to a tomb they came, whose grave seemed dug in all men's hearts
By whom the unity of God is held and glorified.
I had not thought, or ere they bore thee forth upon the bier, To see my joy upon the hands of men uplifted ride;
Nor, till they laid thee in the grave, could I have ever deemed That stars could leave their place in heaven and in the dark earth hide.
Is the indweller of the tomb the hostage of a pit, In which, for that his face is there, splendour and light abide?
Lo, praise has ta'en upon itself to bring him back to life! Now that his body's hid, his fame's shown forth and magnified.

When he had made an end of reciting these verses, he wept and all the troops wept with him; then he threw himself on the tomb, wild with grief, and the Vizier repeated the words of the poet:

That which fleets past thou hast left and won what endureth for aye,
And even as thou are the folk, that were and have passed away;
And yet it was not of thy will that thou quittedst this house of the world;
For here hadst thou joy and delight of all that befell in thy day.
How oft hast thou proven thyself a succour and shield from the foe,
When the arrows and javelins of war flew thick in the midst of the fray!
I see that this world's but a cheat and a vanity after all, And ever to seek out the Truth all creatures desire and essay!
The Lord of the Empyrean vouchsafe thee in heaven to dwell And the Guide assign thee therein a goodly sojourn, I pray!
I bid thee adieu with a sigh and I see, for the loss of thee, The East and the West o'ershadowed with mourning and dismay.

When the Vizier had finished, he wept sore, and the tears fell from his eyes, like a network of pearls. Then came forward one of Sherkan's boon-companions, weeping till his eyes resembled rivers, and recalled the dead man's noble qualities, reciting the following cinquains:

Where be thy giving, alas! and the hand of thy bounty fled? They lie in the earth, and my body is wasted for drearihead.
O guide of the camel-litters,[1] (may God still gladden thy stead!) My tears on my cheeks have written, in characters of red,
That which would both rejoice thee and fill thee with pain and dread!
By Allah, 'twixt me and my heart, not a word of thee is said Nor doth the thought of thy grace and thy glory pass through my head,
But that mine eyes are wounded by dint of the tears I shed! Yea, if to rest on another my glance be ever led,
May my lids be drawn in slumber by longing for the dead!

Then Zoulmekan and Dendan wept sore and the whole army lamented aloud; after which they all withdrew to

[1] *i.e.* protector of the women that ride therein.

their tents, and Zoulmekan turned to Dendan and took counsel with him concerning the conduct of the war. On this wise they passed days and nights, what while Zoulmekan was weighed down with grief and concern, till at last he said to the Vizier, "I have a mind to hear stories of adventures and chronicles of kings and tales of folk oppressed of love, so haply God may make this to solace the heavy anxiety that is on my heart and do away from me weeping and lamentation." "O King," replied Dendan, "if nought but hearing pleasant tales of bygone kings and peoples and stories of folk oppressed of love and so forth can dispel thy trouble, the thing is easy, for I had no other business, in the lifetime of thy late father, than to tell him stories and repeat verses to him; so, this very night, I will tell thee a story of a lover and his beloved, which shall lighten thy heart." When Zoulmekan heard this, his heart yearned after that which the Vizier promised him and he did nothing but watch for the coming of the night, that he might hear what he had to tell. So, no sooner had the night closed in, than he bade light the lamps and the candles and bring all that was needful of meat and drink and perfumes and what not and sending for Dendan, Rustem, Behram, Terkash and the Grand Chamberlain, turned to the Vizier and said, "O Vizier, behold, the night is come and hath let down its veils over us, and we desire that thou tell us that which thou didst promise us." "With all my heart," replied the Vizier. "Know, O august King, that I have heard tell a story of a lover and a loved one and of the discourse between them and of the rare and pleasant things that befell them, a story such as does away care from the heart and dispels sorrow like unto that of the patriarch Jacob: and it is as follows:

Night cvii.

STORY OF TAJ EL MULOUK AND THE PRINCESS DUNYA.

There stood once, behind the mountains of Ispahan, a town called the Green City, in which dwelt a king named Suleiman Shah, a man of virtue and beneficence, just, generous and loyal, to whom travellers resorted from all parts, for his renown was noised abroad in all cities and countries; and he reigned over the country for many years, in all honour and prosperity, save that he had neither wife nor child. Now he had a vizier who was akin to him in goodness and generosity, and one day, he sent for him and said to him, 'O my Vizier, my heart is heavy and my patience at end and my strength fails me, for that I have neither wife nor child. This is not of the fashion of kings that rule over all, princes and beggars; for they rejoice in leaving behind them children, who shall succeed them and by whom both their number and strength are multiplied. Quoth the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), "Marry and engender and multiply, that I may boast myself of you over the peoples on the Day of Resurrection." So what is thy counsel, O Vizier? Advise me what is fitting to be done.' When the Vizier heard this, the tears streamed from his eyes and he replied, 'God forbid, O king of the age, that I should speak on that which is of the pertinence of the Compassionate One! Wilt thou have me cast into the fire by the wrath of the All-powerful King? Buy a concubine.' 'Know, O Vizier,' rejoined the King, 'that when a prince buys a female slave, he knows neither her condition nor her lineage and thus cannot tell if she be of mean extraction, that he may abstain from her, or of gentle blood, that he may be intimate with her. So, if he have commerce with her, belike she will conceive by him and her son be a hypocrite, a tyrant and a shedder of

blood. Indeed such a woman may be likened to a salt soil, which, if one till it, yields only worthless crops; for it may be the son in question will be obnoxious to the wrath of his Lord, doing not that which He commandeth him neither abstaining from that which He forbiddeth him. Wherefore I will never risk being the cause of this, through the purchase of a concubine; and it is my will, therefore, that thou demand for me in marriage the daughter of some one of the kings, whose lineage is known and whose beauty is renowned. If thou canst direct me to some king's daughter of the Muslims, who is a woman of good birth and piety, I will seek her hand and marry her before witnesses, that the favour of the Lord of all creatures may accrue to me thereby.' 'O King,' said the Vizier, 'God hath fulfilled thy need and hath brought thee to thy desire; for it hath come to my knowledge that King Zehr Shah, Lord of the White Country, hath a daughter of surpassing beauty, whom report fails to describe; she hath not her equal in this age, being perfect in beauty and symmetry, with melting black eyes and long hair, slender-waisted and heavy-hipped. When she draws nigh, she seduces, and when she turns her back, she slays, ravishing heart and sight, even as says of her the poet:

A slender one! her shape confounds the branch of the cassia tree; Nor sun nor moon can with her face for brightness evened be.
Meseems, the water of her mouth is honey blent with wine; Ay, and her teeth are finer pearls than any in the sea.
The purest white and deepest black meet in her glittering glance And shapelier than the black-eyed maids of Paradise is she.
How many a man her eyes have slain, who perished in despair! The love of her's a way wherein are fear and misery.
If I would live, behold, she's death! I may not think of her, Lest I should die; for, lacking her, life's nothing worth to me.

So it is my counsel, O King, that thou despatch to her father a sagacious and experienced ambassador, versed in the conduct of affairs, who shall with courteous and

persuasive speech demand her in marriage for thee; for she hath not her equal in the world, far or near. So shalt thou enjoy her beauty in the way of right and the Lord of Glory be content with thee; for it is reported of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) that he said, "There is no monkery in Islam."' At this the King was transported to the perfection of delight; his heart was lightened and his breast dilated and care and anxiety ceased from him; and he said to the Vizier, 'None shall go about this business but thou, by reason of thy consummate wit and good breeding; wherefore do thou make ready by the morrow and depart and demand me this girl in marriage, with whom thou hast made my heart to be engrossed; nor do thou return to me but with her.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the Vizier, and withdrawing to his own house, made ready a present such as befits kings, of jewels and other precious things, light of carriage but heavy of worth, besides Arabian horses and coats of mail, fine-wrought as those which David made,[1] and chests of treasure, such as speech fails to describe. These all he loaded upon camels and mules and set out, with flags and banners flying before him and attended by a hundred white slaves and the like number of black and a hundred slave-girls. The King charged him to return to him speedily; so he set out, leaving Suleiman Shah on coals of fire, engrossed night and day with desire for the princess, and fared on, without ceasing, night and day, across plains and deserts, till there remained but a day's journey between him and the city to which he was bound. Here

[1] The Mohammedans have a legend that God gave David extraordinary skill in working iron and making chain mail, that he might earn his living without drawing upon the public treasury. "And we gave David a grace from us and softened for him iron (saying), 'Make thou coats of mail and adjust the rings duly and deal rightly, for I look upon what ye do.'"—*Koran*, xxxiv. 10.

he halted on the banks of a river, and calling one of his chief officers, bade him hasten forward to King Zehr Shah and announce his approach. Accordingly, the messenger rode on in haste to the city and was about to enter it, when the King, who chanced to be seated in one of his pleasaunces before the gate, espied him and knowing him for a stranger, bade bring him before him. So when the messenger came into his presence, he informed him of the approach of the Vizier of the mighty King Suleiman Shah, Lord of the Green Country and of the mountains of Ispahan; whereat King Zehr Shah rejoiced and bade him welcome. Then he carried him to his palace and said to him, 'Where didst thou leave the Vizier?' 'I left him,' replied the messenger, 'at the first of the day, on the banks of such a river, and he will be with thee to-morrow, may God continue His favours to thee and have mercy upon thy parents!' Whereupon the King commanded one of his Viziers to take the better part of his nobles and chamberlains and officers and grandees and go out to meet the ambassador, in honour of King Suleiman Shah, for that his dominion extended over the country.

Meanwhile, King Suleiman's Vizier abode in his stead, till the night was half spent, when he set out for the city; but hardly had the day appeared and the sun risen upon the hills and plains, when he saw King Zehr Shah's Vizier approaching with his retinue and the two parties joined company at some parasangs' distance from the city. At this the Vizier made sure of the success of his errand and saluted the new-comers, who escorted him to the King's palace and forewent him to the seventh vestibule, where none might enter on horseback, for it was near the presence-chamber of the King. So the Vizier alighted and walked on till he came to a lofty hall, at the upper end whereof stood a couch of alabaster, set with pearls and jewels and having four elephants' tusks for feet. It

was covered with a mattress of green satin, embroidered with red gold, and surmounted by a canopy adorned with pearls and jewels, and on it sat King Zehr Shah, whilst his officers of state stood in attendance on him. When the Vizier stood before him, he composed himself and loosing his tongue, displayed such skill of speech as befits viziers and saluted the King in eloquent and complimentary language, reciting the following verses in his honour: Night cviii.

He cometh, bending gracefully in his robes and shedding dew Of bounty over the thirsting land and the folk to him that sue.
Indeed, he charmeth; nor amulets nor spells nor magic may Avail to ward off the faithful glance of those his eyes from you.
Say to the censurers, "Blame me not: whilst life abide in me, I'll never swerve from the love of him nor turn to love anew."
Lo, slumber surely is tired of me and fallen in love with him, And even my heart hath played me false and but to him is true!
O heart, thou art not the only one that loves and tenders him; So get thee gone and bide with him and leave me here to rue!
Except the praise of the King Zehr Shah it be that folk acclaim, There's nought rejoices mine ears, in sooth, to hearken thereunto.
A King, the sight of whose glorious face would well thy pains repay, Though thou shouldst lavish thy hearts' best blood, so great a grace to woo.
If thou be minded to offer up a pious prayer for him, Thou'lt find but true believers and sharers the whole world through.
O folk of his realm, if any forswear his governance And look for another, I hold him none of the faithful few!

When the Vizier had made an end of his speech, the King bade him draw near and showed him the utmost honour; then seating him by his own side, he smiled in his face and made him a gracious reply. They conversed till the time of the morning-meal, when the attendants brought in the tables of food and they all ate till they were satisfied, after which the tables were removed and all who were present withdrew, with the exception of the chief officers; which when the Vizier saw, he rose to his feet, and after complimenting the King a second time and

kissing the earth before him, spoke as follows: 'O mighty king and august prince, I have travelled hither and am come to thee upon an errand, wherein is profit and good and prosperity for thee; and it is that I come as ambassador to thee, seeking the hand of thy noble and illustrious daughter, from the most just, loyal and excellent King Suleiman Shah, Lord of the Green Country and of the mountains of Ispahan, who sends thee many and rare presents and gifts of price, ardently desiring thine alliance. Art thou, then, minded to him as he to thee?' And he was silent, awaiting a reply. When the King heard his words, he sprang to his feet and kissed the earth respectfully before the Vizier, to the amazement of the bystanders, whose minds were confounded at his condescension to the ambassador. Then he praised Him who is the Lord of glory and honour and replied, still standing, 'O mighty Vizier and illustrious lord, hear what I say. Verily we are of the subjects of King Suleiman Shah and are ennobled by his alliance and aspire ardently thereto. My daughter is one of his handmaids, and it is my dearest wish that he may become my stay and my support in time of need.' Then he summoned the Cadis and the witnesses, who took act that King Suleiman had deputed his Vizier his proxy to conclude the marriage, and King Zehr Shah joyfully consented on behalf of his daughter. So the Cadis drew up the marriage contract and offered up prayers for the happiness and prosperity of the contracting parties; after which the Vizier arose and fetching the gifts and rarities and precious things that he had brought with him, laid them all before the King, who betook himself to the equipment of his daughter, honourably entreating the Vizier and feasting great and small; and they held high festival for two months, omitting nought that could gladden heart and eye. When all was ready that was needful for the bride, the King caused the tents to be pitched without the city

and they packed the bride's clothes and jewels in chests and loaded them on mules and camels. Now he had provided his daughter with Greek handmaids and Turkish slave-girls and great store of jewels and precious things, and had let make for her a litter of red gold inlaid with pearls and jewels, which within was as one of the chambers of a palace and without as one of the pavilions of Paradise, whilst its mistress seemed as she were of the lovely houris. Moreover, he furnished her also with twenty mules for the journey and brought her three parasangs forward on her road, after which he bade her and the Vizier farewell and returned to his own city in peace and gladness. Meanwhile, the Vizier and his company fared on by forced marches, traversing plains and deserts and staying not day or night, till they came within three days' journey of King Suleiman's capital, when the Vizier despatched a messenger to acquaint the King with their arrival. The messenger hastened forward till he reached the King's presence and announced to him the coming of the bride, whereat he rejoiced and bestowed on him a dress of honour. Then he bade his troops don their richest apparel and sally forth in grand procession, with banners flying, to meet the princess and her company and do them honour, and let cry throughout the city that neither cloistered damsel nor honoured lady nor infirm old woman should fail to go forth to meet the bride. So they all went out to meet her and the chiefest of them vied in doing her service, meaning to bring her to the King's palace by night. Moreover, the grandees agreed to decorate the road and stand on either side, whilst the bride should pass by, clad in the robes her father had given her and preceded by her eunuchs and serving-women. So at the appointed time, she made her appearance, surrounded by the troops, these on her right hand and those on her left, and the litter ceased not going with her, till they drew near the palace;

Night cix.

nor was there any one but came forth to gaze upon the show. The drums beat and the lances were brandished, the trumpets blared and the banners fluttered and the horses pranced, whilst fragrant odours breathed around, till they reached the gate of the palace and the pages entered with the litter through the private gate. The place shone with its splendours and the walls glittered for the lustre of its ornaments. When the night came, the eunuchs threw open the doors of the bride-chamber and stood on either hand; whereupon the bride entered, among her damsels, like the moon among stars or a pearl of matchless beauty in a string of lesser pearls, and seated herself upon a couch of alabaster inlaid with pearls and jewels, that had been set for her there. Then came the King in to her and God filled his heart with love of her; so he did away her maidenhead, and his trouble and disquiet ceased from him. She conceived by him the first night, and he abode with her well-nigh a month, at the end of which time he went forth and seating himself on his throne of state, dispensed justice to his subjects, till the months of her pregnancy were accomplished. Towards daybreak on the last night of the ninth month, the queen was seized with the pangs of labour; so she sat down on the stool of delivery and God made the travail easy to her, so that she gave birth to a male child, on whom appeared the signs of happy fortune. When the King heard of this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and rewarded the bearer of the good tidings with much treasure. Then, of his gladness, he went in to the child and kissed him between the eyes, wondering at his brilliant beauty; for in him was the saying of the poet made truth:

God hath a lion given in him unto the forts of fame And in the heaven of high estate hath set another star.
Lo, at his birth, the spears shake all and all the wild deer start And all the chieftains of the folk and all the men of war!

So mount him not upon the breasts, for he shall surely deem That horses' backs for such as he the softer sitting are;
And wean ye him from sucking milk, for he eftsoon shall find The blood of foemen in the field the sweeter drink by far.

The midwives took the new-born child and cut the cord of his navel, after which they anointed his eyes with kohl and named him Taj el Mulouk Kharan. He was suckled at the breast of delight and reared in the lap of favouring fortune, and the days ran on and the years passed by, till he reached the age of seven. Then the King his father summoned the doctors and learned men and bade them teach his son writing and science and polite letters. This they did for some years, till he had learnt all that was needful, when the King took him out of the professors' hands and committed him to a master, who taught him horsemanship and the use of arms, till the boy attained the age of fourteen and became proficient in martial exercises. Moreover, he outshone all the people of his time for the excess of his beauty; so that, whenever he went abroad on any occasion, all who saw him were ravished with him and made verses in his honour, and even the virtuous were seduced by his brilliant loveliness. Quoth the poet of him: Night cx.

A tender branch, that from the breeze hath ta'en its nourishment! I clipped him and straightway became drunk with his sweetest scent;
Not drunken with the drunkenness of one who drinketh wine, But with the honey of his mouth fulfilled of languishment.
All loveliness comprised is within his perfect form, So that o'er all the hearts of men he reigns omnipotent.
By God, forgetfulness of him shall never cross my mind, What while I wear the chains of life, nor even when they're rent!
Lo, if I live, in love of him I'll live; and, if I die Of love-longing for him, I'll say, "O rare! O excellent!"

When he reached his eighteenth year, the tender down began to invade the table of his rosy cheeks, which were

adorned by a black mole like a grain of ambergris, and he captivated the minds and eyes of all who looked on him, even as says of him the poet in the following verses:

He is become the Khalif of beauty in Joseph's place; The hearts of all lovers dread him, whenas they see his grace.
Pause thou with me and fasten thy gaze on him; thou'lt see The sign of the Khalifate set in sable[1] on his face.

And as says another:

Thine eyes have never looked upon a fairer sight, Of all the things that are to see beneath the sky,
Than yonder mole of brown, that nestles on his face, Midmost the rosy cheek, beneath the coal-black eye.

And a third:

I marvel at yon mole that serves the fire eternally Upon his cheek, yet is not burned, all Kafir[2] though it be;
And eke I marvel that he's sent of God, with every glance To work true miracles; and yet a sorcerer is he!
The many gall-bladders that burst for him it is that make The shining fringes of his cheek so black and bright to see.

And yet a fourth:

I wonder to hear the folk ask of the water of life And question in which of the lands its magical fountain flows;
Whenas I see it well from the damask lips of a fawn, Under his tender moustache and his cheek's perennial rose.
And eke 'tis a wonder of wonders that Moses,[3] finding it there Flowing, yet took no patience nor laid him down to repose.

When he came to man's estate, his beauty increased and he had many comrades and friends; and every one who drew near to him hoped that he would become Sultan

[1] This appears to be an allusion to the colours of the house of Abbas, which were black.
[2] *Kafir* means "black" as well as "infidel."
[3] One of the Mohammedan legends represents Moses as seeking the water of life.

after his father's death and that he himself might be one of his officers. He had a passion for hunting and would hardly leave the chase a single hour. His father would have restrained him, fearing for him the perils of the desert and the wild beasts; but he paid no heed to him. One day, he bade his attendants take ten days' provender and setting out for the chase, rode on into the desert four days long, at the end of which time he came to a verdant champaign, full of wild beasts pasturing and trees laden with ripe fruit and springs welling forth. Then he said to his followers, 'Set up the nets in a wide circle and let our general rendezvous be at the mouth of the ring, in such a spot.' So they staked out a wide circle with the nets; and there gathered together a multitude of all kinds of wild beasts and gazelles, which cried out for fear of them and threw themselves in terror right in the face of the horses. Then they loosed the dogs and sakers and hunting lynxes on them and smote them with arrows in the vitals; so, by the time they came to the closed end of the ring of nets, they took a great number of the wild beasts, and the rest fled. Then the prince sat down by the water-side and letting spread the game before himself, apportioned it among his men, after he had set apart the choicest thereof for his father King Suleiman and despatched it to him; and other part he divided among the officers of his court. He passed the night in that place, and when it was morning, there came up a caravan of merchants, with their slaves and servants, and halted by the water and the verdure. When Taj el Mulouk saw this, he said to one of his companions, 'Go, bring me news of yonder folk and ask them why they have halted here.' So the man went up to them and said, 'Tell me who ye are, and answer quickly.' 'We are merchants,' replied they, 'and have halted here to rest, for that the next station is distant and we have confidence in King Suleiman Shah and his

son Taj el Mulouk, knowing that all who alight in their dominions are in peace and safety; and we have with us precious stuffs, that we have brought for the prince.' The messenger returned with this news to the prince, who said, 'I will not depart hence till I see what they have brought for me.' Then he mounted and rode to the caravan, followed by his servants. The merchants rose to receive him and invoked on him the aid and favour of God, with continuance of glory and virtues; after which they pitched him a pavilion of red satin, emblazoned with pearls and jewels, in which they spread him a royal divan, upon a silken carpet embroidered at the upper end with emeralds. The prince seated himself on the divan, whilst his servants stood in attendance upon him, and bade the merchants bring out all that they had with them. Accordingly, they produced all their merchandise, and he viewed it and took of it what liked him, paying them the price. Then he remounted and was about to ride onward, when his eyes fell on a handsome young man, well dressed and elegantly made, with flower-white forehead and face brilliant as the moon, save that his beauty was wasted and that pallor had invaded his cheeks by reason of separation from those he loved: sighing and lamentation were grievous upon him and the tears streamed from his eyelids, as he repeated the following verses:

Night cxi.

Absence is long and care and fear are heavy on my soul, Whilst from mine eyes the tears, O friend, without cessation roll.
Alas, I left my heart behind upon the parting day, And now sans heart, sans hope, abide all lonely in my dole.
Pause with me, O my friend, what while I take my leave of one By whose sweet speech diseases all and sorrows are made whole.

Having said this, he wept awhile and fell down in a swoon, whilst Taj el Mulouk looked at him wonderingly: then coming to himself, he stared fixedly before him, with a distracted air, and repeated these other verses:

I rede thee beware of her glance, for, lo, 'tis a wizard, I ween! None 'scapeth unscathed of the shafts of her eyes, that has gazed on their sheen.
For, trust me, black eyes, that are armed with the grace of a languorous look, Are swifter and sharper to wound than scimitars, tempered and keen.
And let not thy mind be beguiled by the sweet and the soft of her words; For the fever that springs from her speech o'ermasters the senses' demesne.
Soft-sided, were silk but to press on her skin, it would cause it to bleed, So delicate-bodied she is and so nesh, as forsooth thou hast seen.
Right chary she is of the charms 'twixt her neck and her anklets that lie, And what is the sweetest of scents to the fragrance that breathes from my queen?

Then he gave a sob and swooned away a second time. When Taj el Mulouk saw him thus, he was perplexed about his case and went up to him. So when he came to himself and saw the prince standing by him, he sprang to his feet and kissed the earth before him; and Taj el Mulouk said to him, 'Why didst thou not show us thy merchandise?' 'O my lord,' answered the young merchant, 'there is nought among my stock worthy of thine august highness.' 'It matters not,' said the prince, 'thou must show me what thou hast and acquaint me with thy case; for I see thee weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted. If thou hast been wronged, we will do away thine oppression, and if thou be in debt, we will discharge thy debt; for my heart aches for thee, since I first set eyes on thee.' Then he called for seats and they set him a chair of ebony and ivory, netted with gold and silk, and spread him a silken carpet. So he sat down on the chair and bidding the young merchant seat himself on the carpet, again commanded him to show him his merchandise. 'O my lord,' said he, 'do not name this to me,' for I have nought worthy of thee.' 'I will have it so,' rejoined Taj el Mulouk and bade some of the servants fetch the goods. So they brought them in spite of the merchant; and when he

saw this, the tears streamed from his eyes and he wept and sighed and lamented; sobs rose from his bosom and he repeated the following verses:

By the witching amorous sweetness and the blackness of thine eyes, By the tender flexile softness in thy slender waist that lies,
By the graces and the languor of thy body and thy shape, By the founts of wine and honey from thy coral lips that rise,
O my hope, to see thine image in my dreams were sweeter far Than were safety to the fearful, languishing in woful wise!

Then he opened his bales and displayed their contents to Taj el Mulouk, piece by piece, till he came to a mantle of satin brocaded with gold, worth two thousand dinars, from which, when he opened it, there fell a piece of linen. As soon as he saw this, he caught up the piece of linen in haste and hid it under his thigh; and indeed he seemed as though he had lost his reason, and he repeated the following verses:

When shall my sad tormented heart be healed, alas, of thee? The Pleiades were nearer far than is thy grace to me.
Distance, estrangement, longing pain and fire of love laid waste, Procrastination and delay, in these my life doth flee.
For no attainment bids me live nor exile slays me quite; Travel no nigher doth me bring, nor wilt thou nearer be.
There is no justice to be had of thee nor any ruth In thee; no winning to thy grace and yet no breaking free.
Alack, for love of thee, the ways are straitened all on me; So that I know not where I go nor any issue see!

The prince wondered greatly at his behaviour, and said to him, 'What is that piece of linen?' 'O my lord,' replied the merchant, 'thou hast no concern with it.' 'Show it me,' said the prince; and the merchant answered, 'O my lord, it was on account of this piece of linen that I refused to show thee my goods; for I cannot let thee look on it.' But Taj el Mulouk rejoined, 'I must and will see it;' and insisted and became angry. So he

Night cxii.

drew it out from under his thigh, weeping and lamenting and redoubling his sighs and groans, and repeated the following verses:

Blame ye the lover not, for blame but irketh him to hear; Indeed, I spoke him truth, but he to me would lend no ear.
God have her in His care, my moon that rises far away, Down in the valley, midst the camp, from out the collars' sphere![1]
I left her; would to God my love had left me peace of life! So had I never parted been from her that held me dear.
O how she pleaded for my sake upon our parting day, What while adown her cheeks and mine tear followed upon tear!
May God belie me not! The wede of my excuse from me Was all to-rent for loss of her; but I will mend my cheer.
No bed is easy to my side, nor is her resting-place Ayemore reposeful unto her, now I'm no longer near.
For Fate with an ill-omened hand hath wrought upon our loves And hindered me from my delight and her from hers, yfere.
Indeed, what time it filled the cup, whereof she drank what I E'en made her drink, it poured us out grief, all unmixed and sheer.

Quoth Taj el Mulouk, 'Thy conduct perplexes me; tell me why thou weepest at the sight of this piece of linen.' When the young merchant heard speak of the piece of linen, he sighed and answered, 'O my lord, my story is a strange and eventful one, with regard to this piece of linen and her from whom I had it and her who wrought the figures and emblems that be thereon.' So saying, he unfolded the piece of linen, and behold, thereon were the figures of two gazelles, facing one another, one wrought in silk and gold and the other in silver with a ring of red gold and three bugles of chrysolite about its neck. When Taj el Mulouk saw the figures and the beauty of their fashion, he exclaimed, 'Glory be to God who teacheth man that which he knoweth not!' And his heart was filled with longing to hear the merchant's story; so he

[1] The allusion here is to the face of a beloved one, which is likened to a moon rising out of her dress.

said to him, 'Tell me thy story with her who gave thee these gazelles.' 'Know, O my lord,' replied the young man, 'that

STORY OF AZIZ AND AZIZEH.

My father was one of the chief merchants (of my native town) and God had vouchsafed him no other child than myself; but I had a cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, who was brought up with me in our house; for her father was dead and before his death, he had agreed with my father that I should marry her. So when I reached man's estate and she became a woman, they did not separate us, and we ceased not to sleep on the same couch, knowing no evil, albeit she was more thoughtful, more intelligent and quicker-witted than I, till at last, my father spoke to my mother and said, "This very year we will draw up the contract of marriage between Aziz and Azizeh." So they agreed upon this, and he betook himself to preparing victual for the marriage festivities. When he had made an end of his preparations and there remained nought but to draw up the contract and consummate the marriage, he appointed the wedding for a certain Friday, after the congregational prayers, and going round to his friends among the merchants and others, acquainted them with this, whilst my mother invited her female friends and kindred. When the day came, they cleaned the guest-chamber and washed the marble floor, then spread carpets about the house and set out thereon what was needful, after they had hung the walls with cloth of gold. Now the folk had agreed to come to our house after the Friday-prayers; so my father went and let make cates and dishes of sweetmeats, and there remained nothing to do but to draw up the contract. Then my mother sent me to the bath and sent after me a suit of new clothes of the richest kind,

which I put on, when I came out. The clothes were perfumed, and as I went along, there exhaled from them a delicious fragrance, that scented the way. I was about to repair to the mosque, when I bethought me of one of my friends and was minded to go in quest of him, that he might be present at the drawing up of the contract, saying in myself, "This will occupy me till near the time of prayer." So I turned back and came to a by-street, that I had never before entered. Now I was in a profuse perspiration, from the effects of the bath and the new clothes on my body, and the sweat streamed from me, whilst the perfume of my clothes was wafted abroad: so I sat down to rest on a stone bench at the upper end of the street, spreading under me an embroidered handkerchief I had with me. The heat redoubled on me, so that my forehead sweated and the drops ran down on to my cheeks; but I could not wipe my face with my handkerchief, because I lay upon it. So I was about to take the skirt of my gaberdine and wipe my cheeks with it, when suddenly there fell on me from above a white handkerchief, softer to the feel than the zephyr and pleasanter to the sight than recovery to the sick. I seized on it and looking up to see whence it came, my eyes met those of the lady who gave me these gazelles. She was looking out of a wicket in a lattice of brass and never saw my eyes a fairer than she; my tongue fails to picture her beauty. When she saw me looking at her, she put her forefinger to her mouth, then joined her middle and index fingers and laid them on her bosom, between her breasts; after which she drew in her head and shut the wicket. With this, fire broke out and raged in my heart; the glance I had of her cost me a thousand sighs and I abode perplexed, having heard no word from her and understanding not the meaning of her signs. I looked again at the window, but found it shut and waited till sundown, but heard no sound and saw no one. When

Night cxiii.

I despaired of seeing her again, I rose and taking up the handkerchief, opened it, whereupon there exhaled from it a scent of musk, which caused me such ease that meseemed I was in paradise. Then I spread it out before me and there dropped from it a little scroll of paper. I opened the scroll, which was scented with a delicious perfume, and found written therein the following verses:

I sent my love a scroll, complaining of desire, Writ in a fine, small hand; for writings vary still.
"Why is thy writing thus," my lover said to me, "Attenuate and small, uneath to read and ill?"
Quoth I, "Because I too am wasted, ay, and thin. Thus should their writing be, who weary at Love's will."

Then, casting my eyes on the beauty of the handkerchief, I saw embroidered on one of its borders the following verses:

The down of his whiskers writes (good luck to it for a scribe!) Two lines, in the basil[1] hand, on the table of his face.
O the wilderment of the moon at him, when he appears! And O the shame of the branch at sight of his flexile grace!

And on the opposite border were the following verses:

The whiskers write upon his cheeks, with ambergris on pearl, Two lines, as 'twere with jet upon an apple, line for line.
Death harbours in his languid eyes and slays with every glance; And in his cheeks is drunkenness, and not in any wine.

When I read what was written on the handkerchief, the flames of love raged in my heart, and longing and trouble redoubled on me. So I took the handkerchief and the scroll and went home, knowing no means to compass my desire, for that I was inexperienced in love affairs and unskilled in the interpretation of the language of signs used therein. The night was far spent before I reached my house, and when I entered, I found my cousin sitting

[1] An ornamental hand, said to be so called from the resemblance of the pen with which it is written to the leaf of the sweet basil.

weeping. As soon as she saw me, she wiped away her tears and coming up to me, took off my (outer) clothes and asked me the reason of my absence, saying, "All the folk, amirs and notables and merchants and others, assembled here, and the Cadi and the witnesses came also at the appointed time. They ate and sat awhile, awaiting thy coming for the drawing-up of the contract, till they despaired of thee, when they dispersed and went their ways. And indeed," added she, "thy father was exceeding wroth, by reason of this, and swore that he would not celebrate our marriage till next year, for that he hath spent much money on this occasion. What hath befallen thee to make thee tarry till now?" "O my cousin," replied I, "do not ask me what hath befallen me." Then I told her all that had passed and showed her the handkerchief and the scroll. She took them and read what was written therein; whereupon the tears ran down her cheeks and she repeated the following verses:

Who says to thee, the first of love is free, Tell him, not so; but, on the contrary,
'Tis all constraint, wherein no blame can be. History indeed attests this verity;
It does not style the good coin falsified.
Say, if thou wilt, the taste of pain is sweet, Or to be spurned by Fortune's flying feet;
Of need or vengeance, fortune or defeat, With joy or dole it makes the heart to beat:
'Twixt phrase and counterphrase I'm stupefied.
But as for him whose happy days are light, Fair maids, whose lips with smiles are ever bright,
Borne on the fragrant gales of their delight, Who hath his will, unhindered of despite,
'Tis not with him a craven heart may bide.

Then she asked me what she said and what signs she made to me. "She spoke not," answered I; "but put her index finger to her mouth, then joining it to her middle finger, laid them both on her bosom and pointed to the

ground, after which she drew in her head and shut the wicket and I saw her no more. She took my heart with her and I sat till sundown, expecting her to appear again at the window; but she came not: so, when I despaired of her, I rose and went home. This is my story, and I beg thee to help me in this my affliction." With this, she raised her face to me and said, "O my cousin, if thou soughtest my eye, I would tear it from its socket for thee, and I cannot choose but help thee to thy desire and her also to hers; for she is passionately enamoured of thee, even as thou of her." "And what is the meaning of her signs?" asked I. "As for the putting her finger to her mouth," replied Azizeh, "it meant that thou art to her as her soul to her body and that she would bite upon union with thee with her wisdom-teeth. The handkerchief is the token of greeting from lover to beloved and the scroll is a sign that her heart is bound up in thee. As for the laying her two fingers between her breasts, it is as if she said to thee, 'Return hither after two days, that the sight of thy countenance may dispel my anguish.' For know, O my cousin, that she loves thee and trusts in thee. This is my reading of her signs, and could I come and go at will, I would quickly bring you and her together and cover you both with my skirt." I thanked her and said to myself, "I will wait two days." So I abode two days in the house, without going out, and ate not nor drank, but lay with my head in my cousin's lap, whilst she comforted me and bade me take heart and be of good cheer. When the two days were past, she said to me, "Take courage and dress thyself and go to her, according to the tryst." Then she rose and changed my clothes and perfumed me with incense. So I took heart and went out and walked on till I came to the by-street, where I sat down on the bench. After a while, the wicket opened and I looked up and seeing the lady, fell down in a swoon. When I revived,

Night cxiv.

I took courage to look again at her and again became insensible. Then I came to myself and looking at her, saw that she had a mirror and a red handkerchief in her hand. When she saw me, she bared her forearms and smote her breast with her palm and five fingers; after which she raised her hands and holding the mirror forth of the wicket, took the red handkerchief and retired with it, but immediately returned and putting out her hand with the handkerchief, lowered it towards the ground and raised it again three several times. Then she wrung it out and folded it in her hands, bowing her head the while; after which she drew in her head and shutting the window, went away, without saying a word, leaving me confounded and knowing not what she meant. I sat there till the evening and did not return home till near midnight, when I found my cousin sitting, weeping bitterly and repeating the following verses:

Ah me, what ails the censurer, that he at thee should flite? How shall I be consoled for thee, and thou a sapling slight?
O thou, the splendour of whose sight has ta'en my heart by storm, Whose supple bending grace compels to passion's utmost height,[1]
Whose eyes, with Turkish languor fraught, work havoc in the breast And leave such wounds as ne'er were made by falchion in the fight!
Thou layst on me a heavy load of passion and desire, On me that am too weak to bear a shift upon me dight.
Ay, tears of blood I weep, for that my censors say to me, "A sudden sword, from out his lids thou lovest, shall thee smite."
Ah, would my heart were like to thine, even as my body is Like to thy waist, all thin and frail and dwindled for despite!
Thou, that my prince in beauty art, a steward[2] hast, whose rule Aggrieves me and a chamberlain[3] that doth me foul unright.
He lies who says, "All loveliness in Joseph was comprised." How many Josephs are there not within thy beauty bright!
I force myself to turn from thee, for fear of spying eyes, Though sore it irks me to forswear the solace of thy sight.

[1] *lit.* "the love of the Beni Udhra," an Arabian tribe, famous for the passion and devotion with which love was practised among them.
[2] *Syn.* eye (*nazir*). [3] *Syn.* eyebrow (*hajib*).

At this, trouble and grief redoubled on me and I fell down in a corner; whereupon she sprang up and coming to me, lifted me up and took off my outer clothes and wiped my face with her sleeve. Then she asked me how I had fared, and I told her all that had happened. "O my cousin," said she, "as for her sign to thee with her palm and five fingers, it meant, 'Return after five days;' and her gestures with the mirror and the putting forth of her head and the lowering and raising of the red handkerchief meant, 'Sit in the dyer's shop, till my messenger come to thee.'" When I heard this, fire flamed up in my heart and I exclaimed, "O my cousin, by Allah, thou sayst sooth in this thine interpretation; for I saw the shop of a Jewish dyer in the street." Then I wept, and she said, "O my cousin, summon up resolution and be steadfast of heart: others are occupied with love for years and are constant to endure the ardour of passion, whilst thou hast but a week[1] to wait; so why art thou thus impatient?" Then she went on to cheer me with comfortable talk and brought me food: so I took a mouthful, but could not eat and abstained from meat and drink and knew not the solace of sleep, till my colour paled and I lost my good looks; for I had never before been in love nor tasted the ardour of passion. So I fell sick and my cousin also sickened on my account; but every night she would divert me with stories of love and lovers, till I fell asleep; and whenever I awoke, I used to find her wakeful for my sake, with the tears running down her cheeks. Thus we did till the five days were past, when she rose and heating water, bathed me with it. Then she dressed me and said to me, "Go to her and may God fulfil your wish and bring thee to thy desire of thy beloved!" So I went out and walked on, till I came to the by-street. I found the dyer's shop shut, for it was Saturday, and sat before it, till I heard the

[1] *i.e.* including the two days that had already elapsed.

call to afternoon prayer. Then the sun turned pale, the Muezzins chanted the call to the prayer of sunset and the night came; but I saw no sign nor heard aught of her. With this, I feared for myself, sitting there alone; so I rose and went home, staggering like a drunken man. When I reached the house, I found my cousin Azizeh standing, with one hand grasping a peg driven into the wall and the other on her breast; and she was sighing heavily and repeating the following verses:

The longing of a Bedouin maid, whose folk are far away, Who yearns
after the willow of the Hejaz and the bay,[1]
Whose tears, when she on travellers lights, might for their water serve
And eke her passion, with its heat, their bivouac-fire purvey,
Is not more fierce nor ardent than my longing for my love, Who deems
that I commit a crime in loving him alway.

When she had finished, she turned and seeing me, wiped away her tears and mine with her sleeve. Then she smiled in my face and said, "O my cousin, God grant thee joy of that which He hath given thee! Why didst thou not pass the night with thy beloved and why hast thou not fulfilled thy desire of her?" When I heard what she said, I gave her a kick in the breast and she fell over on to the edge of the estrade and struck her forehead against a peg there. I looked at her and saw that her forehead was cut open and the blood running; but she was silent and did not utter a syllable. She made some tinder of rags and staunching the wound with it, bound her forehead with a bandage; after which she wiped up the blood that had fallen on the carpet, and it was as if nothing had happened. Then she came up to me and smiling in my face, said, with gentle speech, "By Allah, O my cousin, I had it not in my thought to mock at thee or at her! I was troubled with a pain in my head and thought to be let blood, but now thou hast eased my head and brow; so tell me what has befallen

Night cxb.

[1] *i.e.* a graceful youth of the province in which Mecca is situate.

thee to-day." So I told her what had passed and she wept and said, "O my cousin, rejoice in the near fulfilment of thy desire and the attainment of thy hopes. Verily, this is a sign of acceptance; she only stayed away, because she wished to try thee and know if thou wert patient and sincere in thy love for her or not. To-morrow, do thou go to her at the old place and note what signs she makes to thee; for indeed thy gladness is near and the end of thy grief is at hand." And she went on to comfort me; but my trouble and affliction ceased not to increase on me. Presently, she brought me food, but I kicked the dishes away, so that their contents were scattered in all directions, and said, "Every lover is a madman; he inclines not to food neither enjoys sleep." "By Allah, O my cousin," answered she, "these are indeed the signs of love!" And the tears streamed down her cheeks, whilst she gathered the fragments of the dishes and wiped up the food; then she sat down by me and talked to me, whilst I prayed God to hasten the coming of the day. When, at last, the morning arose with its light and shone, I went out and hastening to the by-street in question, sat down on the bench, when behold, the wicket opened and she put out her head, laughing. Then she went in and returned with a mirror, a bag, a pot of flowering plants and a lamp. First, she took the mirror and putting it into the bag, tied it up and threw it back into the room; after which she let down her hair over her face and set the lamp an instant on the pot of flowers; then took up all the things and shutting the window, went away, without saying a word. My heart was tortured by her obscure signs and mysterious gestures, and passion and distraction redoubled on me. So I retraced my steps, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and returning home, found Azizeh sitting, with her face to the wall; for her heart was on fire for grief and anxiety and jealousy; albeit the love she bore me forbade her to acquaint

me with what she suffered, by reason of what she saw of the excess of my passion and distraction (for another). I looked at her and saw that she had two bandages on her head, one on account of the wound in her forehead, and the other over her eye, which pained her for excess of weeping; and she was in very sorry plight, weeping and repeating the following verses:

I count the nights, night after night, the weary nights and slow; Yet would I, once upon a time, unreckoned let them go.
I have no knowledge, O my friend, of that which God ordains Of Leila or what He decrees to me, but this I know;
He to another her adjudged and cursed me with her love: So hath He not afflicted me with other than her woe?

When she had finished, she looked round and seeing me through her tears, wiped them away and came up to me, but could not speak for excess of emotion. So she was silent awhile, then said to me, "O my cousin, tell me what befell thee with her this time." So I told her all that had passed, and she said, "Be patient, for the time of thy delight is come, and thou hast won to the attainment of thy hopes. As for her sign with the mirror and the bag, it was as if she said to thee, 'When the sun is set;' and the letting down of her hair over her face signified, 'When the night is come and hath let fall the blackness of the dark and overmastered the daylight, come hither.' As for her gesture with the flower-pot and the lamp, it meant, 'When thou comest, enter the garden behind the street, and where as thou seest the lamp burning, go thither and seat thyself beneath it and wait for me; for the love of thee is killing me.'" When I heard this, I cried out for excess of passion and said, "How long wilt thou deceive me with promises and I go to her, but get not my will nor find any truth in thine interpreting?" At this, she laughed and replied, "Thou needest but have patience for the rest of the day, till the light depart and the night come with the darkness,

and thou shalt enjoy fruition and accomplish thy hopes. And indeed this is true without leasing." And she repeated the following verses:

Let the days pass, as they list, and fare, And enter thou not the house of despair.
Full oft, when the quest of a thing is hard, The next hour brings us the end of our care.

Then she came to me and began to comfort me with soothing words, but dared not offer me food, fearing my wrath and seeking to make me incline to her: so she only took off my upper garment and said to me, "Sit, O my cousin, that I may entertain thee with talk, till the end of the day; and God willing, thou shalt be with thy beloved as soon as it is night." But I paid no heed to her and gave not over looking for the coming of the night, saying, "O Lord, hasten the coming of the night!" till the hour of the evening prayer, when she wept sore and giving me a grain of pure musk, said to me, "O my cousin, put this in thy mouth, and when thou foregatherest with thy beloved and hast taken thy will of her and she hath granted thee thy desire, repeat to her this verse:

Tell me, O lovers, for God's sake, I do entreat of you, When love is sore upon a maid, alack! what shall she do?

And she kissed me and made me swear not to repeat this to my mistress, till I should be about to leave her. Then I went out and walked on till I came to the garden. I found the door open; so I entered, and seeing a light in the distance, made towards it and came to a great pavilion, vaulted over with a dome of ivory and ebony, from the midst of which hung the lamp. The floor was spread with silken carpets, embroidered in gold and silver, and under the lamp stood a great candle, burning in a stand of gold. Midmost the pavilion was a fountain, adorned with all manner of figures; and by it stood a table of food, covered with a silken napkin, and a great porcelain

vase full of wine, with a goblet of crystal, sprayed with gold. Near these was a great covered dish of silver, which I uncovered and found therein fruits of all kinds, figs and pomegranates and grapes and oranges and citrons and shaddocks, together with all manner sweet-scented flowers, such as roses and jasmine and myrtle and eglantine and narcissus and all kinds of sweet-smelling herbs; but I saw there not a living soul, no, not even a slave, male or female, to guard these things. I was transported with delight at what I saw, and my grief and anxiety ceased from me. So I sat down to await the coming of the beloved of my heart: but the first hour of the night passed by, and the second and the third, and still she came not. Then I grew sore an hungred, for that it was long since I had tasted food by reason of the violence of my passion: but when I found the garden even as my cousin had told me and saw the truth of her interpretation of my mistress's signs, my mind was set at rest and I made sure of attaining my desire, so that nature resumed its sway and I felt the pangs of hunger. Moreover, the odour of the viands on the table excited in me a longing to eat: so I went up to the table, and lifting the cover, found in the middle a porcelain dish, containing four fricasseed fowls, seasoned with spices, round which were four smaller dishes, one containing sweetmeats, another conserve of pomegranate-seeds, a third almond patties and a fourth honey fritters, and the contents of these dishes were part sweet and part acid. So I ate of the fritters and a piece of meat, then went on to the almond patties and ate what I would of them; after which I attacked the sweetmeats, of which I ate a spoonful or two or three or four, ending with part of a fowl and a mouthful of bread. With this my stomach became full and my limbs heavy and I grew drowsy; so I laid my head on a cushion, after having washed my hands, and sleep overcame me; and I knew

Night xxvi.

not what happened to me after this nor did I awake till the sun's heat burnt me, for that I had not tasted sleep for days. When I awoke, I found myself lying on the naked marble, with a piece of salt and another of charcoal on my stomach; so I stood up and shook my clothes and turned right and left, but could see no one. At this I was perplexed and afflicted; the tears ran down my cheeks and I mourned grievously for myself. Then I returned home, and when I entered, I found my cousin beating her bosom and weeping like the rain-clouds, as she repeated the following verses:

From out my loved one's land a breeze blows cool and sweet: The fragrance of its wafts stirs up the ancient heat.
Blow, zephyr of the East! Each lover hath his lot, His heaven-appointed doom of fortune or defeat.
Lo, if we might, we would embrace thee for desire, Even as a lover clips his mistress, when they meet.
Whenas my cousin's face is absent, God forbids All pleasance [unto me] and all life has of sweet.
Ah, would I knew his heart was even as is mine, All wasted and consumed by passion's flaming feet!

When she saw me, she rose in haste and wiping away her tears, accosted me with her soft speech, saying, "O my cousin, verily God hath been gracious to thee in thy love, in that she whom thou lovest loves thee, whilst I pass my time in weeping and lamenting my separation from thee that blamest and chidest me; but may God not reproach thee for my sake!" Then she smiled in my face, a sad smile, and caressed me; then taking off my outer clothes, she spread them out and said, "By Allah, this is not the scent of one who hath enjoyed his mistress! Tell me what has befallen thee, O my cousin." So I told her all that had passed, and she smiled again, a sad smile, and said, "Verily, my heart is full of pain; but may he not live who would hurt thy heart! Indeed, this woman makes herself extravagantly difficult to thee, and by Allah, I fear for thee

from her. Know that the meaning of the salt is that thou wast drowned in sleep and she likens thee to insipid food, at which the soul sickens; and it is as if she said to thee, 'It behoves that thou be salted, lest nature reject thee. Thou professest to be of the true lovers, but sleep is forbidden to a lover; therefore, thy love is false.' But it is her love for thee that is false; for she saw thee asleep, yet awoke thee not, and were her love for thee sincere, she had aroused thee. As for the charcoal, it means, 'God blacken thy face, for that thou makest a lying pretence of love, whereas thou art but a child and hast no concern but to eat and drink and sleep!' This is the interpretation of her signs, and may God the Most High deliver thee from her!" When I heard my cousin's words, I beat my breast with my hand and cried out, "By Allah, this is the truth, for I slept and lovers sleep not! Indeed, I have sinned against myself, for nought could have done me more hurt than eating and sleeping. What shall I do?" Then I wept sore and said to her, "Have compassion on me and tell me what to do, so may God have compassion on thee: else I shall die." Now my cousin loved me very dearly; so she replied, "On my head and eyes. But, O my cousin, as I have told thee often, could I go in and out at will, I would very soon bring you together and cover you both with my skirt: nor would I do this but hoping to win thy favour. God willing, I will do my utmost endeavour to bring about your union; but hearken thou to me and do as I bid thee. Go to the garden at nightfall and sit down in the same place and look thou eat not, for eating induces sleep; and beware of sleeping, for she will not come to thee, till a fourth part of the night be passed. And may God save thee from her mischief!" When I heard this, I rejoiced and besought God to hasten the night. As soon as it was dark, I rose to go, and my cousin said to me, "If thou foregather with her, repeat to her the verse I taught

Night cxbii.

thee, at the time of leave-taking." "On my head and eyes," replied I, and going out, repaired to the garden, where I found all as on the previous night, with meat and drink spread ready, and dessert and flowers and so forth. I went up into the pavilion and smelt the odour of the viands and my soul lusted after them; but I forbore awhile, till at last I could no longer restrain my appetite. So I went up to the table, and raising the cover, found a dish of fowls, surrounded by four smaller dishes, containing various meats. I ate a mouthful of each dish and a piece of meat and as much as I would of the sweetmeat: then I tasted a dish of rice dressed with honey and saffron and liking it, supped of it by the spoonful, till I was satisfied and my belly was full. With this, my eyelids became heavy; so I took a cushion and put it under my head, saying, "Surely I can recline upon it, without going to sleep." Then I closed my eyes and slept, nor did I wake till the sun had risen, when I found myself lying on the bare marble, with a die of bone, a play-stick,[1] a green date-stone[2] and a carob-bean on my stomach. There was no furniture nor aught else in the place, and it was as if there had been nothing there yesterday. So I rose and shaking all these things off me, went out in a rage, and going home, found my cousin sighing and repeating the following verses:

Wasted body and heart a-bleeding for despair And tears that down my cheeks stream on and on for e'er,
And a beloved one persistent in disdain; Yet all a fair one does must needs be right and fair.
O cousin mine, thou'st filled my heart with longing pain And wounded are mine eyes with tears that never spare.

I chid her and reviled her, at which she wept; then wiping away her tears, she came up to me and kissed me

[1] A small piece of wood used in a children's out-door game called *tab*.
[2] The stone of the *beleh* or "green" date, not allowed to ripen.

and pressed me to her bosom, whilst I held back from her and blamed myself. Then she said to me, "O my cousin, meseems thou didst sleep again last night?" "Yes," replied I; "and when I awoke, I found on my stomach a die of bone, a play-stick, a green date-stone and a carob-bean, and I know not why she did this." Then I wept and said to her, "Expound to me her meaning in this and tell me what I shall do and help me in this my strait." "On my head and eyes," answered she. "Know then that, by the figure of the die and the play-stick, she says to thee, 'Thy body is present, but thy heart absent. Love is not thus: so do not reckon thyself among lovers.' As for the date-stone, it as if she said to thee, 'If thou wert in love, thy heart would be on fire with passion and thou wouldst not taste the delight of sleep; for the sweet of love is like a green date and kindles a fire in the entrails.' As for the carob-bean, it signifies, 'The lover's heart is wearied; so be thou patient under our separation, even as Job was patient.'" When I heard this, fires raged in my entrails and grief redoubled upon my heart and I cried out, saying, "God ordained sleep to me, of my ill-fortune!" Then I said to her, "O my cousin, I conjure thee by my life, contrive me some device whereby I may win to her!" She wept and answered, "O Aziz, O my cousin, verily my heart is full of melancholy thought and I cannot speak: but go thou again to-night to the same place and look that thou sleep not, and thou shalt surely attain thy desire. This is my counsel and peace be on thee." "God willing," said I, "I will not sleep, but will do as thou biddest me." Then she rose and set food before me, saying, "Eat now what may suffice thee, that thy heart may be free." So I ate my fill, and when the night came, my cousin rose and bringing me a sumptuous suit of clothes, clad me therein. Then she made me promise to repeat the verse aforesaid to my mistress and bade me beware of sleeping. So I left

her and repairing to the garden, went up into the pavilion, where I occupied myself with gazing on the garden, holding my eyes open with my fingers and wagging my head from side to side, as the night darkened on me. Presently I grew hungry with watching, and the smell of the meats, being wafted towards me, increased my hunger: so I went up to the table and taking off the cover, ate a piece of meat and a mouthful of every dish; after which I turned to the vessel of wine, saying in myself, "I will drink one cup." So I drank one cup and a second and a third, till I had drunk full half a score, when the air smote me and I fell to the earth like a dead man. I lay thus till day, when I awoke and found myself without the garden, with a large sharp knife and an iron dirhem[1] on my stomach. I arose trembling and taking the knife and the dirhem, went home, where I found my cousin saying, "Verily, I am in this house wretched and sorrowful, having no helper but weeping." When I entered, I fell down at full length and fainted, throwing the knife and the dirhem from my hand. As soon as I came to myself, I told her what had passed and said, "Indeed, I shall never enjoy my desire." The sight of my tears and my passion redoubled her distress on my account, and she said, "Verily, I can no more! I warned thee against sleeping; but thou wouldst not listen to my counsel, and my words profited thee nothing." "By Allah," cried I, "I conjure thee to explain to me the meaning of the knife and the dirhem." "By the dirhem," replied she, "she alludes to her right eye, and it is as if she said to thee, 'I swear, by the Lord of all creatures and by my right eye, that, if thou come here again and sleep, I will slay thee with this knife!' And indeed, O my cousin, I fear for thee from her malice; my heart is full of anguish for thee and I cannot speak. Nevertheless, if thou canst be sure of thyself not to sleep, return to her and thou shalt

Night Prcxviii.

[1] Or drachm-weight.

attain thy desire; but if thou sleep, according to thy wont, she will surely slay thee." "O my cousin," said I, "what shall I do? I conjure thee, by Allah, to help me in this my affliction!" "On my head and eyes," replied she. "If thou wilt hearken to me and do as I say, thou shalt have thy will." Quoth I, "I will indeed hearken to thee and do thy bidding." And she said, "When it is time for thee to go, I will tell thee." Then she pressed me to her bosom and laying me on the bed, rubbed my feet, till drowsiness overcame me and I was drowned in sleep; when she took a fan and seating herself at my head, ceased not to fan my face till the end of the day. Then she awoke me, and I found her sitting at my head weeping, with the fan in her hand and her clothes wet with tears. When she saw that I was awake, she wiped away her tears and fetching food, set it before me. I refused it, but she said to me, "Didst thou not promise to do my bidding? Eat." So I ate and did not cross her, and she proceeded to put the food into my mouth and I to eat, till I was full. Then she made me drink sherbet of jujube-fruit and sugar and washed my hands and dried them with a napkin; after which she sprinkled me with rose-water, and I sat with her awhile, restored to health and spirits. When the night had closed in, she dressed me and said to me, "O my cousin, watch all night and sleep not; for she will not come to thee this time till the last of the night, and God willing, thou shalt foregather with her this night: but do not forget my charge." Then she wept, and my heart was sore for her, by reason of her much weeping, and I said to her, "What is the charge thou gavest me?" "When thou art about to take leave of her," replied she, "repeat to her the verse I taught thee." So I left her, full of gladness, and repairing to the garden, entered the pavilion, where I sat down, satiated with food, and watched till a fourth part of the night was past. The night was tedious to me, as it were

a year: but I remained awake, till it was three quarters spent and the cocks cried out and I became sore an hungred for long watching. So I went up to the table and ate my fill, whereupon my head grew heavy and I was on the point of falling asleep, when I espied a light making towards me from afar. So I sprang up and washed my hands and mouth and roused myself; and before long, up came the lady, accompanied by ten damsels, in whose midst she shone, like the full moon among the stars. She was clad in a dress of green satin, embroidered with red gold, and she was as says the poet:

She lords it over her lovers in garments all of green, With open vest and collars and flowing hair beseen.
"What is thy name?" I asked her, and she replied, "I'm she Who burns the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen."
I made my moan unto her of passion and desire; "Upon a rock," she answered, "thy plaints are wasted clean."
"Even if thy heart," I told her, "be rock in very deed, Yet hath God made fair water well from the rock, I ween."

When she saw me, she laughed and said, "How is it that thou art awake and that sleep hath not overcome thee? Now that thou hast passed the night without sleep, I know that thou art in love, for it is the mark of a lover to watch the night for stress of longing." Then she signed to her women and they went away, whereupon she came up to me and strained me to her bosom and kissed me and sucked my upper lip, whilst I kissed her and sucked her lower lip. I put my hand to her waist and pressed it and we came to the ground at the same moment. Then she undid her trousers and they fell down to her anklets and we fell to clipping and toying and clicketing and speaking softly and biting and intertwining of legs and going round about the House and the corners thereof,[1]

[1] An audacious parody of the consecrated expression used to describe the ceremonious circumambulation of the Kaabeh at Mecca.

till her senses failed her for delight and she swooned away. And indeed that night was heart-gladdening and eye-refreshing, even as says the poet:

The sweetest of all the nights that ever the world can show! The cup in it stinted never from hand to hand to go.
Therein I did dissever mine eyes from sleep and made The ear-drop[1] and the anklet[1] foregather evermo'.

We lay together till the morning, when I would have gone away, but she stopped me, saying, "Stay, till I tell thee somewhat and give thee a charge." So I waited, whilst she undid a handkerchief and taking out this piece of linen, spread it out before me. I saw worked on it these two figures of gazelles and admired it exceedingly; and she said to me, "Keep this carefully, for it is my sister's work." "What is thy sister's name?" asked I, and she answered, "Nour el Huda." Then I took the piece of linen and went away, joyful, after we had agreed that I should visit her every night in the garden; but in my joy I forgot to repeat to her the verse my cousin had taught me. When I reached home, I found Azizeh lying down; but, as soon as she saw me, she rose, with the tears running from her eyes, and coming up to me, kissed me on the breast and said, "Didst thou repeat the verse to her, as I enjoined thee?" "I forgot it," answered I; "and here is what made me forget it." And I threw the piece of linen down before her. She rose and sat down again, but was unable to contain herself and her eyes ran over with tears, whilst she repeated the following verses:

Night cxix.

O thou that seekest severance, forbear; Let not the fair delude thee with their sleight.
Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then she said, "O my cousin, give me this piece of linen." So I gave it to her, and she took it and unfolding

[1] Subaudiantur autem utriusque sexûs pudenda.

it, saw what was therein. When the time came for my going to my mistress, she said to me, "Go and peace be with thee; and when thou art about to leave her, repeat to her the verse I taught thee and which thou forgottest." Quoth I, "Repeat it to me." So she repeated it. Then I went to the garden and entered the pavilion, where I found the lady awaiting me. When she saw me, she rose and kissed me and made me sit in her lap; and we ate and drank and did our desire as on the previous night. In the morning, I repeated to her my cousin's verse:

Tell me, O lovers, for God's sake I do entreat of you, When love is sore upon a maid, alack! what shall she do?

When she heard this, her eyes filled with tears and she answered with the following verse:

Against her passion she must strive and hide her case from view And humble and submissive be, whatever may ensue.

This I committed to memory and returned home, rejoiced at having done my cousin's errand. When I entered the house, I found Azizeh lying on the bed and my mother at her head, weeping over her condition. When the latter saw me, she said to me, "Out on thee for a cousin! How couldst thou leave the daughter of thine uncle in ill case and not ask what ailed her?" Azizeh, seeing me, raised her head and sat up and said, "O Aziz, didst thou repeat the verse to her?" "Yes," replied I; "and she wept and recited, in answer, another verse, which I remember." "Tell it me," said Azizeh. I did so; and she wept and repeated the following verses:

How shall she temper her desire? It doth her life undo, And still with each recurring day her heart is cleft in two.
Indeed, she strives for patience fair, but findeth nought in her Except a heart too weak to bear the love that makes her rue.

"When thou goest to thy mistress as of wont," added she, "repeat to her these verses also." "I hear and obey," answered I and betook myself, at the wonted time, to the

garden, where there passed between my mistress and myself what the tongue fails to describe. As I was about to leave her, I repeated to her my cousin's verses; whereupon the tears streamed from her eyes and she replied:

If she her secret cannot hide and lack of patience due, I see no help for her but death, of all things old and new.

Then I returned home, where I found Azizeh fallen of a swoon and my mother sitting at her head. When she heard my voice, she opened her eyes and said, "O Aziz, didst thou repeat the verses to her?" "Yes," answered I; "and she replied with this verse." And I repeated it; whereupon my cousin swooned again, and when she came to herself, she recited the following verses:

I hearken, I obey, I die; yet bear to one, who slew My hopes of union and delight, my greeting and adieu.
Fair fall the happy of their joy, alack! and fair befall The wretched lover of the cup that's set her lips unto!

When it was night, I repaired, as of wont, to the garden, where I found my mistress awaiting me. We sat down and ate and drank, after which we did our need and slept till the morning; and as I was going away, I repeated to her Azizeh's verses. When she heard them, she gave a loud cry and was greatly moved and exclaimed, "Alas! Alas! She who said these words is dead!" Then she wept and said to me, "Out on thee! What kin is she, who spoke thus, to thee?" "She is the daughter of my father's brother," replied I. "Thou liest," rejoined she. "By Allah, were she thy cousin, thou wouldst have loved her even as she loved thee! It is thou who hast killed her, and may God in like manner kill thee! By Allah, hadst thou told me thou hadst a cousin, I would not have admitted thee to my favours!" Quoth I, "Indeed, she is my cousin, and it was she who interpreted to me thy signs and taught me how to come at thee and how I should deal with thee; and but for her, I had never won to thee." "Did she then

know of us?" asked she. "Yes," answered I; and she exclaimed, "God give thee sorrow of thy youth, even as thou hast wasted hers!" Then she said to me, "Go and see after her." So I went away, troubled at heart, and when I reached our street, I heard a sound of wailing, and asking about it, was answered, "We found Azizeh dead behind the door." I entered the house, and when my mother saw me, she said to me, "Her death lies at thy door, and may God not acquit thee of her blood! Out on thee for a cousin!" Then came my father, and we laid her out and did her the last offices and buried her. Moreover, we let make recitations of the Koran over her tomb and abode there three days, after which we returned home, grieving for her. When I entered the house, my mother came to me and said, "I would fain know what thou didst to her, to break her heart, for, O my son, I questioned her many times of the cause of her malady, but she would tell me nothing. So, God on thee, tell me what thou didst to her, that she died." Quoth I, "I did nothing." "May God avenge her on thee!" rejoined my mother. "She told me nothing, but kept her secret till she died, of her affection for thee. But when she died, I was with her, and she opened her eyes and said to me, 'O wife of my uncle, may God hold thy son guiltless of my blood and punish him not for that he hath done with me! And now He transporteth me from this transitory house of the world to the other and eternal dwelling-place.' 'O my daughter,' said I, 'God preserve thee and preserve thy youth!' And I questioned her of the cause of her illness; but she made me no answer. Then she smiled and said, 'O wife of my uncle, when my cousin is about to repair to the place whither he goes every day, bid him repeat these two words at his going away: "Faith is fair and perfidy foul." For this is of my tenderness over him, that I am solicitous for him in my life-time and after my death.' Then she gave

Night CXX.

me somewhat for thee and made me swear that I would not give it to thee, till I should see thee weeping for her and lamenting her death. The thing is with me, and when I see thee as I have said, I will give it to thee." "Show it me," quoth I: but she would not. Then I gave myself up to my pleasures and thought no more of my cousin's death; for I was light-witted and would fain have been with my beloved day and night. So hardly had the night fallen, when I betook myself to the garden, where I found the lady sitting on coals of fire, for much waiting. As soon as she saw me, she ran to me and throwing her arms about my neck, enquired of my cousin. "She is dead," replied I; "and we have caused litanies and recitations of the Koran to be performed for her; and it is now four nights since she died." When she heard this, she shrieked aloud and wept, saying, "Did I not tell thee that thou hadst slain her? Hadst thou let me know of her before her death, I would have requited her the kindness she did me, in that she served me and brought thee to me; for but for her, we had never come together; and I fear lest some calamity befall thee by reason of thy sin against her." Quoth I, "She acquitted me before she died." And I repeated to her what my mother had told me. "God on thee," rejoined she, "when thou returnest to thy mother, learn what it is she hath for thee." Quoth I, "My mother also said to me, 'Before thy cousin died, she laid a charge upon me, saying, "When thy son is about to go whither of wont, teach him these two words, 'Faith is fair and perfidy foul.'" When my mistress heard this, she exclaimed, "The mercy of God the Most High be upon her! Indeed, she hath delivered thee from me, for I had it in mind to do thee a mischief, but now I will not hurt thee nor trouble thee." I wondered at this and said to her, "What then didst thou purpose to do with me, and we lovers?" Quoth she, "Thou art infatuated with me; for thou art young and

witless; thy heart is free from guile and thou knowest not our perfidy and malice. Were she yet alive, she would protect thee, for she is the cause of thy preservation and hath delivered thee from destruction. And now I charge thee that thou speak not with neither accost any of our sex, young or old, for thou art young and simple and knowest not the wiles of women and their malice, and she who explained the signs to thee is dead. And indeed I fear for thee, lest thou fall into some calamity and find none to deliver thee from it, now that thy cousin is dead. Alas, the pity of her! Would God I had known her before her death, that I might have visited her and requited her the fair service she did me! The mercy of the Most High be upon her, for she kept her secret and revealed not what she suffered, and but for her, thou hadst never won to me! But there is one thing I desire of thee." "What is it?" said I. "It is," answered she, "that thou bring me to her grave, that I may visit her in the tomb wherein she is and write some verses thereon." "To-morrow," replied I, "if it be the will of God." Then I lay with her that night, and she ceased not, from time to time, to say, "Would thou hadst told me of thy cousin, before her death!" And I said to her, "What is the meaning of the two words she taught me?" But she made me no answer. As soon as it was day, she rose and taking a purse of dinars, said to me, "Come, show me her tomb, that I may visit it and grave some verses thereon and build a dome over it and commend her to the mercy of God and bestow these dinars in alms for her soul." "I hear and obey," replied I and went on before her, whilst she followed me, giving alms by the way and saying to all to whom she gave, "This is an alms for the soul of Azizeh, who kept her counsel, till she drank the cup of death, and discovered not the secret of her passion." And she stinted not thus to give alms and say, "For Azizeh's soul," till the purse

Night cxxi.

was empty and we came to the burial-place. When she saw the tomb, she wept and threw herself upon it; then pulling out a graver of steel and a light mallet, she graved the following verses, in fine characters, upon the stone at the head of the tomb:

I passed by a ruined tomb, in the midst of a garden-way, Upon whose letterless stone seven blood-red anemones lay.
"Who sleeps in this unmarked grave?" I said; and the earth, "Bend low; For a lover lies here and waits for the Resurrection Day."
"God help thee, O victim of love," I cried, "and bring thee to dwell In the highest of all the heavens of Paradise, I pray!
How wretched are lovers all, even in the sepulchre, When their very graves are covered with ruin and decay!
Lo, if I might, I would plant thee a garden round about And with my streaming tears the thirst of its flowers allay!"

Then she returned to the garden, weeping, and I with her, and she said to me, "By Allah, thou shalt never leave me!" "I hear and obey," answered I. Then I devoted myself wholly to her and paid her frequent visits, and she was good and generous to me. As often as I passed the night with her, she would make much of me and ask me of the two words my cousin told my mother, and I would repeat them to her.

I abode thus a whole year, till, what with eating and drinking and dalliance and wearing change of rich raiment, I waxed stout and fat, so that I lost all thought of sorrow and anxiety and forgot my cousin Azizeh. At the end of this time, I went one day to the bath, where I refreshed myself and put on a rich suit of clothes, scented with various perfumes; then, coming out, I drank a cup of wine and smelt the fragrance of my new clothes, whereupon my breast dilated, for I knew not the perfidy of fortune nor the calamities of events. When the hour of evening prayer came, I thought to repair to my mistress; but being heated with wine, I knew not where I went, so

that, on the way, my drunkenness turned me into a by-street called En Nekib, where, as I was going along, I met an old woman with a lighted flambeau in one hand and a folded letter in the other; and she was weeping and repeating the following verses:

Night cxxii.

O welcome, bearer of glad news, thrice welcome to my sight! How sweet and solaceful to me thy tidings of delight!
Thou that the loved one's greeting bringst unto my longing soul, God's peace, what while the zephyr blows, dwell with thee day and night!

When she saw me, she said to me, "O my son, canst thou read?" And I, of my officiousness, answered, "Yes, O old aunt." "Then, take this letter," rejoined she, "and read it to me." So I took the letter, and unfolding it, read it to her. Now it contained the greetings of an absent man to his friends; and when she heard its purport, she rejoiced and was glad and called down blessings on me, saying, "May God dispel thine anxiety, as thou hast dispelled mine!" Then she took the letter and walked on. Meanwhile, I was seized with a pressing need and squatted down on my heels to make water. When I had finished, I stood up and cleansed myself with pebbles, then shaking down my clothes, was about to go my way, when the old woman came up to me again and bending down to kiss my hand, said, "O my lord, God give thee joy of thy youth! I entreat thee to go with me to yonder door, for I told them what thou readest to me of the letter, and they believe me not: so come with me two steps and read them the letter from behind the door and accept my devout prayers." "What is the history of this letter?" asked I; and she answered, "O my son, it is from my son, who hath been absent from us these ten years. He set out with merchandise and tarried long in foreign parts, till we lost hope of him, supposing him to be dead. Now comes this letter from him, and he has a sister, who weeps for him day and night; so I said to her, 'He is in good health

and case.' But she will not believe me and says, 'Thou must needs bring me one who will read the letter in my presence, that my heart may be set at rest and my mind eased.' Thou knowest, O my son, that those who love are prone to imagine evil: so do me the favour to go with me and read the letter, standing without the door, whilst I call his sister to listen behind the curtain, so shalt thou dispel our anxiety and fulfil our need. Quoth the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), 'He who eases an afflicted one of one of the troubles of this world, God will ease him of a hundred troubles;' and according to another tradition, 'Whoso relieves his brother of one of the troubles of this world, God will relieve him of two-and-seventy troubles of the Day of Resurrection.' And I have betaken myself to thee; so do not disappoint me." "I hear and obey," replied I. "Do thou go before me." So she went on and I followed her a little way, till she came to the gate of a large handsome house, whose door was plated with copper. I stood without the door, whilst the old woman cried out in Persian, and before I could think, a damsel ran up, with a nimble and agile step. She had tucked up her trousers to her knees, so that I saw a pair of legs that confounded mind and eye, for they were like columns of alabaster, adorned with anklets of gold, set with jewels. As says the poet, describing her:

O thou who barest thy leg for lovers to look upon, That by the sight of the leg the rest they may infer,
Who passest the cup around midst thy gallants, brisk and free, Nought seduces the folk but the cup[1] and the cup-bearer.[2]

She had seemingly been engaged in work of some kind, for she had tucked the end of her shift within the ribbon

[1] Subaudiatur vas muliebre.

[2] The word *sac* (leg), when used in the oblique case, as it would necessarily be here, makes *saki*, *i.e.* cup-bearer. A play upon the double meaning is evidently intended.

of her trousers and thrown the skirt of her robe over her arm. Her sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, so that I could see her white wrists and forearms, on which were two pairs of bracelets, with clasps of great pearls, and round her neck was a collar of precious stones. Her ears were adorned with pendants of pearls and on her head she wore a kerchief of brocade, embroidered with jewels of price. When I saw her, I was confounded at her beauty, for she was like the shining sun. Then she said, with clear and dulcet speech, never heard I sweeter, "O my mother, is this he who cometh to read the letter?" "It is," replied the old woman; and she put out her hand to me with the letter. Now she was standing about half a rod within the door; so I stretched out my hand and put my head and shoulders within the door, thinking to draw near her and read the letter, when behold, before I knew what she would be at, the old woman thrust her head into my back and pushed me forward, with the letter in my hand, so that before I could think, I found myself in the vestibule. Then she entered, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, and had but to shut the door. When the damsel saw me in the vestibule, she came up to me and straining me to her bosom, threw me to the floor, then knelt upon my breast and kneaded my belly with her hands, till I lost my senses. Then she took me by the hand and led me, unable to resist, for the violence of her pressure, through seven vestibules, whilst the old woman went before us with the lighted candle, till we came to a great saloon, with four daises, in which a horseman might play at ball. Here she released me, saying, "Open thine eyes." So I opened them, still giddy for the excess of her pressing and pummelling, and saw that the whole place was built of the finest alabaster and hung and carpeted with stuffs of silk and brocade, with cushions and divans of the same. Therein also were two benches of brass and a couch of red gold,

Night cxxiii.

set with pearls and jewels, befitting none save kings like unto thee. Then said she, "O Aziz, which wouldst thou rather, life or death?" "Life," answered I; and she said, "If life be liefer to thee, thou must marry me." Quoth I, "It were odious to me to marry the like of thee." "If thou marry me," rejoined she, "thou wilt at least be safe from the daughter of Delileh the crafty." "And who is she?" asked I. She laughed and replied, "How comes it that thou knowest her not, seeing that to-day thou hast companied with her a year and four months, may God the Most High destroy her and afflict her with one worse than herself! By Allah, there lives not a more perfidious than she! How many hath she not slain before thee and what deeds hath she not done! Nor can I understand how thou hast been so long in her company, yet hath she not killed thee nor done thee any hurt." When I heard this, I marvelled exceedingly and said, "Who made thee to know of her, O my lady?" "I know of her," said she, "as the age knows of its calamities: but now I would fain have thee tell me all that has passed between you, that I may know the cause of thy deliverance from her." So I told her all that had happened, including the story of my cousin Azizeh. When she heard of the latter's death, her eyes ran over with tears and she smote hand upon hand and cried out, "God have mercy on her, for she lost her youth in His service, and may He replace her to thee! By Allah, O Aziz, it was she who was the cause of thy preservation from the daughter of Delileh and but for her, thou hadst been lost! Now she is dead and I fear for thee from the other's perfidy and mischief; but my heart is full and I cannot speak." "By Allah," quoth I, "all this happened, even as thou sayest!" And she shook her head and said, "There lives not this day the like of Azizeh." "And when she was dying," continued I, "she bade me repeat to my mistress these two words, 'Faith is fair and

perfidy foul.'" When she heard this, she exclaimed, "By Allah, O Aziz, it was this that saved thee from dying by her hand: and now my heart is at ease for thee from her, for she will never slay thee and thy cousin preserved thee, both in her lifetime and after her death. By Allah, I have desired thee this many a day, but could not get at thee till now and except by a trick, which succeeded with thee; for thou art inexperienced and knowest not the malice of women nor the wiles of old women." "No, by Allah!" rejoined I. Then said she to me, "Be of good cheer and take comfort; the dead is in the mercy of God and the living shall be fairly entreated. Thou art a handsome youth, and I do not desire thee but according to the ordinance of God and of His prophet, on whom be peace and salvation! Whatever thou desirest of money and stuff, thou shalt have without stint, and I will not impose any toil on thee, for there is with me always bread baked and water in the pitcher. All I ask of thee is that thou do with me even as the cock does." "And what is it the cock does?" asked I. At this she laughed and clapped her hands and fell over on her back for excess of laughter: then she sat up and said, "O light of my eyes, dost thou not know what the cock's business is?" "No, by Allah!" replied I; and she said, "The cock's business is to eat and drink and tread." I was abashed at her words and said, "Is that the cock's business?" "Yes," answered she; "and all I ask of thee now is to gird thy loins and strengthen thy resolution and swive thy best." Then she clapped her hands and cried out, saying, "O my mother, bring hither those who are with thee." Whereupon in came the old woman, carrying a veil of silk and accompanied by four lawful witnesses, who saluted me and sat down. Then she lighted four candles, whilst the young lady covered herself with the veil and deputed one of the witnesses to execute the contract on her behalf. So they drew up the marriage

contract and she acknowledged to have received the whole of her dowry, both precedent and contingent, and to be indebted to me in the sum of ten thousand dirhems. Then she gave the witnesses their fee and they withdrew whence they came; whereupon she put off her clothes and abode in a shift of fine silk, laced with gold, after which she took me by the hand and carried me up to the couch, saying, "There is no blame in what is lawful." She lay down on her back and drawing me on to her breast, heaved a sigh and followed it up with an amorous gesture. Then she pulled up the shift above her breasts, and when I saw her thus, I could not choose but thrust into her, after I had sucked her lips, whilst she moaned and made a show of bashfulness and wept without tears. And indeed the case reminded me of the saying of the poet:

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When I drew up her shift and discovered the terrace-roof of her kaze, I found it as strait as my humour or eke my worldly ways.
So I drove it incontinent in, halfway; and she heaved a sigh. "For what dost thou sigh?" quoth I. "For the rest of it, sure," she says.

Then said she, "O my beloved, to it and do thy best, for I am thine handmaid. My life on thee, give it me, all of it, that I may take it in my hand and thrust it into my entrails!" And she ceased not to excite me with sobs and sighs and amorous gestures, in the intervals of kissing and clipping, till we attained the supreme felicity and the term of our desires. We lay together till the morning, when I would have gone out; but she came up to me, laughing, and said, "Thinkest thou that going out of the bath is the same as going in?[1] Verily, I believe thou deemest me to be the like of the daughter of Delileh. Beware of such a thought, for thou art my husband by contract and according to law. If thou be drunken, return to thy right mind and know that this house is opened but

[1] In the East, bathers pay on leaving the bath.

one day in every year. Go down and look at the great door." So I went down and found the door locked and nailed up and returned and told her so. "Know, O Aziz," said she, "that we have in this house flour and grain and fruits and pomegranates and sugar and meat and sheep and fowls and so forth, enough to serve us for many years; and henceforth, the door will not be opened till after the lapse of a whole year, nor shalt thou find thyself without till then." Quoth I, "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" "And what can this irk thee," rejoined she, "seeing thou knowest the cock's craft, of which I told thee?" Then she laughed and I laughed too, and I conformed to what she said and abode with her, plying the cock's craft, eating and drinking and clicketing, twelve whole months, during which time she conceived by me and brought me a son. At the end of the year, I heard the door opened and men came in with manchets and flour and sugar. Thereupon, I would have gone out, but my wife said, "Wait till nightfall and go out as thou camest in." So I waited till the hour of evening prayer, and was about to go forth in fear and trembling, when she stopped me, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go, except thou swear to return this night before the closing of the door." I agreed to this, and she made me take a solemn oath by sword and Koran and the oath of divorce to boot that I would return to her. Then I left her and going straight to the garden, found the door open as usual; whereat I was angry and said to myself, "I have been absent a whole year and come here at unawares and find the place open as of wont! I wonder, is the damsel still in her old case? Algates I must enter and see, before I go to my mother, more by token that it is now nightfall." So I entered and making for the pavilion, found the daughter of Delileh sitting there with her head on her knee and her hand to her cheek. Her colour was changed and her eyes sunken; but when she

Night CXXV.

saw me, she exclaimed, "Praised be God for thy safety!" and would have risen, but fell down for joy. I was abashed before her and hung my head; but presently went up to her, and kissing her, said, "How knewest thou that I should come to thee to-night?" "I knew it not," replied she. "By Allah, this whole year past I have not tasted sleep, but have watched every night, expecting thee, from the day thou wentest out from me and I gave thee the new suit of clothes, and thou didst promise me to go to the bath and come back! So I abode awaiting thee that night and a second and a third; but thou camest not till now, and I ever expecting thy coming, for this is the way of lovers. And now I would have thee tell me what has been the cause of thine absence this year long." So I told her all that had happened: and when she knew that I was married, her colour paled. "I have come to thee to-night," added I; "but I must leave thee before day." Quoth she, "Doth it not suffice her to have tricked thee into marrying her and kept thee prisoner with her a whole year, but she must make thee take the oath of divorce to return to her before morning and not allow thee to divert thyself with thy mother or me nor suffer thee to pass one night with either of us, away from her? How, then, must it be with one from whom thou hast been absent a whole year, and I knew thee before she did? But may God have compassion on thy cousin Azizeh, for there befell her what never befell any and she endured what never any endured else and died, oppressed and rejected of thee; yet was it she protected thee against me. Indeed, I thought thou didst love me, so let thee take thine own way; else had I not let thee go safe and sound, when I had it in my power to hold thee in duresse and destroy thee." Then she wept and waxed wroth and shuddered in my face and looked at me with angry eyes. When I saw this, I was terrified at her and trembled in every nerve, for she was like a dreadful

ghoul and I like a bean over the fire. Then said she, "Thou art of no use to me, now thou art married and hast a child, nor art thou any longer fit for my company. I care only for bachelors and not for married men; for they profit us nothing. Thou hast sold me for yonder stinking nose-gay; but by Allah, I will make the baggage's heart ache for thee, for thou shalt not live either for me or for her!" Then she gave a loud cry, and ere I could think, up came ten damsels and threw me on the ground; whereupon she rose and taking a knife, said, "I will slaughter thee like a he-goat; and that will be less than thy desert, for thy behaviour to me and to thy cousin before me." When I found myself at the mercy of her women, with my cheeks stained with dust, and saw her sharpen the knife, I made sure of death and cried out to her for mercy. But she only redoubled in inhumanity and ordered the maids to bind my hands behind me, which they did, and throwing me on my back, sat down on my stomach and held my head. Then two of them sat on my shins, whilst other two held my hands, and she bade a third pair beat me. So they beat me till I lost my senses and my voice failed. When I revived, I said to myself, "It were easier and better for me to have my throat cut than to be beaten thus!" And I remembered how my cousin used to say to me, "God keep thee from her mischief!" and cried out and wept, till my voice failed and I remained without breath or motion. Then she sharpened the knife and said to the girls, "Uncover him." With this God inspired me to repeat to her the two words my cousin had bequeathed me, and I said, "O my lady, dost thou not know that faith is fair and perfidy foul?" When she heard this, she cried out and said, "God pity thee, Azizeh, and give thee Paradise in exchange for thy wasted youth! Verily, she served thee in her lifetime and after her death, and now she has saved thee alive out of my hands with these two words. Nevertheless, I cannot

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leave thee thus, but I must e'en set my mark on thee, to spite yonder shameless baggage, who has kept thee from me." Then she called out to the damsels and bade them bind my feet with cords and sit on me. They did her bidding, whilst I lay insensible, and she fetched a pan of copper and setting it on a brazier, poured into it oil of sesame, in which she fried cheese.[1] Then she came up to me and unfastening my trousers, tied a cord round my cullions and giving it to two of her women, bade them pull at it. They did so, and I swooned away and was for excess of pain in a world other than this. Then she came with a steel scalpel and cut off my yard, so that I remained like a woman: after which she seared the wound with the boiling oil and rubbed it with a powder, and I the while unconscious. When I came to myself, the blood had ceased to flow; so she bade the damsels unbind me and gave me a cup of wine to drink. Then said she to me, "Go now to her whom thou hast married and who grudged me a single night, and the mercy of God be on thy cousin Azizeh, who discovered not her secret! Indeed she was the cause of thy preservation, for hadst thou not repeated those words to me, I had surely slain thee. Rise and go to whom thou wilt, for thou hadst nothing of mine, save what I have cut off, and now I have no part in thee, nor have I any further care or occasion for thee: so begone about thy business and bless thy cousin's memory!" With that, she gave me a push with her foot, and I rose, hardly able to walk, and went little by little, till I came to the door of my wife's house. I found it open, so I threw myself within it and fell down in a swoon; whereupon my wife came out and lifting me up, carried me into the saloon and found that I was like unto a woman. Then I fell into a deep sleep; but when I awoke, I found myself thrown down at the gate of the garden. I rose, groaning for pain and misery, and

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[1] As a styptic.

made my way to my mother's house, where I found her weeping for me and saying, "O my son, would I knew where thou art!" So I drew near and threw myself upon her, and when she saw me, she knew that I was ill, for my face was at once pale and livid. Then I called to mind my cousin and all the kind offices she had been wont to do me and knew that she had indeed loved me; so I wept for her and my mother wept also. Presently, she said to me, "O my son, thy father is dead." At this my anguish redoubled, and I wept till I lost my senses. When I came to myself, I looked at the place where Azizeh had been used to sit and wept anew, till I all but fainted for excess of grief; and I ceased not to weep and lament thus till midnight, when my mother said to me, "Thy father has been dead these ten days." "I shall never think of any one but my cousin Azizeh," answered I; "and indeed I deserve all that hath befallen me, in that I abandoned her who loved me so dear." "What hath befallen thee?" asked my mother. So I told her all that had happened, and she wept awhile, then rose and set meat and drink before me. I ate a little and drank, after which I repeated my story to her, and she exclaimed, "Praised be God that she did but this to thee and forbore to slay thee!" Then she tended me and medicined me till I regained my health: and when my recovery was complete, she said to me, "O my son, I will now bring out to thee that which thy cousin committed to me in trust for thee; for it is thine. She made me swear not to give it thee, till I should see thee recalling her to mind and weeping over her and thine affections severed from other than her; and now I see these conditions fulfilled in thee." So she arose and opening a chest, took out the piece of linen, with the figures of gazelles worked thereon, which I had given Azizeh; and I opened it and found written therein the following verses:

Who moved thee, fairest one, to use this rigour of disdain And slay, with stress of love, the souls that sigh for thee in vain?
If thou recall me not to mind beyond our parting-day, God knows the thought of thee with me for ever shall remain!
Thou smitest me with cruel words, that yet are sweet to me: Wilt thou one day, though but in dreams, to look upon me deign?
I had not thought the ways of Love were languishment and woe And stress of soul until, alas! to love thee I was fain.
I knew not weariness till I the captive of thine eyes Became and all my soul was bound in passion's fatal chain.
Even my foes have ruth on me and pity my distress: But thou, O heart of steel, wilt ne'er have mercy on my pain.
By God, although I die, I'll ne'er forget thee, O my hope, Nor comfort take, though life itself for love should waste and wane!

When I read these verses, I wept sore and buffeted my face; then I unfolded the scroll, and there fell from it another. I opened it and found these words written therein: "Know, O my cousin, that I acquit thee of my blood and I beseech God to make accord between thee and her whom thou lovest: but if aught befall thee through the daughter of Delileh the crafty, return thou not to her neither resort to any other woman and bear thine affliction patiently, for were not the ordained term of thy life a long one, thou hadst perished long ago: but praised be God, who hath appointed my last day before thine! My peace be upon thee; preserve the cloth with the gazelles figured thereon and let it not leave thee, for it used to keep me company, whenas thou wast absent from me; but I conjure thee, by Allah, if thou chance to fall in with her who wrought these gazelles and it be in thy power to foregather with her, hold aloof from her and do not let her approach thee nor marry her; and if thou happen not on her and find no way to her, look thou company not with any other of her sex. Know that she who wrought these gazelles is the daughter of the King of the Camphor Islands and every year she works a like cloth and despatches it to far countries, that her report and the beauty of her broidery,

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which none in the world can match, may be bruited abroad. As for thy beloved, the daughter of Delileh, this cloth came to her hand, and she used to ensnare folk with it, showing it to them and saying, 'I have a sister who wrought this.' But she lied in this saying, may God bring her to shame! This, then, is my parting counsel to thee, and I have not charged thee thus, but because I know that, after my death, the world will be straitened on thee and belike, by reason of this, thou wilt leave thy native land and wander in foreign countries, and hearing of her who wrought these figures, be minded to foregather with her. Then wilt thou remember me and it shall not avail thee nor wilt thou know my value till after my death."

When I had read the scroll and understood what was written therein, I fell again to weeping, and my mother wept because I did; and I ceased not to gaze upon it and weep till nightfall. I abode thus a whole year, at the end of which time the merchants, with whom I am in this caravan, prepared to set out from my native town, and my mother counselled me to equip myself and journey with them, so haply I might find forgetfulness and my sorrow cease from me, saying, "Take comfort and put away from thee this mourning and travel for a year or two or three, till the caravan returns, when peradventure thy breast may be dilated and thy heart lightened." She ceased not to persuade me thus, till I provided myself with merchandise and set out with the caravan. But all the time of my journey, my tears have never ceased flowing; and at every station where we halt, I open this piece of linen and look on these gazelles and call to mind my cousin Azizeh and weep for her as thou hast seen, for indeed she loved me very dearly and died, oppressed and rejected of me; I did her nought but ill and she did me nought but good. When these merchants return from their journey, I shall return with them, by which time I shall have been a whole year

absent: yet is my sorrow greater than ever and my grief and affliction were but increased by my visit to the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal. The islands in question are seven in number and are ruled by a king, Shehriman by name, who hath a daughter called Dunya; and I was told that it was she who wrought these gazelles and that this thou seest was of her broidery. When I knew this, yearning redoubled on me and I became a prey to consuming languor and drowned in the sea of melancholy thought; and I wept over myself, for that I was become even as a woman, without manly gear like other men, and that there was no recourse for me. From the day of my departure from the Camphor Islands, I have been tearful-eyed and sorrowful-hearted, and I know not whether it will be given me to return to my native land and die by my mother or not, for I am weary of the world.'

When the young merchant had made an end of telling his story, he wept and groaned and complained and gazed upon the figures wrought on the piece of linen, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks and he repeated the following verses:

'Needs must thy sorrow have an end,' quoth many an one, 'and cease.'
And I, 'Needs must your chiding end and let me be at peace.'
'After a while,' say they; and I, 'Who will ensure me life, O fools,
until the hands of grief their grip of me release?'

And also these:

God knows that, since my severance from thee, full sore I've wept, So
sore that needs my eyes must run for very tears in debt!
'Have patience,' quoth my censurers, 'and thou shalt win them yet.'
And I, 'O thou that blamest me, whence should I patience get?'

Then said he, 'This, O prince, is my story: hast thou ever heard a stranger one?' Taj el Mulouk marvelled greatly at the young merchant's tale and said to him, 'By Allah, thou hast suffered that which never befell any but

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thyself, but thou hast a life appointed to thee, which thou must needs fulfil; and now I would fain have thee tell me how thou sawest the lady who wrought these gazelles.' 'O my lord,' answered Aziz, 'I got me access to her by a stratagem, and it was this. When I entered her city with the caravan, I went forth and wandered about the gardens [till I came to one walled in and] abounding in trees, whose keeper was a venerable old man of advanced age. I asked him to whom the garden belonged, and he replied, "To the Lady Dunya, the king's daughter. We are now beneath her palace," added he; "and when she is minded to divert herself, she opens the private door and walks in the garden and breathes the fragrance of the flowers." So I said to him, "Favour me by allowing me to sit in the garden till she comes; haply I may be fortunate enough to catch a sight of her as she passes." "There can be no harm in that," answered he. So I gave him money and said to him, "Buy us something to eat." He took the money joyfully and opening the door, admitted me into the garden and carried me to a pleasant spot, where he bade me sit down and await his return. Then he brought me fruit and leaving me, returned after a while with a roasted lamb, of which we ate till we had enough, my heart yearning the while for a sight of the princess. Presently, as we sat, the postern opened and the keeper said to me, "Rise and hide thyself." I did so; and behold a black eunuch put out his head through the wicket and said, "O elder, is there any one with thee?" "No," answered he; and the eunuch said, "Shut the garden gate." So the keeper shut the gate, and the Lady Dunya came in by the private door. When I saw her, methought the moon had risen above the horizon and was shining; so I looked at her a long while and longed for her, as a man athirst longs for water. After a time she withdrew and shut the door; whereupon I left the garden and sought my lodging,

knowing that I could not win to her and that I was no mate for her, more by token that I was become like unto a woman, having no manly gear, and she was a king's daughter and I but a merchant; so how could I have access to the like of her or to any other woman? Accordingly, when my companions made ready for departure, I too made ready and set out with them, and we journeyed till we arrived at this place, where we met with thee. This then is my story, and peace be on thee!'

When Taj el Mulouk heard the young merchant's account of the Princess Dunya and her beauty, fires raged in his bosom and his heart and thought were occupied with love for her; passion and longing were sore upon him and he knew not what to do. Then he mounted his horse and taking Aziz with him, returned to his father's capital, where he assigned the merchant a house and supplied him with all that he needed in the way of meat and drink and clothing. Then he left him and returned to his palace, with the tears running down his cheeks, for report [whiles] stands in stead of sight and very knowledge. He abode thus till his father came in to him and finding him pale-faced, lean of body and tearful-eyed, knew that some chagrin had betided him and said to him, 'O my son, acquaint me with thy case and tell me what hath befallen thee, that thy colour is changed and thy body wasted.' So he told him all that had passed and how he had heard from Aziz of the princess Dunya and had fallen in love with her on hearsay, without having set eyes on her. 'O my son,' said the King, 'she is the daughter of a king, whose country is far distant from ours: so put away this thought from thee and go in to thy mother's palace. There are five hundred damsels like moons, and whichsoever of them pleaseth thee, take her; or else we will seek thee in marriage some one of the kings' daughters, fairer than the Lady Dunya.' 'O my father,' answered Taj el Mulouk, Night cxxx.

'I desire none other, for she it is who wrought the gazelles that I saw, and I must have her; else I will flee into the deserts and waste places and slay myself for her sake.' Then said his father, 'O my son, have patience with me, till I send to her father and demand her hand in marriage, as I did with thy mother. It may be that God will bring thee to thy desire; and if her father will not consent, I will shake his kingdom under him with an army, whose van shall be upon him, whilst the rear is yet with me.' Then he sent for Aziz and said to him, 'O my son, dost thou know the way to the Camphor Islands?' 'Yes,' answered he; and the King said, 'It is my wish that thou accompany my Vizier thither.' 'I hear and obey, O King of the age,' replied Aziz; whereupon the King summoned his Vizier and said to him, 'Devise me some plan, whereby my son's affair may be rightly managed, and go to the King of the Camphor Islands and demand his daughter in marriage for Taj el Mulouk.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier. Then Taj el Mulouk returned to his dwelling-place, and his longing redoubled and impatience and unease were sore upon him; and when the night darkened upon him, he wept and sighed and complained and repeated the following verses:

The shadows darken and my tears flow aye without avail, Whilst in my heart the fires of love rage on and never fail.
Question the nights of me, and they will testify to thee That I in all their endless hours do nought but weep and wail.
Wakeful for love-longing and grief, I lie and watch the stars All night, what while upon my cheeks the tears fall down like hail.
Lowly and helpless I abide, for such as lovers be Have, as it were, nor kith nor kin to help them in their bale.

Then he swooned away and did not recover his senses till the morning, when there came to him one of his father's servants and standing at his head, summoned him to the King's presence. So he went with him, and his father

seeing that his pallor had increased, exhorted him to patience and promised him union with her he loved. Then he equipped Aziz and the Vizier for the journey and gave them presents for the princess's father; and they set out and fared on night and day, till they drew near the Camphor Islands, when the Vizier called a halt on the banks of a stream and despatched a messenger to acquaint the King of his arrival. The messenger had not long been gone, when they saw, advancing towards them, the King's chamberlains and amirs, who met them at a parasang's distance from the city and escorted them to the royal presence. They laid before the King the gifts with which they were charged and enjoyed his hospitality three days. On the fourth day the Vizier rose and going in to the King, stood before him and acquainted him with the object of his visit; whereat he was perplexed and knew not what answer to make him, for that his daughter was averse from men and did not desire to marry. So he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and calling one of his eunuchs, said to him, 'Go to thy mistress, the princess Dunya, and repeat to her what thou hast heard and tell her this Vizier's errand.' So the eunuch went out and returning after a while, said to the King, 'O King of the age, when I went to the Lady Dunya and told her what I had heard, she was exceeding wroth and made at me with a staff, meaning to break my head; whereupon I fled from her, and she said to me, 'If my father force me to marry, him whom I wed I will kill.' Then said the King to the Vizier and Aziz, 'Salute the King your master and tell him what ye have heard and that my daughter is averse from men and hath no mind to marry.' So they returned, without having accomplished the object of their journey, and fared on till they rejoined the King and told him what had passed; whereupon he commanded the chiefs to summon the troops for war. But the Vizier said to him, 'O King, do not this,

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for the King is not at fault, seeing that, when his daughter learnt our business, she sent to say that, if her father forced her to marry, she would kill her husband and herself after him: so the refusal comes from her.' When the King heard this, he feared for Taj el Mulouk and said, 'If I make war on the King of the Camphor Islands and carry off his daughter, she will kill herself and it will profit me nothing.' So he told his son how the case stood, and he said, 'O my father, I cannot live without her; so I will go to her and cast about to get me access to her, though I die in the attempt.' 'How wilt thou go to her?' asked his father; and he answered, 'In the disguise of a merchant.' Then said the King, 'If thou must go and there is no help for it, take with thee Aziz and the Vizier.' He agreed to this, and the King took money from his treasuries and made ready for him merchandise, to the value of a hundred thousand dinars; and when the night came Taj el Mulouk went to Aziz's lodging and passed the night there, heart-smitten and taking no delight in food nor sleep; for melancholy was heavy upon him and he was agitated with longing for his beloved. So he besought the Creator to unite him with her and wept and groaned and complained, repeating the following verses:

Shall union after estrangement betide us, perchance, some day? Shall I ever make moan of my passion to thee, I wonder, and say,
'How oft have I called thee to mind, whilst the night in its trances slept! Thou hast made me waken, whilst all but I in oblivion lay.'

Then he wept sore and Aziz wept with him, for that he remembered his cousin; and they both ceased not to do thus till the morning, when Taj el Mulouk rose and went in to his mother, in his travelling dress. She asked him of his case, and he told her what was to do; so she gave him fifty thousand dinars and bade him farewell, offering up prayers for his safety and for his union with his beloved. Then he left her and betaking himself to his

father, asked his leave to depart. The King granted him leave and presenting him with other fifty thousand dinars, let pitch a tent for him without the city, in which they abode two days, then set out on their journey. And Taj el Mulouk delighted in Aziz's company and said to him, 'O my brother, I can never bear to be parted from thee.' 'Nor I from thee,' replied Aziz; 'and fain would I die at thy feet: but, O my brother, my heart is concerned for my mother.' 'When we have attained our wish,' said the prince, 'all will be well.' As for the Vizier, he exhorted Taj el Mulouk to patience, whilst Aziz entertained him with talk and recited verses to him and diverted him with stories and anecdotes; and so they fared on day and night for two whole months, till the way became tedious to the prince and the fires of passion redoubled on him. So he repeated the following verses:

Long is the road and restlessness and grief redouble aye, Whilst in my breast the fires of love rage ever night and day.
O thou, the goal of all my hopes, sole object of my wish, I swear by Him, the Most High God, who moulded man from clay,
For love of thee I bear a load of longing and desire, Such as the mountains of Es Shumm might ne'er withal away!
Indeed, O lady of my world,[1] love slayeth me outright! No breath of life in me is left, my fainting spright to stay.
But for the hope of union with thee, that lures me on, My weary body had no strength to furnish forth the way.

When he had finished, he wept and Aziz wept with him, from a lacerated heart, till the Vizier was moved to pity by their weeping and said to the prince, 'O my lord, take courage and be of good cheer; all will yet be well.' 'O Vizier,' said Taj el Mulouk, 'indeed I am weary of the length of the way. Tell me how far we are distant yet from the city.' 'But a little way,' replied Aziz. Then they continued their journey, traversing valleys and plains and hills and stony wastes, till one night, as Taj el Mulouk

[1] *Dunya.*

was asleep, he dreamt that his beloved was with him and that he embraced her and pressed her to his bosom; and he awoke, trembling and delirious with emotion, and repeated the following verses:

My heart is maddened for love and my tears for ever flow, And longing is ever upon me and unrelenting woe.
My plaint is, for tears, as the mourning of women bereft of young. And I moan, when the darkness gathers, as the turtles, sad and low.
Yet, if the breezes flutter from the land where thou dost dwell, Their wafts o'er the earth, sun-wearied, a grateful coolness throw.
Peace be on thee, my belovéd, as long as the cushat flies, As long as the turtles warble, as long as the zephyrs blow!

When he had finished, the Vizier came to him and said, 'Rejoice; this is a good sign: so comfort thyself and be of good cheer, for thou shalt surely compass thy desire.' And Aziz also came to him and exhorted him to patience and applied himself to divert him, talking with him and telling him stories. So they pressed on, night and day, other two months, till, one day, at sunrise, there appeared to them some white thing in the distance and Taj el Mulouk said to Aziz, 'What is yonder whiteness?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'that is the Fortress of Crystal and the city that thou seekest.' At this the prince rejoicéd, and they fared forward till they drew near the city, to the exceeding joy of Taj el Mulouk, whose grief and anxiety ceased from him. They entered, in the guise of merchants, the King's son being habited as a merchant of importance, and repaired to a great khan, known as the Merchants' Lodging. Quoth Taj el Mulouk to Aziz, 'Is this the resort of the merchants?' 'Yes,' replied he; 'it is the khan in which I lodged, when I was here before.' So they alighted there and making their beasts kneel down, unloaded them and laid up their goods in the warehouses. They abode four days, resting; at the end of which time, the Vizier proposed that they should hire a large house. To this

they assented and hired a spacious house, fitted up for festivities, where they took up their abode, and the Vizier and Aziz studied to devise some plan of conduct for Taj el Mulouk, whilst the latter remained in a state of perplexity, knowing not what to do. The Vizier could think of nothing but that he should set up as a merchant in the stuff-market; so he turned to the prince and Aziz and said to them, 'If we tarry thus, we shall not compass our desire nor attain our aim; but I have bethought me of somewhat, in which, if it please God, we shall find our advantage.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' replied Taj el Mulouk; 'indeed there is a blessing on the aged, more by token that thou art versed in the conduct of affairs: so tell me what is in thy mind.' 'It is my counsel,' rejoined the Vizier, 'that we hire thee a shop in the stuff-bazaar, where thou mayst sit to sell and buy. Every one, great and small, hath need of silken and other stuffs; so if thou be patient and abide in thy shop, thine affairs will prosper, if it please God, especially as thou art comely of aspect. Moreover, I would have thee make Aziz thy factor and set him within the shop, to hand thee the pieces of stuffs and silks.' When Taj el Mulouk heard this, he said, 'This is a good counsel.' So he took out a handsome suit of merchant's clothes, and putting it on, set out for the bazaar, followed by his servants, to one of whom he had given a thousand dinars, wherewith to fit up the shop. When they came to the stuff-market and the merchants saw Taj el Mulouk's beauty and grace, they were confounded and some said, 'Sure Rizwan hath opened the gates of Paradise and left them unguarded, so that this passing lovely youth hath come out.' And others, 'Belike this is one of the angels.' They asked for the shop of the overseer of the market, and the merchants directed them to it. So they repaired thither and saluted him, and he and those who were with him rose to them and seated them and made much of

them, because of the Vizier, whom they saw to be a man of age and reverend aspect; and seeing Aziz and Taj el Mulouk in his company, they said to one another, 'Doubtless this old man is the father of these two youths.' Then said the Vizier, 'Which of you is the overseer of the market?' 'This is he,' answered they; whereupon he came forward and the Vizier, observing him, saw him to be an old man of grave and dignified carriage, with slaves and servants, white and black. He greeted them in the friendliest manner and was lavish in his attentions to them: then he made them sit by his side and said to them, 'Have you any business which we may have the pleasure of transacting?' 'Yes,' answered the Vizier. 'I am an old man, stricken in years, and have with me these two youths, with whom I have travelled through many towns and countries, tarrying a whole year in every city (of importance) on our way, that they might take their pleasure in viewing it and come to know its people. Now I have chosen to make a stay in this your town; so I would fain have thee allot me a handsome shop in the best situation, wherein I may establish them, that they may traffic and learn to buy and sell and give and take, whilst they divert themselves with the sight of the place and acquire the uses of its people.' 'Good,' said the overseer, and looking at the two youths, rejoiced in them and conceived a great affection for them. Now he was a great lover of bewitching glances, preferring the commerce of boys to that of girls and inclining to their love. So he said in himself, 'These be fine purchase; glory to Him who created and fashioned them out of vile water!'[1] and rising, stood before them like a servant, to do them honour. Then he went out and made ready for them a shop in the midst of the market, than which there was no larger nor better in the bazaar, for it was

[1] Semen hominis.

spacious and handsomely decorated and fitted with shelves of ebony and ivory; after which he delivered the keys to the Vizier, who was dressed as an old merchant, saying, 'Take them, O my lord, and may God make it a blessed abiding-place to thy sons!' The Vizier took the keys, and they returned to the Khan and caused their servants to transport to the shop all their goods and stuffs and valuables, of which they had great plenty, worth treasures of money. Next morning, the Vizier carried the two young men to the bath, where they washed and put on rich clothes and perfumed themselves to the utmost therein. Now each of them was passing fair to look upon, and the bath enhanced their charms to the utmost, even as says the poet: Night cxxxii.

Good luck to him who in the bath doth serve him as his squire, Handling a body 'gotten sure 'twixt water and the fire!
With skilful hands he showeth forth the marvels of his craft, In that he gathers very musk[1] from what is like camphire.

When the overseer heard that they had gone to the bath, he sat down to await them, and presently they came up to him, like two gazelles, with red cheeks and black eyes and shining faces, as they were two lustrous moons or two fruit-laden saplings. When he saw them, he rose and said to them, 'May your bath profit you ever!' Whereupon Taj el Mulouk replied, with the sweetest of speech, 'May God be bountiful to thee, O my father! Why didst thou not come with us and bathe in our company?' Then they both bent over his hands and kissing them, walked before him to the shop, to do him honour and show their respect for him, for that he was chief of the merchants and the market, as well as their sense of his kindness in giving them the shop. When he saw their hips quivering, emotion and longing redoubled on him and he could not contain himself, but puffed and snorted and devoured them with his eyes, repeating the following verses:

[1] *i.e.* the rolls of dirt that come off under the bathman's hands.

The heart in them studies the chapter of worship unshared and sheer;
No proofs of more gods to worship than one it readeth here.
No wonder it is they tremble by reason of their weight; How much is
there not of motion in that revolving sphere!

And also these:

Two fair ones walking on the earth mine eyes did late espy; Two that
I needs must love although they walked upon mine eye.

When they heard this, they begged him to enter the bath with them a second time. He could hardly believe his ears and hastening thither, went in with them. The Vizier had not yet left the bath; so when he heard of the overseer's coming, he came out and meeting him in the outer room of the bath, invited him to enter. He refused, but Taj el Mulouk took him by one hand and Aziz by the other and carried him into a cabinet, the impure old man submitting to them, whilst his emotion increased on him. Then Taj el Mulouk swore that none but he should wash him and Aziz that none but he should pour water on him. He would have refused, albeit this was what he desired; but the Vizier said to him, 'They are thy sons; let them wash thee and bathe thee.' 'God preserve them to thee!' exclaimed the overseer. 'By Allah, thy coming and theirs hath brought blessing and fortune upon our city!' and he repeated the following verses:

Thou cam'st, and the mountains about us grew green And glittered,
with flowers for the bridegroom beseen;
Whilst earth and her creatures cried, 'Welcome to thee, Thrice welcome,
that comest in glory and sheen!'

They thanked him for this, and Taj el Mulouk proceeded to wash him, whilst Aziz poured water over him and he thought himself in Paradise. When they had made an end of his service, he called down blessings on them and sat talking with the Vizier, gazing the while on the youths. Presently, the servants brought them towels, and they dried themselves and donned their clothes. Then they went

out, and the Vizier said to the overseer, 'O my lord, verily the bath is the Paradise of this world.' 'May God vouchsafe it[1] to thee,' replied the overseer, 'and health to thy sons and guard them from the evil eye! Do you remember aught that the poets have said in praise of the bath?' 'Yes,' said Taj el Mulouk and repeated the following verses:

The life of the bath is the pleasantest part of life, Except that the time
of our sojourn there is slight.
A heaven, wherein 'tis irksome to us to bide; A hell, into which we
enter with delight.

'And I also,' said Aziz, 'remember some verses in praise of the bath.' Quoth the overseer, 'Let us hear them.' So he repeated the following:

I know a house, wherein flowers from the sheer stone blow; Most
goodly, when the flames about it rage and glow.
Thou deem'st it hell, and yet, in truth, 'tis Paradise And most that be
therein are suns and moons, I trow.

His verses pleased the overseer and he wondered at their grace and eloquence and said, 'By Allah, ye possess both beauty and eloquence! But now listen to me.' And he chanted the following verses:

O pleasaunce of hell-fire and paradise of pain! Bodies and souls therein
indeed are born again.
I marvel at a house, whose pleasantness for aye Doth flourish, though
the flames beneath it rage amain.
A sojourn of delight to those who visit it It is; the pools on them their
tears in torrents rain.

Then he fed his eyes on the gardens of their beauty and repeated the following verses:

I went to the bath-keeper's house and entered his dwelling-place And
found no door-keeper there but met me with smiling face.
I sojourned awhile in his heaven[2] and visited eke his hell[3] And thanked
both Malik[4] and Rizwan[5] for solace and kindly grace.

[1] *i.e.* Paradise. [2] The cold room of the bath. [3] The hot room.
[4] The door-keeper of hell. [5] The door-keeper of Paradise.

They were charmed with these verses, and the overseer invited them to his house; but they declined and returned to their own lodging, to rest from the great heat of the bath. They took their ease there and ate and drank and passed the night in the greatest comfort and delight, till morning, when they arose from sleep and making their ablutions, prayed the morning-prayer and drank the morning-draught. As soon as the sun had risen and the markets and shops were open, they went out to the bazaar and opened their shop, which their servants had already furnished, after the handsomest fashion, with prayer-rugs and silken carpets and a pair of divans, each worth a hundred dinars. On each divan they had spread a rug, garded with gold and fit for a king, and in the midst of the shop stood a third seat of still greater elegance, even as the case required. Taj el Mulouk sat down on one couch and Aziz on another, whilst the Vizier seated himself on that in the centre, and the servants stood before them. The people of the city heard of them and crowded to them, so that they sold some of their goods and the report of Taj el Mulouk's beauty and grace spread throughout the place. Some days passed thus, and every day the people flocked to them more and more, till the Vizier, after exhorting the prince to keep his secret, commended him to Aziz's care and went home, that he might be alone and cast about for some device that might profit them.

Meanwhile, the two young men sat talking and the prince said to Aziz, 'It may be some one will come from the Princess Dunya.' So he abode in expectation of this days and nights, whilst his heart was troubled and he knew neither sleep nor rest; for desire had gotten the mastery of him and passion and longing were sore upon him, so that he forewent the solace of sleep and abstained from meat and drink; yet ceased he not to be like the

full moon. One day, as he sat in the shop, there came up an old woman, followed by two slave-girls. She stopped before Taj el Mulouk and observing his grace and elegance and symmetry, marvelled at his beauty and sweated in her clothes, exclaiming, 'Glory to Him who created thee out of vile water and made thee a ravishment to all who look upon thee!' And she fixed her eyes on him and said, 'This is sure no mortal, but a noble angel.' Then she drew near and saluted him, whereupon he returned her salute and (being prompted thereto by Aziz) rose to his feet to receive her and smiled in her face; after which he made her sit down by his side and fanned her, till she was rested and refreshed, when she turned to him and said, 'O my son, O thou that art perfect in graces and charms, art thou of this country?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered he in the sweetest and pleasantest of voices, 'I was never in this country in my life till now, nor do I sojourn here save for my diversion.' 'May all honour and prosperity attend thee!' rejoined she. 'What stuffs hast thou brought with thee? Show me something handsome; for the fair should bring nothing but what is fair.' When he heard her words, his heart fluttered and he knew not what she meant; but Aziz made a sign to him, and he replied, 'I have everything thou canst desire, and amongst the rest goods that befit none but kings and kings' daughters; so tell me for whom thou seekest the stuff, that I may show thee what will befit her.' This he said, that he might learn the meaning of her words; and she rejoined, 'I want a stuff fit for the Princess Dunya, daughter of King Shehriman.' When the prince heard the name of his beloved, he rejoiced greatly and said to Aziz, 'Give me such a bale.' So Aziz brought it and opened it before Taj el Mulouk, who said to the old woman, 'Choose what will suit her; for these are goods only to be found with me.' So she chose

Night cxxxiii.

goods worth a thousand dinars and said, 'How much is this?' And ceased not the while to talk with him and rub the inside of her thighs with the palm of her hand. 'Shall I haggle with the like of thee about this paltry price?' answered he. 'Praised be God who hath brought me acquainted with thee!' 'The name of God be upon thee!' exclaimed she. 'I commend thy fair face to the protection of the Lord of the Daybreak! Fair face and pleasant speech! Happy the woman who lies in thy bosom and clasps thy waist in her arms and enjoys thy youth, especially if she be fair and graceful like unto thee!' At this, Taj el Mulouk laughed till he fell backward and said (in himself), 'O Thou who fulfillest desires by means of dissolute old women! They are indeed the accomplishers of desires!' Then said she, 'O my son, what is thy name?' And he answered, 'My name is Taj el Mulouk.'[1] 'This is a name of kings and kings' sons,' rejoined she; 'and thou art clad in a merchant's habit.' Quoth Aziz, 'For the love his parents and family bore him and the value they set on him, they named him thus.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' replied the old woman. 'May God guard you both from the evil eye and the malice of the enemy and the envious, though hearts be broken by your charms!' Then she took the stuff and went away, amazed at the prince's beauty and grace and symmetry, and going in to the Princess Dunya, said to her, 'O my lady, I have brought thee some handsome stuff.' 'Show it me,' said the princess. 'Here it is,' answered the old woman; 'turn it over, O my treasure, and examine it.' So the princess looked at the stuff and was amazed at its beauty and said, 'O my nurse, this is indeed handsome stuff! I have never seen its like in our city.' 'O my lady,' replied the nurse, 'he who sold it me is handsomer still. It would seem as if Rizwan had left the gates of Paradise open and this youth had

[1] i.e. *Crown of Kings.*

come out. I would he might sleep this night with thee and lie between thy breasts! He hath come hither with these stuffs for amusement's sake, and he is a ravishment to all who set eyes on him.' The princess laughed at her words and said, 'Allah afflict thee, O pernicious old woman! Thou dotest and there is no sense left in thee. Give me the stuff, that I may look at it anew.' So she gave it her, and she examined it again and seeing that, though small, it was of great value, was moved to admiration, for she had never in her life seen its like, and exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is a handsome stuff!' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'if thou sawest him who sold it to me, thou wouldst know him for the handsomest of all that be upon the face of the earth.' Quoth the princess, 'Didst thou ask him if he had any need, that we might satisfy it?' The nurse shook her head and answered, 'God keep thy sagacity! Assuredly he has a want, may thy skill not fail thee. What man is free from wants?' 'Go back to him,' rejoined the princess; 'salute him for me, and say to him, "Our land and town are honoured by thy visit, and if thou hast any need, we will fulfil it to thee, on our head and eyes."' So the old woman returned to Taj el Mulouk, and when he saw her, his heart leapt for joy and he rose to his feet and taking her hand, seated her by his side. As soon as she was rested, she told him what the princess had said, whereat he rejoiced exceedingly; his breast dilated and gladness entered his heart, and he said in himself, 'Verily, I have gotten my desire.' Then said he to the old woman, 'Belike thou wilt take her a message from me and bring me her answer.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she. So he said to Aziz, 'Bring me inkhorn and paper and a pen of brass.' Aziz brought him what he sought, and he took the pen and wrote the following verses:

I send thee, O my hope, a letter, to complain Of all my soul endures for parting and its pain.
Six lines it hath; the first, 'A fire is in my heart;' The next line setteth forth my passion all in vain;
The third, 'My patience fails and eke my life doth waste;' The fourth, 'All love with me for ever shall remain.'
The fifth, 'When shall mine eyes behold thee?' And the sixth, 'When shall the day betide of meeting for us twain?'

And by way of subscription he wrote these words, 'This letter is from the captive of desire, prisoned in the hold of longing, from which there is no deliverance but in union and intercourse with her whom he loveth, after absence and separation: for he suffereth grievous torment by reason of his severance from his beloved.' Then his tears rushed out and he wrote the following verses:

I write to thee, my love, and the tears run down as I write; For the tears of my eyes, alack! cease never day or night.
Yet do I not despair; mayhap, of God His grace, The day shall dawn for us of union and delight.

Then he folded the letter and sealed it and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'Carry it to the Lady Dunya.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she; whereupon he gave her a thousand dinars and said to her, 'O my mother, accept this, as a token of my affection.' She took the letter and the money, calling down blessings on him, and returned to the princess. When the latter saw her, she said to her, 'O my nurse, what is it he asks, that we may fulfil his wish to him?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'he sends thee this letter by me, and I know not what is in it.' The princess took the letter and reading it, exclaimed, 'Who and what is this merchant that he should dare to write to me thus?' And she buffeted her face, saying, 'What have we done that we should come in converse with shopkeepers? Alas! Alas! By Allah, but that I fear God the Most High, I would put him to death and crucify him before his shop!' 'What is in the letter,' asked the old

woman, 'to trouble thy heart and move thine anger thus? Doth it contain a complaint of oppression or demand for the price of the stuff?' 'Out on thee!' answered the princess. 'There is none of this in it, nought but words of love and gallantry. This is all through thee: else how should this devil know me?' 'O my lady,' rejoined the old woman, 'thou sittest in thy high palace and none may win to thee, no, not even the birds of the air. God keep thee and keep thy youth from blame and reproach! Thou art a princess, the daughter of a king, and needest not reck of the barking of dogs. Blame me not that I brought thee this letter, knowing not what was in it; but it is my counsel that thou send him an answer, threatening him with death and forbidding him from this idle talk: surely he will abstain and return not to the like of this.' 'I fear,' said the princess, 'that, if I write to him, he will conceive hopes of me.' Quoth the old woman, 'When he reads thy threats and menace of punishment, he will desist.' So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and pen of brass and wrote the following verses:

O thou who feignest thee the prey of love and wakefulness And plainst of that thou dost endure for passion and distress,
Thinkst thou, deluded one, to win thy wishes of the moon? Did ever any of a moon get union and liesse?
I rede thee put away the thought of this thou seekst from thee, For that therein but peril is for thee and weariness.
If thou to this thy speech return, a grievous punishment Shall surely fall on thee from me and ruin past redress.
By Him, the Almighty God, I swear, who moulded man from clay, Him who gave fire unto the sun and lit the moon no less,
If thou offend anew, for sure, upon a cross of tree I'll have thee crucified, for all thy wealth and goodliness!

Then she folded the letter and giving it to the old woman, said, 'Carry this to him and bid him desist from this talk.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she, and taking the letter, returned, rejoicing, to her own house, where she

passed the night and in the morning betook herself to the shop of Taj el Mulouk, whom she found expecting her. At sight of her, he well nigh lost his reason for delight, and when she came up to him, he rose to his feet and seated her by his side. Then she brought out the letter and gave it to him, saying, 'Read this. When the princess read thy letter, she was angry; but I coaxed her and jested with her till I made her laugh, and she had pity on thee and has returned thee an answer.' He thanked her and bade Aziz give her a thousand dinars: then he read her letter and fell to weeping sore, so that the old woman's heart was moved to pity for him and his tears and complaints grieved her. So she said to him, 'O my son, what is there in this scroll, that makes thee weep?' 'She threatens me with death and crucifixion,' replied he, 'and forbids me to write to her: but if I write not, my death were better than my life. So take thou my answer to her letter and let her do what she will.' 'By the life of thy youth,' rejoined the old woman, 'needs must I venture my life for thee, that I may bring thee to thy desire and help thee to win that thou hast at heart!' And he said, 'Whatever thou dost, I will requite thee therefor, and do thou determine of it; for thou art versed in affairs and skilled in all fashions of intrigue: difficult matters are easy to thee: and God can do all things.' Then he took a scroll and wrote therein the following verses:

My love with slaughter threatens me, woe's me for my distress! But death is foreordained; to me, indeed, 'twere happiness.
Better death end a lover's woes than that a weary life He live, rejected and forlorn, forbidden from liesse.
Visit a lover, for God's sake, whose every helper fails, And with thy sight thy captive slave and bondman deign to bless!
Have ruth upon me, lady mine, for loving thee; for all, Who love the noble, stand excused for very passion's stress.

Then he sighed heavily and wept, till the old woman wept also and taking the letter, said to him, 'Take heart

and be of good cheer, for it shall go hard but I bring thee to thy desire.' Then she rose and leaving him on coals of fire, returned to the princess, whom she found still pale with rage at Taj el Mulouk's first letter. The nurse gave her his second letter, whereupon her anger redoubled and she said, 'Did I not say he would conceive hopes of us?' 'What is this dog,' replied the old woman, 'that he should conceive hopes of thee?' Quoth the princess, 'Go back to him and tell him that, if he write to me again, I will have his head cut off.' 'Write this in a letter,' answered the nurse, 'and I will take it to him, that his fear may be the greater.' So she took a scroll and wrote thereon the following verses:

Harkye, thou that letst the lessons of the past unheeded lie, Thou that lookst aloft, yet lackest power to win thy goal on high,
Thinkest thou to reach Es Suha,[1] O deluded one, although Even the moon's too far to come at, shining in the middle sky?
How then dar'st thou hope my favours and aspire to twinned delight And my spear-straight shape and slender in thine arms to girdle sigh?
Leave this purpose, lest mine anger fall on thee some day of wrath, Such as e'en the parting-places shall with white for terror dye.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who took it and returned to Taj el Mulouk. When he saw her, he rose to his feet and exclaimed, 'May God not bereave me of the blessing of thy coming!' Quoth she, 'Take the answer to thy letter.' He took it and reading it, wept sore and said, 'Would some one would slay me now, for indeed death were easier to me than this my state!' Then he took pen and inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

O my hope, have done with rigour; lay disdain and anger by; Visit one who, drowned in passion, doth for love and longing sigh.
Think not, under thine estrangement, that my life I will endure. Lo, my soul, for very severance from thy sight, is like to die.

[1] An obscure star in the Great Bear.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'Grudge it not to me, though I have wearied thee to no purpose.' And he bade Aziz give her other thousand dinars, saying, 'O my mother, needs must this letter result in perfect union or complete separation.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'by Allah, I desire nought but thy weal; and it is my wish that she be thine, for indeed thou art the resplendent moon and she the rising sun. If I do not bring you together, there is no profit in my life: these ninety years have I lived in the practice of wile and intrigue; so how should I fail to unite two lovers, though in defiance of law?' Then she took leave of him, after comforting his heart, and returned to the palace. Now she had hidden the letter in her hair: so she sat down by the princess and rubbing her head, said, 'O my lady, maybe thou wilt comb out my hair, for it is long since I went to the bath.' The princess bared her arms to the elbow and letting down the old woman's hair, began to comb it, when out dropped the letter and Dunya seeing it, asked what it was. Quoth the nurse, 'This paper must have stuck to me, as I sat in the merchant's shop: give it me, that I may return it to him; belike it contains some reckoning of which he hath need.' But the princess opened it, and reading it, cried out, 'This is one of thy tricks, and hadst thou not reared me, I would lay violent hands on thee forthright! Verily God hath afflicted me with this merchant: but all that hath befallen me with him is of thy contrivance. I know not whence this fellow can have come: none but he would venture to affront me thus, and I fear lest this my case get wind, the more that it concerns one who is neither of my rank nor of my peers.' 'None would dare speak of this,' rejoined the old woman, 'for fear of thine anger and awe of thy father; so there can be no harm in sending him an answer.' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'verily this fellow is a devil. How can he dare

to use such language to me and not dread the Sultan's wrath? Indeed, I am perplexed about his case: if I order him to be put to death, it were unjust; and if I leave him, his presumption will increase.' 'Write him a letter,' rejoined the old woman; 'it may be he will desist.' So she called for pen and ink and paper and wrote the following verses:

Again and again I chide thee, yet folly ever again Lures thee: how long, with my writing, in verse shall I bid thee refrain,
Whilst thou but growest in boldness for all forbidding? But I No grace, save to keep thy secret, unto thy prayers may deign.
Conceal thy passion nor ever reveal it; for, an thou speak, I will surely show thee no mercy nor yet my wrath contain.
If to thy foolish daring thou turn thee anew, for sure, The raven of evil omen shall croak for thee death and bane;
And slaughter shall come upon thee ere long, and under the earth To seek for a place of abiding, God wot, thou shalt be fain.
Thy people, O self-deluder, thou'lt leave in mourning for thee; Ay, all their lives they shall sorrow for thee, fordone and slain.

Then she folded the letter and committed it to the old woman, who took it and returning to Taj el Mulouk, gave it to him. When he read it, he knew that the princess was hard-hearted and that he should not win to her; so he complained to the Vizier and besought his advice. Quoth he, 'Nothing will profit thee save that thou write to her and invoke the wrath of God upon her.' And he said to Aziz, 'O my brother, do thou write to her in my name, according to thy knowledge.' So Aziz took a scroll and wrote the following verses:

O Lord, by the Five Elders, deliver me, I pray, And her, for whom I suffer, in like affliction lay!
Thou knowest that I weary in raging flames of love; Whilst she I love is cruel and saith me ever nay.
How long shall I be tender to her, despite my pain? How long shall she ride roughshod o'er my weakness night and day?
In agonies I wander of never-ceasing death And find nor friend nor helper, O Lord, to be my stay.

Full fain would I forget her; but how can I forget, When for desire my patience is wasted all away?
Thou that forbidst my passion the sweets of happy love, Art thou then safe from fortune, that shifts and changes aye?
Art thou not glad and easeful and blest with happy life, Whilst I, for thee, an exile from folk and country stray?

Then he folded the letter and gave it to Taj el Mulouk, who read the verses and was pleased with them. So he handed the letter to the old woman, who took it and carried it to the princess. When she read it, she was greatly enraged and said, 'All that has befallen me comes from this pernicious old woman!' Then she cried out to the damsels and eunuchs, saying, 'Seize this accursed old trickstress and beat her with your slippers!' So they beat her till she swooned away; and when she revived, the princess said to her, 'By Allah, O wicked old woman, did I not fear God the Most High, I would kill thee!' Then she bade them beat her again, and they did so, till she fainted a second time, whereupon the princess ordered them to drag her forth and throw her without the palace. So they dragged her along on her face and threw her down before the gate. When she came to herself, she rose and made the best of her way home, walking and resting by turns. She passed the night in her own house and in the morning, she went to Taj el Mulouk and told him what had passed, at which he was distressed and said, 'O my mother, this that has befallen thee is grievous to us; but all things are according to fate and destiny.' 'Take comfort and be of good cheer,' replied she; 'for I will not give over striving, till I have brought thee and her together and made thee to enjoy the vile baggage who hath tortured me with beating.' Quoth the prince, 'Tell me the reason of her aversion to men.' 'It arose from what she saw in a dream,' answered the old woman. 'And what was this dream?' asked the prince. 'One night,' replied she, 'as

she lay asleep, she saw a fowler spread his net upon the ground and scatter grain round it. Then he sat down hard by, and all the birds in the neighbourhood flocked to the net. Amongst the rest she saw a pair of pigeons, male and female; and whilst she was watching the net, the male bird's foot caught in it and he began to struggle, whereupon all the other birds took fright and flew away. But presently his mate came back and hovered over him, then alighted on the net, unobserved by the fowler, and fell to picking and pulling at the mesh in which the male bird's foot was entangled with her beak, till she released him and they flew away together. Then the fowler came up and mended his net and seated himself afar off. After a while, the birds came back and the female pigeon was caught in the net, whereupon all the other birds took fright and flew away; and the male pigeon flew away with the rest and did not return to his mate. Then came the fowler and took the female pigeon and killed her. So the princess awoke, troubled by her dream, and said, "All males are worthless, like this pigeon: and men in general are wanting in goodness to women."' When the old woman had made an end of her story, the prince said to her, 'O my mother, I desire to have one look at her, though it be my death; so do thou contrive me some means of seeing her.' 'Know then,' answered she, 'that she hath under her palace windows a pleasure-garden, to which she resorts once in every month by the private door. In ten days, the time of her thus going forth will arrive; so when she is about to visit the garden, I will come and tell thee, that thou mayst go thither and meet her. And look thou quit not the garden, for haply, if she sees thy beauty and grace, her heart will be taken with love of thee, and love is the most potent means of union.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Taj el Mulouk. Then he and Aziz left the shop, and taking the old woman with them, showed her where they lodged.

Then said the prince to Aziz, 'I have no further need of the shop, having fulfilled my purpose of it; so I give it to thee with all that is in it; for that thou hast come abroad with me and hast left thy country for my sake.' Aziz accepted his gift and they sat conversing awhile, the prince questioning the young merchant of the strange passages of his life and the latter acquainting him with the particulars thereof. Presently, they went to the Vizier and acquainting him with Taj el Mulouk's purpose, asked him what they should do. 'Let us go to the garden,' answered he. So they donned their richest clothes and went forth, followed by three white slaves, to the garden, which they found thick with trees and abounding in rills. At the gate, they saw the keeper sitting; so they saluted him and he returned their salute. Then the Vizier gave him a hundred dinars, saying, 'Prithee, take this spending-money and fetch us something to eat; for we are strangers and I have with me these two lads, whom I wish to divert.' The gardener took the money and said to them, 'Enter and take your pleasure in the garden, for it is all yours; and sit down till I bring you what you require.' So he went to the market, and the Vizier and his companions entered the garden. In a little while, the gardener returned with a roasted lamb and bread as white as cotton, which he placed before them, and they ate and drank; after which he set on sweetmeats, and they ate of them, then washed their hands and sat talking. Presently the Vizier said to the gardener, 'Tell me about this garden: is it thine or dost thou rent it?' 'It does not belong to me,' replied he, 'but to the Princess Dunya, the King's daughter.' 'What is thy wage?' asked the Vizier, and the gardener answered, 'One dinar every month and no more.' Then the Vizier looked round about the garden and seeing in its midst a pavilion, lofty but old and dilapidated, said to the keeper, 'O elder, I am minded to do here a good work, by which thou shalt

remember me.' 'O my lord,' rejoined the other, 'what is that?' 'Take these three hundred dinars,' answered the Vizier. When the keeper heard speak of the dinars, he said, 'O my lord, do what thou wilt.' So the Vizier gave him the money, saying, 'God willing, we will work a good work in this place.' Then they left the garden and returned to their lodging, where they passed the night. Next day, the Vizier sent for a plasterer and a painter and a skilful goldsmith, and furnishing them with all the tools and materials that they required, carried them to the garden, where he bade them plaster the walls of the pavilion and decorate it with various kinds of paintings. Then he sent for gold and ultramarine and said to the painter, 'Paint me on the wall, at the upper end of the saloon, a fowler, with his nets spread and birds lighted round them and a female pigeon fallen into the net and entangled therein by the bill. Let this fill one compartment of the wall, and on the other paint the fowler seizing the pigeon and setting the knife to her throat, whilst the third compartment of the picture must show a great hawk seizing the male pigeon, her mate, and digging his talons into him.' The painter did as the Vizier bade him, and when he and the other workmen had finished, they took their hire and went away. Then the Vizier and his companions took leave of the gardener and returned to their lodging, where they sat down to converse. And Taj el Mulouk said to Aziz, 'O my brother, recite me some verses: haply it may dilate my breast and dispel my sad thoughts and assuage the fire of my heart.' So Aziz chanted the following verses:

All that they fable lovers feel of anguish and despite, I in myself comprise, and so my strength is crushed outright;
And if thou seekst a watering-place, see, from my streaming eyes, Rivers of tears for those who thirst run ever day and night.
Or, if thou fain wouldst look upon the ruin passion's hands Can wreak on lovers, let thy gaze upon my body light.

And his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated these verses also:

Who loves not the necks and the eyes of the fair and pretends, forsooth,
To know the delight of the world, God wot, he speaks not the truth.
For in love is a secret meaning, that none may win to know Save he who has loved indeed and known its wrath and ruth.
May God not lighten my heart of passion for her I love Nor ease my eyelids, for love, of wakefulness in my youth!

Then he sang the following:

Avicenna pretends, in his writings renowned, That the lover's best med'cine is song and sweet sound
And dalliance with one of his sex like his love And drinking, with waters and fruits all around.
I took me another, to heal me for thee, And fate was propitious and grace did abound;
Yet I knew love a mortal disease, against which Avicenna his remedy idle I found.

Taj el Mulouk was pleased with his verses and wondered at his eloquence and the excellence of his recitation, saying, 'Indeed, thou hast done away from me somewhat of my concern.' Then said the Vizier, 'Of a truth, there occurred to those of times past what astounds those who hear it.' 'If thou canst recall any fine verse of this kind,' quoth the prince, 'I prithee let us hear it and keep the talk in vogue.' So the Vizier chanted the following verses:

Methought thy favours might be bought and thou to give consent To union won by gifts of gold and grace and blandishment:
And eke, for ignorance, I deemed thy love an easy thing, Thy love in which the noblest souls for languor are forspent;
Until I saw thee choose one out and gratify that one With sweet and subtle favours. Then, to me 'twas evident
Thy graces never might be won by any artifice; So underneath my wing my head I hid incontinent
And in the nest of passion made my heart's abiding-place, Wherein my morning and my night for evermore are pent.

Meanwhile the old woman remained shut up in her house,

till it befell that the princess was taken with a desire to divert herself in the garden. Now this she had been wont to do only in company with her nurse; so she sent for her and spoke her fair and made her peace with her, saying, 'I wish to go forth to the garden, that I may divert myself with the sight of its trees and fruits and gladden my heart with its flowers.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the old woman; 'but let me first go to my house and change my dress, and I will be with thee anon.' 'Go,' said the princess; 'but be not long absent from me.' So the old woman left her and repairing to Taj el Mulouk, said to him, 'Don thy richest clothes and go to the gardener and salute him and make shift to hide thyself in the garden.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and she agreed with him upon a signal to be made by her to him and returned to the princess. As soon as she was gone, the Vizier and Aziz rose and dressed Taj el Mulouk in a right costly suit of kings' raiment, worth five thousand dinars, and girt his middle with a girdle of gold set with jewels. Then he repaired to the garden and found the keeper seated at the gate. As soon as the latter saw him, he sprang to his feet and received him with all respect and consideration and opening the gate, said, 'Enter and take thy pleasure in the garden.' Now the gardener knew not that the princess was to visit the garden that day: but Taj el Mulouk had been there but a little while, when he heard a noise and ere he could think, out came the eunuchs and damsels by the private door. When the gardener saw this, he came up to the prince and said to him, 'O my lord, what is to be done? The Princess Dunya, the King's daughter, is here.' 'Fear not,' replied the prince; 'no harm shall befall thee: for I will conceal myself somewhere about the garden.' So the gardener exhorted him to the utmost prudence and went away. Presently, the princess entered the garden, attended by her damsels and the old woman, who said to

herself, 'If these eunuchs abide with us, we shall not attain our object.' So she said to the princess, 'O my lady, I have somewhat to say to thee that will be for thy heart's ease.' 'Say on,' replied the princess. 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'thou hast no present need of these eunuchs; send them away, for thou wilt not be able to divert thyself at thine ease, whilst they are with us.' 'Thou art right,' rejoined the princess. So she dismissed the eunuchs and began to walk about, whilst Taj el Mulouk fed his eyes on her beauty and grace, without her knowledge, and fainted every time he looked at her, by reason of her surpassing loveliness. The old woman held her in converse and drew her on till they reached the pavilion, which the Vizier had caused to be decorated afresh, when the princess entered and looking round, perceived the picture of the fowler and the birds; whereupon she exclaimed, 'Glory be to God! This is the very presentment of what I saw in my dream.' She continued to gaze at the painting, full of admiration, and presently she said, 'O my nurse, I have been wont to blame and dislike men, by reason of my having seen in my dream the female pigeon abandoned by her mate; but now see how the male pigeon was minded to return and set her free; but the hawk met him and tore him in pieces.' The old woman, however, feigned ignorance and ceased not to hold her in converse, till they drew near the place where the prince lay hidden, whereupon she signed to him to come out and walk under the windows of the pavilion. He did so: and presently the princess, chancing to look out, saw him and noting his beauty and symmetry, said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, whence comes yonder handsome youth?' 'I know nothing of him,' replied the old woman, 'except that I think he must be some great king's son, for he attains the utmost extreme of beauty and grace.' The princess fell passionately in love with him; the spells that bound her were

dissolved and her reason was overcome by his beauty and elegance. So she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, this is indeed a handsome youth.' 'Thou art in the right, O my lady!' replied the nurse and signed to Taj el Mulouk to go home. So he went away, not daring to cross her, though desire flamed in him and he was distraught for love and longing, and taking leave of the gardener, returned to his lodging, where he told the Vizier and Aziz all that had passed. They exhorted him to patience, saying, 'Did not the old woman know that there was an object to be gained by thy departure, she had not signed to thee to return home.'

Meanwhile, desire and passion redoubled upon the princess, and she was overcome with love-longing and said to the old woman, 'I know not how I shall foregather with this youth, but through thee.' 'God be my refuge from Satan the Accursed!' exclaimed the old woman. 'Thou that art averse from men! How comes it that thou art thus afflicted with love of this young man? Though, by Allah, none is worthy of thy youth but he!' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'help me to foregather with him, and thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars and a dress worth as much more: but if thou aid me not to come at him, I shall assuredly die.' 'Go to thy palace,' replied the nurse, 'and leave me to devise means for bringing you together. I will risk my life to content you both.' So the princess returned to her palace, and the old woman betook herself to Taj el Mulouk, who rose to receive her and entreated her with respect and honour, making her sit by his side. Then said she, 'The device hath succeeded,' and told him all that had passed between the princess and herself. 'When is our meeting to be?' asked he. 'To-morrow,' replied the old woman. So he gave her a thousand dinars and a dress of equal value, and she took them and returned to the princess, who said to her, as soon as she saw her, 'O

my nurse, what news of my beloved?' 'I have discovered where he lives,' replied she, 'and will bring him to thee to-morrow.' At this the princess was glad and gave her a thousand dinars and a dress worth as much more, with which she returned to her own house, where she passed the night. Next morning, she went to Taj el Mulouk and dressing him in women's clothes, said to him, 'Follow me and sway from side to side, as thou goest, and do not hasten in thy walk nor take heed of any that speaks to thee.' Then she went out and walked on, followed by the prince, whom she continued to lesson and hearten by the way, that he might not be afraid, till they came to the palace gate. She entered and the prince after her, and she led him through doors and vestibules, till they had passed six doors. As they approached the seventh door, she said to him, 'Take courage and when I call out to thee and say, "Pass, O damsel!" do not hesitate, but hasten on. When thou art in the vestibule, thou wilt see on thy left a gallery, with doors along it: count five doors and enter the sixth, for therein is thy desire.' 'And whither wilt thou go?' asked the prince. 'Nowhere,' answered she; 'except that I may drop behind thee and the chief eunuch may detain me, whilst I talk with him.' Then they went up to the door, where the chief eunuch was stationed, and he, seeing Taj el Mulouk with her, dressed as a slave-girl, said to the old woman, 'What girl is this with thee?' Quoth she, 'This is a slave-girl of whom the Princess Dunya has heard that she is skilled in different arts, and she hath a mind to buy her.' 'I know no slave-girl,' rejoined the eunuch, 'nor any one else; and none shall enter here without being searched by me, according to the King's orders.' At this the old woman feigned to be angry and said, 'I thought thee a man of sense and good breeding: but, if thou be changed, I will let the princess know of it and how thou hinderest her slave-girl.' Then she

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cried out to Taj el Mulouk, saying, 'Pass on, O damsel!' So he passed on into the vestibule, whilst the eunuch was silent and said nothing. Then the prince counted five doors and entered the sixth, where he found the Princess Dunya standing awaiting him. As soon as she saw him, she knew him and pressed him to her bosom, and he returned her embrace. Then the old woman came in to them, having made a pretext to dismiss the princess's attendants for fear of discovery, and the princess said to her, 'Do thou keep the door.' So she and Taj el Mulouk abode alone together and passed the night in kissing and embracing and twining leg with leg. When the day drew near, she left him and shutting the door upon him, passed in to another apartment, where she sat down according to her wont, whilst her women came in to her, and she attended to their affairs and conversed with them awhile. Then she said to them, 'Leave me now, for I wish to be alone.' So they withdrew and she betook herself to Taj el Mulouk, and the old woman brought them food, of which they ate and after fell again to amorous dalliance, till the dawn. Then the princess left him, and locked the door as before; and they ceased not to do thus for a whole month.

Meanwhile, the Vizier and Aziz, when they found that the prince did not return from the princess's palace all this while, gave him up for lost and Aziz said to the Vizier, 'O my father, what shall we do?' 'O my son,' answered he, 'this is a difficult matter, and except we return to his father and tell him, he will blame us.' So they made ready at once and setting out, journeyed night and day along the valleys, in the direction of the Green Country, till they reached King Suleiman's capital and presenting themselves before him, acquainted him with what had befallen his son and how they had heard no news of him, since he entered the princess's palace. At this the King was greatly troubled and regret was sore upon him, and

he let call a holy war throughout his realm. Then he encamped without the town with his troops and took up his abode in his pavilion, whilst the levies came from all parts of the kingdom; for his subjects loved him by reason of his much justice and beneficence. As soon as his forces were assembled, he took horse, with an army covering the country as far as the eye could reach, and departed in quest of his son Taj el Mulouk. Meanwhile, the latter sojourned with the princess half a year's time, whilst every day they redoubled in mutual affection and distraction and passion and love-longing and desire so pressed upon Taj el Mulouk, that at last he opened his mind to the princess and said to her, 'Know, O beloved of my heart and entrails, that the longer I abide with thee, the more longing and passion and desire increase on me, for that I have not yet fulfilled the whole of my desire.' 'What then wouldst thou have, O light of my eyes and fruit of my entrails?' asked she. 'If thou desire aught beside kissing and embracing and entwining of legs, do what pleases thee; for, by Allah, none hath any part in us.' 'It is not that I desire,' rejoined he; 'but I would fain acquaint thee with my true history. I am no merchant, but a King, the son of a King, and my father is the supreme King Suleiman Shah, who sent his Vizier ambassador to thy father, to demand thy hand for me in marriage, but thou wouldst not consent.' Then he told her his story from first to last, nor is there any profit in repeating it, and added, 'And now I wish to return to my father, that he may send an ambassador to thy father, to demand thy hand for me, so we may be at ease.' When she heard this, she rejoiced greatly, because it fell in with her own wishes, and they passed the night on this understanding. But by the decree of Fate, it befell that sleep overcame them that night above all nights and they slept till the sun had risen. Now at this hour, King Shehriman was sitting on his chair of

estate, with his amirs and grandees before him, when the chief of the goldsmiths presented himself before him carrying a large box, which he opened and brought out therefrom a small casket worth a hundred thousand dinars, for that which was therein of rubies and emeralds and other jewels, beyond the competence of any King. When the King saw this, he marvelled at its beauty and turning to the chief eunuch (him with whom the old woman had had to do, as before related), said to him, 'O Kafour, take this casket to the Princess Dunya.' The eunuch took the casket and repairing to the princess's apartment, found the door shut and the old woman lying asleep on the threshold; whereupon said he, 'Asleep at this hour?' His voice aroused the old woman, who was terrified and said to him, 'Wait till I fetch the key.' Then she went out and fled for her life; but the eunuch, having his suspicions of her, lifted the door off its hinges and entering, found the princess and Taj el Mulouk lying asleep in each other's arms. At this sight he was confounded and was about to return to the King, when the princess awoke, and seeing him, was terrified and changed colour and said to him, 'O Kafour, veil thou what God hath veiled.' But he replied, 'I cannot conceal aught from the King;' and locking the door on them, returned to Shehriman, who said to him, 'Hast thou given the casket to the princess?' 'Here is the casket,' answered the eunuch. 'Take it, for I cannot conceal aught from thee. Know that I found a handsome young man in the princess's arms, and they asleep in one bed.' The King commanded them to be fetched and said to them, 'What manner of thing is this!' and being violently enraged, seized a dagger and was about to strike Taj el Mulouk with it, when the princess threw herself upon him and said to her father, 'Slay me before him.' The King reviled her and commanded her to be taken back to her chamber: then he turned to Taj el

Mulouk and said to him, 'Woe to thee! Whence art thou? Who is thy father and what hath emboldened thee to debauch my daughter?' 'Know, O King," replied the prince, 'that if thou put me to death, thou wilt repent it, for it will be thy ruin and that of all in thy dominions.' 'How so?' asked the King. 'Know,' answered Taj el Mulouk, 'that I am the son of King Suleiman Shah, and before thou knowest it, he will be upon thee with his horse and foot.' When King Shehriman heard this, he would have forborne to kill Taj el Mulouk and put him in prison, till he should know the truth of his words; but his Vizier said to him, 'O King of the age, it is my counsel that thou make haste to slay this gallows-bird, that dares debauch kings' daughters.' So the King said to the headsman, 'Strike off his head; for he is a traitor.' Accordingly, the headsman took him and binding him fast, raised his hand to the amirs, as if to consult them, a first and a second time, thinking to gain time; but the King said to him, 'How long wilt thou consult the amirs? If thou do so again, I will strike off thine own head.' So the headsman raised his hand, till the hair of his armpit appeared, and was about to smite off Taj el Mulouk's head, when sud-
Night denly loud cries arose and the people closed their shops;
cxxxvi. whereupon the King said to him, 'Wait awhile,' and despatched one to learn the news. Presently, the messenger returned and said, 'I see an army like the stormy sea with its clashing billows; the earth trembles with the tramp of their horses, and I know not the reason of their coming.' When the King heard this, he was confounded and feared lest his realm should be torn from him; so he turned to his Vizier and said, 'Have not any of our troops gone forth to meet this army?' But before he had done speaking, his chamberlains entered with messengers from the approaching host, and amongst them the Vizier who had accompanied Taj el Mulouk. They saluted the King, who rose to receive

them and bidding them draw near, enquired the reason of their coming; whereupon the Vizier came forward and said, 'Know that he who hath invaded thy realm is no king like unto the Kings and Sultans of time past.' 'Who is he?' asked Shehriman, and the Vizier replied, 'He is the lord of justice and loyalty, the report of whose magnanimity the caravans have blazed abroad, the Sultan Suleiman Shah, Lord of the Green Country and the Two Columns and the mountains of Ispahan, he who loves justice and equity and abhors iniquity and oppression. He saith to thee that his son, the darling of his heart and the fruit of his loins, is with thee and in this thy city; and if he find him in safety, his aim is won and thou shalt have praise and thanks; but if he have disappeared from thy dominions or if aught have befallen him, look thou for ruin and the laying waste of thy realm; for this thy city shall become a desert, in which the raven shall croak. Thus have I done my errand to thee and peace be on thee!' When King Shehriman heard these words, his heart was troubled and he feared for his kingdom: so he cried out for his grandees and viziers and chamberlains and officers; and when they appeared, he said to them, 'Out on you! Go down and search for the young man!' Now the prince was still under the headsman's hands, but he was changed by the fright he had undergone. Presently, the Vizier, chancing to look aside, saw the prince on the carpet of blood and knew him; so he threw himself upon him, as did the other envoys. Then they loosed his bonds and kissed his hands and feet, whereupon he opened his eyes and recognizing his father's Vizier and his friend Aziz, fell down in a swoon, for excess of delight in them. When King Shehriman saw that the coming of the army was indeed on this youth's account, he was confounded and feared greatly; so he went up to Taj el Mulouk and kissing his head, said to him, with streaming eyes, 'O my son, bear me not malice neither

blame the sinner for his evil-doing: but have compassion on my gray hairs and do not lay waste my kingdom.' But Taj el Mulouk drew near unto him and kissing his hand, replied, 'Fear not: no harm shall come to thee, for indeed thou art to me as my father; but look that nought befall my beloved, the Lady Dunya.' 'O my lord,' replied the King, 'fear not for her; nought but joy shall betide her.' And he went on to excuse himself to him and made his peace with King Suleiman's Vizier, to whom he promised much money, if he would conceal from the King what he had seen. Then he bade his officers carry the prince to the bath and clothe him in one of the best of his own suits and bring him back speedily. So they carried him to the bath and brought him back to the presence-chamber, after having clad him in the suit that the King had set apart for him. When he entered, the King rose to receive him and made all his grandees stand in attendance on him. Then he sat down to converse with Aziz and the Vizier and acquainted them with what had befallen him; after which they told him how they had returned to his father and given him to know of his son's perilous plight and added, 'And indeed our coming hath brought thee relief and us gladness.' Quoth he, 'Good fortune hath attended your every action, first and last.'

Meanwhile, King Shehriman went in to his daughter, the Princess Dunya, and found her weeping and lamenting for Taj el Mulouk. Moreover, she had taken a sword and fixed the hilt in the earth, with the point to her heart between her breasts; and she bent over it, saying, 'Needs must I kill myself and not live after my beloved.' When her father entered and saw her in this case, he cried out, 'O princess of kings' daughters, hold thy hand and have compassion on thy father and the people of thy realm!' Then he came up to her and said, 'God forbid that an ill thing should befall thy father for thy sake!' And he told

her that her lover was the son of King Suleiman Shah and sought her to wife and that the marriage waited only for her consent; whereat she smiled and said, 'Did I not tell thee that he was a king's son? By Allah, I must let him crucify thee on a piece of wood worth two dirhems!' 'O my daughter,' answered the King, 'have mercy on me, so may God have mercy on thee!' 'Hark ye,' rejoined she, 'make haste and bring him to me without delay.' The King replied, 'On my head and eyes be it,' and returning in haste to Taj el Mulouk, repeated her words in his ear. So he arose and accompanied the King to the princess, who caught hold of him and embraced him in her father's presence and kissed him, saying, 'Thou hast made me a weary woman!' Then she turned to her father and said to him, 'Sawst thou ever any do hurt to the like of this fair creature, more by token that he is a king, the son of a king, and of the free-born, guarded against abominations?' Therewith Shehriman went out and shutting the door on them with his own hand, returned to the Vizier and the other envoys and bade them report to their King that his son was in health and gladness and enjoying all delight of life with his beloved. So they returned to King Suleiman and acquainted him with this, whereat he rejoiced and exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath brought my son to his desire!'

Meanwhile, King Shehriman despatched largesse of money and victual to King Suleiman's troops, and choosing out a hundred coursers and a hundred dromedaries and a hundred white slaves and a hundred concubines and a hundred black slaves and a hundred female slaves, sent them all to the King as a present. Then he took horse, with his grandees and chief officers, and rode out of the city in the direction of King Suleiman's camp. As soon as the latter knew of his approach, he rose and advancing some paces to meet him, took him in his arms and made

him sit down beside himself on the royal couch, where they conversed awhile frankly and cheerfully. Then food was set before them, followed by sweetmeats and fruits, and they ate till they were satisfied. Presently, they were joined by Taj el Mulouk, richly dressed and adorned, and when his father saw him, he rose and embraced him and kissed him. Then the two kings seated him between them, whilst all who were present rose to do him honour; and they sat conversing awhile, after which quoth King Suleiman to King Shehriman, 'I wish to have the contract between my son and thy daughter drawn up in the presence of witnesses, that the marriage may be made public, as of wont.' 'I hear and obey,' answered King Shehriman and summoned the Cadi and the witnesses, who came and drew up the marriage contract between the prince and princess. Then they gave largesse of money and sweetmeats and burnt perfumes and sprinkled essences. And indeed it was a day of joy and festivity, and the grandees and soldiers rejoiced therein. Then King Shehriman proceeded to equip his daughter; and Taj el Mulouk said to his father, 'Of a truth, this young man Aziz is a man of great worth and generosity and hath done me right noble service, having wearied for me and travelled with me till he brought me to my desire. Indeed, he ceased never to have patience with me and exhort me to patience, till I accomplished my intent; and he has now companied with us two whole years, cut off from his native land. So now I purpose to equip him with merchandise, that he may depart with a light heart; for his country is near at hand.' 'It is well seen,' replied his father: so they made ready a hundred loads of the richest and most costly stuffs, which Taj el Mulouk presented to Aziz, saying, 'O my brother and my true friend, take these loads and accept them from me, as a gift and token of affection, and go in peace to thine own country.' Aziz accepted the presents and kiss-

ing the earth before the prince and his father, bade them farewell. Moreover, Taj el Mulouk mounted and brought him three miles on his homeward way, after which Aziz conjured him to turn back, saying, 'By Allah, O my lord, were it not for my mother, I would never part from thee! But leave me not without news of thee.' 'So be it,' replied Taj el Mulouk. Then the prince returned to the city, and Aziz journeyed on, till he came to his native town and repairing to his mother's house, found that she had built him a monument in the midst of the courtyard and used to visit it continually. When he entered, he found her, with her hair dishevelled and spread over the tomb, weeping and repeating the following verses:

Indeed, I'm very patient 'gainst all that can betide; Yet do I lack of patience thine absence to abide.
Who is there can have patience after his friend and who Bows not the head to parting, that comes with rapid stride?

Then sobs burst up out of her breast, and she repeated these verses also:

What ails me? I pass by the graveyard, saluting the tomb of my son, And yet no greeting he gives me and answer comes there none.
"How shall I give thee an answer, who lie in the grip of the grave, The hostage of earth and corruption?" replies the beloved one.
"The dust hath eaten my beauties and I have forgotten thee, Shut in from kindred and lovers and stars and moon and sun."

Then Aziz came in to her, and when she saw him, she fell down in a swoon for joy. He sprinkled water on her, till she revived and rising, took him in her arms and strained him to her bosom, whilst he in like manner embraced her. Then they exchanged greetings, and she asked the reason of his long absence, whereupon he told her all that had befallen him from first to last and how Taj el Mulouk had given him a hundred loads of wealth and stuffs. At this she rejoiced, and Aziz abode with his mother in his native town, weeping for what had befallen

him with the daughter of Delileh the Crafty, even her who had gelded him.

Meanwhile, Taj el Mulouk went in to his beloved, the Princess Dunya, and did away her maidenhead. Then King Shehriman proceeded to equip his daughter for her journey with her husband and father-in-law and let bring them victual and gifts and rarities. So they loaded their beasts and set forth, whilst Shehriman brought them three days' journey on their way, till King Suleiman begged him to return. So he took leave of them and turned back, and Taj el Mulouk and his wife and father journeyed on, night and day, with their troops, till they drew near the capital of the Green Country. As soon as the news of their coming became known, the folk decorated the city; so they entered, and the King sitting down on his chair of estate, with his son by his side, gave alms and largesse and loosed those who were in bonds. Then he held a second bridal for his son, and the sound of the singing-women and players upon instruments of music ceased not for a whole month, during which time the tire-women stinted not to adorn the bride and display her in various dresses; and she tired not of the unveiling nor did they weary of gazing on her. Then Taj el Mulouk, after having companied awhile with his father and mother, took up his sojourn with his wife, and they abode in all delight of life and fair fortune, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights."

Night cxxxvii.

When the Vizier had made an end of the story of Taj el Mulouk and the Princess Dunya, Zoulmekan said to him, "Of a truth, it is the like of thee who lighten the mourning heart and are worthy to be the companions of kings and to guide their policy in the right way."

Meanwhile, they ceased not from the leaguer of Constantinople; and there they lay four whole years, till they yearned after their native land and the troops murmured,

being weary of siege and vigil and stress of war by night and by day. Then King Zoulmekan summoned Rustem and Behram and Terkash and bespoke them thus, "Know that all these years we have lain here and have not come by our intent and have gotten us but increase of trouble and concern; for indeed we came, thinking to take our wreak for King Omar ben Ennuman and behold, my brother Sherkan was slain; so is our sorrow grown two sorrows and our affliction two afflictions. All this came of the old woman Dhat ed Dewahi, for it was she who slew the Sultan in his kingdom and carried off his wife, the Princess Sufiyeh; nor did this suffice her, but she must put another cheat on us and slay my brother Sherkan: and indeed I have bound myself and sworn by the most solemn oaths to avenge them of her. What say ye? Ponder my words and answer me." With this, they bowed their heads and answered, "It is for the Vizier Dendan to decide." So the Vizier came forward and said, "O King of the age, it avails us nothing to tarry here, and it is my counsel that we strike camp and return to our own country, there to abide awhile and after return and fall upon the worshippers of idols." "This is a good counsel," replied the King; "for indeed the folk weary for a sight of their families, and I also am troubled with yearning after my son Kanmakan and my brother's daughter Kuzia Fekan, for she is in Damascus and I know not how it is with her." So he bade the herald call the retreat after three days, whereupon the troops rejoiced and blessed the Vizier Dendan. Then they fell to preparing for the homeward march and on the fourth day, they beat the drums and unfurled the banners and the army set forth, the Vizier in the van and the King riding in the mid-battle, with the Great Chamberlain by his side, and journeyed night and day, till they reached Baghdad. The folk rejoiced in their return, and care and hardship ceased

from them, whilst those who had stayed at home came forth to meet those who had been so long absent and each amir betook him to his own house. As for Zoulmekan, he went up to the palace and went in to his son Kanmakan, who had now reached the age of seven and used to go down [into the tilting-ground] and ride. As soon as the King was rested of his journey, he entered the bath with his son, and returning, seated himself on his chair of estate, whilst the Vizier Dendan took up his station before him and the amirs and grandees of the realm entered and stood in attendance upon him. Then he called for his comrade the stoker, who had befriended him in his strangerhood; and when he came, the King rose to do him honour and made him sit by his own side. Now he had acquainted the Vizier with all the kindness and fair service that the stoker had done him; so the Vizier and all the amirs made much of him. The stoker had waxed fat and burly with rest and good living, so that his neck was like an elephant's neck and his face like a porpoise's belly. Moreover, he was grown dull of wit, for that he had never stirred from his place; so at the first he knew not the King by his aspect. But Zoulmekan came up to him smilingly and saluted him after the friendliest fashion, saying, "How hast thou made haste to forget me!" So the stoker roused himself and looking steadfastly on Zoulmekan, knew him: whereupon he sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "O my friend, who hath made thee Sultan?" Zoulmekan laughed at him and the Vizier, coming up to him, expounded the whole story to him and said, "He was thy brother and thy friend; and now he is King of the land and needs must thou get great good of him. So I counsel thee, if he say to thee, 'Ask a boon of me,' ask not but for some great thing; for thou art very dear to him." Quoth the stoker, "I fear lest, if I ask of him aught, he may not

choose to grant it or may not be able thereto." "Have no care," answered the Vizier; "whatsoever thou askest, he will give thee." "By Allah," rejoined the stoker, "I must ask of him a thing that is in my thought! Every night I dream of it and implore God to vouchsafe it to me." "Take heart," said the Vizier. "By Allah, if thou askedst of him the government of Damascus, in the room of his brother, he would surely give it thee." With this, the stoker rose to his feet and Zoulmekan signed to him to sit; but he refused, saying, "God forfend! The days are gone by of my sitting in thy presence." "Not so," answered the Sultan; "they endure even now. Thou wast the cause that I am now alive, and by Allah, what thing soever thou askest of me, I will give it to thee! But ask thou first of God, and then of me." "O my lord," said the stoker, "I fear . . . . ." "Fear not," quoth the Sultan. "I fear," continued he, "to ask aught and that thou shouldst refuse it to me." At this the King laughed and replied, "If thou askedst of me the half of my kingdom, I would share it with thee: so ask what thou wilt and leave talking." "I fear . . . ," repeated the stoker. "Do not fear," said the King. "I fear," went on the stoker, "lest I ask a thing and thou be not able thereto." With this, the Sultan waxed wroth and said, "Ask what thou wilt." Then said the stoker, "I ask, first of God and then of thee, that thou write me a patent of mastership over all the stokers in Jerusalem." The Sultan and all who were present laughed and Zoulmekan said, "Ask somewhat other than this." "O my lord," replied the stoker, "said I not I feared thou wouldst not choose to grant me what I should ask or be not able thereto?" Therewith the Vizier nudged him once and twice and thrice, and every time he began, "I ask of thee . . ." Quoth the Sultan, "Ask and be speedy." So he said, "I beseech thee to make me captain of the scavengers in Jerusalem or Damascus." Then all those

who were present laughed, till they fell backward, and the Vizier beat him. So he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "What art thou that thou shouldst beat me? It is no fault of mine: didst thou not bid me ask some considerable thing? Let me go to my own country." With this, the Sultan knew that he was jesting and took patience with him awhile; then turned to him and said, "O my brother, ask of me some considerable thing, befitting our dignity." So the stoker said, "O King of the age, I ask first of God and then of thee, that thou make me Viceroy of Damascus in the room of thy brother." "God granteth thee this," answered the King. So the stoker kissed the ground before him, and he bade set him a chair in his rank and put on him a viceroy's habit. Then he wrote him a patent of investiture and sealing it with his own seal, said to the Vizier, "None shall go with him but thou; and when thou returnest, do thou bring with thee my brother's daughter, Kuzia Fekan." "I hear and obey," answered the Vizier and taking the stoker, went down with him and made ready for the journey. Then the King appointed the stoker servants and officers and gave him a new litter and princely equipage and said to the amirs, "Whoso loves me, let him honour this man and give him a handsome present." So they brought him every one his gift, according to his competence; and the King named him Ziblcan,[1] and conferred on him the surname of honour of El Mujahid.[2] As soon as the new Viceroy's gear was ready, he went up with the Vizier to the King, to take leave of him and ask his permission to depart. The King rose to him and embracing him, exhorted him to do justice among his subjects and deal fairly with them and bade him make ready for war against the infidels after two years. Then they took leave of each other and King Ziblcan,

[1] *Zibl* means "dung" or "sweepings." *Can* (Khan) means "chief."
[2] *i.e.* Him who fights for the Faith.

surnamed El Mujahid, set out on his journey, after the amirs had brought him slaves and servants, even to five thousand in number, who rode after him. The Grand Chamberlain also took horse, as did Behram, captain of the Medes, and Rustem, captain of the Persians, and Terkash, captain of the Arabs, and rode with him three days' journey, to do him honour and take their leaves of him. Then they returned to Baghdad and the Sultan Ziblcan and the Vizier Dendan fared on, with their company, till they drew near Damascus. Now news was come, upon the wings of birds, to the notables of Damascus that King Zoulmekan had made Sultan over Damascus a Sultan called Ziblcan el Mujahid; so when he reached the city, he found it decorated in his honour, and all the folk came out to gaze on him. He entered Damascus in great state and went up to the citadel, where he sat down upon his chair of estate, whilst the Vizier Dendan stood in attendance on him, to acquaint him with the ranks and stations of the amirs. Then the grandees came in to him and kissed hands and called down blessings on him. He received them graciously and bestowed on them gifts and dresses of honour; after which he opened the treasuries and gave largesse to the troops, great and small. Then he governed and did justice and proceeded to equip the Lady Kuzia Fekan, daughter of King Sherkan, appointing her a litter of silken stuff. Moreover, he furnished the Vizier Dendan also for the return journey and would have made him a gift of money, but he refused, saying, "Thou art near the time of the tryst with the King, and haply thou wilt have need of money, or we may send to seek of thee funds for the Holy War or what not." When the Vizier was ready, the Viceroy brought Kuzia Fekan to him and made her mount the litter, giving her ten damsels to do her service. Moreover, he mounted, to bid the Vizier farewell, and they set forward, whilst Ziblcan returned to

Damascus and busied himself in ordering the affairs of his government and making ready his harness of war, against such time as King Zoulmekan should send to him therefor. Meanwhile the Vizier and his company fared forward, by easy stages, till they came, after a month's travel, to Ruhbeh[1] and thence pushed on, till they drew near Baghdad. Then he despatched messengers, to inform King Zoulmekan of his arrival; and he, when he heard this, took horse and rode out to meet him. The Vizier would have dismounted to receive him, but the King conjured him not to do so and spurred his steed, till he came up to him. Then he questioned him of Ziblcan, whereto the Vizier replied that he was well and that he had brought with him his brother's daughter, Kuzia Fekan. At this the King rejoiced and said to Dendan, "Go thou and rest thee of the fatigue of the journey, and after three days come to me again." "With all my heart," replied the Vizier and betook himself to his own house, whilst the King went up to his palace and went in to his brother's daughter, who was then a girl of eight years old. When he saw her, he rejoiced in her and sorrowed sore for her father. Then he let make for her clothes and gave her splendid jewels and ornaments and bade lodge her with his son Kanmakan in one place. So they both grew up, the brightest and bravest of the people of their time; but Kuzia Fekan grew up possessed of good sense and understanding and knowledge of the issues of events, whilst Kanmakan grew up generous and freehanded, taking no thought to the issue of aught. Now Kuzia Fekan used to ride a-horseback and fare forth with her cousin into the open plain and range at large with him in the desert; and they both learnt to smite with swords and thrust with spears. So they grew up, till each of them attained the age of twelve, when King Zoulmekan, having completed his preparations and provisions

[1] A town on the Euphrates, on the borders of Syria and Mesopotamia.

for the Holy War, summoned the Vizier Dendan and said to him, "Know that I am minded to do a thing, which I will discover to thee, and do thou with speed return me an answer thereon." "What is that, O King of the age?" asked the Vizier. "I am resolved," said the King, "to make my son Kanmakan king and rejoice in him in my lifetime and do battle before him, till death overcome me. What deemest thou of this?" The Vizier kissed the earth before the King and replied, "O King and Sultan, lord of the age and the time, this that is in thy mind is indeed good, save that it is now no time to carry it out, for two reasons: the first, that thy son Kanmakan is yet of tender age; and the second, that it is of wont that he who makes his son king in his lifetime, lives but a little thereafterward." "Know, O Vizier," rejoined the King, "that we will make the Grand Chamberlain guardian over him, for he is art and part of us and he married my sister, so that he is to me as a brother." Quoth the Vizier, "Do what seemeth good to thee: we will obey thine orders." Then the King sent for the Grand Chamberlain and the grandees of the kingdom and said to them, "Ye know that this my son Kanmakan is the first cavalier of the age and that he hath no peer in jousting and martial exercises; and now I appoint him to be Sultan over you in my stead and I make his uncle, the Grand Chamberlain, guardian over him." "O King of the age," replied the Chamberlain, "I am but an offset of thy bounty." And the King said, "O Chamberlain, verily this my son Kanmakan and my niece Kuzia Fekan are brothers' children; so I marry them one to the other and I call those present to witness thereof." Then he made over to his son such treasures as beggar description and going in to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, told her what he had done, whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, "Verily, they are both my children. May God preserve thee to them many a year!" "O my sister,"

replied he, "I have accomplished that which was in my heart of the world and I have no fear for my son: yet it were well that thou shouldst have a watchful eye to him and to his mother." And he went on to commend to the Chamberlain and Nuzhet ez Zeman his son and niece and wife. Thus did he nights and days till he [fell sick and] deeming surely that he should drink the cup of death, took to his bed and abode thus a whole year, whilst the Chamberlain took upon himself the ordering of the people and the realm. At the end of this time, the King summoned his son Kanmakan and the Vizier Dendan and said to the former, "O my son, this Vizier shall be thy father, when I am dead; for know that I am about to leave this transitory house of life for that which is eternal. And indeed I have fulfilled my lust of this world; yet there remaineth in my heart one regret, which may God dispel at thy hands!" "What regret is that, O my father?" asked his son. "O my son," answered Zoulmekan, "it is that I die without having avenged thy grandfather Omar ben Ennuman and thine uncle Sherkan on an old woman whom they call Dhat ed Dewahi; but, so God grant thee aid, do not thou fail to take thy wreak on her and to wipe out the disgrace we have suffered at the hands of the infidels. Beware of the old woman's craft and do as the Vizier shall counsel thee; for that he from of old time hath been the pillar of our realm." And his son assented to what he said. Then the King's eyes ran over with tears and his sickness redoubled on him, nor did it leave to press sore upon him four whole years, during which time his brother-in-law the Chamberlain held sway over the country, judging and commanding and forbidding, to the contentment of the people and the nobles, and all the land prayed for him[1] what while Zoulmekan was occupied with his malady. As for Kanmakan, he had no thought but of riding and

[1] *i.e.* recognized him as king by naming him in the public prayers.

tilting with spears and shooting with arrows, and thus also did his cousin Kuzia Fekan; for they were wont to go forth at the first of the day and return at nightfall, when she would go in to her mother and he to his, to find her sitting weeping by his father's bed. Then he would tend his father till daybreak, when he would go forth again with his cousin, according to their wont. Now Zoulmekan's sufferings were long upon him and he wept and recited these verses:

My strength is past away, my tale of days is told And I, alas! am left even as thou dost behold.
In honour's day, the first amongst my folk was I, And in the race for fame the foremost and most bold.
Would that before my death I might but see my son The empery in my stead over the people hold
And rush upon his foes and take on them his wreak, At push of sword and pike, in fury uncontrolled.
Lo, I'm a man fordone, in this world and the next, Except my spright of God be solaced and consoled!

When he had made an end of repeating these verses, he laid his head on his pillow and his eyes closed and he slept. In his sleep he saw one who said to him, "Rejoice, for thy son shall fill the lands with justice and have the mastery over them and men shall obey him." Then he awoke gladdened by this happy omen that he had seen, and after a few days, death smote him, whereat great grief fell on the people of Baghdad, and gentle and simple mourned for him. But time passed over him, as if he had never been, and Kanmakan's estate was changed; for the people of Baghdad set him aside and put him and his family in a place apart. When his mother saw this, she fell into the sorriest of plights and said, "Needs must I go to the Grand Chamberlain, and I hope for the favour of the Subtle, the All-Wise One!" Then she betook herself to the house of the Chamberlain, who was now become Sultan, and found him sitting upon his couch. So she

went in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman and wept sore and said, "Verily, the dead have no friends. May God never bring you to need and may you cease not to rule justly over rich and poor many days and years! Thine ears have heard and thine eyes have seen all that was ours aforetime of kingship and honour and dignity and wealth and goodliness of life and condition; and now fortune hath turned upon us, and fate and the time have played us false and wrought hostilely with us; wherefore I come to thee, craving thy bounties, I that have been used to confer favours; for when a man dies, women and girls are brought low after him." And she repeated the following verses:

Let it suffice thee that Death is the worker of wonders and know That the lives which are gone from our sight will never return to us mo'.
The days of the life of mankind are nothing but journeys, I wot, Whose watering-places for aye are mixed with misfortune and woe.
Yet nothing afflicteth my heart like the loss of the good and the great, Whom the stresses of adverse events have compassed about and laid low.

When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she remembered her brother Zoulmekan and his son Kanmakan and making her draw near to her, said to her, "By Allah, I am now rich and thou poor, and by Allah, we did not leave to seek thee out, but that we feared to wound thy heart, lest thou shouldst deem our gifts to thee an alms. Of a truth, all the good that we now enjoy is from thee and thy husband: so our house is thy house and our place thy place, and all that we have of wealth and goods is thine." Then she clad her richly and appointed her a lodging in the palace, adjoining her own; and she and her son abode therein in all delight of life. Him also did Nuzhet ez Zeman clothe in kings' raiment and gave them handmaids to do them service. After a little, she told her husband of her brother's widow, whereat his eyes filled with tears and he said, "Wouldst thou see the world after thee, look upon the

world after another than thyself. Entertain her honourably and enrich her poverty." Night cxxxviii.

Meanwhile, Kanmakan and Kuzia Fekan grew up and flourished, like unto two fruit-laden saplings or two shining moons, till they reached the age of fifteen. As for the girl, she was indeed the fairest of the cloistered maids, with lovely face and smooth cheeks, slender waist, heavy hips and arrowy shape, lips sweeter than old wine and spittle as it were the fountain Selsebil of Paradise, even as saith the poet, describing her:

From her mouth's honeyed dew, meseems, the first-pressed wine is drawn And on her sweetest lips the grapes, from which it's crushed, are grown;
And when thou makest her to bend, its vines sway in her shape. Blessed be He who fashioned her and may not be made known!

For indeed God had united in her every attribute of beauty: her shape put to shame the willow-wand and the rose sought grace before her cheeks; the water of her mouth made mock of clear wine, and she gladdened heart and eyes, even as saith of her the poet:

Goodly and glorious she is, and perfect in every charm. Her eyelashes put to shame kohl and the users of kohl.
Even as a sword in the hand of Ali, the Vicar of God, So is the glance of her eye to a lover's heart and soul.

As for Kanmakan, he was no less accomplished in grace and excelling in perfection; there was none could match with him in beauty and qualities, and valour shone from between his liquid black eyes, testifying for him and not against him. The hardest hearts inclined to him; and when the tender down of his lips and cheeks began to sprout, many were the poems made in his honour: as for example quoth one:

Unshown was my excuse, till on his cheek the hair Grew and the darkness crept, bewildered, here and there.
A fawn, when eyes of men are fixed upon his charms, His glances straight on them a trenchant poniard bare.

And another:

His lovers' souls have woven upon his cheek, I ween, A net the blood has painted with all its ruddy sheen.
Oh, how at them I marvel! They're martyrs; yet they dwell In fire, and for their raiment, they're clad in sendal green.[1]

It chanced, one festival day, that Kuzia Fekan went out, surrounded by her handmaids, to visit certain kindred of the court; and indeed beauty encompassed her; the rose of her cheek vied with the mole thereon, her teeth flashed from her smiling lips, like the petals of the camomile flower, and she was as the resplendent moon. Her cousin Kanmakan began to turn about her and devour her with his eyes. Then he took courage and giving loose to his tongue, repeated the following verses:

When shall the mourning heart be healed of anger and disdain? When, rigour ceasing, shall the lips of union smile again?
Would God I knew if I shall lie, some night, within the arms Of a belovéd, in whose heart is somewhat of my pain!

When she heard this, she was angry and putting on a haughty air, said to him, "Hast thou a mind to shame me among the folk, that thou speakest thus of me in thy verse? By Allah, except thou leave this talk, I will assuredly complain of thee to the Grand Chamberlain, Sultan of Baghdad and Khorassan and lord of justice and equity, whereby disgrace and punishment will fall on thee!" To this Kanmakan made no reply, but returned to Baghdad: and Kuzia Fekan also returned home and complained of her cousin to her mother, who said to her, "O my daughter, belike he meant thee no ill, and is he not an orphan? Indeed, he said nought that implied reproach to thee; so look thou tell none of this, lest it come to the Sultan's ears and he cut short his life and blot out his name and make it even as yesterday, whose remembrance hath passed away." How-

[1] *i.e.* the silky whiskers, which it is common, in poetry, to call green, likening them to newly-sprouted herbage.

ever, Kanmakan's case was not hidden from the people, and his love for Kuzia Fekan became known in Baghdad, so that the women talked of it. Moreover, his heart became contracted and his patience waned and he knew not what to do. Then longed he to give vent to the anguish he endured, by reason of the pangs of separation; but he feared her anger and her rebuke: so he recited the following verses:

What though I be fearful, anon, of her wrath, Whose humour serene is grown troubled and dour,
I bear it with patience, as he who is sick Endureth a caut'ry in hopes of a cure.

His verses came one day to the knowledge of King Sasan (for so had they named the Grand Chamberlain, on his assumption of the Sultanate), as he sat on his throne, and he was told of the love the prince bore to Kuzia Fekan; whereat he was sore vexed, and going in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman, said to her, "Verily, to bring together fire and dry grass is of the greatest of risks; and men may not be trusted with women, so long as eyes cast furtive glances and eyelids quiver. Now thy nephew Kanmakan is come to man's estate and it behoves us to forbid him access to the harem; nor is it less needful that thy daughter be kept from the company of men, for the like of her should be cloistered." "Thou sayest sooth, O wise King," answered she. Next day came Kanmakan, according to his wont, and going in to his aunt, saluted her. She returned his greeting and said to him, "O my son, I have somewhat to say to thee, that I would fain leave unsaid; yet must I tell it thee, in my own despite." "Speak," said he. "Know then," rejoined she, "that thine uncle the Chamberlain, the father of Kuzia Fekan, has heard of thy love for her and the verses thou madest of her and has ordered that she be kept from thee; wherefore, if thou have occasion for aught from us, I will send it to thee from behind the door, and thou shalt

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not look upon Kuzia Fekan nor return hither from this day forth." When he heard this, he withdrew, without speaking a word, and betook himself to his mother, to whom he related what his aunt had said to him. Quoth she, "This all comes of thy much talk. Thou knowest that the news of thy passion for Kuzia Fekan is noised abroad everywhere and how thou eatest their victual and makest love to their daughter." "And who should have her but I?" replied the prince. "She is the daughter of my father's brother and I have the best of rights to her." "These are idle words," rejoined his mother. "Be silent, lest thy talk come to King Sasan's ears and it prove the cause of thy losing her and of thy ruin and increase of affliction. They have not sent us the evening meal to-night and we shall die of want; and were we in any land other than this, we were already dead of the pangs of hunger or the humiliation of begging our bread." When Kanmakan heard his mother's words, his anguish redoubled; his eyes ran over with tears and he sobbed and complained and repeated the following verses:

Give o'er this unrelenting blame, that never lets me be! My heart loves her to whom it's thrall and may not struggle free.
Look not to me for any jot of patience, for I swear By God His house, my patience all is clean divorced from me!
Blamers to prudence me exhort; I heed them not, for I In my avouchment am sincere of love and constancy.
They hinder me by very force from visiting my dear, Though, by the Merciful, nor rogue am I nor debauchee!
Indeed, my bones, whenas they hear the mention of her name, Do quake and tremble even as birds from sparrow-hawks that flee.
O daughter of my uncle, say to him who chides at love, That I, by Allah, am distraught with love-longing for thee.

And he said to his mother, "I can dwell no longer in my aunt's house nor among these people, but will go forth and abide in the corners of the city." So he and his mother left the palace and took up their abode in one of

the quarters of the poorer sort: and she used to go from time to time to King Sasan's palace and take thence food for her own and her son's subsistence. One day, Kuzia Fekan took her aside and said to her, "Alas, my aunt, how is it with thy son?" "O my daughter," replied she, "sooth to say, he is tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, being fallen into the snare of thy love." And she repeated to her the verses he had made; whereupon Kuzia Fekan wept and said, "By Allah, I rebuked not him for his words, of ill-will or dislike to him, but because I feared the malice of enemies for him. Indeed, my passion for him is double that he feels for me; words fail to set out my yearning for him; and were it not for the extravagances of his tongue and the wanderings of his wit, my father had not cut off his favours from him nor decreed unto him exclusion and prohibition. However, man's fortune is nought but change, and patience in every case is most becoming; peradventure He who ordained our severance will vouchsafe us reunion!" And she repeated the following:

O son of mine uncle, the like of thine anguish I suffer, the like of thy passion I feel;
Yet hide I from men what I suffer for longing, And shouldst thou not also thy passion conceal?

When his mother heard this, she thanked her and blessed her: then she left her and returning to her son, told him what his mistress had said; whereupon his desire for her increased. But he took heart, being eased of his despair, and the turmoil of his spirits was quelled. And he said, "By Allah, I desire none but her!" And he repeated the following verses:

Give over thy chiding; I'll hearken no whit to the flouts of my foes: Indeed I've discovered my secret that nought should have made me disclose;
And she, whose enjoyment I hoped for, alack! is far distant from me; Mine eyes watch the hours of the dark, whilst she passes the night in repose.

So the days and nights went by, whilst Kanmakan lay tossing upon coals of fire, till he reached the age of seventeen: and indeed his beauty was now come to perfection and his wit had ripened. One night, as he lay awake, he communed with himself and said, "Why should I keep silence, till I consume away, and see not my love? My only fault is poverty: so, by Allah, I will go out from this land and wander afar in the plains and valleys; for my condition in this city is one of misery and I have no friend nor lover in it to comfort me; wherefore I will distract myself by absence from my native land, till I die and am at peace from abasement and tribulation." And he repeated the following verses:

Though my soul weary for distress and flutter fast for woe, Yet of its nature was it ne'er to truckle to a foe.
Excuse me; for indeed my heart is like a book, whereof The superscription's nought but tears, that aye unceasing flow.
Behold my cousin, how she seems a maid of Paradise, A houri come, by Rizwan's grace, to visit us below!
Who seeks the glances of her eyes and dares the scathing stroke Of their bright swords, shall hardly 'scape their swift and deadly blow.
Lo, I will wander o'er the world, to free my heart from bale And compensation for its loss upon my soul bestow!
Yea, I will range the fields of war and tilt against the brave And o'er the champions will I ride roughshod and lay them low.
Then will I come back, glad at heart and rich in goods and store, Driving the herds and flocks as spoil before me, as I go.

So he went out in the darkness of the night, barefoot, wearing a short-sleeved tunic and a skull cap of felt seven years old and carrying a cake of dry bread, three days stale, and betook himself to the gate El Arij of Baghdad. Here he waited till the gate opened, when he was the first to go forth; and he went out at random and wandered in the deserts day and night. When the night came, his mother sought him, but found him not, whereupon the world, for all its wideness, was straitened upon her and she

took no delight in aught of its good. She looked for him a first day and a second and a third, till ten days were past, but no news of him reached her. Then her breast became contracted and she shrieked and lamented, saying, "O my son, O my delight, thou hast revived my sorrows! Did not what I endured suffice, but thou must depart from the place of my abiding? After thee, I care not for food nor delight in sleep, and but tears and mourning are left me. O my son, from what land shall I call thee? What country hath given thee refuge?" And her sobs burst up, and she repeated the following verses:

We know that, since you went away, by grief and pain we're tried. The bows of severance on us full many a shaft have plied.
They girt their saddles on and 'gainst the agonies of death Left me to strive alone, whilst they across the sand-wastes hied.
Deep in the darkness of the night a ring-dove called to me, Complaining of her case; but I, "Give o'er thy plaint," replied.
For, by thy life, an if her heart were full of dole, like mine, She had not put a collar on nor yet her feet had dyed.
My cherished friend is gone and I for lack of him endure All manner sorrows which with me for ever will abide.

Then she abstained from food and drink and gave herself up to weeping and lamentation. Her grief became known and all the people of the town and country wept with her and said, "Where is thine eye, O Zoulmekan?" And they bewailed the rigour of fate, saying, "What can have befallen him, that he left his native town and fled from the place where his father used to fill the hungry and do justice and mercy?" And his mother redoubled her tears and lamentations, till the news of Kanmakan's departure came to King Sasan through the chief amirs, who said to him, "Verily, he is the son of our (late) King and the grandson of King Omar ben Ennuman and we hear that he hath exiled himself from the country." When King Sasan heard these words, he was wroth with them and ordered one of them to be hanged, whereat the fear

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of him fell upon the hearts of the rest and they dared not speak one word. Then he called to mind all the kindness that Zoulmekan had done him and how he had commended his son to his care; wherefore he grieved for Kanmakan and said, "Needs must I have search made for him in all countries." So he summoned Terkash and bade him choose a hundred horse and go in quest of the prince. Accordingly he went out and was absent ten days, after which he returned and said, "I can learn no tidings of him and have come on no trace of him, nor can any tell me aught of him." With this, King Sasan repented him of that which he had done with Kanmakan; whilst his mother abode without peace or comfort, nor would patience come at her call: and thus twenty heavy days passed over her.

To return to Kanmakan. When he left Baghdad, he went forth, perplexed about his case and knowing not whither he should go: so he fared on alone into the desert for the space of three days and saw neither footman nor horseman. Sleep deserted him and his wakefulness redoubled, for he pined for his people and his country. So he wandered on, eating of the herbs of the earth and drinking of its waters and resting under its trees at the hour of the noontide heats, till he came to another road, into which he turned and following it other three days, came to a land of green fields and smiling valleys, abounding in the fruits of the earth. It had drunken of the beakers of the clouds, to the sound of the voices of the turtle and the ring-dove, till its hill-sides were enamelled with verdure and its fields were fragrant. At this sight, Kanmakan recalled his father's city Baghdad, and for excess of emotion repeated the following verses:

I wander on, in hope I may return Some day, yet know not when that day shall be.
What drove me forth was that I found no means To fend away the ills that pressed on me.

Then he wept, but presently wiped away his tears and ate of the fruits of the earth. Then he made his ablutions and prayed the ordained prayers that he had neglected all this time; after which he sat in that place, resting, the whole day. When the night came, he lay down and slept till midnight, when he awoke and heard a man's voice repeating the following verses:

Life unto me is worthless, except I see the shine Of the flashing teeth of my mistress and eke her face divine.
The bishops in the convents pray for her day and night And in the mosques the imams fall prone before her shrine.
Death's easier than the rigours of a belovéd one, Whose image never cheers me, whenas I lie and pine.
O joy of boon-companions, when they together be And lover and belovéd in one embrace entwine!
Still more so in the season of Spring, with all its flowers, What time the world is fragrant with blossoms sweet and fine.
Up, drinker of the vine-juice, and forth, for seest thou not Earth gilt with blooms and waters all welling forth like wine?

When Kanmakan heard this, it revived his sorrows; his tears ran down his cheeks like rivers and flames of fire raged in his heart. He rose to see who it was that spoke, but saw none, for the thickness of the dark; whereupon passion increased on him and he was alarmed and restlessness possessed him. So he descended to the bottom of the valley and followed the banks of the stream, till he heard one sighing heavily, and the same voice recited the following verses:

Though thou have used to dissemble the love in thy heart for fear, Give, on the day of parting, free course to sob and tear.
'Twixt me and my belovéd were vows of love and troth; So cease I for her never to long and wish her near.
My heart is full of longing; the zephyr, when it blows, To many a thought of passion stirs up my heavy cheer.
Doth she o' the anklets hold me in mind, whilst far away, Though between me and Saada were solemn vows and dear?
Shall the nights e'er unite us, the nights of dear delight, And shall we tell our suff'rings, each in the other's ear?

"Thou art seduced by passion for us," quoth she, and I, "God keep
Thy lovers all! How many have fallen to thy spear!"
If mine eyes taste the pleasance of sleep, while she's afar, May God deny
their vision her beauties many a year!
O the wound in mine entrails! I see no cure for it Save love-delight
and kisses from crimson lips and clear.

When Kanmakan heard this, yet saw no one, he knew that the speaker was a lover like unto himself, debarred the company of her whom he loved; and he said to himself, "It were fitting that this man should lay his head to mine and become my comrade in this my strangerhood." Then he hailed the speaker and cried out to him, saying, "O thou that goest in the sombre night, draw near to me and tell me thy history. Haply thou shalt find in me one who will succour thee in thine affliction." "O thou that answerest my complaint and wouldst know my history," rejoined the other, "who art thou amongst the cavaliers? Art thou a man or a genie? Answer me speedily ere thy death draw near, for these twenty days have I wandered in this desert and have seen no one nor heard any voice but thine." When Kanmakan heard this, he said to himself, "His case is like unto mine, for I also have wandered twenty days in the desert and have seen none nor heard any voice: but I will make him no answer till the day." So he was silent and the other called out to him, saying, "O thou that callest, if thou be of the Jinn, go in peace, and if thou be a man, stay awhile, till the day break and the night flee with the dark." So they abode each in his own place, reciting verses and weeping with abundant tears, till the light of day appeared and the night departed with the darkness. Then Kanmakan looked at the other and found him a youth of the Bedouin Arabs, clad in worn clothes and girt with a rusty sword, and the signs of passion were apparent on him. So he went up to him and accosting him, saluted him. The Bedouin returned the salute and greeted him courteously, but made little account

of him, for what he saw of his tender years and his condition, which was that of a poor man. So he said to him, "O youth, of what tribe art thou and to whom art thou kin among the Arabs? What is thy history and wherefore goest thou by night, after the fashion of champions? Indeed, thou spokest to me in the night words such as are spoken of none but magnanimous cavaliers and lion-hearted warriors; and now thy life is in my hand. But I have compassion on thee by reason of thy tender age; so I will make thee my companion, and thou shalt go with me, to do me service." When Kanmakan heard him speak thus unseemly, after what he had shown him of skill in verse, he knew that he despised him and thought to presume with him; so he answered him with soft and dulcet speech, saying, "O chief of the Arabs, leave my tenderness of age and tell me thy story and why thou wanderest by night in the desert, reciting verses. Thou talkest of my serving thee; who then art thou and what moved thee to speak thus?" "Hark ye, boy!" answered the Bedouin, "I am Subbah, son of Remmah ben Hummam. My people are of the Arabs of Syria, and I have a cousin called Nejmeh, who brings delight to all that look on her. My father died, and I was brought up in the house of my uncle, the father of Nejmeh; but when I grew up and my cousin became a woman, they excluded her from me and me from her, seeing that I was poor and of little estate. However, the chiefs of the Arabs and the heads of the tribes went in to her father and rebuked him, and he was abashed before them and consented to give me his daughter, but upon condition that I should bring him as her dower fifty head of horses and fifty dromedaries and fifty camels laden with wheat and a like number laden with barley, together with ten male and ten female slaves. The dowry he imposed upon me was beyond my competence; for he exacted more than the due marriage

portion. So now I am travelling from Syria to Irak, having passed twenty days without seeing other than thyself, and I mean to go to Baghdad, that I may note what rich and considerable merchants start thence. Then I will go out in their track and seize their goods, for I will kill their men and drive off their camels with their loads. But what manner of man art thou?" "Thy case is like unto mine," replied Kanmakan; "save that my complaint is more grievous than thine; for my cousin is a king's daughter, and the dowry of which thou hast spoken would not content her family, nor would they be satisfied with the like of that from me." "Surely," said Subbah, "thou art mad or light-headed for excess of passion! How can thy cousin be a king's daughter? Thou hast no sign of princely rank on thee, for thou art but a mendicant." "O chief of the Arabs," rejoined Kanmakan, "marvel not at my case, for it is due to the shifts of fortune; and if thou desire proof of me, behold, I am Kanmakan, son of King Zoulmekan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and Khorassan, and fortune hath played the tyrant with me; for my father died and (my uncle) King Sasan took the Sultanate. So I fled forth from Baghdad, secretly, lest any should see me, and have wandered twenty days, without seeing any but thyself. So now I have discovered to thee my case, and my history is as thy history and my need as thy need." When Subbah heard this, he cried out and said, "O joy! I have attained my desire! I will have no booty this day but thyself; for, since thou art of the lineage of kings and hast come out in the habit of a beggar, it cannot be but thy people will seek thee, and if they find thee in any one's hand, they will ransom thee with much treasure. So put thy hands behind thee, O my lad, and walk before me." "Softly, O brother of the Arabs," answered Kanmakan; "my people will not ransom me with silver nor with gold, no, not with

a brass dirhem; and I am a poor man, having with me neither much nor little: so leave this behaviour with me and take me to comrade. Let us go forth of the land of Irak and wander over the world, so haply we may win dower and marriage-portion and enjoy our cousins' embraces." When Subbah heard this, he was angry; his arrogance and heat redoubled and he said, "Out on thee, O vilest of dogs! Dost thou bandy words with me? Turn thy back, or I will chastise thee." At this Kanmakan smiled and answered, "Why should I turn my back for thee? Is there no equity in thee? Dost thou not fear to bring reproach upon the Arabs by driving a man like myself captive, in dishonour and humiliation, before thou hast proved him in the field, to know if he be a warrior or a coward?" The Bedouin laughed and replied, "By Allah, I wonder at thee! Thou art a boy in years, but old in talk. These words should come from none but a doughty champion: what wantest thou of equity?" "If thou wilt have me be thy captive, to serve thee," said Kanmakan, "throw down thine arms and put off thine upper clothes and wrestle with me; and whichever of us throws the other shall have his will of him and make him his servant." The other laughed and said, "I think thy much talk denotes the nearness of thy death." Then he threw down his sword and tucking up his skirt, drew near unto Kanmakan, and they gripped each other. But the Bedouin found that Kanmakan had the better of him and out-weighed him, as the quintal outweighs the dinar; and he looked at his legs and saw that they were as firmly planted as two well-builded minarets or two tent-poles driven into the ground or two immoveable mountains. So he knew that he himself was not able to cope with him and repented of having come to wrestle with him, saying in himself, "Would I had fallen on him with my weapons!" Then Kanmakan took hold of him and mastering him,

shook him, till he thought his guts would burst in his belly and roared out, "Hold thy hand, O boy!" He heeded him not, but shook him again, and lifting him from the ground, made with him towards the stream, that he might throw him therein: whereupon the Bedouin cried out, saying, "O valiant man, what wilt thou do with me?" Quoth Kanmakan, "I mean to throw thee into this stream: it will carry thee to the Tigris. The Tigris will bring thee to the river Isa and the Isa to the Euphrates, and the Euphrates will bear thee to thine own country; so thy people will see thee and know thy manlihead and the sincerity of thy passion." When Subbah heard this, he cried out and said, "O champion of the desert, do not with me the deed of the wicked, but let me go, by the life of thy cousin, the jewel of the fair!" With this, Kanmakan set him down; and when he found himself at liberty, he ran to his sword and buckler and taking them up, stood plotting in himself treachery and a sudden attack on Kanmakan. The latter read his intent in his eye and said to him, "I know what is in thy mind, now thou hast hold of thy sword and buckler. Thou hast neither strength nor skill for wrestling, but thou thinkest that, wert thou on horseback and couldst wheel about and ply me with thy sword, I had been slain long ago. But I will give thee thy will, so there may be no despite left in thy heart. Give me the buckler and fall on me with thy sword; either I shall kill thee or thou me." "Here it is," answered Subbah and throwing him the shield, drew his sword and rushed at him. Kanmakan took the buckler in his right hand and began to fend himself with it, whilst Subbah struck at him with the sword, saying at each stroke, "This is the finishing one!" But Kanmakan received all his blows on his buckler and they fell harmless, though he did not strike back again, having no weapon of offence; and Subbah ceased not to smite at him, till his arm was

weary. When the prince saw this, he rushed at him and seizing him in his arms, shook him and threw him to the ground. Then he turned him over on his face and binding his arms behind him with the hangers of his sword, began to drag him by the feet towards the river: whereupon cried Subbah, "What wilt thou do with me, O youth and cavalier of the age and hero of the field?" "Did I not tell thee," answered Kanmakan, "that it was my intent to send thee by the river to thy people and thy tribe, lest their hearts be troubled for thee and thou miss thy cousin's bride-feast?" At this, Subbah shrieked aloud and wept and said, "Do not thus, O champion of the time! Let me go and make me one of thy servants." And he wept and wailed and recited the following verses:

An outcast from my folk (how long my exile lasts!) am I. Would God I knew if I in this my strangerhood shall die!
I perish, and my folk know not the place where I am slain; I fall in exile, far away from her for whom I sigh.

Kanmakan had compassion on him and said to him, "Make a covenant with me and swear to be a true comrade to me and to bear me company whithersoever I may go." "It is well," replied Subbah and took the required oath. So Kanmakan loosed him, and he rose and would have kissed the prince's hand; but he forbade him. Then the Bedouin opened his wallet and taking out three barley-cakes, laid them before Kanmakan, and they both sat down on the bank of the stream to eat. When they had done eating, they made the ablution and prayed, after which they sat talking of what had befallen each of them from his people and the shifts of fortune. Then said Kanmakan, "Whither dost thou now intend? "I purpose," replied Subbah, "to repair to Baghdad, thy native town, and abide there, till God vouchsafe me the marriage-portion." "Up then," rejoined the other, "and to the road! I abide here." So the Bedouin took leave of him

and set out for Baghdad, whilst Kanmakan remained behind, saying to himself, "O my soul, how shall I return poor and needy? By Allah, I will not go back empty-handed, and if God please, I will assuredly work my deliverance!" Then he went to the stream and made his ablutions and prayed to his Lord, laying his brow in the dust and saying, "O my God, Thou that makest the dew to fall and feedest the worm in the rock, vouchsafe me, I beseech Thee, my livelihood, of Thy power and the graciousness of Thy compassion!" Then he pronounced the salutation that closes prayer and sat, turning right and left and knowing not which way to take. Presently, he saw, making towards him, a horseman whose back was bowed and who let the reins droop. He sat still and after a while the horseman came up to him, when, behold, he was at the last gasp and made sure of death, for he was grievously wounded. The tears streamed down his cheeks, like water from the mouths of skins, and he said to Kanmakan, "O chief of the Arabs, take me to friend, whilst I live, for thou wilt not find my like, and give me a little water, harmful though the drinking of water be to a wounded man, especially whilst the blood is flowing and the life with it. If I live, I will give thee what shall heal thy distress and thy poverty: and if I die, mayst thou be blessed for thy good intent!" Now this horseman had under him a stallion of the most generous breed, with legs like shafts of marble, the tongue fails to describe it; and when Kanmakan looked at it, he was seized with longing admiration and said in himself, "Verily, the like of this stallion is not to be found in our time." Then he helped the rider to alight and entreated him friendly and gave him a little water to drink; after which he waited till he was rested and said to him, "Who has dealt thus with thee?" "I will tell thee the truth of the case," answered the wounded man. "I am a horse-thief and all my life I have

occupied myself with stealing and snatching horses, night and day, and my name is Ghessan, surnamed the plague of all stables and horses. I heard tell of this stallion, that he was with King Afridoun in the land of the Greeks, where they had named him El Catoul and surnamed him El Mejnoun. So I journeyed to Constantinople on his account, and whilst I was watching my opportunity to get at him, there came out an old woman, much considered among the Greeks and whose word is law with them, a past mistress in all manner of trickery, by name Shewahi Dhat ed Dewahi. She had with her this stallion and ten slaves, no more, to attend on her and it, and was bound for Baghdad, there to sue for peace and pardon from King Sasan. So I went out in their track, thinking to get the horse, and ceased not to follow them, but was unable to get at the stallion, by reason of the strict guard kept by the slaves, till they reached this country and I feared lest they should enter the city of Baghdad. As I was casting about to steal the horse, behold, a great cloud of dust arose and covered the prospect. Presently it opened and disclosed fifty horsemen, banded together to waylay merchants and led by a captain by name Kehrdash, like a raging lion, yea, in battle a lion that lays heroes flat even as a carpet. They bore down on the old woman and her company, shouting and surrounding them, nor was it long before they bound her and the ten slaves and made off with their captives and the horse, rejoicing. When I saw this, I said to myself, 'My toil is wasted and I have not attained my desire.' However, I waited to see how the affair would result, and when the old woman found herself a captive, she wept and said to Kehrdash, 'O doughty champion and invincible warrior, what wilt thou do with an old woman and slaves, now thou hast thy will of the horse?' And she beguiled him with soft words and promises that she would send him horses and cattle, till

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he released her and her slaves. Then he went his way, he and his comrades, and I followed them to this country, watching my opportunity, till at last I succeeded in stealing the horse, whereupon I mounted him and drawing a whip from my wallet, struck him with it. When the robbers heard this, they came out on me and surrounded me on all sides and shot arrows and cast spears at me, whilst I stuck fast on the horse's back and he defended me with his hoofs, till at last he shot out with me from amongst them, like an arrow from the bow or a shooting star, after I had gotten a grievous wound in the press of the battle. Since that time, I have passed three days in the saddle, without tasting food or sleep, so that my strength is wasted and the world is become of no account to me. But thou hast dealt kindly with me and hast had pity on me: and I see thee naked of body and sorrowful of aspect; yet are the marks of gentle breeding manifest on thee. So tell me, what and whence art thou and whither art thou bound?" "My name is Kanmakan," answered the prince, "son of King Zoulmekan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman. My father died, and a base man seized the throne after his death and became king over great and small." Then he told him all his story from first to last; and the thief said to him, (and indeed he had compassion on him), "By Allah, thou art a man of great account and exceeding nobility and thou shalt surely win to high estate and become the first cavalier of thy time! If thou canst lift me into the saddle and mount behind me and bring me to my country, thou shalt have honour in this world and a reward on the Day of calling of men one to another;[1] for I have no strength left to hold myself in the saddle; and if I die by the way, the steed is thine; for thou art worthier of it than any other." "By Allah," said Kanmakan, "if I could carry thee on my shoulders or share my

[1] *i.e.* the Day of Judgment.

life with thee, I would do so, without the horse! For I am of those that love to do good and succour the afflicted. So make ready to set out and put thy trust in the Subtle, the All-Wise." And he would have lifted him on to the horse and set forward, trusting in God the Succourable. But the robber said, "Wait for me a little." Then he closed his eyes and opening his hands, said, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God! O Glorious One, pardon me my mortal sin, for none can pardon mortal sins save Thou!" And he made ready for death and recited the following verses:

I've ranged through all countries, oppressing mankind, And in drinking of wine I have wasted my days.
I've waded through torrents, the horses to steal And I've used with my guile the high places to raze.
My case is right grievous and great is my guilt, And Catoul, alas! is the end of my ways.
I hoped of this horse I should get my desire; But vain was my journey and vain my essays.
All my life I have stolen the steeds, and my death Was decreed of the Lord of all power and all praise.
So, in fine, for the good of the stranger, the poor, The orphan, I've wearied in toils and affrays.

When he had finished, he closed his eyes and opened his mouth; then giving one sob, he departed this life. Kanmakan rose and dug a grave and laid him in the earth. Then he went up to the stallion and kissed it and wiped its face and rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "None has the like of this horse, no, not even King Sasan." So much for Kanmakan.

Meanwhile, news came to King Sasan that the Vizier Dendan and half the army had thrown off their allegiance to him and sworn that they would have no king but Kanmakan and the Vizier had bound the troops by a solemn covenant and had gone with them to the islands of India and Ethiopia, where he had gathered together a host like

the swollen sea, none could tell its van from its rear. Moreover, he was resolved to make for Baghdad and possess himself of the kingdom and slay all who should let him, having sworn not to return the sword of war to its sheath, till he had set Kanmakan on the throne. When this news came to Sasan, he was drowned in the sea of melancholy, knowing that the whole state had turned against him, great and small, and trouble and anxiety were sore on him. So he opened his treasuries and distributed that which was therein among his officers and prayed for Kanmakan's return, that he might draw his heart to him with fair usage and bounty and make him commander of those troops that remained faithful to him, hoping thus to prop his [failing] power. The news of this reached Kanmakan by the merchants; so he returned in haste to Baghdad, riding on the aforesaid stallion, and the news of his coming reached King Sasan, as he sat perplexed upon his throne; whereupon he despatched all the troops and head-men of Baghdad to meet him. So all who were in Baghdad went out to meet the Prince and escorted him to the palace and kissed the threshold, whilst the damsels and eunuchs went in to his mother and gave her the good tidings of his return. She came to him and kissed him between the eyes, but he said to her, "O my mother, let me go to my uncle King Sasan, who hath overwhelmed us with favours and benefits." Then he repaired to the palace, whilst all the people marvelled at the beauty of the stallion and said, "No king is like unto this man." So he went in to King Sasan, who rose to receive him; and Kanmakan saluted him and kissing his hands, offered him the horse as a present. The King bade him welcome, saying, "Welcome and fair welcome to my son Kanmakan! By Allah, the world hath been straitened on me by reason of thine absence, but praised be God for thy safety!" And Kanmakan called down blessings on

him. Then the King looked at the stallion and knowing it for the very horse, Catoul by name, that he had seen in such and such a year, whilst at the leaguer of Constantinople with King Zoulmekan, said to Kanmakan, "If thy father could have come by this horse, he would have bought him with a thousand chargers of price: but now let the honour return to thee who deservest it. We accept the steed and return it to thee as a gift, for thou hast more right to it than any man alive, being the prince of cavaliers." Then he bade bring forth for him dresses of honour and led horses and appointed him the chief lodging in the palace, giving him much money and showing him the utmost honour, for that he feared the issue of the Vizier Dendan's doings. At this Kanmakan rejoiced and despondency and humiliation ceased from him. Then he went to his house and said to his mother, "O my mother, how is it with my cousin?" "By Allah, O my son," answered she, "my concern for thine absence hath distracted me from any other, even to thy beloved; especially as she was the cause of thine exile and separation from me." Then he complained to her of his sufferings, saying, "O my mother, go to her and speak with her; haply she will favour me with a sight of her and dispel my anguish." "O my son," replied his mother, "idle desires abase the necks of men; so put away from thee this thought that will but lead to vexation; for I will not go to her nor carry her such a message." Thereupon he told her what he had heard from the horse-thief concerning Dhat ed Dewahi, how she was then in their land, on her way to Baghdad, and added, "It was she who slew my uncle and grandfather, and needs must I avenge them and wipe out our reproach." Then he left her and repaired to an old woman, by name Saadaneh, a cunning, perfidious and pernicious beldam, past mistress in all kinds of trickery and deceit. To her he complained of what he suffered for love

of his cousin Kuzia Fekan and begged her to go to her and implore her favour for him. "I hear and obey," answered the old woman and betaking herself to Kuzia Fekan's palace, interceded with her in his favour. Then she returned to him and said, "Thy cousin salutes thee and will visit thee this night at the middle hour." At this he rejoiced and sat down to await the fulfilment of his cousin's promise. At the appointed hour she came to him, wrapped in a veil of black silk, and aroused him from sleep, saying, "How canst thou pretend to love me, when thou art sleeping, heart-free, after the goodliest fashion?" So he awoke and said, "O desire of my heart, by Allah, I slept not but hoping that thine image might visit me in dreams!" Then she chid him tenderly and repeated the following verses:

Night cxlii.

Wert thou indeed a lover true and leal, Thou hadst not suffered slumber on thee creep.
O thou who feign'st to walk the ways of love, The watch of passion and desire to keep,
Son of my uncle, sure the eyes of those Who're love-distraught know not the taste of sleep.

When he heard his cousin's words, he was abashed before her and rose and excused himself. Then they embraced and complained to each other of the anguish of separation; and thus they did, till the dawn broke and the day flowered forth over the lands; when she rose to depart. At this, Kanmakan wept and sighed and repeated the following verses:

She came to me, after her pride had driven me to despair, She in whose lips the teeth as the pearls of her necklace were.
I kissed her a thousand times and clipped her close in my arms And lay all night with my cheek pressed close to the cheek of the fair;
Till the day, that must sever our loves, as 'twere the blade of a sword That flashes forth of its sheath, gleamed out on us unaware.

Then she took leave of him and returned to her palace.

Now she let certain of her damsels into her secret, and one of them told the King, who went in to Kuzia Fekan and drawing his sabre upon her, would have slain her: but her mother Nuzhet ez Zeman entered and said to him, "By Allah, do her no hurt, lest it be noised among the folk and thou become a reproach among the kings of the age! Thou knowest that Kanmakan is no base-born wretch, but a man of honour and nobility, who would not do aught that could shame him, and she was reared with him. So take patience and be not hasty; for verily the report is spread abroad, among the people of the palace and all the folk of the city, how the Vizier Dendan hath levied troops from all countries and is on his way hither to make Kanmakan king." "By Allah," said the King, "needs must I cast him into a calamity, such that neither earth shall bear him nor sky shadow him! I did but speak him fair and entreat him with favour, because of my subjects and officers, lest they should turn to him; but thou shalt see what will betide." Then he left her and went out to order the affairs of the kingdom.

Next day, Kanmakan came in to his mother and said to her, "O my mother, I am resolved to go forth a-raiding in quest of booty. I will way-lay caravans and seize horses and flocks and slaves black and white, and as soon as my store is waxed great and my case is bettered, I will demand my cousin Kuzia Fekan in marriage of my uncle." "O my son," replied she, "of a truth the goods of men are not as a wastril camel, ready to thy hand; but between thee and them are sword-strokes and lance-thrusts and men that eat wild beasts and lay waste countries and snare lions and trap lynxes." Quoth he, "God forbid that I should turn from my purpose, till I have attained my desire!" Then he despatched the old woman to Kuzia Fekan, to tell her that he was about to set out in quest of a dowry befitting her, saying, "Thou must without fail

bring me an answer from her." "I hear and obey," replied the old woman and going forth, presently returned with Kuzia Fekan's answer, which was that she would come to him at midnight. So he abode awake till one half of the night was past, when disquietude got hold on him, and before he was aware, she came in to him, saying, "My life be thy ransom from wakefulness!" And he sprang up to receive her, exclaiming, "O desire of my heart, my life be thy ransom from all things evil!" Then he acquainted her with his intent, and she wept; but he said, "Weep not, O my cousin; for I beseech Him who decreed our separation to vouchsafe us reunion and felicity." Then Kanmakan went in to his mother and took leave of her, after which he girt on his sword and donned turban and chin-band and mounting his horse Catoul, rode through the streets of Baghdad, till he reached the gate of the city. Here he found his comrade Subbah ben Remmah going out, who, seeing him, ran to his stirrup and saluted him. He returned his greeting, and Subbah said to him, "O my brother, how camest thou by this steed and sword and clothes, whilst I up to now have gotten nothing but my sword and target?" Quoth Kanmakan, "The hunter returns not but with game after the measure of his intent. A little after thy departure, fortune came to me: so now wilt thou go with me and work thine intent in my company and journey with me in this desert?" "By the Lord of the Kaabeh," replied Subbah, "from this time forth I will call thee nought but 'My lord!'" Then he ran on before the horse with his sword hanging from his neck and his budget between his shoulder-blades, and they pushed on into the desert four days' space, eating of the gazelles they caught and drinking of the water of the springs. On the fifth day, they came in sight of a high hill, at whose foot was a Spring encampment and a running stream. The knolls and hollows were filled with

camels and oxen and sheep and horses, and little children played about the cattle-folds. When Kanmakan saw this, he was right glad and his breast was filled with joy; so he addressed himself to battle, that he might take the camels and the cattle, and said to Subbah, "Come, let us fall upon this good, whose owners have left it unguarded, and do battle for it with near and far, so haply it may fall to our lot and we will share it between us." "O my lord," replied Subbah, "verily they to whom these herds belong are much people, and among them are doughty horsemen and footmen. If we cast ourselves into this great danger, neither of us will return to his people; but we shall both be cut off utterly and leave our cousins desolate." When Kanmakan heard this, he laughed and knew that he was a coward: so he left him and rode down the hill, intent on rapine, shouting and chanting aloud the following verses:

O the house of En Numan is mickle of might! We're the champions with swords on the squadrons that smite!
When the fury of battle flames high in our hearts, We're aye to be found in the front of the fight.
The poor man amongst us may slumber secure Nor see the foul favour of want or unright.
I hope for the succour of Him in whose hand Is the Kingdom, the Maker of body and spright.

Then he rushed upon the cattle, like a camel in heat, and drove them all, oxen and sheep and horses and camels, before him. Therewith the slaves ran at him with their bright swords and their long lances; and at their head was a Turkish horseman, a stout champion, doughty in battle and onset and skilled to wield the tawny spear and the white sabre. He drove at Kanmakan, saying, "Out on thee! Knewest thou to whom these cattle belong, thou hadst not done this thing! Know that they are the good of the Greek band, the champions of the sea and the Circassian troop, and they are a hundred cavaliers, all

stern warriors, who have forsworn the commandment of all kings. There has been stolen from them a steed of great price, and they have vowed not to return hence, but with it." When Kanmakan heard these words, he cried out, saying, "O losels, this that I bestride is the steed itself, after which ye seek and for whose sake ye would do battle with me! So come out against me, all of you at once, and do your dourest!" So saying, he cried out between Catoul's ears and he ran at them, as he were a ghoul. Then Kanmakan drove at the Turk and smote him and overthrew him and let out his life; after which he turned upon a second and a third and a fourth and bereft them also of life. When the slaves saw this, they were afraid of him, and he cried out and said to them, "Ho, sons of whores, drive out the cattle and the horses, or I will dye my spear in your blood!" So they untethered the cattle and began to drive them out, and Subbah came down to Kanmakan, crying out with a loud voice and rejoicing greatly; when, behold, there arose a cloud of dust and grew, till it covered the prospect, and there appeared under it a hundred cavaliers, like fierce lions. With this Subbah fled up on to the hill, that he might gaze upon the fight in safety, saying, "I am no warrior but in sport and jest." Then the hundred cavaliers made towards Kanmakan from all sides, and one of them accosted him, saying, "Whither goest thou with this good?" "I have made prize of them," replied he, "and am carrying them away; and I forbid you from them, for know that he who is before you is a terrible lion and an illustrious champion and a sword that cuts wherever it turns!" When the horseman heard this, he looked at Kanmakan and saw that he was a cavalier as he were a strong lion, whilst his face was as the full moon rising on its fourteenth night, and valour shone from between his eyes. Now this horseman was the chief of the hundred horse, and his name was

Kehrdash; and what he saw in Kanmakan of the perfection of martial grace, together with surpassing beauty and comeliness, reminded him of a mistress of his, by name Fatin. Now this Fatin was one of the fairest of women in face, for God had given her beauty and grace and charms and noble qualities of all kinds, such as the tongue fails to describe. Moreover, the cavaliers of the tribe feared her prowess and the champions of the land stood in awe of her, and she had sworn that she would not marry nor give any possession of her, except he should conquer her, saying to her father, "None shall approach me, except he master me in the field and the stead of war." Kehrdash was one of her suitors, and when the news reached him of the vow she had taken, he thought scorn to fight with a girl, fearing reproach; and one of his friends said to him, "Thou art accomplished in beauty and manly qualities; so if thou contend with her, even though she be stronger than thou, thou must needs overcome her; for when she sees thy beauty and grace, she will be discomfited before thee, seeing that women by nature incline unto men, as is not unknown to thee." Nevertheless he refused and would not contend with her, albeit indeed she loved him, for what she had heard of his beauty and valour: and he ceased not to abstain from her thus, till he met with Kanmakan, as hath been set down. Now he took the prince for his beloved Fatin and was afraid; so he went up to him and said, "Out on thee, O Fatin! Thou comest to show me thy prowess; but now alight from thy steed, that I may talk with thee, for I have driven off these cattle and waylaid horsemen and champions, all for the sake of thy beauty and grace, which are without peer. So now thou shalt marry me, that kings' daughters may wait on thee, and thou shalt become queen of these countries." When Kanmakan heard this, the fires of wrath flamed up in him and he cried out, saying, "Out on thee, O dog of

the barbarians! Leave thy raving of Fatin and come to cutting and thrusting, for eftsoon thou shalt lie in the dust." So saying, he began to wheel about him and offer battle. Then Kehrdash observed him more closely and saw that he was indeed a doughty knight and a stalwart champion; and the error of his thought was manifest to him, whenas he saw the tender down that adorned his cheeks, as it were myrtles springing from the heart of a red rose. And he feared his onslaught and said to those that were with him, "Out on you! Let one of you attack him and show him the keen sword and the quivering spear; for know that for a company to do battle with one man is foul shame, even though he be a doughty man of war and an invincible champion." With this, there ran at Kanmakan a lion-like horseman, mounted on a black horse with white feet and a star on his forehead, the bigness of a dirhem, astounding sight and wit, as he were Abjer, that was Antar's steed: even as saith of him the poet:

See, where the stallion yonder comes, that with a fierce delight Drives to the battle, mingling earth with heaven in his might.
Meseems, the morning smote his brow and to avenge himself Thereon, he plunges straight and deep into its heart of light.

He rushed upon Kanmakan, who met him in mid-career, and they wheeled about awhile in the dint of battle, exchanging blows such as confound the wit and dim the sight, till Kanmakan took the other at vantage and smote him a swashing blow, that shore through turban and iron skull-cap and reached his head, and he fell from his saddle, as a camel falls, when he rolls over. Then a second came out to him and a third and a fourth and a fifth, and he did with them all as he had done with the first. Thereupon the rest rushed upon him, all at once, for indeed they were wild with rage and concern; but it was not long before he had transfixed them all with the point of his lance. When

Kehrdash saw his feats of arms, he knew that he was stout of heart and concluded that he was the phœnix of the champions and heroes of the age: so he feared death and said to Kanmakan, "I give thee thy life and pardon thee the blood of my comrades, for I have compassion on thee by reason of thy fair youth. So take what thou wilt of the cattle and go thy ways, for life is better for thee [than death]." "Thou lackest not of the generosity of the noble,"[1] replied Kanmakan; "but leave this talk and flee for thy life and reck not of blame nor think to get back the booty; but take the straight path for thine own safety." When Kehrdash heard this, he waxed exceeding wroth and his anger moved him to that which was the cause of his death; so he said to Kanmakan, "Out on thee! Knewest thou who I am, thou wouldst not talk thus in the open field. I am the doughty lion known as Kehrdash, he who despoils great kings and waylays all the travellers and seizes the merchants' goods. Yonder steed under thee is what I am seeking and I call upon thee to tell me how thou camest by it." "Know," replied Kanmakan, "that this steed was being carried to my uncle King Sasan in the company of a certain old woman, attended by ten slaves, when thou fellest upon her and tookest the horse from her; and I have a debt of blood against this old woman for the sake of my grandfather King Omar ben Ennuman and my uncle King Sherkan." "Out on thee!" said Kehrdash. "Who is thy father, O thou that hast no (known) mother?" "Know," answered the prince, "that I am Kanmakan, son of Zoulmekan, son of Omar ben Ennuman." Quoth Kehrdash, "Thy perfection cannot be denied, nor yet the union in thee of martial virtue and comeliness: but go in peace, for thy father showed us favour and bounty." "By Allah, O vile wretch," rejoined Kanmakan, "I will not so far honour thee as to overcome

[1] Ironical.

thee in the open field!" At this the Bedouin was wroth and they drove at one another, shouting aloud, whilst their horses pricked up their ears and raised their tails. They clashed together with such a dint, that it seemed to each as if the heavens were split in sunder, and strove like two butting rams, smiting one another with thick-coming spear-strokes. Presently, Kehrdash aimed a blow at Kanmakan; but he evaded it and turning upon the brigand, smote him in the breast, that the head of the spear issued from his back. Then he collected the horses and cattle and cried out to the slaves, saying, "Up and drive them off briskly!" With this down came Subbah and accosting Kanmakan, said to him, "Thou hast quitted thee right well, O hero of the age! I prayed God for thee and He heard my prayer." Then he cut off Kehrdash's head and Kanmakan laughed and said, "Out on thee, Subbah! I thought thee a man of valour." Quoth the Bedouin, "Forget not thy slave in the division of the spoil, so haply I may win therewith to marry my cousin Nejmeh." "Thou shalt surely have a share in it," answered Kanmakan; "but now keep watch over the booty and the slaves." Then they set out and journeyed night and day till they drew near Baghdad, and all the troops heard of Kanmakan and saw the booty and the brigand's head on the point of Subbah's spear. Moreover, the merchants knew Kehrdash's head and rejoiced, for he was a noted highwayman, saying, "Allah hath rid mankind of him!" And they marvelled at his death and called down blessings on his slayer. Then all the people of Baghdad came to Kanmakan, seeking to know what had befallen him, and he told them what had passed, whereupon they were taken with awe of him and all the champions and men of war feared him. After this, he drove his spoil to the palace and planting the spear, on which was Kehrdash's head, before the gate, gave largesse to the people of camels and horses,

so that they loved him and all hearts inclined to him. Then he took Subbah and lodged him in a spacious dwelling, giving him part of the booty; after which he went in to his mother and told her all that had befallen him. Meanwhile the news of him reached the King, who rose and shutting himself up with his chief officers, said to them, "I wish to reveal to you my secret and acquaint you with the truth of my case. Know that Kanmakan will be the cause of our expulsion from the kingdom; for he has slain Kehrdash, albeit he had with him the tribes of the Turks and the Kurds, and our affair with him will assuredly result in our destruction, seeing that the most part of our troops are his kinsmen and ye know what the Vizier Dendan hath done; how he refuses to recognize me, after all the favours I have done him, and is become a traitor to his faith. Indeed, it has come to my knowledge that he hath levied an army in the provinces and goeth about to make Kanmakan king, for that the kingdom was his father's and his grandfather's before him, and he will surely slay me without mercy." When they heard this, they replied, "O King, verily he[1] is unequal to this, and did we not know him to have been reared by thee, not one of us would take thought to him. We are at thy commandment; if thou wilt have us slay him, we will do so, and if thou wilt have him kept at a distance, we will chase him away." When King Sasan heard this, he said, "Verily, it were wise to slay him: but needs must ye take an oath of it." So they all pledged themselves to kill him, to the intent that, when the Vizier Dendan came and heard of his death, his might should be weakened and fail of that which he designed to do. When they had made this compact with him, the King bestowed great gifts upon them and dismissing them, retired to his own apartments. Now the troops refused their service, awaiting what should

[1] *i.e.* Kanmakan.

befall, for they saw that the most part of the army was with the Vizier Dendan. Presently, the news of these things came to Kuzia Fekan and caused her much concern; so that she sent for the old woman, who was wont to carry messages between her and her cousin, and bade her go to him and warn him of the plot against his life. Accordingly, she repaired to Kanmakan and gave him the princess's message, to which he replied, "Bear my cousin my salutation and say to her, 'The earth is God's (to whom belong might and majesty), and He maketh whom He willeth of His servants to inherit it. How excellent is the saying of the poet:

The kingship is God's alone, and him who would fain fulfil His wishes
He driveth away and maketh him rue for his ill.
Had I or another than I a handsbreadth of earth to my own, The Godship
were sundered in twain and two were the Power and the Will.'"

The old woman returned to Kuzia Fekan with Kanmakan's reply and told her that he abode in the city. Meanwhile, King Sasan awaited his going forth from Baghdad, that he might send after him and kill him; till, one day, it befell that Kanmakan went out to hunt, accompanied by Subbah, who would not leave him day or night. He caught ten gazelles and among them one that had soft black eyes and turned right and left: so he let her go, and Subbah said to him, "Why didst thou let her go?" Kanmakan laughed and set the others free also, saying, "It behoves us, of humanity, to release gazelles that have young, and this one only turned from side to side, to look for her young ones: so I let her go and released the others in her honour." Quoth Subbah, "Do thou release me, that I may go to my people." At this Kanmakan laughed and smote him on the breast with the butt of his spear, and he fell to the ground, writhing like a serpent. Whilst they were thus occupied, they saw a cloud of dust and heard the tramp of horse; and presently

there appeared a troop of armed cavaliers. Now King Sasan had heard of Kanmakan's going out and sending for an Amir of the Medes, called Jami, and twenty men, had given them money and bidden them slay Kanmakan. So, when they drew near the prince, they rushed at him and he met them in mid-career and killed them all, to the last man. Meanwhile the King took horse and riding out to meet his men, found them all slain, whereat he wondered and turned back; but the people of the city laid hands on him and bound him straitly. As for Kanmakan, he left that place behind him and rode onward with Subbah. As he went, he saw a youth sitting at the door of a house in his road and saluted him. The youth returned his greeting and going into the house, brought out two platters, one full of milk and the other of brewis swimming in (clarified) butter, which he set before Kanmakan, saying, "Favour me by eating of my victual." But he refused and the young man said to him, "What ails thee, O man, that thou wilt not eat?" "I have a vow upon me," replied the prince. "What is the cause of thy vow?" asked the youth, and Kanmakan answered, "Know that King Sasan seized upon my kingdom wrongfully and oppressively, albeit it was my father's and my grandfather's before me; yet he laid hands upon the throne by force, after my father's death, and took no count of me, for that I was of tender years. So I have bound myself by a vow to eat no man's victual, till I have eased my heart of my enemy." "Rejoice," rejoined the youth; "for God hath fulfilled thy vow. Know that he is in prison and methinks he will soon die." "In what house is he imprisoned?" asked Kanmakan. "In yonder high pavilion," answered the other. The prince looked and saw the folk entering and buffeting Sasan, who was suffering the agonies of death. So he went up to the pavilion and noted what was therein; after which he returned to his place and

sitting down to meat, ate what sufficed him and put the rest in his budget. Then he waited till it was dark night and the youth, whose guest he was, slept; when he rose and repaired to the pavilion in which Sasan was confined. Now about it were dogs, guarding it, and one of them ran at him; so he took out of his wallet a piece of meat and threw it to him. He ceased not to do thus, till he came to the pavilion and making his way to the place where Sasan was, laid his hand upon his head; whereupon he said in a loud voice, "Who art thou?" "I am Kanmakan," replied the prince, "whom thou wentest about to kill; but God made thee fall into the evil thyself hadst devised. Did it not suffice thee to take my kingdom and that of my father, but thou must go about to kill me?" And Sasan swore a vain oath that he had not plotted his death and that the report was untrue. So Kanmakan forgave him and said to him, "Follow me." Quoth he, "I cannot walk a single step for weakness." "If the case be thus," replied Kanmakan, "we will get us two horses and ride forth and seek the open country." So they took horse and rode till daybreak, when they prayed the morning-prayer and fared on till they came to a garden, where they sat down and talked awhile. Then Kanmakan rose and said to Sasan, "Is there aught of bitterness left in thy heart against me?" "No, by Allah!" replied Sasan. So they agreed to return to Baghdad and Subbah the Bedouin said, "I will go on before you, to give the folk notice of your coming." Then he rode on in advance, acquainting men and women with the news; so all the people came out to meet Kanmakan with tabrets and flutes; and Kuzia Fekan also came out, like the full moon shining in all her splendour in the thick darkness of the night. Kanmakan met her, and their hearts yearned each to each and their bodies longed one for the other. There was no talk among the people of the time but of Kanmakan; for the cavaliers

bore witness of him that he was the most valiant of the folk of the age and said, "It is not just that other than he should be King over us; but the throne of his grandfather shall revert to him as it was." Meanwhile King Sasan went in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman, who said to him, "I hear that the folk talk of nothing but Kanmakan and attribute to him such qualities as beggar description." "Hearing is not like seeing," replied the King; "I have seen him, but have noted in him not one of the attributes of perfection. Not all that is heard is said; but the folk ape one another in extolling and cherishing him, and God makes his praise to run on the lips of men, so that there incline to him the hearts of the people of Baghdad and of the perfidious traitor the Vizier Dendan, who has levied troops from all countries and arrogates to himself the right of naming a king of the country and chooses that it shall be under the hand of a worthless orphan." "What then dost thou purpose to do?" asked Nuzhet ez Zeman. "I mean to kill him," replied the King, "that the Vizier may be baulked of his intent and return to his allegiance to me, seeing nothing for it but my service." Quoth she, "Perfidy is a foul thing with strangers, and how much more with kinsfolk? Thou wouldst do better to marry him to thy daughter Kuzia Fekan and give heed to what was said of old time:

If Fate set over thee a man, though thou than he Be worthier and this be grievous unto thee,
Yield him the honour due to his estate; thou'lt find He will advantage thee, though near or far thou be.
Speak not thy thought of him; else wilt thou be of those Who of their own accord the way of weal do flee.
Many in the harem oft are brighter than the bride; But time is on her side, and opportunity."

When Sasan heard this, he rose in anger and said to her, "Were it not that to kill thee would bring disgrace

and reproach on me, I would take off thy head with my sword and make an end of thee." Quoth she, "I did but jest with thee." And rose and kissed his head and hands, saying, "Thou art right, and we will cast about for some means to kill him." When he heard this, he was glad and said, "Make haste and contrive some device to relieve me of my affliction; for I am at my wit's end." Said she, "I will make shift to do away his life for thee." "How so?" asked he; and she answered, "By means of our female slave Bakoun." Now this Bakoun was past mistress in all kinds of knavery and was one of the most pernicious of old women, in whose religion it was not lawful to abstain from wickedness; she had brought up Kanmakan and Kuzia Fekan, and the former had her in so great affection, that he was wont to sleep at her feet. So when King Sasan heard his wife name her, he said, "This is a good counsel," and sending for the old woman, told her what had passed and bade go about to kill Kanmakan, promising her all good. "O my lord," replied she, "thy commandment shall be done: but I would have thee give me a dagger that has been tempered in water of death,[1] that I may despatch him the quicklier for thee." "So be it," said Sasan and gave her a knife that would well-nigh forego destiny. Now this woman had heard stories and verses and committed to memory great store of witty traits and anecdotes: so she took the dagger and went out, considering how she should compass Kanmakan's destruction. Then she repaired to the prince, whom she found sitting awaiting [the coming of a messenger with] his cousin's tryst; so that night his thought was taken up with Kuzia Fekan and the fires of love for her raged in his heart. Bakoun went in to him, saying, "The time of union is at hand and the days of separation are over and gone." When he heard this, he said, "How is it with Kuzia

[1] Meaning, apparently, poisoned.

Fekan?" And she answered, "Know that she is distraught for love of thee." At this he rose and taking off his [upper] clothes, put them on her and promised her all good. Then said she, "Know that I mean to pass this night with thee, that I may repeat to thee what talk I have heard and divert thee with tales of many a slave of love, whom passion hath made sick." Quoth he, "Tell me a story, that will gladden my heart and dispel my cares." "With all my heart," answered she and sitting down beside him, with the dagger under her clothes, began thus, "The pleasantest thing I ever heard was as follows:

BAKOUN'S STORY OF THE HASHISH-EATER.

A certain man loved the fair and spent his substance on them, till he became a beggar and used to go about the streets and markets, seeking his bread. One day, as he went along, a splinter of iron pierced his finger and made it bleed; so he sat down and wiping away the blood, bound up his finger. Then he went on, crying out, till he came to a bath, and entering found it clean (and empty). So he took off his clothes and sitting down by the basin, fell to pouring water on his head, till he was tired, when he went out to the room in which was the tank of cold water. Finding none there, he shut himself up [in a cabinet] and taking out a piece of hashish, swallowed it. The fumes of the drug spread through his brain and he rolled over on to the marble floor. Then the hashish made it appear to him as if a great lord were kneading him and as if two slaves stood at his head, one bearing a bowl and the other washing gear and all the requisites of the bath. When he saw this, he said to himself, 'Meseems these are mistaken in me; or else they are of the company of us hashish-eaters.' Then he stretched out his legs and it seemed to him that the bathman said to

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him, 'O my lord, the time of thy going forth draws near and it is to-day thy turn of service (at the palace).' At this he laughed and said, 'As God wills, O hashish!' Then he sat and said nothing, whilst the bathman took him by the hand and raising him up, girt his middle with a waist-cloth of black silk, after which the two slaves followed him, with the bowls and implements, till they brought him into a cabinet, wherein they set perfumes burning. He found the place full of various kinds of fruits and sweet-scented flowers, and they cut him a melon and seated him on a stool of ebony, whilst the bathman stood to wash him and the slaves poured water on him; after which they rubbed him down well and said, 'O our lord the Vizier, may the bath profit thee and mayst thou come to delight everlasting!' Then they went out and shut the door on him; and he took up the waistcloth and laughed till he well-nigh lost his senses. He gave not over laughing for some time and saying to himself, 'What ails them to bespeak me as if I were a Vizier and style me "Master" and "our lord"? Surely they are dreaming now; but presently they will know me and say, "This fellow is a beggar," and take their fill of cuffing me on the nape of the neck.' Presently, he felt hot and opened the door, whereupon it seemed to him that a little white slave and an eunuch entered, carrying a parcel. The slave opened the parcel and brought out three kerchiefs of silk, one of which he threw over his head, a second over his shoulders, and a third he tied round his waist. Moreover, the eunuch gave him a pair of bath-clogs, and he put them on; after which in came eunuchs and slaves and supported him, laughing the while, to the outer hall, which he found hung and spread with magnificent furniture, such as beseems none but kings; and the pages hastened up to him and seated him on the divan. Then they fell to kneading him, till sleep overcame him and he

dreamt that he had a girl in his arms. So he kissed her and set her between his thighs; then, clipping her as a man clips a woman, took his yard in his hand and was about to have at her, when he heard one saying to him, 'Awake, thou good-for-nought! The hour of noon is come and thou art still asleep.' He opened his eyes and found himself lying on the marge of the cold-water tank, with a crowd of people about him, laughing at him; for the napkin was fallen from his middle and discovered his yard in point. So he knew that all this was but an imbroglio of dreams and an illusion of hashish and was vexed and said to him who had aroused him, 'Would thou hadst waited till I had put it in!' Then said the folk, 'Art thou not ashamed, O hashish-eater, and thou lying asleep and naked, with thy yard on end?' And they cuffed him, till the nape of his neck was red. Now he was starving, yet had he tasted the savour of delight in sleep."

When Kanmakan heard this story, he laughed till he fell backward and said to Bakoun, "O my nurse, this is indeed a rare story; I never heard its like. Hast thou any more?" "Yes," answered she and went on to tell him diverting stories and laughable anecdotes, till sleep overcame him. Then she sat by him till the most part of the night was past, when she said to herself, "It is time to profit by the occasion." So she unsheathed the dagger and drawing near to Kanmakan, was about to slaughter him, when, behold, in came his mother. When Bakoun saw her, she rose to meet her, and fear got hold on her and she fell a-trembling, as if she had the ague. The prince's mother marvelled to see her thus and aroused her son, who awoke and found her sitting at his head. Now the reason of her coming was that Kuzia Fekan heard of the plot to kill Kanmakan and said to his mother, "O wife of my uncle, go to thy son, ere that wicked bag-

gage Bakoun kill him." And she told her what had passed, from beginning to end. So she rose at once and stayed not for aught, till she came to her son's lodgings, just as Bakoun was about to slay him. When he awoke, he said to his mother, "O my mother, indeed thou comest at a good time, for my nurse Bakoun has been with me this night." Then he turned to Bakoun and said to her, "My life on thee, knowest thou any story better than those thou hast told me?" "What I have told thee," answered she, "is nothing to what I will tell thee; but that must be for another time." Then she rose to go, hardly believing that she should escape with her life, for she perceived of her cunning that his mother knew what was toward; and he said, "Go in peace." So she went her way, and his mother said to him, "O my son, blessed be this night, wherein God the Most High hath delivered thee from this accursed woman!" "How so?" asked he, and she told him the whole story. "O my mother," said he, "whoso is fated to live finds no slayer; nor, though he be slain, will he die; but now it were wise that we depart from amongst these enemies and let God do what He will." So, as soon as it was day, he left the city and joined the Vizier Dendan, and certain things befell between King Sasan and Nuzhet ez Zeman, which caused her also to leave the city and join herself to Kanmakan and Dendan, as did likewise such of the King's officers as inclined to their party. Then they took counsel together what they should do and agreed to make an expedition into the land of the Greeks and take their revenge for the death of King Omar ben Ennuman and his son Sherkan. So they set out with this intent and after adventures which it were tedious to set out, but the drift of which will appear from what follows, they fell into the hands of Rumzan, King of the Greeks. Next morning, King Rumzan caused Dendan and Kanmakan and their company to be brought before him

and seating them at his side, bade spread the tables of food. So they ate and drank and took heart of grace, after having made sure of death, for that, when they were summoned to the King's presence, they said to one another, "He has not sent for us but to put us to death." Then said the King, "I have had a dream, which I related to the monks and they said, 'None can expound it to thee but the Vizier Dendan.'" "And what didst thou see in thy dream, O king of the age?" asked Dendan. "I dreamt," answered the King, "that I was in a pit, as it were a black well, where meseemed folk were tormenting me; and I would have risen, but fell on my feet and could not get out of the pit. Then I turned and saw on the ground a girdle of gold and put out my hand to take it; but when I raised it from the ground, I saw it was two girdles. So I girt my middle with them, and behold, they became one girdle; and this, O Vizier, is my dream and what I saw in sleep." "O our lord the Sultan," said Dendan, "this thy dream denotes that thou hast a brother or a brother's son or an uncle's son or other near kinsman of thy flesh and blood [of whom thou knowest not]." When the King heard this, he looked at Kanmakan and Dendan and Nuzhet ez Zeman and Kuzia Fekan and the rest of the captives and said in himself, "If I cut off these people's heads, their troops will lose heart for the loss of their chiefs and I shall be able to return speedily to my realm, lest the kingdom pass out of my hands." So he called the headsman and bade him strike off Kanmakan's head, when behold, up came Rumzan's nurse and said to him, "O august King, what wilt thou do?" Quoth he, "I mean to put these captives to death and throw their heads among their troops; after which I will fall upon them, I and all my men, and kill all we may and put the rest to the rout; so will this be the end of the war and I shall return speedily to my kingdom, ere aught befall among my subjects."

When the nurse heard this, she came up to him and said in the Frank tongue, "How canst thou slay thine own brother's son and thy sister and thy sister's daughter?" When he heard this, he was exceeding angry and said to her, "O accursed woman, didst thou not tell me that my mother was murdered and that my father died by poison? Didst thou not give me a jewel and say to me, 'This jewel was thy father's'? Why didst thou not tell me the truth?" "All that I told thee is true," replied she: "but thy case and my own are wonderful and thine and my history extraordinary. My name is Merjaneh and thy mother's name was Abrizeh. She was gifted with such beauty and grace and valour that proverbs were made of her, and her prowess was renowned among men of war. Thy father was King Omar ben Ennuman, Lord of Baghdad and Khorassan. He sent his son Sherkan on an expedition, in company with this very Vizier Dendan; and Sherkan thy brother separated himself from the troops and fell in with thy mother Queen Abrizeh, in a privy garden of her palace, whither we had resorted to wrestle, she and I and her other damsels. He came on us by chance and wrestled with thy mother, who overcame him by the splendour of her beauty and her valour. Then she entertained him five days in her palace, till the news of this came to her father, by the old woman Shewahi, surnamed Dhat ed Dewahi, whereupon she embraced Islam at Sherkan's hands and he carried her by stealth to Baghdad, and with her myself and Rihaneh and other twenty damsels. When we came to thy father's presence, he fell in love with thy mother and going in to her one night, foregathered with her, and she became with child by him of thee. Now thy mother had three jewels, which she gave to thy father, and he gave one of them to his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman, another to thy brother Zoulmekan and the third to thy brother Sherkan. This last thy mother took from Sherkan, and I

kept it for thee. When the time of the princess's delivery drew near, she yearned after her own people and discovered her secret to me; so I went privily to a black slave called Ghezban and telling him our case, bribed him to go with us. Accordingly, he took us and fled forth the city with us by stealth towards the land of the Greeks, till we came to a desert place on the borders of our own country. Here the pangs of labour came upon thy mother, and the slave, being moved by lust, sought of her a shameful thing; whereat she cried out loudly and was sore affrighted at him. In the excess of her alarm, she gave birth to thee at once, and at this moment there arose, in the direction of our country, a cloud of dust which spread till it covered the plain. At this sight, the slave feared for his life; so, in his rage, he smote Queen Abrizeh with his sword and slew her, then, mounting his horse, went his way. Presently, the dust lifted and discovered thy grandfather, King Herdoub, who, seeing thy mother his daughter dead on the ground, was sorely troubled and questioned me of the manner of her death and why she had left her father's kingdom. So I told him all that had happened, first and last; and this is the cause of the feud between the people of the land of the Greeks and the people of Baghdad. Then we took up thy dead mother and buried her; and I took thee and reared thee, and hung this jewel about thy neck. But, when thou camest to man's estate, I dared not acquaint thee with the truth of the matter, lest it should stir up a war of revenge between you. Moreover, thy grandfather had enjoined me to secrecy, and I could not gainsay the commandment of thy mother's father, Herdoub, King of the Greeks. This, then, is why I forbore to tell thee that thy father was King Omar ben Ennuman; but, when thou camest to the throne, I told thee [what thou knowest]; and the rest I could not reveal to thee till this moment. So now, O king of the age, I have discovered

to thee my secret and have acquainted thee with all that I know of the matter; and thou knowest best what is in thy mind." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard what the King's nurse said, she cried out, saying, "This King Rumzan is my brother by my father King Omar ben Ennuman, and his mother was the Princess Abrizeh, daughter of Herdoub, King of the Greeks; and I know this damsel Merjaneh right well." With this, trouble and perplexity got hold upon Rumzan and he caused Nuzhet ez Zeman to be brought up to him forthright. When he looked upon her, blood drew to blood and he questioned her of his history. So she told him all she knew, and her story tallied with that of his nurse; whereupon he was assured that he was indeed of the people of Irak and that King Omar ben Ennuman was his father. So he caused his sister to be unbound, and she came up to him and kissed his hands, whilst her eyes ran over with tears. He wept also to see her weeping, and brotherly love entered into him and his heart yearned to his brother's son Kanmakan. So he sprang to his feet and taking the sword from the headsman's hands, bade bring the captives up to him. At this, they made sure of death; but he cut their bonds with the sword and said to Merjaneh, "Explain the matter to them, even as thou hast explained it to me." "O King," replied she, "know that this old man is the Vizier Dendan and he is the best of witnesses to my story, seeing that he knows the truth of the case." Then she turned to the captives and repeated the whole story to them and to the princes of the Greeks and the Franks who were present with them, and they all confirmed her words. When she had finished, chancing to look at Kanmakan, she saw on his neck the fellow jewel to that which she had hung round King Rumzan's neck, whereupon she gave such a cry, that the whole palace rang again, and said to the King, "Know, O my son, that now my certainty is

still more assured, for the jewel that is about the neck of yonder captive is the fellow to that I hung to thy neck, and this is indeed thy brother's son Kanmakan." Then she turned to Kanmakan and said to him, "O King of the age, let me see that jewel." So he took it from his neck and gave it to her. Then she asked Nuzhet ez Zeman of the third jewel and she gave it to her, whereupon she delivered the two to King Rumzan, and the truth of the matter was made manifest to him and he was assured that he was indeed Prince Kanmakan's uncle and that his father was King Omar ben Ennuman. So he rose at once and going up to the Vizier Dendan, embraced him; then he embraced Prince Kanmakan, and they cried aloud for very gladness. The joyful news was blazed abroad and they beat the drums and cymbals, whilst the flutes sounded and the people held high festival. The army of Irak and Syria heard the clamour of rejoicing among the Greeks; so they mounted, all of them, and King Ziblcan also took horse, saying in himself, "What can be the cause of this clamour and rejoicing in the army of the Franks?" Then the Muslim troops made ready for fight and advancing into the field, drew out in battle array. Presently, King Rumzan turned and seeing the army deployed in battalia, enquired the reason and was told the state of the case; so he bade Kuzia Fekan return at once to the Muslim troops and acquaint them with the accord that had betided and how it was come to light that he was Kanmakan's uncle. So she set out, putting away from her sorrows and troubles, and stayed not till she came to King Ziblcan, whom she found tearful-eyed, fearing for the captive chiefs and princes. She saluted him and told him all that had passed, whereat the Muslims' grief was turned to gladness. Then he and all his officers took horse and followed the princess to the pavilion of King Rumzan, whom they found sitting with his nephew, Prince Kanma-

kan. Now they had taken counsel with the Vizier Dendan concerning King Ziblcan and had agreed to commit to his charge the city of Damascus of Syria and leave him king over it as before, whilst themselves entered Irak. Accordingly, they confirmed him in the vice-royalty of Damascus and bade him set out at once for his government; so he departed with his troops and they rode with him a part of the way, to bid him farewell. Then they returned and gave orders for departure, whereupon the two armies united and King Rumzan and his nephew set out, surrounded by their nobles and grandees. And indeed Kanmakan rejoiced in his uncle King Rumzan and called down blessings on the nurse Merjaneh, who had made them known to each other; but the two Kings said to one another, "Our hearts will never be at rest nor our wrath appeased, till we have taken our wreak of the old woman Shewahi, surnamed Dhat ed Dewahi, and wiped out the blot upon our honour." So they fared on till they drew near Baghdad, and Sasan, hearing of their approach, came out to meet them and kissed the hand of the King of the Greeks, who bestowed on him a dress of honour. Then King Rumzan sat down on the throne and seated his nephew at his side, who said to him, "O my uncle, this kingdom befits none but thee." "God forbid," replied Rumzan, "that I should supplant thee in thy kingdom!" So the Vizier Dendan counselled them to share the throne between them, ruling each one day in turn, and they agreed to this. Then they made feasts and offered sacrifices and held high festival, whilst King Kanmakan spent his nights with his cousin Kuzia Fekan; and they abode thus awhile.

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One day, as the two kings sat, rejoicing in the happy ending of their troubles, they saw a cloud of dust arise and up came a merchant, who ran to them, shrieking and crying out for succour. "O kings of the age," said he,

"how comes it that I was in safety in the country of the infidels and am plundered in your realm, what though it be a land of peace and justice?" King Rumzan questioned him of his case, and he replied, "I am a merchant, who have been nigh a score of years absent from my native land, travelling in far countries; and I have a patent of exemption from Damascus, which the late Viceroy King Sherkan wrote me, for that I had made him gift of a slave-girl. Now I was returning to Irak, having with me a hundred loads of rarities of Ind; but, as I drew near Baghdad, the seat of your sovereignty and the abiding place of your peace and your justice, there came out upon me Bedouins and Kurds banded together from all parts, who slew my men and robbed me of all my goods. This is what hath befallen me." Then he wept and bemoaned himself before the two Kings, who took compassion on him and swore that they would sally out upon the thieves. So they set out with a hundred horse, each reckoned worth thousands of men, and the merchant went before them, to guide them in the right way. They fared on all that day and the following night till daybreak, when they came to a valley abounding in streams and trees. Here they found the bandits dispersed about the valley, having divided the treasure between them; but there was yet some of it left. So they fell upon them and surrounded them on all sides, nor was it long before they made prize of them all, to the number of near three hundred horsemen, banded together of the scourings of the Arabs. They bound them all, and taking what they could find of the merchant's goods, returned to Baghdad, where the two Kings sat down upon one throne and passing the prisoners in review before them, questioned them of their condition and their chiefs. So they pointed out to them three men and said, "These are our only chiefs, and it was they who gathered us together from all parts and countries." The Kings bade

lay hands on these three and set the rest free, after taking from them all the goods in their possession and giving them to the merchant, who examined them and found that a fourth of his stock was missing. The two Kings engaged to make good his loss, whereupon he pulled out two letters, one in the handwriting of Sherkan and the other in that of Nuzhet ez Zeman; for this was the very merchant who had bought Nuzhet ez Zeman of the Bedouin, as hath been before set forth. Kanmakan examined the letters and recognized the handwriting of his uncle Sherkan and his aunt Nuzhet ez Zeman; then (for that he knew the latter's history) he went in to her with that which she had written and told her the merchant's story. She knew her own handwriting and recognizing the merchant, despatched to him guest-gifts (of victual and what not) and commended him to her brother and nephew, who ordered him gifts of money and slaves and servants to wait on him, besides which the princess sent him a hundred thousand dirhems in money and fifty loads of merchandise, together with other rich presents. Then she sent for him and made herself known to him, whereat he rejoiced greatly and kissed her hands, giving her joy of her safety and union with her brother and thanking her for her bounty: and he said to her, "By Allah, a good deed is not lost upon thee!" Then she withdrew to her own apartment and the merchant sojourned with them three days, after which he took leave of them and set out to return to Damascus. After this, the two Kings sent for the three robber-chiefs and questioned them of their condition, whereupon one of them came forward and said, "Know that I am a Bedouin, who use to lie in wait, by the way, to steal children and virgin girls and sell them to merchants; and this I did for many a year until these latter days, when Satan incited me to join these two gallows-birds in gathering together all the riff-raff of the Arabs

and other peoples, that we might waylay merchants and plunder caravans." Said the two Kings, "Tell us the rarest of the adventures that have befallen thee in kidnapping children and girls." "O kings of the age," replied he, "the strangest thing that ever happened to me was as follows. Two-and-twenty years ago, being at Jerusalem, I saw a girl come out of the khan, who was possessed of beauty and grace, albeit she was but a servant and was clad in worn clothes, with a piece of camel-cloth on her head; so I entrapped her by guile and setting her on a camel, made off with her into the desert, thinking to carry her to my own people and there set her to pasture the camels and collect their dung (for fuel); but she wept so sore, that after beating her soundly, I carried her to Damascus, where a merchant saw her and being astounded at her beauty and accomplishments, bid me more and more for her, till at last I sold her to him for a hundred thousand dinars. I heard after that he clothed her handsomely and presented her to the Viceroy of Damascus, who gave him for her her price thrice told; and this, by my life, was but little for such a damsel! This, O kings of the age, is the strangest thing that ever befell me." The two Kings wondered at his story; but, when Nuzhet ez Zeman heard it, the light in her face became darkness, and she cried out and said to her brother, "Sure, this is the very Bedouin who kidnapped me in Jerusalem!" And she told them all that she had endured from him in her strangerhood of hardship and blows and hunger and humiliation, adding, "And now it is lawful to me to slay him." So saying, she seized a sword and made at him; but he cried out and said, "O kings of the age, let her not kill me, till I have told you the rare adventures that have betided me." And Kanmakan said to her, "O my aunt, let him tell his story, and after do with him as thou wilt." So she held

her hand and the Kings said to him, "Now let us hear thy story." "O kings of the age," said he, "if I tell you a rare story, will you pardon me?" "Yes," answered they. Then said the Bedouin, "Know that

HEMMAD THE BEDOUIN'S STORY.

Awhile ago, I was sore wakeful one night and thought the dawn would never break: so, as soon as it was day, I rose and girding on my sword, mounted my steed and set my lance in rest. Then I rode out to hunt, and as I went along, a company of men accosted me and asked me whither I went. I told them, and they said, 'We will bear thee company.' So we all fared on together, and presently we saw an ostrich and gave chase; but it evaded us and spreading its wings, fled before us and drew us on after it, till it brought us to a desert, wherein there was neither grass nor water, nor was aught to be heard there save the hissing of serpents, the wailing of Jinn and the howling of ghouls. Here we lost sight of the ostrich, nor could we tell whether it had flown up into the sky or sunk into the ground. Then we turned our horses' heads and thought to go back; but found that our return would be toilsome and dangerous at that time of exceeding heat; for the heat was grievous to us, so that we were sore athirst and our horses stood still. So we made sure of death; but as we were in this case, we espied a spacious meadow afar off, wherein were gazelles frisking. There was a tent pitched and by the tent-side a horse tethered and a spear stuck in the earth, whose head glittered in the sun. When we saw this, our hearts revived, after we had despaired, and we turned our horses' heads towards the meadow and rode on, till we came to a spring, where we alighted and drank and watered our beasts. Then I was seized with a frenzy of curiosity and went up to the door

of the tent, where I saw a young man like the new moon, without hair on his cheeks, and on his right hand a slender damsel, as she were a willow wand. No sooner did I set eyes on the girl, than love of her got hold upon my heart and I saluted the young man, who returned my greeting. Then said I to him, 'O brother of the Arabs, tell me who thou art and what is this damsel to thee?' With this, he bent down his head awhile, then raised it and replied, 'Tell me first who thou art and what are these horsemen with thee.' 'I am Hemmad, son of El Fezari,' answered I, 'the renowned cavalier, who is reckoned as five hundred horse among the Arabs. We went forth this morning to hunt and were overcome by thirst; so I came to the door of this tent, thinking to get of thee a draught of water.' When he heard this, he turned to the fair maiden and said to her, 'Bring this man water and what there is of food.' So she went in, trailing her skirts, whilst her feet stumbled in her long hair and the golden bangles tinkled on her ankles, and returned after a little, bearing in her right hand a silver vessel of cold water and in her left a bowl full of milk and dates and flesh of wild cattle. But, of the excess of my passion for her, I could take of her nor meat nor drink, and I recited to her the following verses, applying them to her:

The dye of the henna upon her hand doth show, As 'twere a raven new lighted on fresh-fall'n snow;
And see the full moon and the sun beside her face, This dim and the other fearful for shame and woe.

Then, after I had eaten and drunk, I said to the youth, 'O chief of the Arabs, I have told thee truly who and what I am, and now I would fain have thee do the like by me and tell me the truth of thy case.' 'As for this damsel,' replied he, 'she is my sister.' Quoth I, 'It is my desire that thou give her to me to wife of free will: else will I slay thee and take her by force.' With this, he bowed his

head awhile, then raised his eyes to me and answered, 'Thou sayest sooth in avouching thyself a renowned cavalier and a famous champion and the lion of the desert; but if ye all attack me treacherously and slay me and take my sister by force, it will be a stain upon your honour. If ye be, as thou sayest, cavaliers that are counted among the champions and fear not the shock of battle, give me time to don my armour and gird on my sword and set my lance in rest and mount my horse. Then will we go forth into the field and fight; and if I conquer you, I will kill you, every man of you; and if you overcome me and slay me, this damsel my sister is thine.' 'This is but just,' answered I, 'and we oppose it not.' Then I turned my horse's head, mad for love of the damsel, and rode back to my companions, to whom I set forth her beauty and grace, as also the comeliness of the young man and his valour and strength of soul and how he avouched himself a match for a thousand horse. Moreover, I described to them the tent and all the riches and rarities it contained and said to them, 'Be sure that this youth would not have taken up his abode alone in this desert place, were he not a man of great prowess: so I propose that whoso slays him shall take his sister.' And they agreed to this. Then we armed ourselves and mounting, rode to the tent, where we found the young man armed and mounted; but his sister ran up to him, with her veil drenched with tears, and laying hold of his stirrup, cried out, saying, 'Alas!' and 'Woe worth the day!' in her fear for her brother, and recited the following verses:

To God above I make my moan of sorrow and affright. Mayhap, the empyrean's Lord will smite them with dismay.
They fain would kill thee, brother mine, with malice aforethought, Though never cause of anger was nor fault forewent the fray.
Yet for a champion art thou known among the men of war, The doughtiest knight that East or West goes camping by the way.

Thou wilt thy sister's honour guard, whose might is small, for thou Her brother art and she for thee unto the Lord doth pray.
Let not the foe possess my soul nor seize on me perforce And work their cruel will on me, without my yea or nay.
By God His truth, I'll never live in any land where thou Art not, albeit all the goods of plenty it display!
But I will slay myself for love and yearning for thy sake And in the darksome tomb I'll make my bed upon the clay.

When he heard her words, he wept sore and turning his horse's head towards her, made answer with the following verses:

Stand by and see the wondrous deeds that I will do this day, Whenas we meet and I on them rain blows in the mellay.
E'en though the lion of the war, the captain of the host, The stoutest champion of them all, spur out into the fray,
I'll deal a Thaalebiyan[1] blow at him and in his heart I'll let my spear, even to the shaft, its thirst for blood allay.
If I defend thee not from all that seek thee, sister mine, May I be slaughtered and my corse given to the birds a prey!
Ay, I will battle for thy sake, with all the might I may, And books shall story after me the marvels of this day.

Then said he, 'O my sister, give ear to what I shall enjoin on thee.' And she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Quoth he, 'If I fall, let none possess thee;' and she buffeted her face and said, 'God forbid, O my brother, that I should see thee laid low and yield myself to thine enemies!' With this he put out his hand to her and drew aside her veil, whereupon her face shone forth, like the sun from out clouds. Then he kissed her between the eyes and bade her farewell; after which he turned to us and said, 'Ho, cavaliers! Come ye as guests or are you minded to cut and thrust? If ye come as guests, rejoice in hospitality; and if ye covet the shining moon,[2] come out against me, one by one, and fight.' Then came out

[1] *i.e.* with a blow worthy of the members of the family of Thaalebeh to which (see *post* p. 368) he belonged. [2] *i.e.* his sister.

to him a sturdy horseman, and the young man said to him, 'Tell me thy name and thy father's name, for I have sworn to fight with none whose name and whose father's name tally with mine and my father's, and if it be thus with thee, I will give thee up the girl.' 'My name is Bilal,[1] answered the other; and the young man repeated the following verses:

Thou liest when thou talkest of "benefits"; for lo, Thou comest with mischief and malice and woe!
So, an thou be doughty, heed well what I say; I'm he who the braves in the battle lays low
With a keen-cutting sword, like the horn of the moon; So look (and beware) for a hill-shaking blow!

Then they ran at one another, and the youth smote his adversary in the breast, that the lance-head issued from his back. With this, another came out, and the youth repeated the following verses:

O dog, that art noisome of stench and of sight, What is there of worth that to come by is light?
'Tis only the lion, of race and of might Right noble, recks little of life in the fight.

Nor was it long before he left him also drowned in his blood and cried out, 'Who will come out to me?' So a third horseman pricked out, reciting the following verses:

I come to thee, with a fire in my breast that blazes free, And call on my comrades all to the fight to follow me.
Though thou hast slain the chiefs of the Arabs, yet, perdie, Thou shalt not 'scape this day from those that follow thee!

When the youth heard this, he answered him, saying:

Thou com'st, like a right evil fiend that thou art, With a lie on thy lips and a fraud at thy heart;
This day shalt thou taste of a death-dealing dart And a spear that shall rid thee of life with its smart.

Then he smote him on the breast, that the spear-point

[1] *i.e.* benefits.

issued from his back, and cried out, saying, 'Will another come out?' So a fourth came out and the youth asked him his name. He replied, 'My name is Hilal.'[1] And the youth repeated these verses:

Thou err'st, that wouldst plunge in my sea of affray And thinkest to daunt me with lies and dismay.
Lo, I, to whose chant thou hast hearkened this day, Thy soul, ere thou know'st it, will ravish away!

Then they drove at one another and exchanged blows; but the youth's stroke forewent that of his adversary and slew him: and thus he went on to kill all who sallied out against him. When I saw my comrades slain, I said in myself, 'If I fight with him, I shall not be able to withstand him, and if I flee, I shall become a byword among the Arabs.' However, the youth gave me no time to think, but ran at me and laying hold of me, dragged me from my saddle. I swooned away and he raised his sword to cut off my head; but I clung to his skirts and he lifted me in his hand, as I were a sparrow [in the clutches of a hawk]. When the maiden saw this, she rejoiced in her brother's prowess and coming up to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he delivered me to her, saying, 'Take him and entreat him well, for he is come under our rule.' So she took hold of the collars of my coat-of-arms and led me away by them as one would lead a dog. Then she did off her brother's armour and clad him in a robe, after which she brought him a stool of ivory, on which he sat down, and said to him, 'May God whiten thine honour and make thee to be as a provision against the shifts of fortune!' And he answered her with the following verses:

My sister said, (who saw my lustrous forehead blaze Midmost the war, as shine the sun's meridian rays)
"God bless thee for a brave, to whom, when he falls on, The desert lions bow in terror and amaze!"

[1] *i.e.* new moon.

"Question the men of war," I answered her, "of me, Whenas the champions flee before my flashing gaze.
I am the world-renowned for fortune and for might, Whose prowess is uplift to what a height of praise!
O Hemmad, thou hast roused a lion, who shall show Thee death that comes as swift as vipers in the ways."

When I heard what he said, I was perplexed about my affair, and considering my condition and how I was become a captive, I was lessened in my own esteem. Then I looked at the damsel and said to myself, 'It is she who is the cause of all this trouble;' and I fell a-marvelling at her beauty and grace, till the tears streamed from my eyes and I recited the following verses:

Reproach me not, O friend, nor chide me for the past, For I will pay no heed to chiding and dispraise.
Lo, I am clean distraught for one, whom when I saw, Fate in my breast forthright the love of her did raise.
Her brother was my foe and rival in her love, A man of mickle might and dreadful in affrays.

Then the maiden set food before her brother, and he bade me eat with him, whereat I rejoiced and felt assured of my life. When he had made an end of eating, she brought him a flagon of wine and he drank, till the fumes of the wine mounted to his head and his face flushed. Then he turned to me and said, 'Harkye, Hemmad, dost thou know me?' 'By thy life,' answered I, 'I am rich in nought but ignorance!' Said he, 'I am Ibad ben Temim ben Thaalebeh, and indeed God giveth thee thy liberty and spareth thee confusion.' Then he drank to my health and gave me a cup of wine and I drank it off. Then he filled me a second and a third and a fourth, and I drank them all; and he made merry with me and took an oath of me that I would never betray him. So I swore to him a thousand oaths that I would never deal perfidiously with him, but would be a friend and a helper to him.

Then he bade his sister bring me ten dresses of silk; so she brought them and laid them on me, and this gown I have on my body is one of them. Moreover, he made her bring one of the best of the riding camels, laden with stuffs and victual, and a sorrel horse, and gave the whole to me. I abode with them three days, eating and drinking, and what he gave me is with me to this day. At the end of this time, he said to me, 'O Hemmad, O my brother, I would fain sleep awhile and rest myself. I trust myself to thee; but if thou see horsemen making hither, fear not, for they are of the Beni Thaalebeh, seeking to wage war on me.' Then he laid his sword under his head and slept; and when he was drowned in slumber, the devil prompted me to kill him; so I rose, and drawing the sword from under his head, dealt him a blow that severed his head from his body. His sister heard what I had done, and rushing out from within the tent, threw herself on his body, tearing her clothes and repeating the following verses:

Carry the tidings to the folk, the saddest news can be; But man from God His ordinance no whither hath to flee.
Now art thou slaughtered, brother mine, laid prostrate on the earth, Thou whose bright face was as the round of the full moon to see.
Indeed, an evil day it was, the day thou mettest them, And after many a fight, thy spear is shivered, woe is me!
No rider, now that thou art dead, in horses shall delight Nor evermore shall woman bear a male to match with thee.
Hemmad this day hath played thee false and foully done to death: Unto his oath and plighted faith a traitor base is he.
He deemeth thus to have his will and compass his desire; But Satan lieth to his dupes in all he doth decree.

When she had ended, she turned to me and said, 'O man of accursed lineage, wherefore didst thou play my brother false and slay him, whenas he purposed to send thee back to thy country with gifts and victual and it was his intent also to marry thee to me at the first of the

month?' Then she drew a sword she had with her, and planting it in the ground, with the point set to her breast, threw herself thereon and pressed upon it, till the blade issued from her back and she fell to the ground, dead. I mourned for her and wept and repented when repentance availed me nothing. Then I went in haste to the tent and taking whatever was light of carriage and great of worth, went my way: but in my haste and fear, I took no heed of my (dead) comrades, nor did I bury the maiden and the youth. This, then, is my story, and it is still more extraordinary than that of the serving-maid I kidnapped in Jerusalem.'

Night cxlv. When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard these words of the Bedouin, the light in her eyes was changed to darkness, and she rose and drawing the sword, smote him amiddleward the shoulder-blades, that the point issued from his throat. The bystanders said to her, "Why hast thou made haste to slay him?" And she answered, "Praised be God who hath granted me to avenge myself with my own hand!" And she bade the slaves drag the body out by the feet and cast it to the dogs. Then they turned to the second prisoner, who was a black slave, and said to him, "What is thy name? Tell us the truth of thy case." "My name is Ghezban," answered he and told them what had passed between himself and the princess Abrizeh and how he had slain her and fled. Hardly had he made an end of his story, when King Rumzan struck off his head with his sabre, saying, "Praised be God that gave me life! I have avenged my mother with my own hand." Then he repeated to them what his nurse Merjaneh had told him of this same Ghezban; after which they turned to the third prisoner and said to him, "Tell us who thou art and speak the truth." Now this was the very camel-driver, whom the people of Jerusalem hired to carry Zoulmekan to the hospital at Damascus; but he threw him down on

the fuel-heap and went his way. So he told them how he had dealt with Zoulmekan, whereupon Kanmakan took his sword forthright and cut off his head, saying, "Praised be God who hath given me life, that I might requite this traitor what he did with my father, for I have heard this very story from King Zoulmekan himself!" Then they said to each other, "It remains only for us to take our wreak of the old woman Shewahi, yclept Dhat ed Dewahi, for that she is the prime cause of all these troubles. Who will deliver her into our hands, that we may avenge ourselves upon her and wipe out our dishonour?" And King Rumzan said, "Needs must we bring her hither." So he wrote a letter to his grandmother, the aforesaid old woman, giving her to know that he had subdued the kingdoms of Damascus and Mosul and Irak and had broken up the host of the Muslims and captured their princes and adding, "I desire thee of all urgency to come to me without delay, bringing with thee the princess Sufiyeh, daughter of King Afridoun, and whom thou wilt of the Nazarene chiefs, but no troops; for the country is quiet and under our hand." And he despatched the letter to her, which when she read, she rejoiced greatly and forthwith equipping herself and Sufiyeh, set out with their attendants and journeyed, without stopping, till they drew near Baghdad. Then she sent a messenger to acquaint the King of her arrival, whereupon quoth Rumzan, "We should do well to don the habit of the Franks and go out to meet the old woman, to the intent that we may be assured against her craft and perfidy." So they clad themselves in Frankish apparel, and when Kuzia Fekan saw them, she exclaimed, "By the Lord of Worship, did I not know you, I should take you to be indeed Franks!" Then they sallied forth, with a thousand horse, to meet the old woman, and King Rumzan rode on before them. As soon as his eyes met hers, he dismounted and walked

towards her, and she, recognizing him, dismounted also and embraced him; but he pressed her ribs with his hands, till he well-nigh broke them. Quoth she, "What is this, O my son?" But before she had done speaking, up came Kanmakan and Dendan, and the horsemen with them cried out at the women and slaves and took them all prisoners. Then the two kings returned to Baghdad, with their captives, and Rumzan bade decorate the city three days long, at the end of which time they brought out the old woman, with a tall red bonnet of palm-leaves on her head, diademed with asses' dung, and preceded by a herald, proclaiming aloud, "This is the reward of those who presume to lay hands on kings and kings' sons!" Then they crucified her on one of the gates of Baghdad; and her companions, seeing what befell her, all embraced the faith of Islam. As for Kanmakan and his uncle Rumzan and his aunt Nuzhet ez Zeman, they marvelled at the wonderful events that had betided them and bade the scribes set them down orderly in books, that those who came after might read. Then they all abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there overtook them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and this is all that hath come down to us of the dealings of fortune with King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan and his son's son Kanmakan and his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman and her daughter Kuzia Fekan.

END OF VOL. II.

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