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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 FOURTH.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

HOW THE IMAM ABOU YOUSUF EXTRICATED THE KHALIF HAROUN ER RESHID AND HIS VIZIER JAAFER FROM A DILEMMA.

It is said that Jaafer the Barmecide was one night carousing with Er Reshid, when the latter said to him, 'O Jaafer, I hear that thou hast bought such and such a slave-girl. Now I have long sought her and my heart is taken up with love of her, for she is passing fair; so do thou sell her to me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'I will not sell her.' 'Then give her to me,' rejoined the Khalif. 'Nor will I give her,' answered Jaafer. 'Be Zubeideh triply divorced,' exclaimed Haroun, 'if thou shalt not either sell or give her to me!' Quoth Jaafer, 'Be my wife triply divorced, if I either sell or give her to thee!' After awhile they recovered from their intoxication and were ware that they had fallen into a grave dilemma, but knew not how to extricate themselves. Then said Er Reshid, 'None can help us in this strait but Abou Yousuf.'[1] So they sent for him, and this was in the middle of the night. When the messenger reached the Imam, he arose in alarm, saying in himself, 'I should not be sent for at this hour, save by reason of

[1] A very famous legist and wit of the eighth century and a prime favourite with Er Reshid. He was one of the chief pupils of the Imam Abou Henifeh (see note, Vol. II. p. 131) and was Cadi of Baghdad under the third, fourth and fifth Khalifs of the Abbaside dynasty.

some crisis in Islam.' So he went out in haste and mounted his mule, saying to his servant, 'Take the mule's nose-bag with thee; it may be she has not finished her feed; and when we come to the Khalif's palace, put the bag on her, that she may eat what is left of her fodder, whilst I am with the Khalif.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the man.

So the Imam rode to the palace and was admitted to the presence of Er Reshid, who made him sit down on the couch beside himself, whereas he was used to seat none but him, and said to him, 'We have sent for thee at this hour to advise us upon a grave matter, with which we know not how to deal.' And he expounded to him the case. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Abou Yousuf, 'this is the easiest of things.' Then he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'O Jaafer, sell half of her to the Commander of the Faithful and give him the other half; so shall ye both be quit of your oaths.' The Khalif was delighted with this and they did as he prescribed. Then said Er Reshid, 'Bring me the girl at once, for I long for her exceedingly.' So they brought her and the Khalif said to Abou Yousuf, 'I have a mind to lie with her forthright; for I cannot endure to abstain from her during the prescribed period of purification; how is this to be done?' 'Bring me one of thine unenfranchised male slaves,' answered the Imam, 'and give me leave to marry her to him; then let him divorce her before consummation. So shall it be lawful for thee to lie with her before purification.' This expedient pleased the Khalif yet more than the first and he sent for the slave. When he came, Er Reshid said to the Imam, 'I authorize thee to marry her to him.' So the Imam proposed the marriage to the slave, who accepted it, and performed the due ceremony; after which he said to the slave, 'Divorce her, and thou shalt have a hundred dinars.' But he refused to do this

Night ccxcvii.

and the Imam went on to increase his offer, till he bid him a thousand dinars. Then said the slave to him, 'Doth it rest with me to divorce her, or with thee or the Commander of the Faithful?' 'With thee,' answered the Imam. 'Then, by Allah,' quoth the slave, 'I will never do it!'

At this the Khalif was exceeding wroth and said to the Imam, 'What is to be done, O Abou Yousuf?' 'Be not concerned, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Imam; 'the thing is easy. Make this slave the damsel's property.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'I give him to her;' and the Imam said to the girl, 'Say, "I accept."' So she said, 'I accept:' whereupon quoth Abou Yousuf, 'I pronounce divorce between them, for that he hath become her property, and so the marriage is annulled.' With this, Er Reshid sprang to his feet and exclaimed, 'It is the like of thee that shall be Cadi in my time.' Then he called for sundry trays of gold and emptied them before Abou Yousuf, to whom he said, 'Hast thou wherein to put this?' The Imam bethought him of the mule's nose-bag; so he sent for it and filling it with gold, took it and went home; and on the morrow, he said to his friends, 'There is no easier or shorter road to the goods of this world and the next, than that of learning; for, see, I have received all this money for answering two or three questions.'

Consider, then, O polite [reader], the pleasantness of this anecdote, for it comprises divers goodly features, amongst which are the complaisance of Jaafer to Er Reshid and the wisdom[1] of the Khalif and the exceeding wisdom of Abou Yousuf, may God the Most High have mercy on all their souls!

[1] Shown in choosing so learned a Cadi.

THE LOVER WHO FEIGNED HIMSELF A THIEF TO SAVE HIS MISTRESS'S HONOUR.

There came one day to Khalid ibn Abdallah el Kesri,[1] governor of Bassora, a company of men dragging a youth of exceeding beauty and lofty bearing, whose aspect expressed good breeding and dignity and abundant wit. They brought him before the governor, who asked what was to do with him, and they replied, 'This fellow is a thief, whom we caught last night in our dwelling.' Khalid looked at him and was struck with wonder at his well-favouredness and elegance; so he said to the others, 'Loose him,' and going up to the young man, asked what he had to say for himself. 'The folk have spoken truly,' answered he; 'and the case is as they have said.' 'And what moved thee to this,' asked Khalid, 'and thou so noble and comely of aspect?' 'The lust after worldly good,' replied the other, 'and the ordinance of God, glorified and exalted be He!' 'May thy mother be bereaved of thee!' rejoined Khalid. 'Hadst thou not, in thy fair face and sound sense and good breeding, what should restrain thee from thieving?' 'O Amir,' answered the young man, 'leave this talk and proceed to what God the Most High hath ordained; this is what my hands have earned, and God is no oppressor of His creatures.'[2] Khalid was silent awhile, considering the matter; then he said to the young man, 'Verily, thy confession before witnesses perplexes me, for I cannot believe thee to be a thief. Surely thou hast some story that is other than one of theft. Tell it me.' 'O Amir,' replied the youth, 'deem thou nought save

[1] Governor of the two Iraks (*i.e.* Bassora and Cufa) in the reign of Hisham, tenth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty (A.D. 723–741). He was celebrated for his beneficence and liberality.

[2] *Koran* iii. 178, etc.

what I have confessed; for I have no story other than that I entered these folk's house and stole what I could lay hands on, and they caught me and took the stuff from me and carried me before thee.' Then Khalid bade clap him in prison and commanded a crier to make proclamation throughout Bassora, saying, 'Ho, whoso is minded to look upon the punishment of such an one, the thief, and the cutting-off of his hand, let him be present to-morrow morning at such a place!'

When the youth found himself in prison, with irons on his feet, he sighed heavily and repeated the following verses, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes:

Khalid doth threaten me with cutting off my hand, Except I do reveal to him my mistress' case.
But, "God forbid," quoth I, "that I should e'er reveal That which of love for her my bosom doth embrace!"
The cutting-off my hand, for that I have confessed Unto, less grievous were to me than her disgrace.

The warders heard him and went and told Khalid, who sent for the youth after nightfall and conversed with him. He found him well-bred and intelligent and of a pleasant and vivacious wit; so he ordered him food and he ate. Then said Khalid, 'I know thou hast a story to tell that is no thief's; so, when the Cadi comes to-morrow morning and questions thee before the folk, do thou deny the charge of theft and avouch what may avert the cutting-off of thy hand; for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) saith, "In cases of doubt, eschew [or defer] punishment."' Then he sent him back to the prison, where he passed the night. Night ccxcviii.

On the morrow, the folk assembled to see his hand cut off, nor was there man or woman in Bassora but came forth to look upon his punishment. Then Khalid mounted in company of the notables of the city and others and summoning the Cadi, sent for the young man, who came,

hobbling in his shackles. There was none saw him but wept for him, and the women lifted up their voices in lamentation. The Cadi bade silence the women and said to the prisoner, 'These folk avouch that thou didst enter their dwelling and steal their goods: belike thou stolest less than a quarter dinar?'[1] 'Nay,' replied he, 'I stole more than that.' 'Peradventure,' rejoined the Cadi, 'thou art partner with them in some of the goods?' 'Not so,' replied the young man; 'it was all theirs. I had no right in it.' At this Khalid was wroth and rose and smote him on the face with his whip, applying this verse to his own case:

Man wisheth and seeketh his wish to fulfil, But Allah denieth save that which He will.

Then he called for the executioner, who came and taking the prisoner's hand, set the knife to it and was about to cut it off, when, behold, a damsel, clad in tattered clothes, pressed through the crowd of women and cried out and threw herself on the young man. Then she unveiled and showed a face like the moon; whereupon the people raised a mighty clamour and there was like to have been a riot amongst them. But she cried out her loudest, saying, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, O Amir, hasten not to cut off this man's hand, till thou have read what is in this scroll!' So saying, she gave him a scroll, and he took it and read therein the following verses:

O Khalid, this man is love-maddened, a slave of desire, Transfixed by the glances that sped from the bows of my eye.
The shafts of my looks 'twas that pierced him and slew him; indeed, He's a bondsman of love, sick for passion and like for to die.
Yea, rather a crime, that he wrought not, he chose to confess Than suffer on her whom he cherished dishonour to lie.
Have ruth on a sorrowful lover; indeed he's no thief, But the noblest and truest of mortals for passion that sigh.

[1] "The hand of a thief shall not be cut off for stealing less than a quarter of a dinar."—*Mishcat ul Masabih.*

When he had read this, he called the girl apart and questioned her; and she told him that the young man was her lover and she his mistress. He came to the dwelling of her people, thinking to visit her, and threw a stone into the house, to warn her of his coming. Her father and brothers heard the noise of the stone and sallied out on him; but he, hearing them coming, caught up all the household stuff and made as if he would have stolen it, to cover his mistress's honour. 'So they seized him,' continued she, 'saying, "A thief!" and brought him before thee, whereupon he confessed to the robbery and persisted in his confession, that he might spare me dishonour; and this he did, making himself a thief, of the exceeding nobility and generosity of his nature.'

'He is indeed worthy to have his desire,' replied Khalid and calling the young man to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he sent for the girl's father and bespoke him, saying, 'O elder, we thought to punish this young man by cutting off his hand; but God (to whom belong might and majesty) hath preserved us from this, and I now adjudge him the sum of ten thousand dirhems, for that he would have sacrificed his hand for the preservation of thine honour and that of thy daughter and the sparing you both reproach. Moreover, I adjudge other ten thousand dirhems to thy daughter, for that she made known to me the truth of the case; and I ask thy leave to marry him to her.' 'O Amir,' rejoined the old man, 'thou hast my consent.' So Khalid praised God and thanked Him and offered up a goodly exhortation and prayer; after which he said to the young man, 'I give thee this damsel to wife, with her own and her father's consent; and her dowry shall be this money, to wit, ten thousand dirhems.' 'I accept this marriage at thy hands,' replied the youth and Khalid let carry the money on trays in procession to the young man's house, whilst the people dispersed, full of

Night ccxcix.

gladness. And surely [quoth he who tells the tale[1]] never saw I a rarer day than this, for that its beginning was weeping and affliction and its end joy and gladness.

JAAFER THE BARMECIDE AND THE BEAN-SELLER.

When Haroun er Reshid put Jaafer the Barmecide to death, he commanded that all who wept or made moan for him should be crucified; so the folk abstained from this. Now there was a Bedouin from a distant desert, who used every year to make and bring to Jaafer an ode in his honour, for which he rewarded him with a thousand dinars; and the Bedouin took them and returning to his own country, lived upon them, he and his family, for the rest of the year. Accordingly, he came with his ode at the wonted time and finding Jaafer done to death, betook himself to the place where his body was hanging, and there made his camel kneel down and wept sore and mourned grievously. Then he recited his ode and fell asleep. In his sleep Jaafer the Barmecide appeared to him and said, 'Thou hast wearied thyself to come to us and findest us as thou seest; but go to Bassora and ask for such a man there of the merchants of the town and say to him, "Jaafer the Barmecide salutes thee and bids thee give me a thousand dinars, by the token of the bean."'

When the Bedouin awoke, he repaired to Bassora, where he sought out the merchant and repeated to him what Jaafer had said in the dream; whereupon he wept sore, till he was like to depart the world. Then he welcomed the Bedouin and entertained him three days as an honoured guest; and when he was minded to depart, he gave him a thousand and five hundred dinars, saying, 'The thousand

[1] El Asmaï the poet, author or compiler of the well-known romance of Antar.

are what is commanded to thee, and the five hundred are a gift from me to thee; and every year thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars.' When the Bedouin was about to take leave, he said to the merchant, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me the story of the bean, that I may know the origin of all this.' 'In the early part of my life,' replied the merchant, 'I was miserably poor and hawked hot boiled beans about the streets of Baghdad for a living.

I went out one cold, rainy day, without clothes enough on my body to protect me from the weather, now shivering for excess of cold and now stumbling into the pools of rain-water, and altogether in so piteous a plight as would make one shudder to look upon. Now it chanced that Jaafer was seated that day, with his officers and favourites, in an upper chamber overlooking the street, and his eye fell on me; so he took pity on my case and sending one of his servants to fetch me to him, said to me, "Sell thy beans to my people." So I began to mete out the beans with a measure I had with me, and each who took a measure of beans filled the vessel with gold pieces, till the basket was empty. Then I gathered together the money I had gotten, and Jaafer said to me, "Hast thou any beans left?" "I know not," answered I and sought in the basket, but found only one bean. This Jaafer took and splitting it in twain, kept one half himself and gave the other to one of his favourites, saying, "For how much wilt thou buy this half-bean?" "For the tale of all this money twice-told," replied she; whereat I was confounded and said in myself, "This is impossible." But, as I stood wondering, she gave an order to one of her handmaids and the girl brought me the amount twice-told. Then said Jaafer, "And I will buy my half for twice the sum of the whole. Take the price of thy bean." And he gave an order to one of his servants, who gathered together the whole of the money and laid it in my basket; and I took

it and departed. Then I betook myself to Bassora, where I traded with the money and God prospered me, to Him be the praise and the thanks! So, if I give thee a thousand dinars a year of the bounty of Jaafer, it will in no wise irk me.' Consider then the munificence of Jaafer's nature and how he was praised both alive and dead, the mercy of God the Most High be upon him!

ABOU MOHAMMED THE LAZY.

It is told that Haroun er Reshid was sitting one day on the throne of the Khalifate, when there came in to him a youth of his eunuchs, bearing a crown of red gold, set with pearls and rubies and all manner other jewels, such as money might not buy, and kissing the ground before him, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the lady Zubeideh kisses the earth before thee and saith to thee, thou knowest she hath let make this crown, which lacks a great jewel for its top; and she hath made search among her treasures, but cannot find a jewel to her mind.' Quoth the Khalif to his chamberlains and officers, 'Make search for a great jewel, such as Zubeideh desires.' So they sought, but found nothing befitting her and told the Khalif, who was vexed thereat and exclaimed, 'Am I Khalif and king of the kings of the earth and lack of a jewel? Out on ye! Enquire of the merchants.' So they enquired of the merchants, who replied, 'Our lord the Khalif will not find a jewel such as he requires save with a man of Bassora, by name Abou Mohammed the Lazy.' They acquainted the Khalif with this and he bade his Vizier Jaafer send a letter to the Amir Mohammed ez Zubeidi, governor of Bassora, commanding him to equip Abou Mohammed the Lazy and bring him to Baghdad.

Night ccc.

Jaafer accordingly wrote a letter to that effect and despatched it by Mesrour, who set out forthright for

Bassora and went in to the governor, who rejoiced in him and entreated him with the utmost honour. Then Mesrour read him the Khalif's mandate, to which he replied, 'I hear and obey,' and forthwith despatched him, with a company of his followers, to Abou Mohammed's house. When they reached it, they knocked at the door, whereupon a servant came out and Mesrour said to him, 'Tell thy master that the Commander of the Faithful calls for him.' The servant went in and told his master, who came out and found Mesrour, the Khalif's chamberlain, and a company of the governor's men at the door. So he kissed the earth before Mesrour and said, 'I hear and obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful; but enter ye my house.' 'We cannot do that,' replied Mesrour, 'save in haste; for the Commander of the Faithful awaits thy coming.' But he said, 'Have patience with me a little, till I set my affairs in order.' So, after much pressure and persuasion, they entered and found the corridor hung with curtains of blue brocade, figured with gold, and Abou Mohammed bade one of his servants carry Mesrour to the bath. Now this bath was in the house and Mesrour found its walls and floor of rare and precious marbles, wrought with gold and silver, and its waters mingled with rose-water. The servants served Mesrour and his company on the most perfect wise and clad them, on their going forth of the bath, in robes of honour of brocade, interwoven with gold.

Then they went in to Abou Mohammed and found him seated in his upper chamber upon a couch inlaid with jewels. Over his head hung curtains of gold brocade, wrought with pearls and jewels, and the place was spread with cushions, embroidered in red gold. When he saw Mesrour, he rose to receive him and bidding him welcome, seated him by his side. Then he called for food: so they brought the table of food, which when Mesrour saw, he

exclaimed, 'By Allah, never saw I the like of this in the palace of the Commander of the Faithful!' For indeed it comprised all manner of meats, served in dishes of gilded porcelain. So they ate and drank and made merry till the end of the day, when Abou Mohammed gave Mesrour and each of his company five thousand dinars; and on the morrow he clad them in dresses of honour of green and gold and entreated them with the utmost honour. Then said Mesrour to him, 'We can abide no longer, for fear of the Khalif's displeasure.' 'O my lord,' answered Abou Mohammed, 'have patience with us till to-morrow, that we may equip ourselves, and we will then depart with you.' So they tarried that day and night with him; and next morning, Abou Mohammed's servants saddled him a mule with housings and trappings of gold, set with all manner pearls and jewels; whereupon quoth Mesrour in himself, 'I wonder if, when he presents himself in this equipage before the Commander of the Faithful, he will ask him how he came by all this wealth.'

Then they took leave of Ez Zubeidi and setting out from Bassora, fared on, without stopping, till they reached Baghdad and presented themselves before the Khalif, who bade Abou Mohammed be seated. So he sat down and addressing the Khalif in courtly wise, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have brought with me a present by way of homage: have I thy leave to produce it?' 'There is no harm in that,' replied the Khalif; whereupon Abou Mohammed caused bring in a chest, from which he took a number of rarities and amongst the rest, trees of gold, with leaves of emerald and fruits of rubies and topazes and pearls. Then he fetched another chest and brought out of it a pavilion of brocade, adorned with pearls and rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and other precious stones; its poles were of the finest Indian aloes-wood, and its skirts were set with emeralds. Thereon

were depicted all manner beasts and birds and other created things, spangled with rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and balass rubies and other precious stones.

When Er Reshid saw these things, he rejoiced exceedingly, and Abou Mohammed said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, deem not that I have brought these to thee, fearing aught or coveting aught; but I knew myself to be but a man of the people and that these things befitted none save the Commander of the Faithful. And now, with thy leave, I will show thee, for thy diversion, something of what I can do.' 'Do what thou wilt,' answered Er Reshid, 'that we may see.' 'I hear and obey,' said Abou Mohammed and moving his lips, beckoned to the battlements of the palace, whereupon they inclined to him; then he made another sign to them, and they returned to their place. Then he made a sign with his eye, and there appeared before him cabinets with closed doors, to which he spoke, and lo, the voices of birds answered him [from within]. The Khalif marvelled exceedingly at this and said to him, 'How camest thou by all this, seeing that thou art only known as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, and they tell me that thy father was a barber-surgeon, serving in a public bath, and left thee nothing?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'listen to my story, for it is an extraordinary one and its particulars are wonderful; were it graven with needles upon the corners of the eye, it would serve as a lesson to him who can profit by admonition.' 'Let us hear it,' said the Khalif. Night ccci.

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Abou Mohammed, '(may God prolong to thee glory and dominion,) that the report of the folk, that I am known as the Lazy and that my father left me nothing, is true; for he was, as thou hast said, but a barber-surgeon in a bath. In my youth I was the laziest wight on the face of the earth; indeed, so great was my sluggishness that, if I lay

asleep in the sultry season and the sun came round upon me, I was too lazy to rise and remove from the sun to the shade; and thus I abode till I reached my fifteenth year, when my father was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High and left me nothing. However, my mother used to go out to service and feed me and give me to drink, whilst I lay on my side.

One day, she came in to me, with five silver dirhems, and said to me, "O my son, I hear that the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffer is about to go a voyage to China." (Now this Sheikh was a good and charitable man and loved the poor.) "So come, let us carry him these five dirhems and beg him to buy thee therewith somewhat from the land of China, so haply thou mayst make a profit of it, by the bounty of God the Most High!" I was too lazy to move; but she swore by Allah that, except I rose and went with her, she would neither bring me meat nor drink nor come in to me, but would leave me to die of hunger and thirst. When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I knew she would do as she said; so I said to her, "Help me to sit up." She did so, and I wept the while and said to her, "Bring me my shoes." Accordingly, she brought them and I said, "Put them on my feet." She put them on my feet and I said, "Lift me up." So she lifted me up and I said, "Support me, that I may walk." So she supported me and I went along thus, still stumbling in my skirts, till we came to the river-bank, where we saluted the Sheikh and I said to him, "O uncle, art thou Aboul Muzeffer?" "At thy service," answered he, and I said, "Take these dirhems and buy me somewhat from the land of China: haply, God may vouchsafe me a profit of it." Quoth the Sheikh to his companions, "Do ye know this youth?" "Yes," replied they; "he is known as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, and we never saw him stir from his house till now." Then said he to me,

"O my son, give me the dirhems and the blessing of God the Most High go with them!" So he took the money, saying, "In the name of God!" and I returned home with my mother.

Meanwhile the Sheikh set sail, with a company of merchants, and stayed not till they reached the land of China, where they bought and sold, and having done their intent, set out on their homeward voyage. When they had been three days at sea, the Sheikh said to his company, "Stay the ship!" And they asked him what was to do with him. "Know," replied he, "that I have forgotten the commission with which Abou Mohammed the Lazy charged me; so let us turn back, that we may buy him somewhat whereby he may profit." "We conjure thee, by God the Most High," exclaimed they, "turn not back with us; for we have traversed an exceeding great distance and endured sore hardship and many perils." Quoth he, "There is no help for it;" and they said, "Take from us double the profit of the five dirhems and turn not back with us." So he agreed to this and they collected for him a great sum of money.

Then they sailed on, till they came to an island, wherein was much people; so they moored thereto and the merchants went ashore, to buy thence precious metals and pearls and jewels and so forth. Presently, Aboul Muzeffer saw a man seated, with many apes before him, and amongst them one whose hair had been plucked off. As often as the man's attention was diverted from them, the other apes fell upon the plucked one and beat him and threw him on their master; whereupon the latter rose and beat them and bound them and punished them for this; and all the apes were wroth with the plucked ape therefor and beat him the more. When Aboul Muzeffer saw this, he took compassion upon the plucked ape and said to his master, "Wilt thou sell me yonder ape?" "Buy," replied

the man, and Aboul Muzeffer rejoined, "I have with me five dirhems, belonging to an orphan lad. Wilt thou sell me the ape for that sum?" "He is thine," answered the ape-merchant. "May God give thee a blessing of him!" So the Sheikh paid the money and his slaves took the ape and tied him up in the ship.

Then they loosed sail and made for another island, where they cast anchor; and there came down divers, who dived for pearls and corals and other jewels. So the merchants hired them for money and they dived. When the ape saw this, he did himself loose from his bonds and leaping off the ship's side, dived with them; whereupon quoth Aboul Muzeffer, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! The ape is lost to us, by the [ill] fortune of the poor fellow for whom we bought him." And they despaired of him; but, after awhile, the company of divers rose to the surface, and with them the ape, with his hands full of jewels of price, which he threw down before Aboul Muzeffer, who marvelled at this and said, "There hangs some great mystery by this ape!"

Then they cast off and sailed till they came to a third island, called the Island of the Zunouj,[1] who are a people of the blacks, that eat human flesh. When the blacks saw them, they boarded them in canoes and taking all in the ship, pinioned them and carried them to their king, who bade slaughter certain of the merchants. So they slaughtered them and ate their flesh; and the rest passed the night in prison and sore concern. But, when it was [mid]night, the ape arose and going up to Aboul Muzeffer, did off his bonds. When the others saw him free, they said, "God grant that our deliverance may be at thy hands, O Aboul Muzeffer!" But he replied, "Know that he who delivered me, by God's leave, was none other than this ape; and I buy my release of him at a thousand dinars."

Night cccii.

[1] Zanzibar (*ant.* Zengibar).

"And we likewise," rejoined the merchants, "will pay him a thousand dinars each, if he release us." With this, the ape went up to them and loosed their bonds, one by one, till he had freed them all, when they made for the ship and boarding her, found all safe and nothing missing. So they cast off and set sail; and presently Aboul Muzeffer said to them, "O merchants, fulfil your promise to the ape." "We hear and obey," answered they and paid him a thousand dinars each, whilst Aboul Muzeffer brought out to him the like sum of his own monies, so that there was a great sum of money collected for the ape.

Then they fared on till they reached the city of Bassora, where their friends came out to meet them; and when they had landed, the Sheikh said, "Where is Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" The news reached my mother, who came to me, as I lay asleep, and said to me, "O my son, the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffer has come back and is now in the city; so go thou to him and salute him and enquire what he hath brought thee; it may be God hath blessed thee with somewhat." "Lift me from the ground," quoth I, "and prop me up, whilst I walk to the river-bank." So she lifted me up and I went out and walked on, stumbling in my skirts, till I met the Sheikh, who exclaimed, at sight of me, "Welcome to him whose money has been the means of my delivery and that of these merchants, by the will of God the Most High! Take this ape that I bought for thee and carry him home and wait till I come to thee." So I took the ape, saying in myself, "By Allah, this is indeed rare merchandise!" and drove it home, where I said to my mother, "Whenever I lie down to sleep, thou biddest me rise and trade; see now this merchandise with thine own eyes."

Then I sat down, and presently up came Aboul Muzeffer's slaves and said to me, "Art thou Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; and behold, Aboul Muzeffer

appeared behind them. So I went up to him and kissed his hands; and he said to me, "Come with me to my house." "I hear and obey," answered I and followed him to his house, where he bade his servants bring me the money [and what not else the ape had earned me]. So they brought it and he said to me, "O my son, God hath blessed thee with this wealth, by way of profit on thy five dirhems." Then the slaves laid the treasure in chests, which they set on their heads, and Aboul Muzeffer gave me the keys of the chests, saying, "Go before the slaves to thy house; for all this wealth is thine." So I returned to my mother, who rejoiced in this and said to me, "O my son, God hath blessed thee with this much wealth; so put off thy laziness and go down to the bazaar and sell and buy." So I shook off my sloth, and opened a shop in the bazaar, where the ape used to sit on the same divan with me, eating with me when I ate and drinking when I drank. But, every day, he was absent from daybreak till noon-day, when he came back, bringing with him a purse of a thousand dinars, which he laid by my side, and sat down. Thus did he a great while, till I amassed much wealth, wherewith I bought houses and lands and planted gardens and got me slaves, black and white and male and female.

One day, as I sat in my shop, with the ape at my side, he began to turn right and left, and I said in myself, "What ails the beast?" Then God made the ape speak with a glib tongue, and he said to me, "O Abou Mohammed!" When I heard him speak, I was sore afraid; but he said to me, "Fear not; I will tell thee my case. Know that I am a Marid of the Jinn and came to thee, because of thy poor estate; but to-day thou knowest not the tale of thy wealth; and now I have a need of thee, wherein if thou do my will, it shall be well for thee." "What is it?" asked I, and he said, "I have a mind to marry thee to

a girl like the full moon." "How so?" quoth I. "To-morrow," replied he, "don thou thy richest clothes and mount thy mule, with the saddle of gold, and ride to the forage-market. There enquire for the shop of the Sherif[1] and sit down beside him and say to him, 'I come to thee as a suitor for thy daughter's hand.' If he say to thee, 'Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family,' pull out a thousand dinars and give them to him; and if he ask more, give him more and tempt him with money." "I hear and obey," answered I; "to-morrow, if it please God, I will do thy bidding."

So on the morrow I donned my richest clothes and mounting my mule with trappings of gold, rode, attended by half a score slaves, black and white, to the forage-market, where I found the Sherif sitting in his shop. I alighted and saluting him, seated myself beside him. Quoth he, "Haply, thou hast some business with us, which we may have the pleasure of transacting?" "Yes," answered I; "I have business with thee." "And what is it?" asked he. Quoth I, "I come to thee as a suitor for thy daughter's hand." And he said, "Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family;" whereupon I pulled out a thousand dinars of red gold and said to him, "This is my rank and family; and he whom God bless and keep hath said, 'The best of ranks is wealth.' And how well saith the poet:

Night cccliii.

Whoso hath money, though it be but dirhems twain, his lips Have learnt
all manner speech and he can speak and fear no slight.
His brethren and his mates draw near and hearken to his word And
'mongst the folk thou seest him walk, a glad and prideful wight.
But for the money, in the which he glorieth on this wise, Thou'dst find
him, midst his fellow-men, in passing sorry plight.

[1] The word *Sherif* (*lit.* noble) signifies strictly a descendant of the martyr Hussein, son of the Khalif Ali; but it is here used in the sense of "chief [of the bazaar]."

Yea, whensoe'er the rich man speaks, though in his speech he err, 'Thou hast not spoken a vain thing,' they say; 'indeed, thou'rt right.'
But, for the poor man, an he speak, albeit he say sooth, They say, 'Thou liest,' and make void his speech and hold it light.
For money, verily, in all the lands beneath the sun, With goodliness and dignity doth its possessors dight.
A very tongue it is for him who would be eloquent And eke a weapon to his hand who hath a mind to fight."

When he heard this, he bowed his head awhile, then, raising it, said, "If it must be so, I will have of thee other three thousand dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and sent one of my servants to my house for the money. When he came back with it, I handed it to the Sherif, who rose and bidding his servants shut his shop, invited his brother-merchants to the wedding; after which he carried me to his house and drew up the contract of marriage between his daughter and myself, saying to me, "After ten days, I will bring thee in to her." So I went home rejoicing and shutting myself up with the ape, told him what had passed; and he said, "Thou hast done well."

When the time appointed by the Sherif drew near, the ape said to me, "There is a thing I would fain have thee do for me; and after, thou shalt have of me what thou wilt." "What is that?" asked I. Quoth he, "At the upper end of the bridechamber stands a cabinet, on whose door is a padlock of brass and the keys under it. Take the keys and open the cabinet, in which thou wilt find a coffer of iron, with four talismanic flags at its angles. In its midst is a brass basin full of money, wherein is tied a white cock with a cleft comb; and on one side of the coffer are eleven serpents and on the other a knife. Take the knife and kill the cock; cut away the flags and overturn the chest; then go back to the bride and do away her maidenhead. This is what I have to ask of thee." "I hear and obey," answered I and betook myself to the Sherif's house.

As soon as I entered the bridechamber, I looked for the cabinet and found it even as the ape had described it. Then I went in to the bride and marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry, for indeed they were such as no tongue can set forth. So I rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy; and in the middle of the night, when she slept, I rose and taking the keys, opened the cabinet. Then I took the knife and killed the cock and threw down the flags and overturned the coffer, whereupon the girl awoke and seeing the closet open and the cock slain, exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! The Marid hath gotten me!" Hardly had she made an end of speaking, when the Marid came down upon the house and seizing the bride, flew away with her; whereupon there arose a great clamour and in came the Sherif, buffeting his face. "O Abou Mohammed," said he, "what is this thou hast done? Is it thus thou requitest us? I made the talisman in the cabinet in my fear for my daughter from this accursed one; for these six years hath he sought to steal away the girl, but could not. But now there is no more abiding for thee with us; so go thy ways."

So I went out and returned to my own house, where I made search for the ape, but could find no trace of him; whereby I knew that he was the Marid, who had taken my wife and had tricked me into destroying the talisman that hindered him from taking her, and repented, rending my clothes and buffeting my face; and there was no land but was straitened upon me. So I made for the desert, knowing not whither I should go, and wandered on, absorbed in melancholy thought, till night overtook me. Presently, I saw two serpents fighting, a white one and a tawny. So I took up a stone and throwing it at the tawny serpent, which was the aggressor, killed it; whereupon the white serpent made off, but returned after awhile,

accompanied by ten others of the same colour, which went up to the dead serpent and tore it in pieces, till but the head was left. Then they went their ways and I fell prostrate for weariness on the ground where I stood; but, as I lay, pondering my case, I heard a voice repeat the following verses, though I saw no one:

Let destiny with slackened rein its course appointed fare And lie thou down by night to sleep with heart devoid of care.
For, 'twixt the closing of the eyes and th' opening thereof, God hath it in His power to change a case from foul to fair.

When I heard this, great concern got hold of me and I was beyond measure troubled; and I heard a voice from behind me repeat these verses also:

Muslim, whose guide's the Koran and his clue, Rejoice, for succour cometh thee unto.
Let not the wiles of Satan make thee rue, For we 're a folk whose creed's the One, the True.

Then said I, "I conjure thee by Him whom thou worshippest, let me know who thou art!" Thereupon the unseen speaker appeared to me, in the likeness of a man, and said, "Fear not; for the report of thy good deed hath reached us, and we are a people of the true-believing Jinn. So, if thou lack aught, let us know it, that we may have the pleasure of fulfilling thy need." "Indeed," answered I, "I am in sore need, for there hath befallen me a grievous calamity, whose like never yet befell man." Quoth he, "Surely, thou art Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" And I answered, "Yes." "O Abou Mohammed," rejoined the genie, "I am the brother of the white serpent, whose enemy thou slewest. We are four brothers, by one father and mother, and we are all indebted to thee for thy kindness. Know that he who played this trick on thee, in the likeness of an ape, is a Marid of the Marids of the Jinn; and had he not used this artifice, he had never been able to take the girl; for

he hath loved her and had a mind to take her this long while, but could not win at her, being hindered of the talisman; and had it remained as it was, he could never have done so. However, fret not thyself for that; we will bring thee to her and kill the Marid; for thy kindness is not lost upon us."

Then he cried out with a terrible voice, and behold, there appeared a company of Jinn, of whom he enquired concerning the ape; and one of them said, "I know his abiding-place; it is in the City of Brass, upon which the sun riseth not." Then said the first genie to me, "O Abou Mohammed, take one of these our slaves, and he will carry thee on his back and teach thee how thou shalt get back the girl: but know that he is a Marid and beware lest thou utter the name of God, whilst he is carrying thee; or he will flee from thee, and thou wilt fall and be destroyed." "I hear and obey," answered I and chose out one of the slaves, who bent down and said to me, "Mount." So I mounted on his back, and he flew up with me into the air, till I lost sight of the earth and saw the stars as they were fixed mountains and heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, what while the Marid held me in converse, diverting me and hindering me from pronouncing the name of God. But, as we flew, behold, one clad in green raiment, with streaming tresses and radiant face, holding in his hand a javelin whence issued sparks of fire, accosted me, saying, "O Abou Mohammed, say, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle;' or I will smite thee with this javelin."

Night cccib.

Now I was already sick at heart of my [forced] abstention from calling on the name of God; so I said, "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His apostle." Whereupon the shining one smote the Marid with his javelin and he melted away and became ashes; whilst I was precipitated from his back and fell headlong toward

the earth, till I dropped into the midst of a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. Hard by where I fell was a ship and five sailors therein, who, seeing me, made for me and took me up into the boat. They began to speak to me in some tongue I knew not; but I signed to them that I understood not their speech. So they fared on till ended day, when they cast out a net and caught a great fish and roasting it, gave me to eat; after which they sailed on, till they reached their city and carried me in to their king, who understood Arabic. So I kissed the ground before him, and he bestowed on me a dress of honour and made me one of his officers. I asked him the name of the city, and he replied, "It is called Henad and is in the land of China." Then he committed me to his Vizier, bidding him show me the city, which was formerly peopled by infidels, till God the Most High turned them into stones; and there I abode a month's space, diverting myself with viewing the place, nor saw I ever greater plenty of trees and fruits than there.

One day, as I sat on the bank of a river, there accosted me a horseman, who said to me, "Art thou not Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; whereupon, "Fear not," said he; "for the report of thy good deed hath reached us." Quoth I, "Who art thou?" And he answered, "I am a brother of the white serpent, and thou art hard by the place where is the damsel whom thou seekest." So saying, he took off his [outer] clothes and clad me therein, saying, "Fear not; for he, that perished under thee, was one of our slaves." Then he took me up behind him and rode on with me, till we came to a desert place, when he said to me, "Alight now and walk on between yonder mountains till thou seest the City of Brass; then halt afar off and enter it not, till I return to thee and teach thee how thou shalt do." "I hear and obey," replied I and alighting, walked on till I came to the city, the walls

whereof I found of brass. I went round about it, looking for a gate, but found none; and presently, the serpent's brother rejoined me and gave me a charmed sword that should hinder any from seeing me, then went his way.

He had been gone but a little while, when I heard a noise of cries and found myself in the midst of a multitude of folk whose eyes were in their breasts. Quoth they, "Who art thou and what brings thee hither?" So I told them my story, and they said, "The girl thou seekest is in the city with the Marid; but we know not what he hath done with her. As for us, we are brethren of the white serpent. But go to yonder spring and note where the water enters, and enter thou with it; for it will bring thee into the city." I did as they bade me and followed the water-course, till it brought me to a grotto under the earth, from which I ascended and found myself in the midst of the city. Here I saw the damsel seated upon a throne of gold, under a canopy of brocade, midmost a garden full of trees of gold, whose fruits were jewels of price, such as rubies and chrysolites and pearls and coral.

When she saw me, she knew me and accosted me with the [obligatory] salutation, saying, "O my lord, who brought thee hither?" So I told her all that had passed, and she said, "Know that the accursed Marid, of the greatness of his love for me, hath told me what doth him hurt and what profit and that there is here a talisman by means whereof he could, an he would, destroy this city and all that are therein. It is in the likeness of an eagle, with I know not what written on it, and whoso possesses it, the Afrits will do his commandment in everything. It stands upon a column in such a place; so go thou thither and take it. Then set it before thee and taking a chafing-dish, throw into it a little musk, whereupon there will arise a smoke, that will draw all the Afrits to thee, and they will all present themselves before thee, nor shall one be absent; and

whatsoever thou biddest them, that will they do. Arise therefore and do this thing, with the blessing of God the Most High."

"I hear and obey," answered I and going to the column, did what she bade me, whereupon the Afrits presented themselves, saying, "Here are we, O our lord! Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do." Quoth I, "Bind the Marid that brought the damsel hither." "We hear and obey," answered they and disappearing, returned after a while and informed me that they had done my bidding. Then I dismissed them and returning to my wife, told her what had happened and said to her, "Wilt thou go with me?" "Yes," answered she. So I carried her forth of the city, by the underground channel, and we fared on, till we fell in with the folk who had shown me the way into the city. I besought them to teach me how I should return to my native land; so they brought us to the sea-shore and set us aboard a ship, which sailed on with us with a fair wind, till we reached the city of Bassora. Here we landed, and I carried my wife to her father's house; and when her people saw her, they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then I fumigated the eagle with musk and the Afrits flocked to me from all sides, saying, "At thy service; what wilt thou have us do?" I bade them transport all that was in the City of Brass of gold and silver and jewels and precious things to my house in Bassora, which they did; and I then ordered them to fetch the ape. So they brought him before me, abject and humiliated, and I said to him, "O accursed one, why hast thou dealt thus perfidiously with me?" Then I commanded the Afrits to shut him in a brazen vessel: so they put him in a strait vessel of brass and sealed it with lead. But I abode with my wife in joy and delight; and now, O Commander of the Faithful, I have under my hand such store of precious things and rare jewels and other treasure as neither

Night cccb.

reckoning may comprise nor measure suffice unto. All this is of the bounty of God the Most High, and if thou desire aught of money or what not, I will bid the Jinn bring it to thee forthright.'

The Khalif wondered greatly at his story and bestowed on him royal gifts, in exchange for his presents, and entreated him with the favour he deserved.

THE GENEROUS DEALING OF YEHYA BEN KHALID THE BARMECIDE WITH MENSOUR.

It is told that Haroun er Reshid, in the days before he became jealous of the Barmecides, sent once for one of his guards, Salih by name, and said to him, 'O Salih, go to Mensour[1] and say to him, "Thou owest us a thousand thousand dirhems and we require of thee immediate payment of the amount." And I charge thee, O Salih, an he pay it not before sundown, sever his head from his body and bring it to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Salih and going to Mensour, acquainted him with what the Khalif had said, whereupon quoth he, 'By Allah, I am a lost man; for all my estate and all my hand owns, if sold for their utmost value, would not fetch more than a hundred thousand dirhems. Whence then, O Salih, shall I get the other nine hundred thousand?' 'Contrive how thou mayst speedily acquit thyself,' answered Salih; 'else art thou a dead man; for I cannot grant thee a moment's delay after the time appointed me by the Khalif, nor can I fail of aught that he hath enjoined on me. Hasten, therefore, to devise some means of saving thyself ere the time expire.' 'O Salih,' quoth Mensour, 'I beg thee of thy favour to bring me to my house, that I may take leave of my children and family and give my kinsfolk my last injunctions.'

[1] *Quære* Mensour en Nemri, a well-known poet of the time and (originally) a protégé of Yehya's son, El Fezl.

So he carried him to his house, where he fell to bidding his family farewell, and the house was filled with a clamour of weeping and lamentation and calling on God for help. Then Salih said to him, 'I have bethought me that God may peradventure vouchsafe thee relief at the hands of the Barmecides. Come, let us go to the house of Yehya ben Khalid.' So they went to Yehya's house, and Mensour told him his case, whereat he was sore concerned and bowed his head awhile; then raising it, he called his treasurer and said to him, 'How much money have we in our treasury?' 'Five thousand dirhems,' answered the treasurer, and Yehya bade him bring them and sent a message to his son Fezl, saying, 'I am offered for sale estates of great price, that may never be laid waste; so send me somewhat of money.' Fezl sent him a thousand thousand dirhems, and he despatched a like message to his son Jaafer, who also sent him a thousand thousand dirhems; nor did he leave sending to his kinsmen of the Barmecides, till he had collected from them a great sum of money for Mensour. But the latter and Salih knew not of this; and Mensour said to Yehya, 'O my lord, I have laid hold upon thy skirt, for I know not whither to look for the money but to thee; so discharge thou the rest of my debt for me, in accordance with thy wonted generosity, and make me thy freed slave.' Thereupon Yehya bowed his head and wept; then he said to a page, 'Harkye, boy, the Commander of the Faithful gave our slave-girl Denanir a jewel of great price: go thou to her and bid her send it us.' The page went out and presently returned with the jewel, whereupon quoth Yehya, 'O Mensour, I bought this jewel of the merchants for the Commander of the Faithful, for two hundred thousand dinars, and he gave it to our slave-girl Denanir the lutanist. When he sees it with thee, he will know it and spare thy life and do thee honour for our sake; and now thy money is complete.'

So Salih took the money and the jewel and carried them to the Khalif, together with Mensour; but on the way, he heard the latter repeat this verse, applying it to his own case:

It was not love, indeed, my feet to them that led; Nay, but because the stroke of th' arrows I did dread.

When Salih heard this, he marvelled at the baseness and ingratitude of Mensour's nature, and turning upon him, said, 'There is none on the face of the earth better than the Barmecides, nor any baser nor more depraved than thou; for they bought thee off from death and saved thee from destruction, giving thee what should deliver thee; yet thou thankest them not nor praisest them, neither acquittest thee after the manner of the noble; nay, thou requitest their benevolence with this speech.' Then he went to Er Reshid and acquainted him with all that had passed; and he marvelled at the generosity and benevolence of Yehya ben Khalid and the baseness and ingratitude of Mensour and bade restore the jewel to Yehya, saying, 'That which we have given, it befits not that we take again.' Night cccbi.

So Salih returned to Yehya and acquainted him with Mensour's ill conduct; whereupon, 'O Salih,' replied he, 'when a man is in distress, sick at heart and distracted with melancholy thought, he is not to be blamed for aught that falls from him; for it comes not from the heart.' And he fell to seeking excuse for Mensour. But Salih wept [in telling the tale] and exclaimed, 'Never shall the revolving sphere bring forth into being the like of thee, O Yehya! Alas, that one of such noble nature and generosity should be buried beneath the earth!' And he repeated the following verses:

Hasten to do the kindnesses thou hast a mind unto; For bounty is not possible at every tide and hour.

How many a man denies his soul to do the generous deed, To which it's fain, till lack of means deprive him of the power!

THE GENEROUS DEALING OF YEHYA BEN KHALID WITH A MAN WHO FORGED A LETTER IN HIS NAME.

There was between Yehya ben Khalid and Abdallah ben Malik el Khuzaï[1] a secret enmity, the reason whereof was that Haroun er Reshid loved the latter with an exceeding love, so that Yehya and his sons were wont to say that he had bewitched the Khalif; and thus they abode a long while, with rancour in their hearts, till it fell out that the Khalif invested Abdallah with the government of Armenia and sent him thither. Soon after he had established himself in his seat of government, there came to him one of the people of Irak, a man of excellent parts and good breeding, who had lost his wealth and wasted his substance, and his estate was come to nought; so he forged a letter to Abdallah in Yehya's name and set out therewith for Armenia. When he came to the governor's gate, he gave the letter to one of the chamberlains, who carried it to his master. Abdallah read it and considering it attentively, knew it to be forged; so he sent for the man, who presented himself before him and called down blessings upon him and praised him and those of his court. Quoth Abdallah to him, 'What moved thee to weary thyself thus and bring me a forged letter? But be of good heart; for we will not disappoint thy travail.' 'God prolong the life of our lord the Vizier!' replied the other. 'If my coming irk thee, cast not about for a pretext to repel me, for God's earth is wide and the Divine Provider liveth. Indeed, the letter I bring thee from Yehya ben Khalid is true and no forgery.' Quoth Abdallah, 'I will write a letter to my

[1] Intendant of the palace to Haroun er Reshid and captain of his guards.

agent at Baghdad and bid him enquire concerning the letter. If it be true, as thou sayest, I will bestow on thee the government of one of my cities; or, if thou prefer a present, I will give thee two hundred thousand dirhems, besides horses and camels of price and a robe of honour. But, if the letter prove a forgery, I will have thee beaten with two hundred blows of a stick and thy beard shaven.'

Accordingly, he bade confine him in a privy chamber and furnish him therein with all he needed, till his case should be made manifest. Then he despatched a letter to his agent at Baghdad, to the following purport: 'There is come to me a man with a letter purporting to be from Yehya ben Khalid. Now I have my doubts of this letter: so delay thou not, but go thyself and learn the truth of the case and let me have an answer in all speed.' When the letter reached the agent, he mounted at once and betook himself to the house of Yehya ben Khalid, whom he found sitting with his officers and boon-companions. So he gave him the letter and he read it and said to the agent, 'Come back to me to-morrow, against I write thee an answer.' Night cccbii.

When the agent had gone away, Yehya turned to his companions and said, 'What doth he deserve who forgeth a letter in my name and carrieth it to my enemy?' They all answered, saying this and that, each proposing some kind of punishment; but Yehya said, 'Ye err in that ye say and this your counsel is of the meanness and baseness of your spirits. Ye all know the close favour of Abdallah with the Khalif and what is between him and us of despite and enmity; and now God the Most High hath made this man an intermediary, to effect a reconciliation between us, and hath appointed him to quench the fire of hate in our hearts, which hath been growing this score years; and by his means our differences shall be accorded. Wherefore it behoves me to requite him by confirming his

expectation and amending his estate; so I will write him a letter to Abdallah, to the intent that he may use him with increase of honour and liberality.'

When his companions heard what he said, they called down blessings on him and marvelled at his generosity and the greatness of his magnanimity. Then he called for paper and ink and wrote Abdallah a letter in his own hand, to the following effect: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Thy letter hath reached me (may God give thee long life!) and I have read it and rejoice in thy health and well-being. It was thy thought that yonder worthy man had forged a letter in my name and that he was not the bearer of any message from me; but the case is not so, for the letter I myself wrote, and it was no forgery; and I hope, of thy courtesy and benevolence and the nobility of thy nature, that thou wilt fulfil this generous and excellent man of his hope and wish and use him with the honour he deserves and bring him to his desire and make him the special object of thy favour and munificence. Whatever thou dost with him, it is to me that thou dost it, and I am beholden to thee accordingly.' Then he superscribed the letter and sealing it, delivered it to the agent, who despatched it to Abdallah.

When the latter read it, he was charmed with its contents and sending for the man, said to him, 'Now will I give thee which thou wilt of the two things I promised thee.' 'The gift were more acceptable to me than aught else,' replied the man; whereupon Abdallah ordered him two hundred thousand dirhems and ten Arab horses, five with housings of silk and other five with richly ornamented saddles of state, besides twenty chests of clothes and ten mounted white slaves and a proportionate quantity of jewels of price. Moreover, he bestowed on him a dress of honour and sent him to Baghdad in great state. When he came thither, he repaired to Yehya's house, before he

went to his own folk, and sought an audience of him. So the Chamberlain went in to Yehya and said to him, 'O my lord, there is one at our door who craves speech of thee; and he is a man of apparent wealth and consideration, comely of aspect and attended by many servants.' Yehya bade admit him; so he entered and kissed the ground before him. 'Who art thou?' asked Yehya; and he answered, 'O my lord, I am one who was dead from the tyranny of fortune; but thou didst raise me again from the grave of calamities and preferredst me to the paradise of [my] desires. I am he who forged a letter in thy name and carried it to Abdallah ben Malik el Khuzaï.' 'How hath he dealt with thee,' asked Yehya, 'and what did he give thee?' Quoth the man, 'He hath made me rich and overwhelmed me with presents and favours, thanks to thee and thy great generosity and magnanimity and to thine exceeding goodness and abounding munificence and thine all-embracing liberality. And now, behold, I have brought all that he gave me, and it is at thy door; for it is thine to command, and the decision is in thy hand.' 'Thou hast done me better service than I thee,' rejoined Yehya; 'and I owe thee thanks without stint and abundant largesse, for that thou hast changed the enmity that was between me and yonder man of worship into love and friendship. Wherefore I will give thee the like of what Abdallah gave thee.' Then he ordered him money and horses and apparel, such as Abdallah had given him; and thus that man's fortune was restored to him by the munificence of these two generous men.

THE KHALIF EL MAMOUN AND THE STRANGE DOCTOR.

It is said that there was none, among the Khalifs of the house of Abbas, more accomplished in all branches of knowledge than El Mamoun. On two days in each week, he was wont to preside at conferences of the learned, when the doctors and theologians met and sitting, each in his several rank and room, disputed in his presence. One day, as he sat thus, there came into the assembly a stranger, clad in worn white clothes, and sat down in an obscure place, behind the doctors of the law. Then the assembled scholars began to speak and expound difficult questions, it being the custom that the various propositions should be submitted to each in turn and that whoso bethought him of some subtle addition or rare trait, should make mention of it. So the question went round till it came to the stranger, who spoke in his turn and made a goodlier answer than that of any of the doctors; and the Khalif approved his speech and bade advance him to a higher room. When the second question came round to him, he made a still more admirable answer, and the Khalif ordered him to be preferred to a yet higher place. When the third question reached him, he made answer more justly and appropriately than on the two previous occasions, and El Mamoun bade him come up and sit near himself. When the conference broke up, water was brought and they washed their hands; after which food was set on and they ate. Then the doctors arose and withdrew; but El Mamoun forbade the stranger to depart with them and calling him to himself, entreated him with especial favour and promised him honour and benefits.

Night cccviii.

Presently, they made ready the banquet of wine; the fair-faced boon-companions came and the cup went round

amongst them, till it came to the stranger, who rose to his feet and said, 'If the Commander of the Faithful permit me, I will say one word.' 'Say what thou wilt,' answered the Khalif. Quoth the stranger, 'Verily, the Exalted Intelligence[1] (whose eminence God increase!) knoweth that his slave was this day, in the august assembly, one of the unknown folk and of the meanest of the company, and the Commander of the Faithful distinguished him and brought him near to himself, little as was the wit he showed, preferring him above the rest and advancing him to a rank whereto his thought aspired not: and now he is minded to deprive him of that small portion of wit that raised him from obscurity and augmented him, after his littleness. God forfend that the Commander of the Faithful should envy his slave what little he hath of understanding and worth and renown! But, if his slave should drink wine, his reason would depart from him and ignorance draw near to him and steal away his good breeding; so would he revert to that low degree, whence he sprang, and become contemptible and ridiculous in the eyes of the folk. I hope, therefore, that the August Intelligence, of his power and bounty and royal generosity and magnanimity, will not despoil his slave of this jewel.'

When the Khalif heard his speech, he praised him and thanked him and making him sit down again in his place, showed him high honour and ordered him a present of a hundred thousand dinars. Moreover he mounted him upon a horse and gave him rich apparel; and in every assembly he exalted him and showed him favour over all the other doctors, till he became the highest of them all in rank.

[1] *i.e.* the Khalif.

ALI SHAR AND ZUMURRUD.

There lived once, of old days, in the land of Khorassan, a merchant called Mejdeddin, who had great wealth and many slaves and servants, black and white; but he was childless until he reached the age of threescore, when God the Most High vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Ali Shar. The boy grew up like the moon on the night of its full, and when he came to man's estate and was endowed with all kinds of perfection, his father fell sick of a mortal malady and calling his son to him, said to him, 'O my son, the hour of my death is at hand, and I desire to give thee my last injunctions.' 'And what are they, O my father?' asked Ali. 'O my son,' answered Mejdeddin, 'I charge thee, be not [too] familiar with any and eschew what leads to evil and mischief. Beware lest thou company with the wicked; for he is like the blacksmith; if his fire burn thee not, his smoke irks thee: and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

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

And what another saith:

Men are a latent malady; Count not on them, I counsel thee.
An if thou look into their case, They're full of guile and perfidy.

And yet a third:

The company of men will profit thee in nought, Except to pass away the time in idle prate;
So spare thou to converse with them, except it be For gain of lore and wit or mending of estate.

And a fourth:

If a quickwitted man have made proof of mankind, I have eaten of them, where but tasted hath he,
And have seen their affection but practice and nought But hypocrisy found their religion to be.'

'O my father,' said Ali, 'I hear and obey: what more shall I do?' 'Do good when thou art able thereto,' answered his father; 'be ever courteous and succourable to men and profit by all occasions of doing a kindness; for a design is not always easy of accomplishment; and how well saith the poet:

'Tis not at every time and season that to do Kind offices, indeed, is easy unto you;
So, when the occasion serves, make haste to profit by't, Lest by and by the power should fail thee thereunto.'

'I hear and obey,' answered Ali; 'what more?' 'Be mindful of God,' continued Mejdeddin, 'and He will be mindful of thee. Husband thy wealth and squander it not; for, if thou do, thou wilt come to have need of the least of mankind. Know that the measure of a man's worth is according to that which his right hand possesses: and how well saith the poet:

Night cccix.

If wealth should fail, there is no friend will bear me company, But whilst my substance yet abounds, all men are friends to me.
How many a foe for money's sake hath companied with me! How many a friend for loss thereof hath turned mine enemy!'

'What more?' asked Ali. 'O my son,' said Mejdeddin, 'take counsel of those who are older than thou and hasten not to do thy heart's desire. Have compassion on those that are below thee, so shall those that are above thee have compassion on thee; and oppress none, lest God set over thee one who shall oppress thee. How well saith the poet:

Add others' wit to thine and counsel still ensue ; For that the course of right is not concealed from two.
One mirror shows a man his face, but, if thereto Another one he add, his nape he thus can view.

And as saith another :

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

And yet another :

Do no oppression, whilst the power thereto is in thine hand ; For still in peril of revenge the sad oppressor goes.
Thine eyes will sleep anon, what while the opprest, on wake, call down Curses upon thee, and God's eye shuts never in repose.

Beware of drinking wine, for it is the root of all evil: it does away the reason and brings him who uses it into contempt; and how well saith the poet:

By Allah, wine shall never invade me, whilst my soul Endureth in my body and my thoughts my words control !
Not a day long will I turn me to the zephyr-freshened bowl, And for friend I'll choose him only who of wine-bibbing is whole.

This, then,' added Mejdeddin, 'is my charge to thee; keep it before thine eyes, and may God stand to thee in my stead.' Then he swooned away and kept silence awhile. When he came to himself, he besought pardon of God and making the profession of the Faith, was admitted to the mercy of the Most High. His son wept and lamented for him and made due preparation for his burial. Great and small attended him to the grave and the readers recited the Koran about his bier; nor did Ali Shar omit aught of what was due to the dead. Then they prayed over him and committed him to the earth, graving these words upon his tomb:

Created of the dust thou wast and cam'st to life And eloquence didst learn and spokest many a word ;
Then to the dust again returnedst and wast dead, As 'twere from out the dust, indeed, thou'dst never stirred.

His son Ali Shar grieved sore for him and mourned him after the wont of men of condition; nor did he cease therefrom till his mother died also, not long afterward, when he did with her as he had done with his father. Then he sat in the shop, selling and buying and consorting with none of God's creatures, in accordance with his father's injunction.

On this wise he abode for a year, at the end of which time there came in to him certain whoreson fellows by craft and companied with him, till he turned with them to lewdness and swerved from the right way, drinking wine in goblets and frequenting the fair night and day; for he said in himself, 'My father amassed this wealth for me, and if I spend it not, to whom shall I leave it? By Allah, I will not do save as saith the poet:

If all the days of thy life thou get And heap up treasure, to swell thy hoard,
When wilt thou use it and so enjoy That thou hast gathered and gained and stored?'

Then he ceased not to squander his wealth all tides of the day and watches of the night, till he had made away with it all and abode in evil case and troubled at heart. So he sold his shop and lands and so forth, and after this he sold the clothes off his body, leaving himself but one suit. Then drunkenness left him and thought came to him, and he fell into melancholy.

One day, when he had sat from day-break to mid-afternoon without breaking his fast, he said in himself, 'I will go round to those on whom I spent my wealth: it may be one of them will feed me this day.' So he went the round of them all; but, as often as he knocked at any one's door,

Night cccx.

the man denied himself and hid from him, till he was consumed with hunger. Then he betook himself to the bazaar, where he found a crowd of people, assembled in a ring round somewhat, and said in himself, 'I wonder what ails the folk to crowd together thus? By Allah, I will not remove hence, till I see what is within yonder ring!' So he made his way into the ring and found that the crowd was caused by a damsel exposed for sale. She was five feet high, slender of shape, rosy-cheeked and high-bosomed and surpassed all the people of her time in beauty and grace and elegance and perfection; even as saith one, describing her:

As she wished, she was created, after such a wise that lo! She in beauty's mould was fashioned, perfect, neither less nor mo'.
Loveliness itself enamoured of her lovely aspect is; Coyness decks her and upon her, pride and pudour sweetly show.
In her face the full moon glitters and the branch is as her shape; Musk her breath is, nor midst mortals is her equal, high or low.
'Tis as if she had been moulded out of water of pure pearls; In each member of her beauty is a very moon, I trow.

And her name was Zumurrud.

When Ali Shar saw her, he marvelled at her beauty and grace and said, 'By Allah, I will not stir hence till I see what price this girl fetches and know who buys her!' So he stood with the rest of the merchants, and they thought he had a mind to buy her, knowing the wealth he had inherited from his parents. Then the broker stood at the damsel's head and said, 'Ho, merchants! Ho, men of wealth! Who will open the biddings for this damsel, the mistress of moons, the splendid pearl, Zumurrud the Curtain-maker, the aim of the seeker and the delight of the desirous? Open the biddings, and on the opener be nor blame nor reproach.'

So one merchant said, 'I bid five hundred dinars for her.' 'And ten,' said another. 'Six hundred,' cried an old

man named Reshideddin, blue-eyed and foul of face. 'And ten,' quoth another. 'I bid a thousand,' rejoined Reshideddin; whereupon the other merchants were silent and the broker took counsel with the girl's owner, who said, 'I have sworn not to sell her save to whom she shall choose; consult her.' So the broker went up to Zumurrud and said to her, 'O mistress of moons, yonder merchant hath a mind to buy thee.' She looked at Reshideddin and finding him as we have said, replied, 'I will not be sold to a grey-beard, whom decrepitude hath brought to evil plight. Bravo, quoth I, for one who saith:

I asked her for a kiss one day; but she my hoary head Saw, though of wealth and worldly good I had great plentihead;
So, with a proud and flouting air, her back she turned on me And, "No, by Him who fashioned men from nothingness!" she said.
"Now, by God's truth, I never had a mind to hoary hairs, And shall my mouth be stufled, forsooth, with cotton, ere I'm dead?"'

'By Allah,' quoth the broker, 'thou art excusable, and thy value is ten thousand dinars!' So he told her owner that she would not accept of Reshideddin, and he said, 'Ask her of another.' Thereupon another man came forward and said, 'I will take her at the same price.' She looked at him and seeing that his beard was dyed, said, 'What is this lewd and shameful fashion and blackening of the face of hoariness?' And she made a great show of amazement and repeated the following verses:

A sight, and what a sight, did such an one present To me! A neck, to beat with shoes, by Allah, meant!
And eke a beard for lice a coursing-ground that was And brows for binding on of ropes all crook'd and bent.[1]
Thou that my cheeks and shape have ravished, with a lie Thou dost disguise thyself and reck'st not, impudent;

[1] *i.e.* As if he were an old Bedouin, with forehead disfigured by the friction of the rope of camel's hair, which is part of the Bedouin head-dress.

Dyeing thy hoary hairs disgracefully with black[1] And hiding what appears, with fraudulent intent;
As of the puppet-men thou wert, with one beard go'st And with another com'st again, incontinent.

And how well saith another:

Quoth she to me, "I see thou dy'st thy hoariness;" and I, "I do but hide it from thy sight, O thou my ear and eye!"[2]
She laughed out mockingly and said, "A wonder 'tis indeed! Thou so aboundest in deceit that even thy hair 's a lie."

'By Allah,' quoth the broker, 'thou hast spoken truly!' The merchant asked what she said: so the broker repeated the verses to him, and he knew that she was in the right and desisted from buying her. Then another came forward and would have bought her at the same price; but she looked at him and seeing that he had but one eye, said, 'This man is one-eyed; and it is of such as he that the poet saith:

Consort not with him that is one-eyed a day, And be on thy guard 'gainst his mischief and lies:
For God, if in him aught of good had been found, Had not curst him with blindness in one of his eyes.'

Then the broker brought her another bidder and said to her, 'Wilt thou be sold to this man?' She looked at him and seeing that he was short of stature and had a beard that reached to his navel, said, 'This is he of whom the poet speaks, when he says:

I have a friend, who has a beard, that God Caused flourish without profit, till, behold,
'Tis, as it were, to look upon, a night Of middle winter, long and dark and cold.'

'O my lady,' said the broker, 'look who pleases thee of

[1] Mohammed said, "Change the whiteness of your hair, but not with anything black." Henna is the approved hairdye for a true-believer; it changes the hair to a reddish-brown.

[2] *i.e.* thou that art as dear to me as my sight and hearing.

these that are present, and point him out, that I may sell thee to him.' So she looked round the ring of merchants, examining them one by one, till her eyes rested on Ali Shar. His sight cost her a thousand sighs and her heart was taken with him; for that he was passing fair of favour and more pleasant than the northern zephyr; and she said, 'O broker, I will be sold to none but my lord there, him of the handsome face and slender shape, whom the poet describes in the following verses:

They showed thy lovely face and railed At her whom ravishment assailed.
Had they desired to keep me chaste, Thy face so fair they should have veiled.

None shall possess me but he,' added she; 'for his cheek is smooth and the water of his mouth sweet as Selsebil;[1] his sight is a cure for the sick and his charms confound poet and proser, even as saith one of him:

The water of his mouth is wine, and very musk The fragrance of his breath; his teeth are camphor white.
Rizwan hath put him out from Paradise, for fear The black-eyed girls of heaven be tempted with the wight.
Men blame him for his pride; but the full moon's excuse, How proud soe'er it be, finds favour in our sight.

Him of the curling locks and rose-red cheeks and enchanting glances, of whom saith the poet:

A slender loveling promised me his favours fair and free; So my heart's restless and my eye looks still his sight to see.
His eyelids warranted to me the keeping of his troth; But how shall they, that bankrupt[2] are, fulfil their warranty?

And as saith another:

"The script of whiskers on his cheek," quoth they, "is plain to see: How canst thou then enamoured be of him, and whiskered he?"

[1] A fountain of Paradise.

[2] *Syn.* languishing (*munkesir*).

Quoth I, "Have done with blame and leave your censuring, I pray. An if it be a very script, it is a forgery.
Lo, in the gathering of his cheeks the meads of Eden be, And more by token that his lips are Kauther,[1] verily."

When the broker heard the verses she repeated on the charms of Ali Shar, he marvelled at her eloquence, no less than at the brightness of her beauty; but her owner said to him, 'Marvel not at her beauty, that shames the sun of day, nor that her mind is stored with the choicest verses of the poets; for, besides this, she can repeat the glorious Koran, according to the seven readings, and the august Traditions, after the authentic text; and she writes the seven hands and is versed in more branches of knowledge than the most learned doctor. Moreover, her hands are better than gold and silver; for she makes curtains of silk and sells them for fifty dinars each; and it takes her eight days to make a curtain.' 'Happy the man,' exclaimed the broker, 'who hath her in his house and maketh her of his privy treasures!' And her owner said, 'Sell her to whom she will.' So the broker went up to Ali Shar and kissing his hands, said to him, 'O my lord, buy thou this damsel, for she hath made choice of thee.' Then he set forth to him all her charms and accomplishments, and added, 'I give thee joy, if thou buy her, for she is a gift from Him who is no niggard of His giving.'

Ali bowed his head awhile, laughing to himself and saying inwardly, 'Up to now I have not broken my fast; yet I am ashamed to own before the merchants that I have no money wherewith to buy her.' The damsel, seeing him hang down his head, said to the broker, 'Take my hand and lead me to him, that I may show myself to him and tempt him to buy me; for I will not be sold to any but him.' So the broker took her hand and stationed her before Ali Shar, saying, 'What is thy pleasure, O my

[1] A river of Paradise.

lord?' But he made him no answer, and the girl said to him, 'O my lord and darling of my heart, what ails thee that thou wilt not bid for me? Buy me for what thou wilt, and I will bring thee good fortune.' Ali raised his eyes to her and said, 'Must I buy thee perforce? Thou art dear at a thousand dinars.' 'Then buy me for nine hundred,' answered she. 'Nay,' rejoined he; and she said, 'Then for eight hundred;' and ceased not to abate the price, till she came to a hundred dinars. Quoth he, 'I have not quite a hundred dinars.' 'How much dost thou lack of a hundred?' asked she, laughing. 'By Allah,' replied he, 'I have neither a hundred dinars, nor any other sum; for I own neither white money nor red, neither dinar nor dirhem. So look out for another customer.' When she knew that he had nothing, she said to him, 'Take me by the hand and carry me aside into a passage, as if thou wouldst examine me privily.' He did so and she took from her bosom a purse containing a thousand dinars, which she gave him, saying, 'Pay down nine hundred to my price and keep the rest to provide us withal.'

He did as she bade him and buying her for nine hundred dinars, paid down the price from the purse and carried her to his house, which when she entered, she found nothing but bare floors, without carpets or vessels. So she gave him other thousand dinars, saying, 'Go to the bazaar and buy three hundred dinars' worth of furniture and vessels for the house and three dinars' worth of meat and drink, also a piece of silk, the size of a curtain, and gold and silver thread and [sewing] silk of seven colours.' He did her bidding, and she furnished the house and they sat down to eat and drink; after which they went to bed and took their pleasure, one of the other. And they lay the night embraced and were even as saith the poet: Night ccccxii.

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain; For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo, whilst I slept, in dreams I saw thee lying by my side And from thy lips the sweetest, sure, of limpid springs did drain.
Yea, true and certain all I saw is, as I will avouch, And 'spite the envier, thereto I surely will attain.
There is no goodlier sight, indeed, for eyes to look upon, Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their twinned delight, Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain,
Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire, But on cold iron smite the folk who chide at them in vain.
Thou, that for loving censurest the votaries of love, Canst thou assain a heart diseased or heal a cankered brain?
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true, I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

They lay together till the morning and love for the other was stablished in the heart of each of them. On the morrow, Zumurrud took the curtain and embroidered it with coloured silks and gold and silver thread, depicting thereon all manner birds and beasts; nor is there in the world a beast but she wrought on the curtain the semblant thereof. Moreover, she made thereto a band, with figures of birds, and wrought at it eight days, till she had made an end of it, when she trimmed it and ironed it and gave it to Ali, saying, 'Carry it to the bazaar and sell it to one of the merchants for fifty dinars; but beware lest thou sell it to a passer-by, for this would bring about a separation between us, because we have enemies who are not unmindful of us.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and repairing to the bazaar, sold the curtain to a merchant, as she bade him; after which he bought stuff for another curtain and silk and gold and silver thread as before and what they needed of food, and brought all this to her, together with the rest of the money.

They abode thus a whole year, and every eight days she made a curtain, which he sold for fifty dinars. At the end

of the year, he went to the bazaar, as usual, with a curtain, which he gave to the broker; and there came up to him a Christian, who bid him threescore dinars for the curtain; but he refused, and the Christian went on to bid higher and higher, till he came to a hundred dinars and bribed the broker with ten gold pieces. So the latter returned to Ali and told him of this and urged him to accept the offer, saying, 'O my lord, be not afraid of this Christian, for he can do thee no hurt.' The merchants also were instant with him to accept the offer; so he sold the curtain to the Christian, though his heart misgave him, and taking the price, set off to return home.

Presently, he found the Christian walking behind him; so he said to him, 'O Nazarene, why dost thou follow me?' 'O my lord,' answered the other, 'I have a need at the end of the street, may God never bring thee to need!' Ali went on, but, as he came to the door of his house, the Christian overtook him; so he said to him, 'O accursed one, what ails thee to follow me wherever I go?' 'O my lord,' replied the other, 'give me a draught of water, for I am athirst; and with God the Most High be thy reward!' Quoth Ali in himself, 'Verily, this man is a tributary [of the Khalifate] and seeks a draught of water of me; by Allah, I will not disappoint him!' So he entered the house and took a mug of water; but Zumurrud saw him and said to him, 'O my love, hast thou sold the curtain?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'To a merchant or a passer-by?' asked she. 'For my heart forethinketh me of separation.' 'To a merchant, of course,' replied he. But she rejoined, 'Tell me the truth of the case, that I may order my affair; and what wantest thou with the mug of water?' 'To give the broker to drink,' answered he; whereupon she exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And repeated the following verses:

Night ccccxiii.

O thou that seekest parting, stay thy feet: Let clips and kisses not delude thy spright.
Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then he took the mug and going out, found the Christian within the vestibule and said to him, 'O dog, how darest thou enter my house without my leave?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'there is no difference between the door and the vestibule and I will not budge hence, save to go out; and I am beholden to thee for thy kindness.' Then he took the mug and emptying it, returned it to Ali, who took it and waited for him to go; but he did not move. So Ali said to him, 'Why dost thou not rise and go thy way?' 'O my lord,' answered the Christian, 'be not of those that do a kindness and after make a reproach of it, nor of those of whom saith the poet:

Gone, gone are they who, if thou stoodst before their door of old, Had, at thy seeking, handselled thee with benefits untold!
And if thou stoodest at their door who follow after them, These latter would begrudge to thee a draught of water cold.

O my lord,' continued he, 'I have drunk, and now I would have thee give me to eat of whatever is in the house, though it be but a crust of bread or a biscuit and an onion.' 'Begone, without more talk,' replied Ali; 'there is nothing in the house.' 'O my lord,' insisted the Christian, 'if there be nothing in the house, take these hundred dinars and fetch us somewhat from the market, if but a cake of bread, that bread and salt may pass between us.' With this, quoth Ali to himself, 'This Christian is surely mad; I will take the hundred dinars and bring somewhat worth a couple of dirhems and laugh at him.' 'O my lord,' added the Christian, 'I want but somewhat to stay my hunger, were it but a cake of dry bread and an onion; for the best food is that which does away hunger, not rich meats; and how well saith the poet:

A cake of dry stale bread will hunger put to flight: Why then are grief and care so heavy on my spright?
Death is, indeed, most just, since, with an equal hand, Khalif and beggar-wretch, impartial, it doth smite.'

Then said Ali, 'Wait here, whilst I lock the saloon and fetch thee somewhat from the market.' 'I hear and obey,' said the Christian. So Ali shut up the saloon and locking the door with a padlock, put the key in his pocket: after which he repaired to the market and bought fried cheese and virgin honey and bananas and bread, with which he returned to the Christian. When the latter saw this, he said, 'O my lord, this is [too] much; thou hast brought enough for half a score men and I am alone; but belike thou wilt eat with me.' 'Eat by thyself,' replied Ali; 'I am full.' 'O my lord,' rejoined the Christian, 'the wise say, "He who eats not with his guest is a base-born churl."'

When Ali heard this, he sat down and ate a little with him, after which he would have held his hand: but [whilst he was not looking] the Christian took a banana and peeled it, then, splitting it in twain, put into one half concentrated henbane, mixed with opium, a drachm whereof would overthrow an elephant. This half he dipped in the honey and gave to Ali Shar, saying, 'O my lord, I swear by thy religion that thou shalt take this.' Ali was ashamed to make him forsworn; so he took the half banana and swallowed it; but hardly had it reached his stomach, when his head fell down in front of his feet and he was as though he had been a year asleep. Night ccccxiv.

When the Nazarene saw this, he rose, as he had been a bald wolf or a baited cat, and taking the saloon key, made off at a run, leaving Ali Shar prostrate. Now this Christian was the brother of the decrepit old man who thought to buy Zumurrud for a thousand dinars, but she would none of him and flouted him in verse. He was an

infidel at heart, though a Muslim in outward show, and called himself Reshideddin;[1] and when Zumurrud mocked him and would not accept of him to her lord, he complained to his brother, the aforesaid Christian, Bersoum by name, who said to him, 'Fret not thyself about this affair; for I will make shift to get her for thee, without paying a penny.'

Now he was a skilful sorcerer, crafty and wicked; so he watched his time and played Ali Shar the trick aforesaid; then, taking the key, he went to his brother and told him what had passed, whereupon Reshideddin mounted his mule and repaired with his servants to Ali Shar's house, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, wherewith to bribe the master of police, should he meet him. He unlocked the saloon door, and the men who were with him rushed in upon Zumurrud and seized her, threatening her with death, if she spoke; but they left the house as it was and took nothing therefrom. Moreover, they laid the key by Ali's side and leaving him lying in the vestibule, shut the door on him and went away. The Christian carried the girl to his own house and setting her amongst his women and concubines, said to her, 'O strumpet, I am the old man, whom thou didst reject and lampoon; but now I have thee, without paying a penny.' 'God requite thee, O wicked old man,' replied she, with her eyes full of tears, 'for sundering my lord and me!' 'Wanton doxy that thou art,' rejoined he, 'thou shalt see how I will punish thee! By the virtue of the Messiah and the Virgin, except thou obey me and embrace my faith, I will torture thee with all manner of torture!' 'By Allah,' answered she, 'though thou cut me in pieces, I will not forswear the faith of Islam! It may be God the Most High will bring me speedy relief, for He is all-powerful, and the wise say, "Better hurt in body than in religion."'

[1] *i.e.* Orthodox.

Thereupon the old man called out to his eunuchs and women, saying, 'Throw her down!' So they threw her down and he beat her grievously, whilst she cried in vain for help, but presently stinted and fell to saying, 'God is my sufficiency, and He is indeed sufficient!' till her breath failed her and she swooned away. When he had taken his fill of beating her, he said to the eunuchs, 'Drag her forth by the feet and cast her down in the kitchen, and give her nothing to eat.' They did his bidding, and on the morrow the accursed old man sent for her and beat her again, after which he bade return her to her place. When the pain of the blows had subsided, she said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle! God is my sufficiency and excellent is He in whom I put my trust!' And she called upon our lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) for succour.

Night ccccxv.

Meanwhile, Ali Shar slept on till next day, when the fumes of the henbane quitted his brain and he awoke and cried out, 'O Zumurrud!' But none answered him. So he entered the saloon and found 'the air empty and the place of visitation distant;'[1] whereby he knew that it was the Nazarene, who had played him this trick. And he wept and groaned and lamented and repeated the following verses:

O Fate, thou sparest not nor dost desist from me: Lo, for my soul is racked with dolour and despite!
Have pity, O my lords, upon a slave laid low, Upon the rich made poor by love and its unright.
What boots the archer's skill, if, when the foe draw near, His bowstring snap and leave him helpless in the fight?
And when afflictions press and multiply on man, Ah, whither then shall he from destiny take flight?
How straitly did I guard 'gainst severance of our loves! But, when as Fate descends, it blinds the keenest sight.

[1] These words are a quotation from a well-known piece of verse.

Then he sobbed and repeated these verses also:

Her traces on the encampment's sands a robe of grace bestow: The mourner yearneth to the place where she dwelt whiles ago.
Towards her native land she turns; a camp in her doth raise Longing, whose very ruins now are scattered to and fro.
She stops and questions of the place; but with the case's tongue It answers her, "There is no way to union, I trow.
'Tis as the lost a levin were, that glittered on the camp Awhile, then vanished and to thee appeareth nevermo'."

And he repented, whenas repentance availed him not, and wept and tore his clothes. Then he took two stones and went round about the city, beating his breast with the stones and crying out, 'O Zumurrud!' whilst the children flocked round him, calling out, 'A madman! A madman!' and all who knew him wept for him, saying, 'Yonder is such an one: what hath befallen him?' Thus he did all that day, and when night darkened on him, he lay down in one of the by-streets and slept till morning. On the morrow, he went round about the city with the stones till eventide, when he returned to his house, to pass the night. One of his neighbours, a worthy old woman, saw him and said to him, 'God keep thee, O my son! How long hast thou been mad?' And he answered her with the following verse:

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely mad for her thou lov'st;" and I replied, "Indeed the sweets of life belong unto the raving race.
My madness leave and bring me her for whom ye say I'm mad; And if she heal my madness, spare to blame me for my case."

Therewith she knew him for a lover who had lost his mistress and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! O my son, I would have thee acquaint me with the particulars of thine affliction. Peradventure God may enable me to help thee against it, if it so please Him.' So he told her all that had happened and she said, 'O my son, indeed thou hast

excuse.' And her eyes ran over with tears and she repeated the following verses:

Torment, indeed, in this our world, true lovers do aby; Hell shall not torture them, by God, whenas they come to die!
Of love they died and to the last their passion chastely hid; So are they martyrs, as, indeed, traditions[1] testify.

Then she said, 'O my son, go now and buy me a basket, such as the jewel-hawkers carry, and stock it with rings and bracelets and ear-rings and other women's gear, and spare not money. Bring all this to me and I will set it on my head and go round about, in the guise of a huckstress, and make search for her in all the houses, till I light on news of her, if it be the will of God the Most High.' Ali rejoiced in her words and kissed her hands, then, going out, speedily returned with all she required; whereupon she rose and donning a patched gown and a yellow veil, took a staff in her hand and set out, with the basket on her head.

She ceased not to go from quarter to quarter and street to street and house to house, till God the Most High led her to the house of the accursed Reshideddin the Nazarene. She heard groans within and knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came down and opening the door to her, saluted her. Quoth the old woman, 'I have these trifles for sale: is there any one with you who will buy aught of them?' 'Yes,' answered the girl and carrying her indoors, made her sit down; whereupon all the women came round her and each bought something of her. She spoke them fair and was easy with them as to price, so that they rejoiced in her, because of her pleasant speech and easiness. Meanwhile, she looked about to see who it was she had heard groaning, till her eyes fell on Zumurrud, when she knew her and saw that she was laid prostrate. So she wept and said to the girls, 'O my children, how

Night cccxbi.

[1] Of the Prophet.

comes yonder damsel in this plight?' And they told her what had passed, adding, 'Indeed the thing is not of our choice; but our master commanded us to do this, and he is now absent on a journey.' 'O my children,' said the old woman, 'I have a request to make of you, and it is that you loose this unhappy woman of her bonds, till you know of your lord's return, when do ye bind her again as she was; and you shall earn a reward from the Lord of all creatures.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and loosing Zumurrud, gave her to eat and drink.

Then said the old woman, 'Would my leg had been broken, ere I entered your house!' And she went up to Zumurrud and said to her, 'O my daughter, take heart; God will surely bring thee relief.' Then she told her [privily] that she came from her lord Ali Shar and appointed her to be on the watch that night, saying, 'Thy lord will come to the bench under the gallery and whistle to thee; and when thou hearest him, do thou whistle back to him and let thyself down to him by a rope from the window, and he will take thee and go away.' Zumurrud thanked the old woman, and the latter returned to Ali Shar and told him what she had done, saying, 'Go to-night, at midnight, to such a quarter,—for the accursed fellow's house is there and its fashion is thus and thus. Stand under the window of the upper chamber and whistle; whereupon she will let herself down to thee; then do thou take her and carry her whither thou wilt.' He thanked her for her good offices and repeated the following verses, with the tears running down his cheeks:

Let censors cease to rail and chide and leave their idle prate: My body's wasted and my heart weary and desolate;
And from desertion and distress my tears, by many a chain Of true traditions handed down, do trace their lineage straight.
Thou that art whole of heart and free from that which I endure Of grief and care, cut short thy strife nor question of my state.

A sweet-lipped maiden, soft of sides and moulded well of shape, With her soft speech my heart hath ta'en, ay, and her graceful gait.
My heart, since thou art gone, no rest knows nor my eyes do sleep, Nor can the hunger of my hopes itself with patience sate.
Yea, thou hast left me sorrowful, the hostage of desire, 'Twixt enviers and haters dazed and all disconsolate.
As for forgetting, 'tis a thing I know not nor will know; For none but thou into my thought shalt enter, soon or late.

Then he sighed and shed tears and repeated these also:

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

He waited till the appointed time, then went to the street, where was the Christian's house, and recognizing it from the old woman's description, sat down on the bench under the gallery. Presently, drowsiness overcame him, for it was long since he had slept, for the violence of his passion, and he became as one drunken with sleep. Glory be to Him who sleepeth not!

Meanwhile, chance led thither a certain thief, who had come out that night to steal somewhat and prowled about the skirts of the city, till he happened on Reshideddin's house. He went round about it, but found no way of climbing up into it and presently came to the bench, where he found Ali Shar asleep and took his turban. At that moment, Zumurrud looked out and seeing the thief standing in the darkness, took him for her lord; so she whistled to him and he whistled back to her; whereupon she let herself down to him, with a pair of saddle-bags full of gold. When the robber saw this, he said to himself, 'This is a strange thing, and there must needs be some extraordinary cause to it.' Then, snatching up the saddle-bags, he took Zumurrud on his shoulders and made off with both like the blinding lightning. Night cccxbii.

Quoth she, 'The old woman told me that thou wast

weak with illness on my account; and behold, thou art stronger than a horse.' He made her no reply; so she put her hand to his face and felt a beard like a bath-broom,[1] as he were a hog that had swallowed feathers and they had come out at his gullet; whereat she took fright and said to him, 'What art thou?' 'O strumpet,' answered he, 'I am the sharper Jewan the Kurd, of the band of Ahmed ed Denef; we are forty sharpers, who will all tilt at thy tail this night, from dusk to dawn.' When she heard his words, she wept and buffeted her face, knowing that Fate had gotten the better of her and that there was nothing for it but to put her trust in God the Most High. So she took patience and submitted herself to the ordinance of God, saying, 'There is no god but God! As often as we escape from one trouble, we fall into a worse.'

Now the manner of Jewan's coming thither was thus: he had said to Ahmed ed Denef, 'O captain, I have been here before and know a cavern without the town, that will hold forty souls; so I will go before you thither and set my mother therein. Then will I enter the city and steal somewhat on your account and keep it till you come; so shall you be my guests this day.' 'Do what thou wilt,' replied Ahmed. So Jewan forewent them to the cavern and left his mother there; but, as he came out, he found a trooper lying asleep, with his horse tethered beside him; so he slew him and taking his clothes and arms, hid them with his mother in the cave, where also he tied up the horse. Then he betook himself to the city and prowled about, till he happened on the Christian's house and did with Ali Shar and Zumurrud as we have said. He ceased not to run, with Zumurrud on his back, till he came to the cavern, where he gave her in charge of his mother, saying, 'Keep watch over her till I come back to thee at point of day,' and went away.

[1] Usually made of palm-fibres.

Meanwhile Zumurrud said to herself, 'Now is the time to cast about for a means of escape. If I wait till these forty men come, they will take their turns at me, till they make me like a water-logged ship.' Then she turned to the old woman and said to her, 'O my aunt, wilt thou not come without the cave, that I may louse thee in the sun?' 'Ay, by Allah, O my daughter!' replied the old woman. 'This long time have I been out of reach of the bath; for these hogs cease not to hale me from place to place.' So they went without the cavern, and Zumurrud combed out the old woman's hair and killed the vermin in her head, till this soothed her and she fell asleep; whereupon Zumurrud arose and donning the clothes of the murdered trooper, girt herself with his sword and covered her head with his turban, so that she became as she were a man. Then she took the saddle-bags full of gold and mounted the horse, saying in herself, 'O kind Protector, I adjure thee by the glory of Mohammed, (whom God bless and preserve,) protect me! If I enter the city, belike one of the trooper's folk will see me, and no good will befall me.' So she turned her back on the city and rode forth into the desert.

She fared on ten days, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of its waters, she and her horse; and on the eleventh day, she came in sight of a pleasant and safe city, stablished in good; the season of winter had departed from it with its cold and the spring-tide came to it with its roses and orange-blossoms; its flowers blew bright, its streams welled forth and its birds warbled. As she drew near, she saw the troops and Amirs and notables of the place drawn up before the gate, at which she marvelled and said to herself, 'The people of the city are all collected at the gate: there must needs be a reason for this.' Then she made towards them; but, as she drew near, the troops hastened forward to meet her and dismounting, kissed the

ground before her and said, 'God aid thee, O our lord the Sultan!'

Then the grandees ranked themselves before her, whilst the troops ranged the people in order, saying, 'God aid thee and make thy coming a blessing to the Muslims, O Sultan of all men! God stablish thee, O king of the age and pearl of the day and the time!' 'What ails you, O people of the city?' asked Zumurrud; and the chamberlain answered, 'Verily, He who is no niggard in giving hath been bountiful to thee and hath made thee Sultan of this city and ruler over the necks of all that are therein; for know that it is the custom of the citizens, when their king dies, leaving no son, that the troops should sally forth of the place and abide there three days; and whoever cometh from the quarter whence thou hast come, they make him king over them. So praised be God who hath sent us a well-favoured man of the sons of the Turks; for had a lesser than thou presented himself, he had been Sultan.'

Now Zumurrud was well-advised in all she did; so she said, 'Think not that I am of the common folk of the Turks; nay, I am a man of condition; but I was wroth with my family, so I went forth and left them. See these saddle-bags full of gold I brought with me, that I might give alms thereof to the poor and needy by the way.' So they called down blessings upon her and rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy and she also rejoiced in them and said in herself, 'Now that I have attained to this estate, it may be God will reunite me with my lord in this place, for He can do what He will.' Then the troops escorted her to the city and dismounting, walked before her to the palace. Here she alighted and the Amirs and grandees, taking her under the armpits, carried her into the palace and seated her on the throne; after which they all kissed the ground before her. Then she bade open the treasuries

Night cccxix.

and gave largesse to the troops, who offered up prayers for the continuance of her reign, and all the townsfolk and the people of the kingdom accepted her rule.

She abode thus awhile, ordering and forbidding, and remitted taxes and released prisoners and redressed grievances, so that all the people came to hold her in exceeding reverence and to love her, by reason of her generosity and continence; but, as often as she bethought her of her lord, she wept and besought God to reunite them; and one night, as she was thinking of him and calling to mind the days she had passed with him, her eyes ran over with tears and she repeated the following verses:

My longing, 'spite of time, for thee is ever new; My weeping wounds my lids and tears on tears ensue.
Whenas I weep, I weep for anguish of desire; For grievous severance is a lover's heart unto.

Then she wiped away her tears and rising, betook herself to the harem, where she appointed to the slave-girls and concubines separate lodgings and assigned them pensions and allowances, giving out that she was minded to live apart and devote herself to works of piety. So she betook herself to fasting and praying, till the Amirs said, 'Verily, this Sultan is exceeding devout.' Nor would she suffer any attendants about her, save two little eunuchs, to serve her.

She held the throne thus a whole year, during which time she heard no news of Ali Shar, and this was exceeding grievous to her; so, when her distress became excessive, she summoned her Viziers and chamberlains and bid them fetch architects and builders and make her a tilting-ground, a parasang long and the like broad, in front of the palace. They hastened to do her bidding, and when the place was completed to her liking, she went down into it and they pitched her there a great pavilion,

wherein the chairs of the Amirs were set in their order. Then she bade spread in the tilting-ground tables with all manner rich meats and ordered the grandees to eat. So they ate and she said to them, 'It is my will that, on the first day of each month, ye do on this wise and proclaim in the city that none shall open his shop, but that all the people shall come and eat of the king's banquet, and that whoso disobeyeth shall be hanged over his own door.'

They did as she bade them, and when came the first day of the next month, Zumurrud went down into the tilting-ground and the crier proclaimed aloud, saying, 'Ho, all ye people, great and small, whoso openeth shop or house or magazine shall straightway be hanged over his own door; for it behoves you all to come and eat of the king's banquet.' Then they laid the tables and the people came in troops; so she bade them sit down at the tables and eat their fill of all the dishes. So they sat down and she sat on her chair of estate, watching them, whilst each thought she was looking at none but him. Then they fell to eating and the Amirs said to them, 'Eat and be not ashamed; for this is pleasing to the King.' So they ate their fill and went away, blessing the King and saying, one to the other, 'Never saw we a Sultan that loved the poor as doth this Sultan.' And they wished her length of life, whilst Zumurrud returned to the palace, rejoicing in her device and saying in herself, 'If it please God the Most High, I shall surely by this means happen on news of my lord Ali Shar.'

Night cccxx.

When the first day of the second month came round, she made the banquet as before and the folk came and sat down at the tables, company by company and one by one. As she sat on her throne, at the head of the tables, watching the people eat, her eye fell on Bersoum, the Nazarene who had bought the curtain of Ali Shar; and she knew him and said in herself, 'This is the first of my

solace and of the accomplishment of my desire.' Bersoum came up to the table and sitting down with the rest to eat, espied a dish of sweet rice, sprinkled with sugar; but it was far from him. So he pushed up to it and putting out his hand to it, took it and set it before himself. His next neighbour said to him, 'Why dost thou not eat of what is before thee? Art thou not ashamed to reach over for a dish that is distant from thee?' Quoth Bersoum, 'I will eat of none but this dish.' 'Eat then,' rejoined the other, 'and small good may it do thee!' But another man, a hashish-eater, said, 'Let him eat of it, that I may eat with him.' 'O unluckiest of hashish-eaters,' replied the first speaker, 'this is no meat for thee; it is eating for Amirs. Let it be, that it may return to those for whom it is meant and they eat it.'

But Bersoum heeded him not and putting his hand to the rice, took a mouthful and put it in his mouth. He was about to take a second mouthful, when Zumurrud, who was watching him, cried out to certain of her guards, saying, 'Bring me yonder man with the dish of sweet rice before him and let him not eat the mouthful he hath ready, but throw it from his hand.' So four of the guards went up to Bersoum and throwing the mouthful of rice from his hand, haled him forthright before Zumurrud, whilst all the people left eating and said to one another, 'By Allah, he did wrong in not eating of the food meant for the like of him.' 'For me,' quoth one, 'I was content with this frumenty that is before me.' And the hashish-eater said, 'Praised be God who hindered me from eating of the dish of sweet rice, for I looked for it to stand before him and was only waiting for him to have stayed his hunger of it, to eat with him, when there befell him what we see.' And they said, one to another, 'Wait till we see what befalls him.'

Then said Zumurrud to Bersoum, 'Out on thee, O blue

eyes! What is thy name and why comest thou hither?' But the accursed fellow miscalled himself, having a white turban,[1] and answered, 'O King, my name is Ali; I am a weaver and came hither to trade.' 'Bring me a table of sand and a pen of brass,' quoth Zumurrud, and they brought her what she sought. She levelled the sand and taking the pen, drew a geomantic figure, in the likeness of an ape; then, raising her head, she considered Bersoum straitly and said to him, 'O dog, how darest thou lie to kings? Art thou not a Nazarene, Bersoum by name, and comest thou not hither in quest of somewhat? Speak the truth, or, by the splendour of the Deity, I will strike off thy head!' At this, Bersoum was confounded and the Amirs and bystanders said, 'Verily, the King understands geomancy: blessed be He who hath gifted him!' Then Zumurrud cried out upon Bersoum and said, 'Tell me the truth, or I will make an end of thee!' 'Pardon, O King of the age,' replied Bersoum; 'the table hath told thee aright; thy slave is indeed a Nazarene.' Whereupon all present wondered at the King's skill in geomancy, saying, 'Verily, the King is a diviner, whose like there is not in the world.'

Night ccccxxi.

Then Zumurrud bade flay the Christian and stuff his skin with straw and hang it over the gate of the tilting-ground. Moreover, she commanded to dig a pit without the city and burn his flesh and bones therein and throw over his ashes offal and rubbish. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and did with him as she bade. When the people saw what had befallen the Christian, they said, 'He hath his deserts; but what an unlucky mouthful was that for him!' And another said, 'Be my wife triply divorced if ever I eat of sweet rice as long as I live!' 'Praised be God,' quoth the hashish-eater, 'who saved me from this fellow's fate by hindering me from eating of

[1] The distinctive headdress of the Muslims.

the rice!' Then they all went out, minded thenceforth to leave sitting in the Christian's place, over against the dish of sweet rice.

When the first day of the third month came, they laid the tables as of wont, and Queen Zumurrud came down and sat on her throne, with her guards in attendance on her, fearing her danger. Then the townsfolk entered, as usual, and went round about the tables, looking for the place of the dish of sweet rice, and quoth one to another, 'Hark ye, Hajji Khelef!' 'At thy service, O Hajji Khalid,' answered the other. 'Avoid the dish of sweet rice,' said Khalid, 'and look thou eat not thereof; for if thou do, thou wilt be hanged.' Then they sat down to meat; and as they were eating, Zumurrud chanced to look at the gate of the tilting-ground and saw a man come running in. So she considered him and knew him for Jewan the Kurd.

Now the manner of his coming was on this wise. When he left his mother, he went to his comrades and said to them, 'I had fine purchase yesterday; for I slew a trooper and took his horse. Moreover there fell to me last night a pair of saddle-bags, full of gold, and a girl worth more than the money; and I have left them all with my mother in the cave.' At this they rejoiced and repaired to the cavern at nightfall, whilst he forewent them, that he might fetch them the booty. But he found the place empty and questioned his mother, who told him what had befallen; whereupon he bit his hands for despite and exclaimed, 'By Allah, I will make search for yonder harlot and take her, wherever she is, though it be in the shell of a pistachio-nut, and quench my malice on her!' So he went forth in quest of her and journeyed from place to place, till he came to Queen Zumurrud's city. He found the town deserted and enquiring of some women whom he saw looking from the windows, learnt that it was the Sultan's custom to make a banquet for all the people on the first of each

month and was directed to the tilting-ground, where the feast was spread.

So he came running in and finding no place empty, save that before the dish of sweet rice, took his seat there and put out his hand to the dish; whereupon the folk cried out to him, saying, 'O brother, what wilt thou do?' Quoth he, 'I mean to eat my fill of this dish.' 'If thou eat of it,' rejoined one of the people, 'thou wilt assuredly be hanged.' But Jewan said, 'Hold thy peace and talk not thus.' Then he stretched out his hand to the dish aforesaid and drew it to him.

Now the hashish-eater, of whom we have before spoken, was sitting by him; but when he saw him do this, the fumes of the hashish left his head and he fled from his place and sat down afar off, saying, 'I will have nothing to do with yonder dish.' Then Jewan put out his hand, as it were a crow's foot, and dipping it in the dish, scooped up therewith half the dishful and drew it out, as it were a camel's hoof, and the bottom of the dish appeared. He rolled the rice in his hand, till it was like a great orange, and threw it ravenously into his mouth; and it rolled down his gullet, with a noise like thunder. 'Praised be God,' quoth his neighbour, 'who hath not made me meat before thee; for thou hast emptied the dish at one mouthful.' 'Let him eat,' said the hashish-eater; 'methinks he hath a gallows-face.' Then, turning to Jewan, 'Eat,' added he, 'and small good may it do thee!'

Night cccxxii.

Jewan put out his hand again and taking another mouthful, was rolling it in his hands like the first, when Zumurrud cried out to the guards, saying, 'Bring me yonder man in haste and let him not eat the mouthful in his hand.' So they ran and seizing him, as he bent over the dish, brought him to her, whilst the people exulted over him and said, one to the other, 'He hath his deserts, for we warned him, but he would not take warning. Verily, this

place is fated to be the death of whoso sits therein, and yonder rice is fatal to all who eat of it.'

Then said Zumurrud to Jewan, 'What is thy name and condition and why comest thou hither?' 'O our lord the Sultan,' answered he, 'my name is Othman; I am a gardener and am come hither in quest of somewhat I have lost.' 'Bring me a table of sand,' said Zumurrud. So they brought it, and she took the pen and drawing a geomantic figure, considered it awhile, then raising her head, exclaimed, 'Out on thee, thou sorry knave! How darest thou lie to kings? This sand tells me that thy name is Jewan the Kurd and that thou art by trade a robber, taking men's goods in the way of unright and slaying those whom God hath forbidden to slay, save for just cause.' And she cried out upon him, saying, 'O hog, tell me the truth of thy case or I will cut off thy head!'

When he heard this, he turned pale and his teeth chattered; then, deeming that he might save himself by telling the truth, he replied, 'O King, thou sayst sooth; but I repent at thy hands henceforth and turn to God the Most High!' Quoth she, 'I may not leave a pest in the way of the true-believers.' And she said to her guards, 'Take him and flay him and do with him as ye did by his like last month.' And they did her commandment. When the hashish-eater saw this, he turned his back upon the dish of rice, saying, 'It is unlawful to present my face to thee.' Then, when they had made an end of eating, they dispersed and Zumurrud returned to her palace and dismissed her attendants.

When the fourth month came round, they made the banquet, as of wont, and the folk sat awaiting leave to begin. Presently Zumurrud entered and sitting down on her throne, looked at the tables and saw that room for four people was left void before the dish of rice, at which she wondered. As she sat, looking around, she saw a man

come running in at the gate, who stayed not till he reached the tables and finding no room, save before the dish of rice, took his seat there. She looked at him and knowing him for the accursed Christian, who called himself Reshideddin, said in herself, 'How blessed is this device of the food, into whose toils this infidel hath fallen!'

Night cccxiii. Now the manner of his coming was extraordinary, and it was on this wise. When he returned from his journey, the people of the house told him that Zumurrud was missing and with her a pair of saddle-bags full of gold; whereupon he rent his clothes and buffeted his face and plucked out his beard. Then he despatched his brother Bersoum in quest of her, and when he was weary of awaiting news of him, he went forth himself, to seek for him and for Zumurrud, and fate led him to the latter's city. He entered it on the first day of the month and finding the streets deserted and the shops shut, enquired of the women at the windows, who told him that the King made a banquet on the first of each month for the people, all of whom were bound to attend it, nor might any abide in his house or shop that day; and they directed him to the tilting-ground.

So he betook himself thither and sitting down before the rice, put out his hand to eat thereof, whereupon Zumurrud cried out to her guards, saying, 'Bring me him who sits before the dish of rice.' So they laid hands on him and brought him before Queen Zumurrud, who said to him, 'Out on thee! What is thy name and occupation, and what brings thee hither?' 'O King of the age,' answered he, 'my name is Rustem and I have no occupation, for I am a poor dervish.' Then said she to her attendants, 'Bring me table of sand and pen of brass.' So they brought her what she sought, as usual; and she took the pen and drawing a geomantic figure, considered it awhile, then raising her head to Reshideddin, said, 'O dog, how darest

thou lie to kings? Thy name is Reshideddin the Nazarene; thou art outwardly a Muslim, but a Christian at heart, and thine occupation is to lay snares for the slave-girls of the Muslims and take them. Speak the truth, or I will smite off thy head.' He hesitated and stammered, then replied, 'Thou sayest sooth, O King of the age!' Whereupon she commanded to throw him down and give him a hundred blows on each sole and a thousand on his body; after which she bade flay him and stuff his skin with hards of flax and dig a pit without the city, wherein they should burn his body and cast dirt and rubbish on his ashes. They did as she bade them and she gave the people leave to eat.

So they ate their fill and went their ways, whilst Zumurrud returned to her palace, thanking God for that He had solaced her heart of those who had wronged her. Then she praised the Creator of heaven and earth and repeated the following verses:

Lo, these erst had power and used it with oppression and unright! In a little, their dominion was as if it ne'er had been.
Had they used their power with justice, they had been repaid the like;
But they wrought unright and Fortune guerdoned them with dole and teen.
So they perished and the moral of the case bespeaks them thus, "This is what your crimes have earnt you: Fate is not to blame, I ween."

Then she called to mind her lord Ali Shar and wept, but presently recovered herself and said, 'Surely God, who hath given mine enemies into my hand, will vouchsafe me speedy reunion with my beloved; for He can do what He will and is generous to His servants and mindful of their case!' Then she praised God (to whom belong might and majesty) and besought forgiveness of Him, submitting herself to the course of destiny, assured that to each beginning there is an end, and repeating the saying of the poet: Night cccxiv.

Be at thine ease, for all things' destiny Is in His hands who fashioned earth and sea.
Nothing of Him forbidden shall befall Nor aught of Him appointed fail to thee.

And what another saith:

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.

And a third:

Be mild what time thou'rt ta'en with anger and despite And patient, if there fall misfortune on thy head.
Indeed, the nights are quick and great with child by Time And of all wondrous things are hourly brought to bed.

And a fourth:

Take patience, for therein is good; an thou be learn'd in it, Thou shalt be calm of soul nor drink of anguish any whit.
And know that if, with a good grace, thou do not thee submit, Yet must thou suffer, will or nill, that which the Pen hath writ.

She abode thus another whole month's space, judging the folk and commanding and forbidding by day, and by night weeping and bewailing her separation from her lord Ali Shar. On the first day of the fifth month, she bade spread the banquet as usual and sat down at the head of the tables, whilst the people awaited the signal to fall to, leaving the place before the dish of rice vacant. She sat with eyes fixed upon the gate of the tilting-ground, noting all who entered and saying, 'O Thou that restoredst Joseph to Jacob and didst away the affliction of Job, vouchsafe of Thy power and greatness to restore me my lord Ali Shar; for Thou canst all things! O Lord of all creatures, O Guide of the erring, O Hearer of those that cry, O Answerer of prayer, answer Thou my prayer, O Lord of all creatures!'

Hardly had she made an end of her prayer, when she

saw entering the gate a young man, in shape like the willow wand, the comeliest and most accomplished of youths, save that his face was sallow and his form wasted. He came up to the tables and finding no seat vacant save before the dish of rice, sat down there; whereupon Zumurrud's heart fluttered and observing him narrowly, she knew him for her lord Ali Shar and was like to have cried out for joy, but restrained herself, fearing disgrace before the folk. Her bowels were troubled and her heart throbbed; but she concealed that which she suffered.

Now the manner of his coming thither was on this wise. When he awoke and found himself lying on the bench outside the Christian's house, with his head bare, he knew that some one had come upon him and robbed him of his turban, whilst he slept. So he spoke the word, which whoso saith shall never be confounded, that is to say, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!' and going back to the old woman's house, knocked at the door. She came out and he wept before her, till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he told her all that had passed, and she blamed him and chid him for his heedlessness, saying, 'Thou hast but thyself to thank for thine affliction and calamity.' And she gave not over reproaching him, till the blood streamed from his nostrils and he again fainted away. When he revived, he saw her weeping over him; so he bewailed himself and repeated the following verses: Night cccxxb.

How bitter is parting to friends, and how sweet Reunion to lovers, for sev'rance that sigh!
May God all unite them and watch over me, For I'm of their number and like for to die.

The old woman mourned over him and said to him, 'Sit here, whilst I go in quest of news and return to thee in haste.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he. So she left him and was absent till midday, when she returned and

said to him, 'O Ali, I fear me thou must die in thy grief; thou wilt never see thy beloved again save on Es Sirat;[1] for the people of the Christian's house, when they arose in the morning, found the window giving on the garden broken in and Zumurrud missing, and with her a pair of saddle-bags, full of the Christian's money. When I came thither, I found the Master of Police and his officers standing at the door, and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

When he heard this, the light in his eyes was changed to darkness and he despaired of life and made sure of death; nor did he leave weeping, till he lost his senses. When he recovered, love and longing were sore upon him; there befell him a grievous sickness and he kept his house a whole year; during which time the old woman ceased not to bring him doctors and ply him with diet-drinks and make him broths, till his life returned to him. Then he recalled what had passed and repeated the following verses:

Union is parted; in its stead, of grief I am possessed: My tears flow still, my heart's on fire for yearning and unrest.
Longing redoubles on a wight who hath no peace, so sore Of love and wakefulness and pain he's wasted and oppressed.
Lord, I beseech Thee, if there be relief for me in aught, Vouchsafe it, whilst a spark of life abideth in my breast.

When the second year began, the old woman said to him, 'O my son, all this thy sadness and sorrowing will not bring thee back thy mistress. Rise, therefore, take heart and seek for her in the lands: haply thou shalt light on some news of her.' And she ceased not to exhort and encourage him, till he took heart and she carried him to the bath. Then she made him drink wine and eat fowls, and thus she did with him for a whole month, till he re-

[1] The bridge that spans Hell, finer than a hair and sharper than a sword, and over which all must pass on the Day of Judgment.

gained strength and setting out, journeyed without ceasing till he arrived at Zumurrud's city, when he went to the tilting-ground and sitting down before the dish of sweet rice, put out his hand to eat of it.

When the folk saw this, they were concerned for him and said to him, 'O young man, eat not of that dish, for whoso eats thereof, misfortune befalls him.' 'Leave me to eat of it,' answered he, 'and let them do with me as they list, so haply I may be at rest from this weary life.' Then he ate a first mouthful, and Zumurrud was minded to have him brought to her; but bethought her that belike he was anhungred and said in herself, 'It were well to let him eat his fill.' So he went on eating, whilst the people looked on in astonishment, waiting to see what would befall him; and when he had done, Zumurrud said to certain of her eunuchs, 'Go to yonder youth that eateth of the rice and bring him to me on courteous wise, saying, 'The King would have speech of thee on some slight matter.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and going up to Ali Shar, said to him, 'O my lord, the King desires the favour of a word with thee, and let thy heart be easy.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and followed the eunuchs, who carried him before Zumurrud, whilst the people said to one another, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what the King will do with him!' And others said, 'He will do him nought but good; for, were he minded to harm him, he had not suffered him to eat his fill.'

Night cccxxvi.

When he came before Zumurrud, he saluted and kissed the earth before her, whilst she returned his greeting and received him with honour. Then said she to him, 'What is thy name and condition and what brought thee hither?' 'O King,' answered he, 'my name is Ali Shar; I am of the sons of the merchants of Khorassan and the object of my coming hither is to seek for a slave-girl whom I

have lost; for she was dearer to me than my sight and my hearing, and indeed my soul cleaves to her, since I lost her.' And he wept, till he swooned away. She caused sprinkle rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when she said, 'Bring me the table of sand and the pen.' So they brought them and she took the pen and drew a geomantic figure, which she considered awhile; then, 'Thou hast spoken sooth,' quoth she. 'God will grant thee speedy reunion with her; so be not troubled.' Then she bade her chamberlain carry him to the bath and after clothe him in a handsome suit of royal apparel, and mount him on one of the best of the King's horses and bring him to the palace at end of day. So the chamberlain took him away, whilst the folk said to one another, 'What makes the King deal thus courteously with yonder youth?' And one said, 'Did I not tell you that he would do him no hurt? For he is fair of aspect; and this I knew, when the King suffered him to eat his fill.' And each said his say; after which they all dispersed and went their ways.

As for Zumurrud, she thought the night would never come, that she might be alone with the beloved of her heart. As soon as it was dusk, she withdrew to her sleeping-chamber and made as she were overcome with sleep; and it was her wont to suffer none to pass the night with her, save the two little eunuchs that waited upon her. After a little, she sent for Ali Shar and sat down upon the bed, with candles burning at her head and feet and the place lighted with hanging lamps of gold that shone like the sun. When the people heard of her sending for Ali Shar, they marvelled and said, 'Algates, the King is enamoured of this young man, and to-morrow he will make him commander of the troops.' And each thought his thought and said his say. When they brought him in to her, he kissed the earth before her and called down blessings on her, and she said in herself, 'Needs must I

jest with him awhile, ere I make myself known to him.' Then said she to him, 'O Ali, hast thou been to the bath?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered he. 'Come, eat of this fowl and meat and drink of this wine and sherbet of sugar,' said she; 'for thou art weary; and after come hither.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and did as she bade him.

When he had made an end of eating and drinking, she said to him, 'Come up with me on the couch and rub my feet.' So he fell to rubbing her feet and legs and found them softer than silk. Then said she, 'Go higher with the rubbing;' and he, 'Pardon me, O my lord, I will go no higher than the knee.' Whereupon, 'Wilt thou gainsay me?' quoth she. 'It shall be an ill-omened night for thee! Nay, but it behoves thee to do my bidding and I will make thee my minion and appoint thee one of my Amirs.' 'And in what must I do thy bidding, O King of the age?' asked Ali. 'Put off thy trousers,' answered she, 'and lie down on thy face.' Quoth he, 'That is a thing I never in my life did; and if thou force me thereto, I will accuse thee thereof before God on the Day of Resurrection. Take all thou hast given me and let me go to my own city.' And he wept and lamented. But she said, 'Put off thy trousers and lie down on thy face, or I will strike off thy head.' So he did as she bade him and she mounted upon his back. And he felt what was softer than silk and fresher than cream and said in himself, 'Of a truth, this King is better than all the women!'

Night cccxxvii.

She abode awhile on his back, then turned over on to the ground, and he said [in himself], 'Praised be God! It seems his yard is not in point.' Then said she, 'O Ali, it is of the wont of my yard that it standeth not on end, except it be rubbed with the hand; so, come, rub it with thy hand, till it be in point, else will I kill thee.' So saying, she lay down on her back and taking his hand, set

it to her kaze, and he found it a kaze softer than silk, white, plump and great, resembling for heat the hot room of the bath or the heart of a lover, whom passion hath wasted. Quoth Ali in himself, 'Verily, this King hath a kaze. This is a wonder of wonders!' And desire got hold on him and his yard stood on end to the utmost; which when Zumurrud saw, she burst out laughing and said to him, 'O my lord, all this betideth and yet thou knowest me not!' 'And who art thou, O King?' asked he; and she said, 'I am thy slave-girl Zumurrud.'

When he knew this and was certified that she was indeed his very slave-girl Zumurrud, he threw himself upon her, as the lion upon the sheep, and kissed her and embraced her. Then he thrust his yard into her poke and stinted not to play the porter at her door and the Imam[1] at her prayer-niche, whilst she with him ceased not from inclination and prostration and rising up and sitting down,[2] accompanying her canticles of praise[3] with motitations and other amorous gestures, till the [two little] eunuchs [aforesaid] heard [the noise]. So they came and peeping out from behind the curtains, saw the King lying [on his back] and Ali Shar upon him, thrusting and thronging amain, whilst she puffed and blew and wriggled. Quoth they, 'This is no man's wriggle: belike this King is a woman.' But they concealed their affair and discovered it to none.

On the morrow, Zumurrud summoned all the troops and the grandees of the realm and said to them, 'I am minded to journey to this man's country; so choose you a deputy, who shall rule over you, till I return to you.' And they

[1] Or leader of the people at prayer, who stands opposite the niche sunk into or painted on the wall of the mosque, to indicate the direction of Mecca.

[2] All this is an audacious parody of the Muslim ritual of prayer.

[3] *Lit.* "exclamations of 'Glory be to God!'" which are of frequent recurrence in the Mohammedan formulas of prayer. See last note.

answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then she applied herself to making ready for the journey and furnished herself with victual and treasure and camels and mules and so forth; after which she set out with Ali Shar, and they fared on, till they arrived at his native place, where he entered his house and gave alms and largesse. God vouchsafed him children by her, and they both lived the happiest of lives, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. Glory be to God, the Eternal without cease, and praised be He in every case!

THE LOVES OF JUBEIR BEN UMEIR AND THE LADY BUDOUR.

It is related that the Khalif Haroun er Reshid was restless one night and could not sleep; so that he ceased not to toss from side to side for very restlessness, till, growing weary of this, he called Mesrour and said to him, 'O Mesrour, look what may solace me of this my restlessness.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mesrour, 'wilt thou walk in the garden of the palace and divert thyself with the sight of its flowers and gaze upon the stars and note the beauty of their ordinance and the moon among them, shining on the water?' 'O Mesrour,' replied the Khalif, 'my heart inclines not to aught of this.' 'O my lord,' continued Mesrour, 'there are in thy palace three hundred concubines, each of whom hath her separate lodging. Do thou bid each retire into her own apartment and then go thou about and divert thyself with gazing on them, without their knowledge.' 'O Mesrour,' answered Haroun, 'the palace is mine and the girls are my property: moreover, my soul inclineth not to aught of this.' 'O my lord,' said Mesrour, 'summon the doctors and sages and poets and bid them contend before thee in argument and recite verses and tell thee tales and

anecdotes.' 'My soul inclines not to aught of this,' answered the Khalif; and Mesrour said, 'O my lord, bid the minions and wits and boon-companions attend thee and divert thee with witty sallies.' 'O Mesrour,' replied the Khalif, 'indeed my soul inclineth not to aught of this.' 'Then, O my lord,' rejoined Mesrour, 'strike off my head; maybe, that will dispel thine unease and do away the restlessness that is upon thee.'

Night cccxxviii.

At this the Khalif laughed and said, 'See which of the boon-companions is at the door.' So Mesrour went out and returning, said, 'O my lord, he who sits without is Ali ben Mensour of Damascus, the Wag.' 'Bring him to me,' quoth Haroun; and Mesrour went out and returned with Ibn Mensour, who said, on entering, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' The Khalif returned his salutation and said to him, 'O Ibn Mensour, tell us one of thy stories.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said the other, 'shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have only heard tell?' 'If thou have seen aught worth telling,' replied the Khalif, 'let us hear it; for report is not like eye-witness.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said Ibn Mensour, 'lend me thine ear and thy heart.' 'O Ibn Mensour,' answered the Khalif, 'behold, I am listening to thee with mine ears and looking at thee with mine eyes and attending to thee with my heart.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Ibn Mensour, 'that I receive a yearly allowance from Mohammed ben Suleiman el Hashimi, Sultan[1] of Bassora; so I went to him, once upon a time, as usual, and found him about to ride out a-hunting. I saluted him, and he returned my salute and would have me mount and go a-hunting with him; but I said, "O my lord, I cannot ride; so do thou stablish me in the guest-house and give thy chamberlains and officers charge over me." And he did so and departed

[1] *i.e.* governor.

for the chase. His officers entreated me with the utmost honour and hospitality; but I said in myself, "By Allah, it is a strange thing that I should have used so long to come from Baghdad to Bassora, yet know no more of the town than from the palace to the garden and back again! When shall I find an occasion like this to view the different parts of Bassora? I will rise at once and walk forth alone and divert myself and digest what I have eaten."

So I donned my richest clothes and went out a-walking in Bassora. Now it is known to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, that it hath seventy streets, each seventy parasangs long of Irak measure; and I lost myself in its by-streets and thirst overcame me. Presently, as I went along, I came to a great door, on which were two rings of brass, with curtains of red brocade drawn before it. Over the door was a trellis, covered with a creeping vine, that hung down and shaded the doorway; and on either side the porch was a stone bench. I stood still, to gaze upon the place, and presently heard a sorrowful voice, proceeding from a mourning heart, warbling melodiously and chanting the following verses:

My body is become th' abode of sickness and dismay, By reason of a fawn, whose land and stead are far away.
O zephyr of the waste, that roused my pain in me, I pray, By God your Lord, to him, with whom my heart dwells, take your way
And prithee chide him, so reproach may soften him, maybe.
And if to you he do incline and hearken, then make fair Your speech and tidings unto him of lovers, 'twixt you, bear.
Yea, and vouchsafe to favour me with service debonair And unto him I love make known my case and my despair,
Saying, "What ails thy bounden slave that, for estrangement, she
Should die without offence of her committed or despite Or disobedience or breach of plighted faith or slight
Or fraud or turning of her heart to other or unright?" And if he smile, with dulcet speech bespeak ye thus the wight:
"An thou thy company wouldst grant to her, 'twere well of thee;

For she for love of thee 's distraught, as needs must be the case; Her eyes are ever void of sleep; she weeps and wails apace."
If he show favour and incline to grant the wished-for grace, 'Tis well and good: but, if ye still read anger in his face,
Dissemble then with him and say, "We know her not, not we."

Quoth I to myself, "Verily, if the owner of this voice be fair, she unites beauty of person and eloquence and sweetness of voice." Then I drew near the door, and raising the curtain little by little, beheld a damsel, white as the moon, when it rises on its fourteenth night, with joined eyebrows and languorous eyelids, breasts like twin pomegranates and dainty lips like twin corn-marigolds,[1] mouth as it were Solomon's seal and teeth that sported with the reason of rhymester and proser, even as saith the poet:

O mouth of the belovéd, who set thy pearls arow And eke with wine fulfilled thee and camomiles like snow,
And lent the morning-glory unto thy smile, and who Hath with a padlock sealed thee of rubies sweet of show?
Whoso but looks upon thee is mad for joy and pride. How should it fare with him, then, who kisseth thee, heigho!

And as saith another:

O pearls of the teeth of my love, Have ruth on cornelian and spare
To vie with it! Shall it not find You peerless and passing compare?

In fine, she comprised all manner of loveliness and was a ravishment to men and women, nor could the beholder satisfy himself with the sight of her beauty; for she was as the poet hath said of her:

[1] The word *ucwaneh*, here used in the dual number, usually designates the teeth, in its common meaning of "camomile-flower": but the lips are here expressly mentioned, and this fact, together with that of the substitution, in the Breslau edition, of the word *akikan* (two cornelians or rubies) for *ucwanetan* (two camomiles), as in the Calcutta and Boulac editions, shows that the word is intended to be taken in its rarer meaning of "corn-marigold."

If, face to face, she do appear, unveiled, she slays; and if She turn her back, she makes all men her lovers far and near.
Like the full moon and eke the sun she is, but cruelty And inhumanity belong not to her nature dear.
The garden-gates of Paradise are opened with her shift And the full moon revolveth still upon her neck-rings' sphere.

As I looked at her through the opening of the curtains, she turned and seeing me standing at the door, said to her maid, "See who stands at the door." So the maid came up to me and said, "O old man, hast thou no shame, or do gray hairs and impudence go together?" "O my mistress," answered I, "I confess to the gray hairs, but as for unmannerliness, I think not to be guilty of it." "And what can be more unmannerly," rejoined her mistress, "than to intrude thyself upon a house other than thy house and gaze on a harem other than thy harem?" "O my lady," said I, "I have an excuse." "And what is thine excuse?" asked she. Quoth I, "I am a stranger and well nigh dead of thirst." "We accept thine excuse," answered she and calling one of her maids, said to her, "O Lutf, give him to drink in the golden tankard." Night cccxxix.

So she brought me a tankard of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, full of water mingled with odoriferous musk and covered with a napkin of green silk; and I addressed myself to drink and was long about it, casting stolen glances at her the while, till I could prolong it no longer. Then I returned the tankard to the maid, but did not offer to go; and she said to me, "O old man, go thy way." "O my lady," replied I, "I am troubled in mind." "For what?" asked she; and I answered, "For the uncertainty of fortune and the vicissitudes of events." "Well mayst thou be troubled thereanent," replied she, "for Time[1] is the mother of wonders. But what hast thou seen of them, that thou shouldst muse upon?" Quoth I, "I was think-

[1] *Syn.* Fortune (*ez zeman*).

ing of the former owner of this house, for he was my good friend in his lifetime." "What was his name?" asked she. "Mohammed ben Ali the Jeweller," answered I; "and he was a man of great wealth. Did he leave any children?" "Yes," said she; "he left a daughter, Budour by name, who inherited all his wealth." Quoth I, "Meseems thou art his daughter?" "Yes," answered she, laughing; then added, "O old man, thou hast talked long enough; go thy ways." "Needs must I go," replied I; "but I see thou art out of health. Tell me thy case; it may be God will give thee solace at my hands." "O old man," rejoined she, "if thou be a man of discretion, I will discover to thee my secret; but first tell me who thou art, that I may know whether thou art worthy of confidence or not; for the poet saith:

None keepeth secrets but the man who's trusty and discreet: A secret's ever safely placed with honest folk and leal;
For me, my secrets I preserve within a locked-up house, Whose key is lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal."

"O my lady," answered I, "an thou wouldst know who I am, I am Ali ben Mensour of Damascus, the Wag, boon-companion to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid." When she heard my name, she came down from her seat and saluting me, said, "Welcome, O Ibn Mensour! Now will I tell thee my case and entrust thee with my secret. Know that I am a lover separated from her beloved." "O my lady," rejoined I, "thou art fair and shouldst love none but the fair. Whom then dost thou love?" Quoth she, "I love Jubeir ben Umeir es Sheibani, Prince of the Benou Sheiban;"[1] and she described to me a young man than whom there was none handsomer in Bassora. "O my lady," asked I, "have letters or interviews passed between you?"

[1] One of the tribes of the Arabs and that to which the renowned Maan ben Zaïdeh (see Vol. III. p. 317) belonged.

"Yes," answered she; "but his love for me was of the tongue, not of the heart; for he kept not his covenant nor was faithful to his troth," "And what was the cause of your separation?" asked I.

"I was sitting one day," replied she, "whilst my maid here combed my hair. When she had made an end of combing it, she plaited my tresses, and my beauty and grace pleased her; so she bent down to me and kissed my cheek. At that moment, he came in, unawares, and seeing her kiss my cheek, turned away in anger, vowing eternal separation and repeating the following verses:

If any share with me in her I love, incontinent, I'll cast her off from me and be to live alone content.
A mistress, sure, is nothing worth, if, in the way of love, She wish for aught but that to which the lover doth consent.

And from that time to this, O Ibn Mensour," continued she, "he hath neither written to me nor answered my letters." "And what thinkest thou to do?" asked I. Quoth she, "I have a mind to send him a letter by thee. If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred dinars; and if not, then a hundred for thy pains." "Do what seemeth good to thee," answered I. So she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Whence this estrangement and despite, belovéd of my soul? Whither have kindliness and love between us taken flight?
What makes thee with aversion turn from me? Indeed, thy face Is not the face I used to know, when we our troth did plight.
Belike, the slanderers have made a false report of me, And thou inclin'dst to them, and they redoubled in despite.
If thou believedst their report, far, far it should have been From thee, that art too whole of wit at such a bait to bite!
Yea, I conjure thee by thy life, tell me what thou hast heard: For lo! thou knowest what was said and wilt not do unright.
If aught I've said that angered thee, a speech of change admits: Ay, and interpreting, I trow, may change its meaning quite,

Were it a word sent down from God; for even the Pentateuch Hath falsified and garbled been of this and th' other wight.[1]
Whilst, as for lies, how many were of folk before us told! Joseph to Jacob was traduced and blackened in his sight.
Yea, for the slanderer and myself and thee, an awful day Of standing up shall come, when God to judgment all shall cite.

Then she sealed the letter and gave it to me. I took it and carried it to the house of Jubeir ben Umeir, whom I found absent hunting. So I sat down, to wait for him, and presently he returned; and when I saw him come riding up, my wit was confounded by his beauty and grace. As soon as he saw me sitting at the door, he dismounted and coming up to me, saluted and embraced me; and meseemed I embraced the world and all that therein is. Then he carried me into his house and seating me on his own couch, called for food. So they brought a table of khelenj[2] wood of Khorassan, with feet of gold, whereon were all manner of meats, fried and roasted and the like. So I seated myself at the table and examining it, found the following verses engraved upon it:

Night cccxxx.

Weep for the cranes that erst within the porringers did lie And for the stews and partridges evanished heave a sigh!
Mourn for the younglings of the grouse; lament unceasingly, As, for the omelettes and the fowls browned in the pan, do I.
How my heart yearneth for the fish that, in its different kinds, Upon a paste of wheaten flour, lay hidden in the pie!
Praiséd be God for the roast meat, as in the dish it lay, With pot-herbs, soaked in vinegar, in porringers hard by,
And eke the rice with buffaloes' milk dressed and made savoury, Wherein the hands were plunged and arms were buried bracelet high!
O soul, I rede thee patient be, for God is bountiful: What though thy fortunes straitened be, His succour's ever nigh.

[1] The Muslims accuse the Jews of having corrupted the Pentateuch and others of their sacred books, even as the Christians the Gospels (see Vol. II. page 149, note), by expunging or altering the passages foretelling the coming of Mohammed.

[2] See Vol. I. p. 135, note 2.

Then said Jubeir, "Put thy hand to our food and ease our heart by eating of our victual." "By Allah," answered I, "I will not eat a mouthful, till thou grant me my desire." "What is thy desire?" asked he. So I brought out the letter and gave it to him; but, when he had read it, he tore it in pieces and throwing it on the floor, said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, I will grant thee whatever thou askest, save this that concerns the writer of this letter, for I have no answer to make to her." At this, I rose in anger; but he caught hold of my skirts, saying, "O Ibn Mensour, I will tell thee what she said to thee, for all I was not present with you." "And what did she say to me?" asked I. "Did she not say to thee," rejoined he, 'If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred dinars; and if not, a hundred for thy pains'?" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "Abide with me this day and eat and drink and make merry, and thou shalt have five hundred dinars."

So I sat with him and ate and drank and made merry and entertained him with converse; after which I said to him, "O my master, is there no music in thy house?" "Indeed," answered he, "we have drunk this long while without music." Then he called out, saying, "Ho, Shejeret ed Durr!" Whereupon a slave-girl answered him from her chamber and came in to us, with a lute of Indian make, wrapped in a silken bag. She sat down and laying the lute in her lap, preluded in one-and-twenty modes, then, returning to the first, sang the following verses to a lively measure:

Who hath not tasted the sweet and the bitter of passion, I trow, The presence of her whom he loves from her absence he hardly shall know.
So he, from the pathway of love who hath wandered and fallen astray, The smooth knoweth not from the rough of the roadway, wherein he doth go.
I ceased not the votaries of love and of passion to cross and gainsay, Till I too must taste of its sweet and its bitter, its gladness and woe.

Then I drank a full draught of the cup of its bitters, and humbled was I, And thus to the bondman of Love and its freedman therein was brought low.
How many a night have I passed with the loved one, carousing with him, Whilst I drank from his lips what was sweeter than nectar and colder than snow!
How short was the life of the nights of our pleasance! It seemed to us still, No sooner was night fallen down than the day-break to eastward did glow.
But Fortune had vowed she would sever our union and sunder our loves; And now, in good sooth, she her vow hath accomplished. Fate ordered it so;
Fate ordered it thus, and against its ordaining, appeal there is none; For who shall gainsay a supreme one's commandments or cause him forego?

Hardly had she made an end of these verses, when Jubeir gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon; whereupon, "May God not punish thee, O old man!" exclaimed the damsel. "This long time have we drunk without music, for fear the like of this should befall our master. But go now to yon chamber and sleep there." So I went to the chamber in question and slept till the morning, when a page brought me a purse of five hundred dinars and said to me, "This is what my master promised thee; but return thou not to her who sent thee and let it be as if neither thou nor we had heard of this affair." "I hear and obey," answered I and taking the purse, went my way.

However, I said in myself, "The lady will have expected me since yesterday; and by Allah, I must needs return to her and tell her what passed between me and him; or she will curse me and all who come from my country." So I went to her and found her standing behind the door; and when she saw me, she said, "O Ibn Mensour, thou hast gotten me nought." "Who told thee of this?" asked I; and she answered, "O Ibn Mensour, yet another thing hath been revealed to me; and it is that, when thou gavest him the letter, he tore it in pieces and throwing it

on the floor, said to thee, 'O Ibn Mensour, ask me anything but what relates to the writer of this letter; for I have no reply to make to her.' Then didst thou rise from beside him in anger; but he laid hold of thy skirts, saying, 'Abide with me to-day, for thou art my guest, and eat and drink and make merry; and thou shalt have five hundred dinars.' So thou didst sit with him, eating and drinking and making merry, and entertainedst him with converse; and a slave-girl sang such an air and such verses, whereupon he fell down in a swoon." Quoth I, "Wast thou then with us?" "O Ibn Mensour," replied she, "hast thou not heard the saying of the poet:

The heart of the lover hath eyes, well I wot, That see what the eyes of beholders see not.

But," added she, "day and night alternate not upon aught, but they change it." Then she raised her eyes to heaven and said, "O my God and my Master and my Lord, like as Thou hast afflicted me with love of Jubeir ben Umeir, even so do Thou afflict him with love of me and transfer the passion from my heart to his!" Then she gave me a hundred dinars for my pains and I took it and returned to the palace, where I found the Sultan come back from hunting; so I took my pension of him and made my way back to Baghdad. Night cccxxxi.

Next year, I repaired to Bassora, as usual, to seek my pension, and the Sultan paid it to me; but, as I was about to return to Baghdad, I bethought me of the lady Budour and said to myself, "By Allah, I must needs go and see what hath befallen between her and her lover!" So I went to her house and finding the porch swept and sprinkled and slaves and servants and pages standing before the door, said to myself, "Most like grief hath broken the lady's heart and she is dead, and some Amir or other hath taken up his abode in her house." So I went on to

Jubeir's house, where I found the benches of the porch broken down and no pages at the door, as of wont, and said to myself, "Belike he too is dead." Then I took up my station before the door of his house and with my eyes running over with tears, bemoaned it in the following verses:

Lords, that are gone, but whom my heart doth evermore ensue, Return; so shall my festal days return to me with you.
I stand before your sometime stead, bewailing your abodes, With quivering lids, from which the tears rain down, like summer dew.
Weeping, I question of the house and ruins, "Where is he Who was the source of benefits and bounties ever new?"
[They answer] "Go thy ways, for those thou lov'st from the abode Departed are and neath the dust are buried; so adieu!"
May God not stint us of the sight [in dreams] of all their charms Nor be their noble memories aye absent from men's view!

As I was thus bewailing the folk of the house, there came a black slave thereout and said to me, "Hold thy peace, O old man! May thy mother be bereft of thee! What ails thee to bemoan the house thus?" Quoth I, "I knew it of yore, when it belonged to a good friend of mine." "What was his name?" asked the slave. And I answered, "Jubeir ben Umeir the Sheibani." "And what hath befallen him?" rejoined he. "Praised be God, he is yet in the enjoyment of wealth and rank and prosperity, except that God hath stricken him with love of a damsel called the lady Budour; and he is overcome with love of her, that, for the violence of his passion and torment, he is like a great rock overthrown. If he hunger, he saith not, 'Feed me;' nor, if he thirst, doth he say, 'Give me to drink.'" Quoth I, "Ask leave for me to go in to him." "O my lord," said the slave, "wilt thou go in to him who understands or to him who understands not?" "I must needs see him, whatever be his case," answered I.

So he went in and presently returned with permission for me to enter, whereupon I went in to Jubeir and found him like a rock overthrown, understanding neither sign

nor speech. I spoke to him, but he answered me not; and one of his servants said to me, "O my lord, if thou know aught of verse, repeat it, and raise thy voice; and he will be aroused by this and speak with thee." So I recited the following verses:

Budour's love hast thou forgotten or art deaf still to her sighs? Wak'st anights, or do thine eyelids close upon thy sleeping eyes?
If thy tears flow fast and freely, night and day long, torrent-wise, Know thou, then, that thou shalt sojourn evermore in Paradise.[1]

When he heard this, he opened his eyes and said, "Welcome, O Ibn Mensour! Verily, the jest is become earnest." "O my lord," said I, "is there aught thou wouldst have me do for thee?" "Yes," answered he; "I would fain write her a letter and send it to her by thee. If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars; and if not, two hundred for thy pains." "Do what seemeth good to thee," said I. So he called to one of his slave-girls for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses: Night cccxxxii.

By Allah, O my lady, have ruth on me, I pray! For all my wit by passion is ravished quite away.
Yea, love for thee and longing have mastered me and clad With sickness and bequeathed me abjection and dismay.
Aforetime, O my lady, by love I set small store And deemed it light and easy to bear, until to-day;
But now that Love hath shown me the billows of its sea, Those I excuse, repenting, who languish neath its sway.
Vouchsafe thy grace to grant me; or, if thou wilt me slay, At least, then, for thy victim forget thou not to pray.

Then he sealed the letter and gave it to me. I took it and repairing to Budour's house, raised the curtain of the door, little by little, as of wont, and looking in, saw ten damsels, high-bosomed maids, like moons, and the lady Budour sitting in their midst, as she were the full moon among stars or the sun, when it is clear of clouds; nor

[1] *i.e.* as a martyr.

was there on her any trace of pain or care. As I looked and marvelled at her case, she turned and seeing me standing at the gate, said to me, "Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O Ibn Mensour! Come in." So I entered and saluting her, gave her the letter. She read it and laughing, said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, the poet lied not when he said:

The love of thee I will endure with patient constancy, Till such time as a messenger shall come to me from thee.

O Ibn Mensour," added she, "I will write thee an answer, that he may give thee what he promised thee." "May God requite thee with good!" answered I. So she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

How comes it my vows I fulfilled and thou, thou wast false to thy plight? Thou sawst me do justice and truth, and yet thou thyself didst unright.
'Twas thou that begannest on me with rupture and rigour, I trow; 'Twas thou that play'dst foul, and with thee began the untruth and the slight.
Yea, still I was true to my troth and cherished but thee among men And ceased not thine honour to guard and keep it unsullied and bright,
Till tidings of fashions full foul I heard, as reported of thee, And saw with mine eyes what thou didst, to harm me and work me despite.
Shall I then abase my estate, that thine may exalted become? By God, hadst thou generous been, the like should thy conduct requite!
So now unto solace I'll turn my heart, with forgetting, from thee And washing my hands of thy thought, blot despair for thee out of my spright.

"By Allah, O my lady," said I, "there needs but the reading of this letter, to kill him!" So I tore it in pieces and said to her, "Write him other than this." "I hear and obey," answered she and wrote the following:

Indeed, I am consoled and sleep is pleasant to mine eyes; For I have heard what came of prate of slanderers and spies.
My heart my summons hath obeyed, thee to forget; and eke My lids to stint from wake for thee have seen it good and wise.

He lies who says that severance is bitterness; for me I find its taste none otherwise than sweet; indeed he lies.
I've grown to turn away from those who bring me news of thee And look upon it as a thing at which my gorge doth rise.
Behold, I have forgotten thee with every part of me. Let then the spy and who will else this know and recognize.

"By Allah, O my lady," said I, "when he reads these verses, his soul will depart his body!" "O Ibn Mensour," quoth she, "is passion indeed come to such a pass with him as thou sayst?" "Had I said more than this," replied I, "it were but the truth: but clemency is of the nature of the noble." When she heard this, her eyes filled with tears and she wrote him a letter, O Commander of the Faithful, there is none in thy court could avail to write the like of it; and therein were these verses:

How long shall this despite continue and this pride? My enviers' spite on me thou sure hast satisfied.
Mayhap, I did amiss and knew it not; so tell Me what thou heardst of me, that did our loves divide.
Even as I welcome sleep unto mine eyes and lids, So would I welcome thee, belovéd, to my side.
I've quaffed the cup of love for thee, unmixed and pure; So, if thou see me drunk, reproach me not nor chide.

Then she sealed it and gave it to me; and I said, "O my lady, this thy letter will heal the sick and ease the thirsting soul." Then I took it and was going away, when she called me back and said to me, "Tell him that I will be his guest this night." At this I rejoiced greatly and carried the letter to Jubeir, whom I found with his eyes fixed on the door, expecting the reply. I gave him the letter and he opened and read it, then gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, did she indeed write this letter with her hand and touch it with her fingers?" "O my lord," answered I, "do folk write with their feet?" And by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had not

Night cccxxxiii.

done speaking, when we heard the chink of her anklets in the vestibule and she entered.

When he saw her, he sprang to his feet, as though there ailed him nought, and embraced her as the letter Lam embraces Alif,[1] and the malady, that would not depart, ceased from him. Then he sat down, but she abode standing and I said to her, "O my lady, why dost thou not sit?" Quoth she, "I will not sit, O Ibn Mensour, save on a condition that is between us." "And what is that?" asked I. "None may know lovers' secrets," answered she and putting her mouth to Jubeir's ear, whispered to him; whereupon, "I hear and obey," replied he and rising, said somewhat privily to one of his slaves, who went out and returned, in a little, with a Cadi and two witnesses. Then Jubeir rose and taking a bag containing a hundred thousand dinars, said, "O Cadi, marry me to this young lady and write this sum to her dowry." Quoth the Cadi to her, "Say, 'I consent to this.'" "I consent to this," said she, whereupon he drew up the contract of marriage, and she opened the bag and taking out a handful of gold, gave it to the Cadi and the witnesses and handed the rest to Jubeir.

Then the Cadi and the witnesses withdrew, and I sat with them, in mirth and delight, till the most part of the night was past, when I said in myself, "These are lovers and have been this long while separated. I will go now and sleep in some place afar from them and leave them to be private, one with the other." So I rose, but she laid hold of my skirts, saying, "What thinkest thou to do?" "So and so," answered I. But she rejoined, "Sit still;

[1] The force of this comparison will best appear from the actual figuration of the Arabic double-letter Lam-Alif, (*Anglicé* LA.) which is made up of the two letters, ل, (initial form of Lam) and ا (final of Alif,) and is written thus, لا.

when we would be rid of thee, we will send thee away." So I sat with them till near daybreak, when she said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, go to yonder chamber; for we have furnished it for thee, and it is thy sleeping-place." So I went thither and slept till morning, when a page brought me basin and ewer, and I made the ablution and prayed the morning-prayer. Then I sat down and presently, Jubeir and his mistress came out of the bath in the house, wringing their locks.

I wished them good morning and gave them joy of their safety and reunion, saying to Jubeir, "That which began with constraint hath ended in contentment." "Thou sayst well," replied he; "and indeed thou deservest largesse." And he called his treasurer and bade him fetch three thousand dinars. So he brought a purse containing that sum, and Jubeir gave it to me, saying, "Favour us by accepting this." "I will not take it," answered I, "till thou tell me the manner of the transfer of love from her to thee, after so great an aversion." "I hear and obey," said he. "Know that we have a festival, called the festival of the New Year, when all the people use to take boat and go a-pleasuring on the river. So I went out, with my comrades, and saw a boat, wherein were half a score damsels like moons, and amongst them, the Lady Budour, with her lute in her hand. She preluded in eleven modes, then returning to the first, sang the following verses:

Fire is not so fierce and so hot as the fires in my heart that glow, And granite itself is less hard than the heart of my lord, I trow.
Indeed, when I think on his make and his fashion, I marvel to see A heart that is harder than rock in a body that's softer than snow.

Quoth I to her, 'Repeat the verses and the air.' But she would not; so I bade the boatmen pelt her with oranges, and they pelted her till we feared her boat would sink. Then she went her way, and this is how the love was transferred from her breast to mine." So I gave

Night cccxxxiv.

them joy of their union and taking the purse, with its contents, returned to Baghdad.'

When the Khalif heard Ibn Mensour's story, his heart was lightened and the restlessness and oppression from which he suffered forsook him.

THE MAN OF YEMEN AND HIS SIX SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Khalif El Mamoun was sitting one day in his palace, surrounded by his grandees and officers of state, and there were present also before him all his poets and minions, amongst the rest one named Mohammed of Bassora. Presently, the Khalif turned to the latter and said to him, 'O Mohammed, I wish thee to tell me something that I have never before heard.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mohammed, 'shall I tell thee a thing I have heard with my ears or a thing that I have seen with my eyes?' 'Tell me whichever is the rarer,' said El Mamoun.

'Know, then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Mohammed, 'that there lived once a wealthy man, who was a native of Yemen; but he left his native land and came to this city of Baghdad, whose sojourn so pleased him that he transported hither his family and possessions. Now he had six slave-girls, the first fair, the second dark, the third fat, the fourth thin, the fifth yellow and the sixth black, all fair of face and perfectly accomplished and skilled in the arts of singing and playing upon instruments of music. One day, he sent for them all and called for meat and drink; and they ate and drank and made merry. Then he filled the cup and taking it in his hand, said to the blonde, "O new-moon-face, let us hear somewhat pleasing." So she took the lute and tuning it, made music thereon with such melodious trills and modulations

that the place danced to the rhythm; after which she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

I have a friend, whose form is mirrored in mine eye, And deep within my breast, his name doth buried lie.
Whenas I call him back to mind, I am all heart, And when on him I gaze, all eyes indeed am I.
"Forswear the love of him," my censor says; and I, "That which is not to be, how shall it be?" reply.
"Go forth from me," quoth I, "and leave me, censor mine: Feign not that eath and light, that's grievous to aby."

At this their master was moved to mirth and drinking off his cup, gave the damsels to drink, after which he said to the brunette, "O light of the brasier[1] and delight of souls, let us hear thy lovely voice, wherewith all that hearken are ravished." So she took the lute and trilled upon it, till the place was moved to mirth; then, taking all hearts with her graceful bendings, she sang the following verses:

As thy face liveth, none but thee I'll love nor cherish e'er, Till death, nor ever to thy love will I be false, I swear.
O full moon, shrouded, as it were a veil, with loveliness, All lovely ones on earth that be beneath thy banners fare.
Thou, that in pleasantness and grace excellest all the fair, May God, the Lord of heaven and earth, be with thee everywhere!

The man was pleased and drank off his cup; after which he filled again and taking the goblet in his hand, beckoned to the plump girl and bade her sing and play. So she took the lute and striking a grief-dispelling measure, sang as follows:

If but thy consent be assured, O thou who art all my desire, Be all the folk angered 'gainst me; I set not a whit by their ire.
And if thou but show me thy face, thy brilliant and beautiful face, I reck not if all of the kings of the earth from my vision retire.
Thy favour, O thou unto whom all beauty must needs be referred, Of the goods and the sweets of the world is all that I seek and require.

[1] *i.e.* O thou, whose glance is as the light of the glowing embers.

The man was charmed and emptying his cup, gave the girls to drink. Then he beckoned to the slender girl and said to her, "O houri of Paradise, feed thou our ears with sweet sounds." So she took the lute and tuning it, preluded and sang the following verses:

Is it not martyrdom that I for thine estrangement dree, Seeing, indeed, I cannot live, if thou depart from me?
Is there no judge, in Love its law, to judge betwixt us twain, To do me justice on thy head and take my wreak of thee?

Their lord rejoiced and emptying the cup, gave the girls to drink. Then he signed to the yellow girl and said to her, "O sun of the day, let us hear some pleasant verses." So she took the lute and preluding after the goodliest fashion, sang as follows:

I have a lover, whenas I draw him nigh, He bares upon me a sword from either eye.
May God avenge me some whit of him! For lo, He doth oppress me, whose heart in 's hand doth lie.
Oft though, "Renounce him, my heart," I say, yet it Will to none other than him itself apply.
He's all I ask for, of all created things; Yet jealous Fortune doth him to me deny.

The man rejoiced and drank and gave the girls to drink; then he filled the cup and taking it in his hand, signed to the black girl, saying, "O apple of the eye, let us have a taste of thy fashion, though it be but two words." So she took the lute and preluded in various modes, then returned to the first and sang the following verses to a lively air:

O eyes, be large with tears and pour them forth amain, For, lo, for very love my senses fail and wane.
All manner of desire I suffer for his sake I cherish, and my foes make merry at my pain.
My enviers me forbid the roses of a cheek; And yet I have a heart that is to roses fain.

Ay, once the cups went round with joyance and delight And to the smitten lutes, the goblets did we drain,
What time my love kept troth and I was mad for him And in faith's heaven, the star of happiness did reign.
But lo, he turned away from me, sans fault of mine! Is there a bitterer thing than distance and disdain?
Upon his cheeks there bloom a pair of roses red, Blown ready to be plucked; ah God, those roses twain!
Were't lawful to prostrate oneself to any else Than God, I'd sure prostrate myself unto the swain.

Then rose the six girls and kissing the ground before their lord, said to him, "Judge thou between us, O our lord!" He looked at their beauty and grace and the difference of their colours and praised God the Most High and glorified Him: then said he, "There is none of you but has read the Koran and learnt to sing and is versed in the chronicles of the ancients and the doings of past peoples; so it is my desire that each of you rise and pointing to her opposite, praise herself and dispraise her rival; that is to say, let the blonde point to the black, the plump to the slender and the yellow to the brunette; and after, the latter shall, each in turn, do the like with the former; and be this illustrated with citations from the Holy Koran and somewhat of anecdotes and verse, so as to show forth your culture and elegance of discourse." Quoth they, "We hear and obey."

So the blonde rose first and pointing at the black, said to her, "Out on thee, blackamoor! It is told that whiteness saith, 'I am the shining light, I am the rising full moon.' My colour is patent and my forehead is resplendent, and of my beauty quoth the poet: Night cccxxxv.

A blonde with smooth and polished cheeks, right delicate and fair, As if a pearl in beauty hid, as in a shell, she were.
Her shape a splendid Alif[1] is, her smile a medial Mim[2] And over it her eyebrows make inverted Nouns,[3] a pair.

[1] Thus figured in Arabic ا. [2] Thus م. [3] Thus ن.

Yea, and the glances of her eyes are arrows, and her brows A bow that therewithal is horned with death and with despair.
If to her cheeks and shape thou pass, her cheeks are roses red, Sweet basil, ay, and eglantine and myrtles rich and rare.
'Tis of the saplings' wont, to be implanted in the meads; But, in the saplings of thy shape, how many meads are there!

My colour is like the wholesome day and the newly-gathered orange-blossom and the sparkling star; and indeed quoth God the Most High, in His precious book, to His prophet Moses (on whom be peace), 'Put thy hand into thy bosom and it shall come forth white without hurt.'[1] And again He saith, 'As for those whose faces are made white, they are in the mercy of God and dwell for ever therein.'[2] My colour is a miracle and my grace an extreme and my beauty a term. It is on the like of me that clothes show fair and to the like of me that hearts incline. Moreover, in whiteness are many excellences; for instance, the snow falls white from heaven, and it is traditional that white is the most beautiful of colours. The Muslims also glory in white turbans; but I should be tedious, were I to repeat all that may be said in praise of white; little and enough is better than too much. So now I will begin with thy dispraise, O black, O colour of ink and blacksmith's dust, thou whose face is like the crow that brings about lovers' parting! Verily, the poet saith in praise of white and dispraise of black:

Seest not that for their milky hue white pearls in price excel And charcoal for a groat a load the folk do buy and sell?
And eke white faces, 'tis well known, do enter Paradise, Whilst faces black appointed are to fill the halls of Hell.

And indeed it is told in certain histories, related on the authority of devout men, that Noah (on whom be peace) was sleeping one day, with his sons Ham and Shem seated at his head, when a wind sprang up and lifting his clothes,

[1] *Koran* xxvii. 12. [2] *Koran* iii. 103.

uncovered his nakedness; whereat Ham laughed and did not cover him; but Shem rose and covered him. Presently, Noah awoke and learning what had passed, blessed Shem and cursed Ham. So Shem's face was whitened and from him sprang the prophets and the orthodox Khalifs and Kings; whilst Ham's face was blackened and he fled forth to the land of Ethiopia, and of his lineage came the blacks. All people are of a mind in affirming the lack of understanding of the blacks, even as saith the adage, 'How shall one find a black having understanding?'"

Quoth her master, "It sufficeth; sit down, thou hast been prodigal." And he signed to the negress, who rose, and pointing at the blonde, said, "Dost thou not know that, in the Koran sent down to His prophet and apostle, is transmitted the saying of God the Most High, 'By the night, when it veileth [the world with darkness], and by the day, when it appeareth in all its glory!'[1] If the night were not more illustrious than the day, why should God swear by it and give it precedence of the day? And indeed those of sense and understanding accept this. Knowst thou not that black [hair] is the ornament of youth and that, when whiteness descends upon the head, delights pass away and the hour of death draws nigh? Were not black the most illustrious of things, God had not set it in the kernel of the heart and the apple of the eye; and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

An if I cherish the dusky maids, this is the reason why; They have the hue of the core of the heart and the apple of the eye
And youth; nor in error I eschew the whiteness of the blondes; For 'tis the colour of hoary hair and shrouds in them shun I.

And that of another:

The brown, not the white, are first in my love And worthiest eke to be loved of me,
For the colour of damask lips have they, Whilst the white have the hue of leprosy.

[1] *Koran* xcii. 1, 2.

And of a third:

Black women, white of deeds, are like indeed to eyne That, though jet-black they be, with peerless splendours shine.
If I go mad for her, be not amazed; for black The source of madness is, when in the feminine.[1]
'Tis as my colour were the middle dark of night; For all no moon it be, yet brings it light, in fine.

Moreover, is the companying together of lovers good but in the night? Let this quality and excellence suffice thee. What protects lovers from spies and censors like the blackness of the shadows? And nought gives them cause to fear discovery like the whiteness of the dawn. So, how many claims to honour are there not in blackness and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

I visit them, and the mirk of night doth help me to my will And seconds me, but the white of dawn is hostile to me still.

And that of another:

How many a night in joy I've passed with the belovéd one, What while the darkness curtained us about with tresses dun!
Whenas the light of morn appeared, it struck me with affright, And I to him, 'The Magians lie, who worship fire and sun.'

And saith a third:

He came forth to visit me, shrouding himself in the cloak of the night, And hastened his steps, as he wended, for caution and fear and affright.
Then rose I and laid in his pathway my cheek, as a carpet it were, For abjection, and trailed o'er my traces my skirts, to efface them from sight.
But lo, the new moon rose and shone, like a nail-paring cleft from the nail, And all but discovered our loves with the gleam of her meddlesome light.
And then there betided between us what I'll not discover, i' faith: So question no more of the matter and deem not of ill or unright.

And a fourth:

Foregather with thy lover, whilst night your loves may screen; For that the sun's a telltale, the moon a go-between.

[1] *Sauda*, feminine of *aswed* (black), *syn.* black bile (melancholia).

And a fifth:

I love not white women, with fat blown out and overlaid; The girl of all girls for me is the slender dusky maid.
Let others the elephant mount, if it like them; as for me, I'll ride but the fine-trained colt on the day of the cavalcade.

And a sixth:

My loved one came to me by night And we did clip and interlace
And lay together through the dark; But, lo, the morning broke apace.
To God, my Lord, I pray that He Will reunite us of His grace
And make night last to me, what while I hold my love in my embrace.

Were I to set forth all the praise of blackness, I should be tedious; but little and enough is better than great plenty and too much. As for thee, O blonde, thy colour is that of leprosy and thine embrace is suffocation; and it is of report that frost and intense cold[1] are in Hell for the torment of the wicked. Again, of black things is ink, wherewith is written the word of God; and were it not for black ambergris and black musk, there would be no perfumes to carry to kings. How many glories are there not in blackness and how well saith the poet:

Dost thou not see that musk, indeed, is worth its weight in gold, Whilst for a dirhem and no more a load of lime is sold.
Black eyes cast arrows at men's hearts; but whiteness of the eyes, In man, is judged of all to be unsightly to behold."

"It sufficeth," said her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the fat girl, who rose and pointing at the slim girl, uncovered her arms and legs and bared her stomach, showing its creases and the roundness of her navel. Then she donned a shift of fine stuff, that showed her whole body, and said, "Praised be God who created me, for that He beautified my face and made me fat and fair and likened me to branches laden with fruit and bestowed upon me abounding beauty and brightness; and praised be He no less, for that He hath

Night cccxxxvi.

[1] The distinctive colour of which is white.

given me the precedence and honoured me, when He speaks of me in His holy book! Quoth the Most High, 'And he brought a fat calf.'[1] And indeed He hath made me like unto an orchard, full of peaches and pomegranates. Verily, the townsfolk long for fat birds and eat of them and love not lean birds; so do the sons of Adam desire fat meat and eat of it. How many precious attributes are there not in fatness, and how well saith the poet:

Take leave of thy love, for the caravan, indeed, is on the start. O man, canst thou bear to say farewell and thus from her to part?
'Tis as her going were, I trow, but to her neighbour's house, The faultless gait of a fat fair maid, that never tires the heart.

Sawst thou ever one stop at a butcher's stall, but sought fat meat of him? The wise say, 'Pleasure is in three things, eating flesh and riding on flesh and the thrusting of flesh into flesh.' As for thee, O thin one, thy legs are like sparrow's legs or pokers, and thou art like a cruciform plank or a piece of poor meat; there is naught in thee to gladden the heart; even as saith of thee the poet:

Now God forfend that aught enforce me take for bedfellow A woman like a foot-rasp, wrapt in palm-fibres and tow!
In every limb she has a horn, that butts me in my sleep, So that at day-break, bruised and sore, I rise from her and go."

"It is enough," quoth her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the slender girl, who rose, as she were a willow-wand or a bamboo-shoot or a plant of sweet basil, and said, "Praised be God who created me and beautified me and made my embraces the end of all desire and likened me to the branch, to which all hearts incline. If I rise, I rise lightly; if I sit, I sit with grace; I am nimble-witted at a jest and sweeter-souled than cheerfulness [itself]. Never heard I one describe his mistress, saying, 'My beloved is the bigness

[1] *Koran* li. 26.

of an elephant or like a long wide mountain;' but rather, 'My lady hath a slender waist and a slim shape.'

A little food contents me and a little water stays my thirst; my sport is nimble and my habit elegant; for I am sprightlier than the sparrow and lighter-footed than the starling. My favours are the desire of the longing and the delight of the seeker; for I am goodly of shape, sweet of smile and graceful as the willow-wand or the bamboo-cane or the basil-plant; nor is there any can compare with me in grace, even as saith one of me:

Thy shape unto the sapling liken I And set my hope to win thee or to die.
Distraught, I follow thee, and sore afraid, Lest any look on thee with evil eye.

It is for the like of me that lovers run mad and that the longing are distracted. If my lover be minded to draw me to him, I am drawn to him, and if he would have me incline to him, I incline to him and not against him. But as for thee, O fat of body, thine eating is as that of an elephant, and neither much nor little contents thee. When thou liest with a man, he hath no ease of thee, nor can he find a way to take his pleasure of thee; for the bigness of thy belly holds him off from clipping thee and the grossness of thy thighs hinders him from coming at thy kaze. What comeliness is there in thy grossness and what pleasantness or courtesy in thy coarse nature? Fat meat is fit for nought but slaughter, nor is there aught therein that calls for praise. If one joke with thee, thou art angry; if one sport with thee, thou art sulky; if thou sleep, thou snorest; if thou walk, thou pantest; if thou eat, thou art never satisfied. Thou art heavier than mountains and fouler than corruption and sin. Thou hast in thee nor movement nor blessing nor thinkest of aught but to eat and sleep. If thou make water, thou scatterest; if thou void, thou gruntest like a bursten

wine-skin or a surly elephant. If thou go to the draught-house, thou needest one to wash thy privy parts and pluck out the hairs; and this is the extreme of laziness and the sign of stupidity. In fine, there is no good thing in thee, and indeed the poet saith of thee:

Heavy and swollen with fat, like a blown-out waterskin, With thighs like the pillars of stone that buttress a mountain's head,
Lo, if she walk in the West, so cumbrous her corpulence is, The Eastern hemisphere hears the sound of her heavy tread."

Quoth her master, "It is enough: sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the yellow girl, who rose to her feet and praised God and magnified His name, calling down peace and blessing on the best of His creatures;[1] after which she pointed at the brunette and said to her, "I am praised in the Koran, and the Compassionate One hath described my colour and its excellence over all others in His manifest Book, where He saith, 'A yellow [heifer], pure yellow, whose colour rejoices the beholders.'[2] Wherefore my colour is a portent and my grace an extreme and my beauty a term; for that my colour is the colour of a dinar and of the planets and moons and of apples. My fashion is the fashion of the fair, and the colour of saffron outvies all other colours; so my fashion is rare and my colour wonderful. I am soft of body, and of great price, comprising all attributes of beauty. My colour, in that which exists, is precious as virgin gold, and how many glorious qualities are there not in me! Of the like of me quoth the poet:

Night cccxxxvii.

Yellow she is, as is the sun that shineth in the sky, And like to golden dinars, eke, to see, her beauties are.
Nor with her brightness, any wise, can saffron hold compare, And even the very moon herself her charms outvie by far.

[1] Mohammed.
[2] *Koran* ii. 64, referring to an expiatory heifer which the Jews were commanded, through Moses, to sacrifice.

And now I will begin in thy dispraise, O brown of favour! Thy colour is that of the buffalo, and all souls shudder at thy sight. If thy colour be in aught, it is blamed; if it be in food, it is poisoned; for thy colour is that of flies and is a mark of ugliness in dogs. It is, among colours, one which strikes with amazement and is of the signs of mourning. Never heard I of brown gold or brown pearls or brown jewels. If thou enter the wardrobe, thy colour changes, and when thou comest out, thou addest a new ugliness to thine ugliness. Thou art neither black, that thou mayst be known, nor white, that thou mayst be described; and there is no good quality in thee, even as saith of thee the poet:

As a complexion unto her, the hue of soot doth serve; Her mirky colour is as dust on couriers' feet upcast.
No sooner fall mine eyes on her, though but a moment's space, Than troubles and misgivings straight beset me thick and fast."

"Enough," said her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the brunette. Now she was endowed with grace and beauty and symmetry and perfection, delicate of body, with coal-black hair, slender shape, rosy, oval cheeks, liquid black eyes, fair face, eloquent tongue, slim waist and heavy buttocks. So she rose and said, "Praised be God who hath created me neither blameably fat nor lankily slender, neither white like leprosy nor yellow like colic nor black like coal, but hath made my colour to be beloved of men of wit; for all the poets praise brunettes in every tongue and exalt their colour over all others. Brown of hue, praiseworthy of qualities; and God bless him who saith:

In the brunettes a meaning is, couldst read its writ aright, Thine eyes would never look again on others, red or white.
Free-flowing speech and amorous looks would teach Harout[1] himself The arts of sorcery and spells of magic and of might.

[1] See note, Vol. III. p. 104.

And saith another:

Give me brunettes; the Syrian spears, so limber and so straight, Tell of the slender dusky maids, so lithe and proud of gait.
Languid of eyelids, with a down like silk upon her cheek, Within her wasting lover's heart she queens it still in state.

And yet another:

Yea, by my life, such virtues in goodly brownness lie, One spot thereof makes whiteness the shining moons outvie;
But if the like of whiteness it borrowed, then, for sure, Its beauty were transmuted unto reproach thereby.
Not with her wine[1] I'm drunken, but with her tresses[2] bright That make all creatures drunken that dwell beneath the sky.
Each of her charms doth envy the others; yea, and each To be the down so silky upon her cheek doth sigh.

And again:

Why should I not incline me unto the silken down On the cheeks of a dusky maiden, like the cane straight and brown,
Seeing the spot of beauty in waterlilies' cups Is of the poets fabled to be all beauty's crown?
Yea, and I see all lovers the swarthy-coloured mole, Under the ebon pupil, do honour and renown.
Why, then, do censors blame me for loving one who's all A mole? May Allah rid me of every railing clown!

My form is beautiful and my shape slender; kings desire my colour and all love it, rich and poor. I am pleasant, nimble, handsome, elegant, soft of body and great of price. I am perfect in beauty and breeding and eloquence; my aspect is comely and my tongue fluent, my habit light and my sport graceful. As for thee, [O yellow girl,] thou art like unto a mallow of Bab el Louc, yellow and made all of sulphur. Perdition to thee, O pennyworth of sorrel, O rust of copper, O owl's face and food of the damned! Thy bedfellow, for oppression of spirit, is buried in the

[1] *Sulafeh.*

[2] *Sewalif*, plural of *salifeh* (equivalent of *sulafeh*). A play upon the double meaning of the word is, of course, intended.

tombs, and there is no good thing in thee, even as saith the poet of the like of thee:

Paleness[1] is sore on her, for all no illness doth her fret; My breast is straitened by its sight; ay, and my head aches yet.
If thou repent thee not, my soul, to punish thee, I vow, I'll humble thee with a kiss of her face, my teeth on edge shall set."

"Enough," said her master; "sit down." Then he made peace between them and clad them all in sumptuous dresses of honour and handselled them with precious jewels of land and sea. And never, O Commander of the Faithful, in any place or time have I seen fairer than these six fair damsels.' Night ccccxxxviii.

When the Khalif El Mamoun heard this story from Mohammed of Bassora, he said to him, 'O Mohammed, knowest thou the abiding-place of these damsels and their master, and canst thou make shift to buy them of him for us?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'I have heard that their master is wrapped up in them and cannot endure to be parted from them.' 'Take threescore thousand dinars,—that is, ten thousand for each girl,—' rejoined the Khalif, 'and go to his house and buy them of him.' So Mohammed took the money and betaking himself to the man of Yemen, acquainted him with the Khalif's wish. He consented to sell them at that price, to pleasure him, and despatched them to El Mamoun, who assigned them an elegant lodging and used to sit with them therein, marvelling at their beauty and grace, no less than at their varied colours and the excellence of their speech.

After awhile, when their former owner could no longer endure separation from them, he sent a letter to the Khalif, complaining of his ardent love for them and containing, amongst the rest, the following verses:

[1] *Syn.* yellowness (*isfirar*).

Six damsels fair and bright have captivated me: My blessing and my peace the six fair maidens greet!
My life, indeed, are they, my hearing and my sight, Yea, and my very drink, my pleasance and my meat.
No other love can bring me solace for their charms, And slumber, after them, no more to me is sweet.
Alas, my long regret, my weeping for their loss! Would I had ne'er been born, to know this sore defeat!
For eyes, bedecked and fair with brows like bended bows, Have smitten me to death with arrows keen and fleet.

When the letter came to El Mamoun's hands, he clad the six damsels in rich apparel and giving them threescore thousand dinars, sent them back to their master, who rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy,—more by token of the money they brought him,—and abode with them in all delight and pleasance of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE DAMSEL AND ABOU NUWAS.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being one night exceeding restless and oppressed with melancholy thought, went out and walked about his palace, till he came to a chamber, over whose doorway hung a curtain. He raised the curtain and saw, at the upper end of the room, a bed, on which lay something black, as it were a man asleep, with a candle on his right hand and another on his left and by his side a flagon of old wine, over against which stood the cup. The Khalif wondered at this, saying, 'How came yonder black by this wine-service?' Then, drawing near the bed, he found that it was a girl asleep there, veiled with her hair, and uncovering her face, saw that it was like the moon on the night of her full. So he filled a cup of wine and drank it to the roses

of her cheeks; then bent over her and kissed a mole on her face, whereupon she awoke and cried out, saying, 'O Trusty One of God,[1] what is to do?' 'A guest who knocks at thy dwelling by night,' replied the Khalif, '[hoping] that thou wilt give him hospitality till the dawn.' 'It is well,' answered she; 'I will grace the guest with my hearing and my sight.'

So she brought the wine and they drank together; after which she took the lute and tuning it, preluded in one-and-twenty modes, then returning to the first, struck a lively measure and sang the following verses:

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaks thee for my soul, Telling I love thee with a love that nothing can control.
I have an eye, that testifies unto my sore disease, And eke a heart with parting wrung, a-throb for love and dole.
Indeed, I cannot hide the love that frets my life away; Longing increases still on me, my tears for ever roll.
Ah me, before the love of thee, I knew not what love was; But God's decree must have its course on every living soul.

Night cccxxxix.

Then said she, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I am a wronged woman.' 'How so?' quoth he, 'and who hath wronged thee?' She answered, 'Thy son bought me awhile ago, for ten thousand dirhems, meaning to give me to thee; but the daughter of thine uncle[2] sent him the price aforesaid and bade him shut me up from thee in this chamber.' Whereupon, 'Ask a boon of me,' said the Khalif; and she, 'I ask thee to lie to-morrow night with me.' 'If it be the will of God,' replied the Khalif, and leaving her, went away.

Next morning, he repaired to his sitting-room and called for Abou Nuwas, but found him not and sent his chamberlain to seek for him. The chamberlain found him in pawn, in a tavern, for a score of a thousand dirhems, that he had spent on a certain boy, and ques-

[1] A title of the Prophet. [2] His wife Zubeideh.

tioned him. So he told him what had befallen him with the boy and how he had spent a thousand dirhems upon him; whereupon quoth the chamberlain, 'Show him to me; and if he be worth this, thou art excused.' 'Wait a while,' replied the poet, 'and thou shalt see him presently.' As they were talking, up came the boy, clad in a white tunic, under which was another of red and yet another of black. When Abou Nuwas saw him, he sighed and repeated the following verses:

To me he appeared in a garment of white, His eyes and his eyelids with languor bedight.
Quoth I, "Dost thou pass and salutest me not? Though God knows thy greeting were sweet to my spright.
Be He blessèd who mantled with roses thy cheeks, Who creates, without let, what He will, of His might!"
"Leave prating," he answered; "for surely my Lord Is wondrous of working, sans flaw or dissight.
Yea, truly, my garment is even as my face And my fortune, each white upon white upon white."

When the boy heard this, he put off the white tunic and appeared in the red one; whereupon Abou Nuwas redoubled in expressions of admiration and repeated the following verses:

Appeared in a garment, the colour of flame, A foeman of mine, "The belovéd," by name.
"Thou'rt a full moon," I said in my wonder, "and com'st In a garment that putteth the roses to shame.
Hath the red of thy cheek clad that vest upon thee Or in heart's blood of lovers hast tinctured the same?"
Quoth he, "'Twas the sun lately gave me the wede; From the rubicund hue of his setting it came.
So my garment and wine and the colour so clear Of my cheek are as flame upon flame upon flame."

Then the boy doffed the red tunic and abode in the black; whereupon Abou Nuwas redoubled in attention to him and repeated the following verses:

He came in a tunic all sable of hue And shone out, thus veiled in the dark, to men's view.
"Thou passest," quoth I, "without greeting, and thus Givest cause to exult to the rancorous crew.
Thy garment resembles thy locks and my lot, Yea, blackness and blackness and blackness thereto."

Then the chamberlain returned to Haroun er Reshid and acquainted him with the poet's predicament, whereupon he bade him take a thousand dirhems and go and take him out of pawn. So he returned to Abou Nuwas and paying his score, carried him to the Khalif, who said, 'Make me some verses containing the words, "O Trusty One of God, what is to do?"' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he and improvised the following verses: Night cccxl.

My night was long for sleeplessness and care. Weary I was and many my thoughts were.
I rose and walked awhile in my own place, Then midst the harem's cloistered courts did fare,
Until I chanced on somewhat black and found It was a damsel shrouded in her hair.
God bless her for a shining moon! Her shape A willow-wand, and pudour veiled the fair.
I quaffed a cup to her; then, drawing near, I kissed the mole upon her cheek so rare.
She woke and swayed about in her amaze, Even as the branch sways in the rain-fraught air;
Then rose and said, "O Trusty One of God, What is to do, and thou, what dost thou there?"
"A guest," quoth I, "that sues to thee, by night, For shelter till the hour of morning-prayer."
"Gladly," she said; "with hearing and with sight To grace the guest, my lord, I will not spare."

'Confound thee!' cried the Khalif. 'It is as if thou hadst been present with us.' Then he took him by the hand and carried him to the damsel, who was clad in a dress and veil of blue. When Abou Nuwas saw her, he

was profuse in expressions of admiration and recited the following verses:

Say to the lovely maid, i' the veil of azure dight, "By Allah, O my life, have pity on my plight!
For when the fair entreats her lover cruelly, Sighs of all longing rend his bosom day and night.
So, by thy charms and by the whiteness of thy cheek, Have ruth upon a heart for love consumed outright.
Incline to him and be his stay 'gainst stress of love, Nor let what fools may say find favour in thy sight."

Then the damsel set wine before the Khalif and taking the lute, played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

Wilt thou be just in thy love to others and deal with me Unjustly and put me away, whilst others have joy in thee?
Were there for lovers a judge, to whom I might complain Of thee, he would do me justice and judge with equity.
If thou forbid me to pass thy door, yet from afar To greet thee and to bless, at least, I shall be free.

The Khalif bade her ply Abou Nuwas with wine, till he lost his wits; when he gave him a full cup, and he drank a draught of it and held the cup in his hand. Er Reshid bade the girl take the cup from him and conceal it; so she took it and hid it between her thighs. Then he drew his sword and standing at the poet's head, pricked him with the point; whereupon he awoke and saw the Khalif standing over him, with a drawn sword. At this sight the fumes of the wine fled from his head and the Khalif said to him, 'Make me some verses and tell me therein what is come of thy cup; or I will cut off thy head.' So he improvised the following verses:

My tale, indeed, is hard to tell: The thief was none but yon gazelle.
She stole my cup of wine, whereof My lips had drunken but one spell,
And hid it in a place, for which My heart's desire's unspeakable.
I name it not, for awe of him, In whom the right thereof doth dwell.

'Confound thee!' quoth the Khalif. 'How knewst thou that? But we accept what thou sayst.' Then he ordered him a dress of honour and a thousand dinars, and he went away, rejoicing.

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE DISH OF GOLD IN WHICH THE DOG ATE.

There was once a man, who was overborne with debt, and his case was straitened upon him, so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction. He wandered on at random till he came to a high-walled and splendidly built city and entered it in a state of wretchedness and despair, gnawed with hunger and worn with the toil of his journey. As he passed through one of the streets, he saw a company of notables going along; so he followed them, till they entered a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not till they came in presence of a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, seated at the upper end of a saloon and surrounded by pages and servants, as he were of the sons of the Viziers. When he saw the visitors, he rose and received them with honour; but the poor man was confounded at the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants and drawing back, in fear and perplexity, sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him. Night cccxli.

After awhile, in came a man with four hunting-dogs, clad in various kinds of silk and brocade and having on their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set apart for him; after which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, one of which he set before each dog. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food, for stress of hunger, and

would fain have gone up to one of the dogs and eaten with him; but fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and God the Most High inspired him with a knowledge of his case; so he drew back from the platter and beckoned to the man, who came and ate, till he was satisfied. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog pushed the dish towards him with his paw, signing to him to take it and what was left in it for himself. So the man took the dish and leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him. Then he journeyed to another city, where he sold the dish and buying goods with the price, returned to his own town. There he sold his stock and paid his debts; and he prospered and became rich and at his ease.

After some years had passed, he said to himself, 'Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, which the dog bestowed on me, and carry him its price, together with a fit and handsome present.' So he took the price of the dish and a suitable present and setting out, journeyed night and day, till he came to the city and entering, went straight to the place where the man's house had been; but lo, he found there nothing but mouldering ruins and dwelling-places laid waste, over which the raven croaked; for the place was desert and the environs changed out of knowledge. At this, his heart and soul were troubled and he repeated the words of him who saith:

The privy chambers are void of all their hidden store, As hearts of the fear of God and the virtues all of yore.
Changed is the vale and strange to me are its gazelles, And those I knew of old its sandhills are no more.

And those of another:

The phantom of Suada came to me by night, near the break of day, And roused me, whenas my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay.
But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me, I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

When he saw what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the things that had been aforetime, the testimony of his eyes made it needless for him to enquire of the case; so he turned away and seeing a wretched man, in a plight that made the skin quake and would have moved the very rock to pity, said to him, 'Harkye, sirrah! What have time and fortune done with the master of this place? Where are his shining full moons[1] and splendid stars;[1] and what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode, so that but the walls thereof remain?' Quoth the other, 'He is the miserable wretch thou seest bewailing that which hath befallen him. Knowest thou not the words of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), wherein is a lesson to him who will profit by it and an admonition to whoso will be guided thereby in the right way? "Verily it is the way of God the Most High to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again." If thou enquire of the cause of this thing, indeed, it is no wonder, considering the vicissitudes of fortune. I was the master of this place and its builder and founder and owner and lord of its shining full moons and radiant damsels and of all its splendid circumstance and magnificent garniture; but Fortune turned and did away from me wealth and servants, overwhelming me unawares with disasters unforeseen and bringing me to this sorry plight. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question: tell it me and leave wondering.'

So the other told him the whole story, sore concerned at what he heard and saw, and added, 'I have brought thee a present, such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold, that I took; for it was the cause of my becoming rich, after poverty, and of the reinstating of my dwelling-place, after desolation, and of the doing

[1] *i.e.* his beautiful slave-girls.

away of my trouble and straitness from me.' But the poor man shook his head, groaning and weeping and lamenting, and answered, 'O man, methinks thou art mad; for this is not the fashion of a man of understanding. How should a dog of mine make gift to thee of a dish of gold and I receive back its price? This were indeed a strange thing! By Allah, were I in the straitest misery and unease, I would not accept of thee aught, no, not the worth of a nail-paring! So return whence thou camest, in health and safety.'

The merchant kissed his feet and taking leave of him, returned whence he came, praising him and reciting the following verse:

The men and eke the dogs are gone and vanished all. Peace be upon the men and dogs, whate'er befall!

THE SHARPER OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE MASTER OF POLICE.

There was once, in the coast-fortress of Alexandria, a Master of Police, Husameddin by name, who was one night sitting in his seat of office, when there came in to him a trooper, who said to him, 'Know, O my lord, that I entered the city this night and alighted at such a khan and slept there, till a third part of the night was past, when I awoke and found my saddle-bags cut open and a purse of a thousand dinars stolen from them.' No sooner had he done speaking than the magistrate called his officers and bade them lay hands on all in the khan and clap them in prison till the morning; and on the morrow, he caused bring the instruments of torment and sending for the prisoners, was about to torture them, [to make them confess], in the presence of the owner of the stolen money, when, behold, a man pressed through the crowd and coming up to the chief of the police, said, 'O Amir, let

these folk go, for they are wrongly accused. It was I who robbed the trooper, and here is the purse I stole from his saddle-bags.' So saying, he pulled out the purse from his sleeve and laid it before Husameddin, who said to the soldier, 'Take thy money; thou hast no ground of complaint now against the people of the khan.' Thereupon the latter and all who were present fell to blessing the thief and praising him; but he said, 'O Amir, the skill is not in that I came to thee and brought thee the purse, but in taking it a second time from the trooper.' 'And how didst thou take it, O sharper?' asked Husameddin.

'O Amir,' replied the thief, 'I was standing in the money-changers' bazaar at Cairo, when I saw yonder man receive the gold and put it in his purse; so I followed him from street to street, but found no occasion of stealing it from him. Then he left Cairo and I followed him from place to place, casting about by the way to rob him, but without avail, till he entered this city and I followed him to the khan. I took up my lodging beside him and watched him till he fell asleep and I heard him snoring, when I went softly up to him and cutting open his saddle-bags with this knife, took the purse thus——'

So saying, he put out his hand and took the purse from before the chief of the police, whilst the latter and the trooper and the folk drew back, watching him and thinking he would show them how he took the purse from the saddle-bags; but, of a sudden, he broke into a run and threw himself into a reservoir hard by. The chief of the police called to his officers to pursue him, but before they could put off their clothes and descend the steps, he had made off; and they sought for him, but found him not; for the streets of Alexandria all communicate one with another. So they came back, empty-handed, and the chief of the police said to the trooper, 'Thou hast no recourse against the folk; for thou foundest him who robbed thee

and receivedst back thy money, but didst not keep it.' So the trooper went away, having lost his money, whilst the folk were delivered from his hands and those of the chief of the police; and all this was of the favour of God the Most High.

EL MELIK EN NASIR AND THE THREE MASTERS OF POLICE.

El Melik en Nasir[1] once sent for the chiefs of the police of New Cairo, Boulac and Old Cairo and said to them, 'I wish each of you to tell me the most remarkable thing that hath befallen him during his term of office.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they. Then said the chief of the police of New Cairo, 'O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was on this wise:

Night ccccxliii.

STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE POLICE OF NEW CAIRO.

There were once, in this city, two men apt to bear witness in matters of blood and wounds; but they were both given to wine and women and debauchery; nor, do what I would, could I succeed in bringing them to account. So I charged the vintners and confectioners and fruiterers and chandlers and bagnio-keepers to acquaint me of these two, whenever they should anywhere be engaged in drinking or debauchery, whether together or apart, and that, if they or either of them bought of them aught for the purpose of carousal, they should not conceal it from me. And they replied, "We hear and obey."

[1] Title of Saladin (*Selaheddin*) and several other Eyoubite Sultans of Egypt and Syria. It is equivalent to our "Defender of the Faith."

One night, a man came to me and said, "O my lord, know that the two witnesses are in such a house in such a street, engaged in sore wickedness." So I disguised myself and went out, accompanied by none but my page, to the street in question. When I came to the house, I knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came out and opened to me, saying, "Who art thou?" I made her no answer, but entered and saw the two witnesses and the master of the house sitting, and lewd women with them, and great plenty of wine before them. When they saw me, they rose to receive me, without showing the least alarm, and made much of me, seating me in the place of honour and saying to me, "Welcome for an illustrious guest and a pleasant cup-companion!"

Presently, the master of the house went out and returning after awhile with three hundred dinars, said to me, without the least fear, "O my lord, it is, we know, in thy power both to disgrace and punish us; but this will bring thee nothing but weariness. So thou wouldst do better to take this money and protect us; for God the Most High is named the Protector and loveth those of His servants who protect each other; and thou shalt have thy reward in the world to come." The money tempted me and I said in myself, "I will take the money and protect them this once; but, if ever again I have them in my power, I will take my wreak of them."

So I took the money and went away; but, next day, one of the Cadi's serjeants came to me and cited me before the court. I accompanied him thither, knowing not the meaning of the summons; and when I came into the Cadi's presence, I saw the two witnesses and the master of the house sitting by him. The latter rose and sued me for three hundred dinars, nor was it in my power to deny the debt; for he produced a written obligation and the two others testified against me that I owed the amount.

Their evidence satisfied the Cadi and he ordered me to pay the money; nor did I leave the Court till they had of me the three hundred dinars. So I went away, in the utmost wrath and confusion, vowing vengeance against them and repenting that I had not punished them.'

Then rose the chief of the Boulac police and said, 'As for me, O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was as follows:

STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE BOULAC POLICE.

I was once in debt to the amount of three hundred thousand dinars, and being distressed thereby, I sold what was behind me and what was before me and all I could lay my hands on, but could raise no more than a hundred thousand dinars and abode in great perplexity. One night, as I sat at home, in this state of mind, there came a knocking at the gate; so I said to one of my servants, "See who is at the door." He went out and returned, pale and trembling in every nerve; so I said to him, "What ails thee?" "There is a man at the door, seeking thee," answered he. "He is half naked, clad in skins, with a sword and a knife in his girdle, and with him are a company of the same fashion." So I took my sword and going out to see who these were, found them as the boy had reported and said to them, "What is your business?" "We are thieves," answered they, "and have made great purchase to-night and appointed it to thy use, that thou mayst pay therewith the debts that oppress thee and free thyself from thy distress." "Where is it?" asked I; and they brought me a great chest, full of vessels of gold and silver; which when I saw, I rejoiced and said in myself, "It were ungenerous to let them go away empty-handed."

Night ccccxliv.

So I took the hundred thousand dinars I had by me and gave it to them, thanking them; and they took it and went their way, under cover of the night. But, on the morrow, when I examined the contents of the chest, I found them gilded brass and pewter, worth five hundred dirhems at the most; and this was grievous to me, for I had lost what money I had, and trouble was added to my trouble.'

Then rose the chief of the police of Old Cairo and said, 'O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was on this wise:

STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE OLD CAIRO POLICE.

I once had ten thieves hanged, each on his own gibbet, and set guards to watch them and hinder the folk from taking them down. Next morning, when I came to look at them, I found two bodies hanging from one gibbet and said to the guards, "Who did this, and where is the tenth gibbet?" But they denied all knowledge of it, and I was about to beat them, when they said, "Know, O Amir, that we fell asleep last night, and when we awoke, we found one of the bodies gone, gibbet and all, whereat we were alarmed, fearing thy wrath. But, presently, up came a peasant, jogging along on his ass; so we laid hands on him and killing him, hung his body upon this gibbet, in the stead of the missing thief.'

When I heard this, I marvelled and said to them, "Had he aught with him?" "He had a pair of saddle-bags on the ass," answered they. "What was in them?" asked I; and they said, "We know not." Quoth I, "Bring them hither." So they brought them to me and I bade open

them, when, behold, therein was the body of a murdered man, cut in pieces. When I saw this, I marvelled and said in myself, "Glory be to God! The cause of the hanging of this peasant was no other but his crime against this murdered man; and the Lord is no unjust dealer with [His] servants."'[1]

THE THIEF AND THE MONEY-CHANGER.

A money-changer, bearing a bag of money, once passed by a company of thieves, and one of the latter said to the others, 'I know how to steal yonder bag of money.' 'How wilt thou do it?' asked they. 'Look,' answered he and followed the money-changer, till he entered his house, when he threw the bag on a shelf and went into the draught-house, to do an occasion, calling to the slave-girl to bring him an ewer of water. So she took the jug and followed him to the draught-house, leaving the door open, whereupon the thief entered and taking the bag of money, made off with it to his companions, to whom he related what had passed. 'By Allah,' said they, 'this was a clever trick! It is not every one could do it: but, presently, the money-changer will come out of the draught-house and missing the bag of money, will beat the slave-girl and torture her grievously. Meseems thou hast at present done nothing worthy of praise; but, if thou be indeed a sharper, thou wilt return and save the girl from being beaten.' 'If it be the will of God,' answered the thief, 'I will save both the girl and the purse.'

Night cccxlv.

Then he went back to the money-changer's house and found him beating the girl, because of the bag of money; so he knocked at the door and the man said, 'Who is there?' Quoth the thief, 'I am the servant of thy neighbour in the bazaar.' So he came out to him and said, 'What is thy business?' 'My master salutes thee,' replied the thief, 'and says to thee, "Surely, thou art mad to cast the like of this bag of money down at the door of thy shop and go away and leave it! Had a stranger chanced on it, he had made off with it." And except my master had seen it and taken care of it, it had been lost to thee.' So saying, he pulled out the purse and showed it to the money-changer, who said, 'That is indeed my purse,' and put out his hand to take it; but the thief said, 'By Allah, I will not give it thee, till thou write me a receipt; for I fear my master will not believe that thou hast duly received the purse, except I bring him a writing to that effect, under thy hand and seal.' So the money-changer went in to write the receipt; but, in the meantime, the thief made off with the bag of money, having [thus] saved the slave-girl her beating.

[1] *Koran* xli. 46.

THE CHIEF OF THE COUS POLICE AND THE SHARPER.

It is related that Alaeddin, chief of the police of Cous,[1] was sitting one night in his house, when a man of comely aspect and dignified port, followed by a servant bearing a chest upon his head, came to the door and said to one of the young men, 'Go in and tell the Amir that I would speak with him privily.' So the servant went in and told his master, who bade admit the visitor. When he entered, the Amir saw him to be a man of good appearance and carriage; so he received him with honour, seating him beside himself, and said to him, 'What is thy business?' 'I am a highwayman,' replied the stranger, 'and am minded to repent at thy hands and turn to God the Most High; but I would have thee help me to this, for that I am in thy

[1] A town of Upper Egypt.

district and under thine eye. I have here a chest, wherein is that which is worth nigh forty thousand dinars; and none hath so good a right to it as thou; so do thou take it and give me in exchange a thousand dinars of thy money, lawfully gotten, that I may have a little capital, to aid me in my repentance, and not be forced to resort to sin for subsistence; and with God the Most High be thy reward!' So saying he opened the chest and showed the Amir that it was full of trinkets and jewels and bullion and pearls, whereat he was amazed and rejoiced greatly. Then he cried out to his treasurer, to bring him a purse of a thousand dinars, and gave it to the highwayman, who thanked him and went his way, under cover of the night.

Night cccxlvi.

On the morrow, the Amir sent for the chief of the goldsmiths and showed him the chest and what was therein; but the goldsmith found it nothing but pewter and brass and the jewels and pearls all of glass; at which Alaeddin was sore chagrined and sent in quest of the highwayman; but none could come at him.

IBRAHIM BEN EL MEHDI AND THE MERCHANT'S SISTER.

The Khalif El Mamoun once said to [his uncle] Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, 'Tell us the most remarkable thing that thou hast ever seen.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'Know that I went out one day, a-pleasuring, and my course brought me to a place where I smelt the odour of food. My soul longed for it and I halted, perplexed and unable either to go on or enter. Presently, I raised my eyes and saw a lattice-window and behind it a hand and wrist, the like of which for beauty I never saw. The sight turned my brain and I forgot the smell of the food and began to cast about how I should get access to the house. After awhile, I

espied a tailor hard by and going up to him, saluted him. He returned my greeting and I said to him, "Whose house is that?" "It belongs to a merchant called such an one," answered he, "who consorteth with none but merchants."

As we were talking, up came two men of comely and intelligent aspect, riding on horseback; and the tailor told me their names and that they were the merchant's most intimate friends. So I spurred my horse towards them and said to them, "May I be your ransom! Abou such an one[1] waits for you!" And I rode with them to the gate, where I entered and they also. When the master of the house saw me, he doubted not but I was their friend; so he welcomed me and made me sit down in the highest room. Then they brought the table of food and I said, "God hath granted me my desire of the food; and now there remain the hand and wrist." After awhile, we removed, for carousal, to another room, which I found full of all manner of rarities; and the host paid me particular attention, addressing his conversation to me, for that he deemed me a guest of his guests; whilst the latter, in like manner, made much of me, taking me for a friend of the master of the house.

When we had drunk several cups of wine, there came in to us a damsel of the utmost beauty and elegance, as she were a willow wand, who took a lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

Is it not passing strange, indeed, one house should hold us tway And still thou drawst not near to me nor yet a word dost say,
Except the secrets of the souls and hearts that broken be And entrails blazing in the fires of love, the eye bewray
With meaning looks and knitted brows and eyelids languishing And hands that salutation sign and greeting thus convey?

When I heard this, my entrails were stirred and I was

[1] Meaning the merchant, whose name, Abou Jaafer or the like, he had learnt from the tailor.

moved to delight, for the excess of her grace and the beauty of the verses she sang; and I envied her her skill and said, "There lacketh somewhat to thee, O damsel!" Whereupon she threw the lute from her hand, in anger, and cried, "Since when do you use to bring ill-mannered fools into your assemblies?" Then I repented of what I had done, seeing that the others were vexed with me, and said in myself, "My hopes are at an end;" and I saw no way of quitting myself of reproach but to call for a lute, saying, "I will show you what escaped her in the air she sang." So they brought me a lute and I tuned it and sang the following verses:

This is thy lover distraught, absorbed in his passion and pain; Thy lover, the tears of whose eyes run down on his body like rain.
One hand to his heart ever pressed, whilst the other the Merciful One Imploreth, so He of His grace may grant him his hope to attain.
O thou, that beholdest a youth for passion that's perished, thine eye And thy hand are the cause of his death and yet might restore him again.

When the damsel heard this, she sprang up and throwing herself at my feet, kissed them and said, "It is thine to excuse, O my lord! By Allah, I knew not thy quality nor heard I ever the like of this fashion!" And they all extolled me and made much of me, being beyond measure delighted, and besought me to sing again. So I sang a lively air, whereupon they all became as drunken men, and their wits left them. Then the guests departed to their homes and I abode alone with the host and the girl. The former drank some cups with me, then said to me, "O my lord, my life hath been wasted, in that I have not known the like of thee till now. By Allah, then, tell me who thou art, that I may know who is the boon-companion whom God hath bestowed on me this night."

I would not at first tell him my name and returned him evasive answers; but he conjured me, till I told him who

I was; whereupon he sprang to his feet and said, "Indeed, I wondered that such excellence should belong to any but the like of thee; and Fortune hath done me a service for which I cannot avail to thank her. But, belike, this is a dream; for how could I hope that the family of the Khalifate should visit me in my own house and carouse with me this night?" I conjured him to be seated; so he sat down and began to question me, in the most courteous terms, as to the cause of my visit. So I told him the whole matter, concealing nothing, and said to him, "Verily, I have had my desire of the food, but not of the hand and wrist." Quoth he, "Thou shalt have thy desire of them also, so God will." Then said he to the slave-girl, "Bid such an one come down." And he called his slave-girls down, one by one and showed them to me; but I saw not my mistress among them, and he said, "O my lord, there is none left save my mother and sister; but, by Allah, I must needs have them also down and show them to thee."

I marvelled at his courtesy and large-heartedness and said, "May I be thy ransom! Begin with thy sister." "Willingly," replied he. So she came down and behold, it was she whose hand and wrist I had seen. "May God make me thy ransom!" said I. "This is the damsel whose hand and wrist I saw at the lattice." Then he sent at once for witnesses and bringing out two myriads of dinars, said to the witnesses, "This our lord Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, uncle of the Commander of the Faithful, seeks the hand of my sister such an one, and I call you to witness that I marry her to him and that he has endowed her with a dowry of ten thousand dinars." And he said to me, "I give thee my sister in marriage, at the dowry aforesaid." "I consent," answered I. Whereupon he gave one of the bags to her and the other to the witnesses, and said to me, "O my lord, I desire to array a chamber for thee, where thou mayst lie with thy wife." But I was abashed

at his generosity and was ashamed to foregather with her in his house; so I said, "Equip her and send her to my house." And by thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he sent me such an equipage with her, that my house was too strait to hold it, for all its greatness! And I begot on her this boy that stands before thee.'

The Khalif marvelled at the merchant's generosity and said, 'Gifted of God is he! Never heard I of his like.' And he bade Ibrahim bring him to court, that he might see him. So he brought him and the Khalif conversed with him; and his wit and good breeding so pleased him, that he made him one of his chief officers.

THE WOMAN WHOSE HANDS WERE CUT OFF FOR THAT SHE GAVE ALMS TO THE POOR.

A certain King once made proclamation to the people of his realm, saying, 'If any of you give alms of aught, I will assuredly cut off his hand;' wherefore all the people abstained from alms-giving, and none could give to any.

Night ccccxlviii. One day a beggar accosted a certain woman (and indeed hunger was sore upon him) and said to her, 'Give me an alms.' 'How can I give thee aught,' answered she, 'when the King cutteth off the hands of all who give alms?' But he said, 'I conjure thee by God the Most High, give me an alms.' So, when he adjured her by God, she had compassion on him and gave him two cakes of bread. The King heard of this; so he called her before him and cut off her hands, after which she returned to her house.

A while after, the King said to his mother, 'I have a mind to take a wife; so do thou marry me to a fair woman.' Quoth she, 'There is among our female slaves one who is unsurpassed in beauty; but she hath a grievous blemish.' 'What is that?' asked the King; and his

mother answered, 'She hath had both her hands cut off.' Said he, 'Let me see her.' So she brought her to him, and he was ravished by her and married her and went in to her; and she brought him a son.

Now this was the woman, who had her hands cut off for alms-giving; and when she became queen, her fellow-wives envied her and wrote to the King [who was then absent] that she was unchaste; so he wrote to his mother, bidding her carry the woman into the desert and leave her there. The old queen obeyed his commandment and abandoned the woman and her son in the desert; whereupon she fell to weeping and wailing exceeding sore for that which had befallen her. As she went along, with the child at her neck, she came to a river and knelt down to drink, being overcome with excess of thirst, for fatigue and grief; but, as she bent her head, the child fell into the water.

Then she sat weeping sore for her child, and as she wept, there came up two men, who said to her, 'What makes thee weep?' Quoth she, 'I had a child at my neck, and he hath fallen into the water.' 'Wilt thou that we bring him out to thee?' asked they, and she answered, 'Yes.' So they prayed to God the Most High, and the child came forth of the water to her, safe and sound. Quoth they, 'Wilt thou that God restore thee thy hands as they were?' 'Yes,' replied she: whereupon they prayed to God, blessed and exalted be He! and her hands were restored to her, goodlier than before. Then said they, 'Knowst thou who we are?' 'God [only] is all-knowing,' answered she; and they said, 'We are thy two cakes of bread, that thou gavest in alms to the beggar and which were the cause of the cutting off of thy hands. So praise thou God the Most High, for that He hath restored thee thy hands and thy child.' So she praised God the Most High and glorified Him.

THE DEVOUT ISRAELITE.

There was once a devout man of the children of Israel,[1] whose family span cotton; and he used every day to sell the yarn they span and buy fresh cotton, and with the profit he bought the day's victual for his household. One day, he went out and sold the day's yarn as usual, when there met him one of his brethren, who complained to him of want; so he gave him the price of the yarn and returned, empty-handed, to his family, who said to him, 'Where is the cotton and the food?' Quoth he, 'Such an one met me and complained to me of want; so I gave him the price of the yarn.' And they said, 'How shall we do? We have nothing to sell.' Now they had a broken platter and a jar; so he took them to the market; but none would buy them of him.

Presently, as he stood in the market, there came up a man with a stinking, swollen fish, which no one would buy of him, and he said to the Jew, 'Wilt thou sell me thine unsaleable ware for mine?' 'Yes,' answered the Jew and giving him the jar and platter, took the fish and carried it home to his family, who said, 'What shall we do with this fish?' Quoth he, 'We will broil it and eat of it, till it please God to provide for us.' So they took it and ripping open its belly, found therein a great pearl and told the Jew, who said, 'See if it be pierced. If so, it belongs to some one of the folk; if not, it is a provision of God for us.' So they examined it and found it unpierced.

Night ccccxlix.

On the morrow, the Jew carried it to one of his brethren, who was skilled in jewels, and he said, 'Whence hadst thou this pearl?' 'It was a gift of God the Most High to us,' replied the Jew, and the other said, 'It is worth a thousand dirhems, and I will give thee that sum; but take

[1] *i.e.* Muslim Jews.

it to such an one, for he hath more money and skill than I.' So the Jew took it to the jeweller, who said, 'It is worth threescore and ten thousand dirhems and no more.' Then he paid him that sum and the Jew hired two porters to carry the money to his house. As he came to his door, a beggar accosted him, saying, 'Give me of that which God the Most High hath given thee.' Quoth the Jew, 'But yesterday, we were even as thou; take half the money.' So he made two parts of it, and each took his half. Then said the beggar, 'Take back thy money and God prosper thee in it; I am a messenger, whom thy Lord hath sent to try thee.' Quoth the Jew, 'To God be the praise and the thanks!' and abode with his family in all delight of life, till death.

ABOU HASSAN EZ ZIYADI AND THE MAN FROM KHORASSAN.

Quoth Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi,[1] 'I was once in very needy case, and the baker and grocer and other purveyors importuned me, so that I was in sore straits and knew of no resource nor what to do. Things being thus, there came in to me one day one of my servants and said to me, "There is a man, a pilgrim, at the door, who seeks admission to thee." Quoth I, "Admit him." So he came in and behold, he was a native of Khorassan. We exchanged salutations and he said to me, "Art thou Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi?" "Yes," answered I. "What is thy business?" Quoth he, "I am a stranger and am minded to make the pilgrimage; but I have with me a great sum of money, which is burdensome to me. So I wish to deposit with thee these ten thousand dirhems, whilst I make the pilgrimage and return. If the caravan return

[1] A well-known jurist at Baghdad in the reign of the Khalif Mamoun.

and thou see me not, know that I am dead, in which case the money is a gift from me to thee; but if I come back, it shall be mine." "Be it as thou wilt," answered I, "so it please God the Most High." So he brought out a leather bag and I said to the servant, "Fetch the scales." He brought them and the man weighed out the money and handed it to me, after which he went his way. Then I called the tradesmen and paid them what I owed and spent freely, saying in myself, "By the time he returns, God will have succoured me with one or another of His bounties."

Night cccl.

However, next day, the servant came in to me and said, "Thy friend the man from Khorassan is at the door." "Admit him," answered I. So he came in and said to me, "I had thought to make the pilgrimage; but news hath reached me of the death of my father, and I have resolved to return; so give me the money I deposited with thee yesterday." When I heard this, I was troubled and perplexed beyond measure and knew not what reply to make him; for, if I denied it, he would put me to my oath, and I should be shamed in the world to come; whilst, if I told him that I had spent the money, he would make an outcry and disgrace me. So I said to him, "God give thee health! This my house is no stronghold nor place of safe custody for this money. When I received thy leather bag, I sent it to one with whom it now is; so do thou return to us to-morrow and take thy money, if it be the will of God."

So he went away, and I passed the night in sore concern, because of his return to me. Sleep visited me not nor could I close my eyes: so I rose and bade the boy saddle me the mule. "O my lord," answered he, "it is yet but the first watch of the night." So I returned to bed, but sleep was forbidden to me and I ceased not to awaken the boy and he to put me off, till break of day, when he saddled

me the mule, and I mounted and rode out, not knowing whither to go. I threw the reins on the mule's shoulders and gave myself up to anxiety and melancholy thought, whilst she fared on with me to the eastward of Baghdad. Presently, as I went along, I saw a number of people in front and turned aside into another path to avoid them; but they, seeing that I wore a professor's hood, followed me and hastening up to me, said, "Knowest thou the lodging of Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi?" "I am he," answered I; and they rejoined, "The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee." Then they carried me before El Mamoun, who said to me, "Who art thou?" Quoth I, "I am a professor of the law and traditions, and one of the associates of the Cadi Abou Yousuf." "How art thou called?" asked the Khalif. "Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi," answered I, and he said, "Expound to me thy case."

So I told him how it was with me and he wept sore and said to me, "Out on thee! The Apostle of God (whom may He bless and preserve) would not let me sleep this night, because of thee; for he appeared to me in my first sleep and said to me, 'Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi.' Whereupon I awoke and knowing thee not, went to sleep again; but he came to me a second time and said to me, 'Woe to thee! Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi.' I awoke a second time, but knew thee not, so went to sleep again; and he came to me a third time and still I knew thee not and went to sleep again. Then he came to me once more and said, 'Out on thee! Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi!' After that I dared not go to sleep again, but watched the rest of the night and aroused my people and sent them in all directions in quest of thee." Then he gave me ten thousand dirhems, saying, "This is for the Khorassani," and other ten thousand, saying, "Spend freely of this and amend thy case therewith, and set thine affairs in order." Moreover, he gave me yet thirty thousand

dirhems, saying, "Furnish thyself with this, and when the day of estate comes round, come thou to me, that I may invest thee with an office."

So I took the money and returned home, where I prayed the morning-prayer. Presently came the Khorassani, so I carried him into the house and brought out to him ten thousand dirhems, saying, "Here is thy money." "It is not my very money," answered he. "How cometh this?" So I told him the whole story, and he wept and said, "By Allah, hadst thou told me the truth at first, I had not pressed thee! And now, by Allah, I will not accept aught of the money; and thou art quit of it." So saying, he went away and I set my affairs in order and repaired on the appointed day to the Divan, where I found the Khalif seated. When he saw me, he called me to him and bringing forth to me a paper from under his prayer-carpet, said to me, "This is a patent, conferring on thee the office of Cadi of the western division of the Holy City[1] from the Bab es Selam[2] to the end of the town; and I appoint thee such and such monthly allowances. So fear God (to whom belong might and majesty) and be mindful of the solicitude of His Apostle (whom may He bless and preserve) on thine account." The folk marvelled at the Khalif's words and questioned me of their meaning; so I told them the whole story and it spread abroad amongst the people.'

Night cccli.

And [quoth he who tells the tale] Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi ceased not to be Cadi of the Holy City, till he died in the days of El Mamoun, the mercy of God be on him!

[1] Medina.

[2] One of the gates of the great mosque there, wherein is the tomb of the Prophet.

THE POOR MAN AND HIS GENEROUS FRIEND.

There was once a rich man, who lost all he had and became poor, whereupon his wife counselled him to seek aid of one of his friends. So he betook himself to a certain friend of his and acquainted him with his strait; and he lent him five hundred dinars to trade withal. Now he had aforetime been a jeweller; so he took the money and went to the jewel-bazaar, where he opened a shop to buy and sell. Presently, three men accosted him, as he sat in his shop, and asked for his father. He told them that he was dead, and they said, 'Did he leave any offspring?' Quoth the jeweller, 'He left a son, your servant.' 'And who knoweth thee for his son?' asked they. 'The people of the bazaar,' replied he; and they said, 'Call them together, that they may testify to us that thou art his son.' So he called them and they bore witness of this; whereupon the three men delivered to him a pair of saddle-bags, containing thirty thousand dinars, besides jewels and bullion, saying, 'This was deposited with us in trust by thy father.' Then they went away; and presently there came to him a woman, who sought of him certain of the jewels, worth five hundred dinars, and paid him three thousand for them.

So he took five hundred dinars and carrying them to his friend, who had lent him the money, said to him, 'Take the five hundred dinars I borrowed of thee; for God hath aided and prospered me.' 'Not so,' quoth the other. 'I gave them to thee outright, for the love of God; so do thou keep them. And take this paper, but read it not, till thou be at home, and do according to that which is therein.' So he took the paper and returned home, where he opened it and read therein the following verses:

The men who came to thee at first my kinsmen were, my sire, His brother and my dam's, Salih ben Ali is his name.
Moreover, she to whom thou soldst the goods my mother was, And eke the jewels and the gold, from me, to boot, they came;
Nor, in thus ordering myself to thee, aught did I seek Save of the taking it from me to spare thee from the shame.

THE RUINED MAN WHO BECAME RICH AGAIN THROUGH A DREAM.

There lived once in Baghdad a very wealthy man, who lost all his substance and became so poor, that he could only earn his living by excessive labour. One night, he lay down to sleep, dejected and sick at heart, and saw in a dream one who said to him, 'Thy fortune is at Cairo; go thither and seek it.' So he set out for Cairo; but, when he arrived there, night overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque. Presently, as fate would have it, a company of thieves entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house; but the people of the house, being aroused by the noise, awoke and cried out; whereupon the chief of the police came to their aid with his officers. The robbers made off; but the police entered the mosque and finding the man from Baghdad asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm-rods, till he was well nigh dead. Then they cast him into prison, where he abode three days, after which the chief of the police sent for him and said to him, 'Whence art thou?' 'From Baghdad,' answered he. 'And what brought thee to Cairo?' asked the magistrate. Quoth the Baghdadi, 'I saw in a dream one who said to me, "Thy fortune is at Cairo; go thither to it." But when I came hither, the fortune that he promised me proved to be the beating I had of thee.'

The chief of the police laughed, till he showed his jaw-

teeth, and said, 'O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me, "There is in Baghdad a house of such a fashion and situate so-and-so, in the garden whereof is a fountain and thereunder a great sum of money buried. Go thither and take it." Yet I went not; but thou, of thy little wit, hast journeyed from place to place, on the faith of a dream, which was but an illusion of sleep.' Then he gave him money, saying, 'This is to help thee back to thy native land.' Now the house he had described was the man's own house in Baghdad; so the latter returned thither, and digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure; and [thus] God gave him abundant fortune.

Night ccclii.

THE KHALIF EL MUTAWEKKIL AND HIS FAVOURITE MEHBOUBEH.

There were in the palace of the Khalif El Mutawekkil ala Allah[1] four thousand concubines, whereof two thousand were Greeks [and other foreigners] and other two thousand native Arabians[2] and Abyssinians; and Obeid ibn Tahir[3] had given him two hundred white girls and a like number of Abyssinian and native girls.[2] Among these latter was a girl of Bassora, Mehboubeh by name, who was of surpassing beauty and elegance and voluptuous grace. Moreover, she played upon the lute and was skilled in singing and making verses and wrote excellent well; so that El Mutawekkil fell passionately in love with her and could not endure from her a single hour. When she saw this, she presumed upon his favour to use him haughtily and capriciously, so that he waxed ex-

[1] Tenth Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, A.D. 849–861.
[2] *Muwelledat*, women born in Muslim countries of slave-parents; *syn.* mulatto-women.
[3] Lieutenant of the Prefect of Baghdad.

ceeding wroth with her and forsook her, forbidding the people of the palace to speak with her.

On this wise she abode some days, but the Khalif still inclined to her; and he arose one morning and said to his courtiers, 'I dreamt, last night, that I was reconciled to Mehboubeh.' 'Would God this might be on wake!' answered they. As they were talking, in came one of the Khalif's maidservants and whispered him that they had heard a noise of singing and luting in Mehboubeh's chamber and knew not what this meant. So he rose and entering the harem, went straight to Mehboubeh's apartment, where he heard her playing wonder-sweetly upon the lute and singing the following verses:

I wander through the halls, but not a soul I see, To whom I may complain or who will speak with me.
It is as though I'd wrought so grievous an offence, No penitence avails myself therefrom to free.
Will no one plead my cause with a king, who came to me In sleep and took me back to favour and to gree;
But with the break of day to rigour did revert And cast me off from him and far away did flee?

When the Khalif heard these verses, he marvelled at the strange coincidence of their dreams and entered the chamber. As soon as she was ware of him, she hastened to throw herself at his feet, and kissing them, said, 'By Allah, O my lord, this is what I dreamt last night; and when I awoke, I made the verses thou hast heard.' 'By Allah,' replied El Mutawekkil, 'I also dreamt the like!' Then they embraced and made friends and he abode with her seven days and nights.

Now she had written upon her cheek, in musk, the Khalif's name, which was Jaafer: and when he saw this, he made the following verses:

One wrote on her cheek, with musk, a name, yea, Jaafer to wit: My soul be her ransom who wrote on her cheek what I see on it!

If her fingers, indeed, have traced a single line on her cheek, I trow, in my heart of hearts full many a line she hath writ.
O thou, whom Jaafer alone of men possesses, may God Grant Jaafer to drink his fill of the wine of thy beauty and wit!

When El Mutawekkil died, all his women forgot him, save Mehboubeh, who ceased not to mourn for him, till she died and was buried by his side, the mercy of God be on them both! Night cccliii.

WERDAN THE BUTCHER HIS ADVENTURE WITH THE LADY AND THE BEAR.

There lived once in Cairo, in the days of the Khalif El Hakim bi Amrillah, a butcher named Werdan, who dealt in sheep's flesh; and there came to him every forenoon a lady and gave him a dinar, whose weight was nigh two and a half Egyptian dinars, saying, 'Give me a lamb.' So he took the money and gave her the lamb, which she delivered to a porter she had with her; and he put it in his basket and she went away with him to her own place. This went on for some time, the butcher profiting a dinar by her every day, till at last he began to be curious about her and said to himself 'This woman buys a dinar's worth of meat of me every day, paying ready money, and never misses a day. Verily, this is a strange thing!' So he took an occasion of questioning the porter, in her absence, and said to him, 'Whither goest thou every day with yonder woman?' 'I know not what to make of her,' answered the porter; 'for, every day, after she hath taken the lamb of thee, she buys fresh and dried fruits and wax candles and other necessaries of the table, a dinar's worth, and takes of a certain Nazarene two flagons of wine, for which she pays him another dinar. Then she loads me with the whole and I go with her to the Vizier's Gardens, where she blindfolds me, so that I cannot see where I set my

feet, and taking me by the hand, leads me I know not whither. Presently, she says, "Set down here;" and when I have done so, she gives me an empty basket she has ready and taking my hand, leads me back to the place, where she bound my eyes, and there does off the bandage and gives me ten dirhems.' 'God be her helper!' quoth Werdan; but he redoubled in curiosity about her case; disquietude increased upon him and he passed the night in exceeding restlessness.

Next morning, [quoth Werdan,] she came to me as of wont and taking the lamb, delivered it to the porter and went away. So I gave my shop in charge to a boy and followed her, unseen of her; nor did I cease to keep her in sight, hiding behind her, till she left Cairo and came to the Vizier's Gardens. Then I hid, whilst she bound the porter's eyes, and followed her again from place to place, till she came to the mountain and stopped at a place where there was a great stone. Here she made the porter set down his crate, and I waited, whilst she carried him back to the Vizier's Gardens, after which she returned and taking out the contents of the basket, disappeared behind the stone. Then I went up to the stone and pulling it away, discovered behind it an open trap-door of brass and a flight of steps leading downward. So I descended, little by little, into a long corridor, brilliantly lighted, and followed it, till I came to a [closed] door, as it were the door of a room. I looked about till I discovered a recess, with steps therein; then climbed up and found a little niche with an opening therein giving upon a saloon.

Night cccliv.

So I looked in and saw the lady cut off the choicest parts of the lamb and laying them in a saucepan, throw the rest to a huge great bear, who ate it all to the last bit. When she had made an end of cooking, she ate her fill, after which she set on wine and fruits and confections and fell to drinking, using a cup herself and giving the bear

to drink in a basin of gold, till she was heated with wine, when she put off her trousers and lay down. Thereupon the bear came up to her and served her, whilst she gave him the best of what belongeth to mankind, till he had made an end, when he sat down and rested. Presently, he sprang to her and served her again; and thus he did, till he had furnished half a score courses, and they both fell down in a swoon and abode without motion.

Then said I to myself, "Now is my opportunity," and taking a knife I had with me, that would cut bones before flesh, went down to them and found them motionless, not a muscle of them moving for their much swink. So I put my knife to the bear's gullet and bore upon it, till I severed his head from his body, and he gave a great snort like thunder, whereat she started up in alarm and seeing the bear slain and me standing with the knife in my hand, gave such a shriek that I thought the soul had left her body. Then said she, "O Werdan, is this how thou requitest me my favours?" "O enemy of thine own soul," replied I, "dost thou lack of men that thou must do this shameful thing?" She made me no answer, but bent down to the bear, and finding his head divided from his body, said to me, "O Werdan, which were the liefer to thee, to hearken to what I shall say to thee and be the means of thine own safety and enrichment to the end of thy days, or gainsay me and so bring about thine own destruction?" "I choose rather to hearken unto thee," answered I. "Say what thou wilt." "Then," said she, "kill me, as thou hast killed this bear, and take thy need of this treasure and go thy way." Quoth I, "I am better than this bear. Return to God the Most High and repent, and I will marry thee, and we will live on this treasure the rest of our lives." "O Werdan," rejoined she, "far be it from me! How shall I live after him? An thou kill me not, by Allah, I will assuredly do away thy life! So leave bandying words with

Night cccliv.

me, or thou art a lost man. This is all I have to say to thee and peace be on thee." Then said I, "I will slay thee, and thou shalt go to the malediction of God." So saying, I caught her by the hair and cut her throat; and she went to the malediction of God and of the angels and of all mankind.

Then I examined the place and found there gold and pearls and jewels, such as no king could bring together. So I filled the porter's crate with as much as I could carry and covered it with the clothes I had on me. Then I shouldered it and going up out of the underground place, set out homeward and fared on, till I came to the gate of Cairo, where I fell in with ten of the Khalif's body-guard, followed by El Hakim[1] himself, who said to me, "Ho, Werdan!" "At thy service, O King," replied I. "Hast thou killed the woman and the bear?" asked he and I answered, "Yes." Quoth he, "Set down the basket and fear nought, for all the treasure thou hast with thee is thine, and none shall dispute it with thee." So I set down the basket, and he uncovered it and looked at it; then said to me, "Tell me their case, though I know it, as if I had been present with you." So I told him all that had passed and he said, "Thou hast spoken the truth, O Werdan. Come now with me to the treasure."

So I returned with him to the cavern, where he found the trap-door closed and said to me, "O Werdan, lift it; none but thou can open the treasure, for it is enchanted in thy name and favour." "By Allah," answered I, "I cannot open it;" but he said, "Go up to it, trusting in the blessing of God." So I called upon the name of God the Most High and going up to the trap-door, put my hand to it; where-

[1] El Hakim bi Amrillah, sixth Fatimite Khalif of Egypt (A.D. 995–1021), a cruel and fantastic tyrant, who claimed to be an incarnation of the Deity. He was the founder of the religion of the Druses, who look to him to reappear and be their Messiah.

upon it came up, as it had been the lightest of things. Then said the Khalif, "Go down and bring up what is there; for none but one of thy name and favour and quality hath gone down there since the place was made, and the slaying of the bear and the woman was appointed to be at thy hand. This was recorded with me and I was awaiting its fulfilment." Accordingly, I went down and brought up all the treasure, whereupon the Khalif sent for beasts of burden and carried it away, after giving me the porter's crate, with what was therein. So I carried it home and opened me a shop in the market. And [quoth he who tells the tale] this market is still extant and is known as Werdan's Market.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER AND THE APE.

There was once a King's daughter, whose heart was taken with love of a black slave: he did away her maidenhead, and she became passionately addicted to amorous dalliance, so that she could not endure from it a single hour and made moan of her case to one of her body-women, who told her that no thing doth the deed of kind more abundantly than the ape. Now it chanced, one day, that an ape-leader passed under her lattice, with a great ape; so she unveiled her face and looking upon the ape, signed to him with her eyes, whereupon he broke his bonds and shackles and climbed up to the princess, who hid him in a place with her, and he abode, eating and drinking and clicketing, night and day. Her father heard of this and would have killed her; but she took the alarm and disguising herself in a [male] slave's habit, loaded a mule with gold and jewels and precious stuffs past count; then, taking horse with the ape, fled to Cairo, where she took up her abode in one of the houses without the city. Night ccclvi.

Now, every day, she used to buy meat of a young man,

a butcher, but came not to him till after noonday, pale and disordered in face; so that he said in himself, 'There hangs some mystery by this slave.' For she used to visit him in her slave's habit. [Quoth the butcher,] So, one day, when she came to me as usual, I went out after her, unseen, and ceased not to follow her from place to place, so as she saw me not, till she came to her lodging, without the city, and I looked in upon her, through a cranny, and saw her light a fire and cook the meat, of which she ate her fill and gave the rest to an ape she had with her. Then she put off her slave's habit and donned the richest of women's apparel; and so I knew that she was a woman. After this she set on wine and drank and gave the ape to drink; and he served her nigh half a score times, till she swooned away, when he threw a silken coverlet over her and returned to his place.

Thereupon I went down into the midst of the place and the ape, becoming aware of me, would have torn me in pieces; but I made haste to pull out my knife and slit his paunch. The noise aroused the young lady, who awoke, terrified and trembling; and when she saw the ape in this plight, she gave such a shriek, that her soul well nigh departed her body. Then she fell down in a swoon, and when she came to herself, she said to me, "What moved thee to do thus? By Allah, I conjure thee to send me after him!" But I spoke her fair and engaged to her that I would stand in the ape's stead, in the matter of much clicketing, till her trouble subsided and I took her to wife.

However, I fell short in this and could not endure to it; so I complained of her case to a certain old woman, who engaged to manage the affair and said to me, "Thou must bring me a cooking-pot full of virgin vinegar and a pound of pyrethrum."[1] So I brought her what she sought, and

[1] Bastard or Spanish pellitory.

she laid the pyrethrum in the pot with the vinegar and set it on the fire, till it boiled briskly. Then she bade me serve the girl, and I served her, till she fainted away, when the old woman took her up, and she unknowing, and set her kaze to the mouth of the cooking-pot. The steam of the pot entered her poke and there fell from it somewhat, which I examined and behold, it was two worms, one black and the other yellow. Quoth the old woman, "The black was bred of the embraces of the negro and the yellow of those of the ape."

When my wife recovered from her swoon, she abode with me, in all delight and solace of life, and sought not copulation, as before, for God the Most High had done away from her this appetite; whereat I marvelled and acquainted her with the case. Moreover, [quoth he who tells the tale,] she took the old woman to be to her in the stead of her mother, and she and Werdan and his wife abode in joy and cheer, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to the Living One, who dieth not and in whose hand is the empire of the Seen and the Unseen!

Night cccliii.

THE ENCHANTED HORSE.

There was once, of old time, a great and puissant King, of the Kings of the Persians, Sabour by name, who was the richest of all the Kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed them all in wit and wisdom. Generous, open-handed and beneficent, he gave to those who sought and repelled not those who resorted to him, comforted the broken-hearted and honourably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon those who oppressed them. He had three daughters, like shining full moons or flowered gardens, and a son as he

were the moon; and it was his wont to keep two festivals in the year, those of the New Year and the Autumnal Equinox, on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave gifts and made proclamation of safety and security and advanced his chamberlains and officers; and the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the festival, bringing him gifts and servants.

Now he loved science and geometry, and one day, as he sat on his throne of kingship, during one of these festivals, there came in to him three sages, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of crafts and inventions, skilled in making rarities, such as confound the wit, and versed in the knowledge of [occult] truths and subtleties; and they were of three different tongues and countries, the first an Indian, the second a Greek and the third a Persian. The Indian came forward and prostrating himself before the King, gave him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting [his dignity]; that is to say, a figure of gold, set with precious stones and jewels of price and holding in its hand a golden trumpet. When Sabour saw this, he said, 'O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?' And the Indian answered, 'O my lord, if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for, if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this trumpet against him, and so he will be known and laid hands on.' The King marvelled at this and said, 'By Allah, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire.'

Then came forward the Greek and prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver, in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four-and-twenty young ones of the same metal. Sabour looked at them and turning to the Greek, said to him, 'O sage,

what is the virtue of this peacock?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'as often as an hour of the day or night passes, it pecks one of its young [and cries out and flaps its wings,] till the four-and-twenty hours are accomplished; and when the month comes to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the new moon therein.' And the King said, 'An thou speak sooth, I will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire.'

Then came forward the Persian sage and prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse of ebony wood, inlaid with gold and jewels, ready harnessed with saddle and bridle and stirrups such as befit kings; which when Sabour saw, he marvelled exceedingly and was confounded at the perfection of its form and the ingenuity of its fashion. So he said, 'What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and the secret of its movement?' 'O my lord,' answered the Persian, 'the virtue of this horse is that, if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air for the space of a year and a day.' The King marvelled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon each other in one day, and turning to the sage, said to him, 'By the Great God and the Bountiful Lord, who created all creatures and feedeth them with water and victual, an thy speech be true and the virtue of thy handiwork appear, I will give thee whatsoever thou seekest and will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire!'

Then he entertained the three sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts, after which they brought them before him and each took the creature he had wrought and showed him the secret of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trumpet, the peacock pecked its young and the Persian sage mounted the horse of ebony, whereupon it soared with him into the air and descended again. When the King saw all this, he was amazed and

perplexed and was like to fly for joy and said to the three sages, 'Now am I certified of the truth of your words and it behoves me to quit me of my promise. Seek ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give it you.' Now the report of the [beauty of the] King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered, 'If the King be content with us and accept of our gifts and give us leave to ask a boon of him, we ask of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-in-law; for that the stability of kings may not be gainsaid.' Quoth the King, 'I grant you that which you desire,' and bade summon the Cadi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters.

Now these latter were behind a curtain, looking on; and when they heard this, the youngest considered [him that was to be] her husband and saw him to be an old man, a hundred years of age, with frosted hair, drooping forehead, mangy eyebrows, slitten ears, clipped[1] beard and moustaches, red, protruding eyes, bleached, hollow, flabby cheeks, nose like an egg-plant and face like a cobbler's apron, teeth overlapping one another,[2] lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous; brief, a monstrous favour; for he was the frightfullest of the folk of his time; his grinders had been knocked[3] out and his teeth were like the tusks of the Jinn that fright the fowls in the hen-house. Now the princess was the fairest and most graceful woman of her time, more elegant than the tender gazelle, blander than the gentle zephyr and brighter than the moon at her full, confounding the branch and outdoing the gazelle in the flexile grace of her shape and movements; and she was fairer and sweeter than her sisters. So, when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and lamenting and weeping.

[1] Or dyed. [2] Or interlocking. [3] Or torn.

Now the prince her brother, who loved her with an exceeding love, more than her sisters, was then newly returned from a journey and hearing her weeping and crying, came in to her and said, 'What ails thee? Tell me and conceal nought from me.' 'O my brother and my dear one,' answered she, 'if the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out; and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to provide for me.' Quoth he, 'Tell me what means this talk and what has straitened thy breast and troubled thy humour.' 'O my brother and my dear one,' answered the princess, 'know that my father hath given me in marriage to a sorcerer, who brought him, as a gift, a horse of black wood, and hath stricken him with his craft and his sorcery; but, as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him, I had never come into this world!' Her brother soothed her and comforted her, then betook himself to his father and said to him, 'What is this sorcerer to whom thou hast given my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present that he hath brought thee, so that thou hast caused my sister to [almost] die of chagrin? It is not right that this should be.'

Now the Persian was standing by and when he heard the prince's words, he was mortified thereby and filled with rage, and the King said, 'O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be filled with amazement.' Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so; and when the prince, who was an accomplished cavalier, saw it, it pleased him. So he mounted it forthright and struck its belly with the stirrup-irons; but it stirred not and the King said to the sage, 'Go and show him its movement, that he also may help thee to thy wish.' Now the Persian bore the prince malice for that he willed not he should have his sister; so he showed him the peg of ascent on the right side [of the

horse's neck] and saying to him, 'Turn this pin,' left him. So the prince turned the pin and forthwith the horse soared with him into the air, as it were a bird, and gave not over flying with him, till it disappeared from sight, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his affair and said to the Persian, 'O sage, look how thou mayst make him descend.' But he answered, 'O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till the Day of Resurrection, for that he, of his ignorance and conceit, asked me not of the peg of descent and I forgot to acquaint him therewith.' When the King heard this, he was sore enraged and bade beat the sorcerer and clap him in prison, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and buffeted his face and beat upon his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and lamentation, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city; and [thus] their joy was turned to mourning and their gladness changed into chagrin and sore affliction.

Meanwhile, the horse gave not over soaring with the prince, till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying in himself, 'Verily, this was a plot of the sage to destroy me; but there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I am lost without recourse; but, I wonder, did not he who made the peg of ascent make a peg of descent also?' Now he was a man of wit and intelligence; so he fell to examining all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a peg, like a cock's head, on its right shoulder and the like on the left, and turned the right-hand peg, whereupon the horse flew upward with increased speed. So he left it and turned the left-hand peg, and immediately the steed's upward motion ceased and he began to descend, little by little, towards the earth. When the prince saw this and knew the uses of the horse, he was filled with joy

Night ccclviii.

and gladness and thanked God the Most High for that He had vouchsafed to deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whither he would, making him rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete command of his movement.

He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's upward flight had borne him afar from the earth; and as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various towns and countries over which he passed and which he knew not, having never seen them in his life. Amongst the rest, he saw a city of the goodliest ordinance, in the midst of a green and smiling country, abounding in trees and streams; whereat he fell a-musing and said in himself, 'Would I knew the name of yonder city and in what country it is!' And he began to circle about it and observe it right and left. By this time, the day began to wane and the sun drew near to its setting; and he said, 'I see no goodlier place to pass the night in than this city; so I will lodge here this night and on the morrow I will return to my people and my kingdom and tell my father and family what has passed and what I have seen with my eyes.' Then he addressed himself to look for a place, where he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should see him, and presently espied a palace, surrounded by a great wall with lofty battlements, rising high into the air from the midst of the city and guarded by forty black slaves, clad in complete mail and armed with spears and swords and bows and arrows. Quoth he, 'This is a goodly place,' and turned the peg of descent, whereupon the horse sank down with him and alighted gently on the roof of the palace. So the prince dismounted and began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying, 'By Allah, he who fashioned thee was a cunning craftsman, and if God extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and family in

safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner of bounties and entreat him with the utmost favour.'

By this time the night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof, till he was assured that all in the palace slept; and indeed hunger and thirst were sore upon him, for that he had not tasted food since he parted from his father. So he said in himself, 'Surely, the like of this palace will not lack of victual,' and leaving the horse there, went in quest of somewhat to eat. Presently, he came to a stair and descending it, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, that shone in the light of the moon. He marvelled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but heard no sound and saw no living soul and stood in perplexity, looking right and left and knowing not whither he should go. Then said he to himself, 'I cannot do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it; and as soon as it is day, I will mount and depart.' However, as he stood talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace, and making towards it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the palace, at the head of an eunuch, as he were one of the Afrits of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than a plank and wider than a bench. He lay asleep before the door, with the pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a budget of leather[1] hanging from a column of granite.

Night ccclix.

When the prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, 'I crave help from God the Supreme! O my God, even as Thou hast [already] delivered me from destruction, vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of

[1] *Sufreh*, a round piece of leather used (mostly by travellers) as a table-cloth and having a running string inserted round its edge, by means of which it can be converted into a bag or budget for holding provisions, as in this instance.

this palace!' So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and taking it, carried it to a place apart and opened it and found in it food of the best. So he ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung the budget up in its place and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the latter slept on, knowing not whence destiny should come to him. Then the prince fared on into the palace, till he came to another door, with a curtain drawn before it; so he raised the curtain and entering, saw a couch of ivory, inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave-girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was therein, and found a young lady lying asleep, veiled with her hair, as she were the full moon at its rising, with flower-white forehead and shining parting and cheeks like blood-red anemones and dainty moles thereon.

When he saw this, he was amazed at her beauty and grace and symmetry and recked no more of death. So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve, and kissed her on the right cheek; whereupon she awoke forthright and seeing the prince standing at her head, said to him, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'I am thy slave and thy lover.' 'And who brought thee hither?' asked she. 'My Lord and my fortune,' answered he; and she said, 'Belike thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favour. By Allah he lied, when he spoke this thing, for thou art not other than handsome.'

Now the son of the King of Hind[1] had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him, for that he was ill-favoured, and she thought the prince was he. So, when she saw his beauty and grace, for indeed he was like the radiant moon, her heart was taken in the snare of his love,

[1] Lower India.

as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse. Presently, her waiting-women awoke from their sleep and seeing the prince sitting with their mistress, said to her, 'O my lady, who is this with thee?' Quoth she, 'I know not; I found him sitting by me, when I awoke. Belike it is he who seeks me in marriage of my father.' 'O my lady,' answered they, 'by the Most Great God, this is not he who seeks thee in marriage, for he is foul and this man is fair and of high condition. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant.'

Then they went out to the eunuch and finding him asleep, awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Quoth they, 'How comes it that thou art guardian of the palace and yet men come in to us, whilst we are asleep?' When the eunuch heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found it not, and fear took him and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress and seeing the prince sitting talking with her, said to the former, 'O my lord, art thou a man or a genie?' 'Out on thee, O unluckiest of slaves!' replied the prince. 'How darest thou even a prince of the sons of the Chosroës with one of the unbelieving Satans?' Then he took the sword in his hand and said, 'I am the King's son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her.' 'O my lord,' replied the eunuch, 'if thou be indeed a man, as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other.'

Then he ran to the King, shrieking out and rending his clothes and casting dust upon his head; and when the King heard his outcry, he said to him, 'What has befallen thee? Speak quickly and be brief; for thou troublest my heart.' 'O King,' answered the eunuch, 'come to thy daughter's succour; for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a king's son, hath gotten possession of her; so up and at him!' When the King heard this, he thought to kill him

and said, 'How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?' Then he betook himself to the princess's palace, where he found her women standing, [awaiting him] and said to them, 'What is come to my daughter?' 'O King,' answered they, 'sleep overcame us and when we awoke, we found a young man sitting talking with her, as he were the full moon, never saw we a fairer of favour than he. So we questioned him of his case and he avouched that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a genie; but he is modest and well bred, and doth nothing unseemly.'

When the King heard this, his wrath cooled and he raised the curtain stealthily and looking in, saw a prince of the goodliest fashion, with a face like the shining full moon, sitting talking with his daughter. At this sight he could not contain himself, of his jealousy for his daughter, and putting the curtain aside, rushed in upon them, like a Ghoul, with his drawn sword in his hand. When the prince saw him, he said to the princess, 'Is this thy father?' 'Yes,' answered she; whereupon he sprang to his feet and taking his sword in his hand, cried out at the King with such a terrible cry, that he was confounded. Then he would have fallen on him with the sword; but the King, seeing that the prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his blade and stood till the latter came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, 'O youth, art thou a man or a genie?' Quoth the prince, 'Did I not respect thy right[1] and thy daughter's honour, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou even me with devils, me that am a prince of the sons of the Chosroës, who, had they a mind to take thy kingdom, could shake thee from thy power and thy dominion and despoil thee of all thy possessions?' When the King heard his words, he was

Night cccLx.

[1] *i.e.* as master of the house in which I have sought shelter.

smitten with awe and fear of him and rejoined, 'If thou indeed be of the sons of the Kings, as thou pretendest, how comes it that thou enterest my palace, without my leave, and soilest my honour, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and that I have given her to thee to wife, I that have slain kings and kings' sons, who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my mischief, when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to death, they would slay thee forthright? Who then shall deliver thee out of my hand?'

When the prince heard this speech of the King, he answered, 'Verily, I wonder at thee and at the poverty of thy wit! Canst thou covet for thy daughter a goodlier mate than myself and hast ever seen a stouter of heart or a more sufficient or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?' 'Nay, by Allah,' rejoined the King. 'But, O youth, I would have had thee make suit to me for her hand before witnesses, that I might marry her to thee publicly; and now, were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonoured me in her person.' 'Thou sayst well, O King,' replied the prince; 'but, if thy servants and soldiers should fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendest, thou wouldst but publish thine own dishonour, and the folk would be divided between belief and disbelief with regard to thee. Wherefore, meseems thou wilt do well to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee.' Quoth the King, 'Let me hear what thou hast to propose.' And the prince said, 'What I have to propose to thee is this: either do thou meet me in single combat and he who slays the other shall be held the worthier and having a better title to the kingdom; or else, let me be this night and on the morrow draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants; but [first] tell me their number.' Quoth the King, 'They are forty thousand

horse, besides my own slaves and their followers, who are the like of them in number.' 'When the day breaks, then,' continued the prince, 'do thou array them against me and say to them, "This fellow is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle single-handed against you all; for he pretends that he will overcome you and put you to the rout and that ye cannot prevail against him." Then leave me to do battle with them. If they kill me, then is thy secret the safelier hidden and thine honour the better guarded; and if I overcome them, then is the like of me one whose alliance a King should covet.'

The King approved of his counsel and accepted his proposition, despite his awe and amaze at the exorbitant pretension of the prince to do battle against his whole army, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the mellay and so he be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonour. So he called the eunuch and bade him go forthright to his Vizier and bid him assemble the whole of the troops and cause them don their arms and mount their horses. The eunuch carried the King's order to the Vizier, who straightway summoned the captains of the army and the grandees of the realm and bade them don their harness of war and mount their horses and sally forth in battle array.

Meanwhile, the King sat conversing with the prince, being pleased with his wit and good breeding, till daybreak, when he returned to his palace and seating himself on his throne, commanded the troops to mount and bade saddle one of the best of the royal horses with handsome housings and trappings and bring it to the prince. But the latter said, 'O King, I will not mount, till I come in sight of the troops and see them.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' answered the King. Then they repaired to the tilting ground, where the troops were drawn up, and the prince

looked upon them and noted their great number; after which the King cried out to them, saying, 'Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeks my daughter in marriage,—never have I seen a goodlier than he, no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier, for he pretends that he can overcome you, single-handed, and put you to the rout and that, were ye a hundred thousand in number, yet would ye be for him but little. But, when he charges upon you, do ye receive him upon the points of your lances and the edges of your sabres; for, indeed, he hath undertaken a grave matter.'

Then said he to the prince, 'Up, O my son, and do thy will on them.' 'O King,' answered he, 'thou dealest not fairly with me. How shall I go forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and they are mounted?' 'I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst,' rejoined the King; 'but take which of my horses thou wilt.' But he said, 'None of thy horses pleases me, and I will ride none but that on which I came.' 'And where is thy horse?' asked the King. 'Atop of thy palace,' answered the prince, and the King said, 'In what part of my palace?' 'On the roof,' replied the prince, 'Out on thee!' quoth the King. 'This is the first sign thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof? But we shall soon see if thou speak truth or falsehood.' Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, 'Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof.' And all the people marvelled at the prince's words, saying, 'How can a horse come down the steps from the roof? Verily this is a thing whose like we never heard.'

Meanwhile, the King's messenger repaired to the palace, accompanied by other of the royal officers, and mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there,—never had they looked on a handsomer; but when they drew near and examined it, they saw that it was made of ebony and

ivory; whereat they laughed to each other, saying, 'Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spoke? Surely, he must be mad; but we shall soon see the truth of his case. Belike, there hangs some great mystery by him.' Then they lifted up the horse and carrying it to the King, set it down before him, and all the people flocked round it, staring at it and marvelling at the beauty of its fashion and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it and wondered at it extremely; and he said to the prince, 'O youth, is this thy horse?' 'Yes, O King,' answered the prince; 'this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see wonders of it.' 'Then take and mount it,' rejoined the King, and the prince said, 'I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it.' So the King bade them withdraw a bowshot from the horse; whereupon quoth the prince, 'O King, I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy troops and scatter them right and left and cleave their hearts in sunder.' 'Do as thou wilt,' answered the King; 'and spare them not, for they will not spare thee.' Then the prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, 'When the youth comes between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the edges of our swords.' 'By Allah,' quoth another, 'it were pity to kill so handsome and well-shaped a youth!' 'By Allah,' rejoined a third, 'ye will have hard work to get the better of him; for he had not done this, but for what he knew of his own prowess and valiantise.'

Night ccclxii.

Meanwhile, the prince, having settled himself in his saddle, whilst all eyes were strained to see what he would do, turned the peg of ascent; whereupon the horse began to sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements, after the manner of horses, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with him and soared into the sky. When the King saw this, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Out

on you! Take him, ere he escape you!' But his Viziers and officers said to him, 'O King, how shall we overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty enchanter, and God hath saved thee from him. So praise thou the Most High for thy deliverance from his hand.' Then the King returned to his palace and going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen. He found her sore afflicted for the prince and bewailing her separation from him; wherefore she fell grievously sick and took to her pillow. When her father saw her thus, he pressed her to his bosom and kissing her between the eyes, said to her, 'O my daughter, praise God and thank Him for that He hath delivered thee from this crafty enchanter!' And he repeated to her the story of the prince's disappearance; but she paid no heed to his word and did but redouble in her tears and lamentations, saying to herself, 'By Allah, I will neither eat nor drink, till God reunite me with him!' Her father was greatly concerned for her plight and mourned sore over her; but, for all he could do to comfort her, passion and love-longing still grew on her for the prince.

Night ccclxiii. Meanwhile, the King's son, whenas he had risen into the air, turned his horse's head towards his native land, musing upon the beauty and grace of the princess. Now he had enquired of the King's people the name of the princess and of the King her father and of the city, which was the city of Senaa of Yemen. So he journeyed homeward with all speed, till he drew near his father's capital and making a circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King's palace, where he left his horse, whilst he descended into the palace and finding its threshold strewn with ashes, bethought him that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, pale-faced and lean of body. When his father saw him

and was assured that it was indeed his son, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, but presently coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, straining him to his bosom and rejoicing in him exceedingly. His mother and sisters heard this; so they came in and seeing the prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping and rejoicing with an exceeding joy. Then they questioned him of his case; so he told them all that had befallen him from first to last and his father said to him, 'Praised be God for thy safety, O solace of my eyes and life-blood of my heart!'

Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad news flew through the city. So they beat the drums and the cymbals and putting off the raiment of mourning, donned that of joy and decorated the streets and markets; whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the latter proclaimed a general pardon and opening the prisons, released those who were therein. Moreover, he made banquets to the people seven days and nights and all creatures were glad; and he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice. After awhile the prince enquired for the maker of the horse, saying, 'O my father, what hath fortune done with him?' 'May God not bless him,' answered the King, 'nor the hour in which I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us, O my son, and he hath lain in prison since the day of thy disappearance.' Then he bade release him from prison and sending for him, invested him in a dress of honour and entreated him with the utmost favour and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife; whereat he was sore enraged and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the prince had learnt the secret of the horse and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son, 'Methinks thou wilt do well not to mount the horse neither go near it henceforth; for thou knowest not its properties, and it is

perilous for thee to meddle with it.' Now the prince had told his father of his adventure with the King's daughter of Senaa, and he said, 'If the King had been minded to kill thee, he had done so; but thine hour was not yet come.'

When the rejoicings were at an end, the people returned to their houses and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating and drinking and making merry. Now the King had a handsome slave-girl, who was skilled in playing upon the lute; so she took it and began to play upon it and sing thereto of separation of lovers before the King and his son, and she chanted the following verses:

Think not that absence ever shall win me to forget: For what should I remember, if I'd forgotten you?
Time passes, but my passion for you shall never end: In love of you, I swear it, I'll die and rise anew.

When the prince heard this, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his entrails yearned in him for love of the King's daughter of Senaa; so he rose forthright and eluding his father's notice, went forth the palace to the horse and mounting it, turned the peg of ascent, whereupon it flew up into the air with him and soared towards the confines of the sky. Presently, his father missed him and going up to the summit of the palace, in great concern, saw the prince rising into the air; whereat he was sore afflicted and repented exceedingly that he had not taken the horse and hidden it: and he said in himself, 'By Allah, if but my son return to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart may be at rest concerning my son.' And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself for his son.

Night ccclxiv. Meanwhile, the prince flew on through the air till he came to the city of Senaa and alighted on the roof as before. Then he went down stealthily and finding the eunuch asleep, as of wont, raised the curtain and went on,

little by little, till he came to the door of the princess's chamber and stopped to listen; when, behold, he heard her weeping plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept round her. Presently, they heard her weeping and wailing and said, 'O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourns not for thee?' 'O little of wit,' answered she, 'is he for whom I mourn of those who are forgotten?' And she fell again to weeping and wailing, till sleep overcame her.

Now the prince's heart ached for her, so he entered and seeing her lying asleep, without covering, touched her with his hand; whereupon she opened her eyes and saw him standing by her. Quoth he, 'Why this weeping and mourning?' And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him and embraced him and kissed him and answered, 'For thy sake and because of my separation from thee.' 'O my lady,' said he, 'I have wearied for thee all this time!' But she answered, 'It is I who have wearied for thee, and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!' 'O my lady,' rejoined he, 'what thinkest thou of my case with thy father and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O ravishment of all creatures, I had surely slain him and made him a warning to all beholders; but, even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake.' Quoth she, 'How couldst thou leave me? Can life be sweet to me after thee?' Quoth he, 'Let what has happened suffice now: I am hungry and thirsty.' So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, [and they sat eating and drinking and conversing] till nigh upon daybreak, when he rose to take leave of her and depart, ere the eunuch should awake, and she said, 'Whither goest thou?' 'To my father's house,' answered he; 'and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week.' But she wept and said, 'I conjure thee, by God the Supreme, take me with thee whither thou

goest and make me not taste anew the bitterness of separation from thee.' Quoth he, 'Wilt thou indeed go with me?' and she answered, 'Yes.' 'Then,' said he, 'arise, that we may depart.' So she rose forthright and going to a chest, arrayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price. Then he carried her up to the roof of the palace and mounting the horse, took her up behind him and bound her fast to himself; after which he turned the peg of ascent, and the horse rose with him into the air. When her women saw this, they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who rushed up to the roof of the palace and looking up, saw the ebony horse flying away with the prince and princess. At this the King was sore troubled and cried out, saying, 'O King's son, I conjure thee, by Allah, have compassion on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!' The prince made him no reply, but, thinking that the princess repented of leaving her father and mother, said to her, 'O ravishment of the age, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy father and mother?' 'By Allah, O my lord, that is not my desire,' answered she; 'my only wish is to be with thee, wherever thou art; for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even to my father and mother.' At this the prince rejoiced greatly and made the horse fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet the princess; nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, in which was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank; after which they took horse again and fared on, till they came in sight of his father's capital. At this, the prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show her the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her father. So he set her down in one of his father's pleasance-gardens [without the city] and carrying her into

a pavilion there, prepared for the King, left the horse at the door and charged her keep watch over it, saying, 'Sit here, till my messenger come to thee; for I go now to my father, to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate.' 'Do as thou wilt,' answered she, for she was glad that she should not enter but with due honour and observance, as became her rank. Night cccLxv.

Then he left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and welcomed him; and the prince said to him, 'Know that I have brought with me the princess of whom I told thee and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayest make ready and go forth to meet her in state and show her thy royal dignity and troops and guards.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King and straightway bade decorate the city after the goodliest fashion. Then he took horse and rode out in all state and splendour, he and his troops and household and grandees; whilst the prince made ready for her a litter of green and red and yellow brocade, in which he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave-girls. Moreover, he took forth of his treasuries jewellery and apparel and what else of the things that kings treasure up and made a rare display of wealth and magnificence. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and rode forward to the pavilion, where he had left the princess; but found both her and the horse gone. When he saw this, he buffeted his face and rent his clothes and went round about the garden, as he had lost his wits; after which he came to his senses and said to himself, 'How could she have come at the secret of the horse, seeing I told her nothing of it? Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse has chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him.' Then he sought the keepers of the garden and asked them if they had seen any enter the garden.

Quoth they, 'We have seen none enter but the Persian sage, who came to gather simples.' So the prince was certified that it was indeed he that had taken away the princess and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before the folk and returning to his father, [told him what had happened and] said to him, 'Take the troops and return to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair.' When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him, 'O my son, calm thyself and master thy chagrin and return with us and look what King's daughter thou wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her.' But the prince paid no heed to his words and bidding him farewell, departed, whilst the King returned to the city and their joy was changed into mourning.

Night ccclxvi.

Now, as Fate would have it, when the prince left the princess in the pavilion and betook himself to his father's palace, for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck simples and scenting the fragrance of musk and essences, that exhaled from the princess's person and perfumed the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw the horse, that he had made with his own hands, standing at the door. At this sight, his heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had mourned sore for it, since it had gone out of his hand. So he went up to it and examining its every part, found it safe and sound; whereupon he was about to mount and ride away, when he bethought himself and said, 'Needs must I first look what the prince hath brought and left here with the horse.' So he entered the pavilion and seeing the princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky, knew her to be some high-born lady and doubted not but the prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion, whilst he went to the city, to make ready for her entry in state.

Then he went up to her and kissed the earth before her, whereupon she raised her eyes to him and finding him exceeding foul of face and favour, said, 'Who art thou?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I am sent by the prince, who hath bidden me bring thee to another garden, nearer the city; for that my lady the queen cannot go so far a journey and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee.' 'Where is the prince?' asked she; and the Persian replied, 'He is in the city, with his father, and will presently come for thee in great state.' 'O fellow,' said she, 'could he find none to send to me but thee?' At this he laughed and answered, 'O my lady, let not the ugliness of my face and the foulness of my favour deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the prince, thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee, because of my uncomeliness and forbidding aspect, in his jealousy and love of thee: else hath he slaves and pages and servants, white and black, out of number, each goodlier than the other.' When she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him; so she rose and putting her hand in his, said, 'O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on.' Quoth she, 'I cannot ride it by myself.' Whereupon he smiled and knew that she was in his power and said, 'I myself will ride with thee.' So he mounted and taking her up behind him, bound her fast to himself, for she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the peg of ascent, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro and rose with them into the air nor slackened in its flight, till it was out of sight of the city.

Night ccclxvii.

When the princess saw this, she said to him, 'O fellow, what didst thou tell me of the prince, that he sent thee to

me?' 'Foul befall the prince!' answered the Persian. 'He is a scurril knave.' And she said, 'Out on thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment!' 'He is no lord of mine,' rejoined the Persian. 'Knowst thou who I am?' 'I know nothing of thee,' replied the princess, 'save what thou toldest me.' Quoth he, 'What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the prince. I am he who made this horse under us, and I have long regretted its loss; for the prince made himself master of it. But now I have gotten possession of it and of thee too, and I will rack his heart, even as he hath racked mine; nor shall he ever have the horse again. So take comfort and be of good cheer, for I can be of more service to thee than he.' When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out, saying, 'Ah, woe is me! I have neither gotten my beloved nor kept my father and mother!' And she wept sore over what had befallen her, whilst the Persian fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks and alighted in a verdant meadow, abounding in trees and streams.

Now this meadow was near a city, in which was a king of great puissance, and it befell that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the princess and the horse by his side, and before he was aware, the King's followers fell upon him and carried him, the lady and the horse to their master, who noting the foulness of his favour and the beauty and grace of the princess, said to the latter, 'O my lady, what kin is this old fellow to thee?' The Persian made haste to reply, 'She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother.' But she gave him the lie and said, 'O King, by Allah, I know him not, nor is he my husband, but hath stolen me away by force and fraud.' Thereupon the King bade beat the Persian, and they beat him, till he was well-nigh dead;

after which the King commanded to carry him to the city and cast him into prison, and taking the princess and the horse from him, set the former in his harem and laid up the latter in his treasury, though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion.

Meanwhile, the prince donned a travelling-habit and taking what he needed of money, set out, in very sorry plight, in quest of the princess, and journeyed from country to country and city to city, enquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marvelled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus did he a long while; but, for all his enquiry and research, he could win at no news of her. At last, he came to the city of Senaa and there enquired for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, pursuing his enquiries as he went, till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain khan and saw a company of merchants sitting talking. He sat down near them and heard one say to the others, 'O my friends, I happened lately upon a wonder of wonders.' 'What was that?' asked they, and he answered, 'I was late in such a city,' naming the city wherein was the princess, 'and heard its people speak of a strange thing that had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day a-hunting, with a company of his courtiers and the grandees of his realm, and coming to a green meadow, espied there a man standing, with a horse of ebony, and a lady sitting hard by. The man was ugly and foul of favour, but the lady was a marvel of beauty and grace and symmetry; and as for the ebony horse, it was a wonder, never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more perfect than its fashion.' 'And what did the King with them?' asked the others. 'As for the man,' said the merchant, 'he questioned him of the lady and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his father's brother; but

Night ccclxviii.

she gave him the lie. So the King took her from him and bade beat him and cast him into prison. As for the horse, I know not what became of it.' When the prince heard this, he drew near unto the speaker and questioned him discreetly and courteously, till he told him the name of the city and of its king; which when he knew, he passed the night, full of joy.

On the morrow, he set out and travelled till he reached the city; but, when he would have entered, the gate-keepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King; for that it was his wont to question all strangers respecting their conditions and the crafts in which they were skilled and the reason of their coming thither. Now it was eventide, when he entered the city, and it was then too late to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting him. So they carried him to the prison, thinking to lay him therein for the night; but, when the warders saw his beauty and grace, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him, but made him sit with them, without the prison; and when food came to them, he ate his fill with them. When they had made an end of eating, they turned to him and said, 'What country-man art thou?' 'I come from Persia,' answered he, 'the land of the Chosroës.' When they heard this, they laughed and one of them said, 'O Chosroän, I have heard the talk of men and their histories and looked upon their conditions; but never saw or heard I a greater liar than the Chosroän that is with us in the prison.' 'Nor,' quoth another, 'did I ever see fouler than his favour or more repulsive than his aspect.' 'What have ye seen of his lying?' asked the prince, and they answered, 'He pretends that he is a sage. Now the King came upon him, as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most beautiful lady and a horse of ebony, never saw I a handsomer. As for the lady, she is with the King, who is enamoured

of her and would fain marry her; but she is mad, and were this man a physician, as he pretends, he would have cured her, for the King doth his utmost endeavour to find a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers, on her account; but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal treasury, and the man is here with us in the prison; and all night long he weeps and bemoans himself and will not let us sleep.'

When the prince heard this, he bethought himself of a device by which he might compass his desire; and presently the warders, being minded to sleep, clapped him into the prison and locked the door. He heard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself, in his own tongue, and saying, 'Woe is me for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King's son, in that which I did with the damsel; for I neither left her nor got my desire of her! All this comes of my want of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me; for he, who seeks what befits him not, falleth into the like of my predicament.' When the prince heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying, 'How long wilt thou keep up this weeping and wailing? Thinkst thou that there hath befallen thee what never befell other than thou?' When the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to complain to him of his case and misfortunes. Night ccclxix.

As soon as it was day, the warders took the prince and carried him before the King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when no audience could be had of him. Quoth the King to the prince, 'Whence comest thou and what is thy name and craft and why comest thou hither?' And he answered, 'I am called, in Persian, Herjeh. I come from the land of Fars and I am of the men of art and especially of the

art of medicine and cure the sick and the mad. For this, I go round about all countries and cities, adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a sick person, I heal him; and this is my craft.' When the King heard this, he rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'O excellent sage, thou hast come to us at a time when we have need of thee.' Then he acquainted him with the case of the princess, adding, 'If thou win to cure her and recover her of her madness, thou shalt have of me whatever thou seekest.' 'May God advance the King!' rejoined the prince. 'Describe to me all thou hast seen of her madness and tell me how long it is since it attacked her; also how thou camest by her.' So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, 'The sage is in prison.' 'O august King,' said the prince, 'and what hast thou done with the horse?' 'It is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure-chambers,' replied the King; whereupon quoth the prince in himself, 'The first thing to do is to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and unhurt, all will be well; but, if its works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved.'

So he turned to the King and said to him, 'O King, I must see the horse in question: haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel.' 'With all my heart,' replied the King and taking him by the hand, led him to the place where the horse was. The prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and unhurt, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King, 'May God exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her; for I hope, by God's grace, to cure her by means of the horse.' Then he bade take care of the horse and the King carried him to the princess's apartment, where he found her writhing and beating

herself against the ground, as was her wont; but there was no madness in her, and she did this but that none might approach her. When the prince saw her thus, he said to her, 'No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of all creatures; and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he won to make himself known to her; whereupon she gave a loud cry and fell down in a swoon for excess of joy; but the King thought this came of her fear of him.

Then the prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her, 'O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for we have need of patience and skilful ordinance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. To begin with, I will now go out to him and tell him that thou art possessed of a genie, and hence thy madness; but, that if he will loose thee from thy bonds, I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit. So, when he comes in to thee, do thou give him fair words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be accomplished as we desire.' Quoth she, 'I hear and obey;' and he went out to the King, full of joy and happiness, and said to him, 'O august King, by thy good fortune I have discovered her disease and its remedy and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to her and speak softly to her and entreat her kindly, and promise her what may please her; so shall all thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee.' So he went in to her and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground, bade him welcome; whereat he was greatly rejoiced and bade the eunuchs and waiting-women attend her and carry her to the bath and make ready for her dresses and ornaments. Night cccLxx.

So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their greeting, after the goodliest and pleasantest fashion; after which they clad her in royal apparel and clasping

a collar of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth, as she were the full moon; and when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissed the ground before him, whereupon he rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy and said to the prince, 'All this is of thy blessing, may God increase us of thy good offices!' Quoth the prince, 'O King, it behoves, for the completion of her cure, that thou carry her forth, together with the ebony horse, and attend her with all thy troops to the place where thou foundest her, that there I may expel from her the evil spirit, by whom she is possessed, and bind him and kill him, so he may never more return to her.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King. Then he caused carry out the horse to the meadow in question and mounting, rode thither with all his troops and the princess, knowing not the prince's purpose.

When they came to the appointed place, the prince bade set the horse and the princess as far as the eye could reach from the King and his troops and said to the former, 'With thy leave, I will now proceed to the needful fumigations and conjurations and imprison the genie here, that he may nevermore return to her. After this, I shall mount the horse and take the damsel up behind me; whereupon it will sway to and fro and fare forward, till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end; and after this thou mayst do with her as thou wilt.' And when the King heard his words, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy. So the prince mounted the horse and taking the princess up behind him, bound her fast to him, whilst the King and his troops watched him. Then he turned the peg of ascent and the horse took flight and soared with them into the air, till he disappeared from sight.

The King abode half the day, expecting their return;

but they returned not. So, when he despaired of them, he returned to the city with his troops, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel. He shut himself up in his palace, mourning and afflicted; but his Viziers came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying, 'Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be God who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!' And they ceased not from him, till he was comforted for her loss.

Meanwhile, the prince bent his course, in joy and cheer, towards his father's capital and stayed not, till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the princess in safety; after which he went in to his father and mother and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they rejoiced exceedingly. Then he made great banquets to the townsfolk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the princess and they rejoiced in one another with an exceeding joy. But his father broke the horse in pieces and destroyed its works. Moreover, the prince wrote a letter to the princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness, and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and rarities. The messenger, in due course, arrived at the city of Senaa and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, who, when he read the former, rejoiced greatly and accepted the presents, rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he sent rich presents to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed, whereat he was much cheered. And after this the prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him a present, till, in course of time, his father King Sabour died and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his subjects and ordering himself well and righteously towards them, so

Night ccclxxi.

that they submitted themselves to him and did him loyal service; and he and his wife abode in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, He that layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs; and glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the Seen and the Unseen!

UNS EL WUJOUD AND THE VIZIER'S DAUGHTER ROSE-IN-BUD.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a King of great power and glory and dominion, who had a Vizier named Ibrahim, and this Vizier had a daughter of extraordinary beauty and grace, gifted with surpassing brilliancy and all perfection, possessed of abundant wit and perfectly accomplished. She loved wine and good cheer and fair faces and choice verses and rare stories; and the delicacy of her charms invited all hearts to love, even as saith the poet, describing her:

She shines out like the moon at full, that midst the stars doth fare, And for a wrapping-veil she hath the ringlets of her hair.
The Eastern zephyr gives her boughs to drink of all its sweets And like a jointed cane, she sways to every breath of air.
She smiles in passing by. O thou that dost alike accord With red and yellow and arrayed in each, alike art fair,
Thou sportest with my wit in love, so that indeed meseems As if a sparrow in the clutch of playful urchin 'twere.

Her name was Rose-in-bud and she was so named for the exceeding delicacy and perfection of her beauty; and the King loved to carouse with her, because of her wit and good breeding.

Now it was the King's custom yearly to gather together all the nobles of his realm and play with the ball. So, when the day came round, on which the folk assembled

for ball-play, the Vizier's daughter seated herself at her lattice, to divert herself by looking on at the game; and as they were at play, her eyes fell upon a youth among them, never was seen a handsomer than he or a goodlier of favour, for he was bright of face, laughing-teethed, tall and broad-shouldered. She looked at him again and again and could not take her fill of gazing on him. Then she said to her nurse, 'What is the name of yonder handsome young man among the troops?' 'O my daughter,' replied the nurse, 'they are all handsome. Which of them dost thou mean?' 'Wait till he passes,' said Rose-in-bud, 'and I will point him out to thee.' So she took an apple and waited till he came under her window, when she dropped it on him, whereupon he raised his head, to see who did this, and saw the Vizier's daughter at the window, as she were the full moon in the darkness of the night; nor did he withdraw his eyes, till he had fallen passionately in love with her; and he recited the following verses:

Was it an archer shot me or did thine eyes undo The lover's heart that saw thee, what time thou metst his view?
Did the notched arrow reach me from midst a host, indeed, Or was it from a lattice that launched at me it flew?

When the game was at an end, he went away with the King, [whose servant and favourite he was,] with heart occupied with love of her; and she said to her nurse, 'What is the name of that youth I showed thee?' 'His name is Uns el Wujoud,' answered she; whereat Rose-in-bud shook her head and lay down on her couch, with a heart on fire for love. Then, sighing deeply, she improvised the following verses:

He erred not who dubbed thee, "All creatures' delight,"[1] That pleasance and bounty[2] at once dost unite.
Full-moonlike of aspect, O thou whose fair face O'er all the creation sheds glory and light,

[1] *Uns el Wujoud.*
[2] A pun upon his name, *Uns wa joud*, pleasance and bounty.

Thou'rt peerless midst mortals, the sovran of grace, And many a witness to this I can cite.
Thy brows are a *Noun*[1] and thine eyes are a *Sad*,[2] That the hand of the loving Creator did write;
Thy shape is the soft, tender sapling, that gives Of its bounties to all that its favours invite.
Yea, indeed, thou excellest the world's cavaliers In pleasance and beauty and bounty and might.

When she had finished, she wrote the verses on a sheet of paper, which she folded in a piece of gold-embroidered silk and laid under her pillow. Now one of her nurses saw her; so she came up to her and held her in talk, till she slept, when she stole the scroll from under her pillow and reading it, knew that she had fallen in love with Uns el Wujoud. Then she returned the scroll to its place and when her mistress awoke, she said to her, 'O my lady, indeed, I am to thee a faithful counsellor and am tenderly solicitous for thee. Know that passion is grievous and the hiding it melteth iron and causeth sickness and unease; nor is there reproach for whoso confesses it.' 'O my nurse,' rejoined Rose-in-bud, 'and what is the remedy of passion?' 'The remedy of passion is enjoyment,' answered the nurse. 'And how may one come by enjoyment?' asked Rose-in-bud. 'By letters and messages,' replied the nurse, 'and many a tender word and greeting; this brings lovers together and makes hard matters easy. So, if thou have aught at heart, mistress mine, I will engage to keep thy secret and do thy need and carry thy letters.'

When the girl heard this, her reason fled for joy; but she restrained herself from speech, till she should see the issue of the matter, saying in herself, 'None knoweth this thing of me, nor will I trust this woman with my

[1] See supra, p. 95, note 3.
[2] The fourteenth letter of the Arabic alphabet, in its medial form (ـصـ) closely resembling an eye underlined with kohl.

secret, till I have proved her.' Then said the nurse, 'O my lady, I saw in my sleep as though one came to me and said, "Thy mistress and Uns el Wujoud love one another; so do thou serve their loves by carrying their messages and doing their need and keeping their secrets; and much good shall befall thee." So now I have told thee my dream, and it is thine to decide.' 'O my nurse,' quoth Rose-in-bud, 'canst thou keep secrets?' 'And how should I not keep secrets,' answered the nurse, 'I that am of the flower of the free-born?' Then Rose-in-bud pulled out the scroll, on which she had written the verses aforesaid, and said to her, 'Carry this my letter to Uns el Wujoud and bring me his answer.'

Night ccclxxii.

So the nurse took the letter and repairing to Uns el Wujoud, kissed his hands and saluted him right courteously, then gave him the letter; and he read it and wrote on the back the following verses:

I temper my heart in passion and hide my case as I may; But my case interprets for me and doth my love bewray.
And whenas my lids brim over with tears,—lest the spy should see And come to fathom my secret,—"My eye is sore," I say.
Of old I was empty-hearted and knew not what love was; But now I am passion's bondman, my heart to love's a prey.
To thee I prefer my petition, complaining of passion and pain, So haply thou mayst be softened and pity my dismay.
With the tears of my eye I have traced it, that so unto thee it may The tidings of what I suffer for thee to thee convey.
God watch o'er a visage, that veileth itself with beauty, a face That the full moon serves as a bondman and the stars as slaves obey!
Yea, Allah protect her beauty, whose like I ne'er beheld! The boughs from her graceful carriage, indeed, might learn to sway.
I beg thee to grant me a visit; algates, if it irk thee nought. An thou knewst how dearly I'd prize it, thou wouldst not say me nay.
I give thee my life, so haply thou mayst accept it: to me Thy presence is life eternal and hell thy turning away.

Then he folded the letter and kissing it, gave it to the nurse and said to her, 'O nurse, incline thy lady's heart to

me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and carried the letter to her mistress, who kissed it and laid it on her head, then wrote at the foot of it these verses:

Harkye, thou whose heart is taken with my grace and loveliness, Have
but patience, and right surely thou my favours shalt possess.
When we were assured the passion thou avouchedst was sincere And
that that which us betided had betided thee no less,
Gladly had we then vouchsafed thee what thou sighedst for, and more;
But our guardians estopped us to each other from access.
When night darkens on the dwellings, fires are lighted in our heart And
our entrails burn within us, for desire and love's excess.
Yea, for love and longing, slumber is a stranger to our couch And the
burning pangs of fever do our body sore distress.
'Twas a law of passion ever, love and longing to conceal; Lift not thou
the curtain from us nor our secret aye transgress.
Ah, my heart is overflowing with the love of yon gazelle; Would it had
not left our dwellings for the distant wilderness.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the nurse, who took it and went out to go to the young man; but as she went forth the door, her master met her and said to her, 'Whither away?' 'To the bath,' answered she; but, in her trouble, she dropped the letter, without knowing it, and one of the servants, seeing it lying in the way, picked it up. When she came without the door, she sought for it, but found it not, so turned back to her mistress and told her of this and what had befallen her with the Vizier.

Meanwhile, the latter came out of the harem and seated himself on his couch. Presently, the servant, who had picked up the letter, came in to him, with it in his hand, and said, 'O my lord, I found this paper lying on the floor and picked it up.' So the Vizier took it from his hand, folded as it was, and opening it, read the verses above set down. Then he examined the writing and knew it for his daughter's hand; whereupon he went in to her mother, weeping so sore that his beard was drenched. 'What makes thee weep, O my lord?' asked she; and

he answered, 'Take this letter and see what is therein.' So she took it and saw it to be a love-letter from her daughter Rose-in-bud to Uns el Wujoud; whereupon the tears sprang to her eyes; but she mastered herself and swallowing her tears, said to her husband, 'O my lord, there is no profit in weeping: the right course is to cast about for a means of preserving thine honour and concealing thy daughter's affair.' And she went on to comfort him and lighten his trouble. Quoth he, 'I am fearful of what may ensue this passion of my daughter, and that for two reasons. The first concerns myself; it is, that she is my daughter; the second, that Uns el Wujoud is a favourite with the Sultan, who loves him with an exceeding love, and maybe great troubles shall come of this affair. What deemest thou of the matter?' 'Wait,' answered she, 'whilst I pray to God for direction.' So she prayed a two-bow prayer, according to the prophetic ordinance of the prayer for divine guidance; after which she said to her husband, 'Amiddleward the Sea of Treasures stands a mountain called the Mount of the Bereaved Mother,' (the cause of which being so named shall follow in its place, if it be the will of God,) 'and thither can none come, save with difficulty; do thou make her an abiding-place there.'

Night cccLxxiii.

So the Vizier and his wife agreed to build, on the mountain in question, a strong castle and lodge his daughter therein, with a year's victual, to be annually renewed, and attendants to serve and keep her company. Accordingly, he collected builders and carpenters and architects and despatched them to the mountain, where they builded her an impregnable castle, never saw eyes its like. Then he made ready victual and carriage for the journey and going in to his daughter by night, bade her make ready to set out on a pleasure-excursion. She refused to set out by night, but he was instant with her,

till she went forth; and when she saw the preparations for the journey, her heart misgave her of separation from her beloved and she wept sore and wrote upon the door the following verses, to acquaint him with what had passed and with the transports of passion and grief that were upon her, transports such as would make the flesh quake, that would cause the hearts of stones to melt and eyes to overflow with tears:

By Allah, O house, if the loved one pass in the morning-glow And greet with the greeting of lovers, as they pass to and fro,
Give him our salutation, a pure and fragrant one, For that we have departed, and whither he may not know.
Why on this wise they hurry me off by stealth, anights And lightly equipped, I know not, nor whither with me they go.
Neath cover of night and darkness, they carry me forth, alack! Whilst the birds in the brake bewail us and make their moan for our woe;
And the tongue of the case interprets their language and cries, "Alas, Alas for the pain of parting from those that we love, heigho!"
When I saw that the cups of sev'rance were filled and that Fate, indeed, Would give us to drink of its bitter, unmingled, would we or no,
I blended the draught with patience becoming, as best I might; But patience avails not to solace my heart for your loss, I trow.

Then she mounted, and they set forward with her and fared on over desert and plain and hill, till they came to the shore of the Sea of Treasures, where they pitched their tents and built a great ship, in which they embarked her and her suite and carried them over to the mountain. Here they left them in the castle and making their way back to the shore, broke up the vessel, in obedience to the Vizier's commandment, and returned home, weeping over what had befallen.

Meanwhile, Uns el Wujoud arose from sleep and prayed the morning prayer, after which he mounted and rode forth to wait upon the Sultan. On his way, he passed by the Vizier's house, thinking to see some of his followers, as of wont, but saw no one and drawing near

the door, read the verses aforesaid written thereon. At this sight, his senses failed him; fire was kindled in his vitals and he returned to his lodging, where he passed the rest of the day in ceaseless trouble and anxiety, without finding ease or patience, till night darkened upon him, when his transport redoubled. So he put off his clothes and disguising himself in a fakir's habit, set out, at a venture, under cover of the night, distraught and knowing not whither he went.

He wandered on all that night and next day, till the heat of the sun grew fierce and the mountains flamed like fire and thirst was grievous upon him. Presently, he espied a tree, by whose side was a spring of running water; so he made towards it and sitting down in the shade, on the bank of the rivulet, essayed to drink, but found that the water had no taste in his mouth. Then, [looking in the stream,] he saw that his body was wasted, his colour changed and his face grown pale and his feet, to boot, swollen with walking and weariness. So he shed copious tears and repeated the following verses:

The lover is drunken with love of his fair; In longing and heat he redoubles fore'er.
Love-maddened, confounded, distracted, perplexed, No dwelling is pleasant to him and no fare.
For how, to a lover cut off from his love, Can life be delightsome? 'Twere strange an it were.
I melt with the fire of my passion for her And the tears down my cheek roll and never forbear.
Shall I ever behold her or one from her stead, With whom I may solace my heart in despair?

And he wept till he wet the ground; after which he rose and fared on again over deserts and wilds, till there came out upon him a lion, with a neck buried in hair, a head the bigness of a dome, a mouth wider than the door [thereof] and teeth like elephants' tusks. When Uns el Wujoud saw him, he gave himself up for lost and turning

towards Mecca, pronounced the professions of the faith and prepared for death.

Now he had read in books that whoso will flatter the lion, beguileth him, for that he is lightly duped by fair words and glorieth in praise; so he began and said, 'O lion of the forest and the waste! O unconquerable warrior! O father of heroes and Sultan of wild beasts! Behold, I am a desireful lover, whom passion and severance have undone. Since I parted from my beloved, I have lost my reason; wherefore, do thou hearken to my speech and have ruth on my passion and love-longing.' When the lion heard this, he drew back from him and sitting down on his hind-quarters, raised his head to him and began to frisk his tail and paws to him; which when Uns el Wujoud saw, he recited these verses:

Wilt slay me, O lord of the desert, before My enslaver I meet with, e'en her I adore?
No fat on me is; I'm no booty for thee; For the loss of my loved one hath wasted me sore.
Yea, my love's separation hath worn out my soul, And I'm grown like a shape, with a shroud covered o'er.
Give the railers not cause to exult in my woe, O prince of the spoilers, O lion of war!
A lover, all sleepless for loss of my dear, I'm drowned in the tears from mine eyelids that pour;
And my pining for her in the darkness of night Hath robbed me, for passion, of reason and lore.

Night ccclxxiv. When he had finished, the lion rose and coming softly up to him, with his eyes full of tears, licked him with his tongue, then walked on before him, signing to him, as who should say, 'Follow me.' So he followed him, and he led him on till he brought him, over a mountain, to the farther side, where he came upon the track of a caravan and knew it to be that of Rose-in-bud and her company. When the lion saw that he knew the track and set himself to follow it, he turned back and went his way; whilst Uns el Wujoud

followed the foot-marks, till they brought him to a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. The trail led down to the water's edge and there broke off; whereby he knew that they had taken ship there and had continued their journey by sea. So he lost hope of finding his beloved and repeated the following verses, weeping sore:

Far's the place of visitation and my patience faileth me For my love; but how to reach her o'er the abysses of the sea?
When, for love of her, my vitals are consumed and I've forsworn Slumber, sleep for wake exchanging, ah, how can I patient be?
Since the day she left the homesteads and departed, hath my heart Burnt with never-ceasing anguish, all a-fire with agony.
Oxus and Jaxartes, running like Euphrates, are my tears; More than rain and flood abounding, run like rivers to the sea.
Ulcerated are my eyelids with the running of the tears, And my heart on fires of passion's burnt and wasted utterly.
Yea, the armies of my longing and my transport on me pressed, And the hosts of my endurance did before them break and flee.
Lavishly my life I've ventured for the love of her; for life Is the lightest to a lover of all ventures, verily.
Be an eye of God unpunished that beheld the beauteous one, Than the moon how much more splendid, in the harem's sanctuary!
Struck was I and smitten prostrate by wide-opened eyes, whose shafts, From a bow all stringless loosened, pierced the hapless heart of me.
By the soft and flexile motions of her shape she captived me, Swaying as the limber branches sway upon the cassia-tree.
Union with her I covet, that therewith I may apply Solace to the pains of passion, love and care and misery.
For the love of her, afflicted, as I am, I have become; All that's fallen on me betided from the evil eye, perdie.

Then he wept, till he swooned away, and abode in his swoon a long while. When he came to himself, he looked right and left and seeing none in the desert, was fearful of the wild beasts; so he climbed to the top of a high mountain, where he heard a man's voice speaking within a cavern. He listened and found it to be that of a devotee, who had forsworn the world and given himself up to pious exercises. So he knocked thrice at

the cavern door; but the hermit made him no answer, neither came forth to him; wherefore he sighed heavily and recited the following verses:

What way is open unto me, to my desire to get And put off weariness and toil and trouble and regret?
All pains and terrors have combined on me, to make me hoar And old of head and heart, whilst I a very child am yet.
I find no friend to solace me of longing and unease, Nor one 'gainst passion and its stress to aid me and abet.
Alas, the torments I endure for waste and wistful love! Fortune, meseems, 'gainst me is turned and altogether set.
Ah, woe's me for the lover's pain, unresting, passion-burnt, Him who in parting's bitter cup his lips perforce hath wet!
His wit is ravished clean away by separation's woe, Fire in his heart and all consumed his entrails by its fret.
Ah, what a dreadful day it was, when to her stead I came And that, which on the door was writ, my eyes confounded met!
I wept, until I gave the earth to drink of my despair; But still from friend and foe I hid the woes that me beset.
Then strayed I forth till, in the waste, a lion sprang on me And would have slain me straight; but him with flattering words I met
And soothed him. So he spared my life and succoured me, as 'twere He too had known love's taste and been entangled in its net.
Yet, for all this, could I but win to come to my desire, All, that I've suffered and endured, straightway I should forget.
O thou, that harbour'st in thy cave, distracted from the world, Meseems thou'st tasted love and been its slave, O anchoret!

Hardly had he made an end of these verses when, behold, the door of the cavern opened and he heard one say, 'Alas, the pity of it!' So he entered and saluted the hermit, who returned his greeting and said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'Uns el Wujoud,' answered the young man. 'And what brings thee hither?' asked the hermit. So he told him his whole story, whereat he wept and said, 'O Uns el Wujoud, these twenty years have I dwelt in this place, but never beheld I any here, till the other day, when I heard a noise of cries and weeping, and looking forth in the direction of the sound,

saw much people and tents pitched on the sea-shore. They built a ship, in which they embarked and sailed away. Then some of them returned with the ship and breaking it up, went their way; and methinks those, who embarked in the ship and returned not, are they whom thou seekest. In that case, thy trouble must needs be grievous and thou art excusable; though never yet was lover but suffered sorrows.' Then he recited the following verses:

Uns el Wujoud, thou deem'st me free of heart, but, wel-a-way! Longing and transport and desire fold and unfold me aye.
Yea, love and passion have I known even from my earliest years, Since at my mother's nursing breast a suckling babe I lay.
I struggled sore and long with Love, till I his power confessed. If thou enquire at him of me, he will me not unsay.
I quaffed the cup of passion out, with languor and disease, And as a phantom I became for pining and decay.
Strong was I, but my strength is gone and neath the swords of eyes, The armies of my patience broke and vanished clean away.
Hope not to win delight of love, without chagrin and woe; For contrary with contrary conjoinéd is alway.
But fear not change from lover true; do thou but constant be Unto thy wish, and thou shalt sure be happy yet some day:
For unto lovers passion hath ordained that to forget Is heresy, forbidden all its mandates that obey.

Then he rose and coming to the youth, embraced him, and they wept together, till the hills rang with their crying and they fell down in a swoon. When they revived, they swore brotherhood in God the Most High, and the hermit said to Uns el Wujoud, 'This night will I pray to God and seek of Him direction what thou shouldst do to attain thy desire.' Night ccclxxv.

To return to Rose-in-bud. When they brought her into the castle and she beheld its ordinance, she wept and exclaimed, 'By Allah, thou art a goodly place, save that thou lackest the presence of the beloved in thee!' Then, seeing [many] birds in the island, she bade her people set snares for them and hang up all they caught in cages

within the castle; and they did so. But she sat at a window of the castle and bethought her of what had passed, and passion and transport and love-longing redoubled upon her, till she burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

To whom, of my desire complaining, shall I cry, To whom, for loss of loves and parting's sorrow, sigh?
Flames rage within my breast, but I reveal them not, For fear lest they my case discover to the spy.
I'm grown as thin as e'er a bodkin's wood, so worn With absence and lament and agony am I.
Where is the loved one's eye, to see how I'm become Even as a blasted tree, stripped bare and like to die?
They wronged me, when they shut me prisoner in a place, Wherein my love, alas! may never come me nigh.
Greetings a thousandfold I beg the sun to bear, What time he riseth up and setteth from the sky,
To a belovéd one, who puts the moon to shame, For loveliness, and doth the Indian cane outvie.
If the rose ape his cheek, "Now God forfend," I say, "That of my portion aught to pilfer thou shouldst try."
Lo, in his mouth are springs of limpid water sweet, Refreshment that would bring to those in flames who lie.
How shall I one forget who is my heart and soul, My malady and he that healing can apply?

Then, as the shadows darkened upon her, her longing increased and she called to mind the past and recited these verses also:

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 yearning consumes my soul And tears discover my 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.
My heart is a raging furnace, because of the heat whereof My entrails are racked with anguish, that nothing can assain.

O thou, that thinkest to blame me for what is fallen on me, Enough; I suffer with patience whatever the Fates ordain.
I swear I shall ne'er find comfort nor be consoled for them, The oath of the children of passion, whose oaths are never in vain!
Bear tidings, O night, to my dear ones and greet them and witness bear That thou knowest in thee I sleep not, but ever to wake am fain.

Meanwhile, the hermit said to Uns el Wujoud, 'Go down into the valley and fetch me palm-fibre.' So he went and returned with the palm-fibre, which the hermit took and twisting into ropes, made therewith a net, such as is used for carrying straw; after which he said to the youth, 'O Uns el Wujoud, in the heart of the valley grows a gourd, which springs up and dries upon its roots. Go thither and fill this net therewith; then tie it together and casting it into the water, embark thereon and make for the midst of the sea, so haply thou shalt come to thy desire; for he, who adventureth not himself, shall not attain that he seeketh.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Uns el Wujoud and bidding the hermit farewell after he had prayed for him, betook himself to the hollow of the valley, where he did as he had counselled him and launched out upon the water, supported by the net.

Then there arose a wind, which drove him out to sea, till he was lost to the hermit's view; and he ceased not to fare on over the abysses of the ocean, one billow tossing him up on the crest of the wave and another bearing him down into the trough of the sea, and he beholding the while the terrors and wonders of the deep, for the space of three days, at the end of which time Fate cast him upon the Mount of the Bereft Mother, where he landed, weak and giddy as a fledgling bird, for hunger and thirst; but, finding there streams running and birds warbling on the branches and fruit-laden trees, growing in clusters and singly, he ate of the fruits and drank of the streams. Then he walked on till he saw

some white thing afar off, and making for it, found that it was a strongly-fortified castle. So he went up to the gate and finding it locked, sat down by it.

He sat thus three days and on the fourth, the gate opened and an eunuch came out, who seeing Uns el Wujoud seated there, said to him, 'Whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' Quoth he, 'I come from Ispahan and was travelling by sea with merchandise, when my ship was wrecked and the waves cast me upon this island.' When the eunuch heard this, he wept and embraced him, saying, 'God preserve thee, O [thou that bringest me the] fragrance of the beloved! Ispahan is my own country and I have there a cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, whom I loved and cherished from a child; but a people stronger than we fell upon us and taking me among other booty, docked me and sold me for an eunuch, whilst I was yet a lad; and this is how I come to be what I am.' Then he carried him into the courtyard of the castle, where he saw a great basin of water, surrounded by trees, on whose branches hung cages of silver, with doors of gold, and therein birds warbling and singing the praises of the Requiting King. In the first cage he came to was a turtle dove which, seeing him, raised her voice and cried out, saying, 'O Bountiful One!'[1] Whereat he fell down in a swoon, but, presently coming to himself, sighed heavily and recited the following verses:

Night cccLxxvi.

O turtle, art thou mad for love, as is my case? Then sing, 'O Bountiful!' and seek the Lord His grace!
Tell me, doth thy descant in joyance take its rise Or in desireful pain, that in thy heart hath place?
If for desire thou moan'st of bygone loves or pin'st For dear ones that have gone and left thee but their trace,

[1] See Note, Vol. III. p. 274.

Or if thou'st lost thy love, like me, ah, then, indeed, Severance long-felt desire discovereth apace.
God guard a lover true! Though my bones rot, nor time Nor absence from my heart her image shall efface.

Then he fainted again and presently coming to his senses, went on to the second cage, wherein he found a ring-dove. When it saw him, it sang out, 'O Eternal, I praise thee!' and he sighed and recited these verses:

I heard a ring-dove say in her plaintive note, "Despite of my woes, O Eternal, I praise Thee still!"
And God, of His grace, reunion of our loves, In this my travel, may yet to us fulfil.
She visits me oft,[1] with her dusk-red honeyed lips, And lends to the passion within me an added thrill.
And I cry, whilst the fires in my tortured heart flame high And my soul for ardour consumes and my eyes distil
Tears that resemble blood and withouten cease Pour down on my wasted cheeks in many a rill,
There's none created without affliction, and I Must bear with patience my tribulations, until
The hour of solace with her I love one day Unite me. Ah, then, by God His power and will,
In succouring lovers, I vow, I'll spend my good, For they're of my tribe and category still;
And eke from prison I'll loose the birds, to boot, And leave, for joyance, the thought of every ill!

Then he went on to the third cage, in which was a mocking-bird. When it saw him, it set up a song, and he recited the following verses:

The mocking-bird delighteth me with his harmonious strain, As 'twere a lover's voice that pines and wastes for love in vain.
Woe's me for those that lovers be! How many a weary night, For love and anguish and desire, to waken they are fain!
'Twould seem as if they had no part in morning or in sleep, For all the stress of love and woe that holds their heart and brain.
When I became distraught for her I love and wistfulness Bound me in fetters strait, the tears from out mine eyes did rain

[1] *i.e.* in dreams.

So thick and fast, they were as chains, and I to her did say, "My tears have fallen so thick, that now they've bound me with a chain."
The treasures of my patience fail, absence is long on me And yearning sore; and passion's stress consumeth me amain.
If God's protection cover me and Fortune be but just And Fate with her whom I adore unite me once again,
I'll doff my clothes, that she may see how worn my body is, For languishment and severance and solitary pain.

Then he went on to the fourth cage, where he found a nightingale, which, at sight of him, began to tune its plaintive note. When he heard its descant, he burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

The nightingale's note, when the dawning is near, Distracts from the lute-strings the true lover's ear.
Complaineth, for love-longing, Uns el Wujoud, Of a passion that blotteth his being out sheer.
How many sweet notes, that would soften, for mirth, The hardness of iron and stone, do I hear!
The zephyr of morning brings tidings to me Of meadows, full-flower'd for the blossoming year.
The scents on the breeze and the music of birds, In the dawning, transport me with joyance and cheer.
But I think of a loved one, that's absent from me, And mine eyes rain in torrents, with tear upon tear;
And the ardour of longing flames high in my breast, As a fire in the heart of a brasier burns clear.
May Allah vouchsafe to a lover distraught To see and foregather once more with his dear!
Yea, for lovers, heart-sickness and longing and woe And wake are excuses that plainly appear.

Then he went on a little and came to a handsome cage, than which there was no goodlier there, and in it a culver, that is to say, a wood-pigeon, the bird renowned among the birds as the singer of love-longing, with a collar of jewels about its neck, wonder-goodly of ordinance. He considered it awhile and seeing it mazed and brooding in its cage, shed tears and repeated these verses:

O culver of the copse, may peace upon thee light, O friend of all who love and every wistful wight!
I love a young gazelle, a slender one, whose glance Than sharpest sabre's point is keener and more bright.
For love of her, my heart and entrails are a-fire And sicknesses consume my body and my spright.
The sweet of pleasant food's forbidden unto me, And eke I am denied the taste of sleep's delight.
Solace and fortitude have taken flight from me, And love and longing lodge with me, both day and night.
How shall my life be sweet to me, while she's afar, That is my life, my wish, the apple of my sight?

Night cccLxxbii.

When the pigeon heard these verses, it awoke from its brooding and cooed and warbled and trilled, till it all but spoke; and the tongue of the case interpreted for it and recited the following verses:

O lover, thy wailings recall to my mind The time when my youth from me wasted and dwined,
And a mistress, whose charms and whose grace I adored, Seductive and fair over all of her kind;
Whose voice, from the twigs of the sandhill upraised, Left the strains of the flute, to my thought, far behind.
A snare set the fowler and caught me, who cried, "Would he'd leave me to range at my will on the wind!"
I had hoped he was clement or seeing that I Was a lover, would pity my lot and be kind;
But no, (may God smite him!) he tore me away From my dear and apart from her harshly confined.
Since then, my desire for her grows without cease, And my heart with the fires of disjunction is mined.
God guard a true lover, who striveth with love And hath suffered the torments in which I have pined!
When he seeth me languish for love in my cage, He will loose me, in mercy, my loved one to find.

Then Uns el Wujoud turned to his friend, the Ispahani, and said to him, 'What palace is this? Who built it and who abideth in it?' Quoth the eunuch, 'The Vizier of King Shamikh built it for his daughter, fearing for

her the assaults of fate and the vicissitudes of fortune, and lodged her therein, with her attendants; nor do we open it save once in every year, when our victual comes to us.' And Uns el Wujoud said in himself, 'I have gained my end, though after long travail.'

Meanwhile, Rose-in-bud took no delight in eating nor drinking, sitting nor sleeping; but her transport and passion and love-longing redoubled on her, and she went wandering about the castle, but could find no issue; wherefore she shed plenteous tears and recited the following verses:

They have prisoned me straitly from him I adore And given me to eat of mine anguish galore.
My heart with the flames of love-longing they fired, When me from the sight of my loved one they bore.
They have cloistered me close in a palace built high On a mount in the midst of a sea without shore.
If they'd have me forget, their endeavour is vain, For my love but redoubles upon me the more.
How *can* I forget him, when all I endure Arose from the sight of his face heretofore?
My days are consumed in lament, and my nights Pass in thinking of him, as I knew him of yore.
His memory my solace in solitude is, Since the lack of his presence I needs must deplore.
I wonder, will Fate grant my heart its desire And my love, after all, to my wishes restore!

Then she donned her richest clothes and trinkets and threw a necklace of jewels around her neck; after which she ascended to the roof of the castle and tying some strips of Baalbek stuff together, [to serve for a rope], made them fast to the battlements and let herself down thereby to the ground. Then she fared on over wastes and wilds, till she came to the sea-shore, where she saw a fishing-boat, and therein a fisherman, whom the wind had driven on to the island, as he went, fishing here and there, on the sea. When he saw her, he was affrighted,

[taking her for a Jinniyeh], and put out again to sea; but she cried out and made pressing signs to him to return, reciting the following verses:

Harkye, O fisherman, fear thou no injury; I'm but an earthly maid, a mortal like to thee.
I do implore thee, stay, give ear unto my prayer And hearken to my true and woeful history.
Pity, (so God thee spare,) the ardour [of my love,] And say if thou hast seen a loved one, fled from me.
I love a fair-faced youth and goodly; brighter far Of aspect than the face of sun or moon is he.
The antelope, that sees his glances, cries, "His slave Am I," and doth confess inferiority.
Yea, beauty on his brow these pregnant words hath writ In very dust of musk, significant to see,
"Who sees the light of love is in the way of right, And he who strays commits foul sin and heresy."
An thou have ruth on me and bring me to his sight, O rare! Whate'er thou wilt thy recompense shall be;
Rubies and precious stones and freshly gathered pearls And every kind of gem that is in earth and sea.
Surely, O friend, thou wilt with my desire comply; For all my heart's on fire with love and agony.

When the fisherman heard this, he wept and sighed and lamented; then, recalling what had betided himself in the days of his youth, when love had the mastery over him and transport and love-longing and distraction were sore upon him and the fires of passion consumed him, replied with these verses:

Indeed, the lover's excuse is manifest, Wasting of body and streaming tears, unrest,
Eyes, in the darkness that waken still, and heart, As 'twere a fire-box, bespeak him love-opprest.
Passion, indeed, afflicted me in youth, And I good money from bad learnt then to test.
My soul I bartered, a distant love to win; To gain her favours, I wandered East and West;

And eke I ventured my life against her grace And deemed the venture would bring me interest.
For law of lovers it is that whoso buys His love's possession with life, he profits best.

Then he moored his boat to the shore and bade her embark, saying, 'I will carry thee whither thou wilt.' So she embarked and he put off with her; but they had not gone far, before there came out a stern-wind upon the boat and drove it swiftly out of sight of land. The fisherman knew not whither he went, and the wind blew without ceasing three days, at the end of which time it fell, by leave of God the Most High, and they sailed on, till they came in sight of a city builded upon the sea-shore, and the fisherman set about making fast to the land.

Night cccLxxviii.

Now the King of the city, a very powerful prince called Dirbas, was at that moment sitting, with his son, at a window in the palace giving upon the sea, and chancing to look out to sea-ward, they saw the fishing-boat enter the harbour. They observed it narrowly and espied therein a young lady, as she were the full moon in the mid heaven, with pendants in her ears of fine balass rubies and a collar of precious stones about her neck. So the King knew that this must be the daughter of some king or great noble, and going forth of the sea-gate of the palace, went down to the boat, where he found the lady asleep and the fisherman busied in making fast to the shore. He went up to her and aroused her, whereupon she awoke, weeping; and he said to her, 'Whence comest thou and whose daughter art thou and what brings thee hither?' 'I am the daughter of Ibrahim, Vizier to King Shamikh,' answered she; 'and the manner of my coming hither is strange and the cause thereof extraordinary.' And she told him her whole story, hiding nought from him; then she sighed deeply and recited the following verses:

Tears have mine eyelids wounded sore, and wonder-fast they flow Adown my cheek for parting's pain and memory and woe,
For a beloved's sake, who dwells for ever in my heart, Though to forgather with himself I cannot win, heigho!
Fair, bright and brilliant is his face; in loveliness and grace, Turk, Arab and barbarian he doth indeed o'ercrow.
The full moon and the sun contend in deference to him, And when he rises into sight, they, lover-like, bend low.
His eyes with wondrous witchery are decked, as 'twere with kohl; Even as a bow, that's bent to shoot its shafts, to thee they show.
O thou, to whom I have perforce revealed my case, have ruth On one with whom the shifts of love have sported long eno'.
Lo, broken-hearted, Love hath cast me up upon thy coast, Wherefore I trust that thou on me fair favour wilt bestow.
The noble who, when folk of worth alight within their bounds, Do honour and protect them, win increase of glory so.
Cover thou then, my lord, my hope, two lovers' follies up And let them to thy succouring hand their loves' reunion owe.

Then she shed plenteous tears and recited these verses also:

I lived, a marvel till I saw in love, then lived no mo'; Each month to thee as Rejeb[1] be, as free from fear of foe!
Is it not strange that, on the morn they went away, I lit Fire in my vitals with the tears that from mine eyes did flow?
Indeed, mine eyelids ran with blood, and on the wasted plain Of my sad cheek, that therewithal was watered, gold did grow.
Yea, for the safflower hue, that thence o'erspread my cheeks, they seem The shirt of Joseph, steeped in blood, to make a lying show.

When the King heard this, he was certified of her passion and love-longing and was moved to compassion for her; so he said to her, 'Fear nothing and be not troubled; thou hast attained the term of thy wishes; for needs must I bring thee to thy desire.' And he recited the following verses:

[1] One of the months in which war was forbidden to the pagan Arabs and a sort of *Trève de Dieu* prevailed.

Daughter of nobles, thou hast reached thy wishes' goal, I trow: In happy presage then rejoice and fear not any woe.
Treasures this very day, will I collect and neath escort Of horsemen and of champions, to Shamikh they shall go.
Brocade and bladders full of musk I will to him despatch And eke white silver and red gold I'll send to him also.
Yea, and a letter neath my hand my wish for ties of kin And for alliance with himself shall give him eke to know;
And all endeavour will I use, forthwith, that he thou lov'st Once more with thee may be conjoined, to part from thee no mo.
I, too, have battened upon love and know the taste thereof And can excuse the folk who've quaffed the self-same cup of woe.

Then, returning to his palace, he summoned his Vizier and causing pack him up countless treasure, bade him carry it to King Shamikh and say to him, 'The King is minded to ally himself with thee by marrying Uns el Wujoud, thine officer, to his daughter. So needs must thou send him with me, that the marriage may be solemnized in her father's kingdom.' And he wrote a letter to King Shamikh, to this effect, and gave it to the Vizier, charging him without fail bring back Uns el Wujoud, on pain of deposition from his office. 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier and setting out forthright, in due course arrived at the court of King Shamikh, to whom he delivered the letter and presents, saluting him in the name of King Dirbas. When Shamikh read the letter and saw the name of Uns el Wujoud, he burst into tears and said to the Vizier, 'And where is Uns el Wujoud? He went away, and we know not his place of abiding. Bring him to me, and I will give thee the sum of the presents thou hast brought me, twice told.' And he wept and sighed and groaned, reciting the following verses:

Him whom I loved to me restore; By gold and gifts I set no store.
Nor do I crave largesse, indeed, Of pearls and gems and precious ore.
As 'twere a moon at full, for us, In beauty's heaven he did soar.
Passing in wit and grace, gazelles With him comparison gave o'er.

His shape was as a willow-wand, For fruits that sweet seductions bore;
But in the willow, to enslave The hearts of men, there is no lore.
I reared him from a child upon The bed of fondness evermore;
And now I am at heart distraught For him and sorrow passing sore.

Then said he to the Vizier, 'Go back to thy master and tell him that Uns el Wujoud has been missing this year past, and his lord knoweth not whither he is gone nor hath any news of him.' 'O my lord,' answered King Dirbas's Vizier, 'my master said to me, "An thou come back without him, thou shalt be ousted from the Vizierate and shall not enter my city." How then can I return without him?' So King Shamikh said to his Vizier Ibrahim, 'Take a company and go with him and make search for Uns el Wujoud everywhere.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Ibrahim and taking a company of his own retainers, set out in quest of Uns el Wujoud, accompanied by King Dirbas's Vizier; and as often as they fell in with Bedouins or others, they enquired at them of Uns el Wujoud, saying, 'Have ye seen a man, whose name is so and so and his favour thus and thus?' But they answered, 'We know him not.' Night cccLxxix.

So they fared on, enquiring in city and hamlet and seeking in hill and plain and desert and wold, till they came to the sea-shore, where they took ship and sailed, till they came to the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother; and King Dirbas's Vizier said to Ibrahim, 'Why is this mountain thus called?' 'There was once, of old time,' answered the other Vizier, 'a Jinniyeh, of the Jinn of China, who fell passionately in love with a man and being in fear of her own people, searched all the earth for a place, where she might hide him from them, till she happened on this mountain and finding it inaccessible both to men and Jinn, carried off her beloved and lodged him therein. There she used to visit him privily, till she had borne him a number of children, and the merchants, sailing by

the mountain, in their voyages over the sea, heard the weeping of the children, as it were the wailing of a woman, who had lost her young, and said, "Is there here a mother bereaved of her children?" For which reason the place was named the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother.' And King Dirbas's Vizier marvelled at this.

Then they landed and making for the castle, knocked at the gate, which was opened to them by an eunuch, who knew the Vizier Ibrahim and kissed his hands. Ibrahim entered and finding in the courtyard, among the servingmen, a man in the habit of a fakir,[1] said, 'Whence comes yonder fellow?' Quoth they, 'He is a merchant, who hath lost his goods by shipwreck, but saved himself on a plank; and he is an ecstatic.'[2] Now this was none other than Uns el Wujoud, [but the Vizier knew him not]; so he left him and went on into the castle. He found there no trace of his daughter and questioned her women, who answered, 'She abode with us but a little while and went away, how and whither we know not.' Whereupon he wept sore and repeated the following verses:

O house, whose birds warbled for joyance whilere And whose sills were resplendent with glory and pride,
Till the lover came to thee, bemoaning himself For his passion, and found thy doors open and wide,
Would I knew where my soul is, my soul that was late In a house, where its masters no longer abide!
Therein were all things that are costly and rich And with suits of brocade it was decked, like a bride.
Yea, happy and honoured its doorkeepers were. Would God I knew whither its mistress hath hied!

Then he wept and sighed and bemoaned himself, ex-

[1] The Arabic word *fakir* means literally, "a poor man;" but it would appear, from what follows, that Uns el Wujoud had disguised himself as a religious mendicant and was taken for such by the people of the castle.

[2] *i.e.* one absorbed in the contemplation of supra-terrestrial things.

claiming, 'There is no resource against the ordinance of God neither is there any escape from that which He hath decreed!' Then he went up to the roof and finding the strips of Baalbek stuff tied to the battlements and hanging down to the ground, knew that she had descended thence and had fled forth, as one distracted and mad with passion. Presently, he turned and seeing there two birds, an owl and a raven, deemed this an ill omen; so he groaned and recited these verses:

Unto the loved ones' stead I came, as hoping, by their sight, To quench the fire that burnt in me of love-longing and woe;
But no belovéd found I there, nor aught, indeed, I found, Save two ill-omened ones, an owl and eke a corby-crow.
And quoth the tongue o' the case to me, "Thou hast been tyrannous And hast two longing lovers torn, the one the other fro!
Taste of the anguish, then, of love what thou hast made them taste And live, 'twixt agony and tears, in sorrow evermo."

Then he descended, weeping, and bade the servants go forth and search the island for their mistress; so they sought for her, but found her not.

As for Uns el Wujoud, when he was certified that Rose-in-bud was indeed gone, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, nor came to himself for a long time, whilst the folk deemed that a ravishment from the Merciful One had taken him and that he was absorbed in contemplation of the splendour of the majesty of the Requiter of good and evil. Then, despairing of finding Uns el Wujoud and seeing that Ibrahim was distracted for the loss of his daughter, King Dirbas's Vizier addressed himself to return to his own country, for all he had not attained the object of his journey, and said to Ibrahim, 'I have a mind to take yonder fakir with me; it may be God, for his sake, will incline the King's heart to me, for that he is a holy man; and after, I will send him to Ispahan, which is near our country.' 'Do as thou wilt,' answered Ibrahim.

Night ccclxxx.

So they took leave of one another and departed, each for his own country, King Dirbas's Vizier carrying with him Uns el Wujoud, who was still insensible. They bore him with them on muleback, unknowing if he were carried or not, for three days, at the end of which time he came to himself and said, 'Where am I?' 'Thou art in company with King Dirbas's Vizier,' answered they and went and told the latter, who sent him rose-water and sherbet of sugar, of which they gave him to drink and restored him. Then they fared on till they drew near King Dirbas's capital and the King, being advised of his Vizier's coming, wrote to him, saying, 'An Uns el Wujoud be not with thee, come not to me ever.'

When the Vizier read the royal mandate, it was grievous to him, for he knew not that Rose-in-bud was with the King nor why he had sent him in quest of Uns el Wujoud, neither knew he that the fakir he had with him was Uns el Wujoud himself; and the latter in like manner knew not whither they were bound nor that the Vizier had been despatched in quest of himself. So, when he saw him thus chagrined, he said to him, 'What ails thee?' And he answered, 'I was sent by the King on an errand, which I have not been able to accomplish. So, when he heard of my return, he wrote to me, saying, "Enter not my city, except thou have fulfilled my need."' 'And what is the King's need?' asked Uns el Wujoud. So the Vizier told him the case, and he said, 'Fear nothing, but go boldly to the King and take me with thee; and I will be surety to thee for the coming of Uns el Wujoud.' At this the Vizier rejoiced and said, 'Is this true that thou sayest?' 'Yes,' answered he; whereupon the Vizier mounted and carried him to King Dirbas, who said to him, 'Where is Uns el Wujoud?' 'O King,' answered the young man, 'I know where he is.' So the King called him to him and said, 'Where?' 'Near at hand,'

replied Uns el Wujoud. 'Tell me what thou wouldst with him, and I will fetch him to thee.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King; 'but the case calls for privacy.'

So he bade the folk withdraw and carrying Uns el Wujoud into his closet, told him the whole story; whereupon quoth the youth, 'Clothe me in rich apparel, and I will eftsoons bring Uns el Wujoud to thee.' So they brought him a sumptuous dress, and he donned it and said, 'I am the Delight of the World[1] and the Mortification of the Envious.' So saying, he transfixed all hearts with his glances and recited the following verses:

My loved one's memory cheers me still in this my solitude And doth wanhope from me away, as I in absence brood.
I have no helper but my tears; yet, when from out mine eyes They flow, they lighten my despair and ease my drearihood.
Sore is my longing; yea, it hath no like and my affair In love and passion's marvellous, beyond all likelihood.
I lie the night long, wakeful-eyed,—no sleep is there for me,—And pass, for love, from heaven to hell, according to my mood.
Yea, patience fair some time I had, but have it now no more; And longing and chagrin increase upon me, like a flood.
Indeed, my body's worn to nought, for severance from her; Yearnings my aspect and my form to change have all subdued.
Mine eyelids ulcerated are with weeping, nor can I Avail to stay the constant tears, wherewith they're still bedewed.
Indeed, I can no more; my strength, my very vitals fail. How many sorrows have I borne, on sorrows still renewed!
My heart and head are grizzled grown, for loss of a princess In beauty, sure, the fairest maid that ever lover wooed.
In her despite, our parting was, for no desire hath she Save to be joined with me and feed once more on lovers' food.
I wonder, will my fate to me union vouchsafe with her I cherish, after absence long and stress of lonelihood,
And shut the book of severance up, that now is open wide, And blot out troubles from my thought with love's supremest good?
Shall my belovéd, in my land, my cup-companion be And sorrow and affliction be by pure delight ensued?

[1] *Uns el Wujoud.*

'By Allah,' exclaimed the King, 'ye are, indeed, a pair of true lovers and in the heaven of beauty two shining stars! Your story is marvellous and your case extraordinary.' Then he told him all that had befallen Rose-in-bud; and Uns el Wujoud said, 'Where is she, O King of the age?' 'She is with me now,' answered Dirbas and sending for the Cadi and the witnesses, drew up the contract of marriage between her and him. Then he loaded Uns el Wujoud with favours and bounties and sent to King Shamikh, advising him of what had befallen, whereat the latter rejoiced with an exceeding joy and wrote back to him, saying, 'Since the marriage contract hath been drawn up at thy court, it behoves that the wedding and consummation be at mine.' And he made ready camels and horses and men and sent them in quest of the lovers.

When the embassy reached King Dirbas, he gave the pair great store of treasure and despatched them to King Shamikh's court with an escort of his own troops. The day of their arrival was a notable day, never was seen a greater; for the King assembled all the singers and players on instruments of music and made banquets and held high festival seven days; and on each day he gave largesse to the folk and bestowed on them sumptuous dresses of honour. Then Uns el Wujoud went in to Rose-in-bud, and they embraced and sat weeping for excess of joy and gladness, whilst she recited the following verses:

Gladness is come, dispelling grief and putting care aside; We are united now and have our enviers mortified.
The fragrant breeze of union blows fresh and sweet for us, Whereby our bodies, vitals, hearts are all revivified.
The splendour of fulfilled delight in all its glory shines, And for glad tidings beat the drums about us far and wide.
Think not we weep for stress of grief or for affliction; nay, It is for joy our tears flow down and will not be denied.

How many terrors have we seen, that now are past away! Yet we each agonizing strait did patiently abide.
In one hour of delight have we forgotten all the woes, Whose stresses made us twain, whilom, grey-haired and hollow-eyed.

Then they clipped each other and ceased not from their embrace, till they fell down in a swoon, for the ecstasy of reunion; and when they came to themselves, Uns el Wujoud recited these verses: Night cccLxxxi.

Ah, how peerlessly sweet are the nights of delight, When the loved one to me keeps the troth she did plight,
When enjoyment enjoyment ensues and the bonds Of estrangement between us are sundered outright,
And fortune is come to us, favouring and fair, After turning away with aversion and spite!
Fair fortune hath set up her standards for us And we drink from her hand a cup pure of affright.
United, our woes each to each we recount And the nights when in torments we watched for the light.
But now, O my lady, forgotten have we Our griefs, and God pardon the past its unright!
How pleasant, how lovesome, how joyous is life! Enjoyment my passion doth only excite.

Then they gave themselves up anew to the pleasures of the nuptial bed and passed seven whole days thus, carousing and conversing and reciting verses and telling pleasant tales and anecdotes, in the intervals of amorous dalliance; for so drowned were they in the sea of passion, that they knew not night from day and it was to them, for very stress of joy and gladness and pleasure and delight, as if the seven days were but one day, and that without a morrow. Nor did they know the seventh day, but by the coming of the singers and players on instruments of music;[1] whereat Rose-in-bud was beyond measure wondered and improvised the following verses:

[1] To salute them and wish them joy, according to Oriental custom.

Despite the enviers' rage and malice of the spy, I've won of him I love my wish to satisfy;
Yea, we have crowned our loves with many a close embrace, On cushions of brocade and silken stuffs piled high
Upon a couch full soft, of perfumed leather made And stuffed with down of birds of rarest kind that fly.
Thanks to the honeyed dews of my belovéd's lips, Illustrious past compare, no need of wine have I.
Yea, for the sweet excess of our fulfilled delight, The present from the past we know, nor far from nigh.
A miracle indeed! Seven nights o'er us have passed, Without our taking note of how they flitted by;
Till, on the seventh day, they wished us joy and said, "Your union God prolong to all eternity!"

When she had finished, Uns el Wujoud kissed her, more than a hundred times, and recited the following verses:

O day of pure delight and mutual happiness! The loved one came and set me free from loneliness.
She blest me with the sweets of all her glorious charms, What while her converse filled my spirit with liesse.
She plied me with the wine of amorous delight, Till all my senses failed, for very drunkenness.
Yea, merry each with each we made, together lay, Then fell to wine and did, in song, our cheer express;
Nor knew we, of the days that fleeted over us, The present from the past, for very joy's excess.
Fair fall all those that love of ease and twinned delight, And joy to them fulfil its promise none the less!
Ne'er may they know the taste of parting's bitter cup! God succour them as me He succoured in my stress!

Then they went forth and distributed to the folk alms and largesse of money and raiment and so forth; after which Rose-in-bud bade empty the bath for her and turning to Uns el Wujoud, said to him, 'O solace of my eyes, I have a mind to see thee in the bath; and we will be alone together therein.' He gladly consented to this, and she bade perfume the bath for them with all manner of scented woods and essences and light the candles.

Then, of the excess of her contentment, she recited the following verses:

O thou aforetime of my heart that mad'st prize (And the present for us on the past still relies),
Thou, the only companion I crave, for to me None other the want of thy presence supplies,
To the bath,—that in midst of hell-fire we may see Even Paradise shining,—come, light of mine eyes!
We will scent it with ambergris, aloes and musk, Till the fragrance in clouds from all quarters arise.
Yea, Fortune we'll pardon her sins and give thanks, For His grace, to the Merciful One, the All-Wise;
And I'll say, when I see thee therein, "O my love, All delights be thy lot in the earth and the skies!"

So they went to the bath and took their pleasure therein; after which they returned to their palace and there abode in the fullness of delight, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to Him who changeth not neither ceaseth and in whom all things have their term!

ABOU NUWAS WITH THE THREE BOYS AND THE KHALIF HAROUN ER RESHID.

Abou Nuwas one day shut himself up and making ready a richly-furnished saloon, set out therein a banquet of meats of all kinds and colours that lips and tongue can desire. Then he went forth, to seek a minion who should befit the entertainment, saying, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, I beseech Thee to send me one worthy of this banquet and apt to carouse with me this day!' Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when he espied three handsome beardless youths, as they were of the children of Paradise, differing in complexion but equal in perfection of beauty; and all hearts yearned with

desire to the graceful bending of their shapes, even to what saith the poet:

Two beardless youths I happened on one day And said, "I love you."
"Hast thou pelf?" asked they.
"Yes," answered I, "and liberality." "Then is the matter easy," did they say.

Now Abou Nuwas was on this wise given and loved to sport and make merry with the fair and cull the rose from every fresh-flowered cheek, even as saith the poet:

Full many a greybeard is amorous and loves Fair faces and music and dalliance and glee:
From Mosul, the country of pureness,[1] he comes, Yet nought but Aleppo[2] remembereth he.

So he accosted them with the salutation, and they returned his greeting with all honour and civility and would have gone their way; but he stayed them, repeating these verses:

To none but me your footsteps steer; For I have store of all good cheer;
Wine that the heart of convent monk Would glad, so bright it is and clear;
And flesh of sheep, to boot, have I And birds of land and sea and mere.
Eat ye of these and drink old wine, That doth away chagrin and fear.

Night ccclxxxii. The boys were beguiled by his verses and consented to his wishes, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So he carried them to his lodging, where they found all ready that he had set forth in his verses. They sat down and ate and drank and made merry awhile, after which they appealed to Abou Nuwas to decide which was the handsomest and most shapely of them. So he pointed to one of them, after having kissed him twice, and recited the following verses:

[1] Mosul is called the land of purity, in a religious sense, it having never been polluted with idolatrous worship.
[2] The people of Aleppo seem to have been noted for debauchery.

With my life I will ransom the mole, on the cheek of the loveling that is;
For how should I ransom it else with treasure or aught but my soul?
And blesséd for ever be He who fashioned his cheek without hair And made, of His power and His might, all beauty to dwell in yon mole!

Then he pointed to another and kissing his lips, repeated these verses:

There's a loveling hath a mole upon his cheek, As 'twere musk on virgin camphor, so to speak.
My eyes marvel when they see it. Quoth the mole, "Heaven's blessing on the Prophet look ye seek!"[1]

Then he pointed to the third and repeated the following verses, after kissing him half a score times:

All in a silver cup he melted gold full fine, A youth whose hands were dyed in ruby-coloured wine,
And with the skinkers went and handed round one cup Of wine, whilst other two were proffered by his eyne.
Fairer than all the Turks, an antelope, whose waist Together would attract the mountains of Hunain.[2]
An if I were content with crooked[3] womankind, Betwixt attractions twain would be this heart of mine.
One love towards Diyarbeker[4] drawing it, and one That draws it, otherguise, to the land of Jamiaïn.[5]

Now each of the youths had drunk two cups, and when it came to Abou Nuwas's turn, he took the goblet and repeated these verses:

Drink not of wine except it be at the hands of a loveling slim, Who in brightness of soul resembles it and it resembles him.
The drinker of wine, in very truth, hath no delight thereof, Except the cheek of the fair be pure, who doth the goblet brim.

[1] *i.e.* Do not express admiration openly, lest it attract the evil eye, but vent your wonder by saying, "God bless and preserve the Prophet!" according to general Muslim wont.
[2] A gorge near Mecca, the scene of one of Mohammed's battles.
[3] *i.e.* as made out of a crooked rib, according to the tradition.
[4] *i.e.* the land of the virgin.
[5] The word *Jamiaïn* means "two congregational mosques," which would only be found in a large town like Baghdad. It is possible, therefore, that the expression, "land of Jamiaïn," may mean Baghdad or some other great city, noted for its debauched manners.

Then he drank off his cup, and when it came round to him again, joyance got the mastery of him and he repeated the following verses:

Make thou thy boon-fellow of cups, brimmed up as full as this, And eke to follow cup with cup, I rede thee, do not miss,
Poured by a damask-lipped one's hand, a wonder-lovely fair, Whose mouth's sweet water, after sleep, as musk on apple is.
Drink not of wine, except it be from the hand of a gazelle, Whose cheek is goodlier than itself and sweeter still his kiss.

Presently, the wine crept to his head, drunkenness mastered him and he knew not hand from head, so that he swayed about for mirth, inclining anon to this one, to kiss him, and anon to another. Then he fell to glorying in himself and his case and the goodliness of his entertainment and his companions, and recited these verses:

None knoweth perfection of pleasure but he Who drinketh, with fair ones to hearten him still.
This sings to him, t'other, when cheer him would he, Revives him forthright with the cups he doth fill;
And whenever from one he hath need of a kiss, Long draughts from his lips, at his ease, he doth swill.
God bless them! Right sweet has my day with them been, And wonder delightsome and void of all ill!
We drank of the wine-cup, both mingled and pure, And agreed whoso slept, we should touzle at will.

At this moment, there came a knocking at the door; so they bade him who knocked enter, and behold, it was the Khalif Haroun er Reshid. When they saw him, they all rose to him and kissed the ground before him; and the fumes of the wine forsook Abou Nuwas's head for awe of the Khalif, who said to him, 'Hallo, Abou Nuwas!' 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'may God preserve thee!' 'What state is this I find thee in?' asked the Khalif; and the poet replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, methinks my state dispenses with question.' Quoth the Khalif, 'O Abou Nuwas, I

have sought direction of God the Most High and appoint thee Cadi of whoremasters.' 'Dost thou indeed invest me with that office, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked Abou Nuwas. 'I do,' replied the Khalif. 'Then, O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Abou Nuwas, 'hast thou any suit to prefer to me?' At this the Khalif was wroth and turned away and left them, full of rage, and passed the night, sore angered against Abou Nuwas, whilst the latter spent the merriest and most easeful of nights, till the day dawned and the morning-star appeared and shone, when he broke up the sitting and dismissing the boys, donned his court-dress and set out for the Khalif's palace.

Now it was the latter's custom, when the Divan broke up, to withdraw to his sitting-chamber and summon thither his poets and minions and musicians, each having his own place, which he might not overpass. So, that day, he retired to his saloon, and the minions came and seated themselves, each in his place. Presently, in came Abou Nuwas and was about to take his usual seat, when the Khalif cried out to Mesrour the headsman and bade him strip the poet of his clothes and clap an ass's pannel on his back. Moreover, he charged him bind a halter about his head and a crupper under his rear and carry him round to all the lodgings of the slave-girls and the chambers of the harem, that the women might make mock of him; then cut off his head and bring it to him. 'I hear and obey,' replied Mesrour and accoutring Abou Nuwas, as the Khalif had bidden him, carried him round to all the lodgings of the harem, in number as the days of the year; but he made all the girls laugh with his buffooneries and each gave him something, so that he returned with a pocketful of money.

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Just then, Jaafer the Barmecide, who had been absent on an important business for the Khalif, entered and

seeing the poet in this plight, said to him, 'Hallo, Abou Nuwas!' 'At thy service, O our lord,' answered he. 'What offence hast thou committed,' asked Jaafer, 'to bring this punishment on thee?' 'None whatever,' answered the other, 'except that I made our lord the Khalif a present of the best of my verses, and he presented me, in return, with the best of his clothes.' When the Khalif heard this, he laughed, from a heart full of wrath, and [not only] pardoned Abou Nuwas, but gave him a myriad of money.

ABDALLAH BEN MAAMER WITH THE MAN OF BASSORA AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

A certain man of Bassora once bought a slave-girl and reared and educated her excellent well. Moreover, he loved her very dearly and spent all his substance in pleasuring and making merry with her, till he had nothing left and want was very sore upon him. So she said to him, 'O my master, sell me; for thou needest my price and it makes my heart ache to see the sorry plight to which want hath brought thee. If thou sell me and make use of my price, it will be better for thee than keeping me, and haply God the Most High will prosper thee and mend thy fortune.' He agreed to this, of the straitness of his case, and carried her to the bazaar, where the broker offered her for sale to the Governor of Bassora, by name Abdallah ben Maamer et Teimi, and she pleased him. So he bought her, for five hundred dinars, of her master, who took the money and was about to go away, when the girl burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

May Allah prosper unto thee the money thou hast got! For me, nought's left me but lament and memory and woe.
I say to my afflicted soul, "Mourn little or mourn much; It skills not, for the loved one's gone and will return no mo."

When he heard this, he sighed heavily and replied thus:

Though there be no recourse for thee in this thy case and thou Find nought but death to solace thee, excuse me yet and know,
Evening and morn the thought of thee will company with me, Wherewith a heart I will console, that's all fulfilled of woe.
Peace be on thee! Henceforth for us no meeting shall there be Nor any union more, except Ben Maamer will it so.

When Abdallah heard these verses and saw their affliction, he exclaimed, 'By Allah, I will have no hand in separating you; for it is manifest to me that ye indeed love one another. So take the money and the damsel, O man, and may God bless thee in them! For parting is grievous to true lovers.' So they kissed his hand and going away, ceased not to dwell together, till death parted them; and glory be to Him whom death overtaketh not!

THE LOVERS OF THE BENOU UDHREH.

There was once, among the Benou Udhreh, a handsome and accomplished man, who was never a day out of love, and it chanced that he became enamoured of a beautiful woman of his own tribe and sent her many messages; but she ceased not to use him with cruelty and disdain, till, for stress of passion and longing and distraction, he fell exceeding sick and took to his bed and forswore sleep. His sickness grew on him and his anguish redoubled upon him, till he was all but dead; and his case became known and his passion noised abroad among the folk. His family and hers were instant with her to visit him, but she refused, till he was at the point of death, when, being told of this, she relented towards him and vouchsafed him a visit. When he saw her, his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated the following verses, from a broken heart:

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If, by thy life, there pass thee by my funeral train, to wit, A bier borne on the necks of four, wilt grudge to follow it?
Wilt thou not follow in its track, that so thou mayst salute The sepulchre of one who's dead, committed to the pit?

When she heard this, she wept sore and said to him, 'By Allah, I thought not that passion had come to such a pass with thee, as to cast thee into the arms of death! Had I known this, I had been favourable to thee, and thou shouldst have enjoyed thy desire.' At this, his tears streamed down, like the cloud-showers, and he repeated the following verse:

She draweth near to me, when death hath come betwixt us two And proffereth union, when it no profit can me do.

Then he gave one sigh and died, and she fell on him, kissing him and weeping, till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she charged her people bury her in his grave and recited the following verses, with streaming eyes:

We lived upon the earth a life of comfort and delight: Country and tribe and dwelling-place alike of us were proud;
But Fortune and the shifts of time did rend our loves apart, And now the grave uniteth us within a single shroud.

Then she fell again to weeping and ceased not from tears and lament, till she swooned away. She lay three days, senseless; then died and was buried in his grave. This is one of the strange chances of love.

THE VIZIER OF YEMEN AND HIS YOUNG BROTHER.

Bedreddin, Vizier of Yemen, had a young brother of singular beauty and kept strait watch over him. So he applied himself to seek a governor for him and coming upon an elder of dignified and reverend aspect, chaste and pious, lodged him in a house next his own, whence

he used to come daily to the Vizier's dwelling, to teach the latter's brother. After a while, the old man's heart was taken with love for his pupil and longing grew upon him and his entrails were troubled, till, one day, he made moan of his case to the boy, who said, 'What can I do, seeing that I may not leave my brother day or night? Thou seest how careful he is over me.' Quoth the governor, 'My lodging adjoins thine; so, when thy brother sleeps, do thou rise and entering the wardrobe, feign thyself asleep. Then come to the parapet of the roof and I will receive thee on the other side of the wall; so shalt thou sit with me awhile and return without thy brother's knowledge.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the boy. So, when a while of the night was past, he entered the closet and waited till his brother lay down on his bed and was drowned in sleep, when he rose and going to the parapet of the roof, found the governor awaiting him, who gave him his hand and carried him to the sitting-chamber, where he had made ready various dainties for his entertainment, and they sat down to carouse.

Now it was the night of the full moon, and as they sat, passing the wine-cup to one another, her rays shone upon them, and the governor fell to singing. But, whilst they were thus in mirth and joyance and good cheer, such as confounds the wit and the sight and defies description, the Vizier awoke and missing his brother, arose in affright and found the door open. So he went up to the roof and hearing a noise of talk, peeped over the parapet and saw a light shining in the governor's lodging. He looked in and espied his brother and his governor sitting carousing: but the latter became aware of him and sang the following verses, cup in hand, to a lively measure:

He gave me wine to drink, of his mouth's nectar rare, Toasting with down of cheeks and what adjoineth there;

Then passed with me the night, embracing, cheek to cheek, A loveling midst mankind unpeered and past compare.
The full moon gazed on us all night; pray then to her, So to his brother she to tell of us forbear.

Now the Vizier was a merry man; so, when he heard this, he said, 'By Allah, I will not betray you!' And he went away and left them to their diversion.

THE LOVES OF THE BOY AND GIRL AT SCHOOL.

Night cccLxxxv. A boy and a girl once learnt together in a school, and the boy fell passionately in love with the girl. So, one day, when the other boys were heedless, he took her tablet[1] and wrote on it the following verses:

Tell me, what sayst thou unto him, whom sickness for thy love Hath worn and wasted, till he's grown distraught and stupefied?
Him who of passion maketh moan; for love and longing pain, That which is in his heart, indeed, no longer can he hide.

When the girl took her tablet, she read the verses and wept for pity of him; then wrote thereunder these others:

An if we see one languishing for very love of us, Our favours, surely, unto him shall nowise be denied.
Yea, and of us he shall obtain that which he doth desire Of love-delight, whate'er to us in consequence betide.

Now it chanced that the teacher came in on them and taking the tablet, unnoticed, read what was written thereon. So he was moved to pity of their case and wrote on the tablet the following verses, in reply to those of the girl:

Favour thy lover, for he's grown distracted for desire, And reck thou not of punishment nor fear lest any chide.
As for the master, have no dread of his authority, For he with passion and its pains aforetime hath been tried.

[1] Oriental substitute for slate.

Presently, the girl's master entered the school and finding the tablet, read the above verses and wrote under them the following:

My Allah never separate your loves, whilst time abide, And may your slanderer be put to shame and mortified!
But, for the master of the school, by Allah, all my life, A busier go-between than he I never yet espied.

Then he sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and married them on the spot. Moreover, he made them a marriage-feast and entreated them with exceeding munificence; and they abode together in joy and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

EL MUTELEMMIS AND HIS WIFE UMEIMEH.

It is related that El Mutelemmis[1] once fled from En Numan ben Mundhir[2] and was absent so long that the folk deemed him dead. Now he had a handsome wife, Umeimeh by name, and her family pressed her to marry again; but she refused, for that she loved her husband El Mutelemmis very dearly. However, they were instant with her, because of the multitude of her suitors, and importuned her till she at last reluctantly consented and they married her to a man of her own tribe.

On the night of the wedding, El Mutelemmis came back and hearing in the camp a noise of pipes and tabrets and seeing signs of festival, asked some of the children what was toward, to which they replied, 'They have married Umeimeh, widow of El Mutelemmis, to such an one, and he goes in to her this night.' When he heard this, he made shift to enter the house with the women and saw

[1] A pre-Mohammedan poet.
[2] King of Hireh in Chaldæa, a fantastic and bloodthirsty tyrant, whom he had lampooned.

there the bride seated on her throne. By and by, the bridegroom came up to her, whereupon she sighed heavily and weeping, recited the following verse:

Ah would, (but many are the shifts of good and evil fate), I knew in what far land thou art, O Mutelemmis mine!

Now El Mutelemmis was a renowned poet; so he answered her with the following verse:

Right near at hand, Umeimeh! Know, whene'er the caravan Halted,
I never ceased for thee with longing heart to pine.

When the bridegroom heard this, he guessed how the case stood and went forth from among them in haste, repeating the following verse:

I was in luck, but now I'm fall'n into the contrary. A hospitable house and room your reknit loves enshrine!

So El Mutelemmis took his wife again and abode with her in all delight and solace of life, till death parted them. And glory be to Him at whose command the earth and the heavens shall arise!

THE KHALIF HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE PRINCESS ZUBEIDEH IN THE BATH.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid loved the Princess Zubeideh with an exceeding love and laid out for her a pleasaunce, in which he made a great pool and led thither water from all sides. Moreover, he set thereabout a screen of trees, which so grew and interlaced over the pool, that one could go in and wash, without being seen of any, for the thickness of the leafage. It chanced, one day, that Zubeideh entered the garden and coming to the basin, gazed upon its goodliness, and the limpidity of the water and the interlacing of the trees over it pleased her. Now it was a day of exceeding heat; so she put off her clothes and entering the pool, which was not deep enough to

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cover her, fell to pouring the water over herself from an ewer of silver.

The Khalif heard she was in the pool; so he left his palace and came down to spy upon her, through the screen of the leaves. He stood behind the trees and saw her naked, with all her secret charms displayed. Presently, she became aware of him and turning, saw him behind the trees and was ashamed that he should see her naked. So she laid her hands on her kaze, but it escaped from between them, by reason of its much greatness and plumpness; and the Khalif turned and went away, wondering and reciting the following verse:

I looked on her whom I adore And longing rose in me full sore.

But he knew not what to say next; so he sent for Abou Nuwas and bade him make a piece of verse commencing with the above line. 'I hear and obey,' replied the poet and in a twinkling extemporized the following lines:

I looked on her whom I adore, And longing rose in me full sore
For a gazelle that ravished me, By double lote-trees shaded o'er.
The water on her dainty part With silver ewer did she pour
And would have hidden it, seeing me, But all too small her hands therefor.
Would I were on it, wel-a-way, An hour or liefer two or more!

The Khalif smiled and made him a handsome present, and he went away rejoicing.

HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE THREE POETS.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was exceeding restless one night; so he rose and walked about his palace, till he happened on a damsel overcome with wine. Now he was greatly enamoured of this damsel; so he toyed with her and pulled her to him, whereupon her girdle fell down and her trousers were unloosed and he besought her of amorous dalliance. But she said to him, 'O Commander of the

Faithful, wait till to-morrow night, for I am unprepared for thee, knowing not of thy coming.' So he left her and went away.

On the morrow, he sent a page to her to announce his visit to her apartment; but she sent back to him, saying, 'The day obliterates the promise of the night.' So he said to his minions, 'Make me somewhat of verse, introducing these words, "The day obliterates the promise of the night."' 'We hear and obey,' answered they; and Er Recashi[1] came forward and recited the following:

By Allah, an thou feltst my longing and my pain, Repose had turned away from thee and taken flight.
A maid hath made me love-distraught, nor visiting Nor being visited, a sad and love-lorn wight.
She promised me her grace, then turned away and said, "The day obliterates the promise of the night."

Then Abou Musab came forward and recited these verses:

When wilt thou put away this dotage from thy spright? Thy heart is dazed and rest to thee forbidden quite.
Is't not enough for thee to have a weeping eye And vitals still on fire for memory and despite?
For self-conceit, indeed, he laugheth, when he saith, "The day obliterates the promise of the night."

Last came Abou Nuwas and recited the following:

Love was prolonged and far was union out of sight, Nor skilled it aught to feign aversion and despite.
One day, she came into the palace, drunk with wine, But even her drunkenness with pudour was bedight.
Her upper garments dropped and left her shoulders bare And loosened trousers showed the dwelling of delight;
Yea, and the breeze shook hips, full heavy, and a shape, As 'twere a branch, whereon pomegranates twain unite.
"Give me a tryst," quoth I; and she replied, "The place Of visiting will be to-morrow clean and right."
Next day, I came and said, "Thy promise;" but quoth she, "The day obliterates the promise of the night."

[1] Aboulabbas er Recashi, a well-known poet of the time.

The Khalif bestowed a myriad each on Er Recashi and Abou Musab, but bade strike off Abou Nuwas's head, saying, 'Thou wast with us yesternight in the palace.' 'By Allah,' answered the poet, 'I slept not but in my own house! I was directed to what I said by thine own words as to the subject of the poem; and indeed quoth God the Most High (and He is the truest of all speakers), "As for poets (devils ensue them!) dost thou not see how they run wild in each valley and say that they do not?"'[1] So the Khalif forgave him and bestowed on him two myriads of gold.

MUSAB BEN EZ ZUBEIR AND AAÏSHEH DAUGHTER OF TELHEH.

It is told of Musab ben ez Zubeir[2] that he met Izzeh, who was one of the shrewdest of women, in Medina and said to her, 'I have a mind to marry Aaïsheh,[3] daughter of Telheh, and I would have thee go to her and spy out for me how she is made.' So she went and returning to Musab, said, 'I have seen her, and her face is more beautiful than health; she hath large and well-opened eyes, an aquiline nose and smooth, oval cheeks and a mouth like a cleft pomegranate, a neck like an ewer of silver and a bosom with two breasts like twin pomegranates, a slim waist and a slender belly, with a navel therein as it were a casket of ivory, and backside like a hummock of sand. Moreover, she hath plump thighs and legs like columns of alabaster; but I saw her feet to be large, and thou wilt fall short with her in time of amorous dalliance.' Upon this report, he married her and Izzeh invited Aaïsheh and

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[1] *Koran* xxvi. 224, 5, 6.

[2] Half-brother of Abdallah ben ez Zubeir, the celebrated pretender to the Khalifate, see Vol. III. p. 194, note 3.

[3] Grand-daughter of the Khalif Aboubekr and the most beautiful woman of her day.

the women of the tribe of Kureish to her house, when Aaïsheh sang the following, with Musab standing by:

The mouths of girls, with their odoriferous, Sweet breath and their witching smiles, are sweet to buss;
Yet ne'er have I tasted them, but in thought of him; And by thought, indeed, the Ruler rules over us.

The night of his going in to her, he departed not from her, till after seven courses; and on the morrow, a freed-woman of his met him and said to him, 'May I be thy ransom! Thou art perfect, even in this.'

Quoth a certain woman, 'I was with Aaïsheh, when her husband came in to her, and she lusted to him; so he fell upon her and she puffed and snorted and made use of all manner of rare motions and strange inventions, and I the while within hearing. So, when he came out from her, I said to her, "How canst thou, with thy rank and nobility and condition, do thus, and I in thy house?" Quoth she, "A woman should bring her husband all of which she is mistress, by way of excitations and rare motions. What mislikest thou of this?" And I answered, "I would have this anights." "Thus is it by day," rejoined she, "and by night I do more than this; for, when he sees me, desire stirs in him and he falls on heat; so he puts out his hand to me and I obey him, and it is as thou seest."'

ABOUL ASWED AND HIS SQUINTING SLAVE-GIRL.

Aboul Aswed bought a native-born slave-girl, who was squint-eyed, and she pleased him; but his people decried her to him; whereat he wondered and spreading out his hands, recited the following verses:

They run her down to me, and yet no fault in her find I, Except perhaps it be a speck she hath in either eye.
To compensate this fault, if fault it be, o' the upper parts She's slim and heavy of the parts beneath the waist that lie.

HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE TWO SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid lay one night between two slave-girls, one from Medina and the other from Cufa, and the latter rubbed his hands, whilst the former rubbed his feet and made his yard to stand up. Quoth the Cufan girl, 'I see thou wouldst keep the whole of the stock-in-trade to thyself; give me my share of it.' And the other answered, 'I have been told by Malik, on the authority of Hisham ibn Orweh,[1] who had it of his [grand]father,[2] that the Prophet said, "Whoso bringeth the dead to life, it is his."' But the Cufan took her unawares and pushing her away, took it all in her own hand and said, 'El Aamesh[3] tells us, on the authority of Kheithemeh,[4] who had it of Abdallah ben Mesoud,[5] that the Prophet said, "Game belongeth to him who taketh it, not to him who raiseth it."'

THE KHALIF HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE THREE SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid lay once with three slave-girls, a Meccan, a Medinan and an Irakite. The Medina girl put her hand to his yard and handled it, whereupon it rose and the Meccan sprang up and drew it to herself. Quoth the other, 'What is this unjust aggression? I have

[1] A famous Medinan Traditionist of the eighth century.
[2] Ez Zubeir ibn el Awwam, cousin-german to Mohammed and one of his Companions.
[3] Abou Mohammed el Aamesh, a Cufan Traditionist of the eighth century.
[4] A Traditionist of the seventh century.
[5] One of the Companions.

heard tell of Malik,[1] on the authority of Ez Zuhri,[1] who had it of Abdallah ibn Salim,[1] on the report of Saïd ben Zeid,[2] that the Apostle (whom God bless and preserve) said, "Whoso revivifies a dead land, it is his."' And the Meccan answered, 'Sufyan[1] tells us, on the authority of Abou Zenad,[1] who had it of El Aarej,[1] on the report of Abou Hureireh,[2] that the Apostle of God said, "The game is his who catches it, not his who starts it."' But the Irak girl pushed them both away and taking it to herself, said, 'This is mine, till your contention be decided.'

THE MILLER AND HIS WIFE.

There was a miller, who had an ass to turn his mill; and he was married to a wicked wife, whom he loved; but she hated him and loved a neighbour of hers, who liked her not and held aloof from her. One night, the miller saw, in his sleep, one who said to him, 'Dig in such a spot of the ass's circuit in the mill, and thou shalt find a treasure.' When he awoke, he told his wife the dream and charged her keep it secret; but she told her neighbour, thinking to win his favour, and he appointed with her to come to her by night. So he came and they dug in the mill and found the treasure and took it forth. Then said he to her, 'How shall we do with this?' 'We will share it equally between us,' answered she; 'and do thou leave thy wife and I will cast about to rid me of my husband. Then shalt thou marry me, and when we are united, we will add the two halves of the treasure, one to the other, and it will be [all] in our hands.' Quoth he, 'I fear lest Satan seduce thee and thou take some man other than myself; for gold in the house is like the sun in the world. Meseems, therefore, it were better that

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[1] Traditionists of the seventh and eighth centuries.
[2] Companions of the Prophet.

the money be all in my hands, so thou mayst study to win free of thy husband and come to me.' 'I fear the like of thee,' rejoined she, 'and I will not yield up my part to thee; for it was I directed thee to it.' When he heard this, covetise prompted him to kill her; so he killed her and threw her body into the empty hole; but the day overtook him and hindered him from covering it up; so he took the treasure and went away.

Presently, the miller awoke and missing his wife, went into the mill, where he fastened the ass to the beam and shouted to it. It went on a little, then stopped; whereupon he beat it grievously; but the more he beat it, the more it drew back; for it was affrighted at the dead woman and could not go on. So he took out a knife and goaded it again and again, but still it would not budge. Then he was wroth with it, knowing not the cause of its obstinacy, and drove the knife into its flanks, and it fell down dead. When the sun rose, he saw his wife lying dead, in the place of the treasure, and great was his rage and sore his chagrin for the loss of the treasure and the death of his wife and his ass. All this came of his letting his wife into his secret and not keeping it to himself.

THE SIMPLETON AND THE SHARPER.

A certain simple fellow was once going along, haling his ass after him by the halter, when a couple of sharpers saw him and one said to his fellow, 'I will take that ass from yonder man.' 'How wilt thou do that?' asked the other. 'Follow me and I will show thee,' replied the first. So he went up to the ass and loosing it from the halter, gave the beast to his fellow; then clapped the halter on his own head and followed the simpleton, till he knew that the other had got clean off with the ass, when he stood still. The man pulled at the halter, but

the thief stirred not; so he turned and seeing the halter on a man's neck, said to him, 'Who art thou?' Quoth the sharper, 'I am thine ass and my story is a strange one. Know that I have a pious old mother and came in to her one day, drunk; and she said to me, "O my son, repent to God the Most High of these thy transgressions." But I took the cudgel and beat her, whereupon she cursed me and God the Most High changed me into an ass and caused me fall into thy hands, where I have remained till now. However, to-day, my mother called me to mind and her heart relented towards me; so she prayed for me, and God restored me to my former shape of a man.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried the simpleton. 'O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah, acquit me of what I have done with thee, in the way of riding and so forth.'

Then he let the sharper go and returned home, drunken with chagrin and concern. His wife asked him, 'What ails thee and where is the ass?' And he answered, 'Thou knowest not what was this ass; but I will tell thee.' So he told her the story, and she exclaimed, 'Woe worth us for God the Most High! How could we have used a man as a beast of burden, all this while?' And she gave alms and asked pardon of God. Then the man abode awhile at home, idle, till she said to him, 'How long wilt thou sit at home, idle?' Go to the market and buy us an ass and do thy business with it.' Accordingly, he went to the market and stopping by the ass-stand, saw his own ass for sale. So he went up to it and clapping his mouth to its ear, said to it, 'Out on thee, thou good-for-nought! Doubtless thou hast been getting drunk again and beating thy mother! But, by Allah, I will never buy thee more!' And he left it and went away.

THE IMAM ABOU YOUSUF WITH HAROUN ER RESHID AND ZUBEIDEH.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid went up one noon-tide to his couch, to lie down, and mounting, found thereon fresh semen; whereat he was startled and sore perturbed and troubled. So he called the princess Zubeideh and said to her, 'What is that spilt on the bed?' She looked at it and replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, it is semen.' 'Tell me truly what this means,' said he; 'or I will lay violent hands on thee forthright.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'indeed, I know not how it came there and I am guiltless of that whereof thou suspectest me.' So he sent for the Imam Abou Yousuf and told him the case. The Imam raised his eyes to the roof and seeing a crack therein, said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the bat hath semen like that of a man, and this is bats' semen.' Then he called for a lance and thrust it into the crack, whereupon down fell the bat. In this manner the Khalif's suspicions were dispelled and Zubeideh's innocence was made manifest; whereat she gave vent to her joy and promised Abou Yousuf a liberal reward. Night cccLxxxix.

Now there were with her magnificent fruits, out of their season, and she knew of others in the garden; so she said to Abou Yousuf, 'O Imam of the Faith, which wouldst thou rather of the two kinds of fruits, those that are here or those that are not here?' 'Our code forbids us to pronounce judgment on the absent,' answered he. 'When they are present, we will give judgment.' So she caused bring the two kinds of fruits before him; and he ate of both. Quoth she, 'What is the difference between them?' And he answered, 'As often as I think to praise one kind, the other puts in its claim.' The Khalif laughed at his

answer and made him a present. Zubeideh also gave him what she had promised him, and he went away, rejoicing. See, then, the blessed qualities of this Imam and how at his hands were made manifest the truth and the innocence of the lady Zubeideh.

THE KHALIF EL HAKIM AND THE MERCHANT.

The Khalif El Hakim bi Amrillah was riding out in state one day, when he came to a garden, in which he saw a man, surrounded by slaves and servants. He asked him for a draught of water, and the man gave him to drink, saying, 'Peradventure, the Commander of the Faithful will honour me by alighting in this my garden.' So the Khalif dismounted and entered the garden with his suite; whereupon the man brought out to them a hundred carpets and a hundred leather mats and a hundred cushions and set before them a hundred dishes of fruits, a hundred saucers of sweetmeats and a hundred bowls full of sherbets of sugar; whereat the Khalif marvelled and said to his host, 'O man, this thy case is a strange one. Didst thou know of our coming and make this preparation for us?' 'No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the other, 'I knew not of thy coming and am but a merchant of the rest of thy subjects. But I have a hundred concubines; so, when the Commander of the Faithful honoured me by alighting with me, I sent to each of them, bidding her send me the morning-meal here. So they sent me each of her furniture and of the excess of her meat and drink: and every day each sends me a dish of meat and another of marinades, also a plate of fruits and a saucer of sweetmeats and a bowl of sherbet. This is my every-day noon-meal, nor have I added aught thereto for thee.'

The Khalif prostrated himself in thanksgiving to God the Most High and said, 'Praised be God, who hath been so bountiful to one of our subjects, that he entertaineth the Khalif and his suite, without making ready for them, but of the surplus of his day's victual!' Then he sent for all the dirhems in the treasury, that had been struck that year,—and they were in number three thousand and seven hundred thousand;—nor did he mount, till the money came, when he gave it to the merchant, saying, 'Use this for the maintenance of thy state; and thy desert is more than this.' Then he mounted and rode away.

KING KISRA ANOUSHIRWAN AND THE VILLAGE DAMSEL.

The just King, Kisra Anoushirwan,[1] was hunting one day and became separated from his suite, in pursuit of an antelope. Presently, he caught sight of a hamlet, near at hand, and being sore athirst, made for the door of a house, that stood by the wayside, and asked for a draught of water. A damsel came out and looked at him; then, going back into the house, pressed the juice from a sugar-cane into a tankard and mixed it with water; after which she strewed on the top somewhat of perfume, as it were dust, and carried it to the King. He took it and seeing in it what resembled dust, drank it, little by little, till he came to the end. Then said he to her, 'O damsel, the drink is good and sweet, but for this dust in it, that troubles it.' 'O guest,' answered she, 'I put that in, of intent.' 'And why didst thou thus?' asked he; and she

[1] A.D. 530-579. The founder of the great Persian dynasty of the Kisras (Chosroës). Mohammed was born in the reign of this monarch, whose name is a synonym with Eastern writers for all that is just and noble in a King.

replied, 'I saw that thou wast exceeding thirsty and feared that thou wouldst swallow the whole at one draught and that this would do thee a mischief; and so hadst thou done, but for this dust that troubled the drink.' The King wondered at her wit and good sense and said to her, 'How many sugar-canes didst thou press for this draught?' 'One,' answered she; whereat the King marvelled and calling for the roll of the taxes of the village, saw that its assessment was but little and bethought him to increase it, on his return to his palace, saying in himself, 'Why is a village so lightly taxed, where they get this much juice out of one sugar-cane?'

Then he left the village and pursued his chase. As he came back at the end of the day, he passed alone by the same door and called again for drink; whereupon the same damsel came out and knowing him, went in to fetch him drink. It was some time before she returned and the King wondered at this and said to her, 'Why hast thou tarried?' Quoth she, 'Because one sugar-cane yielded not enough for thy need. So I pressed three; but they yielded not so much as did one aforetime.' 'What is the cause of that?' asked the King; and she answered, 'The cause of it is that the King's mind is changed.' Quoth he, 'How knewst thou that?' 'We hear from the wise,' replied she, 'that, when the King's mind is changed against a folk, their prosperity ceaseth and their good waxeth less.' Anoushirwan laughed and put away from his mind that which he had purposed against the people of the village. Moreover, he took the damsel to wife then and there, being pleased with her much wit and acuteness and the excellence of her speech.

Night cccxc.

THE WATER-CARRIER AND THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

There was once, in the city of Bokhara, a water-carrier, who used to carry water to the house of a goldsmith and had done thus thirty years. Now the goldsmith had a wife of exceeding beauty and elegance and withal renowned for modesty, chastity and piety. One day, the water-carrier came, as of wont, and poured the water into the cisterns. Now the woman was standing in the midst of the court; so he went up to her and taking her hand, stroked it and pressed it, then went away and left her. When her husband came home from the bazaar, she said to him, 'I would have thee tell me what thou hast done in the bazaar, to-day, to anger God the Most High.' Quoth he, 'I have done nothing.' 'Nay,' rejoined she, 'but, by Allah, thou hast indeed done something to anger God; and except thou tell me the truth, I will not abide in thy house, and thou shalt not see me, nor will I see thee.' 'I will tell thee the truth,' answered he. 'As I was sitting in my shop this day, a woman came up to me and bade me make her a bracelet. Then she went away and I wrought her a bracelet of gold and laid it aside. Presently, she returned and I brought her out the bracelet. She put out her hand and I clasped the bracelet on her wrist; and I wondered at the whiteness of her hand and the beauty of her wrist and recalled what the poet says:

Bracelets, upon her wrists, of glittering virgin gold She hath, like fire ablaze on running water cold.
It is as if the wrists and bracelets thereabout Were water girt with fire, right wondrous to behold.

So I took her hand and pressed it and squeezed it.' 'God is Most Great!' exclaimed the woman. 'Why didst thou this ill thing? Know that the water-carrier, who has come to our house these thirty years, nor sawst thou ever

any treason in him, took my hand to-day and pressed and squeezed it.' Quoth her husband, 'O woman, let us crave pardon of God! Verily, I repent of what I did, and do thou ask forgiveness of God for me.' 'God pardon me and thee,' said she, 'and vouchsafe to make good the issue of our affair!'

Night cccxci.

Next day, the water-carrier came in to the jeweller's wife and throwing himself at her feet, grovelled in the dust and besought pardon of her, saying, 'O my lady, acquit me of that which Satan deluded me to do; for it was he that seduced me and led me astray.' 'Go thy ways,' answered she; 'the fault was not in thee, but in my husband, for that he did what he did in his shop, and God hath retaliated upon him in this world.' And it is related that the goldsmith, when his wife told him how the water-carrier had used her, said, 'Tit for tat! If I had done more, the water-carrier had done more.' And this became a current byword among the folk.

So it behoveth a wife to be both outward and inward with her husband, contenting herself with little from him, if he cannot give her much, and taking pattern by Aaïsheh[1] the Truthful and Fatimeh[2] the Clean Maid, (may God the Most High accept of them), that she may be of the company of the righteous.[3]

KHUSRAU AND SHIRIN WITH THE FISHERMAN.

King Khusrau[4] of Persia loved fish; and one day, as he sat in his saloon, he and Shirin[5] his wife, there came a

[1] Wife of Mohammed. [2] Daughter of Mohammed.

[3] *Lit.* "of the ancestors," *i.e.* those pious and blessed persons who have gone before. The word *es selef* (the ancestors) is specially applied to Mohammed, his wife Aaïsheh, the first three Khalifs and certain other early Muslims.

[4] Khusrau Perviz, grandson of Kisra Anoushirwan (see supra, p. 228).

[5] The famous beauty, daughter of Maurice, Emperor of the East, and heroine of Nizami's well-known poem.

fisherman, with a great fish, and presented it to the King, who was pleased and ordered the man four thousand dirhems. When he was gone, Shirin said to the King, 'Thou hast done ill.' 'Wherefore?' asked he; and she answered, 'Because if, after this, thou give one of thy courtiers a like sum, he will disdain it and say, "He hath but given me the like of what he gave the fisherman." And if thou give him less, he will say, "He makes light of me and gives me less than he gave the fisherman."' 'Thou art right,' rejoined Khusrau; 'but the thing is done and it ill becomes a king to go back on his gift.' Quoth Shirin, 'An thou wilt, I will contrive thee a means to get it back from him.' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'Call back the fisherman and ask him if the fish be male or female. If he say, "Male," say thou, "We want a female," and if he say, "Female," say, "We want a male."'

So he sent for the fisherman, who was a man of wit and discernment, and said to him, 'Is this fish male or female?' The fisherman kissed the ground and answered, 'It is of the neuter gender, neither male nor female.' The King laughed and ordered him other four thousand dirhems. So the fisherman went to the treasurer and taking his eight thousand dirhems, put them in a bag he had with him. Then, throwing the bag over his shoulder, he was going away, when he dropped a dirhem; so he laid the bag off his back and stooped down to pick it up. Now the King and Shirin were looking on, and the latter said, 'O King, didst thou note the meanness and greediness of yon man, in that he must needs stoop down, to pick up the one dirhem, and could not bring himself to leave it for one of the King's servants?' When the King heard this, he was wroth with the fisherman and said, 'Thou art right, O Shirin!' So he called the man back and said to him, 'Thou low-minded fellow! Thou art no man! How couldst thou put the bag off thy shoulder and stoop to pick

up the one dirhem and grudge to leave it where it fell?' The fisherman kissed the earth before him and answered, 'May God prolong the King's life! Indeed, I did not pick up the dirhem, because of its value in my eyes; but because on one of its faces is the likeness of the King and on the other his name; and I feared lest any should unwittingly set his foot upon it, thus dishonouring the name and presentment of the King, and I be blamed for the offence.' The King wondered at his wit and shrewdness and ordered him yet other four thousand dirhems. Moreover, he let cry abroad in his kingdom, saying, 'It behoveth none to order himself by women's counsel; for whoso followeth their advice, loseth, with his one dirhem, other two.'

YEHYA BEN KHALID THE BARMECIDE AND THE POOR MAN.

Yehya ben Khalid the Barmecide was returning home, one day, from the Khalif's palace, when he saw a man at the gate of his house, who rose at his approach and saluted him, saying, 'O Yehya, I am in need of that which is in thy hand, and I make God my intermediary with thee.' So Yehya caused set apart a place for him in his house and bade his treasurer carry him a thousand dirhems every day and that his food should be of the choicest of his own meat. The man abode thus a whole month, at the end of which time, having received in all thirty thousand dirhems, he departed by stealth, fearing lest Yehya should take the money from him, because of the greatness of the sum; and when they told Yehya of this, he said, 'By Allah, though he had tarried with me to the end of his days, yet had I not scanted him of my largesse nor cut off from him the bounties of my hospitality!' For, indeed, the excellences of the Barmecides were past count nor can their virtues

Night cccxcii.

be told; especially those of Yehya ben Khalid, for he abounded in noble qualities, even as saith the poet of him:

I asked munificence, "Art free?" It answered, "No, perdie! Yehya ben Khalid's slave am I; my lord and master he."
"A boughten slave?" asked I; but, "Nay, so heaven forfend!" quoth it. "From ancestor to ancestor he did inherit me."

MOHAMMED EL AMIN AND JAAFER BEN EL HADI.

Jaafer ben Mousa el Hadi[1] once had a slave-girl, a lute-player, called El Bedr el Kebir, than whom there was not in her time a fairer of face nor a better-shaped nor a more elegant of manners nor a more accomplished in singing and smiting the strings; she was indeed perfect in beauty and charm. Mohammed el Amin,[2] son of Zubeideh, heard of her and was instant with Jaafer to sell her to him; but he replied, 'Thou knowest it beseems not one of my rank to sell slave-girls nor traffic in concubines; but, were it not that she was reared in my house, I would send her to thee, as a gift, nor grudge her to thee.'

Some days after this, El Amin went to Jaafer's house, to make merry; and the latter set before him that which it behoves to set before friends and bade El Bedr sing to him and gladden him. So she tuned the lute and sang right ravishingly; whilst El Amin fell to drinking and making merry and bade the cupbearers ply Jaafer with wine, till he became drunken, when he took the damsel and carried her to his own house, but laid not a finger on her. On the morrow, he sent to invite Jaafer; and when he came, he set wine before him and bade the girl sing to him, from behind the curtain. Jaafer knew her voice and was angered at this, but, of the nobleness of his nature and the great-

[1] First cousin of Haroun er Reshid.
[2] Son and successor of Er Reshid.

ness of his mind, he dissembled his vexation and let no change appear in his demeanour.

When the carousal was at an end, El Amin commanded one of his servants to fill the boat, in which Jaafer had come, with dirhems and dinars and all manner jewels and jacinths and rich clothes and other treasures of price. So he laid therein a thousand myriads of money and a thousand fine pearls, each worth twenty thousand dirhems; nor did he give over loading the barge with all manner of precious things, till the boatmen cried out for quarter, saying, 'The boat cannot hold any more;' whereupon he bade them carry all this to Jaafer's palace. Such are the fashions of the magnanimous, may God have mercy on them!

THE SONS OF YEHYA BEN KHALID AND SAÏD BEN SALIM EL BAHILI.

(Quoth Saïd ben Salim el Bahili[1]), I was once, in the days of Haroun er Reshid, in very narrow case and greatly oppressed with debts, that had accumulated upon me and that I had no means of discharging. My doors were blocked up with creditors and I was without cease importuned for payment by claimants, who dunned me in crowds, till I was at my wits' end what to do. At last, being sore perplexed and troubled, I betook myself to Abdallah ben Malik el Khuzaï[2] and besought him to aid me with his judgment and of his good counsel direct me to the door of relief; and he said, "None can quit thee of this thy strait but the Barmecides." Quoth I, "Who can brook their pride and put up with their arrogance?" And he answered, "Thou must put up with it, for the sake of amending thy case." So I left him and went straight to

Night cccxciii.

[1] A well-known grammarian and traditionist of the time, afterwards governor of part of Khorassan, under the Khalif El Mamoun.

[2] Intendant of the palace under Er Reshid.

El Fezl and Jaafer, sons of Yehya ben Khalid, to whom I related my case. "God give thee His aid," answered they, "and enable thee by His bounties to dispense with the aid of His creatures and vouchsafe thee abundant good and bestow on thee what shall suffice thee, without the need of any but Himself; for He can what He will and is gracious and provident with His servants."

I went out from them and returned to Abdallah, disappointed and perplexed and heavy at heart, and told him what they had said. Quoth he, "Thou wouldst do well to abide with us this day, that we may see what God the Most High will decree." So I sat with him awhile, and lo, up came my servant, who said to me, "O my lord, there are at our door many laden mules, and with them a man, who says he is the agent of Fezl and Jaafer ben Yehya." Quoth Abdallah, "I trust that relief is come to thee: go and see what is to do." So I left him and running to my house, found at the door a man, who gave me a letter, wherein was written the following: "Know that, after thou hadst been with us and acquainted us with thy case, we betook ourselves to the Khalif and informed him that the case had reduced thee to the humiliation of begging; whereupon he ordered thee a million dirhems from the Treasury. We represented to him that thou wouldst spend this money in paying thy creditors and said, 'Whence shall he provide for his subsistence?' So he ordered thee other three hundred thousand, and we have sent thee, of our own money, a million dirhems each, so that thou hast now three millions and three hundred thousand dirhems, wherewithal to order thine affair and amend thine estate."

See, then, the munificence of these generous men: may God the Most High have mercy on them!

THE WOMAN'S TRICK AGAINST HER HUSBAND.

A man brought his wife a fish one Friday and bidding her cook it against the end of the congregational prayers, went out to his business. Meanwhile, there came in her friend,[1] who bade her to a wedding at his house; so she agreed and laying the fish in a jar of water, went off with him and was absent a whole week, whilst her husband sought her from house to house and enquired after her; but none could give him any news of her.

On the following Friday, she came home, [and he fell to chiding and reproaching her;] but she brought out to him the fish alive from the jar and assembled the folk against him. He told them his case; but they credited him not and said, 'It cannot be that the fish should have remained alive all this while.' So they caused adjudge him mad and imprisoned him and laughed at him, whereupon he wept sore and recited the following verses:

Night ccccxiv.

A hag, that holds high rank, indeed, in lewdness! In her face Are witnesses that testify to filth and wantonness.
When she's unclean, she bawds; and when she's clean, she plays the whore: So, all her time, she's either bawd or else adulteress.

THE DEVOUT WOMAN AND THE TWO WICKED ELDERS.[2]

There was once, of old time, a virtuous woman among the children of Israel, who was pious and devout and used every day to go out to the place of prayer, first entering a garden, which adjoined thereto, and there making the ablution. Now there were in this garden two old men, its keepers, who fell in love with her and sought her favours;

[1] *i.e.* lover. [2] Muslim version of Susannah and the Elders.

but she refused, whereupon said they, 'Except thou yield thyself to us, we will bear witness against thee of fornication.' Quoth she, 'God will preserve me from your wickedness!' Then they opened the garden-gate and cried out, and the folk came to them from all sides, saying, 'What ails you?' Quoth they, 'We found this damsel in company with a youth, who was doing lewdness with her; but he escaped from our hands.'

Now it was the use of the people of those days to expose an adulteress to public ignominy for three days and after stone her. So they pilloried her three days, whilst the two old men came up to her daily and laying their hands on her head, said, 'Praised be God who hath sent down His vengeance on thee!'

On the fourth day, they carried her away, to stone her; but a lad of twelve years old, by name Daniel, followed them to the place of execution and said to them, 'Hasten not to stone her, till I judge between them.' So they set him a chair and he sat down and caused bring the old men before him separately. (Now he was the first that separated witnesses.) Then said he to the first, 'What sawest thou?' So he repeated to him his story, and Daniel said, 'In what part of the garden did this befall?' 'On the eastern side,' replied the elder, 'under a pear-tree.' Then he called the other old man and asked him the same question; and he replied, 'On the western side of the garden, under an apple-tree.' Meanwhile the damsel stood by, with her hands and eyes uplift to heaven, imploring God for deliverance. Then God the Most High sent down His vengeful thunder upon the two old men and consumed them and made manifest the innocence of the damsel.

This was the first of the miracles of the Prophet Daniel, on whom and on the Prophet be blessing and peace!

JAAFER THE BARMECIDE AND THE OLD BEDOUIN.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid went out one day, with Abou Yousuf the minion and Jaafer the Barmecide and Abou Nuwas, into the desert, where they fell in with an old man, leant upon his ass. The Khalif bade Jaafer ask him whence he came; so he said to him, 'Whence comest thou?' 'From Bassora,' answered the Bedouin. 'And whither goest thou?' asked Jaafer. 'To Baghdad,' said the other. 'And what wilt thou do there?' asked Jaafer. 'I go to seek medicine for my eye,' replied the old man. Quoth the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, make us sport with him.' 'If I jest with him,' answered Jaafer, 'I shall hear what I shall not like.' But Er Reshid rejoined, 'I charge thee, on my authority, jest with him.'

Night cccxcb.

So Jaafer said to the Bedouin, 'If I prescribe thee a remedy that shall profit thee, what wilt thou give me in return?' Quoth the other, 'God the Most High will requite thee for me with better than I can give thee.' 'Harkye, then,' said Jaafer, 'and I will give thee a prescription, which I have given to none but thee.' 'What is that?' asked the Bedouin; and Jaafer answered, 'Take three ounces of wind-wafts and the like of sunbeams and moonshine and lamp-light; mix them together and let them lie in the wind three months. Then bray them three months in a mortar without a bottom and laying them in a cleft platter, set it in the wind other three months; after which use three drachms every night in thy sleep, and (God willing) thou shalt be cured.'

When the Bedouin heard this, he stretched himself out on the ass's back and letting fly a terrible great crack of wind, said to Jaafer, 'Take this, in payment of thy prescription. When I have followed it, if God grant me recovery, I will give thee a slave-girl, who shall serve thee

in thy lifetime a service, wherewith God shall cut short thy term; and when thou diest and God hurries thy soul to the fire, she shall blacken thy face with her ordure, of her mourning for thee, and lament and buffet her face, saying, "O frosty-beard, what a ninny thou wast!"'[1] The Khalif laughed till he fell backward, and ordered the Bedouin three thousand dirhems.

THE KHALIF OMAR BEN KHETTAB AND THE YOUNG BEDOUIN.

The sherif[2] Hussein ben Reyyan relates that the Khalif Omar ben Khettab was sitting one day, attended by his chief counsellors, judging the folk and doing justice between his subjects, when there came up to him two handsome young men, haling by the collar a third youth, perfectly handsome and well dressed, whom they set before him. Omar looked at him and bade them loose him; then, calling him near to himself, said to them, 'What is your case with him?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered they, 'we are two brothers by one mother and known as followers of the truth. We had a father, a very old man of good counsel, held in honour of the tribes, pure of basenesses and renowned for virtues, who reared us tenderly, whilst we were little, and loaded us with favours, when we grew up; in fine, a man abounding in noble and illustrious qualities, worthy of the poet's words:

Night cccxcbi.

"Is Abou es Sekr of Sheiban[3]?" they questioned of me; and "No,"
I answered, "my life upon it! But Sheiban's of him, I trow.
How many a father hath ris'n in repute by a noble son, As Adnan,[4] by
God's Apostle, to fame and glory did grow!"

[1] *Lit.* O frosty-beard (fool), how frosty was thy beard!
[2] Descendant of the Prophet. [3] Name of a tribe.
[4] A descendant of Ishmael, from whom the Arab genealogists trace Mohammed's lineage.

He went forth this day to his garden, to take his pleasure amongst its trees and pluck the ripe fruits, when this young man slew him and swerved from the road of righteousness; wherefore we demand of thee the retribution of his crime and call upon thee to pass judgment upon him, according to the commandment of God.'

The Khalif cast a terrible look at the accused youth and said to him, 'Thou hearest the complaint of these young men; what hast thou to say in reply?' Now he was stout of heart and ready of speech, having doffed the wede of faint-heartedness and put off the apparel of affright; so he smiled and after paying the usual ceremonial compliment to the Khalif, in the most eloquent and elegant words, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have given ear to their complaint, and they have said sooth in that which they avouch, so far as they have set out what befell; and the commandment of God is a decreed decree.[1] But I will state my case before thee, and thine be it to decide thereon.

Know then, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am a very Arab of the Arabs, the noblest of those that are beneath the skies. I grew up in the dwellings of the desert, till evil and hostile times fell upon my tribe, when I came to the utterward of this town, with my children and good and household. As I went along one of the paths between the gardens, with my she-camels, high in esteem with me and precious to me, and midst them a stallion of noble race and goodly shape, a plenteous getter, by whom the females bore abundantly and who walked among them, as he were a crowned king,—behold, one of the she-camels broke away and running to the garden of these young men's father, began to crop the branches that showed above the wall. I ran to her, to drive her away, when there appeared, at a breach of the

[1] *Koran* xxxiii. 38.

wall, an old man, whose eyes sparkled with anger, holding a stone in his right hand and swaying to and fro, like a lion preparing for a spring. He cast the stone at my stallion, and it struck him in a vital part and killed him. When I saw the stallion drop dead beside me, live coals of anger were kindled in my heart; so I took up the stone and throwing it at the old man, it was the cause of his end: thus his own wrongful act returned against him and the man was slain of that wherewith he slew. When the stone struck him, he cried out with a terrible great cry, and I hastened from the spot; but these young men hurried after me and laying hands on me, carried me before thee.'

Quoth Omar, (may God the Most High accept of him), 'Thou hast confessed thy crime and acquittal is impossible; for [the law of] retaliation is imperative and there is no time of escape.'[1] 'I hear and obey the judgment of the Imam,' answered the Bedouin, 'and am content to submit me to the requirement of the law of Islam; but I have a young brother, whose old father, before his death, appointed to him great store of wealth and much gold and committed his affair to me, saying, "I give this into thy hand for thy brother; keep it for him with thy might." So I took the money and buried it; nor doth any know of it but I. Now, if thou adjudge me to die forthright, the money will be lost and thou wilt be the cause of its loss; wherefore the little one will sue thee for his due on the day when God shall judge His creatures. But, if thou wilt grant me three days' delay, I will appoint one to undertake the boy's affair, in my stead, and return to answer my debt; and I have one who will be my surety for this my word.'

The Khalif bowed his head awhile, then raised it and looking round upon those present, said, 'Who will be surety to me for his return?' The Bedouin looked at the

[1] *Koran* xxxviii. 2.

Night cccxcbii.

faces of those who were in company and pointing to Abou Dherr,[1] said, 'This man will answer for me and be my surety.' 'O Abou Dherr,' said Omar, 'dost thou hear what this youth says and wilt thou be surety to me for his return?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Dherr, 'I will be surety for him three days.' So the Khalif accepted his guarantee and let the young man go.

Now, at the appointed time, when the days of grace were nearly or quite at end and still the Bedouin came not, the Khalif sat in his council, with the Companions[2] surrounding him, like the stars about the moon, Abou Dherr and the plaintiffs being also present; and the latter said, 'O Abou Dherr, where is the defendant and how shall he return, having once escaped? But we will not stir hence, till thou bring him to us, that we may take our wreak of him.' 'As the All-Wise King liveth,' replied Abou Dherr, 'if the days of grace expire and the young man return not, I will fulfil my warranty and surrender myself to the Imam.' 'By Allah,' rejoined Omar, 'if the young man tarry, I will assuredly execute on Abou Dherr that which is prescribed by the law of Islam!' Thereupon the eyes of the bystanders ran over with tears; those who looked on raised groans, and great was the clamour. Then the chiefs of the Companions were instant with the plaintiffs to accept the bloodwit and win the thanks of the folk, but they refused and would nothing but the talion. However, as the folk were swaying to and fro and clamorously bemoaning Abou Dherr, up came the young Bedouin, with face beaded with sweat and shining like the new moon, and standing before the Imam, saluted him right fairly and said to him, 'I have given the boy in charge to his mother's brothers and have made them acquainted with all that pertains to his affairs and let them into the secret of his good; after

[1] One of the Companions of the Prophet.

[2] Of the Prophet, *i.e.* those who had personally known Mohammed.

which I braved the heats of midday and am come to redeem the promise of a free-born man.'

The folk marvelled at his good faith and loyalty and his intrepid offering himself to death; and one said to him, 'How noble a youth art thou and how loyal to thy promise and thy duty!' 'Are ye not certified,' rejoined he, 'that when death presenteth itself, none can escape from it? And indeed, I have kept faith, that it be not said, "Loyalty is gone from among men."' 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Abou Dherr, 'I became warrant for this young man, without knowing to what tribe he belonged, nor had I seen him before that day; but, when he turned away from all else who were present and singled me out, saying, "This man will answer for me and be my surety," I thought ill to refuse him, and humanity forbade to baulk his expectation, there being no harm in compliance with his desire, that it be not said, "Benevolence is gone from among men."' Then said the two young men, 'O Commander of the Faithful, we forgive this youth our father's blood,—seeing that [by his noble behaviour] he hath changed desolation into cheer,—that it be not said, "Humanity is gone from among men."'

The Khalif rejoiced in the acquittance of the young Bedouin and his truth and good faith; moreover, he extolled the humanity of Abou Dherr, over all his companions, and approved the benevolent resolve of the two young men, giving them grateful praise and applying to their case the saying of the poet:

He who doth good among the folk shall be repaid again; For works of good are never lost betwixten God and men.

Then he offered to pay them, from the Treasury, the bloodwit for their father; but they refused, saying, 'We forgave him but of our desire unto God the Bountiful, the Exalted; and he who is thus minded followeth not his benefits with reproach neither mischief.'

THE KHALIF EL MAMOUN AND THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT.

It is told that the Khalif El Mamoun, son of Haroun er Reshid, when he entered the [God-]guarded city of Cairo, was minded to pull down the Pyramids, that he might take what was therein; but, when he went about to do this, he could not avail thereto, for all his endeavour. He expended great sums of money in the attempt, but only succeeded in opening up a small gallery in one of them, wherein he found treasure, to the exact amount of the money he had spent in the works, neither more nor less; at which he marvelled and taking what he found there, desisted from his intent.

Night ccccxcviii.

Now the Pyramids are three in number, and they are one of the wonders of the world; nor is there on the face of the earth their like for height and fashion and skilful ordinance; for they are builded of immense rocks, and they who built them proceeded by piercing one block of stone and setting therein upright rods of iron; after which they pierced a second block of stone and lowered it upon the first. Then they poured melted lead upon the joints and set the blocks in geometrical order, till the building was complete. The height of each pyramid was a hundred cubits, of the measure of the time, and it was four-square, each side three hundred cubits long, at the bottom, and sloping upward thence to a point. The ancients say that, in the western Pyramid, are thirty chambers of vari-coloured granite, full of precious stones and treasures galore and rare images and utensils and costly arms, which latter are anointed with magical unguents, so that they may not rust till the day of Resurrection. Therein, also, are vessels of glass, that will bend and not break, containing various kinds of com-

pound drugs and medicinal waters. In the second Pyramid are the records of the priests, written on tablets of granite,—to each priest his tablet, on which are set out the wonders of his craft and his achievements; and on the walls are figures like idols, working with their hands at all manner crafts and seated on thrones. To each pyramid there is a guardian, that keeps watch over it and guards it, to all eternity, against the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of events; and indeed the marvels of these pyramids astound all who have eyes and wit. Many are the poems that describe them, thou shalt profit no great matter thereby, and among the rest, quoth one of them:

The high resolves of kings, if they would have them to abide In memory,
after them, are in the tongues of monuments.
Dost thou not see the Pyramids? They, of a truth, endure And change
not for the shifts of time or chances of events.

And again:

Consider but the Pyramids and lend an ear to all They tell of bygone
times and that which did of yore befall.
Could they but speak, assuredly they would to us relate What time and
fate have done with first and last and great and small.

And again:

I prithee, tell me, friend of mine, stands there beneath the sky A building with the Pyramids of Egypt that can vie
In skilful ordinance? Behold, Time's self's afraid of them, Though of
all else upon the earth 'tis dreaded, low and high.
My sight no longer rests upon their wondrous ordinance, Yet are they
present evermore unto my spirit's eye.

And again:

Where's he the Pyramids who built? What was his tribe, His time and
what the place where he was stricken dead?
The monuments survive their lords awhile; then death O'ertaketh them
and they fall prostrate in their stead.

THE THIEF TURNED MERCHANT AND THE OTHER THIEF.

There was once a thief who repented to God the Most High and making good his repentance, opened himself a shop for the sale of stuffs, where he continued to trade awhile. One day, he locked his shop and went home; and in the night there came to the bazaar a cunning thief, disguised in the habit of the merchant, and pulling out keys from his sleeve, said to the watchman of the market, 'Light me this candle.' So the watchman took the candle and went to get a light, whilst the thief opened the shop and lit another candle he had with him. When the watchman came back, he found him seated in the shop, looking over the account books and reckoning with his fingers; nor did he leave to do thus till point of day, when he said to the man, 'Fetch me a camel-driver and his camel, to carry some goods for me.' So the man fetched him a camel, and the thief took four bales of stuffs and gave them to the camel-driver, who loaded them on his beast. Then he gave the watchman two dirhems and went away after the camel-driver, the watchman the while believing him to be the owner of the shop.

Night ccccxix.

Next morning, the merchant came and the watchman greeted him with blessings, because of the two dirhems, much to the surprise of the former, who knew not what he meant. When he opened his shop, he saw the droppings of the wax and the account-book lying on the floor, and looking round, found four bales of stuffs missing. So he asked the watchman what had happened and he told him what had passed in the night, whereupon the merchant bade him fetch the camel-driver and said to the latter, 'Whither didst thou carry the stuffs?' 'To such a wharf,' answered the driver; 'and I stowed them on board such

a vessel.' 'Come with me thither,' said the merchant. So the camel-driver carried him to the wharf and showed him the barque and her owner. Quoth the merchant to the latter, 'Whither didst thou carry the merchant and the stuff?' 'To such a place,' answered the master, 'where he fetched a camel-driver and setting the bales on the camel, went I know not whither.' 'Fetch me the camel-driver,' said the merchant; so he fetched him and the merchant said to him, 'Whither didst thou carry the bales of stuffs from the ship?' 'To such a khan,' answered he. 'Come thither with me and show it to me,' said the merchant.

So the camel-driver went with him to a khan at a distance from the shore, where he had set down the stuffs, and showed him the mock merchant's magazine, which he opened and found therein his four bales untouched and unopened. The thief had laid his mantle over them; so the merchant took the bales and the cloak and delivered them to the camel-driver, who laid them on his camel; after which the merchant locked the magazine and went away with the camel-driver. On the way, he met the thief, who followed him, till he had shipped the bales, when he said to him, 'O my brother (God have thee in His keeping!), thou hast recovered thy goods, and nought of them is lost; so give me back my cloak.' The merchant laughed and giving him back his cloak, let him go unhindered.

MESROUR THE EUNUCH AND IBN EL CARIBI.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was very restless one night; so he said to his Vizier Jaafer, 'I am sleepless tonight and my heart is oppressed and I know not what to do.' Now his henchman Mesrour was standing before him, and he laughed. Quoth the Khalif, 'Dost thou laugh

Night cccc. in derision of me or art thou mad?' 'Neither, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mesrour, 'by thy kinship to the Prince of Apostles, I did it not of my free-will; but I went out yesterday to walk and coming to the bank of the Tigris, saw there the folk collected about a man named Ibn el Caribi, who was making them laugh; and but now I recalled what he said, and laughter got the better of me; and I crave pardon of thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'Bring him to me forthright,' said the Khalif. So Mesrour repaired in all haste to Ibn el Caribi and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the droll. 'But on condition,' added Mesrour, 'that, if he give thee aught, thou shalt have a fourth and the rest shall be mine.' 'Nay,' replied the other; 'thou shalt have half and I half.' 'Not so,' insisted Mesrour; 'I will have three-quarters.' 'Thou shalt have two-thirds, then,' rejoined Ibn el Caribi; 'and I the other third.' To this Mesrour agreed, after much haggling, and they returned to the palace together.

When Ibn el Caribi came into the Khalif's presence, he saluted him, as became his rank, and stood before him; whereupon said Er Reshid to him, 'If thou do not make me laugh, I will give thee three blows with this bag.' Quoth Ibn el Caribi in himself, 'Three strokes with that bag were a small matter, seeing that beating with whips irketh me not;' for he thought the bag was empty. Then he clapped into a discourse, such as would make a stone laugh, and gave vent to all manner of drolleries; but the Khalif laughed not neither smiled, whereat Ibn el Caribi marvelled and was chagrined and affrighted. Then said the Khalif, 'Now hast thou earned the beating,' and gave him a blow with the bag, in which were four pebbles, each two pounds in weight. The blow fell on his neck and he gave a great cry, then calling to mind his compact with Mesrour, said, 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faith-

ful! Hear two words from me.' 'Say on,' replied the Khalif. Quoth Ibn el Caribi, 'Mesrour made it a condition with me that, whatsoever might come to me of the bounties of the Commander of the Faithful, one-third thereof should be mine and the rest his; nor did he agree to leave me so much as one-third, save after much haggling. Now thou hast bestowed on me nothing but beating; I have had my share and here stands he, ready to receive his; so give him the two other blows.'

When the Khalif heard this, he laughed till he fell backward; then calling Mesrour, he gave him a blow, whereat he cried out and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, one-third sufficeth me: give him the two-thirds.' Night cccci. The Khalif laughed at them and ordered them a thousand dinars each, and they went away, rejoicing.

THE DEVOUT PRINCE.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid had a son, who, from the time he attained the age of sixteen, renounced the world and walked in the way of ascetics and devotees. He was wont to go out to the tombs and say, 'Behold, ye that lie here once possessed the world, but that was no deliverer for you [from death], and now are ye come to your graves! Would God I knew what ye say and what is said to you!' And he wept, as one weeps that is troubled and fearful, and repeated the words of the poet:

Whene'er the funerals pass, my heart with fear is torn, And the wailing of the mourners maketh me to mourn.

One day, as he sat among the tombs, according to his wont, his father passed by, in all his state, surrounded by his viziers and grandees and the officers of his household, who saw the Khalif's son, with a gown of woollen stuff on his body and a cowl of the same on his head, and said to

one another, 'This youth dishonours the Commander of the Faithful among Kings: but, if he reproved him, he would leave his present way of life.' The Khalif heard what they said; so he bespoke his son of this, saying, 'O my son, thou puttest me to shame by thy present way of life.' The young man looked at him and made no reply: then he beckoned to a bird, that was perched on the battlements of the palace, and said to it, 'O bird, I conjure thee, by Him who created thee, alight upon my hand.' And straightway it flew down and perched on his hand. Quoth he, 'Return to thy place;' and it did so. Then he said, 'Alight on the hand of the Commander of the Faithful;' but it refused, and he said to his father, 'It is thou that puttest me to shame, amongst the friends of God, by thy love of the world; and now I am resolved to depart from thee, never to return to thee, save in the world to come.' Then he went down to Bassora, where he fell to working with those that wrought in mud,[1] taking, as his day's hire, but a dirhem and a danic.[2] With the danic he fed himself and gave alms of the dirhem.

(Quoth Abou Aamir of Bassora), There fell down a wall in my house: so I went out to the station of the artisans, to find one who should set it up for me, and my eyes fell on a handsome youth of a radiant countenance. So I accosted him and said to him, "O my friend, dost thou seek work?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "Come with me and build a wall." "On two conditions," replied he. Quoth I, "What are they, O my friend?" "First," said he, "that my hire be a dirhem and a danic, and secondly, that, when the Muezzin calls to prayer, thou shalt let me go pray with the congregation." "It is well," answered I and carried him to my house, where he fell to work, such work as I never saw the like of. Presently, I named to him the

[1] *i.e.* the builders, who, in the East, use mud or clay for mortar.
[2] About a penny.

morning-meal; but he said, "No;" and I knew that he was fasting. When he heard the call to prayer, he said to me, "Thou knowest the condition?" "Yes," answered I. So he loosed his girdle and applying himself to the ablution, made it after a fashion than which I never saw a goodlier; then went to the mosque and prayed with the congregation and returned to his work. He did the like upon the call to afternoon-prayer, and when I saw him fall to work again thereafterward, I said to him, "O my friend, the hours of labour are over for to-day; a workman's day is but till the time of afternoon-prayer." "Glory be to God," answered he, "my service is till the night." And he ceased not to work till nightfall, when I gave him two dirhems. Quoth he, "What is this?" "By Allah," answered I, "this is [but] part of thy wage, because of thy diligence in my service." But he threw me back the two pieces, saying, "I will have no more than was agreed upon between us." I pressed him to take them, but could not prevail upon him; so I gave him the dirhem and the danic, and he went away.

Next morning early, I went to the station, but found him not; so I enquired for him and was told that he came thither only on Saturdays. So, when Saturday came, I betook me to the market and finding him there, said to him, "In the name of God, do me the favour to come and work for me." ["Willingly,"] said he, "upon the conditions thou wottest of." "It is well," answered I and carrying him to my house, stood watching him, unseen of him, and saw him take a handful of mud and lay it on the wall, when, behold, the stones ranged themselves one upon another; and I said, "On this wise are the friends of God." He worked out his day and did even more than before; and when it was night, I gave him his hire, and he took it and went away.

When the third Saturday came round, I went to the standing, but found him not; so I enquired for him and

was told that he lay sick in the hut of such a woman. Now this was an old woman, renowned for piety, who had a hut of reeds in the burial-ground. So I went thither and found him lying on the naked earth, with a brick for a pillow and his face beaming with light. I saluted him and he returned my salute; and I sat down at his head, weeping over his tenderness of years and strangerhood and submission to the will of his Lord. Then said I to him, "Hast thou any need?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "What is it?" He replied, "Come hither tomorrow in the forenoon and thou wilt find me dead. Wash me and dig my grave and tell none thereof: but shroud me in this my gown, after thou hast unsewn it and taken out what thou shalt find in the bosom, which keep with thee. Then, when thou hast prayed over me and laid me in the dust, go to Baghdad and watch for the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, till he come forth, when do thou bear him my salutation and give him what thou shalt find in the breast of my gown.' Then he made the profession of the Faith and glorified his Lord in the most eloquent of words, reciting the following verses:

Carry the trust of him on whom the wished-for death hath come To Er Reshid, and thy reward with thy Creator stand!
"An exile greets thee," say, "who longed full sorely for thy sight; With long desire he yearned for thee, far in a foreign strand.
Nor hate nor weariness from thee estranged him, for, indeed, To God Most High he was brought near by kissing thy right hand.
But, O my father, 'twas his heart, shunning the vain delights Of this thy world, that drove him forth to seek a distant land!"

Night cccciii. Then he betook himself to prayer, asking pardon of God and blessing the Lord of the Just[1] and repeating verses of the Koran; after which he recited the following:

Let not prosperity delude thee, father mine; For fortune wastes and life itself must pass away.

[1] Mohammed.

Whenas thou com'st to know of folk in evil plight, Think thou must answer it upon the Judgment Day;
And when thou bearest forth the dead unto the tombs, Think that thou, too, must pass upon the self-same way!

Then I left him and went home. On the morrow, I returned, at the appointed hour, and found him indeed dead, the mercy of God be on him! So I washed him and unsewing his gown, found in the bosom a ruby worth thousands of dinars and said to myself, "By Allah, this youth was indeed abstracted from the things of this world!" After I had buried him, I made my way to Baghdad and going to the Khalif's palace, waited till he came forth, when I accosted him in one of the streets and gave him the ruby, which when he saw, he knew and fell down in a swoon. His attendants laid hands on me, but he revived and bade them unhand me and bring me courteously to the palace. They did his bidding, and when he returned, he sent for me and carrying me into his closet, said to me, "How doth the owner of this ruby?" Quoth I, "He is dead;" and told him what had passed; whereupon he fell a-weeping and said, "The son hath profited; but the father is disappointed." Then he called out, saying, "Ho, such an one!" And behold, a woman came out to him. When she saw me, she would have withdrawn; but he said to her, "Come; and heed him not." So she entered and saluted, and he threw her the ruby, which when she knew, she gave a great shriek and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said, "O Commander of the Faithful, what hath God done with my son?" And he said to me, "Do thou tell her;" for he could not speak for weeping. So I repeated the story to her, and she began to weep and say in a failing voice, "How I have longed for thy sight, O consolation of my eyes! Would I might have given thee to drink, when thou hadst none to tend thee! Would I might have

companied with thee, whenas thou foundest none to cheer thee!" And she poured forth tears and recited the following verses:

I weep for one to whom death came, an exile and in pain: Alone he died, without a friend to whom he might complain.
Puissant and honoured and conjoined with those that loved him dear, To live alone and seeing none, unfriended, he was fain.
That which the days conceal shall yet be manifest to us: Not one of us by death, indeed, unsmitten may remain.
O absent one, the Lord of all decreed thy strangerhood, And thou left'st far behind the love that was betwixt us twain!
Though death, my son, forbid me hope to see thee in this life, To-morrow, on the Reckoning-Day, we two shall meet again.

Quoth I, "O Commander of the Faithful, was he indeed thy son?" "Yes," answered he; "and indeed, before I succeeded to this office, he was wont to visit the learned and company with the devout; but, when I became Khalif, he grew estranged from me and withdrew himself apart. Then said I to his mother, 'This thy son is absorbed in God the Most High, and it may be that tribulations shall befall him and he be smitten with stress of evil chance; wherefore, do thou give him this ruby, that it may be to him a resource in the hour of need.' So she gave it him, conjuring him to take it, and he obeyed her. Then he left the things of our world to us and removed himself from us; nor did he cease to be absent from us, till he went to the presence of God (to whom belong might and majesty) with a holy and pure mind." Then said he, "Come, show me his grave." So we repaired to Bassora and I showed him his son's grave. When he saw it, he wept and lamented, till he fell down in a swoon; after which he came to himself and asked pardon of God, saying, "We are God's, and to Him we return!" and invoked blessings on the dead. Then he besought me of companionship; but I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, verily, in thy son's

case is for me the gravest of admonitions!" And I recited the following verses:

'Tis I am the stranger! None harbours the wight, Though he lie in his native city by night.
'Tis I am the exile! Nor children nor wife Nor comrades have I, to take ruth on my plight.
The mosques are my refuge; I haunt them indeed: My heart from their shelter shall never take flight.
To the Lord of all creatures, to God be the praise, Whilst yet in the body abideth the spright!

THE SCHOOLMASTER WHO FELL IN LOVE BY REPORT.

(Quoth one of the erudite), I passed once by a [school, in which a] schoolmaster, comely of aspect and well-dressed, was teaching children; so I entered, and he rose and made me sit with him. Then I examined him in the Koran and in syntax and poetry and lexicography, and found him perfect in all that was required of him and said to him, "God strengthen thy purpose! Thou art indeed versed in all that is sought of thee." So I frequented him awhile, discovering daily some new excellence in him, and said to myself, "This is indeed a wonder in a schoolmaster; for the understanding are agreed upon the lack of wit of those that teach children." Then I separated myself from him and sought him out and visited him [only] every few days, till, one day, coming to see him as of wont, I found the school shut and made enquiry of the neighbours, who said, "Some one is dead in his house." So I said to myself, "It behoves me to pay him a visit of condolence," and going to his house, knocked at the door. A slave-girl came out to me and said, "What dost thou want?" "I want thy master," answered I. Quoth she, "He is sitting alone, mourning." "Tell him," rejoined I, "that his friend so and so seeks to condole with him."

She went in and told him; and he said, "Admit him." So she brought me in to him, and I found him seated alone and his head bound [with the fillets of mourning]. "May God amply requite thee!" said I. "This is a road all must perforce travel, and it behoves thee to take patience. But who is dead unto thee?" "One who was dearest and best beloved of the folk to me," answered he. Quoth I, "Perhaps thy father?" He replied, "No;" and I said, "Thy mother?" "No," answered he. "Thy brother?" "No." "One of thy kindred?" "No." "Then," asked I, "what relation was the dead to thee?" "My mistress," answered he. Quoth I to myself, "This is the first sign of his lack of wit." Then I said to him, "There are others than she and fairer;" and he answered, "I never saw her, that I might judge whether or no there be others fairer than she." Quoth I to myself, "This is another sign." Then I said to him, "And how couldst thou fall in love with one thou hast never seen?" Quoth he, "I was sitting one day at the window, when there passed by a man, singing the following verse:

Umm Amri,[1] God requite thee thy generosity! Give back my heart, I prithee, wherever it may be!

Night cccciii. When I heard this, I said to myself, 'Except this Umm Amri were without equal in the world, the poets had not celebrated her in amorous verse.' So I fell in love with her; but, two days after, the same man passed, singing the following verse:

The jackass with Umm Amri departed; but, alas, Umm Amri! She returned not again, nor did the ass.

Thereupon I knew that she was dead and mourned for her. This was three days ago, and I have been mourning ever since." So I left him and went away, having assured myself of the feebleness of his wit.

[1] A woman's name.

THE FOOLISH SCHOOLMASTER.

A man of elegant culture once entered a school and sitting down by the master, entered into discourse with him and found him an accomplished theologian, poet, grammarian and lexicographer, intelligent, well bred and pleasant; whereat he wondered, saying in himself, 'It cannot be that a man, who teaches children in a school, should have a perfect wit.' When he was about to go away, the schoolmaster said to him, 'Thou art my guest to-night;' and he consented and accompanied him to his house, where he made much of him and set food before him. They ate and drank and sat talking, till a third part of the night was past, when the host spread his guest a bed and went up to his harem. The other lay down and addressed himself to sleep, when, behold, there arose a great clamour in the harem. He asked what was to do, and they said, 'A terrible thing hath befallen the sheikh, and he is at the last gasp.' 'Take me up to him,' said he. So they carried him to the schoolmaster, whom he found lying insensible, with his blood streaming down. He sprinkled water on his face and when he revived, he said to him, 'What has betided thee? When thou leftest me, thou wast in all good cheer and sound of body.' 'O my brother,' answered the schoolmaster, 'after I left thee, I sat meditating on the works of God the Most High and said to myself, "In every thing God hath created for man there is an use; for He (to whom be glory) created the hands to seize, the feet to walk, the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the yard to do the deed of kind; and so on with all the members of the body, except these two cullions; there is no use in them." So I took a razor I had by me and cut them off; and there befell me what thou seest.' So the guest left him and went away, saying, 'He was in

the right who said, "No schoolmaster who teaches children can have a perfect wit, though he know all sciences."'

THE IGNORANT MAN WHO SET UP FOR A SCHOOLMASTER.

There was once, among the hangers-on of the collegiate mosque, a man who knew not how to read and write and got his bread by gulling the folk. One day, he bethought him to open a school and teach children; so he got him tablets and written scrolls and hung them up in a [conspicuous] place. Then he enlarged his turban and sat down at the door of the school. The people, who passed by and saw his turban and the tablets and scrolls, thought he must be a very learned doctor; so they brought him their children; and he would say to this, 'Write,' and to that, 'Read;' and thus they taught one another.

One day, as he sat, as of wont, at the door of the school, he saw a woman coming up, with a letter in her hand, and said to himself, 'This woman doubtless seeks me, that I may read her the letter she has in her hand. How shall I do with her seeing I cannot read writing?' And he would fain have gone down and fled from her; but, before he could do this, she overtook him and said to him, 'Whither away?' Quoth he, 'I purpose to pray the noontide-prayer and return.' 'Noon is yet distant,' said she; 'so read me this letter.' He took the letter and turning it upside down, fell to looking at it, now shaking his head and anon knitting his eyebrows and showing concern. Now the letter came from the woman's husband, who was absent; and when she saw the schoolmaster do thus, she said, 'Doubtless my husband is dead, and this learned man is ashamed to tell me so.' So she said to him, 'O my lord, if he be dead, tell me.' But he shook his head and held his peace. Then said she, 'Shall I tear

my clothes?' 'Tear,' answered he. 'Shall I buffet my face?' asked she; and he said, 'Buffet.' So she took the letter from his hand and returning home, fell a-weeping, she and her children.

One of her neighbours heard her weeping and asking what ailed her, was answered, 'She hath gotten a letter, telling her that her husband is dead.' Quoth the man, 'This is a lying saying; for I had a letter from him but yesterday, advising me that he is in good health and case and will be with her after ten days.' So he rose forthright and going in to her, said, 'Where is the letter thou hast received?' She brought it to him, and he took it and read it; and it ran as follows, after the usual salutations, 'I am well and in good health and case and will be with thee after ten days. Meanwhile, I send thee a quilt and an extinguisher.'[1] So she took the letter and returning with it to the schoolmaster, said to him, 'What moved thee to deal thus with me?' And she repeated to him what her neighbour had told her of her husband's well-being and of his having sent her a quilt and an extinguisher. 'Thou art in the right,' answered he. 'But excuse me, good woman; for I was, at the time, troubled and absent-minded and seeing the extinguisher wrapped in the quilt, thought that he was dead and they had shrouded him.' The woman, not smoking the cheat, said, 'Thou art excused,' and taking the letter, went away. Night cccciv.

THE KING AND THE VIRTUOUS WIFE.

A certain King once went forth in disguise, to look into the affairs of his subjects. Presently, he came to a great village and being athirst, stopped at the door of a house and asked for water. There came out to him a fair woman, with a pitcher of water, which she gave him, and he drank.

[1] For putting out the fire in a brasier or cooking-stove.

When he looked at her, he was ravished with her and required her of love. Now she knew him; so she brought him into the house and making him sit down, brought out a book and said to him, 'Look in this book, whilst I order my affair and return to thee.' So he looked into the book, and behold, it treated of the Divine prohibition against adultery and of the punishments that God hath prepared for those that do it. When he read this, his flesh quaked and he repented to God the Most High: then he called the woman and giving her the book, went away. Now her husband was absent and when he returned, she told him what had passed, whereat he was confounded and said in himself, 'I fear lest the King's desire have fallen upon her.' And he dared not have to do with her after this.

After awhile, the wife told her kinsfolk of her husband's conduct, and they complained of him to the King, saying, 'May God advance the King! This man hired of us a piece of land, for tillage, and tilled it awhile; then left it fallow and tilled it not, neither forsook it, that we might let it to one who would till it. Indeed, harm is come to the field, and we fear its corruption, for that land, if it be not tilled, spoileth.' Quoth the King to the man, 'What hinders thee from tilling thy land?' 'May God advance the King!' answered he. 'It came to my knowledge that a lion entered the field, wherefore I stood in awe of him and dared not approach it, seeing that I know I cannot cope with the lion, and I stand in fear of him.' The King understood the parable and rejoined, saying, 'O fellow, the lion trampled not thy land, and it is good for tillage; so do thou till it and God prosper thee in it, for the lion hath done it no hurt.' Then he bade give the man and his wife a handsome present and sent them away.

ABDURREHMAN THE MOOR'S STORY OF THE ROC.

There was once a man of the people of Morocco, called Abdurrehman the Moor, and he was known, to boot, as the Chinaman, for his long sojourn in Cathay. He had journeyed far and wide and traversed many seas and deserts and was wont to relate wondrous tales of his travels. He was once cast upon an island, where he abode a long while and returning thence to his native country, brought with him the quill of the wing-feather of a young roc, whilst yet unhatched and in the egg; and this quill was big enough to hold a skinful of water, for it is said that the length of the young roc's wing, when it comes forth of the egg, is a thousand fathoms. The folk marvelled at this quill, when they saw it, and Abdurrehman related to them the following adventure.

He was on a voyage in the China seas, with a company of merchants, when they sighted a great island: so they steered for it and casting anchor before it, saw that it was large and spacious. The ship's people went ashore to get wood and water, taking with them skins and ropes and axes, and presently espied a great white gleaming dome, a hundred cubits high. So they made towards it and drawing near, found that it was a roc's egg and fell on it with axes and stones and sticks, till they uncovered the young bird and found it as it were a firm-set mountain. They went about to pluck out one of its wing-feathers, but could not win to do so, save by helping one another, for all the feathers were not full grown; after which they took what they could carry of the young bird's flesh and cutting the quill away from the feather-part, returned to the ship. Then they spread the canvas and putting out to sea, sailed with a fair wind all that night, till the sun rose, when they

Night cccvb.

saw the old roc come flying after them, as he were a vast cloud, with a rock in his talons, like a great mountain, bigger than the ship. As soon as he came over the vessel, he let fall the rock upon it; but the ship, having great way on her, forewent the rock, which fell into the sea with a terrible crash. So God decreed them safety and delivered them from destruction; and they cooked the young bird's flesh and ate it. Now there were amongst them old grey-bearded men; and when they awoke on the morrow, they found that their beards had turned black, nor did any who had eaten of the young roc ever grow grey. Some held the cause of the return of youth to them and the ceasing of hoariness from them to be that they had heated the pot with arrow-wood, whilst others would have it that it came of eating the young roc's flesh; and this is indeed a wonder of wonders.

ADI BEN ZEID AND THE PRINCESS HIND.

En Numan ben el Mundhir, King of the Arabs [of Irak], had a daughter named Hind, who was eleven years old and was the loveliest woman of her age and time. She went out one Easter, which is a feast-day of the Nazarenes,[1] to the White Church, to take the sacrament. Now that day came to El Hireh a young man called Adi ben Zeid,[2] with presents from Chosroës,[3] to En Numan, and he also went into the White Church, to communicate. He was tall and well-favoured, with handsome eyes and smooth cheeks, and had with him a company of his people. Now there was with Hind a slave-girl named Mariyeh, who was enamoured of Adi, but had not been able to win to him. So, when she saw him in the church,

[1] The last Kings of Hireh were Christians.
[2] A præ-Islamitic poet.
[3] King of Persia and En Numan's suzerain.

she said to Hind, 'Look at yonder youth. By Allah, he is handsomer than all thou seest!' 'And who is he?' asked Hind. 'Adi ben Zeid,' answered Mariyeh. Quoth the princess, 'I fear lest he know me, if I draw near, to look on him closelier.' 'How should he know thee,' said Mariyeh, 'when he has never seen thee?' So she drew near him and found him jesting with his companions; and indeed he surpassed them all, not only in his beauty, but in the excellence of his speech and the eloquence of his tongue and the richness of his apparel. When the princess saw him, she was ravished with him, her reason was confounded and her colour changed; and Mariyeh, seeing her inclination to him, said to her, 'Speak to him.' So she spoke to him and went away.

When he saw her and heard her speech, he was captivated by her and his wit was dazed; his colour changed and his heart fluttered, so that his companions misdoubted of him, and he whispered one of them to follow her and find out who she was. The man followed her and returning to his master, informed him that she was the princess Hind, daughter of En Numan. So Adi left the church, knowing not whither he went, for stress of love, and reciting the following verses;

Companions mine, yet one more favour I entreat: Address ye to the ways once more your travelling feet.
Turn me towards the lands, the lands where Hinda dwells; Then go and her I love with tidings of me greet.

Then he went to his lodging and lay that night, restless nor tasting sleep. On the morrow, Mariyeh accosted him, and he received her kindly, though before he would not hearken to her, and said to her, 'What is thy will?' Quoth she, 'I have a suit to thee.' 'Name it,' answered he; 'for, by Allah, thou shalt not ask me aught, but I will give it thee!' So she told him that she was in love with him, and her suit to him was that he would grant her

Night cccclvi.

a lover's privacy; and he agreed to do her will, on condition that she would serve him with Hind and make shift to bring them together. Then he took her into a vintner's shop, in one of the by-streets of Hireh, and lay with her; after which she returned to Hind and said to her, 'Dost thou not long to see Adi?' 'How can this be?' replied the princess. 'Indeed my longing for him makes me restless, and no repose is left me since yesterday, on his account.' Quoth Mariyeh, 'I will appoint him to be in such a place, where thou canst look on him from the palace.' 'Do what thou wilt,' replied Hind and agreed with her upon the place.

So Adi came, and the princess looked out upon him; and when she saw him, she was like to fall down from the top of the palace and said to Mariyeh, 'Except thou bring him in to me this night, I shall die.' So saying, she fell down in a swoon, and her serving-women lifted her up and bore her into the palace; whilst Mariyeh hastened to En Numan and discovered the whole matter to him, saying, 'Verily, she is mad for love of Adi; and except thou marry her to him, she will be put to shame and die of love for him.' The King bowed his head awhile in thought and exclaimed again and again, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!' Then said he, 'Out on thee! How shall the marriage be brought about, seeing it misliketh me to open the matter to him?' 'He is yet more ardently in love and yet more desireful of her than she of him,' answered Mariyeh; 'and I will so order the matter that he shall be unaware that his case is known to thee; but do not betray thyself, O King.'

Then she went to Adi and said to him, 'Make a feast and bid the King thereto; and when wine hath gotten the better of him, ask of him the hand of his daughter, for he will not refuse thee.' Quoth Adi, 'I fear lest this enrage him against me and be the cause of enmity between us.'

But she answered, 'I came not to thee, till I had settled the whole matter with him.' Then she returned to En Numan and said to him, 'Seek of Adi that he entertain thee in his house.' 'There is no harm in that,' replied the King and after three days, besought Adi to give him and his lords the morning-meal in his house. The young man consented, and the King went to him; and when the wine had taken effect on En Numan, Adi rose and sought of him his daughter in marriage. He consented and married them and brought her to him after three days; and they abode at En Numan's court, in all delight and solace of life, three years, at the end of which time the King was wroth with Adi and slew him. Hind mourned for him with an exceeding grief and built her a convent without the city, whither she retired and devoted herself to religious exercises, weeping and bemoaning her husband, till she died. And her convent is extant to this day without El Hireh.

Night cccclii.

DIBIL EL KHUZAÏ WITH THE LADY AND MUSLIM BEN EL WELID.

(Quoth Dibil el Khuzaï[1]), I was sitting one day at the gate of El Kerkh,[2] when a lady came up to me, never saw I a handsomer or better shaped than she, walking with a swaying gait and ravishing, with her flexile grace, all who beheld her. When my eyes fell on her, I was captivated by her and my entrails trembled and meseemed my heart fled forth of my breast; so I accosted her with the following verse:

Unsealed are the springs of tears for mine eyes, heigho! And sealed are the springs of sleep to my lids, for woe.

[1] A celebrated poet of the eighth and ninth centuries at the court of the Abbaside Khalifs.

[2] A quarter of Baghdad.

She turned her head and looking at me, made answer forthright with the following:

And surely, an ailing eye to have, for him Whom her looks invite, is a little thing, I trow.

I was astounded at the readiness of her reply and the sweetness of her speech and rejoined with this verse:

And doth then the heart of my fair indeed incline To favour him whose tears as a river flow?

She answered me, without hesitation, thus:

If thou desire us of love, betwixt us love Is a loan to be returned, I'd have thee know.

Never entered my ears sweeter than her speech nor ever saw I brighter than her face: so I changed the rhyme and measure, to try her, in my wonder at her speech, and repeated the following verse:

Will destiny e'er gladden us with union and delight And one desireful one at last with other one unite?

She smiled at this, (never saw I fairer than her mouth nor sweeter than her lips,) and answered me, without hesitation, as follows:

I prithee, what hath destiny to do betwixt us twain? Thou'rt destiny: rejoice us, then, with union and delight.

At this, I sprang up and kissing her hands, said, "I had not thought that Fortune would vouchsafe me such an opportunity. Do thou follow me, not of command or against thy will, but of thy grace and favour to me." Then I went on and she after me.

Now I had not, at that time, a lodging I deemed fit for the like of her; but Muslim ben El Welid[1] was my fast friend, and he had a handsome house. So I made for his abode and knocked at the door, whereupon he came out, and I saluted him, saying, "It is for a time like this that

[1] Another well-known poet of the time, Dibil's teacher and friend.

friends are treasured up." "With all my heart," answered he; "enter." So we entered, I and the lady, but found money scarce with him. However, he gave me a handkerchief, saying, "Carry it to the market and sell it and buy meat and what else thou needest." So I took the handkerchief and hastening to the market, sold it and bought meat and what else we required; but, when I returned, I found that Muslim had retired, with the lady, to an underground chamber.[1] When he heard me, he came out and said to me, "God requite thee the kindness thou hast done me, O Abou Ali,[2] and reckon it of thy good deeds on the Day of Resurrection!" So saying, he took from me the meat and wine and shut the door in my face. His words enraged me and I knew not what to do; but he stood behind the door, shaking for mirth; and when he saw me thus, he said to me, "I conjure thee on my life, O Abou Ali, tell me who it was composed this verse?

I lay in the arms of the fair one all night, Whilst my friend slept, clean-limbed, but polluted of spright."

At this, my rage redoubled, and I replied, "He who wrote this other verse:

One, I wish him in's girdle a thousand of horns, Exceeding the idol Menaf[3] in their height!"

Then I began to revile him and reproach him with the foulness of his conduct and his lack of honour; and he was silent. But, when I had finished, he smiled and said, "Out on thee, O fool! Thou hast entered my house and sold my handkerchief and spent my money: so, with whom art thou wroth, O pimp?" Then he left me and went away to her, whilst I said, "By Allah, thou art right to call me

[1] Underground rooms are much used in Baghdad and Central Asia, for coolness' sake, in the season of the great heats.

[2] Dibil's surname.

[3] An idol of the pagan Arabs, before the coming of Mohammed.

a fool and a pimp!" Then I left his door and went away in sore concern, whereof I feel the trace in my heart to this day; and I never had my desire of her nor ever heard of her more.

ISAAC OF MOSUL AND THE MERCHANT.

(Quoth Ishac ben Ibrahim el Mausili), One day, being weary of assiduous attendance upon the Khalif, I mounted my horse and went forth, at break of day, having a mind to ride out and take my pleasure in the open country, and I said to my servant, "If there come a messenger from the Khalif or another, say that I set out at daybreak, upon a pressing business, and that thou knowest not whither I am gone." So I rode forth alone and went round about the city, till the sun grew hot, when I halted in a street, known as El Herem, and stood my horse under the spacious jutting porch of one of the houses there, to shelter me from the glare of the sun.

Night cccclviii.

I had not stood long, before there came up a black slave, leading an ass with jewelled housings, on which sat a damsel, clad in the richest of clothes, richness can go no farther; and I saw that she was elegantly made, with languorous looks and graceful carriage. I asked one of the passers-by who she was, and he said, "She is a singer." And I fell in love with her at sight, so that I could scarce keep my seat on my horse's back. She entered the house at whose gate I stood; and as I cast about for a device to gain access to her, there came up two comely young men, who sought admission, and the master of the house gave them leave to enter. So they alighted and entered, and I with them, they supposing that the master of the house had invited me; and we sat awhile, till food was brought and we ate. Then they set wine before us, and the damsel came out, with a lute in her hand. She sang

and we drank, till I rose to do an occasion. During my absence, the host questioned the two others of me, and they replied that they knew me not; whereupon quoth he, "This fellow is a spunger, but he is well-bred and pleasant; so entreat him fairly." Then I came back and sat down in my place, whilst the damsel sang the following verses to a pleasing air:

Say thou unto the she-gazelle, who yet is no gazelle, And the wild heifer, languorous-eyed, who yet no heifer is,
"One, who in dalliance affects the male, no female is, And he who is effeminate of step 's no male, ywis."

She sang it excellent well, and the company drank and her song pleased them. Then she sang various songs to rare tunes, and amongst the rest one of mine, to the following words:

The pleasant girls have gone and left The homesteads empty and bereft
Of their sweet converse, after cheer, All void and ruined by Time's theft.

She sang this even better than the first; then she sang other rare songs, old and new, and amongst them, another of mine, with the following words:

To the loved one, who turneth in anger away And withdraweth himself far apart from thee, say,
"The mischief thou wroughtest, thou wroughtest indeed, For all, peradventure, thou wast but in play."

I asked her to repeat the song, that I might correct it for her; whereupon one of the men turned to me and said, "Never saw I a more brazen-faced parasite than thou. Art thou not content with spunging, but thou must meddle, to boot? Verily, in thee is the saying made true, 'A parasite and a meddler.'" I hung down my head for shame and made him no answer, whilst his companion would have restrained him from me; but he would not be restrained. Presently, they rose to pray, but I hung behind a little and taking the lute, tuned it after a particular fashion and stood up to pray with the rest. When

we had made an end of prayer, the same man fell again to flouting and reviling me and persisted in his churlishness, whilst I held my peace. Then the damsel took the lute and touching it, knew that it was other than as she had left it and said, "Who hath touched my lute?" Quoth they, "None of us hath touched it." "Nay, by Allah," rejoined she, "some one hath touched it, and he a past master in the craft; for he hath ordered the strings and tuned them after the fashion of one who is right skilled in the art." Quoth I, "It was I tuned it." "Then, God on thee," answered she, "take it and play on it!" So I took it and playing a rare and difficult measure, that came nigh to deaden the live and raise the dead, sang thereto the following verses:

I had a heart, wherewith of yore I lived: 'Twas seared with fire and all consumed indeed.
Her love, alack! was not vouchsafed to me; Unto the slave 'twas not of Heaven decreed.
If what I taste be passion's very food, Then all who love upon its like must feed.

Night cccix. When I had finished, there was not one of the company but sprang from his place and sat down before me,[1] saying, "God on thee, O our lord, sing us another song." "With all my heart," said I and playing another measure in masterly fashion, sang thereto the following:

O thou whose heart, for fortune's blows, is all consumed and sped, Sorrows with whom from every side have taken up their stead,
Unlawful unto her, my heart who pierces with her shafts, Is that my blood which, breast-bones 'twixt and vitals,[2] she hath shed.
'Twas plain, upon the parting day, that her resolve, our loves To sunder, unto false suspect must be attributed.
She pours forth blood she had not shed, if passion had not been. Will none my murderess ensue and wreak me on her head?

When I had made an end of this song, there was not

[1] In the attitude of a pupil before his master. [2] *i.e.* heart's blood.

one of them but rose to his feet and threw himself to the ground, for excess of delight. Then I cast the lute from my hand; but they said, "Allah on thee, let us hear another song, so God increase thee of His bounty!" "O folk," replied I, "I will sing you another song and another and another and will tell you who I am. Know that I am Ishac ben Ibrahim el Mausili, and by Allah, I bear myself haughtily to the Khalif, when he seeks me. Ye have today made me hear [abuse from] an unmannerly fellow such as I loathe; and by Allah, I will not speak a word nor sit with you, till ye put yonder quarrelsome churl out from among you!" Quoth the latter's companion to him, "This is what I feared and warned thee against." So they took him by the hand and put him out; and I took the lute and sang over again the songs of my fashion that the damsel had sung. Then I whispered the host that she had taken my heart and that I had no patience to endure from her. Quoth he, "Thou shalt have her and all that pertains to her of clothes and jewels, on one condition." "What is that?" asked I. "It is," answered he, "that thou abide with me a month." "It is well," rejoined I; "I will do this." So I abode with him a whole month, whilst none knew where I was and the Khalif sought me everywhere, but could come by no news of me; and at the end of this time, the merchant delivered to me the damsel, together with all that pertained to her of things of price and an eunuch to attend her.

I brought her to my lodging, feeling as I were lord of the whole world, for stress of delight in her; then rode forthright to El Mamoun. When he saw me, he said, "Out on thee, O Isaac, where hast thou been all this while?" I acquainted him with the story and he said, "Bring me the man at once." So I told him where he dwelt, and he sent and fetched him and questioned him of the case; whereupon he repeated the story and the Khalif

said to him, "Thou art a man of a generous mind, and it is just that thou be upheld in thy generosity." Then he ordered him a hundred thousand dirhems and said to me, "O Isaac, bring me the damsel." So I brought her to him, and she sang and delighted him. He was greatly gladdened by her and ordered her fifty thousand dirhems, saying to me, "I appoint her of service every Thursday, when she must come and sing to me from behind the curtain." So, by Allah, this ride of mine was a source of profit both to me and to others.

THE THREE UNFORTUNATE LOVERS.

(Quoth El Utbi[1]), I was sitting one day with a company of men of culture, telling stories of the folk, when the talk turned upon anecdotes of lovers and each of us said his say thereon. Now there was in our company an old man, who remained silent, till we had all spoken and had no more to say, when he said, "Shall I tell you a thing, the like of which you never heard?" "Yes," answered we; and he said, "Know, then, that I had a daughter, who loved a youth, but we knew it not. The youth in question loved a singing-girl, who, in her turn, was enamoured of my daughter. One day, I was present at an assembly, where were also the young man and the girl; when the latter sang the following verses:

Night cccc.

Tears are the token by which, for love, Abjection in lovers still is shown,
And more by token in one who finds No friend, to whom he may make his moan.

'By Allah, thou hast said well, O my lady!' exclaimed the youth. 'Dost thou bid me die?' 'Yes,' answered the girl from behind the curtain, 'if thou be in love.' So he laid his head on a cushion and closed his eyes; and when the cup came round to him, we shook him and

[1] A well-known poet, who flourished at Baghdad in the ninth century.

found that he was dead. Therewith we all flocked to him, and our joy was troubled and we grieved and broke up forthright. When I came home, my people taxed me with returning before the appointed time, and I told them what had befallen the youth, thinking to surprise them. My daughter heard my words and rising, went into another chamber, whither I followed her and found her lying, with her head on a cushion, as I had told of the young man. I shook her and behold, she was dead. So we laid her out and set forth next morning with her funeral, whilst the friends of the young man carried him out, likewise, to bury him. As we were on the way to the burial-place, we met a third funeral and enquiring whose it was, were told that it was that of the singing-girl, who, hearing of my daughter's death, had done even as she and was dead. So we buried them all three on one day, and this is the rarest story that ever was heard of lovers."

THE LOVERS OF THE BENOU TAI.

Quoth a man of the Benou Temim (cited by Casim ben Adi), I went out one day in search of a stray beast and coming to the waters of the Benou Tai, saw two companies of people, near one another, and those of each company were disputing among themselves. So I watched them and observed, in one of the companies, a young man, wasted with sickness, as he were a worn-out water-skin. As I looked on him, he repeated the following verses:

What ails the fair that she returneth not to me? Is 't grudgingness in her or inhumanity?
I sickened, and my folk to visit me came all. Why 'mongst the visitors wast thou then not to see?
Hadst thou been sick, I would have hastened to thy side; Nor menaces nor threats had hindered me from thee.
I miss thee midst the rest, and desolate am I: Thy loss, my heart's abode, is grievous unto me.

A damsel in the other company heard his words and hastened towards him. Her people followed her, but she repelled them with blows. Then the youth caught sight of her and ran towards her, whilst his people ran after him and laid hold of him. However, he struggled, till he freed himself from them, and she in like manner loosed herself; and they ran to each other and meeting between the two parties, embraced and fell down dead.

Night cccxi. Thereupon there came out an old man from one of the tents and stood over them, weeping sore and exclaiming, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!" Then, "May God the Most High have mercy on you both!" said he. "By Allah, though you were not united in your lives, I will at least unite you after death." And he bade lay them out. So they washed them and shrouded them in one shroud and buried them in one grave, after they had prayed over them; nor were there men nor women in the two parties but I saw weeping over them and buffeting their faces. Then I questioned the old man of them, and he said, "She was my daughter and he my brother's son; and love brought them to this pass." "May God amend thee!" exclaimed I. "But why didst thou not marry them to one another?" Quoth he, "I feared reproach and dishonour; and now I am fallen upon both."

THE MAD LOVER.

(Quoth Aboulabbas el Muberred[1]), I set out one day with a company to El Berid on an occasion, and coming to the monastery of Heraclius,[2] we alighted in its shade. Presently a man came out to us and said, "There are

[1] Aboulabbas Mohammed ben Yezid eth Thumali, surnamed El Muberred, a famous Baghdad grammarian of the ninth century.

[2] A monastery in the town of Hemah in Syria, so called from the Emperor Heraclius, who retired thither, to end his days.

madmen in the monastery, and amongst them one who speaketh wisdom; if ye saw him, ye would marvel at his speech." So we arose all and went into the monastery, where we saw a man seated on a leather mat in one of the cells, with bare head and eyes fixed upon the wall. We saluted him, and he returned our greeting, without looking at us; and one said to us, "Repeat some verses to him; for, when he hears verses, he speaks." So I repeated the following verses:

O best of all the race whom Eve gave birth unto, Except for thee the world were neither sweet nor bright:
Thou'rt he, whose face if God unveil to any man, Eternity is his; his head shall ne'er grow white.[1]

When he heard this, he turned towards us and repeated these lines:

God indeed knows that I am sore afflicted: I suffer so, I cannot tell the whole.
I have two souls; one in this place is dwelling; Another country holds my second soul.
Meseems the absent one is like the present And wearies under the same weight of dole.

Quoth he, "Have I said well or ill?" "Thou hast said well and excellent well," replied we. Then he put out his hand and took a stone, that was by him; whereupon we fled from him, thinking he would throw it at us; but he fell to beating his breast therewith violently and said to us, "Fear not, but draw near and hear somewhat from me and receive it from me." So we came back, and he repeated the following verses:

When they made their beasts of burden kneel as day drew nigh and nigher, Then they mounted and the camels bore away my heart's desire,—
When my eyes perceived my loved one through the crannied prison-wall, Then I cried, with streaming eyelids and a heart for love a-fire,

[1] These verses are addressed to the Prophet Mohammed.

"Turn, thou leader of the camels, let me bid my love farewell!" For her absence and estrangement, life and hope in me expire.
Still I kept my troth and failed not from her love; ah, would I knew What she did with that our troth-plight, if she kept her faith entire!

Then he looked at me and said, "Dost thou know what she did?" "Yes," answered I, "she is dead; may God the Most High have mercy on her!" At this his face changed and he sprang to his feet and cried out, "How knowest thou she is dead?" "Were she alive," answered I, "she had not left thee thus." "By Allah, thou art right," said he, "and I care not to live after her." Then his nerves quivered and he fell on his face; and we ran up to him and shook him and found him dead, the mercy of God be on him! At this we marvelled and mourned sore for him and laid him out and buried him. When I returned to Baghdad and went in to the Khalif El Mutawekkil, he saw the trace of tears on my face and said to me, "What is this?" So I told him what had passed, and it was grievous to him and he said, "What moved thee to deal thus with him? By Allah, if I thought thou didst this with intent, I would punish thee therefor!" And he mourned for him the rest of the day.

Night ccccxii.

THE APPLES OF PARADISE.

(Quoth Abou Bekr Mohammed ibn el Ambari[1]), I once left Ambar, on a journey to Ammouriyeh, in the land of the Greeks,[2] and alighted midway at the monastery of El Anwar,[3] in a village near Ammouriyeh, where there came out to me the prior of the monastery and superior of the monks, Abdulmesih[4] by name, and brought me into the monastery. There I found forty monks, who enter-

[1] The most learned grammarian of his day. He flourished at Baghdad in the first half of the tenth century.
[2] Anatolia. [3] The Lights. [4] Servant of the Messiah.

tained me that night with the most liberal hospitality, and I saw among them such abounding piety and diligence in devotion as I never beheld the like of in any others. On the morrow, I took leave of them and went on to Ammouriyeh, where I did my business and returned to Ambar [without again visiting the monastery].

Next year it befell that I made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and as I was compassing the Holy House, behold, I saw Abdulmesih the monk also making the circuit of the Kaabeh, and with him five of his fellows, the monks. When I was certified that it was indeed he, I accosted him, saying, "Art thou not Abdulmesih er Rahib?"[1] "Nay," answered he; "I am Abdallah er Raghib."[2] Therewith I fell to kissing his hoary hairs and weeping; then, taking him by the hand, I led him aside into a corner of the sanctuary and said to him, "Tell me the manner of thy conversion to Islam." "It was a wonder of wonders," answered he, "and befell thus. Know that, not long after thy visit to us, a company of Muslim devotees came to the village, in which is our monastery, and sent a youth to buy them food. He saw, in the market, a Christian damsel selling bread, who was of the fairest of women, and became then and there so passionately enamoured of her, that his senses failed him and he fell on his face in a swoon. When he revived, he returned to his companions and told them what had happened, saying, 'Go ye about your business; I may not go with you.' They blamed him and exhorted him, but he paid no heed to them; so they left him and went on, whilst he entered the village and seated himself at the door of the woman's shop. She asked him what he wanted, and he told her

[1] The monk.
[2] The desireful servant of God. Abdallah is the name commonly given to a Christian convert to Islam. This question and answer are a good example of the jingle of rhymes so much affected by the Arabs.

that he was in love with her, whereupon she turned from him; but he abode in his place three days, without tasting food, with his eyes fixed on her face.

When she saw that he departed not from her, she went to her people and acquainted them with her case, and they set the boys of the village on him, who pelted him with stones and bruised his ribs and broke his head; but, for all this, he would not budge. Then the people of the village took counsel together to kill him; but one of them came to me and told me of his condition, and I went out to him and found him lying prostrate on the ground. So I wiped the blood from his face and carried him to the convent, where I dressed his wounds, and he abode with me fourteen days. But, as soon as he could walk, he left the convent and returned to the door of the woman's shop, where he sat gazing on her as before. When she saw him, she came out to him and said, 'By Allah, thou movest me to pity! If thou wilt enter my faith, I will marry thee.' 'God forbid,' answered he, 'that I should put off the faith of the Unity and enter that of Plurality!'[1] Quoth she, 'Come in with me to my house and take thy will of me and go thy ways in peace.' 'Not so,' answered he, 'I will not barter the pious service of twelve years for the lust of a moment.' 'Then depart from me forthright,' said she; and he rejoined, 'My heart will not suffer me to do that;' whereupon she turned her face from him. Presently the boys found him out and began to throw stones at him; and he fell on his face, saying, 'Verily, God is my keeper, who sent down the Book and who protecteth the righteous!'[2] At this juncture, I sallied forth and driving away the boys, lifted his head from the ground and heard him say, 'O my God, unite me with her in Paradise!' Then I took him in my arms, to carry

Night cccxiii.

[1] *i.e.* of gods (*shirk*).

[2] *Koran* vii. 195.

him to the monastery; but he died, before I could reach it, and I dug him a grave without the village and buried him there.

In the middle of that night, the people of the village heard the damsel give a great cry, and she in her bed; so they flocked to her and questioned her of her case. Quoth she, 'As I slept, the Muslim [whom ye wot of] came in to me and taking me by the hand, carried me to the gate of Paradise; but the keeper denied me entrance, saying, "It is forbidden to unbelievers." So I embraced Islam at his hands and entering with him, beheld therein palaces and trees, such as I cannot describe to you. Moreover, he brought me to a pavilion of jewels and said to me, "This is my pavilion and thine, nor will I enter it except with thee; but, after five nights, thou shalt be with me therein, if it be the will of God the Most High." Then, putting his hand to a tree that grew at the door of the pavilion, he plucked therefrom two apples and gave them to me, saying, "Eat this and keep the other, that the monks may see it." So I ate one of them and never tasted I aught sweeter than it. Then he took my hand and carried me back to my house; and when I awoke, I found the taste of the apple in my mouth and the other in my hand.' So saying, she brought out the apple, and it shone in the darkness of the night, as it were a sparkling star. So they carried her to the monastery, where she repeated to us her vision and showed us the apple; never saw we its like among all the fruits of the world. Then I took a knife and cut the apple into as many pieces as we were folk in company; and never knew we aught more delicious than its taste nor sweeter than its scent; but we said, 'Haply this was a devil that appeared to her, to seduce her from her faith.' Then her people took her and went away; but she abstained from eating and drinking till the fifth night, when she rose from her bed and

Night cccxiv.

going forth the village to the grave of the young Muslim, threw herself upon it and died.

Her people knew not what was come of her; but, on the morrow, there came to the village two Muslim elders, clad in hair-cloth, and with them two women in like garb, and said, 'O people of the village, with you is a woman of the friends of God,[1] who died a Muslim, and we will take charge of her, instead of you.' So the damsel's family sought her and found her dead on the young Muslim's grave; and they said, 'This our sister died in our faith, and we will take charge of her.' 'Not so,' rejoined the two old men; 'she died a Muslim and we claim her.' And the dispute waxed hot between them, till one of the Muslims said, 'Be this the test of her faith. Let the forty monks of the monastery come all and [essay to] lift her from the grave. If they succeed, then she died a Nazarene; if not, one of us shall come and lift her up, and if she yield to him, she died a Muslim.' The villagers agreed to this and fetched the forty monks, who heartened each other and came to her, to lift her, but could not. Then we tied a great rope about her middle and tugged at it with our might; but the rope broke in sunder, and she stirred not; and the villagers came and joined their endeavour to ours, but could not move her from her place. At last, when all our devices failed, we said to one of the two old Muslims, 'Come thou and lift her.' So he went up to the grave and covering her with his mantle, said, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, and of the Faith of the Apostle of God, on whom be peace and salvation!' Then he lifted her and taking her in his bosom, betook himself with her to a cave hard by, where they laid her, and the two women came and washed her and shrouded her. Then the two elders bore her to

[1] *i.e.* saints.

the young Muslim's grave and prayed over her and buried her by his side and went their way.

Now we were witness of all this; and when we were alone with one another, we said, 'Of a verity, the Truth is most worthy to be followed;[1] and indeed it hath been publicly manifested to us, nor is it possible to have a clearer proof of the truth of Islam than that we have seen this day with our eyes.' So I and all the monks embraced Islam and on like wise did the people of the village; and we sent to the people of Mesopotamia for a doctor of the law, to instruct us in the ordinances of Islam and the canons of the Faith. They sent us a pious man, who taught us the rites of devotion and the tenets of the faith and the service of God; and we are now in great good case. To God be the praise and the thanks!"

THE LOVES OF ABOU ISA AND CURRET EL AIN.

(Quoth Amr ben Mesaadeh[2]), Abou Isa, son of Er Reshid and brother to El Mamoun, was enamoured of a girl called Curret el Ain, belonging to Ali ben Hisham,[3] and she also loved him; but he concealed his passion, complaining of it to none neither discovering his secret to any, of his pride and magnanimity; and he had used his utmost endeavour to buy her of her lord, but in vain. At last, when his patience failed him and his passion was sore on him and he was at his wits' end concerning her affair, he went in, one day of state, to El Mamoun, after the folk had retired, and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, if thou wilt this day make trial of thy governors,[4] by visiting them unawares, thou wilt know

[1] *Koran* x. 36.
[2] A well-known man of letters and one of El Mamoun's viziers.
[3] Prefect of Baghdad under El Mamoun.
[4] *i.e.* the persons in authority under thee.

the men of worth from those that lack of it and note each one's [due] place, after the measure of his faculties." (But he purposed, in saying this, to win to sit with Curret el Ain in her lord's house.) El Mamoun approved his proposal and bade make ready a barge, called the Flyer, in which he embarked, with his brother and a party of his chief officers. The first house he visited was that of Hemid et Tawil of Tous, whom he found seated on a mat and before him singers and players, with lutes and hautboys and other instruments of music in their hands. El Mamoun sat with him awhile, and presently he set before him dishes of nothing but flesh-meat, with no birds among them. The Khalif would not taste thereof and Abou Isa said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, we have taken the owner of this place unawares, and he knew not of thy coming; but now let us go to another place, that is prepared and fitted for thee."

Night cccxb.

So the Khalif arose and betook himself, with his brother and his suite, to the abode of Ali ben Hisham, who, on hearing of their approach, came out and received them, after the goodliest fashion, and kissed the earth before El Mamoun. Then he brought them into his palace and opened to them a saloon, than which never saw eyes a goodlier. Its floors and walls and columns were of varicoloured marble, adorned with Greek paintings: it was spread with Indian matting, on which were carpets and divans of Bassora make, fitted to the length and breadth of the room. The Khalif sat awhile, examining the house and its roof and walls, then said, "Give us to eat." So they brought him forthwith nigh upon a hundred dishes of fowls, besides other birds and brewises and fricassees and marinades. When he had eaten, he said, "Give us to drink, O Ali;" and the latter set before him raisin-wine, boiled with fruits and spices, in vessels of gold and silver and crystal, served by boys like moons, clad in garments

of Alexandrian cloth of gold and bearing on their breasts flagons of crystal, full of rose-water mingled with musk. El Mamoun marvelled exceedingly at all this and said, "Harkye, Aboulhusn!"[1] Whereupon Ali sprang to the carpet [on which the Khalif was seated] and kissing it, said, "At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful!" and stood before him. Quoth El Mamoun, "Let us hear some pleasant songs." "I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful," replied Ali and said to one of his servants, "Fetch the singing-women."

So he went out and returned in a moment, followed by ten eunuchs, bearing ten golden stools, which they set down; and these in their turn were followed by ten damsels, as they were shining full moons or flowerful gardens, clad in black brocade, with crowns of gold on their heads. They sat down on the stools and sang various songs. Then El Mamoun looked at one of them and captivated by her elegance and the beauty of her aspect, said to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Sejahi, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she; and he said, "Sing to us, O Sejahi!" So she took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

Right stealthily, for fearfulness, I fare, the weakling's gait, Who sees unto the watering-place two lion-whelps draw near,
With cloak, instead of sword, begirt and bosom love-distraught And heart for eyes of enemies and spies fulfilled of fear,
Till in to one at last I come, a loveling delicate, Like to a desert antelope, that's lost its younglings dear.

"Well done, O damsel!" said the Khalif. "Whose is this song?" "The words are by Amr ben Madi Kerib ez Zubeidi,"[2] answered she, "and the air is Mabid's."[3] Then

[1] Surname of Ali ben Hisham.
[2] A renowned chieftain and poet of the time of Mohammed.
[3] A famous singer and composer of the first century of the Hegira.

the Khalif and Ali and Abou Isa drank and the damsels went away and were succeeded by other ten, clad in flowered silk of Yemen, brocaded with gold, who sat down on the chairs and sang various songs. The Khalif looked at one of them, who was like a wild cow of the desert, and said to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Zebiyeh, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she. "Sing to us, O Zebiyeh," said he; so she warbled some roulades and sang the following verses:

Houris, noble ladies, that reck not of disquiet, Like antelopes of Mecca, forbidden to be slain;
Of their soft speech, they're taken for courtezans; but Islam Still makes them from unseemliness and lewdness to refrain.

Night cccxvi. When she had finished, "Bravo!" cried the Khalif. "Whose is this song?" "The words are by Jerir,"[1] answered she, "and the air by Suraij." Then the Khalif and his company drank, whilst the girls went away and there came yet other ten, as they were rubies, bareheaded and clad in red brocade, gold inwoven and broidered with pearls and jewels, who sat down on the stools and sang various airs. The Khalif looked at one of them, who was like the sun of the day, and said to her, "What is thy name?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "my name is Fatin." "Sing to us, O Fatin," quoth he. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

Vouchsafe me of thy grace; 'tis time to yield consent: Enough have I endured of absence and lament.
Thou'rt he whose face unites all charms, on whose account My patience have I lost, for very languishment.
I've spent my life for love of thee; ah, would to God I might receive return for that which I have spent!

"Bravo, O Fatin!" exclaimed the Khalif, when she had

[1] One of the greatest of Arab poets; he flourished in the first century of the Hegira.

finished. "Whose song is that?" "The words are by Adi ben Zeid," answered she, "and the tune is an old one." Then they drank, whilst the damsels retired and were succeeded by other ten, as they were sparkling stars, clad in flowered silk, embroidered with gold, and girt with jewelled zones. They sat down and sang various airs; and the Khalif said to one of them, who was like a willow-wand, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Reshaa, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she. "Sing to us, O Reshaa," said he. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

There's a houri healing passion [with her kiss], Like a sapling or a wild gazelle at gaze.
Wine I quaff unto the vision of her cheeks[1] And dispute the goblet with her, till she sways.
Then she lies and sleeps the night long in my arms, And I say, "This is the wish of all my days."

"Well done, O damsel!" said the Khalif. "More." So she rose and kissing the ground before him, sang the following verse:

She came out to gaze on the bridal at leisure, In a tunic with ambergris smeared, worth a treasure.

The Khalif was much pleased with this verse, which when Reshaa saw, she repeated it several times. Then said El Mamoun, "Bring up the barge," being minded to embark and depart: but Ali said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have a slave-girl, whom I bought for ten thousand dinars; she hath taken my whole heart, and I would fain show her to the Commander of the Faithful. If she please him and he will accept of her, she is his: and if not, let him hear something from her." "Bring her to me," said the Khalif; and there came forth a damsel, as she were a willow-wand, with heart-seducing

[1] *i.e.* as to the sound of music.

eyes and eyebrows like a double bow. On her head she wore a crown of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, under which was a fillet, wrought in letters of chrysolite with the following words:

Behold, a Jinniyeh this is; and Jinn hath she also, I trow, Who teach her men's hearts to transfix, by means of a stringless bow.

Night ccccxbii. She walked, with a gait like that of a fleeing gazelle, till she came to a chair, on which she seated herself. The Khalif marvelled at her beauty and grace; but when Abou Isa saw her, his colour changed and he was in ill case. "O Abou Isa," said the Khalif, "what ails thee, to change colour thus?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered he, "it is because of a pain that seizes me bytimes." "Hast thou known yonder damsel before to-day?" asked El Mamoun. "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered he. "Can the moon be hidden?" Then said El Mamoun to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Curret el Ain, O Commander of the Faithful," replied she; and he said, "Sing to us, O Curret el Ain." So she sang the following verses:

The loved ones passed from thee in middle midnight's shade And fared forth in the dawn, with the pilgrims' cavalcade.
The tents of pride they pitched round their pavilions And veiled themselves about with hangings of brocade.

Quoth the Khalif, "Bravo, O Curret el Ain! Whose song is that?" "The words are by Dibil el Khuzaï," answered she, "and the air by Zourzour es Seghir." Abou Isa looked at her and his tears choked him; so that the company marvelled at him. Then she turned to El Mamoun and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou give me leave to change the words?" "Sing what thou wilt," answered the Khalif. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

If thou please one and he please thee in public, look thou hide And keep in secret straiter watch o'er love, lest ill betide.
And disregard and put away the tales of slanderers; For seldom seeks the sland'rer aught but lovers to divide.
They say that when a lover's near, he wearies of his love And that by absence passion's cured. 'Tis false; for I have tried
Both remedies, but am not cured of that which is with me, Withal that nearness easier is than distance to abide.
Yet nearness of abode, forsooth, may nowise profit thee, An if the grace of him thou lov'st be unto thee denied.

When she had finished, Abou Isa said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we will be at peace, though we be dishonoured. Dost thou give me leave to reply to her?" "Yes," answered the Khalif. "Say what thou wilt to her." So he swallowed his tears and sang these verses: Night ccccxbiii.

I held my peace nor said, "I am in love;" and eke The passion that I felt even from my heart hid I:
And natheless, if my eyes do manifest my love, It is because they are the shining moon anigh.

Then Curret el Ain took the lute and rejoined with the following:

If what thou dost pretend were very truth, Thou wouldst not with mere wishing rest content,
Nor couldst endure to live without a girl, In charms and beauty wonder-excellent.
But there is nought in that thou dost avouch, Save only idle talk and compliment.

When Abou Isa heard this, he fell a-weeping and lamenting and discovered the trouble and anguish of his soul. Then he raised his eyes to her and sighing, repeated the following:

Under my wede there is a wasted body And in my soul an all-absorbing thought.
I have a heart, whose suffering is eternal, And eyes with tears like torrents ever fraught.

Whenas a wise man meets me, he rebukes me, Chiding the love that thus in me hath wrought.
Lord, I've no strength all this my dole to suffer; Prithee, come Death or quick relief be brought!

When he had ended, Ali ben Hisham sprang up and kissing his feet, said, "O my lord, God hath heard thy prayer and answered thy supplication, and consenteth to thy taking her with all her gear, so the Commander of the Faithful have no mind to her." "Had we a mind to her," answered the Khalif, "we would prefer Abou Isa before ourselves and help him to his desire." So saying, he rose and embarking, went away, whilst Abou Isa tarried for Curret el Ain, whom he took and carried to his own house, with a breast dilated for gladness. See then the generosity of Ali ben Hisham.

EL AMIN BEN ER RESHID AND HIS UNCLE IBRAHIM BEN EL MEHDI.

El Amin,[1] son of Er Reshid, once entered the house of his uncle Ibrahim ben al Mehdi and saw there a slave-girl playing upon the lute. She was one of the fairest of women, and his heart inclined to her. Ibrahim, seeing how it was with him, sent the girl to him, with rich apparel and precious jewels. When he saw her, he thought that his uncle had lain with her; so he was loath to have to do with her, because of this, and sent her back to Ibrahim, accepting the present that came with her. Ibrahim learnt the reason of this from one of El Amin's servants; so he took a shift of flowered silk and let work upon its skirt, in letters of gold, the following lines:

By Him to whom all fronts do bow, of that which is Beneath her skirt, I swear, I'm ignorant outright;
Nor have I had in aught to meddle with her mouth, Except it were by way of hearing and of sight.

[1] Sixth of the Abbaside Khalifs, A.D. 809-813.

Then he clad her in the shift and giving her a lute, sent her once more to his nephew. When she came into the latter's presence, she kissed the earth before him and tuning the lute, sang thereto the following verses:

By returning the gift, thou showest what's hid in thy breast, And thine aversion to me is made manifest.
An thou bear malice for aught that hath been,—forgive The past, for the Khalifate's sake, and let it rest.

When she had made an end of her song, El Amin looked at her and reading that which was wrought upon her skirt, could not control himself, but drew near unto her and kissed her and appointed her a separate lodging in his palace. Moreover, he thanked his uncle for this and bestowed on him the government of Er Reï.[1] Night cccxix.

EL FETH BEN KHACAN AND THE KHALIF EL MUTAWEKKIL.

The Khalif El Mutawekkil[2] was once taking medicine, and folk sent him all manner of presents and rarities. Amongst others, El Feth ben Khacan[3] sent him a virgin slave, high-bosomed, of the fairest of the women of her time, and with her a vase of crystal, containing red wine, and a goblet of red gold, whereon were graven in black the following verses:

When th' Imam's made an end of taking medicine And health and strength ensue to him thereon, in fine,
There's no medicament befits him but to drink, From out this cup, a draught of this decocted wine
And break the seal[4] reserved to him, for this, indeed, Right salutary is, hard after medicine.

[1] See note, Vol. III. p. 324.
[2] Tenth Abbaside Khalif, A.D. 849-861.
[3] Vizier and favourite of El Mutawekkil, killed A.D. 861 whilst endeavouring to defend the Khalif against the parricide El Muntesir.
[4] Virginitatem tollere.

Now the physician Youhenna[1] was with the Khalif, when the damsel entered; and when he read the above verses, he smiled and said, 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, Feth is better versed than I in the art of medicine: so let not the Commander of the Faithful gainsay his prescription.' Accordingly, the Khalif followed El Feth's prescription and was made whole by the blessing of God.

THE MAN'S DISPUTE WITH THE LEARNED WOMAN OF THE RELATIVE EXCELLENCE OF THE MALE AND THE FEMALE.

(Quoth a certain man of learning), I never saw a woman sharper-witted, more intelligent, better furnished in learning, more excellent of faculties or more pleasant of ingredients than a female preacher of the people of Baghdad, by name Sitt el Meshayikh.[2] It chanced that she came to the city of Hemah in the year [of the Hegira] 561[3] and there delivered salutary exhortations to the folk from the pulpits. Now there used to visit her house a number of students of divinity and [other] persons of learning and culture, who would argue with her upon questions of theology and discuss controversial points with her. I went to her one day, with a friend of mine, a man of education; and when we had taken our seats, she set before us a dish of fruit and seated herself behind a curtain. Now she had a [young] brother, a handsome youth, who stood by us, to serve us.

When we had eaten, we fell to disputing upon points of divinity, and I propounded to her a theological question,

[1] Johannes, a Greek physician in high favour with El Mutawekkil and others of the Abbaside Khalifs.

[2] *i.e.* Princess of the Doctors or men of learning.

[3] A.D. 1166.

bearing upon a difference between the Imams.[1] She proceeded to speak in answer, whilst I listened; but my friend fell the while to looking upon her brother's face and considering his charms, without paying any heed to what she said. Now she was watching him from behind the curtain; so, when she had made an end of her exposition, she turned to him and said, "Meseems thou art of those that give men the preference over women!" "Assuredly," answered he. "And why so?" asked she. "Because," replied he, "God hath preferred the male over the female; and I love that which excels and mislike that which is excelled." She laughed and said, "Wilt thou deal fairly with me in argument, if I argue the matter with thee?" "I will," answered he. Then said she, "What is the evidence of the superiority of the male to the female?" "It is of two kinds," answered he, "that which is founded on authority and that which is founded on reason. The authoritative part derives from the Koran and the Sunneh [Traditions of the Prophet]. As for the former, quoth God the Most High, 'Men stand above women, in that God hath given these the preference over those;'[2] and again, 'If there be not two men, then [call] one man and two women;'[3] and again, when treating of the law of inheritance, '[If there be brothers and sisters,] let each male have the like of the portion of two females.'[4] Thus God, blessed and exalted be He, hath in these places preferred the male over the female and teaches that a woman is as the half of a man, for that he is worthier than she. As for the Sunneh, is it not reported of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) that he appointed the blood-wit for a woman to be half that of a

Night cccxx.

[1] Or heads of the various sects or schools of religion.

[2] *Koran* iv. 38.

[3] As witness to a debt, *Koran* ii. 282.

[4] *Koran* iv. 175.

man? As for the evidence of reason, the male is the agent and the female the patient."

"Thou hast said well, O my lord," rejoined she; "but, by Allah, thou hast proved my contention with thine own lips and hast advanced arguments that tell against thee, and not for thee. Thus: God (blessed and exalted be He) preferred the male above the female, solely because of the quality of masculinity; and in this, there is no difference between us. Now this quality [of masculinity] is common to the child, the boy, the youth, the adult and the graybeard; nor is there any distinction between them in this. Since, then, the superior excellence of man enures to him solely by virtue of the quality of masculinity, it behoves that thy heart incline to the graybeard and thy soul delight in him, equally with the boy, seeing that there is no distinction between them, in point of masculinity. But the difference between thee and me turns upon the qualities that are sought as constituting excellence of intercourse and delight of usance; and thou hast adduced no proof of the superiority of the male over the female in this."

"O my lady," answered he, "knowest thou not that which is proper to the boy of symmetry of shape and rosy cheeks and pleasant smile and sweetness of speech? Boys are, in these respects, superior to women; and the proof of this is what is reported of the Prophet, that he said, 'Stay not thy gaze upon the beardless boys, for in them is the similitude[1] of the black-eyed girls of Paradise.' Nor indeed is the superiority of the boy over the girl hidden to any, and how well saith Abou Nuwas:

The least of his virtues it is that thou'rt free From uncleanness with him nor with child can he be.

And what another poet says:

[1] Or "eye-glance."

Quoth th' Imam Abou Nuwas, past-master sure was he In every canon of debauch and jolly knavery,
"O ye that love the downy cheeks of younglings, take your fill Of a delight, in Paradise that will not founden be."

So if one enlarge in praise of a girl and wish to enhance her value by the mention of her charms, he likens her to a boy, because of the illustrious qualities that belong to the latter, even as saith the poet: Night cccxxi.

Boylike of buttocks, to and fro, in amorous dalliance, She sways as sway the nodding canes that in the north wind dance.

If boys, then, were not superior to girls, why should the latter be likened to them? And know also, may God the Most High preserve thee, that a boy is easy to be led, adapting himself to the wish, pleasant of commerce and manners, inclining to assent rather than difference, especially when the down on his face creeps lightly and the hair darkens on his lips and the vermilion of early youth runs in his cheeks, so that he is like the full moon; and how goodly is the saying of Abou Temmam:[1]

"The whiskers on his cheek appear," the slanderers said to me; Quoth I, "That's none of his defect; so give me no more prate."
What time he came of age to bear buttocks that here and there Pulled him and over beads of pearl his lips' hair darkened late
And eke the rose a solemn oath, full fast and binding, swore Its ruddy marvels from his cheek should never separate,
I with my eyelids spoke to him, without the need of speech, And for reply thereto was what his eyebrows answered straight.
His goodliness still goodlier is than that thou knewst of yore, And the hair guardeth him from those his charms would violate.
Brighter and sweeter are his charms, now on his cheek the down Shows and the hair upon his lips grows dark and delicate;
And those who chide me for the love of him, when they take up Their parable of him and me, say evermore, "His mate."

[1] Abou Temmam et Taï (of the tribe of Tai), a famous poet of the first half of the ninth century and postmaster at Mosul under the Khalif Wathic Billah (commonly known as Vathek), A.D. 842-849. He was the compiler of the famous anthology of ancient Arabian poetry, known as the *Hemaseh* (Hamasa).

And quoth El Heriri[1] and saith well:

My censors say, "What is this love and doting upon him? Seest not the hair upon his cheeks that sprouts? Where is thy wit?"
Quoth I, "By Allah, an ye chide at me, I rede you note The exposition of the truth that in his eyes is writ.
But for the blackness of the down, that veils his chin and cheeks, Upon the brightness of his face no mortal gaze might sit.
A man who sojourns in a land, wherein no herbage is, Whenas the very Spring arrives, shall he depart from it?

And quoth another:

"He is consoled," say the censors of me; but, by heaven, they lie! For solace and comfort come hardly to those for longing that sigh.
When the rose of his cheek stood blooming alone, I was not consoled; So how should I now find solace, that basil has sprung thereby?

And again:

A slender one, whose glances and the down upon his cheeks Each other, in the slaying of folk, abet and aid.
A sabre of narcissus[2] withal, he sheddeth blood, The hangers[3] of its scabbard of very myrtle made.

And again:

Not with his wine I'm drunken, but with his tresses bright, That make all creatures drunken, yea, all beneath the sky.
Each of his charms doth envy the others; ay, and each To be the down so silky upon his cheek doth sigh.

These are the excellences of the boy, that women do not possess, and these suffice and more to give boys the preference in grace and glory over women."

"God give thee health!" cried she. "Verily, thou hast imposed the discussion upon thyself; and thou hast spoken

[1] Aboulcasim el Heriri, the famous poet and grammarian, author of the *Mecamat*, the most celebrated single work in Arabic literature. He holds much the same rank in Arabic letters as Pope and Boileau in the literature of England and France and may, with much better reason, be styled "le legislateur du Parnasse (Arabe)." He was a native of Bassora and died early in the twelfth century.

[2] *i.e.* the languishing glance of his eye. [3] *i.e.* his whiskers.

and hast not stinted and hast adduced these arguments, in support of thy contention. But now is the truth made manifest;[1] so swerve thou not from the path thereof; and if thou be not content with a summary of proof, I will set it out to thee in detail. God on thee, where is the boy beside the girl and who shall liken the kid to the wild cow? The girl is soft of speech, fair of shape, like a stalk of sweet basil, with teeth like camomile-petals and hair like halters. Her cheeks are like blood-red anemones and her face like an apple: she hath lips like wine and breasts like double pomegranates and a shape flexile as a willow wand. Her body is rounded and well-formed: she hath a nose like the point of a shining sword and a forehead brilliant with whiteness and joined eyebrows and black and melting eyes. If she speak, fresh pearls are scattered from her mouth and all hearts are ravished by the daintiness of her charms; when she smiles, thou wouldst think the moon shone out from between her lips and when she gazes, swords flash from her eyes. In her all beauties have their term, and she is the centre of attraction of traveller and stay-at-home. She hath two red lips, softer than cream and sweeter of taste than honey, and a bosom, as it were a way between two hills, wherein are a pair of breasts like globes of ivory; likewise, a smooth belly, soft of flanks as palm-flowers[2] and creased with folds and dimples that overlap one another, and luxuriant thighs, like columns of pearl, and buttocks, that beat together like seas of crystal or mountains of light, and two slender feet and hands like ingots of virgin gold. So, O wretched fellow, where are mortal men beside the Jinn? Knowest thou not that mighty kings and captains and noble princes still submit themselves humbly to women and depend on them for delight? Verily, they [women] say, 'We rule over [all] necks and captivate [all]

Night cccxxii.

[1] *Koran* xii. 51. [2] Or *quære* palm-spathes.

hearts.' How many a rich man have they not made poor, how many a powerful one have they not humbled and how many a noble have they not reduced to servitude! Indeed, they seduce the learned and bring the pious to shame and make poor the rich and plunge the favoured of fortune into misery. Yet, for all this, the wise but redouble in love and honour of them, nor do they count this oppression or dishonour. How many a man for them hath transgressed against his Lord and called down on himself the wrath of his father and mother! And all this because of the preponderance of the love of them over hearts. Knowest thou not, O wretched fellow, that for them are palaces built and slave-girls bought, and over them curtains are let down, that for them do tears flow and for them are collected jewels and ambergris and odoriferous musk, armies levied and pleasure-houses raised up and riches gathered and heads smitten off? And indeed he spoke sooth, who said, 'The world is a commentary[1] upon women.'

As for thy citation from the Holy Traditions, it is an argument against thee and not for thee; for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) compares boys to the houris of Paradise. Now, without doubt, the subject of comparison is more worthy than the object compared with it; so, except women be the worthier and the goodlier, wherefore should other than they be likened to them? As for thy saying that girls are likened to boys, it is not so, but the contrary: boys are likened to girls; for folk say, 'Yonder boy is like a girl.' As for that thou quotest from the poets, the verses in question were the product of an unnatural complexion in this respect; and as for the confirmed sodomists and debauchees, that sin against religion, whom God hath condemned in His Holy Book, wherein He denounceth their filthy practices, saying, 'Do

[1] Or *quære* "an exposition of women."

ye betake you to males from the four corners of the world and forsake that which your Lord hath created for you of your wives? Nay, but ye are a froward folk.'[1] These it is that liken girls to boys, of their exceeding profligacy and frowardness and inclination to follow the devil and their own lusts, so that they say, 'She is apt for two men;' and these are all wanderers from the path of right. Quoth their chief Abou Nuwas:

A slender one, boyish of waist and of wit, For wencher as well as for sodomite fit.

As for what thou sayest of a boy's whiskers and moustaches and how they add to his beauty and grace, by Allah, thou wanderest from the right path and sayest that which is other than the truth; for whiskers change the charms of the comely into ugliness; even as saith the poet:

The whiskers, that sprout on the cheek of the wight, His lovers avenge, if he 've done them unright.
I see not on 's face what is like unto smoke, Except that his curls are as coals to the sight.
If the most of his paper[2] thus blackened be, where Is there room, deemest thou, for the pen to indite?
If any prefer him another above, 'Tis ignorance makes them thus turn from the light.

Glory be to God," continued she, "how is it hidden from thee that the perfection of delight is in women and that abiding pleasure is not to be found but with them? Seeing that God (blessed and exalted be He) hath promised His prophets and saints black-eyed damsels in Paradise and hath appointed them for a recompense of their pious works: and had God the Most High known that the supreme delight was in the possession of other than women, He had rewarded them therewith and promised it to them. And quoth he whom God bless and preserve, 'The things

Night cccxxiii.

[1] *Koran* xxvi. 165, 166. [2] *i.e.* the whiteness of his face.

in which I most delight of [the things of] your world are three: women and perfume and the solace of my eyes in prayer.' Verily, God hath appointed boys to serve His prophets and saints in Paradise, because Paradise is the abode of delight and pleasance, which could not be complete without the service of boys; but, as to the use of them for aught but service, it is sin and corruption. How well saith the poet:

Men's turning unto boys is very frowardness; Who noble[1] women loves is noble[1] none the less.
What difference 'twixt the lewd and him whose bedfellow A houri is, for looks a very sorceress.
He rises from her couch and she hath given him scent; He perfumes all the house therewith and each recess.
No boy, indeed, is worth to be compared with her: Shall aloes evened be with what not filthiness?"

Then said she, "O folk, ye have made me overpass the bounds of modesty and the province of free-born women and indulge in idle talk and freedoms of speech, that beseem not people of learning. But the breasts of the noble are the tombs of secrets, and conversations of this kind are in confidence. Moreover, actions are according to intents, and I ask pardon of God for myself and you and all Muslims, seeing that He is forgiving and merciful."

With this she held her peace and thereafter would answer us of nought; so we went our way, rejoicing in that we had profited by her discourses and sorrowing to part from her.

[1] Or "freeborn," the Arabic word here used having this double meaning. The Arabs hold that the child of freeborn parents (Lat. *ingenuus*) must of necessity be noble and those born of slave parents or a slave mother the contrary.

ABOU SUWEID AND THE HANDSOME OLD WOMAN.

(Quoth Abou Suweid), I entered a garden one day, I and a company of my friends, to buy somewhat of fruit; and we saw, in a corner of the place, an old woman, who was bright of face, but her hair was white, and she was combing it with a comb of ivory. We stopped before her, but she paid no heed to us neither veiled her face. So I said to her, "O old woman, wert thou to dye thy hair black, thou wouldst be handsomer than a girl. What hinders thee from this?" She raised her head and looking at me with great eyes, recited the following verses: Night ccccxxiv.

That which the years had dyed, I dyed erewhen; but, sooth to tell, My dye endureth not, whilst that of Time 's perdurable.
Clad in the raiment of my youth and beauty, of old days, Proudly I walked, and back and front, men had with me to mell.

"By Allah," cried I, "bravo to thee for an old woman! How sincere art thou in thy yearning remembrance of sin and how false in thy pretence of repentance from forbidden things!"

THE AMIR ALI BEN TAHIR AND THE GIRL MOUNIS.

There was once shown to the Amir Ali ben Mohammed ben Abdallah ben Tahir[1] a slave-girl, who was excellently handsome and well-bred and an accomplished poetess; and he asked her of her name. 'May God advance the Amir,' replied she, 'my name is Mounis.' Now he knew this before; so he bowed his head awhile, then raising his eyes to her, recited the following verse:

[1] A famous statesman, soldier, poet and musician, governor of Khorassan, Egypt and other provinces under the Khalif El Mamoun.

What dost thou say of one, on whom sickness and pain have wrought,
For love and longing after thee, till he is grown distraught?

'God exalt the Amir!' answered she and recited this verse in reply:

An if we saw a lover true, on whom the pangs of love Were sore, we would to him vouchsafe the favours that he sought.

Her reply pleased him: so he bought her for threescore and ten thousand dirhems and begat on her Obeidallah ben Mohammed, after police-magistrate [at Baghdad].

THE WOMAN WHO HAD A BOY AND THE OTHER WHO HAD A MAN TO LOVER.

(Quoth Abou el Ainaä[1]), There were in our street two women, one of whom had to lover a man and the other a beardless boy, and they foregathered one night on the roof of a house, not knowing that I was within hearing. Quoth one to the other, "O my sister, how canst thou brook the harshness of thy lover's beard, as it falls on thy breast, when he kisses thee, and his moustaches rub thy cheek and lips?" "Silly wench that thou art," replied the other, "what adorns the tree but its leaves and the cucumber but its bloom? Didst ever see aught uglier than a scald-head, with his beard plucked out? Knowest thou not that the beard is to men as the side-locks to women; and what is the difference between the chin and the cheek? Knowest thou not that God (blessed and exalted be He) hath created an angel in heaven, who saith, 'Glory be to Him who adorneth men with beards and women with tresses'? So, were not the beard even as the tresses in comeliness, it had not been coupled with them, O silly woman! How shall I underlie a boy, who

[1] Abou Abdallah ibn el Casim el Hashimi, surnamed Abou el Ainaä, a blind traditionist and man of letters of Bassora, in the ninth century, and one of the most celebrated wits of his day.

will be hasty with me in emission and forestall me in flaccescence, and leave a man, who, when he takes breath, clips close and when he enters, goes leisurely, and when he has done, repeats, and when he pushes, pushes hard, and as often as he withdraws, returns?" The other was edified by her speech and said, "I forswear my lover by the Lord of the Kaabeh!"

THE HAUNTED HOUSE IN BAGHDAD.

There lived once, in the city of Cairo, a merchant by name Hassan the Jeweller of Baghdad, who had great store of wealth in money and jewels and lands and houses beyond count. God had blessed him with a son of perfect beauty and elegance, rosy-cheeked, fair of face and well-shaped, whom he named Ali of Cairo and taught the Koran and science and elocution and the other branches of polite letters, till he became proficient in all manner of knowledge and was under his father's hand in trade. After a while, Hassan fell sick and his sickness increased upon him, till he made sure of death and calling his son to him, said, 'O my son, verily this world passeth away; but the next endureth for ever. Every soul must taste of death; and now, O my son, my last hour is at hand and I desire to lay on thee an injunction, which if thou observe, thou shalt abide in peace and prosperity, till thou meet God the Most High; but if thou follow it not, there shall befall thee weariness galore and thou wilt repent of having transgressed my admonitions.' 'O my father,' replied Ali, 'how shall I do other than hearken to thee and do after thine enjoinder, seeing that I am bounden by the law of God to obey thee and give ear to thy word?' 'O my son,' rejoined his father, 'I leave thee lands and houses and goods and wealth past count; wert thou each day to spend thereof five hundred dinars, thou wouldst

Night cccxxv.

miss nought of it. But, O my son, look that thou live in the fear of God and follow His Chosen One (whom may He bless and preserve) in what he is reported to have enjoined and forbidden in his traditions. Be thou assiduous in good works and the practice of beneficence and in consorting with men of worth and piety and learning; and look that thou have a care for the poor and needy and shun avarice and meanness and the converse of the wicked or those of doubtful character. Look kindly upon thy servants and family, and also upon thy wife, for she is of the daughters of the notables and is with child by thee; belike God will vouchsafe thee virtuous offspring by her.' And he went on to exhort him thus, weeping and saying, 'O my son, I beseech God the Bountiful, the Lord of the Empyrean, to deliver thee from all straits that may betide thee and grant thee His speedy relief!'

His son wept sore and said, 'O my father, I am consumed by thy words, for they are as the words of one that saith farewell.' 'Yes, O my son,' replied the merchant, 'I am ware of my condition: forget thou not my enjoinder.' Then he fell to repeating the professions of the Faith and reciting [verses of the Koran], until the appointed hour arrived, when he said, 'Draw near unto me, O my son.' So Ali drew near and he kissed him; then he sighed and his soul departed his body and he went to the mercy of God the Most High. Therewith great grief fell upon Ali; the noise of lamentation arose in his house and his father's friends flocked to him. Then he betook himself to preparing him for burial and made him a splendid funeral. They bore him to the place of prayer and prayed over him, then to the cemetery, where they buried him and recited over him what was fitting of the Koran; after which they returned to the house and condoled with the dead man's son and went each his own way. Moreover, Ali prayed the Friday prayers for his

father and let make recitations of the whole Koran for the [accustomed] space of forty days, during which time he abode in the house and went not forth, save to the place of prayer; and every Friday he visited his father's tomb.

He ceased not from his prayers and devotions, till, at last, his fellows of the sons of the merchants came in to him one day and saluting him, said, 'How long wilt thou keep up this thy mourning and neglect thy business and the company of thy friends? Verily, this is a fashion that will bring thee weariness, and thy body will suffer greatly for it.' Now, when they came in to him, Iblis the accursed was with them, prompting them, and they went on to press him to accompany them to the bazaar, whilst Iblis incited him to consent to them, till he yielded and went forth the house with them, that the will of God (blessed and exalted be He) might be fulfilled. 'Mount thy mule,' quoth they, 'and ride with us to such a garden, that we may divert us there and that thy grief and melancholy may depart from thee.' So he mounted and taking his slave, went with them to the garden in question, where they entered, and one of them went and making ready the morning-meal, brought it to them there. So they ate and made merry and sat, talking, till the end of the day, when they mounted and returned each to his own lodging, where they passed the night. On the morrow, they said to Ali, 'Come with us.' 'Whither?' asked he, and they answered, 'To such a garden; for it is finer than the first and more pleasant.' So he went with them to the garden, and one of them, going away, made ready the morning-meal and brought it to them, together with strong wine; and Ali said, 'What is this?' Quoth they, 'This is what dispels grief and unveils gladness.' And they went on to commend it to him, till they prevailed upon him and he drank with them. Then they sat, drinking and talking, till the end of the day, when each returned home.

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As for Ali, he was giddy with wine and went in, in this plight, to his wife, who said to him, 'What ails thee?' Quoth he, 'We were making merry to-day, when one of my companions brought us liquor; so my friends drank and I with them, and this giddiness came upon me.' 'O my lord,' said she, 'hast thou forgotten thy father's injunction and done that from which he forbade thee, in consorting with lewd folk?' 'These are of the sons of the merchants,' answered he; 'they are no lewd folk, only lovers of mirth and good cheer.' And he continued to lead this life with his friends, day after day, going from place to place and feasting and drinking with them, till they said to him, 'Our turns are ended, and now it is thy turn.' 'Welcome and fair welcome!' answered he; so, on the morrow, he made ready all that the case called for of meat and drink, double what they had provided, and taking cooks and tent-pitchers and coffee-makers, repaired with the others to Er Rauzeh[1] and the Nilometer, where they abode a whole month, eating and drinking and hearing music and making merry. At the end of the month, Ali found that he had spent a great sum of money; but Satan the Accursed deluded him and said to him, 'Though thou shouldst spend every day a like sum, yet would not thy wealth fail.' So he took no account of expense and continued this way of life three years, whilst his wife remonstrated with him and reminded him of his father's injunctions; but he hearkened not to her, till he had spent all his ready money, when he fell to selling his jewels and spending their price, till they were all gone. Then he sold his houses and lands and farms and gardens, one after another, till they were all gone and he had nothing left but the house in which he lived. So he tore out the marble and wood-work and sold it and spent of its price, till he had

[1] An island near Cairo, on which is situate the Nilometer. It is a favourite pleasure-resort of the Cairenes.

made an end of this also, when he bethought himself and finding that he had nothing left to spend, sold the house itself and spent the purchase-money.

Presently, the man who had bought the house came to him and said, 'Look thyself out a lodging, for I have need of my house.' So he bethought himself and considering that he had nothing requiring a house, except his wife, who had borne him a son and daughter,—for he had not a servant left,—hired a room in one of the mean lodging-houses and there took up his abode, after having lived in honour and luxury, with many servants and much wealth, and came to lack of one day's bread. Quoth his wife, 'I warned thee of this and exhorted thee to obey thy father's injunction, and thou wouldst not hearken to me; but there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Whence shall the little ones eat? Arise, go round to thy friends, the sons of the merchants: it may be they will give thee somewhat on which we may live this day.' So he went the round of his friends, one by one; but they all hid their faces from him and gave him nothing but injurious and revolting words; and he returned to his wife and said to her, 'They have given me nothing.' Thereupon she went out to beg of her neighbours wherewithal to sustain themselves and came to a woman, whom she had known in former days. When she came in to her and she saw her plight, she rose and receiving her kindly, wept and said, 'What hath befallen thee?' So she told her of her husband's conduct, and the other said, 'Welcome and fair welcome! Whatever thou needest, seek it of me, without price.' 'May God abundantly requite thee!' answered she. Then her friend gave her as much victual as would suffice herself and her family a whole month, and she took it and returned to her lodging. When her husband saw her, he wept and said, 'Whence hadst thou that?' 'I got it of such a woman,' answered she; 'for,

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when I told her what had befallen us, she failed me not in aught, but said, "Seek of me all thou needest."' 'Since thou hast this,' rejoined her husband, 'I will betake myself to a place I have in my mind; peradventure God the Most High will bring us relief.'

So saying, he took leave of her and kissing the children, went out, not knowing whither he should go, and walked on till he came to Boulac,[1] where he saw a ship about to sail for Damietta. Here he met a man, between whom and his father there had been friendship; and he saluted him and said to him, 'Whither away?' 'To Damietta,' replied Ali; 'I have friends there, whom I would fain enquire after and visit and return.' The man took him home and entreated him hospitably, then, furnishing him with victual [for the voyage] and giving him somewhat of money, embarked him on board the vessel bound for Damietta. When they reached that place, Ali landed, not knowing where to go, but, as he was walking along, a merchant saw him and had pity on him. So he carried him to his house, where he abode awhile, till he said in himself, 'How long shall this sojourning in other folks' houses last?' Then he left the merchant's house and went down to the quay, where he saw a ship ready to sail for Syria. His host provided him with victual and embarked him in the ship; and it set sail and arrived, in due course, at the coast of Syria, where he landed and journeyed till he entered Damascus. As he walked about the town, a benevolent man saw him and took him to his house, where he abode awhile, till, one day, going abroad, he saw a caravan about to start for Baghdad and bethought himself to journey thither with it. So he returned to his host and taking leave of him, set out with the caravan.

Now God (blessed and exalted be He) inclined to him the heart of one of the merchants, so that he took him

[1] The port of Cairo.

with him, and Ali ate and drank with him, till they came within one day's journey of Baghdad, where a company of highwaymen fell upon the caravan and took all they had. But few of the merchants escaped and these made each for a [separate] place of refuge. As for Ali, he made for Baghdad, where he arrived at sundown, as the gatekeepers were about to shut the gates, and said to them, 'Let me in with you.' So they admitted him and asked him whence he came and whither he was bound. 'I am a man from the city of Cairo,' replied he, 'and have with me mules laden with merchandise and slaves and servants. I forewent them, to look me out a place wherein to deposit my goods; but as I rode along on my mule, there fell upon me a company of highway robbers, who took my mule and gear; nor did I escape from them but at the last gasp.' The warders entreated him hospitably and bade him welcome, saying, 'Abide with us this night, and in the morning we will look thee out a place befitting thee.' Then he sought in his pocket and finding a dinar remaining of those he had gotten of the merchant at Boulac, gave it to one of the gatekeepers, saying, 'Take this and change it and bring us something to eat.' The man took it and went to the market, where he changed it and brought Ali bread and cooked meat. So he ate, he and the gatekeepers, and he lay the night with them.

On the morrow, one of the warders carried him to a merchant of the town, to whom he told the same story, and he believed him, deeming that he was a merchant and had with him loads of merchandise. So he took him up into his shop and entreated him with honour. Moreover, he sent to his house for a splendid suit of his own apparel for him and carried him to the bath. So, [quoth Ali], I went with him to the bath, and when we came out, he brought me to his house, where he caused set the morning-meal before us, and we ate and made merry.

Then said he to one of his slaves, "Harkye, Mesoud, take this thy lord and show him the two houses in such a place. Whichever pleases him of them, give him the key of it and come back." So I went with the slave, till we came to a place where stood three houses, side by side, new and shut up. He opened the first and the second, and I looked at them; after which he said to me, "Of which of them shall I give thee the key?" "To whom does yon large house belong?" asked I. "To us," answered he; and I said, "Open it, that I may view it." Quoth he, "Thou hast no call to it." "Wherefore?" asked I; and he, "Because it is haunted, and none lodges there but in the morning he is a dead man; nor do we use to open the door, to take out the corpse, but mount the roof of one of the other two houses and take it up thence. For this reason, my master has abandoned the house and says, 'I will never again give it to any one.'" Quoth I, "Open it, that I may view it;" and I said in myself, "This is what I seek. I will pass the night there and in the morning be a dead man and be at peace from this miserable plight of mine." So he opened it and I entered and found it a splendid house, without its like; and I said to the slave, "I will have none other than this house; give me the key." But he answered, "I will not give thee this key till I consult my master," and going to the latter, said to him, "The Egyptian merchant saith, 'I will lodge in none but the great house.'"

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When the merchant heard this, he rose and coming to Ali, said to him, 'O my lord, thou hast no need of this house.' But he replied, 'I will lodge in none other than this; for I care nothing for this saying.'[1] 'Then,' said the other, 'write me an acknowledgment that, if aught happen to thee, I am not responsible.' 'So be it,' answered Ali; whereupon the merchant fetched an assessor

[1] *i.e.* the report of its being haunted.

from the Cadi's court and taking of him the prescribed acknowledgment, delivered him the key, which he took and entered the house. The merchant sent him bedding by a slave, who spread it for him on the bench behind the door and went away. Presently Ali went into the inner court and seeing there a well with a bucket, let down the latter and drew water, with which he made the ablution and prayed the obligatory prayers. Then he sat awhile, till the merchant's slave brought him the evening meal from his master's house, together with a lamp, a candle and candlestick, a basin and ewer and a gugglet; after which he left him and returned home. Ali lighted the candle and supped at his ease and prayed the evening prayer; after which he said to himself, 'Let us take the bed and go upstairs and sleep there, rather than here.' So he took the bed and carried it upstairs, where he found a splendid saloon, with gilded ceiling and walls and floor of variegated marble. He spread his bed there and sitting down, began to recite somewhat of the sublime Koran, when suddenly he heard one calling to him and saying, 'O Ali, O son of Hassan, shall I send thee down the gold?' And he answered, 'Send away.'

Hardly had he spoken, when pieces of gold began to rain down on him, like [pebbles from] a mangonel, nor stinted till the saloon was full. Then said the voice, 'Set me free, that I may go my way; for I have made an end of my service and have delivered unto thee that which was committed to me for thee.' Quoth Ali, 'I adjure thee by the Most High God to tell me the history of this gold.' 'This is a treasure that was enchanted to thee of old time,' replied the voice; 'and to every one, who entered the house, we used to come and say to him, "O Ali, O son of Hassan, shall we send down the gold?" Whereat he would be affrighted and cry out, and we would come down to him and break his neck and go away. But, when thou

camest and we accosted thee by thy name and that of thy father, saying, "Shall we send thee down the gold?" and thou madest answer, saying, "Send away," we knew thee for the owner of it and sent it down. Moreover, there is yet another treasure for thee in the land of Yemen, whither thou wouldst do well to journey and fetch it. And now I would have thee set me free, that I may go my way.' 'By Allah,' said Ali, 'I will not set thee free, till thou bring me hither the treasure from Yemen!' Quoth the voice, 'If I bring it thee, wilt thou release me and the servant of the other treasure also?' 'Yes,' replied Ali; and the genie said, 'Swear to me.' So he swore to him, and he was about to go away, when Ali said to him, 'I have one other service to ask of thee.' 'What is that?' asked the genie. Quoth Ali, 'I have a wife and children at Cairo, in such a place; thou must fetch them to me, at their ease and without hurt.' 'I will bring them to thee in state,' answered the genie, 'in a litter, with a train of slaves and servants, together with the treasure from Yemen, if it be the will of God the Most High.' Then he took of him leave of absence for three days, at the end of which time all this should be with him, and departed.

When it was morning, Ali went round about the saloon, seeking a place wherein to lay the gold, and saw in the wall of the dais a marble panel, with a knob in it. So he pressed the knob and the panel slid back and discovered a door, which he opened and entering, found a great closet, full of linen bags. So he took out the bags and fell to filling them with gold and replacing them in the closet, till he had transported thither the whole treasure, whereupon he shut the door and pressing the knob, the panel returned to its place. Then he went down and seated himself on the bench behind the door. Presently, there came a knock at the door; so he opened it and found the merchant's slave, who, seeing him, returned in haste to his master with the

good tidings, saying, 'O my Lord, the merchant, who is lodged in the haunted house, is alive and well and sits on the bench behind the door.' When the merchant heard this, he rose joyfully and went to the house, taking breakfast with him; and when he saw Ali, he embraced him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'How hath God dealt with thee?' 'Right well,' answered Ali. 'I slept upstairs in the marble saloon.' Quoth the merchant, 'Did aught come to thee or didst thou see aught?' 'No,' replied Ali; 'I recited some little of the Koran and slept till morning, when I arose and after making the ablution and praying, came down and seated myself on the bench behind the door.' 'Praised be God for safety!' exclaimed the merchant, then left him and presently sent him slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, with furniture. They swept the house from top to bottom and furnished it magnificently, after which three black slaves and the like number of white and four slave-girls abode with him, to serve him, and the rest returned to their master's house. When the merchants heard of him, they sent him presents of all manner of things of price, even to meat and drink and clothes, and took him with them in the market, saying, 'When will thy baggage arrive?' And he answered, 'After three days it will come."

Accordingly, when the three days had elapsed, the servant of the first treasure came to him and said, 'Go forth and meet thy harem, together with the treasure I have brought thee from Yemen, part of which is by way of costly merchandise; but the slaves, black and white, and the horses and camels and mules are all of the Jinn. (Now the genie, when he betook himself to Cairo, found Ali's wife and children in sore straits for nakedness and hunger; so he carried them forth of the town in a travelling-litter and clad them in sumptuous raiment of that which was in the treasure of Yemen.) When Ali heard

this, he rose and repairing to the merchants, said to them, 'Come, go forth the city with me, to meet the caravan, with my merchandise, and honour me with the presence of your harems, to meet my harem.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and sending for their harems, went forth all together and alighted in one of the gardens without the city. As they sat talking, behold, a cloud of dust arose out of the heart of the desert, and they came out to see what it was. Presently, it lifted and discovered mules and muleteers and tent-pitchers and linkmen, who came on, singing and dancing, till they reached the garden, when the chief of the muleteers came up to Ali and kissing his hand, said to him, 'O my lord, we have been long on the way, for we thought to enter some days ago; but we were in fear of the highway-robbers, so abode in our station four days, till God the Most High rid us of them.'

Then the merchants mounted their mules and rode forward with the caravan, wondering at the [number of] mules laden with chests, whilst their harems followed them, with Ali's harem, marvelling at the richness of the apparel of his wife and children and saying to each other, 'Verily, the King of Baghdad hath no such raiment, no, nor any other of the kings or merchants or notables.' So they entered Baghdad in great state and rode on till they came to Ali's house, where they alighted and brought the mules and their burdens into the midst of the courtyard. Then they unloaded them and laid up the goods in the storehouses, whilst the merchants' wives went up with Ali's family to the saloon, which they found as it were a luxuriant garden, spread with magnificent furniture. They sat in mirth and good cheer till noon, when they brought them up the noon meal, of all manner meats and sweetmeats of the best; and they ate and drank costly sherbets and perfumed themselves thereafter with rose-water and scented woods. Then they took leave and departed, men

Night cccxxx.

and women. When the merchants returned home, they all sent presents to Ali, according to their conditions; and their wives likewise sent presents to his wife, so that there came to them great plenty of slaves, black and white and male and female, and store of all manner goods, such as grain and sugar and so forth, beyond count. As for the landlord of the house, he abode with Ali and quitted him not, but said to him, 'Let the slaves and servants take the mules and the other cattle into one of my other houses, to rest.' Quoth Ali, 'They set out again to-night for such a place.' Then he gave them leave to go forth the city, that they might set out on their journey at nightfall; whereupon they took leave of him forthright and departing the city, flew off through the air to their several abodes.

Ali and the merchant sat together till a third of the night was past, when the latter returned to his own house and Ali went up to his wife and children and greeted them, saying, 'What hath befallen you all this time?' So she told him what they had suffered of hunger and nakedness and toil, and he said, 'Praised be God for safety! How did ye come?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I was asleep, with my children, yesternight, when suddenly one raised us from the ground and carried us through the air, without doing us any hurt, nor did he give over flying with us, till he set us down in a place as it were a Bedouin camping-place, where we saw laden mules and a litter borne upon two great mules, and round them servants, boys and men. So I said to them, "Who are ye and what are these loads and where are we?" And they answered, "We are the servants of the merchant Ali ibn Hassan of Cairo, who has sent us to fetch you to him at Baghdad." Quoth I, "Is it far or near, hence to Baghdad?" "Near," answered they; "there lies but the darkness of the night between us and the city." Then they mounted us in the litter, and on the morrow, we found

ourselves with thee, without having suffered any hurt.' 'Who gave you these clothes?' asked he, and she said, 'The chief of the caravan opened one of the chests on the mules and taking out the clothes, clad me and the children each in a suit; after which he locked the chest and gave me the key, saying, "Take care of it, till thou give it to thy husband." And here it is, safe.' So saying, she gave him the key, and he said, 'Dost thou know the chest?' 'Yes,' answered she. So he took her down to the magazine and she pointed it out, whereupon he put the key in the lock and opened the chest, in which he found much raiment and the keys of all the other chests. So he took them out and fell to opening the other chests, one after another, and feasting his eyes upon the jewels and precious metals they contained, whose like was not found with any of the kings; after which he locked them again and took the keys, saying to his wife, 'This is of the bounty of God the Most High.'

Then he returned with her to the saloon and bringing her to the secret panel, pressed the knob and opened the door of the closet, into which he entered with her and showed her the gold he had laid up there. Quoth she, 'Whence hadst thou all this?' 'It came to me by the grace of my Lord,' answered he and told her all that had befallen him, from first to last. 'O my lord,' said she, 'all this comes of the blessing of thy father's prayers, whenas he prayed for thee, before his death, saying, "I beseech God to cast thee into no strait, except He bring thee speedy deliverance [therefrom]!" So praised be God the Most High for that He hath brought thee relief and hath requited thee with more than thou didst lose! But God on thee, O my lord, return not to thy sometime fashion and companying with folk of lewd life; but look thou fear God the Most High, both in public and private!' And she went on to admonish him. Quoth he, 'I accept thine

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admonition and beg God the Most High to remove the wicked from us and stablish us in His obedience and in the observance of the law of His Prophet, on whom be peace and salvation!'

Ali and his wife and children were now in all delight of life and gladness; and he opened him a shop in the merchants' bazaar and stocking it with jewels and precious metals, sat therein with his children and servants. He soon became the most considerable of the merchants of Baghdad, and his report reached the King of that city, who sent a messenger to command his attendance. So he took four trays of red gold and filling them with jewels and precious metals, such as no king possessed, went up to the palace and presenting himself before the prince, kissed the earth before him and wished him continuance of glory and prosperity, in the best words he could command. 'O merchant,' said the King, 'thou honourest our city with thy presence;' and Ali rejoined, saying, 'O King of the age, thy slave hath brought thee a present and hopes for acceptance thereof from thy favour.' So saying, he laid the four trays before the King, who uncovered them and seeing that they contained jewels, whose like he possessed not and whose worth equalled treasuries of money, said, 'O merchant, thy present is accepted, and so God please, we will requite thee with its like.' And Ali kissed his hands and went away. Then the King called his grandees and said to them, 'How many kings have sought my daughter in marriage?' 'Many,' answered they. 'Hath any of them given me the like of this gift?' asked he. 'Not one,' replied they; 'for that none of them hath its like;' and he said, 'I have consulted God the Most High,[1] as to marrying my daughter to this merchant. What say ye?' 'Be it as thou deemest,' answered they. Then he bade the eunuch carry the four trays into his

[1] *i.e.* by the *Sortes Coranicæ* or other similar process.

harem and going in to his wife, laid them before her. She uncovered them and seeing therein that whose like she possessed not,—no, nor a fraction thereof,—said to him, 'Of which of the kings hadst thou these? Peradventure of one of those that seek our daughter in marriage?' 'Not so,' answered he, 'I had them of an Egyptian merchant, who is lately come to our city. I heard tell of him and sent to command him to us, thinking to make his acquaintance, so haply we might find with him somewhat of jewels and buy them of him for our daughter's equipment. He obeyed the summons and brought us these four trays, as a present, and I saw him to be a handsome and elegant young man[1] of dignified aspect and accomplished wit, well nigh as he were of the sons of the kings. Wherefore my heart inclined to him and I rejoiced in him and thought to marry my daughter to him.' Then he told her what had passed between himself and his grandees on the subject and added, 'But what sayst thou?' 'O King of the age,' answered she, 'the affair is in God's hand, and thine, and what God willeth shall come to pass.' 'If it be His will,' rejoined the King, 'I will marry her to none other than this young man.'

Night cccxxxii.

So, on the morrow, he went out to his Divan and sending for Ali and the rest of the merchants of Baghdad, bade them be seated. Then he summoned the Cadi of the Divan and said to him, 'O Cadi, draw up the contract of marriage between my daughter and the merchant Ali of Cairo.' But the latter said, 'Thy pardon, O our lord the Sultan! It befits not that a merchant, such as I, be the King's son-in-law.' Quoth the King, 'It is my will to bestow this favour upon thee, as well as the Vizierate.' And he invested him forthwith in the Vizier's habit. Then Ali sat down in the

[1] The word *shabb* (young man) is applied by the Arabs to men of all ages from early adolescence to forty or even (according to some authorities) fifty.

seat of the Vizierate and said, 'O King of the age, thou hast bestowed on me this; and indeed I am honoured by thy bounties; but hear one word from me.' 'Say on,' answered the King, 'and fear not.' Quoth Ali, 'Since it is thine august will to marry thy daughter, thou wouldst do better to marry her to my son.' 'Hast thou then a son?' asked the King; and Ali replied, 'Yes.' 'Send for him forthright,' said the King; whereupon, 'I hear and obey,' answered Ali and sent a servant to fetch his son, who came and kissing the ground before the King, stood in an attitude of respect. The King looked at him and seeing him to be yet comelier than his daughter and goodlier than she in symmetry and brightness and perfection, said to him, 'O my son, what is thy name?' 'O our lord the Sultan,' replied the young man, who was then fourteen years old, 'my name is Hassan.' Then the Sultan said to the Cadi, 'Write the contract of marriage between my daughter Husn el Wujoud and Hassan, son of the merchant Ali of Cairo.' So he wrote the contract of marriage between them, and the affair was ended on the goodliest wise; after which all in the Divan went their ways and the merchants escorted the Vizier Ali to his house, where they gave him joy of his advancement and departed. Then he went in to his wife, who, seeing him clad in the Vizier's habit, exclaimed, 'What is this?' So he told her all that had passed, and she rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy.

On the morrow, he went up to the Divan, where the King received him with especial favour and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'O Vizier, we purpose to celebrate the wedding festivities and bring thy son in to our daughter.' 'O our lord the Sultan,' replied Ali, 'that thou deemest good is good.' So the Sultan gave orders for the festivities, and they decorated the city and held high festival thirty days, in all cheer and gladness; at the end of which time, the Vizier Ali's son Hassan went in to

the princess and enjoyed her beauty and grace. When the queen saw her daughter's husband, she conceived a warm affection for him, and in like manner she rejoiced greatly in his mother. Then the King bade build his son-in-law a palace beside his own; so they built him with all speed a splendid palace, in which he took up his abode; and his mother used to abide with her son some days and then return to her own house. After awhile, the queen said to her husband, 'O King of the age, Hassan's mother cannot take up her abode with her son and leave the Vizier; neither can she abide with her husband and leave her son.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' replied the King and bade build a third palace beside the two others, which being done in a few days, he caused remove thither the Vizier's goods, and the latter and his wife took up their abode there. Now the three palaces communicated with one another, so that, when the King had a mind to speak with the Vizier by night, he would go to him or send to fetch him; and so with Hassan and his father and mother.

Night cccxxxiii. They dwelt thus in the greatest happiness and contentment awhile, till the King fell ill and his sickness increased on him. So he summoned the grandees of his realm and said to them, 'There is come upon me a sore sickness, peradventure a mortal one, and I have therefore summoned you to consult you respecting a certain matter, on which I would have you counsel me as you deem well.' 'What is the matter of which thou wouldst take counsel with us, O King?' asked they; and he answered, 'I am old and sickly and I fear for the realm, after me, from the enemies; so I would have you all agree upon some one, that I may proclaim him king in my lifetime and so ye may be at ease.' Whereupon quoth they all, 'We all approve of thy son-in-law Hassan, son of the Vizier Ali; for we have seen the perfectness of his wit and understanding, and he knows the rank of all, great and small.'

'Are ye indeed agreed upon this?' asked the King, and they answered, 'Yes.' 'Peradventure,' quoth he, 'ye say this to my face, of respect for me; but, behind my back, ye will say otherwise.' But they all answered, saying, 'By Allah, our word, in public and in private, is one, varying not; and we accept him frankly and with all our hearts.' 'Since the case is thus,' said the King, 'bring the Cadi of the Holy Law and all the chamberlains and captains and officers of state before me to-morrow, and we will settle the affair on the goodliest wise.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and withdrawing, notified all the doctors of the law and the chief Amirs.

So, on the morrow, they came up to the Divan and saluted the King, who said to them, 'O Amirs of Baghdad, whom will ye have to be king over you after me, that I may invest him in my lifetime, in the presence of you all?' Quoth they all, 'We are agreed upon thy daughter's husband, Hassan, son of the Vizier Ali.' 'If it be so,' said the King, 'go all of you and bring him before me.' So they all arose and repairing to Hassan's palace, said to him, 'Come with us to the King.' 'Wherefore?' asked he, and they answered, 'For a thing that will advantage both us and thee.' So he went in with them to the King and kissed the ground before the latter, who bade him be seated and said to him, 'O Hassan, all the Amirs have approved of thee and agreed to make thee king over them after me; and it is my purpose to proclaim thee, whilst I yet live, and so make an end of the business.' But Hassan arose and kissing the earth once more before the King, said to him, 'O our lord the King, among the Amirs there be [many] who are older than I and greater of worth; hold me quit therefore of this thing.' Quoth all the Amirs, 'We consent not but that thou be king over us.' Then said Hassan, 'My father is older than I, and he and I are one thing; and it befits not to advance me

over him.' But Ali said, 'I will consent to nothing but what is pleasing to my brethren; and they have all chosen and agreed upon thee. Wherefore gainsay thou not the King's commandment and that of thy brethren.' And Hassan hung his head in abashment before the King and his father. Then said the King to the Amirs, 'Do ye all accept of him?' 'We do,' answered they and recited thereupon seven Fatihehs.[1] So the King said to the Cadi, 'Draw up a legal act testifying of these Amirs that they are agreed to make my daughter's husband Hassan king over them.' So the Cadi wrote the act and made it executory,[2] after they had all taken the oath of fealty to Hassan. Then the King invested him with the insignia of royalty and bade him take his seat on the throne; whereupon they all arose and kissed King Hassan's hands and did homage to him.

The new king dispensed justice among the people that day, in right royal fashion, and invested the grandees of the realm in splendid robes of honour. When the Divan broke up, he went in to his father-in-law and kissed his hands; and the old King said to him, 'O my son, look thou govern the people in the fear of God.' 'O my father,' replied Hassan, 'through thy prayers for me, the grace of God will come to me.' Then he entered his own palace and was met by his wife and her mother and their attendants, who kissed his hands and gave him joy of his advancement, saying, 'This is a blessed day.' Then he went in to his father and mother, who rejoiced with an exceeding joy in that which God had vouchsafed him of his advancement to the kingship, and his father exhorted him to the fear of God and to affectionate solicitude in his dealings with his subjects. He passed the night in joy and gladness, and on the morrow, having prayed the appointed

Night cccxxxiv.

[1] *i.e.* recited the first chapter of the Koran seven times.

[2] *i.e.* affixed the *tughraa*, the royal seal or rather countermark.

prayers, concluding with the customary recitation of part of the Koran, he repaired to the Divan, whither came all his officers and dignitaries. He passed the day in dispensing justice among his subjects, enjoining to beneficence and forbidding from iniquity and appointing and displacing, till nightfall, when the Divan broke up, after the goodliest fashion, and all present withdrew and went each his own way. Then he arose and went in to the palace, where he found his father-in-law's sickness grown heavy upon him and said to him, 'May no hurt befall thee!' At this the old King opened his eyes and said, 'O Hassan!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' replied the young man. Quoth the old King, 'My last hour is at hand: be careful of thy wife and her mother and look thou fear God and honour thy parents, being still in awe of the majesty of the Requiting King and remembering that He commandeth to justice and beneficence.' And Hassan replied, 'I hear and obey.'

The old King lingered three days after this and was then received into the mercy of God the Most High. They paid him the last offices and buried him and held over him readings and recitations of the Koran, to the end of the [customary] forty days. And King Hassan, son of the Vizier, reigned in his stead, and his subjects rejoiced in him and all his days were gladness. Moreover, his father ceased not to be his chief Vizier on his right hand, and he took to himself another Vizier, to be at his left hand. His reign was a prosperous one and he abode long King in Baghdad. God blessed him, by the old King's daughter, with three sons, who inherited the kingdom after him; and they abode in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies. And glory be to Him who is eternal and in whose hand are annulment and confirmation!

THE PILGRIM AND THE OLD WOMAN WHO DWELT IN THE DESERT.

A man of the pilgrims once slept a long sleep and awaking, found no trace of the caravan. So he arose and walked on, but lost his way and presently came to a tent, at whose door he saw an old woman and a dog by her, asleep. He went up to the tent and saluting the old woman, sought of her food. 'Go to yonder valley,' said she, 'and catch thy sufficiency of serpents, that I may broil of them for thee and give thee to eat.' 'I dare not catch serpents,' answered the pilgrim; 'nor did I ever eat them.' Quoth the old woman, 'I will go with thee and catch them; fear not.' So she went with him, followed by the dog, to the valley, and catching a sufficient number of serpents, proceeded to broil them. He saw nothing for it but to eat, for fear of hunger and exhaustion; so he ate of the serpents.

Then he was athirst and asked for water to drink. 'Go to the spring and drink,' answered she. So he went to the spring and found the water thereof bitter; yet needs must he drink of it, for all its bitterness, because of the violence of his thirst. Then he returned to the old woman and said to her, 'O old woman, I marvel at thy choosing to abide in this place and putting up with such meat and drink!' 'And how is it then in thy country?' asked she. 'In my country,' answered he, 'are wide and spacious houses and ripe and delicious fruits and sweet and abundant waters and goodly viands and fat meats and plentiful flocks and all things pleasant and all the goods of life, the like whereof are not, save in the Paradise that God the Most High hath promised to His pious servants.' 'All this,' replied she, 'have I heard: but tell me, have you a Sultan who ruleth over you and is tyrannical in his rule

Night ccccxxxv.

and under whose hand you are, who, if one of you commit a fault, taketh his goods and undoth him and who, when he will, turneth you out of your houses and uprooteth you, stock and branch?' 'Indeed, that may be,' answered the man. 'Then, by Allah,' rejoined she, 'these your delicious viands and dainty life and pleasant estate, with tyranny and oppression, are but a corroding poison, in comparison wherewith, our food and fashion, with freedom and safety, are a healthful medicine. Hast thou not heard that the best of all boons, after the true Faith, are health and security?'

Now these[1] [quoth he who tells the tale] may be by the just rule of the Sultan, the Vicar of God in His earth, and the goodness of his policy. The Sultan of times past needed but little awfulness, for that, when the people saw him, they feared him; but the Sultan of these days hath need of the most accomplished policy and the utmost majesty, for that men are not as men of time past and this our age is one of folk depraved and greatly calamitous, noted for folly and hardness of heart and inclined to hatred and enmity. If, therefore, the Sultan that is set over them be (which God the Most High forfend) weak or lack of policy and majesty, without doubt, this will be the cause of the ruin of the land. Quoth the proverb, 'A hundred years of the Sultan's tyranny, rather than one of the tyranny of the people, one over another.' When the people oppress one another, God setteth over them a tyrannical Sultan and a despotic King. Thus it is told in history that there was, one day, presented to El Hejjaj ben Yousuf[2] a docket, in which was written, 'Fear God and oppress not His servants with all manner of oppression.' When he read this, he mounted the pulpit, (for he was ready of speech,) and said, 'O folk, God the Most High

[1] *i.e.* health and security.

[2] See Vol. III. p. 225, note 1.

hath set me over you, by reason of your [evil] deeds; and though I die, yet will ye not be delivered from oppression, with your evil deeds; for God the Most High hath created many like unto me. If it be not I, it will be a more fertile than I in mischief and a mightier in oppression and a more strenuous in violence, even as saith the poet:

For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he oppresst.

Tyranny is feared: but justice is the best of all things. We beg God to better our case.'

ABOULHUSN AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL TAWEDDUD.

There was once in Baghdad a man of rank and rich in money and houses and lands, who was one of the chiefs of the merchants, and God had largely endowed him with worldly goods, but had not vouchsafed him what he longed for of offspring; and there passed over him a long space of time, without his being blessed with children, male or female. His years waxed great, his bones became wasted and his back bent, and weakness and trouble increased on him, and he feared the loss of his wealth and possessions, seeing he had no child, whom he might make his heir and by whom he should be remembered. So he betook himself with supplication to God the Most High, fasting by day and rising by night [to pray]. Moreover, he made vows to God the Living, the Eternal, and visited the pious and was instant in supplication to the Most High, till He gave ear to him and accepted his prayer and took pity on his striving and complaining; so that, before many days were past, he lay with one of his women and she became with child by him the same night. She accomplished the months of her pregnancy and casting her burden, bore a male child as he were a piece of the moon; whereupon the merchant, in his gratitude to God, (to whom belong

might and majesty,) fulfilled his vows and gave alms and clothed the widow and the orphan.

On the seventh night after the boy's birth, he named him Aboulhusn, and the wet-nurses suckled him and the dry-nurses dandled him and the slaves and servants carried him, till he grew up and throve and learnt the sublime Koran and the ordinances of Islam and the things of the True Faith. Moreover, he learned writing and poetry and mathematics and archery and became the pearl of his age and the goodliest of the folk of his time and his day, fair of face and fluent of tongue, bearing himself with a proud and graceful port and glorying in his symmetry and amorous grace. His cheeks were red and his forehead white and brilliant and the tender down of the whiskers darkened upon his face, even as saith one, describing him:

The Spring of the down on his cheeks to the eye shows clear; And how shall the rose endure, after Spring is here?
Dost thou not see that the growth on his cheek, forsooth, A violet is, that forth of its leaves doth peer?

He abode awhile with his father, in the best of case, and the latter rejoiced and delighted in him, till he came to man's estate, when the merchant one day made him sit down before him and said to him, 'O my son, the appointed term draws near; my last hour is at hand and it remains but to meet God (to whom belong might and majesty). I leave thee what shall suffice thee, even to thy son's son, of money and farms and houses and gardens; wherefore, O my son, fear thou God the Most High in [dealing with] that which I leave thee and follow none but those who will help thee [in this].' Not long after, he sickened and died; so his son ordered his funeral, after the goodliest fashion, and burying him, returned to his house and sat mourning for him [many] days and nights, till certain of his friends came in to him and said to him, 'Whoso leaveth the like of thee after him is not dead;

indeed, what is past is past and mourning beseemeth none but girls and cloistered women.' And they ceased not from him, till they wrought on him to enter the bath and break off his mourning. Then he forgot his father's injunctions, and his head was turned by his riches; he thought fortune would still abide with him, as it was, and that wealth would never come to an end. So he ate and drank and made merry and took his pleasure and gave gifts of money and raiment and was profuse with gold and gave himself up to eating fowls and breaking the seals of wine-flasks and listening to songs and to the laugh of the wine, as it gurgled from the flagon; nor did he give over this way of life, till his wealth was wasted and the case became straitened [upon him] and he bit his hands [for repentance] and gone was all he had.

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In good sooth, he had nothing left, after that which he had squandered, but a slave-girl that his father had bequeathed to him with the rest of his estate: her name was Taweddud and she had no equal in beauty and grace and brightness and symmetry and all perfection. She was past mistress in all manner of arts and accomplishments and endowed with [many] excellences, surpassing all the folk of her age and time. She was grown more notorious than a way-mark,[1] for the versatility of her genius, and outdid the fair both in theory and practice and elegant and flexile grace, more by token that she was five feet high and in conjunction with fair fortune, with strait arched brows, as they were the crescent moon of Shaaban,[2] and

[1] A pile of stones or other land-mark, set up to show the way to travellers in the desert.

[2] The eyebrows of a beautiful woman are usually compared to the new moon of Ramazan (see note, Vol. I. p. 71). The meaning here is the same, the allusion being apparently to the eagerness with which the pagan Arabs may be supposed to have watched for the appearance of the new moon of Shaaban, as giving the signal for the renewal of predatory excursions, after the enforced close-time or *Trêve de Dieu* of the holy month Rejeb.

eyes like those of gazelles, nose like the point of the sabre and cheeks like blood-red anemones, mouth like Solomon's seal and teeth like necklaces of pearls, navel holding an ounce of benzoin ointment and waist more slender than his body whom love hath wasted and whom concealment [of his passion] hath made sick, and buttocks heavier than two hills of sand; brief, in all she answered to the saying of him who says:

Her fair shape ravisheth, if face to face she did appear, And if she turn, for severance from her she slayeth sheer.
Sun-like, full-moon-like, sapling-like, unto her character Estrangement nowise appertains nor cruelty austere.
Under the bosom of her shift the garths of Eden are, and the full-moon revolveth still upon her neck-rings' sphere.

She seemed [at once] a rising full moon and a browsing gazelle, a girl of nine and five,[1] putting to shame the moon and the sun, even as saith of her the eloquent and ingenious poet:

The likeness of the full-moon, faring o'er The heavens, five and five and after four;
'Tis not my fault, if she have made of me Its likeness, when it first in heaven doth soar.

White of skin, odoriferous of breath, it seemed as if she were [at once] fashioned of fire and moulded of crystal; rose-red was the cheek of her and perfect her shape and figure; even as saith of her one, describing her:

Scented with sandal and musk, right proudly doth she go, With gold and silver and rose and saffron-colour aglow.
A flower in a garden she is, a pearl in an ouch of gold Or an image in chapel set for worship of high and low.
Slender and shapely she is; vivacity bids her arise, But the weight of her hips says, "Sit, or softly and slowly go."

[1] *Quære* fourteen [years old].

Whenas her favours I seek and sue for my heart's desire, "Be gracious," her beauty says; but her coquetry answers, "No."
Glory to Him who made beauty her portion, and that Of her lover to be the prate of the censurers, heigho!

Indeed, she captivated all who saw her, with the excellence of her beauty and the sweetness of her smile, and transpierced them with the arrows she launched from her eyes; and withal she was eloquent of speech and excellently skilled in poetry.

When Aboulhusn had squandered all his wealth and there remained to him nought but this slave-girl, when [I say] the wretchedness of his plight became manifest to him, he abode three days without tasting food or taking rest in sleep, and Taweddud said to him, 'O my lord, carry me to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, fifth of the sons of Abbas, and seek of him ten thousand dinars to my price. If he deem me dear at this price, say to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, my slave is worth more than this: do but prove her, and her value will be magnified in thine eyes, for she hath not her equal, and it were unfit that any but thou should possess her." And beware, O my lord, of selling me for less than the sum I have named, for it is but little for the like of me.' (Now Aboulhusn knew not her worth nor that she had no equal in her day.) So he carried her to the Khalif, to whom he repeated what she had bidden him say, and the Khalif said to her, 'What is thy name?' 'Taweddud,' answered she. 'O Taweddud,' asked he, 'in what branches of knowledge dost thou excel?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I am versed in syntax and poetry and jurisprudence and exegesis and lexicography and music and the knowledge of the Divine ordinances and in arithmetic and geodesy and the fables of the ancients. I know the sublime Koran [by heart] and have read it according to the seven and the ten and the fourteen [modes]. I know the number of its

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chapters and verses and sections and words and letters and its halves and fourths and eighths and tenths, the number of acts of adoration, that occur in it, and what there is in it of cancelling and cancelled;[1] also what parts of it were revealed at Medina and what at Mecca and the manner of the different revelations. I know the Holy Traditions, their history and variants and the manner of their recitation and interpretation, together with those of them whose chain of descent is unbroken and those for which it is broken; and I have studied the exact sciences, geometry and philosophy and medicine and logic and rhetoric and composition; and I know many things and am passionately fond of poetry. I can play the lute and know its gamut and notation and so forth. If I sing and dance, I ravish, and if I adorn and perfume myself, I slay. In fine, I have reached a pitch of perfection such as can only be estimated by those who are stablished in knowledge.'[2]

When the Khalif heard her words, he wondered at them and at the eloquence of her speech, seeing the tenderness of her age, and turning to Aboulhusn, said to him, 'I will summon those who shall examine her in all she lays claim to; if she answer [correctly,] I will give thee the price thou askest for her and more; and if not, thou art fitter to [possess] her [than I].' 'With all my heart, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aboulhusn. So the Khalif wrote to the Viceroy of Bassora, to send him Ibrahim ben Siyyar the poet, who was the first man of his day in argument and eloquence and poetry and logic, and bade him bring with him readers of the Koran and doctors of the law and physicians and astrologers and sages and geometricians and philosophers; and Ibrahim was more learned than all. In a little while they all arrived at the Khalif's palace, knowing not what was to do, and the latter sent

[1] *i.e.* the abrogated passages and those by which they are abrogated.
[2] *Koran* iv. 160.

for them to his sitting-chamber and bade them be seated. So they sat down and he bade fetch the damsel Taweddud, who came and unveiling, showed herself, as she were a sparkling star. The Khalif caused set her a stool of gold; and she saluted and speaking with an eloquent tongue, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, bid the learned men present contend with me in argument.' So he said to them, 'I desire of you that ye dispute with this damsel on the things of her faith and make void her argument, in all she avoucheth;' and they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey God and thee, O Commander of the Faithful.'

Thereupon Taweddud bowed her head and said, 'Which of you is the doctor of the law, the scholar, versed in the interpretation of the Koran and in the Traditions?' Quoth one of them, 'I am the man thou seekest.' 'Then,' said she, 'ask me of what thou wilt.' Quoth the doctor, 'Hast thou read the precious book of God and dost thou know its abrogating and abrogated parts and hast thou meditated its verses and expressions?' 'Yes,' answered she. 'Then,' said he, 'I will proceed to question thee of the obligatory ordinances and the immutable institutions: so tell me of these, O damsel, and who is thy Lord, who thy prophet, and who thy brethren. Also, what is thy [point of] fronting [in prayer], what thine exemplar, what thy path and what thy highway?' 'Allah is my Lord,' replied she, 'and Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) my prophet and the true-believers are my brethren. The Koran is my exemplar and the Kaabeh my [point of] fronting; the practice of good is my path and the Sunneh[1] my highway.' (Q.) 'With what do we know God the Most High?' (A.) 'With the understanding.' (Q.) 'And what is the understanding?' (A.) 'It is of two kinds, natural and acquired. The first is that which God (to whom belong might and majesty) bestoweth on whom

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[1] Traditions of the Prophet.

He will of His servants; and the other is that which men acquire by dint of study and fair knowledge.' (Q.) 'Thou hast answered well. Where is the seat of the understanding?' (A.) 'God casteth it in the heart, whence its lustre ascendeth to the brain and there becometh fixed.' (Q.) How knowest thou the Prophet of God?' (A.) 'By the reading of God's Holy Book and by signs and proofs and portents and miracles.' (Q.) 'What are the obligatory ordinances and the immutable institutions?' (A.) 'The obligatory ordinances are five in number. (1) Testification that there is no god but God alone, that He hath no partner in divinity and that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle. (2) The scrupulous performance of the enjoined prayers. (3) The payment of the poor-rate. (4) Fasting Ramazan. (5) The performance of the Pilgrimage to God's Holy House [at Mecca] for all to whom it is possible. The immutable institutions are four in number; to wit, night and day and sun and moon, the which build up life and hope, neither knoweth any son of Adam if they will be destroyed on the day of Judgment.' (Q.) 'What are the obligatory rites of the Faith?' (A.) 'Prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, fighting for the Faith and abstinence from what is forbidden.' (Q.) 'Why dost thou stand up to pray?' (A.) 'To express the devout intent of the slave submitting himself to [or acknowledging] the Divinity.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions precedent of standing up to pray?' (A.) 'Purification, covering the privy parts, the avoidance of soiled clothes, standing on a clean place, fronting [the Kaabeh,] a standing posture, the intent[1] and the magnification of prohibition.'[2] (Q.) 'With what shouldest thou go forth thy house to pray?'

[1] *i.e.* saying, "I purpose to pray such and such prayers."

[2] *i.e.* saying, "God is most Great!" So called, because its pronunciation after that of the *niyeh* or intent, prohibits the speaking of any words previous to prayer.

(A.) 'With an intent of worship.'[1] (Q.) 'With what intent shouldest thou enter the mosque?' (A.) 'With an intent of service.'[1] (Q.) 'Why do we front the Kaabeh?' (A.) 'In obedience to three Divine and one Traditional ordinance.' Q. 'What is the commencement, the consecration and the dissolution [end] of prayer?' (A.) 'Purification, the magnification of prohibition and the salutation of the angels [concluding prayer].' (Q.) 'What of him who neglecteth prayer?' (A.) 'It is reported, among the authentic (Traditions of the Prophet, that he said), "He, who neglecteth prayer wilfully and without excuse, hath no part in Islam."' (Q.) 'What is prayer?' (A.) 'Prayer is communion be-
Night tween the slave and his Lord, and in it are ten virtues, to
cccxl. wit, (1) it illumines the heart (2) makes the face shine (3) pleases the Merciful One (4) angers Satan (5) conjures calamity (6) wards off the mischief of enemies (7) multiplies mercy (8) forfends vengeance [or punishment] (9) brings the slave nigh unto [or in favour with] his Lord and (10) restrains from lewdness and iniquity. It is one of the written obligatory ordinances and the pillar of the Faith.' (Q.) 'What is the key of prayer?' (A.) 'Ablution.' (Q.) 'What is the key of ablution?' (A.) 'Nomination.'[2] (Q.) 'That of naming God?' (A.) 'Faith.' (Q.) 'That of Faith?' (A.) 'Trust in God.' (Q.) 'That of trust in God?' (A.) 'Hope.' (Q.) 'That of Hope?' (A.) 'Obedience.' (Q.) 'That of obedience?' (A.) 'The confession of the unity and the acknowledgment of the divinity of God.' (Q.) 'What are the Divine ordinances of ablution?' (A.) 'They are six in number, according to the canon of the Imam Es Shafi Mohammed ben Idris (of whom God accept) to wit, (1) intent[1] to wash the face (2) washing the face (3) washing the hands and elbows (4) wiping part of the head (5) washing the feet and heels and (6) observing the

[1] *i.e.* saying, "I purpose, etc."
[2] *i.e.* saying, "In the name of God, etc."

prescribed order of ablution, whose statutes are ten in number, to wit, (1) nomination (2) washing the hands before putting them into the vase (3) rinsing the mouth (4) drawing up water through the nostrils (5) wiping the whole head (6) washing the ears within and without with fresh water (7) separating a thick beard (8) separating the fingers and toes (9) washing the right foot before the left and (10) doing each of these thrice and all in unbroken succession. When the ablution is ended, the devotee should (quoth Es Shafi[1]) say, "I testify that there is no god but God alone, who hath no partner, and that Mohammed is His servant and apostle. O my God, make me of those who repent and are made clean! Glory to Thee, O my God, and in Thy praise I testify that there is no god but Thou! I crave pardon of Thee and repent to Thee!" For it is reported, in the Holy Traditions, that the Prophet (whom God bless and keep) said of this prayer, "Whoso ensueth every ablution with this prayer, the eight gates of Paradise are open to him; he shall enter at which he pleases."' (Q.) 'When a man purposes to make the ablution, what betides him from the angels and the devils?' (A.) 'When a man prepares for ablution, the angels come and stand on his right and the devils on his left hand. If he name God, at the beginning of the ablution, the devils flee from him and the angels hover over him with a pavilion of light, having four ropes, to each an angel glorifying God and craving pardon for him, so long as he remains silent or calls upon the name of God. But if he omit to begin with naming God (to whom belong might and majesty) neither remain silent, the angels depart from him and the devils settle upon him and whisper evil thoughts unto him, till he falls into doubt

[1] It may be noted that these answers of Taweddud form an excellent compendium of devotional practice, according to the tenets of the Shafiy school.

and comes short in his ablution. For (quoth he on whom be blessing and salvation) "A perfect ablution driveth away the devils and assureth against the tyranny of the Sultan; and he who neglecteth the ablution, if calamity befall him, let him blame none but himself."' (Q.) 'What should a man do, when he awakes from sleep?' (A.) 'He should wash his hands thrice, before putting them into the vessel.' (Q.) 'What are the ordinances, Koranic and Traditional, of complete ablution?'[1] (A.) The Koranic ordinances are intent and covering the whole body with water, so that it shall come at every part of the hair and skin. The Traditional, previous partial ablution [as before prayer,] rubbing the body, separating the hair and deferring in words[2] the washing of the feet till the end of the ablution.' (Q.) 'What are the reasons [or occasions] for making the ablution with other than water, and what are the ordinances thereof, Koranic and Traditional?'[3] (A.) 'The reasons are seven in number, to wit, lack of water, fear, need thereto, going astray on a journey, sickness, having the bones [broken and] in splints and wounds. As for its ordinances, the Koranic are four in number, to wit, intent, dust, applying it to the face and to the hands, and the Traditional two, to wit, nomination and preferring the right before the left hand.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions, the essentials [or fundamentals] and the Traditional statutes of prayer?' (A.) 'The conditions are five in number, to wit, (1) purification of the members (2) covering the privy parts (3) observing the proper hours, either of certainty or to the best of one's belief, (4) fronting the Kaabeh and (5) standing on a clean place. The essentials are twelve in number, to wit, (1) intent, (2) the magnifica-

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[1] Obligatory as a preparation for the Friday prayer and on other occasions when legal purification is necessary.

[2] *i.e.* saying, "I purpose to defer, etc."

[3] *i.e.* with sand, earth or dust.

tion of prohibition, (3) standing at the proper distance one from another, (4) repeating the first chapter of the Koran and also (according to the Shafiyites) saying, "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate!" a verse thereof, (5) bowing the body and tranquillity [or gravity] therein (6) keeping the feet and legs still and in the same position, [whilst the rest of the body moves], and tranquillity therein (7) prostration and tranquillity therein (8) sitting between two prostrations and tranquillity therein (9) repeating the latter profession of the Faith and sitting up therefor (10) invoking benediction on the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) (11) the first Salutation[1] and (12) the intent of making an end of prayer, [expressed] in words. The Traditional statutes are the call to prayer, the repetition of the words of the latter, raising the hands to either side of the face, whilst pronouncing the magnification of prohibition, pronouncing the magnification before reciting the Fatiheh [First chapter of the Koran], seeking refuge with God,[2] saying "Amen," repeating the (obligatory) chapter [of the Koran] after the Fatiheh, repeating the magnifications during change of posture, saying, "May God hear him who praiseth Him!" and "O our Lord, to Thee be the praise!" uttering aloud the prayers in their places and in like manner, under the breath, those so prescribed, the first testification and sitting up thereto, blessing the Prophet therein, blessing his family in the latter profession [or testification] and the second Salutation.' (Q.) 'On what is the poor-rate taxable?' (A.) 'On gold and silver and camels and oxen and sheep and wheat and barley and millet and beans and pulse and rice and raisins and dates.' (Q.) 'What is the poor-rate on gold?' (A.) 'Below twenty dinars, nothing; but, on that amount and over, half a

[1] *i.e.* saying, "Peace be on us and [all] the righteous worshippers of God!"

[2] *i.e.* saying, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed."

dinar for every score.' (Q.) 'On silver?' (A.) 'Under two hundred dirhems, nothing; then, five dirhems on every two hundred.' (Q.) 'On camels?' (A.) 'For every five, an ewe, or for every twenty-five a pregnant camel.' (Q.) 'On sheep?' (A.) 'On forty and over, an ewe for every forty head.' (Q.) 'What are the ordinances of the Fast [of Ramazan]?' (A.) 'The Koranic are intent,[1] abstinence from eating, drinking and copulation and stoppage of vomiting. It is incumbent on all who submit to the Law, save women in their courses and forty days after child-birth; and it becomes obligatory on sight of the new moon or on news of its appearance, brought by a trustworthy person and commending itself as truth to the hearer's heart; and among its requisites is that it be commenced by night.[2] The Traditional ordinances of fasting are, hastening to break the fast,[3] deferring the fore-dawn meal[4] and abstaining from speech, save for good works and for calling on the name of God and reciting the Koran.' (Q.) 'What things vitiate not the fast?' (A.) 'The use of unguents and eye-powders and the dust of the road and the swallowing of one's spittle and the emission of seed in dreams of dalliance or at the sight of a strange woman and cupping and letting blood; none of these things vitiates the fast.' (Q.) 'What are the prayers of the two great [annual] Festivals?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, after the traditional ordinance, without call to prayer or the repetition thereof by the devotee, who shall say, "Prayer is a collector of all folk!"[5] and pronounce the magnification seven times in the first prayer, besides

[1] *i.e.* saying, "I purpose, etc."
[2] *Lit.* that the intent shall be by night. [3] At sundown.
[4] Eaten a little before the break of day, the fast commencing as soon as there is light enough to distinguish a black thread from a white and lasting till sunset.
[5] A saying of Mohammed.

the magnification of prohibition, and in the second, five times, besides that of rising up, (according to the canon of the Imam Es Shafi, on whom God have mercy) and make the profession of the Faith.' (Q.) 'What are the prayers prescribed on the occasion of an eclipse of the sun or moon?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, without call to prayer or repetition thereof by the devotee, who shall make in each two standings up and two inclinations and two prostrations, then sit up and testify and salute.' (Q.) 'What is the ritual of prayer for rain?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, without call to prayer or repetition; then shall the devotee make the profession and salute. Moreover [the Imam] shall deliver an exhortation and (in place of the magnification, as in the two exhortations of the two great Festivals) ask pardon of God and reverse his mantle and pray and supplicate.' (Q.) 'What are the additional or occasional prayers?' (A.) 'The least is a one-bow prayer and the most eleven.' (Q.) 'What is the forenoon prayer?' (A.) 'At least, two one-bow prayers and at most, twelve.' (Q.) 'What is the service of seclusion?'[1] (A.) 'It is a matter of Traditional ordinance.' (Q.) 'What are its conditions?' (A.) '(1) Expression of intent (2) not leaving the mosque save of necessity (3) not having to do with a woman (4) fasting and (5) abstaining from speech.' (Q.) 'Under what conditions is pilgrimage obligatory?' (A.) 'So a man be of full age and understanding and a true-believer and it be possible to him; and it is obligatory [on all], once before death.' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic statutes of the pilgrimage?' (A.) '(1) Assumption of the pilgrim's habit (2) station at Arafat (3) compassing [the Kaabeh] (4) running [between Sefa and Merweh[2]] and (5) [previous] shaving or clipping the hair.' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic statutes of the lesser pilgrimage?'

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[1] *i.e.* retirement to a mosque for pious exercises, equivalent to the Roman Catholic *retraite*. [2] Two hills near Mecca.

(A.) 'Reassuming the pilgrim's habit and compassing and running [as before].' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic ordinances of the assumption of the pilgrim's habit?' (A.) 'Putting off sewn garments, forswearing perfume and ceasing to shave the head or cut the nails and avoiding the killing of game and copulation.' (Q.) 'What are the Traditional statutes of the pilgrimage?' (A.) '(1) The crying out, "Here I am, O our Lord!"[1] (2) the circuitings [about the Kaabeh] of arrival [at] and departure [from Mecca] (3) the passing the night at Muzdelifeh and Mina[2] and (4) the stone-throwing.'[3] (Q.) 'What is the war in defence of the Faith and its essentials?' (A.) 'Its essentials are (1) the descent of the infidels upon us (2) the existence of the Imam[4] (3) a state of [armed] preparation and (4) firmness in meeting the foe. Its ordinance is incital to battle, in that the Most High hath said, "O my Prophet, incite the faithful to battle!"'[5] (Q.) 'What are the ordinances of buying and selling?' (A.) 'The Koranic are (1) offer and acceptance and (2) if the thing sold be a (white) slave, by whom one profiteth, to do one's endeavour to convert him to Islam and (3) to abstain from usury; the Traditional, resiliation and option before separating, after the saying of the Prophet, "The parties to a sale shall have the option [of cancelling or altering the terms of a bargain,] whilst they are yet unseparated."' (Q.) 'What is it forbidden to sell [or exchange] for what?' (A.) 'On this point I mind me of an authentic tradition, reported by Nafi[6] of the Apostle of God, that he forbade the sale of

[1] On first catching sight of Mecca. [2] Places near Mecca.
[3] At a pillar supposed to represent the Devil.
[4] Or chief of the faith. [5] *Koran* vii. 66.
[6] One of the followers of Mohammed, *i.e.* those who had known some of the Companions [of the Prophet] though they had never seen himself. The freedman [and adopted son] of Abdallah, son of Omar ben El Khettab, the most authoritative of all the Companions and reporters of the sayings and doings of the Prophet.

dried dates for fresh and fresh figs for dry and jerked for fresh meat and cream for butter; in fine, of all eatables of one and the same kind, it is unlawful to sell some for other some.'[1]

When the professor heard her words and knew that she was keen of wit, ingenious and learned in jurisprudence and the Traditions and the interpretation of the Koran and what not else, he said in himself, 'Needs must I go about with her, that I may overcome her in the assembly of the Commander of the Faithful.' So he said to her, 'O damsel, what is the lexicographical meaning of the word *wuzou*?'[2] And she answered, 'Cleanliness and freedom from impurities.' (Q.) 'And of prayer?' (A.) 'An invocation of good.' (Q.) 'And of *ghusl*?'[3] (A.) 'Purification.' (Q.) 'And of fasting?' (A.) 'Abstention.' (Q.) 'And of *zekat*?'[4] (A.) 'Increase.' (Q.) 'And of pilgrimage?' (A.) 'Visitation [or quest].' (Q.) 'And of *jehad*?'[5] (A.) '[Endeavour in] repelling.' With this the doctor's arguments were exhausted, so he rose to his feet and said, 'Bear witness against me, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I am in the Law.' Quoth she, 'I will ask thee somewhat, which do thou answer me speedily, an thou be indeed a learned man.' 'Say on,' quoth he; and she said, 'What are the arrows of the Faith?' 'They are ten in number,' answered he; 'to wit, (1) Testification,[6] that is, religion (2) Prayer, that is, the Covenant (3) Alms, that is, purification (4) Fasting, that is, defensive armour (5) Pilgrimage, that is, the Law (6) Fighting for the Faith, that is, a general duty, (7) Enjoining to beneficence and (8) Forbidding from iniquity, both of which are jealousy [for good], (9) The communion

Night cccccxliii.

[1] *i.e.* at a profit. The exchange must be equal and profitless.
[2] Ablution. [3] Complete ablution.
[4] Poor-rate. [5] Warring for the Faith.
[6] *i.e.* saying, "I testify that there is no God, etc."

of the faithful, that is, sociableness, and (10) Seeking knowledge, that is, the praiseworthy way.' (Q.) 'What are the roots[1] of Islam?' (A.) 'They are four in number, to wit, sincerity of belief, truth of purpose, observance of the limit [prescribed by the Law] and keeping the Covenant.' Then said she, 'I have one more question to ask thee, which if thou answer, [it is well]; else, I will take thy clothes.' Quoth he, 'Speak, O damsel;' and she said, 'What are the branches[2] of Islam?' But he was silent and made no reply; and she said, 'Put off thy clothes, and I will expound them to thee.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Expound them, and I will make him put off his clothes for thee.' 'They are two-and-twenty in number,' answered she, 'to wit, (1) holding fast to the Book of God the Most High (2) taking example by His Apostle (whom God bless and preserve) (3) abstaining from doing evil (4) eating what is lawful and (5) avoiding what is unlawful (6) restoring things wrongfully taken to their owners (7) repentance (8) knowledge of the Law (9) love of [Abraham] the Friend [of God] (10) and of the followers of the Revelation[3] (11) belief in the Apostles (12) fear of apostacy (13) preparation for departure[4] (14) strength of conviction (15) clemency in time of power (16) strength in time of weakness (17) patience under affliction (18) knowledge of God the Most High and (19) of what His Prophet hath made known to us (20) gainsaying Iblis the accursed (21) striving earnestly against the lusts of the soul and gainsaying them and (22) guiltlessness of believing in any other god but God.'

When the Commander of the Faithful heard her words, he bade the doctor put off his clothes and hood; and he did so and went forth, beaten and confounded, from the Khalif's presence. Thereupon arose another man and said

[1] *i.e.* fundamentals.
[2] *i.e.* derivatives.
[3] *i.e.* the true believers.
[4] *i.e.* death.

to her, 'O damsel, hear a few questions from me.' 'Say on,' quoth she; and he said, 'What are the conditions of valid [purchase by] payment in advance?' 'That the amount [of the thing bought], the kind and the period [of delivery to the purchaser], be [fixed or] known,' replied she. (Q.) 'What are the Koranic canons of eating?' (A.) 'The confession [by the eater] that God the Most High provideth him and giveth him to eat and drink and thanksgiving to Him therefor.' (Q.) 'What is thanksgiving?' (A.) 'The use by the creature of that which God vouchsafeth to him in the manner and to the ends for which He hath created it.' (Q.) 'What are the Traditional canons of eating?' (A.) 'The [preliminary] naming [of God] and washing the hands, sitting on the left buttock, eating with three fingers and eating of that which is chewed.'[1] (Q.) 'What are the civilities of eating?' (A.) 'Taking small mouthfuls and looking little at one's table-companion.' (Q.) 'What are the heart's stays [or articles of faith] and their correlatives?' (A.) 'They are three in number, to wit, (1) holding fast to the Faith, the correlative whereof is the shunning of infidelity, (2) holding fast to the Traditional Law and its correlative, the shunning of innovation [or heresy] and (3) holding fast to obedience and its correlative, the shunning of disobedience.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions of ablution?' (A.) '(1) Submission to the will of God[2] (2) possession of discernment of good and evil [or having attained the age of discretion] (3) purity of the water and (4) absence of legal or material impediments.' (Q.) 'What is belief?' (A.) 'It is divided into nine parts, to wit, (1) belief in the One worshipped (2) belief in the condition of slavery [of

Night cccclxiv.

[1] *i.e.* that which does not require to be cut with a knife. "Cut not meat with a knife, because it is of the manners and customs of the barbarians; but eat it with your teeth."—*Mishcat ul Masabih.*
[2] Or "being a Muslim."

the worshipper] (3) belief in one God, to the exclusion of all others (4) belief in the Two Handfuls[1] (5) belief in Providence (6) belief in the Abrogating and (7) in the Abrogated (8) belief in God, His angels and apostles and (9) in fore-ordained Fate, general and particular, its good and ill, sweet and bitter.' (Q.) 'What three things do away other three?' (A.) 'It is told of Sufyan eth Thauri[2] that he said, "Three things do away other three. Making light of the pious doth away the future life, making light of kings doth away [this] life and making light of expenditure doth away wealth."' (Q.) 'What are the keys of the heavens, and how many gates have they?' (A.) 'Quoth God the Most High, "And heaven shall be opened, and it shall be [all] doors"[3] and quoth he whom God bless and keep, "None knoweth the number of the gates of heaven, save He who created it, and there is no son of Adam but hath two gates allotted to him in the skies, one whereby his subsistence cometh down and another wherethrough his works [good and evil] ascend. The former is not closed, save when his term of life comes to an end, nor the latter, till his soul ascends [for judgment]."' (Q.) 'Tell me of a thing and a half thing and a no-thing.' (A.) 'The thing is the believer, the half thing the hypocrite and the no-thing the infidel.' (Q.) 'Tell me of various kinds of hearts.' (A.) 'There is the whole [or perfect] heart, which is that of [Abraham] the Friend [of God], the sick heart, that of the infidel, the contrite heart, that of the pious, fearful ones, the heart consecrated to God, that of our Lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and the enlightened [or enlightening] heart, that of those who follow him. The hearts of the learned are

[1] Apparently referring to the verse, "The earth all [shall be] His handful [on the] Day of Resurrection and the heavens rolled up in His right [hand]."—*Koran* xxxix. 67.

[2] See Vol. II. p. 126, note.

[3] *Koran* lxxviii. 19.

of three kinds, to wit, those that are in love with this world, with the next and with their Lord; and it is said that hearts are three, the suspended, that of the infidel, the non-existent [or lost], that of the hypocrite, and the constant [or firm], that of the true-believer. Moreover, it is said that the latter is of three kinds, namely, the heart dilated with light and faith, that wounded with fear of estrangement and that which feareth to be forsaken of God.'

Night cccxlv.

Quoth the second doctor, 'Thou hast said well;' whereupon said she to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he has questioned me, till he is weary, and now I will ask him two questions. If he answer them, it is well, and if not, I will take his clothes and he shall depart in peace.' Quoth the doctor, 'Ask me what thou wilt,' and she said, 'What is religion?' 'Religion,' answered he, 'is confession[1] with the tongue and belief with the heart and doing with the members. Quoth the Prophet, "The believer is not perfect in belief, except five qualities be accomplished in him, namely, trust in God, committal of his affair to Him, submission to His commandment, acquiescence in His decrees and that he do all for His sake; so is he of those who are acceptable to God and who give and withhold for His sake, and he is perfect in belief."' Then said she, 'What is the Koranic ordinance of ordinances and the ordinance which is the preliminary of all ordinances and that of which all others stand in need and that which comprehendeth all others, and what is the Traditional ordinance that entereth into the Koranic, and that whereby the latter is completed?' But he was silent and made no reply; whereupon the Khalif bade her expound and ordered him to doff his clothes and give them to her. 'O doctor,' said she, 'the Koranic ordinance of ordinances is the knowledge of God the Most High; that,

[1] Of the unity of God.

which is the preliminary of all others, is the testifying that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His apostle; that, of which all others have need, is ablution; that, which compriseth all others, is that of [total] ablution from [ceremonial] defilement; the Traditional ordinance, that enters into the Koranic, is the separation of the fingers and the thick beard; and that, wherewith all Koranic ordinances are completed, is circumcision.' Therewith was manifest the insufficiency of the doctor, who rose to his feet and said, 'I call God to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in the Law and what pertains thereto.' So saying, he put off his clothes and went away, defeated.

Then turned she to the rest of the learned men present and said, 'O masters, which of you is the reader,[1] versed in the seven readings and in syntax and lexicography?' Thereupon the professor arose and seating himself before her, said, 'Hast thou read the Book of God the Most High and made thyself throughly acquainted with its verses and its various parts, abrogating and abrogated, equivocal and unequivocal, Meccan and Medinan? Dost thou understand its interpretation and hast thou studied it, according to the various versions and readings?' 'Yes,' answered she; and he said, 'What, then, is the number of its chapters, how many are Meccan and how many Medinan? How many verses and decades[2] does it contain, how many words and how many letters and how many acts of prostration and how many prophets and birds are mentioned in it?' 'It contains a hundred and fourteen chapters,' replied she, "whereof threescore and ten were revealed at Mecca and forty and four at Medina, six thousand three hundred and thirty-six verses, six hundred and twenty-one decades, seventy-nine thousand four hundred and thirty-nine words and three hundred and twenty-

[1] *i.e.* professor of Koranic exegesis. [2] *i.e.* portions so called.

three thousand and six hundred and seventy letters; and to the reader thereof, for every letter, accrue ten benefits. The acts of prostration it contains are fourteen in number, and five-and-twenty prophets are named therein, to wit, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elisha, Jonah, Lot, Salih, Houd,[1] Shuaïb,[2] David, Solomon, Dhoulkifl,[3] Idris,[4] Elias, Yehya,[5] Zacharias, Job, Moses, Aaron, Jesus and Mohammed, the peace of God and His blessing be on them all! Moreover, nine birds [or flying things] are mentioned in the Koran, namely, the gnat, the bee, the fly, the ant, the hoopoe, the crow, the locust, the bustard and the bird of Jesus[6] (on whom be peace), to wit, the bat.' (Q.) 'Which is the most excellent chapter of the Koran?' (A.) 'That of the Cow.'[7] (Q.) 'Which is the most magnificent verse?' (A.) 'That of the Throne;[8] it has fifty words, in each fifty blessings.' (Q.) 'What verse hath in it nine signs [or wonders]?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God the Most High, "Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and the ship that runneth in the sea with what profiteth mankind and in what God sendeth down from heaven of water and quickeneth therewith the earth, after its dearth, and spreadeth abroad therein all manner cattle, and the shifting of the winds and the clouds, pressed into service

Night cccccxlvi.

[1] Heber. [2] Jethro. [3] Joshua. [4] Enoch. [5] John the Baptist.

[6] *i.e.* the bird of clay fabled by the Koran (following the Apocryphal Gospel of the childhood of Christ) to have been animated by him.

[7] *Koran* ii.

[8] *Koran* ii. 256, "God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal. Slumber taketh him not, neither sleep, and His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him but by His leave? He knoweth what is before them and what is behind them, nor do they comprehend aught of the knowledge of Him but of what He willeth. His throne embraceth the heavens and the earth and the guarding of them oppresseth Him not, for He is the Most High, the Supreme."

betwixt heaven and earth, are signs for folk who understand."'[1] (Q.) 'Which is the most just?' (A.) 'That in which God saith, "Verily, God commandeth to justice and beneficence and giving to those that are near unto us and forbiddeth from profligacy and iniquity and oppression."'[2] (Q.) 'Which is the most yearnful?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God, "Shall every man of them yearn to enter a garden of delight?"'[3] (Q.) 'Which is the most hopeful?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God the Most High, "Say, 'O ye my servants, that have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God! Indeed, God forgiveth sins, all of them, for He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate.'"'[4] (Q.) 'By what version dost thou read?' (A.) 'By that of the people of Paradise, to wit, the version of Nafi.'[5] (Q.) 'In which verse doth God make prophets lie?' (A.) 'In that wherein He saith, "They [the brothers of Joseph] brought lying blood upon his shirt."'[6] (Q.) 'In which doth He make infidels speak the truth?' (A.) 'In that wherein He saith, "The Jews say, 'The Nazarenes are [grounded] on nought,' and the Nazarenes say, 'The Jews are [grounded] on nought;' and [yet] they [both] read the Scripture."[7] And [in this] both speak the truth.' (Q.) 'In which doth God speak in His own person [in the singular]?' (A.) 'In that in which He saith, "Neither have I created Jinn and men, but that they should worship."'[8] (Q.) 'In which do the angels speak?' (A.) 'In that which saith, "We celebrate Thy praises and hallow Thee."'[9] (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the formula, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned"?' (A.) 'It is obligatory, by commandment of God, on all who read the Koran, as appears by His saying, "When thou readest the Koran, seek refuge with God

[1] *Koran* ii. 159. [2] *Koran* xvi. 92. [3] Paradise, *Koran* lxx. 38.
[4] *Koran* xxxix. 54. [5] See note, p. 338 *supra*. [6] *Koran* xii. 18.
[7] *Koran* ii. 107. [8] *Koran* li. 57. [9] *Koran* ii. 28.

from Satan the Stoned."'[1] (Q.) 'What are the words and variants of the formula?' (A.) 'Some say, "I take refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing, etc.," and others, "With God the Strong;" but the best is that of which the noble Koran and the Traditions speak. The Prophet was used, whenas he was about to open the Koran, to say, "I take refuge with God from Satan the Stoned." And quoth a Tradition, reported by Nafi on the authority of his [adopted] father, "The apostle of God used, when he rose in the night to pray, to say aloud, 'God is Most Great, with [all] greatness! Praise be to God abundantly! Glory to God morning and evening!' Then would he say, 'I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned and from the instigations of the Devils and their evil suggestions.'" And it is told of Ibn Abbas[2] (of whom God accept) that he said, "The first time Gabriel came down to the Prophet [with a portion of the Koran,] he taught him [the formula of] seeking refuge, saying, 'O Mohammed, say, "I seek refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing;" then say, "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful!" And read, in the name of thy Lord who created men from clotted blood.'"'[3] (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the verse, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful"? Is it one of the verses of the Koran?' (A.) 'Yes; it is a verse of "The ant"[4] and occurs also [at the head of the first and] between every two [following] chapters; and there is much difference of opinion, respecting this, among the learned.' (Q.) 'Why is not the formula written at the head of the chapter of Immunity?'[5] (A.) 'When this

Night cccxlvii.

[1] *Koran* xvi. 100. The Muslims fable the devil to have tempted Abraham to disobey God's commandment to sacrifice Ishmael (Isaac) and to have been driven off by the Patriarch with stones. Hence he is called "The Stoned."

[2] Abdallah ibn Abbas, first cousin of Mohammed and the most learned theologian among the Companions.

[3] *Koran* xcvi. 1 and 2. [4] *Koran* xxvii. 30. [5] *Koran* ix.

chapter was revealed for the dissolution of the alliance between the Prophet and the idolators, the former sent Ali ibn Abi Talib (whose face God honour) therewith [from Medina to Mecca] at the season of the greater pilgrimage;[1] and he read the chapter to them, but did not read "In the name etc."'[2] (Q.) 'What of the excellence of the formula and the blessing that attaches to it?' (A.) 'It is told of the Prophet that he said, "Never is 'In the name etc.' pronounced over aught, but there is a blessing in it;" and it is reported, on his authority, that the Lord of Glory swore by His glory that never should the formula be pronounced over a sick person, but he should be healed of his sickness. Moreover, it is said that, when God created the empyreal heaven, it was agitated with an exceeding agitation; but He wrote on it, "In the name etc.," and its agitation subsided. When the formula was first revealed to the Prophet, he said, "I am safe from three things, earthquake and metamorphosis and drowning;" and indeed its virtues are great and its blessings too many to enumerate. It is told of the Prophet that he said, "There will be brought before God, on the judgment day, a man with whom He shall reckon and finding no good deed to his account, shall order him to the fire; but the man will say, 'O my God, Thou hast not dealt justly by me!' Then shall God (to whom belong might and majesty) say, 'How so?' and the man will answer, saying, 'O Lord, for that Thou callest Thyself the Compassionate, the Merciful, yet wilt Thou punish me with the fire!' And God (extolled be His majesty) shall say, 'I did indeed name myself the Compassionate, the Merciful. Carry My

[1] *i.e.* the day of the sacrifice at Mina, which completes the ceremonies of the pilgrimage.

[2] The better opinion seems to be that this omission (unique in the Koran) arose from the ninth chapter having originally formed part of the eighth, from which it was separated after Mohammed's death.

servant to Paradise, of My mercy, for I am the most Merciful of those that have mercy.'"' (Q.) 'What was the origin of the use of the formula?' (A.) 'When God revealed the Koran, they wrote, "In Thy name, O my God!"; when He revealed the words, "Say, pray ye to God or pray ye to the Compassionate, what days ye pray, for to Him [belong] the most fair names,"[1] they wrote, "In the name of God, the Compassionate;" and when He revealed the words, "Your God is one God, there is no God but He, the Compassionate, the Merciful,"[2] they wrote, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!"' (Q.) 'Did God reveal the Koran all at once or at intervals?' (A.) 'Gabriel the Faithful [Spirit] (on whom be peace) descended with it from the Lord of the Worlds upon His Prophet Mohammed, Prince of the Apostles and seal[3] of the Prophets, by detached verses, containing commandment and prohibition, promise and menace, anecdotes and similitudes, as the occasion called for it, in the course of twenty years.' (Q.) 'Which chapter was first revealed?' (A.) 'According to Ibn Abbas, that of the Clot of Blood,[4] and according to Jabir ben Abdallah,[5] that of the Covered [with a cloak].'[6] (Q.) 'Which verse was the last revealed?' (A.) 'That of Usury,[7] and it is said [also], the verse, "When there cometh God's succour and victory."'[8] (Q.) 'Tell me the names of the Companions who collected the Koran, in the lifetime of the Apostle of God.' (A.) 'They were four in number, to wit, Ubaï ibn Kaab, Zeid ibn Thabit, Abou Ubeideh Aamir ben Jerrah and Othman ben Affan,[9] may God accept of them all!' (Q.) 'Who are the readers, from whom the [accepted] reading of the Koran is taken?' (A.)

Night cccxlviii.

[1] *Koran* xvii. 110. [2] *Koran* ii. 158.

[3] *i.e.* him who seals or closes the list of the prophets. [4] C. xcvi.

[5] A native of Medina and one of the first of Mohammed's disciples.

[6] *Koran* lxxiv. [7] There are several verses on this subject.

[8] *Koran* cx. 1. [9] The third Khalif.

'They are four in number, namely, Abdallah ben Mesoud,[1] Ubaï ben Kaab, Maadh ben Jebel[1] and Salim ben Abdallah.'[2] (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "That which is sacrificed to stones"?'[3] (A.) 'The stones are idols, which are set up and worshipped, instead of God the Most High, and [from this] we seek refuge with Him.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "[Quoth Jesus] Thou knowest what is in my soul, and I know not what is in Thy soul"?'[4] (A.) 'They mean "Thou [God] knowest the truth of me and what is in me and I [Jesus] know not what is in Thee;" and the proof of this are his words,[5] "Thou [God] art He that knoweth the hidden things;" and it is said, also, "Thou [God] knowest my essence, but I [man] know not Thine essence."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "O ye that believe, deny not yourselves the good things that God hath made lawful to you!"?'[6] (A.) 'My master (on whom God have mercy) told me that Ez Zuhak[7] said, "There was a people of the true-believers who said, 'We will dock our yards and don sackcloth;' whereupon this verse was revealed." But El Cutadeh[8] says that it was revealed on account of sundry Companions of the Apostle of God, Ali ibn Abi Talib and Othman ben Musaab and others, who said, "We will dock ourselves and don hair [cloth] and make us monks."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "And God took Abraham to friend"?'[9] (A.) 'The friend [of God] is the needy, the poor, and (according to another saying) he is the lover, he who is absorbed in the love of God the

[1] Companions of the Prophet. [2] One of the Followers.
[3] *Koran* v. 4. [4] *Koran* v. 116.
[5] In the same verse. [6] *Koran* v. 89.
[7] Ez Zuhak ben Sufyan, one of the Companions.
[8] One of the Followers. [9] *Koran* iv. 124.

Most High and in whose exclusive devotion there is no falling away.'

When the professor saw her pass on in speech with the passing of the clouds[1] and that she stayed not in answering, he rose to his feet and said, 'I take God to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in Koranic exegesis and what pertains thereto.' Then said she, 'I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer, it is well; but if thou answer not, I will strip off thy clothes.' 'Ask on,' quoth the Khalif; and she said, 'Which verse of the Koran has in it three-and-twenty *Kafs*,[2] which sixteen *Mims*,[2] which a hundred and forty *Ains*,[2] and which section[3] lacks the formula, "To whom [God] belong might and majesty"?' He could not answer, and she said to him, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he doffed them, and she said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the verse of the sixteen *Mims* is in the chapter Houd and is the saying of the Most High, "It was said, 'O Noah, go down in peace from us, and blessing upon thee!'"[4]; that of the three-and-twenty *Kafs* is the verse called of the Faith, in the chapter of the Cow; that of the hundred and forty *Ains* is in the chapter of El Aaraf,[5] "And Moses chose seventy men of his tribe to [attend] our appointed time;[6] to each man a pair of eyes."[7] And the set portion which lacks the formula, "To whom [God] belong might and majesty," is that which comprises the chapters "The Hour draweth nigh and the Moon is cloven

[1] *i.e.* without hesitation or interruption.
[2] *Kaf*, *Mim* and *Ain*, the 21st, 24th and 18th letters of the Arabic alphabet.
[3] The Koran is divided into sixty set portions, answering or equivalent to our Lessons, for convenience of use in public worship.
[4] *Koran* xi. 50.
[5] Name of the partition-wall between heaven and hell.
[6] *Koran* vii. 154. [7] A play on the word *ain*, which means "eye."

in twain," "The Compassionate" and "The Event."'[1] And the professor departed in confusion.

Night cccxlix. Then came forward the skilled physician and said to her, 'We have done with theology and come now to physiology. Tell me, therefore, how is man made, how many veins, bones and vertebræ are there in his body, which is the chief vein and why Adam was named Adam?' 'Adam was called Adam,' answered she, 'because of the *udmeh*, to wit, the tawny colour of his complexion and also (it is said) because he was created of the *adim* of the earth, that is to say, of the soil of its surface. His breast was made of the earth of the Kaabeh, his head of earth from the East and his legs of earth from the West. There were created for him seven doors [or openings] in his head, to wit, the eyes, the ears, the nostrils and the mouth, and two passages, the urethra and the anus. The eyes were made the seat of the sense of sight, the ears of that of hearing, the nostrils of that of smell, the mouth of that of taste and the tongue to speak forth what is in the innermost heart of man. Adam was originally created of four elements combined, water, earth, fire and air. The yellow bile is the humour of fire, being hot and dry, the black bile that of earth, being cold and dry, the phlegm that of water, being cold and moist, and the blood that of air, being hot and moist. There are in man three hundred and threescore veins, two hundred and forty bones and three souls [or natures], the animal, the rational and the essential or [natural], to each of which is allotted a separate function. Moreover, God made him a heart and spleen and lungs and six guts and a liver and two kidneys and marrow [or brain] and buttocks and bones and skin and five senses, hearing, seeing, smell, taste and touch. The heart He set on the left side of the breast and made the stomach the exemplar [or governor] thereof. He

[1] Chapters liv. lv. and lvi.

appointed the lungs for a ventilator to the heart and set the liver on the right side, opposite thereto. Moreover, He made, besides this, the midriff and the intestines and set up the bones of the breast and ribbed them with the ribs.' (Q.) 'How many ventricles are there in a man's head?' (A.) 'Three, which contain five faculties, styled the intrinsic senses, *i.e.* common sense, fancy, thought, apperception and memory.' (Q.) 'Describe to me the Night cccl. scheme of the bones.' (A.) 'It consists of two hundred and forty bones, which are divided into three parts, the head, the trunk and the extremities. The head is divided into skull and face. The skull is constructed of eight bones, and to it are attached the teeth, two-and-thirty in number, and the hyoïd bone, one. The trunk is divided into spinal column, breast and basin. The spinal column is made up of four-and-twenty bones, called vertebræ, the breast of the breastbone and the ribs, which are four-and-twenty in number, twelve on each side, and the basin of the hips, the sacrum and the coccyx. The extremities are divided into arms and legs. The arms are again divided into shoulder, comprising shoulder-blades and collar-bone, the upper-arm, one bone, the fore-arm, composed of two bones, the radius and the ulna, and the hand, consisting of the wrist, the metacarpus and the fingers. The wrist is composed of eight bones, ranked in two rows, each comprising four bones; the metacarpus of five and the fingers, which are five in number, of three bones each, called the phalanges, except the thumb, which has but two. The lower extremities are divided into thigh, one bone, leg, composed of three bones, the tibia, the fibula and the kneepan, and the foot, divided like the hand, with the exception of the wrist,[1] which is composed of seven bones, ranged in two rows, two in one and five in the other.' (Q.) 'Which is the root of the

[1] *i.e.* ankle.

veins?' (A.) 'The aorta, from which they ramify, and they are many, none knoweth the tale of them save He who created them; but, as I have before observed, it is said that they are three hundred and threescore in number. Moreover, God hath appointed the tongue to interpret [for the thought], the eyes to serve as lanterns, the nostrils to smell with, and the hands for prehensors. The liver is the seat of pity, the spleen of laughter and the kidneys of craft; the lungs are the ventilators, the stomach the storehouse and the heart the pillar [or mainstay] of the body. When the heart is sound, the whole body is sound, and when the heart is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt.' (Q.) 'What are the outward signs and symptoms of disease in the members of the body, both internal and external?' (A.) 'A physician, who is a man of understanding, looks into the state of the body and is guided by the feel of the hands, according as they are firm [or flabby], hot or cool, moist or dry. Internal disorders are also indicated by external symptoms, such as yellowness of the [whites of the] eyes, which denotes jaundice, and bending of the back, which denotes disease of the lungs.'

Night cccclí. (Q.) 'What are the internal symptoms of disease?' (A.) 'The science of the diagnosis of disease by internal symptoms is founded upon six canons, to wit, (1) the actions [of the patient] (2) what is evacuated from his body (3) the nature and (4) site of the pain he feels (5) swelling and (6) the effluvia given off by his body.' (Q.) 'How cometh hurt to the head?' (A.) 'By the introduction of food upon food, before the first be digested, and by satiety upon satiety; this it is that wasteth peoples. He who will live long, let him be early with the morning-meal and not late with the evening-meal; let him be sparing of commerce with women and chary of cupping and blood-letting and make of his belly three parts, one for food, one for drink and the third for air; for that a

man's intestines are eighteen spans in length and it befits that he appoint six for food, six for drink, and six for air. If he walk, let him go gently; it will be wholesomer for him and better for his body and more in accordance with the saying of God the Most High, "Walk not boisterously [or proudly] upon the earth."'[1] (Q.) 'What are the symptoms of yellow bile and what is to be feared therefrom?' (A.) 'The symptoms are, sallow complexion and dryness and bitter taste in the mouth, failure of the appetite, and rapid pulse; and the patient has to fear high fever and delirium and prickly heat and jaundice and tumour and ulceration of the bowels and excessive thirst.' (Q.) 'What are the symptoms of black bile and what has the patient to fear from it, if it get the mastery of the body?' (A.) 'The symptoms are deceptive appetite and great mental disquiet and care and anxiety; and it behoves that it be evacuated, else it will generate melancholy and leprosy and cancer and disease of the spleen and ulceration of the bowels.' (Q.) 'Into how many branches is the art of medicine divided?' (A.) 'Into two: the art of diagnosing diseases and that of restoring the diseased body to health.' (Q.) 'When is the drinking of medicine more efficacious than otherwhen?' (A.) 'When the sap runs in the wood and the grape thickens in the cluster and the auspicious planets[2] are in the ascendant, then comes in the season of the efficacy of drinking medicine and the doing away of disease.' (Q.) 'What time is it, when, if a man drink from a new vessel, the drink is wholesomer and more digestible to him than at another time, and there ascends to him a pleasant and penetrating fragrance?' (A.) 'When he waits awhile after eating, as quoth the poet:

[1] *Koran* xvii. 39.
[2] Two stars in Aquarius and Capricorn.

I rede thee drink not after food in haste, but tarry still; Else with a halter wilt thou lead thy body into ill.
Yea, wait a little after thou hast eaten, brother mine; Then drink, and peradventure thus shalt thou attain unto thy will.'

(Q.) 'What food is it that giveth not rise to ailments?' (A.) 'That which is not eaten but after hunger, and when it is eaten, the ribs are not filled with it, even as saith Galen the physician, "Whoso will take in food, let him go slowly and he shall not go wrong." To end with the saying of the Prophet, (whom God bless and preserve,) "The stómach is the home of disease, and abstinence is the beginning[1] of cure,[2] for the origin of every disease is indigestion, that is to say, corruption of the meat in the stomach."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the bath?' (A.) 'Let not the full man enter it. Quoth the Prophet, "The bath is the delight of the house, for that it cleanseth the body and calleth to mind the fire [of hell]."' (Q.) 'What waters[3] are best for bathing?' (A.) 'Those whose waters are sweet and plains wide and whose air is pleasant and wholesome, its climate [or seasons] being fair, autumn and summer and winter and spring.' (Q.) 'What kind of food is the most excellent?' (A.) 'That which women make and which has not cost overmuch trouble and which is readily digested. The most excellent of food is brewis,[4] according to the saying of the Prophet, "Brewis excels other food, even as Aaïsheh excels other women."' (Q.) 'What kind of seasoning[5] is most excellent?' (A.) 'Flesh meat (quoth the Prophet) is the most excellent of seasonings; for that it is the delight of this world and the next.' (Q.) 'What kind of meat is the most excellent?' (A.) Mutton; but jerked meat is to be avoided, for there is no profit in it.' (Q.) 'What of fruits?' (A.) 'Eat them in

Night ccccliii.

[1] Or chief part, *lit.* head. [2] Or remedial treatment.
[3] *Quære* hot springs. [4] A dish of crumbled bread and broth.
[5] Or savoury supplement to bread, rice and so forth.

their prime and leave them when their season is past.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of drinking water?' (A.) 'Drink it not in large quantities nor by gulps, or it will give thee the headache and cause divers kinds of harm; neither drink it, immediately after the bath nor after copulation or eating (except it be after the lapse of fifteen minutes for a young and forty for an old man) or waking from sleep.' (Q.) 'What of drinking wine?' (A.) 'Doth not the prohibition suffice thee in the Book of God the Most High, where He saith, "Verily, wine and casting lots and idols and divining arrows are an abomination of the fashion of the Devil: shun them, so surely shall ye thrive."[1] And again, "If they ask thee of wine and casting lots, say, 'In them are great sin and advantages to mankind, but the sin of them is greater than the advantage.'"[2] Quoth the poet:

O wine-bibber, art not ashamed and afraid To drink of a thing that thy Maker forbade?
Come, put the cup from thee and mell with it not, For wine and its drinker God still doth upbraid.

And quoth another:

I drank the sweet sin till my wit went astray: 'Tis ill drinking of that which doth reason away.

As for the useful qualities that are therein, it disperses gravel from the kidneys and strengthens the bowels, banishes care, moves to generosity and preserves health and digestion. It assains the body, expels disease from the joints, purifies the frame of corrupt humours, engenders cheerfulness and gladdens and keeps up the natural heat. It contracts the bladder, strengthens the liver and removes obstructions, reddens the face, clears away cobwebs from the brain and defers gray hairs. In short, had not God (to whom belong might and majesty)

[1] *Koran* v. 92. [2] *Koran* ii. 216.

forbidden it, there were not on the face of the earth aught fit to stand in its place. As for drawing lots, it is a game of hazard.'[1] (Q.) 'What wine is the best?' (A.) 'That which is pressed from white grapes and ferments fourscore days or more: it resembleth not water and indeed there is nothing on the surface of the earth like unto it.' (Q.) 'What of cupping?' (A.) 'It is for him who is [over] full of blood and has no defect therein. Whoso will be cupped, let it be at the wane of the moon, on a day without cloud or wind or rain and the seventeenth of the month. If it fall on a Tuesday, it will be the more efficacious, and nothing is more salutary for the brain and eyes and for clearing the memory than cupping.' (Q.) 'What is the best time for cupping?' (A.) 'One should be cupped fasting, for this fortifies the wit and the memory. It is reported of the Prophet that, when any one complained to him of a pain in the head or legs, he would bid him be cupped and not eat salt [meat] fasting, for it engendered scurvy, neither eat sour milk immediately after [cupping].' (Q.) 'When is cupping to be avoided?' (A.) 'On Wednesdays and Saturdays, and let him who is cupped on these days blame none but himself. Moreover, one should not be cupped in very hot nor in very cold weather; and the best season for cupping is Spring.' (Q.) 'Tell me of copulation.'

Night ccccliii.

At this Taweddud hung her head, for shame and confusion before the Khalif; then said, 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, it is not that I am at fault, but that I am ashamed, though, indeed, the answer is on the tip of my tongue.' 'Speak, O damsel,' said the Khalif; whereupon quoth she, 'Copulation hath in it many and exceeding virtues and praiseworthy qualities, amongst which are, that it lightens a body full of black bile and calms the heat of love and engenders affection and dilates

[1] Played with headless arrows.

the heart and dispels sadness; and the excess of it is more harmful in summer and autumn than in Spring and winter.' (Q.) 'What are its good effects?' (A.) 'It doth away trouble and disquiet, calms love and chagrin and is good for ulcers in a cold and dry humour; but excess of it weakens the sight and engenders pains in the legs and head and back: and beware, beware of having to do with old women, for they are deadly. Quoth the Imam Ali,[1] (whose face God honour), "Four things kill and ruin the body: bathing on a full stomach, eating salt meat, copulation on a plethora [of blood] and lying with an ailing woman; for she will weaken thy strength and infect thy body with sickness; and an old woman is deadly poison." And quoth one of them, "Beware of taking an old woman to wife, though she be richer in goods than Caroun."'[2] (Q.) 'What is the best copulation?' (A.) 'If the woman be young, well-shaped, fair of face, swelling-breasted and of honourable extraction, she will add to thee strength and health of body; and let her be even as saith the poet, describing her:

Even by thy looks, I trow, she knows what thou desir'st, By instinct, without sign or setting forth of sense;
And when thou dost behold her all-surpassing grace, Her charms enable thee with gardens to dispense.'

(Q.) 'At what time is copulation good?' (A.) 'If by day, after the morning-meal, and if by night, after food digested.' (Q.) 'What are the most excellent fruits?' (A.) 'The pomegranate and the citron.' (Q.) 'Which is the most excellent of vegetables?' (A.) 'The endive.' (Q.)

[1] The fourth Khalif.

[2] The Korah of Numbers xvi. fabled by the Muslims (following a Talmudic tradition) to have been a man of immense wealth. "Now Caroun was of the tribe of Moses [and Aaron], but he transgressed against them and we gave him treasures, the keys whereof would bear down a company of men of strength."—*Koran* xxviii. 76.

'Which of sweet-scented flowers?' (A.) 'The rose and the violet.' (Q.) 'How is sperma hominis secreted?' (A.) 'There is in man a vein that feeds all the other veins. Water [or blood] is collected from the three hundred and threescore veins and enters, in the form of red blood, the left testicle, where it is decocted, by the heat of man's temperament, into a thick, white liquid, whose odour is as that of the palm-spathe.' (Q.) 'What bird [or flying thing] is it that emits seed and menstruates?' (A.) 'The bat, that is, the rere-mouse.' (Q.) 'What is that which, when it is shut out [from the air], lives, and when it smells the air, dies?' (A.) 'The fish.' (Q.) 'What serpent lays eggs?' (A.) 'The dragon.'

With this the physician was silent, being weary with much questioning, and Taweddud said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath questioned me till he is weary, and now I will ask him one question, which if he answer not, I will take his clothes as lawful prize.' 'Ask on,' quoth the Khalif. So she said to the physician, 'What is that which resembles the earth in [plane] roundness, whose resting-place and spine are hidden, little of value and estimation, narrow-chested, its throat shackled, though it be no thief nor runaway slave, thrust through and through, though not in fight, and wounded, though not in battle; time eats its vigour and water wastes it away; now it is beaten without a fault and now made to serve without stint; united after separation, submissive, but not to him who caresses it, pregnant[1] without a child in its belly, drooping, yet not leaning on its side, becoming dirty yet purifying itself, cleaving to [its mate], yet changing, copulating without a yard, wrestling without arms, resting and taking its ease, bitten, yet not crying out, [now] more complaisant than a boon-companion and [anon] more troublesome than summer-heat, leaving its

Night ccccliv.

[1] *Syn.* bearing a load (*hamil*).

wife by night and clipping her by day and having its abode in the corners of the mansions of the noble?' The physician was silent and his colour changed and he bowed his head awhile in perplexity and made no reply; whereupon she said to him, 'O physician, speak or put off thy clothes.' At this, he rose and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, bear witness against me that this damsel is more learned than I in medicine and what else and that I cannot cope with her.' And he put off his clothes and fled forth. Quoth the Khalif to Taweddud, 'Expound to us thy riddle,' and she replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, it is the button and the button loop.'

Then said she, 'Let him of you who is an astronomer come forward.' So the astronomer came forward and sat down before her. When she saw him, she laughed and said, 'Art thou the astronomer, the mathematician, the scribe?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'Ask of what thou wilt,' quoth she; 'success rests with God.' So he said, 'Tell me of the sun and its rising and setting?' And she replied, 'The sun rises in the Eastern hemisphere and sets in the Western, and each hemisphere comprises ninescore degrees. Quoth God the Most High, "Verily, I swear by the Lord of the places of the sunrise and of the sunsetting."[1] And again, "He it is who appointed the sun for a splendour and the moon for a light and ordained to her mansions, that ye might know the number of the years and the reckoning."[2] The moon is Sultan of the night and the sun Sultan of the day, and they vie with one another in their courses and follow each other in uninterrupted succession. Quoth God the Most High, "It befits not that the sun overtake the moon nor that the night prevent the day, but each glides in [its own] sphere."'[3] (Q.) 'When the day cometh, what becomes of the night, and what of the day, when the night cometh?' (A.) 'He

[1] *Koran* lxx. 40. [2] *Koran* x. 5. [3] *Koran* xxxvi. 40.

maketh the night to enter into the day and the day into the night.'[1] (Q.) 'Enumerate to me the mansions of the moon.' (A.) 'They are eight-and-twenty in number, to wit, Sheretan, Butain, Thureya, Deberan, Hecaäh, Henaäh, Dhiraa, Nethreh, Terf, Jebheh, Zubreh, Serfeh, Awwaa, Simak and Ghefr, Zubaniya, Iklil, Kelb, Shauleh, Naaïm, Beldeh, Saad edh Dhabih, Saad el Bulaa, Saad el Akhbiyeh, Saad es Suwoud, Fergh the Former and Fergh the Latter and Rishaa. They are disposed in the order of the letters of the alphabet, according to their numerical power, and there are in them secret virtues which none knoweth save God (glorified and exalted be He) and those who are firmly stablished in science. They are divided among the twelve signs of the Zodiac, in the ratio of two mansions and a third of a mansion to each sign. Thus Sheretan, Butain and one-third of Thureya belong to Aries, the other two-thirds of Thureya, Deberan and two-thirds of Hecaäh to Taurus, the other third of Hecaäh, Henaäh and Dhiraa to Gemini, Nethreh, Terf and a third of Jebheh to Cancer, the other two-thirds of Jebheh, Zubreh and two-thirds of Serfeh to Leo, the other third of Serfeh, Awwaa and Simak to Virgo, Ghefr, Zubaniya and one-third of Iklil to Libra, the other two-thirds of Iklil, Kelb and two-thirds of Shauleh to Scorpio, the other third of Shauleh, Naaïm and Beldeh to Sagittarius, Saad edh Dhabih, Saad el Bulaa and one-third of Saad es Suwoud to Capricorn, the other two-thirds of Saad es Suwoud, Saad el Akbiyeh and two-thirds of Fergh the Former to Aquarius, the other third of Fergh the Former, Fergh the Latter and Rishaa to Pisces.' (Q.) 'Tell me of the planets and their natures, also of their sojourn in the signs of the Zodiac, their aspects, favourable and sinister, their houses, ascendants and descendants.' (A.) 'The sitting is narrow [for so comprehensive a matter], but

Night cccclv.

[1] *Koran* xxii. 60.

they are seven in number, to wit, the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The sun is hot and dry, sinister in conjunction, favourable in opposition, and abides thirty days in each sign. The moon is cold and moist, favourable of aspect, and abides two days in each sign and a third of another day. Mercury is of a mixed nature, favourable [in conjunction] with the favourable and sinister [in conjunction] with the sinister [asterisms], and abides in each sign seventeen and a half days. Venus is temperate, favourable and abides in each sign five-and-twenty days. Mars is sinister and abides in each sign ten months. Jupiter is favourable and abides in each sign a year. Saturn is cold and dry and sinister and abides in each sign thirty months. The house of the sun is Leo, its ascendant is Aries and its descendant Aquarius. The moon's house is Cancer, its ascendant Taurus, its descendant Scorpio and its sinister aspect Capricorn. Saturn's house is Capricorn and Aquarius, its ascendant Libra, its descendant Aries and its sinister aspects Cancer and Leo. Jupiter's house is Pisces and Sagittarius, its ascendant Cancer, its descendant Capricorn and its sinister aspects Gemini and Leo. Venus's house is Taurus, its ascendant Pisces, its descendant Libra and its sinister aspects Aries and Scorpio. Mercury's house is Gemini and Virgo, its ascendant Virgo, its descendant Pisces and its sinister aspect Taurus. Mars's house is Aries and Scorpio, its ascendant Capricorn, its descendant Cancer and its sinister aspect Libra.'

When the astronomer saw her acuteness and skill and heard her fair answers, he bethought him for a device to confound her before the Commander of the Faithful and said to her, 'O damsel, will rain fall this month?' At this she bowed her head and pondered so long, that the Khalif thought her at a loss for an answer and the astronomer said to her, 'Why dost thou not speak?' Quoth she, 'I

will not speak except the Commander of the Faithful give me leave.' The Khalif laughed and said, 'How so?' Said she, 'I would have thee give me a sword, that I may strike off his head, for he is an infidel.' At this the Khalif and those about him laughed, and she said, 'O astronomer, there are five things that none knoweth save God the Most High;' and she repeated the following verse: 'Verily, with God is the knowledge of the hour; He sendeth down the rain and knoweth what is in the wombs. None knoweth what the morrow shall bring forth for him nor in what land he shall die. Verily God is the All-wise, the All-knowing.'[1]

Quoth the astronomer, 'Thou hast said well, and by Allah, I thought but to try thee.' 'Know,' rejoined she, 'that the almanack-makers have certain signs and tokens, referring to the planets, relative to the coming in of the year, and in which are tribulations for the folk.' (Q.) 'What are they?' (A.) 'Each day hath a planet that rules it. So, if the first day of the year fall on a Sunday, that day is the sun's, and this portends (though God alone is All-knowing) oppression of kings and sultans and governors and much miasma and lack of rain and that the folk will be in great disorder and the grain-crop will be good, except lentils, which will perish, and the vines will rot and flax will be dear and wheat cheap from the beginning of Toubeh[2] to the end of Beremhat.[2] Moreover, in this year there will be much fighting among kings, and there shall be great plenty of good in this year.' (Q.) 'What if the first day fall on Monday?' (A.) 'That day belongs to the moon and portends righteousness in administrators and deputies and that it will be a year of much rain and grain-crops will be good, but linseed will decay and wheat will be cheap in the month Keyehk;[3] also that plagues will be

[1] *Koran* xxxi. 34.

[2] Fifth and seventh months of the Coptic year, answering (roughly) to our January and March. [3] Fourth month of the Coptic year.

rife and that half the sheep and goats will die, that grapes will be plentiful and honey scarce and cotton cheap.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Tuesday?' (A.) 'That is Mars's day and portends death of great men and much destruction and outpouring of blood and dearness of grain, lack of rain and scarcity of fish, which will anon be in excess and anon fail [altogether]. In this year, lentils and honey will be cheap and linseed dear and only barley will thrive, to the exception of all other grain: great will be the fighting among kings and death will be in the blood and there will be much mortality among asses.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Wednesday?' (A.) 'That is Mercury's day and portends great anarchy among the folk and much enmity and rotting of some of the green crops and moderate rains; also that there will be great mortality among cattle and infants and much fighting by sea, that wheat will be dear from Burmoudeh to Misra[1] and other grains cheap: thunder and lightning will abound and honey will be dear, palm-trees will thrive and bear apace and flax and cotton will be plentiful, but radishes and onions will be dear.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Thursday?' (A.) 'That is Jupiter's day and portends equity in viziers and righteousness in Cadis and fakirs and the ministers of religion and that good will be plentiful: rain and fruits and trees and grain and fish will abound and flax, cotton, honey and grapes be cheap.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Friday?' (A.) 'That day belongs to Venus and portends oppression in the chiefs of the Jinn and talk of forgery and calumny; there will be much dew, the autumn crops will be good in the land and there will be cheapness in one town and not in another: lewdness will be rife by land and sea, linseed will be dear, also wheat, in Hatour,[2] but cheap in Amshir:[3] honey will

Night cccclvi.

[1] Eighth and twelfth months of the Coptic year (April and August).

[2] Third month (November) of the Coptic year.

[3] Sixth month (February) of the Coptic year.

be dear and grapes and melons will rot.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Saturday?' (A.) 'That is Saturn's day and portends the preferment of slaves and Greeks and those in whom there is no good, neither in their neighbourhood; there will be great drought and scarcity; clouds will abound and death will be rife anong mankind and woe to the people of Egypt and Syria from the oppression of the Sultan and failure of blessing upon the green crops and rotting of grain.

With this, the astronomer hung his head, [being at an end of his questions], and she said to him, 'O astronomer, I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer not, I will take thy clothes.' 'Ask on,' replied he. Quoth she, 'Where is Saturn's dwelling-place?' And he answered, 'In the seventh heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Jupiter?' (A.) 'In the sixth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Mars?' (A.) 'In the fifth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of the sun?' (A.) 'In the fourth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Venus?' (A.) 'In the third heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Mercury?' (A.) 'In the second heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of the moon?' (A.) 'In the first heaven.' Quoth she, 'Well answered; but I have one more question to ask thee. Into how many parts are the stars divided?' But he was silent and answered nothing; and she said to him, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he put them off and she took them; after which the Khalif said to her, 'Tell us the answer to thy question.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'the stars are divided into three parts, one whereof is hung in the sky of the earth,[1] as it were lamps, to give light to the earth, another suspended in the air, to give light to the seas and that which is therein, and the third is used to transfix the demons withal, when they draw near by stealth to [listen to the talk of the angels in] heaven. Quoth

[1] The lowest of the seven stages into which Mohammedan tradition divides the heavens.

God the Most High, "Verily, we have decked the sky of the earth with lamps and have appointed them for projectiles against the demons."'[1] Quoth the astronomer, 'I have one more question to ask, which if she answer, I will avow myself beaten.' 'Say on,' answered she. Then said he, 'What four incompatible things are based upon other four incompatibles?' 'The four elements,' replied she; 'for of heat God created fire, which is by nature hot and dry; of dryness, earth, which is cold and dry; of cold, water, which is cold and moist; of moisture, air, which is hot and moist. Moreover, He created twelve signs of the zodiac, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces and appointed them of four [several] humours, three, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, fiery, Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn, earthy, Gemini, Libra and Aquarius, airy and Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces, watery.' With this, the astronomer rose, and saying, 'Bear witness against me that she is more learned than I,' went away beaten.

Night cccclvii.

Then said the Khalif, 'Where is the philosopher?' whereupon one came forward and said to Taweddud, 'What is Time?' 'Time,' answered she, 'is a name applied to the [lapse of the] hours of the day and night, which are but the measures of the courses of the sun and moon in their several orbits, even as God the Most High telleth us, when he saith, "And a sign to them [is] the night, from which we strip off the day, and behold, they are in darkness, and the sun runneth to a fixed abode, [appointed] to it; this is the ordinance of the Sublime, the All-knowing."'[2] (Q.) 'How comes unbelief to the son of Adam?' (A.) 'It is reported of the Prophet that he said, "Unbelief runs in a man, as the blood runs in the veins, when he reviles the world and Time and night and the hour." And again, "Let none of you revile Time,

[1] *Koran* lxxvii. 5. [2] *Koran* xxxvi. 36, 37, 38.

for Time is God; neither the world, for it saith, 'May God not help him that reviles me!' neither the hour, for 'Verily, the hour cometh, without doubt;'[1] neither the earth, for it is a portent, according to the saying of the Most High, 'From it we created you, to it we will return you and from it we will bring you forth yet again.'"[2] (Q.) 'What are the five that ate and drank, yet came not out of loins nor belly?' (A.) 'Adam and Simeon and Salih's she-camel[3] and Ishmael's ram and the bird that Abou Bekr the Truth-teller saw in the cave.'[4] (Q.) 'Tell me of five that are in Paradise and are neither mortals, Jinn nor angels?' (A.) 'Jacob's wolf and the Seven Sleepers' dog and Esdras's ass and Salih's camel and the Prophet's mule.' (Q.) 'What man prayed a prayer neither on earth nor in heaven?' (A.) 'Solomon [son of David], when he prayed on his carpet, borne by the wind.' (Q.) 'A man once looked at a handmaid in the morning, and she was unlawful to him; but, at noonday, she became lawful to him. By mid-afternoon, she was again unlawful, but at sundown, she was lawful to him. At evensong, she was a third time unlawful, but by daybreak, she became once more lawful to him.' (A.) 'This was a man who looked at another's handmaid in the morning, and she was then unlawful to him, but at midday he bought her, and she became lawful to him. At mid-afternoon he enfranchised her, and she became unlawful to him, but at sundown he married her and she was again lawful to him. At evensong, he divorced her and she was then a third time unlawful to him, but, next morning, at daybreak, he

[1] *Koran* xxii. 7. [2] *Koran* xx. 57.

[3] A she-camel, big with young, miraculously produced, according to Muslim legend, from a rock by the Prophet Salih, for the purpose of converting the Themoudites.

[4] Where he was hiding with Mohammed from the pursuit of the Benou Curaish.

took her back, and she became once more lawful to him.' (Q.) 'Tell me what tomb fared on with him that lay buried therein?' (A.) 'The whale, when it had swallowed Jonah.' (Q.) 'What spot of ground is it, upon which the sun shone once, but will never again shine till the Day of Judgment?' (A.) 'The bottom of the Red Sea, when Moses smote it with his staff, and the sea clove asunder in twelve places, according to the number of the tribes; then the sun shone on the bottom and will do so never again till the Day of Judgment.' (Q.) 'What was the first skirt that trailed upon the surface of the earth?' (A.) 'That of Hagar, out of shame before Sarah, and it became a custom among the Arabs.' (Q.) 'What is that which breathes without life?' (A.) 'Quoth God the Most High, "By the morning, when it breathes!"'[1] (Q.) 'A number of pigeons came to a high tree and lighted, some on the tree and others under it. Said those on the tree to those on the ground, "If one of you come up to us, ye will be a third part of us [all] in number; and if one of us descend to you, we shall be like unto you in number." How many pigeons were there in all?' (A.) 'Twelve: seven alighted on the tree and five beneath.'

Night cccclviii.

With this the philosopher put off his clothes and fled forth: whereupon she turned to those present and said, 'Which of you is the rhetorician that can discourse of all kinds of knowledge?' There came forward Ibrahim ben Siyyar and said to her, 'Think me not like the rest.' Quoth she, 'It is the more sure to me that thou wilt be beaten, for that thou art a boaster, and God will help me against thee, that I may strip thee of thy clothes. So, if thou sentest one to fetch thee wherewithal to clothe thyself, it would be well for thee.' 'By Allah,' cried he, 'I will assuredly conquer thee and make thee a byword among the folk, generation after generation!' 'Do penance [in

[1] *Koran* lxxxi. 18.

advance] for thy [void] oath,' rejoined she. Then said he, 'What five things did God create, before He made man?' And she replied, 'Water and earth and light and darkness and the fruits [of the earth].' (Q.) 'What did God create with the hand of omnipotence?' (A.) 'The empyreal heaven and the tree Touba[1] and Adam and the garden of Eden; these God created with the hand of His omnipotence; but to all other created things He said, "Be,"—and they were.' (Q.) 'Who is thy father in Islam?' (A.) 'Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!' (Q.) 'Who was the father [in Islam] of Mohammed?' (A.) 'Abraham the Friend of God.' (Q.) 'What is the Faith of Islam?' (A.) 'The professing that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the apostle of God.' (Q.) 'What is thy first and thy last?' (A.) 'My first is troubled water[2] and my last filthy carrion. The first of me is dust and the last dust. Quoth the poet:

Created wast thou of the dust and didst a man become, Ready in question and reply and fluent in debate.
Then to the dust return'dst anon and didst become of it, For that, in very deed, of dust at first thou wast create.'

(Q.) 'What thing was it, whose first [state] was wood and its last life?' (A.) 'Moses' rod, when he cast it on the ground and it became, by permission of God, a writhing serpent.'[3] (Q.) 'What is the meaning of the verse in the Koran, "And I have other need [or occasion] for it"?'[4] (A.) 'He [Moses] was wont to plant his staff in the ground, and it would flower and fruit and shade

[1] In Paradise.
[2] Sperma hominis.
[3] The Muslims attribute this miracle to Moses, instead of Aaron. See *Koran* vii. 110 et seq.
[4] [Quoth God] "What is that in thy right hand, O Moses?" Quoth he, "It is my staff, on which I lean and wherewith I beat down leaves for my flock, and I have other uses for it."—*Koran* xx. 18, 19.

him from the heat and the cold. Moreover, it would carry him, when he was weary, and guard his sheep from the wild beasts, whilst he slept.' (Q.) 'What woman was born of a man alone and what man of a woman alone?' (A.) 'Eve of Adam and Jesus of Mary.' (Q.) 'What fire eats and drinks, what fire eats but drinks not, what fire drinks but eats not and what other neither eats nor drinks?' (A.) 'Hellfire eats and drinks, the fire of the world eats but drinks not, the fire of the sun drinks but eats not, and that of the moon neither eats nor drinks.' (Q.) 'Which is the open [door] and which the shut [door]?' (A.) 'The Traditional Ordinances are the open, the Koranic the shut [door].' (Q.) 'Of what does the poet speak, when he says:

A dweller in the sepulchre, at 's head his victual lies; Whenas he tastes thereof, he speaks and questions and replies.
He rises up and walks and talks, yet silent is the while, And turns anon unto the tomb wherefrom he did arise.
No living one is he, that hath a title to respect, Nor dead, that folk should say of him, "God's mercy him comprise!"?'

(A.) 'The pen.' (Q.) 'What does the poet refer to in these verses:

Two breasts in one it hath; its blood is eath and quick of flow, Wide-mouthed, though all the rest be black, its ears are white as snow.
It hath an idol like a cock, that doth its belly peck, And half a dirhem is its worth, if thou its price wouldst know?'

(A.) 'The inkhorn.' (Q.) 'And in these:

Say to men of wit and learning and to doctors everywhere, Skilled to find the hidden meanings riddles and enigmas bear,
Come expound to me what is it that ye see a bird produce, 'Mongst the Arabs and barbarians and wherever else ye fare;
Neither flesh nor blood, I warrant, hath the thing whereof I speak; Neither down nor feathers, birdwise, for a garment doth it wear.
Boiled it is and likewise roasted, eaten hot and eaten cold; Yea, to boot, and when 'tis buried in the glowing embers' flare,

Colours twain in it are noted, one as silver clear and white, And the other lucent yellow, gold therewith may not compare.
Living can it not be reckoned, neither may we count it dead: Tell me, then, what is this wonder, rarity of all things rare?'

(A.) 'Thou makest long the questioning of an egg worth a doit.' (Q.) 'How many words [or times] did God speak to Moses?' (A.) 'It is related of the Prophet that he said, "God spoke to Moses fifteen hundred and fifteen words [or times]."' (Q.) 'Tell me of fourteen things that speak to the Lord of the Worlds?' (A.) 'The seven heavens and the seven earths, when they say, "We come, obedient."'[1] (Q.) 'How was Adam created?' (A.) 'God created Adam of clay: the clay He made of foam and the foam of the sea, the sea of darkness, darkness of light, light of a fish, the fish of a rock, the rock of a ruby, the ruby of water, and the water He created by the exertion of His omnipotent will, according to His saying (exalted be His name!), "His commandment is only when He willeth aught, that He say, 'Be,'—and it is."'[2] (Q.) 'What is meant by the poet in the following verses:

Night cccclix.

A thing sans mouth or maw that eats in wondrous wise; On trees and beasts it feeds and all beneath the skies.
Give it to eat, it thrives and flourishes amain; But give it not to drink of water, or it dies?'

(A.) 'Fire.' (Q.) 'And in these:

Two lovers, that are still estopped from all delight; Embracing, each with each, they pass the livelong night.
They guarantee the folk from all calamity, And with the risen sun they're torn apart forthright?'

(A.) 'The leaves of a gate.' Q. 'Tell me of the gates of

[1] Then He turned to the heaven (now it was smoke) and said to it and to the earth, "Come ye twain, obedient or loathing." And they said both, "We come, obedient."—*Koran* xli. 10.
[2] *Koran* xxxvi. 82.

Hell?' (A.) They are seven in number and their names are comprised in the following verses:

Jehennem first, then Leza comes and eke Hetim as well; Then must thou count Saïr, and fifth comes Seker, sooth to tell:
Sixth comes Jehim and last of all, Hawiyeh; thus thou hast, In compass brief of doggrel rhyme, the seven rooms of Hell.'

(Q.) 'To what does the poet refer in these verses:

A pair of ringlets long she hath, that trail for aye Behind her, as she comes and goes upon her way,
And eye that never knows the taste of sleep nor sheds A tear, for none it hath for shedding, sooth to say;
Nor wears it aught of clothes, from year to ended year; Yet in all manner wede it doth the folk array?'

(A.) 'A needle.' (Q.) 'What is the length and breadth of the bridge Es Sirat?' (A.) 'Its length is three thousand years' journey, a thousand in descent, a thousand level and a thousand in ascent: it is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair.' (Q.) 'How many intercessions [with God] hath the Prophet [for each soul]?' (A.) 'Three.' (Q.) 'Was Abou Bekr the first that embraced Islam?' (A.) 'Yes.' (Q.) 'Yet Ali[1] became a Muslim before him?' (A.) 'Ali came to the Prophet, when he was a boy of seven years old, for God vouchsafed him the knowledge of the truth in his tender youth, so that he never prostrated himself to idols.' (Q.) 'Which is the more excellent, Ali or Abbas?'[2]

Night cccclx.

Now she knew that, in propounding this question, Ibrahim was laying a trap for her; for, if she said, 'Ali is the more excellent,' she would fall in disgrace with the Khalif; so she bowed her head awhile, now reddening, now paling, then said, 'Thou askest me of two excellent men, each having [his own especial] excellence. Let us return to what we were about.' When the Khalif heard

[1] Ali ibn Abi Taleb, first cousin of Mohammed and fourth Khalif.
[2] Uncle of Mohammed and ancestor of the Abbaside Khalifs.

her reply, he rose to his feet and said, 'By the Lord of the Kaabeh, thou hast said well, O Taweddud!' Then said Ibrahim, 'What means the poet, when he says:

Slender of skirts and slim of shape and sweet of taste it is, Most like unto the spear, except it lacks of the spontoon.
In all the countries of the world the folk make use of it, And eaten 'tis in Ramazan, after mid-afternoon?'

She answered, 'The sugar-cane;' and he said, 'Tell me of many things.' 'What are they?' asked she; and he said, 'What is sweeter than honey, what is sharper than the sword, what is swifter than poison, what is the delight of a moment and what the contentment of three days, what is the pleasantest of days, what is the joy of a week, what is the debt that the worst payer denieth not, what is the prison of the tomb, what is the joy of the heart, what is the snare of the soul, what is death in life, what is the malady that may not be healed, what is the reproach that may not be done away, what is the beast that harbours not in cultivated fields, but lodges in waste places and hates mankind and hath in it somewhat of the make of seven strong beasts?' Quoth she, 'Hear what I shall say in answer; then put off thy clothes, that I may expound to thee.' And the Khalif said, 'Expound, and he shall put off his clothes.' So she said, 'That, which is sweeter than honey, is the love of pious children to their parents; that, which is sharper than the sword, is the tongue; that, which is swifter than poison, is the evil eye; the delight of a moment is coïtion and the contentment of three days is the depilatory for women; the pleasantest of days is that of profit on merchandise; the joy of a week is the bride; the debt, which the worst payer denieth not, is death; the prison of the tomb is an ill son; the joy of the heart is a woman obedient to her husband, (and it is said also that, when fleshmeat descends upon the heart, it rejoiceth therein); the snare [or vexation] of the soul is a disobe-

dient slave; death in life is poverty; the malady, that may not be healed, is an ill nature and the reproach, that may not be done away, is an ill daughter; lastly, the beast that harbours not in cultivated fields, but lodges in waste places and hates mankind and hath in it somewhat of the make of seven strong beasts, is the locust, whose head is as the head of the horse, its neck as the neck of the bull, its wings as the wings of the vulture, its feet as the feet of the camel, its tail as the tail of the serpent, its body as the body of the scorpion and its horns as the horns of the gazelle.'

The Khalif was astounded at her quickness and understanding and said to Ibrahim, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he rose and said, 'I call all who are present in this assembly to witness that she is more learned than I and all the learned men.' And he put off his clothes and gave them to her, saying, 'Take them and may God not bless them to thee!' The Khalif ordered him fresh clothes and said to Taweddud, 'There is one thing left of that for which thou didst engage, namely, chess.' And he sent for professors of chess and draughts and backgammon. The chess-player sat down before her, and they set the pieces, and he moved and she moved; but, every move he made she speedily countered, till she beat him and he found himself check-mated. Quoth he, 'I did but lead thee on, that thou mightest think thyself skilful; but set up again, and I will show thee.' So they placed the pieces a second time, and he said to himself, 'Open thine eyes, or she will beat thee.' And he fell to moving no piece, save after calculation, and ceased not to play, till she said, 'Check-mate.' When he saw this, he was confounded at her quickness and skill; but she laughed and said, 'O master, I will make a wager with thee on this third game. I will give thee the queen and the right-hand rook and the left-hand knight; if thou beat me, take my clothes, and

Night cccclxi.

if I beat thee, I will take thine.' 'I agree to this,' replied he, and they replaced the pieces, she giving him the queen, rook and knight. Then said she, 'Move, O master.' So he moved, saying in himself, 'I cannot but win, with such an advantage,' and made a combination; but she moved on, little by little, till she made one of her pawns a queen and pushing up to him pawns and other pieces, to take off his attention, set one in his way and tempted him with it.[1] Accordingly, he took it and she said to him, 'The measure is meted out and the equilibrium established. Eat, O man, till thou pass repletion; nought shall be thy ruin but greediness. Knowest thou not that I did but tempt thee, that I might beguile thee? See: this is check-mate: put off thy clothes.' 'Leave me my trousers,' quoth he, 'so God requite thee;' and he swore by Allah that he would contend with none, so long as Taweddud abode at the Court of Baghdad. Then he took off his clothes and gave them to her and went away.

Then came the backgammon-player, and she said to him, 'If I beat thee, what wilt thou give me?' Quoth he, 'I will give thee ten suits of brocade of Constantinople, figured with gold, and ten suits of velvet and a thousand dinars, and if I beat thee, I ask nothing but that thou write me an acknowledgment thereof.' 'To it, then,' replied she, 'and do thy best.' So they played, and he lost and went away, jabbering in the Frank jargon and saying, 'By the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful, there is not her like in all the world!' Then the Khalif summoned players on instruments of music and said to her, 'Dost thou know aught of music?' 'Yes,' answered she. So he bade bring a peeled and polished lute, whose owner [or maker] was ground down by exile [or estrangement from the beloved] and of which quoth one, describing it:

[1] *Lit.* gave him to eat of it.

God watered a land and straight a tree sprang up on its root: It cast forth branches and throve and flourished with many a shoot.
The birds, when the wood was green, sang o'er it, and when it was dry, Fair women sang to it in turn, for lo, 'twas a minstrel's lute!

So they brought a bag of red satin, with tassels of saffron-coloured silk: and she opened the bag, and took out a lute, on which were graven the following verses:

Full many a tender branch a lute for singing-girl has grown, Wherewith at banquets to her mates she makes melodious moan.
She sings; it follows on her song, as 'twere to teach her how Heart's troubles in clear perfect speech of music to make known.

She laid her lute in her lap and letting her breasts hang over it, bent to it as bends a mother, suckling her child; then preluded in twelve different modes, till the whole assembly was agitated with delight, and sang the following verses:

Leave your estrangement, I pray, and bid your cruelty hold, For, by your life, my heart will never for you be consoled.
Have pity on one who weeps, afflicted and ever sad, A slave of passion, who burns for thee with longings untold.

The Khalif was ravished and exclaimed, 'May God bless thee and receive him who taught thee[1] into His mercy!' Whereupon she rose and kissed the earth before him. Then he sent for money and paid her master Aboulhusn a hundred thousand dinars to her price; after which he said to her, 'O Taweddud, ask a boon of me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I ask of thee that thou restore me to my lord who sold me to thee.' 'It is well,' answered the Khalif and restored her to her master and gave her five thousand dinars for herself. Moreover, he appointed Aboulhusn one of his boon-companions and assigned him a monthly stipend of a thousand dinars so long as he should live, and he abode with the damsel Taweddud in all delight of life. Night cccclxii.

[1] Assuming him to be dead.

Marvel then, O King, at the eloquence of this damsel and the greatness of her learning and understanding and her perfect excellence in all branches of knowledge, and consider the generosity of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, in that he gave her master this money and said to her, 'Ask a boon of me;' and she besought him to restore her to her lord. So he restored her to him and gave her five thousand dinars for herself and made him one of his boon-companions. Where is such generosity to be found after the Abbaside Khalifs, may God the Most High have mercy upon them all!

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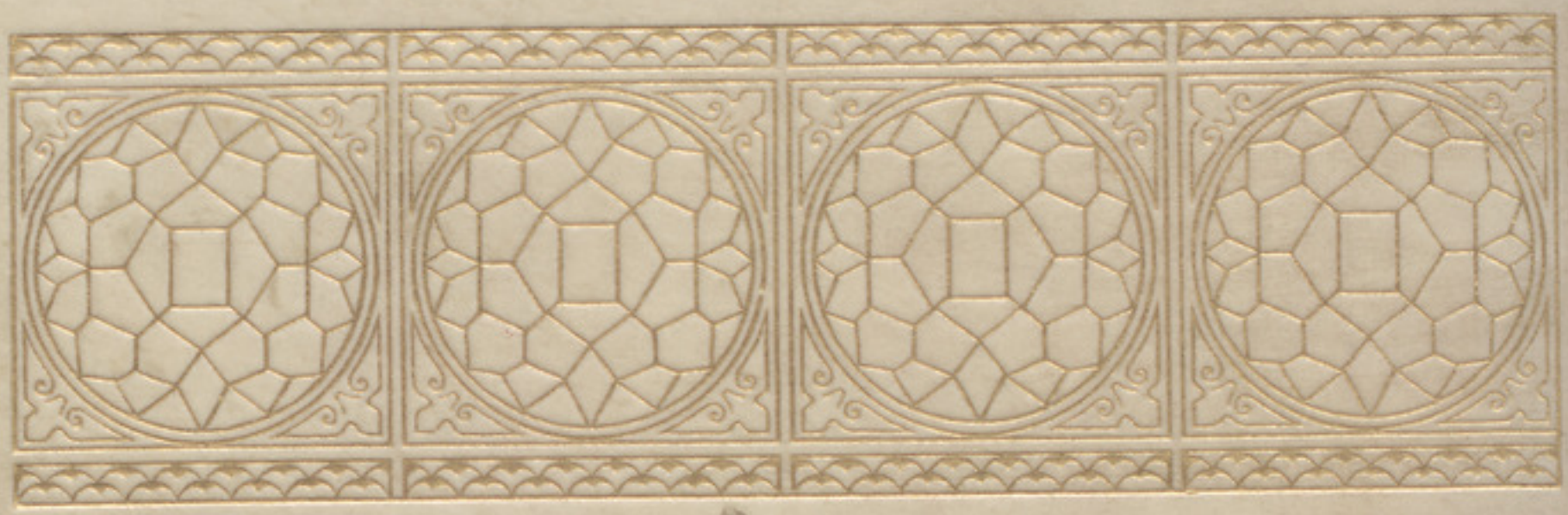
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