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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 FIFTH.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH WITH THE PROUD KING AND THE DEVOUT MAN.

A certain king of the ancients was once minded to ride out in state with the officers of his court and the grandees of his realm and show forth to the folk the wonders of his magnificence. So he bade his lords and Amirs and grandees equip them to this end and commanded his keeper of the wardrobe to bring him of the richest of raiment, such as befitted the King in his state and [his master of the horse] to bring his steeds of the finest breeds and most renowned pedigrees, which being done, he chose out of the raiment what liked him and of the horses that which he deemed good and donning the clothes, together with a collar set with pearls and rubies and all manner jewels, mounted and set forth in state, making his horse prance and curvet among his troops and glorying in his pride and magnificence. And Satan came to him and laying his hand upon his nose, blew into his nostrils the breath of pride and conceit, so that he magnified himself and said in his heart, 'Who among men is like unto me?' And he became so puffed up with arrogance and conceit and so taken up with the thought of his own glory and magnificence, that he would not vouchsafe a glance to any. Presently, there came up a man

clad in tattered clothes and saluted him, but he returned not his greeting, whereupon the stranger laid hold of his horse's bridle. 'Lift thy hand,' said the King, 'thou knowest not whose bridle-rein it is whereof thou takest hold.' Quoth the other, 'I have an occasion to thee.' 'Wait till I alight,' replied the King, 'and then name it.' 'Nay,' rejoined the stranger, 'it is a secret and I will not tell it but in thine ear.' So the King bowed his head to him and he said, 'I am the Angel of Death and I purpose to take thy soul.' 'Have patience with me a little,' said the King, 'whilst I return to my house and take leave of my people and children and neighbours and wife.' 'Not so,' answered the angel; 'thou shalt never return nor look on them again, for the term of thy life is past.' So saying, he took the soul of the King,—who fell off his horse's back, dead,—and departed thence.

Presently, he met a devout man, of whom God the Most High had accepted, and saluted him. He returned his salute, and the Angel of Death said to him, 'O pious man, I have a privy occasion to thee.' 'Tell it in my ear,' said the devotee. Quoth the other, 'I am the Angel of Death.' 'Welcome to thee!' replied the man. 'Praised be God for thy coming! I am weary of awaiting thee; for indeed long hath been thine absence from him who longeth for thee.' Quoth the angel, 'If thou have any business, make an end of it.' But the other answered, saying, 'There is nothing urgent to me as the meeting with my Lord, to whom belong might and majesty!' And the angel said, 'How wouldst thou liefer have me take thy soul? I am bidden to take it as thou willest and choosest.' 'Wait till I make the ablution and pray,' replied the devotee; 'and when I prostrate myself, then take my soul in the act.' Quoth the angel, 'Verily, my Lord commanded me not to take thy soul but with thy consent and as thou shouldst wish; so I will do thy will.' Then the devout man rose

and made the ablution and prayed: and the Angel of Death took his soul in the act of adoration, and God transported it to the place of mercy and acceptance and forgiveness.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH AND THE RICH KING.

A certain king had heaped up treasure beyond count and gathered store of all [precious] things, that God the Most High hath created, that he might take his pleasure thereof, against such time as he should have leisure to enjoy all this abounding wealth that he had collected. Moreover, he builded him a wide and lofty palace, such as beseemeth kings, and set thereto strong doors of cunning fashion and appointed for its service and guard servants and soldiers and doorkeepers. One day, he bade the cooks dress him somewhat of the goodliest of food and assembled his household and retainers and lords and servants to eat with him and partake of his bounty. Then he sat down upon the throne of his kingship and the chair of his state and leaning back upon his cushion, bespoke himself, saying, 'O soul, behold, thou hast gathered together all the riches of the world; so now take thy leisure therein and eat of this good at thine ease, in long life and abounding prosperity!' Night cccclxiii.

Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there came so terrible a knock at the gate that the whole palace shook and the king's throne trembled. The servants were affrighted and ran to the door, where they saw a man clad in tattered raiment, with a cadger's wallet hanging at his neck, as he were one who came to beg food. When they saw him, they cried out at him, saying, 'Out on thee! What unmannerly fashion is this? Wait till the king eateth and [after] we will give thee of what is left.' Quoth he, 'Tell your lord to come out and speak with me, for I

have a pressing errand to him and a weighty matter.' 'Away, fool!' replied they. 'Who art thou that we should bid our lord come out to thee?' But he said, 'Tell him of this.' So they went in and told the king, who said, 'Did ye not rebuke him and draw upon him and chide him!' But, as he spoke, behold, there came another knock at the gate, louder than the first, whereupon the servants ran at the stranger with staves and weapons, to fall upon him; but he cried out at them, saying, 'Abide in your places, for I am the Angel of Death.' When they heard this, their hearts quaked and their wits forsook them; their understandings were dazed and their nerves trembled for fear and their limbs lost the power of motion. Then said the King to them, 'Bid him take a substitute in my stead.' But the Angel answered, saying, 'I will take no substitute, and I come not but on thine account, to make severance between thee and the good thou hast gathered together and the riches thou hast heaped up and treasured.' When the King heard this, he wept and groaned, saying, 'May God curse the treasure that has deluded and undone me and diverted me from the service of my Lord! I deemed it would profit me, but to-day it is a regret for me and an affliction unto me, and behold, I [must] go forth, empty-handed of it, and leave it to mine enemies.'

Therewith God caused the treasure to speak and it said, 'Why dost thou curse me? Curse thyself, for God created both me and thee of the dust and appointed me to be in thine hand, that thou mightest provide thee with me for the next world and give alms with me to the poor and sick and needy and endow mosques and hospices and build bridges and aqueducts, so might I be a succour unto thee in the life to come. But thou didst garner me and hoard me up and bestowedst me on thine own lusts, neither gavest thanks for me, as was due, but wast un-

grateful; and now thou must leave me to thine enemies and abidest in thy regret and thy repentance. But what is my fault, that thou shouldest revile me?' Then the Angel of Death took the soul of the King, before he ate of the food, and he fell from his throne, dead. Quoth God the Most High, 'Even while they rejoiced in what had been given to them, we took them unawares and behold, they were stricken with despair.'[1]

THE ANGEL OF DEATH AND THE KING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

There was once a proud and puissant king of the children of Israel, who sat one day upon the throne of his kingship, when he saw come in to him, by the gate of the hall, a man of terrible and forbidding aspect. The King was affrighted at his sudden intrusion upon him and his look terrified him; so he sprang up and said to him, 'Who art thou, O man? Who gave thee leave to come in to me and who sent thee to my house?' Quoth the stranger, 'The Lord of the house sent me to thee and I need no leave to come in to kings, nor can any door-keeper exclude me, for I reck not of a Sultan's majesty neither of the multitude of guards. I am he from whom no tyrant is at rest, nor for any is there escape from my grasp: I am the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.'

When the King heard this, trembling crept over his body and he fell on his face in a swoon; but, presently coming to himself, he said, 'Art thou then the Angel of Death?' 'Yes,' answered the stranger. 'I conjure thee by Allah,' quoth the King, 'grant me one day's respite, that I may ask pardon of my sins and seek absolution of

[1] *Koran* vi. 44.

my Lord and restore to their rightful owners the treasures that are in my storehouses, so I may not be burdened with the woe of a reckoning nor suffer the misery of punishment therefor.' 'Away! away!' replied the Angel. 'This may nowise be. How can I grant thee a respite, whenas the days of thy life are counted and thy breaths numbered and thy moments fixed and written?' 'Grant me an hour,' said the King; but the Angel answered, saying, 'The hour was in the account and hath passed, and thou unheeding, and hath expired, and thou taking no thought: and now thy moments are accomplished, and there remains to thee but one breath.' 'Who will be with me, when I am transported to my grave?' asked the King. Quoth the Angel, 'Nought will be with thee but thy work.' 'I have no work,' said the King; and the Angel, 'Doubtless, thine abiding place will be in the fire and thy departure to the wrath of the Almighty.' Then he took the soul of the King, and he fell off his throne and dropped on the earth [dead]. And there arose a mighty weeping and wailing and clamour of lamentation for him among the people of his court, and had they known that to which he went of the wrath of his Lord, their weeping for him had been [yet] sorer and their lamentation louder and more abounding.

Night cccclxiv.

ISKENDER DHOULKERNEIN AND A CERTAIN TRIBE OF POOR FOLK.

It is related that Iskender Dhoulkernein[1] came once, in his travels, upon a tribe of poor folk, who owned nought of the goods of the world and who dug their graves over against the doors of their houses and were wont at all

[1] Alexander the Two-horned, a title given by Eastern writers to Alexander the Great (as well as to another ancient king, whose identity is uncertain), probably on account of his claim to descent from Jupiter Ammon, whose distinctive feature was a ram's horn on either temple.

times to frequent them and sweep the earth from them and keep them clean and visit them and worship God the Most High in them; and they had no food save herbs and the fruits of the earth. Iskender sent a man to them, to bid their king to him, but he refused to come, saying, 'I have no occasion to him.' So Iskender went to him and said to him, 'How is it with you and what manner of folk are you? For I see with you nothing of gold or silver nor aught of the good things of the world.' 'None hath his fill of the goods of the world,' answered the king. 'Why do you dig your graves before the doors of your houses?' asked Iskender. 'That they may be the cynosure of our eyes,' replied the king, 'so we may look on them and still take thought unto death neither forget the world to come. Thus is the love of the world banished from our hearts and we are not distracted thereby from the service of our Lord, exalted be His name!' Quoth Iskender, 'Why do ye eat herbs?' And the other answered, 'Because it misliketh us to make our bellies the tombs of beasts and because the pleasure of eating overpasseth not the gullet.'

Then he brought out a human skull and laying it before Iskender, said to him, 'O Dhoulkernein, knowest thou whose was this skull?' 'Nay,' answered Iskender; and the other rejoined, 'He whose skull this is was a king of the kings of the world, who dealt tyrannously with his subjects, oppressing the weak and passing his days in heaping up the perishable goods of the world, till God took his soul and made the fire his abiding-place; and this is his head.'

Then he produced another skull and laying it before Iskender, said to him, 'Knowest thou this?' 'No,' answered the prince; and the other rejoined, 'This is the skull of another king, who dealt justly by his subjects and was tenderly solicitous for the people of his realm and his dominions, till God took his soul and lodged him in His

Paradise and made high his degree [among His blessed].' Then he laid his hands on Iskender's head and said, 'Whether of these twain art thou?' Whereupon Iskender wept sore and straining the king to his bosom, said, 'An thou be minded to consort with me, I will commit to thee the government of my affairs and share with thee in my kingdom.' 'Away! away!' replied the other. 'I have no mind to this.' 'Why so?' asked Iskender, and the King answered, 'Because all men are thine enemies by reason of the wealth and possessions thou hast gotten, and all men are my friends in verity, because of my contentment and poverty, for that I possess nothing, neither covet aught of the goods of the world; I have no desire unto them nor wish for them, neither reck I of aught save contentment.' So Iskender pressed him to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes and went his way.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF KING ANOUSHIRWAN.

It is told of the just King Anoushirwan[1] that he once feigned himself sick and bade his stewards and intendants go round about the provinces of his empire and the quarters of his realm and seek him out a rotten brick from some ruined village, that he might use it as medicine, avouching that the physicians had prescribed this to him. So they went the round of the provinces of his realm and of all the lands under his dominion and returned and said to him, 'In all the realm we have found no ruined place nor old rotten brick.' At this he rejoiced and returned thanks to God, saying, 'I was but minded to prove my kingdom and try my empire, that I might know if there were therein any ruined [or deserted] place, so I

[1] See Vol. IV. p. 227.

might rebuild [or repeople] it; but, since there is no place in it but is inhabited, the affairs of the realm are well ordered and accomplished and [its] prosperity hath reached the pitch of perfection.' Night cccclxv.

And know, O king," [added Shehrzad] "that these kings of time past were not solicitous for the peopling of their kingdoms, but because they knew that the more populous a country is, the more abundant is that which is desired therein, and for that they knew the saying of the wise and the learned to be without doubt true, namely, 'Religion depends on the King, the King on the troops, the troops on the treasury, the treasury on the populousness [or prosperity] of the country and the latter on the justice of the government.' Wherefore they upheld no one in tyranny or oppression neither suffered their dependents to do injustice, knowing that kingdoms are not stablished upon tyranny, but that cities and places fall into ruin, when oppressors get the mastery over them, and their inhabitants disperse and flee to other governments, wherefore ruin falls upon the realm, the imports fail, the treasuries become empty and the lives of the subjects are troubled; for that they love not a tyrant and cease not to offer up prayers against him, so that the King hath no ease of his dominion and the shifts of fortune speedily bring about his destruction.

THE JEWISH CADI AND HIS PIOUS WIFE.

A certain Cadi of the children of Israel had a wife of surpassing beauty, who was withal exceeding virtuous, chaste and patient, and being minded to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, appointed his brother Cadi in his stead, during his absence, and commended his wife to his charge. Now this brother had heard of her beauty and grace and had fallen in love with her. So, his brother

being gone, he went in to her and sought her favours; but she denied him and clave fast unto her chastity. The more she repelled him, the more urgently he pressed his suit upon her, till, despairing of her and fearing lest she should acquaint his brother with his conduct, when he returned, he suborned false witnesses to testify against her of adultery and cited her before the King of the day, who adjudged her to be stoned. So they dug a pit and making her sit therein, stoned her, till she was covered with stones, and [the wicked brother] said, 'Be the pit her grave.'

But, when it was dark night, a passer-by, making for a neighbouring hamlet, heard her groaning and pulling her out of the pit, carried her home to his wife, who dressed her wounds and tended her till she recovered. The peasant's wife had a child, which she gave to the woman to nurse, and the latter used to lodge with the child in another house by night. Now a certain thief saw her and lusted after her. So he sent to her, to require her of love, but she denied herself to him; wherefore he resolved to kill her and making his way into her chamber by night, whilst she slept, thought to strike at her with a knife; but it smote the child and killed it; which when he knew, fear overtook him and he went forth the house and God preserved her from him.

When she awoke in the morning, she found the child by her side slain; and presently his mother came and seeing the boy dead, said to her, 'It was thou didst murder him.' Therewith she beat her grievously and would have killed her; but her husband interposed and delivered the woman, who fled forth for her life, knowing not whither she should go. Presently, she came to a village, where she saw a crowd of people collected about the trunk of a tree, on which was a man crucified, but still in the chains of life. She asked what he had done and they said, 'He hath committed a crime, which nothing can

expiate but death or the payment of such a fine by way of alms.' Now she had with her somewhat of money, so she said to them, 'Take the money and let him go.' Accordingly, they set him free and he repented at her hands and vowed to serve her, for the love of God the Most High, till death should release him. Then he built her a hermitage and lodged her therein; moreover, he betook himself to woodcutting and brought her her daily bread. As for her, she was instant in the service of God, so that there came no sick man or demoniac to her, but she prayed for him and he was straightway made whole.

Night cccclxvi.

Now it befell, by the ordinance of God the Most High, that He sent down upon her husband's brother a cancer in the face and smote the villager's wife with leprosy and afflicted the murderer of the boy with paralysis. When the Cadi returned home from his pilgrimage, he asked his brother of his wife, and he told him that she was dead, whereat he mourned sore and accounted her with God. After awhile, the folk heard of the pious recluse and flocked to her cell from all parts of the length and breadth of the earth. And the Cadi said to his brother, 'O my brother, wilt thou not seek out yonder pious woman? It may be God shall appoint thee healing at her hands.' 'O my brother,' replied he, 'carry me to her.' Moreover, the husband of the leprous woman heard of the pious woman and carried his wife to her, as did also the paralytic's family; and they all met at the door of her cell, where they waited, till her servant came, and begged him to ask leave of her to admit them; and he did so.

Now she had a place wherefrom she could look out upon those who came to her, without their seeing her, and thence she saw them all and recognized them. So, when her servant came in to her, she veiled herself and went out and stood in the door, looking at them; but they knew her not. Then said she to them, 'O folk, ye shall

not be rid of what is with you, till ye confess your sins; for, when the creature confesses his sins, God relenteth towards him and granteth him that for which he resorteth to Him.' Quoth the Cadi to his brother, 'O my brother, repent to God and persist not in thy frowardness, for it will be the more helpful to thy relief.' And the tongue of the case spoke as follows:

Behold, oppressor and oppressed assembled are to-day, And God the secret hath unveiled, till now that hidden lay.
This is a case in which, indeed, the sinners are brought low And God exalteth those that be assiduous in His way.
Yea, and our Master and our Lord discovereth the truth, Whether the sinner froward be or bow him to obey.
Woe unto those who strive with God and anger Him, as 'twere They knew not what He doth prepare for those that Him gainsay!
O thou that power and glory seek'st, know, only in the fear Of God true glory lies; so cleave thou fast to Allah aye.

Then said the brother, 'Now will I tell the truth. I did thus and thus with thy wife;' and he confessed the whole matter, adding, 'And this is my sin.' Quoth the leprous woman, 'As for me, I had a woman with me and imputed to her [a crime,] of which I knew [her] not [to be guilty], and beat her grievously; and this is my offence.' And the paralytic said, 'And I went in to a woman to kill her, after I had solicited her to commit adultery and she had refused; and I slew [instead] a boy that lay beside her; and this is my offence.' Then said the pious woman, 'O my God, even as Thou hast made them to feel the misery of disobedience, so show Thou them [now] the excellence of obedience, for Thou canst all things!' And God (to whom belong might and majesty) made them whole. Then the Cadi fell a-looking on the pious woman and considering her straitly, till she asked him why he did thus and he said, 'I had a wife, were she not dead, I had said that thou wast she.' With this, she made herself known to him

and they both betook themselves to rendering thanks to God (to whom belong might and majesty) for that which He had vouchsafed them of the reunion of their loves; but the brother and the thief and the villager's wife began to implore her forgiveness. So she forgave them, and they all worshipped God in that place and were assiduous in her service, till Death sundered them.

THE SHIPWRECKED WOMAN AND HER CHILD.

(Quoth one of the Seyyids[1]), I was going round about the Kaabeh one dark night, when I heard a plaintive voice, speaking from a contrite heart and saying, 'O Bountiful One, Thy past favours! Indeed, my heart is constant to the covenant.' When I heard this, my heart fluttered, so that I was nigh upon death; but I followed the voice and found that it came from a woman, to whom I said, 'Peace be on thee, O handmaid of God!' 'And on thee be peace,' answered she, 'and the mercy of God and His blessings!' Quoth I, 'I conjure thee, by the Most Great God, tell me what is the covenant to which thy heart is constant.' 'But that thou adjurest me by the Almighty,' replied she, 'I would not tell thee my secret. See what is before me.' So I looked and saw a child lying asleep before her and breathing heavily in his slumber. 'Know,' said she, 'that I set forth, being big with this child, to make the pilgrimage to this [Holy] House and took passage in a ship; but the waves rose against us and the winds were contrary and the ship broke up under us. I saved myself on a plank, and in this situation, I gave birth to the child.

As I sat on the plank, with the boy on my lap and the waves beating upon me, there swam up to me one of the sailors, who climbed on to the plank and said to me, "By Night cccclxbii.

[1] Descendants of the Prophet.

Allah, I desired thee, whilst thou wast yet in the ship, and now I have come at thee. So yield thyself to me, or I will throw thee into the sea." "Out on thee!" cried I. "Hast thou no thought of that which thou hast seen and is it no warning to thee?" Quoth he, "I have seen the like of this many a time and come off safe and reck not." "O fellow," rejoined I, "we are now in a strait whence we hope to be delivered by obedience and not by disobedience [of God's commandments]." But he was instant with me, and I feared him and thought to put him off; so I said to him, "Wait till the child sleeps." And he took the child off my lap and threw him into the sea. When I saw this, my heart throbbed and anguish was sore upon me; but I raised my eyes to heaven and said, "O Thou that intervenest between a man and his heart, intervene between me and this wild beast!" And by Allah, hardly had I spoken when a beast rose out of the sea and snatched him off the plank. When I found myself alone, my affliction redoubled and my grief and longing for my child, and I recited the following verses:

The solace of my eyes, my child, my dear, Is lost, and I am racked with pain and fear:
I see my body wrecked, and all my heart On coals of love and dole is wasting sheer.
No help is there for me in this my need, Save at Thy hands on whom my hope I rear.
Thou, O my Lord, hast seen my sore distress, For loss of him, my child, my suckling dear.
Take ruth on us and give him back to me! Thou art my stay: incline to me Thine ear.

In this condition I abode a day and a night, and on the morrow I caught sight of the sails of a ship shining afar off, nor did the winds cease to drive me and the waves to bear me on, till I reached the vessel, whose sails I had seen. The sailors took me up into the ship, and

I looked and behold, my child amongst them. So I threw myself upon him and said, "O folk, this is my child: how came ye by him?" "As we were sailing along [yesterday]," quoth they, "the ship suddenly stood still in the sea and behold, [that which stayed us was] a [sea] beast, as it were a great city, and this child on its back, sucking his thumbs; so we took him up into the ship." When I heard this, I told them all that had befallen me and returned thanks to my Lord and vowed to Him that I would never stir from His House nor swerve from His service [whilst I lived]; and since then, I have never required of Him aught but He hath given it me.'

When she had made an end of her story (adds the Seyyid), I put my hand to my alms-pouch and would have given to her, but she exclaimed, 'Away, idle man! Have I not told thee of His bounties and the graciousness of His dealings [with me] and shall I take an alms from other than His hand?' And I could not prevail with her to take aught of me: so I left her and went away, reciting the following verses:

How many secret favours are there not in God! His mysteries elude the most enlightened sight.
How often by His grace doth ease come after stress, How oft the broken heart is solaced by His might!
How often in the morn is one oppressed by care, Yet gladness follows on the coming of the night!
If things go hard with thee, trust in the Most High God, The ever-living One that is in Heaven's height.
Claim thou the Prophet's voice to intercede for thee: Through him each faithful soul shall have his heart's delight.

And she ceased not from the service of her Lord, cleaving unto His [Holy] House, till death came to her.

THE PIOUS BLACK SLAVE.

(Quoth Malik ben Dinar,[1] on whom God have mercy), We were once afflicted with drought at Bassora and went forth repeatedly to pray for rain, but saw no sign of our prayers being answered. So I went, I and Itaa es Selemi and Thabit el Benani and Neja el Bekkaa and Mohammed ben Wasi and Eyoub es Sukhtiyani and Hebib el Farsi and Hassan ben Abou Sinan and Otbeh el Ghulam and Salih el Muzeni,[2] till we reached the place of prayer, when the boys came out of the schools and we offered up prayers for rain, but could see no sign of acceptance. So about midday the people went away and I and Thabit el Benani abode till nightfall, when we saw a black of comely visage, slender-shanked and big-bellied, come up, clad in a pair of woollen drawers; if all he wore had been priced, it would not have fetched a couple of dirhems. He fetched water and made the ablution, then, going up to the prayer-niche, prayed two inclinations deftly, his standing and bowing and prostration being [well-nigh] simultaneous. Then he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, how long wilt thou reject the prayers of Thy servants in that which offereth no hurt to Thy sovereignty? Is that which is with Thee expended or are the treasuries of Thy kingdom exhausted? I conjure Thee, by Thy love to me, to pour out upon us Thy rain-clouds forthwith!'

Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the sky clouded over and there came a rain, as of the emptying of waterskins. When we left the oratory, we were up to our knees in water, and we were lost in wonder at the

Night ccccclxviii.

[1] A renowned theologian and ascetic, who flourished at Bassora in the eighth century.

[2] Well-known theologians and jurists of the time.

black. So I accosted him and said to him, 'Out on thee, O black, art thou not ashamed of what thou saidst?' 'How so?' asked he. 'Didst thou not adjure God by His love for thee?' said I. 'What giveth thee to know that He loveth thee?' 'Away from me,' replied he, 'O thou that art distracted [by the love of the world] from [the care of] thine own soul! Where was I, when He gave me strength to identify myself with Him and of His special favour vouchsafed unto me the knowledge of Him?[1] How deemest thou that He aided me thus except of His love to me? Verily, His love to me is after the measure of my love to Him.' Quoth I, 'Tarry awhile with me, may God have mercy on thee!' But he said, 'I am a slave and the Book of God enjoins me to obey my lesser[2] master.' So he went away and we followed him afar off, till we saw him enter a slave-dealer's house.

Now the first half of the night was passed and the last half was long upon us, so we went away; but next morning, we repaired to the slave-dealer and said to him, 'Hast thou a boy[3] to sell us for service?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I have nigh upon a hundred boys, and they are all for sale.' Then he showed us slave after slave, till he had shown us threescore and ten; but my friend was not amongst them, and the dealer said, 'These are all I have.' But, as we were going away, we espied a ruinous hut behind his house and going in, saw the black standing there. 'It is he, by the Lord of the Kaabeh!' cried I and turning back to the dealer, said to him, 'Sell me yonder slave.' 'O Abou Yehya,'[4] replied he, 'this is a plaguy, morose,

[1] "Identification" and "Knowledge," stages of the Sufi mystic on the "Way" or journey to God.

[2] *i.e.* earthly master, as opposed to God, his great or heavenly master.

[3] Male black slaves in the East, as in the United States, are often called "boys," irrespectively of age.

[4] Surname of Malik ben Dinar.

unprofitable fellow, who hath no concern by night but weeping and by day but repentance.' 'It is for that I want him,' said I. So the dealer called him, and he came out, feigning drowsiness. Quoth his master, 'Take him at thine own price, so thou hold me quit of all his faults.' So I bought him for twenty dinars and said, 'What is his name?' 'Maimoun,' answered the dealer; and I took him by the hand and went out with him, intending for my house; but he turned to me and said, 'O my lesser lord, why didst thou buy me? By Allah, I am not fit for the service of the creature!' 'On my head be it,' replied I; 'I bought thee that I might serve thee myself.' 'Why so?' asked he, and I said, 'Wast thou not in company with us yesterday in the place of prayer?' 'And didst thou hear me?' quoth he; and I answered, 'It was I accosted thee yesterday and spoke with thee.'

Then we went on till we came to a mosque, where he entered and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he said, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, the secret that was between Thee and me Thou hast discovered unto men and hast betrayed me therein among Thy creatures. How then shall life be sweet to me, now that others than Thou have happened upon that which is between Thee and me? I conjure Thee to take my soul to Thee forthright.' So saying, he prostrated himself, and I waited awhile till, seeing that he did not raise his head, I went up to him and moved him and found that he was indeed dead, the mercy of God the Most High be upon him! I laid him out and looked at him, and behold, he was smiling. Moreover, whiteness had gotten the better of blackness in his face, and it was radiant with light.

As we wondered at his affair, the door opened and a young man came in to us and said, 'Peace be on you! May God make great our reward and yours for our brother Maimoun! Here is his shroud: wrap him in it.' So saying, he gave us two robes, never had we seen their like, and we shrouded him therein. And now his tomb is a place whither the folk resort to pray for rain and ask favours of God; and how excellently well saith the poet on this subject:

The pleasaunce of the just is in a garden of the skies, About whose gates God's doorkeepers hold ever watch and ward.
Behold, there drink they of old wine, and mingled therewithal Tesnim,[1] that is, the wine of close communion with the Lord.
The secret of their hearts is safe from other than God's sight; For that their sprights with His are blent in one supreme accord.

THE DEVOUT PLATTER-MAKER AND HIS WIFE.

There was once among the children of Israel a worthy man, who was strenuous in the service of his Lord and abstained from the things of this world and had put them away from his heart. He had a wife who helped him in his endeavour and was still obedient to him. They earned their living by making platters and fans, at which they wrought all day, and at nightfall the man went out into the streets and highways, to sell what they had made. They were wont to fast continually, and one morning, they arose, fasting, and wrought at their trade till the end of the day, when the man went forth, according to custom, to seek purchasers for his wares, and fared on, till he came to the door of the house of a certain man of wealth and condition.

Now the platter-maker was fair of face and comely of aspect, and the wife of the master of the house, who was then absent, saw him and fell in love with him and her heart inclined to him with an exceeding inclination; so she called her handmaid and said to her, 'Make shift to bring yonder man to me.' Accordingly the maid went

[1] Name of a fountain of Paradise.

out to him and said, 'Come in; my lady hath a mind to buy some of thy wares, after she hath tried them and looked at them.' The man thought she spoke truly and seeing no harm in this, entered and sat down, as she bade him. The maid shut the door upon him, whereupon her mistress came out and taking him by the gown, drew him into her chamber and said to him, 'How long shall I seek of thee [a lover's] privacy? Verily, my patience is at an end on thine account. See now, the place is perfumed and food ready and the master of the house is absent this night, and I give myself to thee, I whose favours kings and captains and men of fortune have sought this long while, but I have hearkened to none of them.' And she went on talking thus to him, whilst he raised not his eyes from the ground, for shame before God and fear of the pains of His punishment, even as saith the poet:

'Twas shamefastness, I trow, and nothing else, that came 'Twixt me and dalliance with many a noble dame.
The antidote it was to them, and should it pass, I'm lost; for antidote was none but very shame.

He strove to free himself from her, but could not; so he said to her, 'I want one thing of thee.' 'What is that?' asked she, and he answered, 'I wish for pure water and that I may carry it to the highest place of thy house and do an occasion therewith and cleanse myself of a defilement, which I may not discover to thee.' Quoth she, 'The house is spacious and hath closets and privy places and lavatories at command.' But he replied, 'I want nothing but to be at a height.' So she said to her handmaid, 'Carry him up to the belvedere at the top of the house.' Accordingly the maid took him up thither and giving him a vessel of water, went away and left him.

He made the ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he looked at the ground, thinking to throw himself down, but, seeing it afar off, feared to be torn to

pieces in the fall. Then he bethought him of the consequence of his disobedience to God, and it became a light matter to him to offer up his life and shed his blood, [rather than sin]; so he said, 'O my God and my Lord, Thou seest that which is fallen on me; neither is my case hidden from Thee. Thou indeed canst all things, and the tongue of my case reciteth and saith as follows:

My heart doth sign to Thee and eke my vitals too; The soul within my soul is open to Thy view.
Lo, if I speak with Thee, I cry indeed aloud, Or, if I'm mute, my signs my speech to Thee renew.
O Thou to whom indeed no second is conjoined, A wretched lovesick soul and sad to Thee doth sue.
I have a heart that pants for woe, as well Thou knowst; But yet a hope have I, my thoughts confirm it true.
The sacrifice of life, for all its worth be small, Is yet the hardest thing of all that can ensue;
So, an it be Thy will to save me, of Thy grace, Thou, surely, O my hope, art able thereunto!'

Then he cast himself down from the belvedere; but God sent an angel, who bore him up on his wings and brought him to the earth, whole and unhurt. When he found himself safe on the ground, he returned thanks to God (to whom belong might and majesty) for His merciful protection and went straight to his wife, empty-handed. When she saw him, she asked him why he had tarried so long and what was come of that he had taken with him and why he returned empty-handed; whereupon he told her all that had befallen him, and she said, 'Praised be God, who delivered thee from seduction and intervened between thee and calamity!" Then she added, 'O man, the neighbours use to see us light our brasier every night; and if they see us to-night without fire, they will know that we are destitute. Now it behoves us, in gratitude to God, to hide our destitution and join the fast of this night to

that of yesterday and continue it for the sake of God the Most High.' So she rose and filling the brasier with wood, lighted it, to give the neighbours the change, reciting the following verses:

I will conceal what is with me of trouble and distress And light my fire, that so my strait the neighbours may not guess.
What God decreeth I accept, so haply He may see My humbleness to Him and so accept of me no less.

Night cccclxx. Then they made the ablution and stood up to pray. Presently, one of the neighbours' wives came in and asked leave to take a light from the fire. 'At thy service,' answered they; but, when she came to the fire, she cried out, saying, 'Ho, such an one, (to the platter-maker's wife,) take up thy bread before it burns!' Quoth the wife to her husband, 'Hearest thou what she says?' 'Go and look,' answered he. So she went up to the oven, and behold, it was full of fine white bread. She took up the loaves, thanking God (to whom belong might and majesty) for the abounding good and great bounty He had bestowed on them, and carried them to her husband; and they ate of the bread and drank water and praised God the Most High. Then said the woman to her husband, 'Come, let us pray to God the Most High, so haply He may vouchsafe us what will quit us of necessity and enable us to dispense with the weariness of toil for daily bread and devote ourselves [wholly] to worshipping Him and keeping His commandment.' So the man rose and prayed, whilst his wife said 'Amen' to his prayer, when, behold, the roof clove in sunder and down fell a ruby, which lit the whole house with its lustre. At this, they rejoiced greatly and redoubled in praise and thanksgiving to God, praying what the Most High willed.

Then, the night being far spent, they lay down to sleep and the woman dreamt that she entered Paradise and saw therein many chairs and stools ranged in rows. She asked

what these were and it was answered her, 'These are the chairs of the prophets and the stools of the just and the pious.' 'Which is the stool of such an one, my husband?' asked she; and it was said to her, 'Yonder one.' So she looked and seeing a hole in its side, asked what it was. Quoth they, 'It is the place of the ruby that came down to you from the roof of your house.' Thereupon she awoke, weeping and bemoaning the defect in her husband's stool among the seats of the just; so she told him the dream and said to him, 'Let us pray God to restore the ruby to its place, for to suffer hunger and poverty during the few days [of our life here] were easier than a default in thy seat among the just in Paradise.' Accordingly, he prayed to his Lord, and behold, the ruby flew up to the roof [and disappeared,] whilst they looked at it. And they ceased not from their poverty and piety, till they went to the presence of God, to whom belong might and majesty.

EL HEJJAJ AND THE PIOUS MAN.

It is told that El Hejjaj ben Yousuf eth Thekefi had been long in pursuit of a certain man of the notables, and when he [was at last taken and] came before him, he said to him, 'O enemy of God, He hath given thee into my hand.' Then he bade his men hale him to prison and said to them, 'Lay him in strait and heavy fetters and build a cage over him, that he may not come forth of it nor any go in to him.' So they bore him to prison and summoned the blacksmith, who came and laid him in irons. Every time the smith gave a stroke with his hammer, the prisoner raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'Verily, to Him belong creation and commandment!'[1] Then they built the cage over him and left him therein, deserted and lonely, where-

[1] *Koran* vii. 52.

upon longing and consternation entered into him and the tongue of his case recited the following verses:

Wish of the wistful, unto Thee my wishes tend; My trust is in Thy grace, that all doth comprehend.
My case from Thee unhidden is; a look from Thee Is all the goal of my desires, my wishes' end.
They've prisoned me and tried me sore with many a woe: Woe's me, my strangerhood forlorn, without a friend!
Lone as I am, the thought of Thee my solace is And cheer, though slumber from mine eyes my woes forfend.
Ay, an Thou but accept of me, I reck not, I; What in my heart Thou seest of Thee right well is kenned.

At nightfall, the gaoler left his men to watch him and went to his house. On the morrow, when he repaired to the prison, he found the prisoner gone and the fetters lying on the ground; whereat he was affrighted and made sure of death. So he returned to his house and bade his family farewell, after which he took his shroud and the perfumes for his corpse, in his sleeve, and went in to El Hejjaj. The latter smelt the perfumes and said, 'What is that?' 'O my lord,' replied the gaoler, 'it is I who have brought it.' 'And what moved thee to that?' asked the governor; whereupon he told him his case, and El Hejjaj said, 'Out on thee! Didst thou hear him say aught?' 'Yes,' answered the gaoler. 'Whilst the blacksmith was riveting his irons, he ceased not to look up to heaven and say, "Verily to Him belong creation and commandment."' 'Woe to thee!' rejoined El Hejjaj. 'Dost thou not know that He, on whom he called in thy presence, delivered him in thine absence?' And the tongue of the case recited the following verses on the subject:

Night cccclxxi.

O Lord, how many a trouble Thou away from me hast done! Yea, but for Thee I should nor sit nor stand beneath the sun.
Ay, from how many a parlous case, that I might not endure, Hast Thou, indeed, delivered me, how many and many an one!

THE BLACKSMITH WHO COULD HANDLE FIRE WITHOUT HURT.

A certain pious man once heard that there abode in such a town a blacksmith who could put his hand into the fire and pull out the red-hot iron, without its doing him any hurt. So he set out for the town in question and enquiring for the blacksmith, watched him at work and saw him do as had been reported to him. He waited till he had made an end of his day's work, then, going up to him, saluted him and said to him, 'I would fain be thy guest this night.' 'With all my heart,' replied the smith, and carried him to his house, where they supped together and lay down to sleep. The guest watched his host, but found no sign of [special] devoutness in him and said to himself, 'Belike, he concealeth himself from me.' So he lodged with him a second and a third night, but found that he did no more than observe the ordinary letter of the law and rose but little in the night [to pray]. At last he said to him, 'O my brother, I have heard of the gift with which God hath favoured thee and have seen the truth of it with mine eyes. Moreover, I have taken note of thine assiduity [in religious exercises], but find in thee no special fervour of piety, such as distinguisheth those in whom such miraculous gifts are manifest. Whence, then, cometh this to thee?' 'I will tell thee,' answered the smith.

'Know that I was once passionately enamoured of a certain damsel and required her many a time of love, but could not prevail upon her, for that she still clave fast unto chastity. Presently there came a year of drought and hunger and hardship; food failed and there befell a sore famine in the land. I was sitting one day in my house, when one knocked at the door: so I went out and

found her standing there; and she said to me, "O my brother, I am stricken with excessive hunger, and I lift mine eyes to thee, beseeching thee to feed me for God's sake!" Quoth I, "Dost thou not know how I love thee and what I have suffered for thy sake! I will give thee no whit of food, except thou yield thyself to me." But she said, "Better death than disobedience to God." Then she went away and returned after two days with the same petition for food. I made her a like answer, and she entered and sat down, being nigh upon death. I set food before her, whereupon her eyes ran over with tears, and she said, "Give me to eat for the love of God, to whom belong might and majesty!" "Not so, by Allah," answered I, "except thou yield thyself to me." Quoth she, "Better is death to me than the wrath of God the Most High." And she left the food untouched and went away, repeating the following verses:

Night cccclxxii.

O Thou the Only God, whose grace embraceth all that be, Thine ears have heard my moan, Thine eyes have seen my misery;
Indeed, privation and distress are heavy on my head; I cannot tell of all the woes that do beleaguer me.
I'm like a man athirst, that looks upon a running stream, Yet may not drink a single draught of all that he doth see.
My flesh would have me buy its will: alack, its pleasures flee! The sin that pays their price abides to all eternity.

I saw no more of her for two days, when she came a third time and knocked at the door. I went out to her, and lo, hunger had taken away her voice; but, [after a little,] she said, "O my brother, I am worn out with want and know not what to do, for I cannot show my face to any but thee. Wilt thou feed me for the love of God the Most High?" "Not so," answered I, "except thou yield to me." And she entered and sat down. Now I had no food ready, [so I went out to prepare some]; but, when the meat was dressed and I had laid it in a platter, behold, the

grace of God the Most High entered into me and I said to myself, "Out on thee! This woman, weak of wit and faith, hath forborne food, till she can endure from it no longer, for stress of hunger; and lo, she refuseth time after time, and thou still persistest in disobedience to God the Most High!" And I said, "O, my God, I repent to Thee of that which I purposed!" Then I took the food and carrying it in to her, said, "Eat and [fear not:] no harm shall betide thee. It is for the love of God, to whom belong might and majesty." When she heard this, she raised her eyes to heaven and said, "O my God, if this man be sincere, I pray Thee forbid fire to do him hurt in this world and the next, for Thou art He that answereth prayer and art powerful to do whatsoever Thou wilt!"

Then I left her and went to put out the fire in the brasier. Now the time was the winter-cold, and a hot coal fell on my body; but, by the ordinance of God, (to whom belong might and majesty), I felt no pain and it was borne in upon me that her prayer had been answered. So I took the coal in my hand, (and it burnt me not,) and going in to her, said, "Rejoice, for God hath granted thy prayer!" And she dropped the morsel from her hand and said, "O my God, now that Thou hast shown me my desire of him and hast granted me my prayer for him, take Thou my soul, for Thou art Almighty!" And straightway He took her soul to Him, the mercy of God be upon her! And the tongue of the case recited and spoke the following verses on the subject:

Night cccclxxiii.

She prayed and God answered the voice of her prayer And the sinner, who wooed her to lewdness, did spare.
He showed her her wishes accomplished on him And gave her the death that she sought then and there.
She came to his door, hoping succour to get, And sought of him solace to ease her despair.

But he clave to his error and followed his lusts And thought to enjoy her perforce, unaware
Of that which God willed to him. Sudden there came Repentance on him, though he purposed it ne'er.
Fast fated, O God, are men's fortunes; To man If his destiny fare not, to it he must fare.

THE DEVOTEE TO WHOM GOD GAVE A CLOUD TO SERVE HIM AND THE DEVOUT KING.

There was once among the children of Israel a man of the devout, renowned for piety and continence and asceticism. He was a wanderer in the mountains and was used to pass the night in prayer; and God answered his prayers and gave him all he asked. Moreover, He had subjected to him a cloud, that journeyed with him, wherever he went, and poured water on him copiously, that he might make his ablutions and drink. After a time, his fervour abated, whereupon God took the cloud away from him and ceased to answer his prayers. Great was his grief because of this, and he ceased not to regret the time of grace and divine favour and to lament and bemoan himself, till, one night, he saw in a dream one who said to him, 'An thou wouldst have God restore thee thy cloud, seek out such a king, in such a town, and beg him to pray for thee: so will God give thee back thy cloud, by virtue of his pious prayers.' And he repeated the following verses:

I rede thee to the pious prince repair, Who's powerful to order thine affair.
An he pray God for thee, the thing thou seekst Of rain galore shall reach thee at his prayer.
Among the Kings in worth he doth excel And is illustrious beyond compare.

Yea, thou with him shalt surely light on that Shall gladden thee and do away thy care;
Fare, then, o'er plains and deserts to his stead And leave not journeying till thou find him there.

When the hermit awoke, he set out for the town, to which he had been directed by the dream, and coming thither, enquired for the King's palace. At the gate he found an officer sitting on a great chair and clad in splendid apparel; so he saluted him and he returned his salutation and said to him, 'What is thy business?' 'I am a wronged man,' answered the devotee, 'and come to prefer my complaint to the King.' Quoth the officer, 'Thou mayst not win to him to-day; for he hath appointed unto petitioners such a day in every seven, on which they may go in to him; so go thy ways soberly till then.' The hermit was vexed with the King for thus sequestering himself from the folk and said in himself, 'How shall this man be of the friends of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and be on this wise?' Then he went away and awaited the day of audience.

When it came, he repaired to the palace, where he found a number of folk at the gate, awaiting admission, and stood with them, till there came out a Vizier, clad in rich raiment and attended by guards and servants, who said, 'Let those, who have petitions to present, enter.' So the hermit entered with the rest and found the King seated in the midst of his officers and grandees. The Vizier took up his post before him and brought forward the petitioners, one by one, till it came to the hermit's turn, when the King looked on him and said, 'Welcome to the lord of the cloud! Sit down, till I be at leisure for thee.'

The hermit was confounded at his words and confessed his dignity and excellence; and when the King had made an end with the petitioners, he rose and dismissed his Viziers and grandees; then, taking the stranger by the

hand, he carried him to the door of the [inner] palace, where they found a black slave, splendidly arrayed, with a helmet on his head and on his right hand and his left bows and coats of mail. He rose and hastening to obey the King's commandment, opened the door, and they went in, hand in hand, till they came to a low door, which the King opened himself and brought the hermit into a ruinous and neglected building and a chamber, wherein was nought but a prayer-carpet, an ewer for ablution and some mats of palm-leaves. Here the King put off his royal habit and donned a gown of coarse white wool and a tall cap of felt. Then he sat down and making the hermit sit, called out to his wife, who answered from within, saying, 'Here am I.' Quoth he, 'Knowst thou who is our guest to-day?' 'Yes,' replied she; 'it is the lord of the cloud.' And the King said, 'Come in: it matters not for him.' So there entered a woman, as she were a vision, with a face that glittered like the new moon; and she was clad in a gown and veil of coarse wool. Then said the King, 'O my brother, dost thou desire to hear our story or that we should pray for thee and let thee go?' 'Nay,' answered the hermit; 'I wish to hear your story, for I long to know it.'

Night ccccLxxiv.

'Know then,' said the King, 'that my forefathers handed down the throne, one to the other, and it descended from great one to great one, in unbroken succession, till it came to me. Now God had made this hateful to me, for I would fain have gone a-wandering, a pilgrim, over the earth and left the folk to govern themselves; but I feared lest they should fall into temptation and anarchy and swerve from the law of God, and the union of the Faith be broken up. Wherefore I took upon me the kingship and appointed to every head of them a set stipend and donned the royal robes and posted officers at the doors, as a terror to evil doers and for the defence of honest folk

and the maintenance of law and order. When I had made an end of this, I entered this place and putting off my royal habit, donned these clothes thou seest; and this my uncle's daughter is agreed with me to renounce the world and helps me to serve God. So we use to weave these palm leaves [into mats or baskets] and earn, in the course of the day, wherewithal to break our fast at nightfall; and thus have we lived nigh upon forty years. Abide thou with us, so God have mercy on thee, till we sell our mats; so shalt thou sup and sleep with us this night and on the morrow go thy ways with that thou desirest, so it please God the Most High.'

So he abode with them till the end of the day, when there came a boy five [feet] high, who took the mats they had made and carrying them to the market, sold them for a carat.[1] With this he bought bread and beans and returned with them to the King. The hermit supped and lay down to sleep with them; but, in the middle of the night, they both arose and fell to praying and weeping. When daybreak was near, the King said, 'O my God, this Thy servant beseeches Thee to return him his cloud; and Thou art able to this; so, O my God, answer Thou his prayer and restore him his cloud.' The Queen said 'Amen' to his prayer and behold, the cloud appeared in the sky; whereupon the King gave the hermit joy and the latter took leave of them and went away, the cloud following him as of old. Moreover, whatsoever he required of God after this, in the names of the pious King and Queen, He granted it to him; and he made thereon the following verses:

God 'mongst His servants hath elect, whose pious souls, I ween, Range in the gardens of His love, untroubled and serene.
Their bodies' lusts at peace are grown and trouble them no more, For that which harbours in their breasts of hearts made pure and clean.
One sees them silent, bearing them right humbly to their Lord, For they His mysteries behold, unseen as well as seen.

[1] The twenty-fourth part of a mithcal or dinar, *i.e.* about 5*d*.

THE MUSLIM CHAMPION AND THE CHRISTIAN DAMSEL.

The Khalif Omar ben el Khettab (whom God accept) once levied an army of Muslims, to encounter the enemy before Damascus, and they laid strait siege to one of the Christians' strengths. Now there were among the Muslims two men, brothers, whom God had gifted with valour and daring against the foe, so that the commander of the besieged fortress said to his captains and champions, 'Were but yonder two taken or slain, I would warrant you against the rest of the Muslims.' Wherefore they set for them all manner of snares and ambushes and ceased not to lie in wait for them, till, at last, they took one of them prisoner and slew the other, who died a martyr. They carried the prisoner to their general, who looked at him and said, 'To kill this man were pity; but his return to the Muslims would be a calamity. Would he might be brought to embrace the Christian Faith and be to us an aid and a support!' 'O Amir,' answered one of his knights, 'I will bring him to abjure his faith, and on this wise. We know that the Arabs are passionately fond of women, and I have a daughter of surpassing beauty and grace, whom when he sees, he will be ravished by her.' Quoth the general, 'I give him into thy charge: take him.'

Night cccclxxb.

So he carried him to his house and set food before him. Moreover, he clad his daughter in raiment, such as added to her beauty and grace, and made her stand before the Muslim, as she were a handmaid obedient to her lord and awaiting his commandment, that she might fulfil it. When the prisoner saw the snare that was set for him, he commended himself to God the Most High for protection and closing his eyes, applied himself to prayer and reciting the Koran. Now he had a mellow voice and a penetrating

wit; and the young lady fell passionately in love with him and said in herself, 'Would God he would consent to admit me into the Faith of Islam!' And the tongue of her case recited the following verses:

Wilt turn away, from me whose soul is thrall to thee, thy face, From me whose life thy ransom is, whose heart thy dwelling-place?
Indeed, my people I will well to leave and leave a faith Other than that of the sharp sword; yea, Islam I embrace
And testify that there's no Lord save God and God alone; For constant is the proof thereof and doubt can find no place.
Union, mayhap, will He decree with one that is averse And ease a heart distressed for love and longing, of His grace.
For oft-times doors are open thrown, that erst were shut, and he Is granted his desires, whom woe hath brought to sorry case.

She abode thus seven days, till her patience failed her and her breast was straitened and she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'I conjure thee by thy faith, give ear unto my words!' 'What are they?' asked he; and she said, 'Expound unto me Islam.' So he expounded to her the tenets of the Faith, and she became a Muslim, after which she purified herself and he taught her to pray. Then said she to him, 'Know, O my brother, that I did but embrace Islam for thy sake and to win thy favour.' Quoth he, 'The law of Islam forbids sexual commerce between man and woman, save after a marriage before two legal witnesses, and a dowry and next friend [for the woman] are also requisite. Now I know not where to find witnesses or next friend or dowry; but, if thou canst make shift to bring us out of this place, I hope to win to the land of Islam, and I vow to thee that none other in Islam shall be wife to me than thou.' 'I will contrive this,' answered she and calling her father and mother, said to them, 'This Muslim's heart is softened and he inclineth to enter our faith, so I will grant him that which he desireth of me; but he says, "It were not fitting for me to do this in a town where my brother was slain. Could I but come

without it, my heart would be diverted [from the thought of him] and I would do that which is required of me." Now there is no harm in letting me go forth with him to another place, and I will be warrant to you and to the Amir for that which ye require of him.'

So her father went to their chief and told him of this, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bade carry them forth the town to a village that she named. So they went out to the village, where they abode the rest of that day, and at nightfall, they made ready to set out and fare upon their way, even as saith the poet:

"The time of departure," quoth they, "draweth nigh:" And "How oft will ye threat me with parting?" I cry.
No business have I but to traverse the earth, Mile by mile and o'er deserts forever to hie.
If the loved ones prick forth tow'rds a land, for their sake, Once again of the sons of the road [1] become I.
On my longing, to guide me to them, I rely, And it shows me the way nor directs me awry.

Night cccclxxvi. The young Muslim mounted a swift horse and took the girl up behind him, and they set out and fared on all that night till morning, when he turned aside with her from the highway and alighting, they made the ablution and prayed the morning prayer. As they were thus engaged, they heard the clank of arms and ring of bridles and men's voices and tramp of horse; whereupon he said to her, 'O such an one, the Christians are upon us! What shall we do? For the horse is jaded, so that he cannot go another step.' 'Out on thee!' exclaimed she. 'Art thou then afraid?' 'Yes,' answered he; and she said, 'What didst thou tell me of the power of thy Lord and His readiness to succour those who cry to Him? Come, let us make supplication to Him and beseech Him: surely, He will vouchsafe us His succour and visit us with

[1] *i.e.* wayfarers.

His grace, glorified and exalted be He!' 'By Allah,' rejoined he, 'thou sayst well!' So they betook themselves to prayer and supplication to God the Most High, and he recited these verses:

Indeed, I stand in need of Thee all seasons, foul or fair, What though with diadem and crown my brows encompassed were.
Thou art the chiefest of my wants, and could my hand but win This its desire, no other want were left to me whate'er.
Nought that Thou hast withholdest Thou; the outflow of Thy grace Is as a torrent or a shower, that's lavished everywhere.
By my transgression am I shut therefrom, yet is the light Of Thy compassion, Clement One, resplendent past compare.
O Care-Dispeller, that, wherewith I stricken am, dispel; For there is none save Thou alone can do away this care.

Whilst he was praying and she saying, 'Amen,' and the tramp of horse nearing them the while, behold, he heard the voice of his dead brother, the martyr, speaking and saying, 'O my brother, fear not, but be of good cheer; for these thou hearest are the host of God and His angels, whom He hath sent to serve as witnesses to your marriage. Verily, the angels of God the Most High are emulous of you, and He bestoweth on you the recompense of the blessed and the martyrs and hath rolled up the earth for you [as it were a carpet,] so that, by morning, you will be in the mountains of Medina. And thou [O man], whenas thou foregatherest with Omar ben el Khettab, (of whom God accept,) give him my salutation and say to him, "May God abundantly requite thee for Islam, for thou hast dealt faithfully and striven diligently."' Thereupon the angels lifted up their voices in salutation to him and his wife, saying, 'Verily, God the Most High appointed her in marriage to thee two thousand years before your father Adam (on whom be peace) was created.' Then joy and gladness and peace and cheer overcame the twain; assurance was confirmed and stablished was the vocation of the God-fearing pair. So they prayed the fore-dawn

prayer and fared forward; and when the day broke and the light appeared to them, they saw [in the distance] the standards of Medina and the Khalif and a company of Muslims issuing forth to meet them.

Now it was Omar's wont to rise for morning-prayer in the darkness before dawn, and bytimes he would proceed to the mosque, followed by two men, and standing in the prayer-niche, begin by reciting the chapter of the Cattle[1] or that of Women;[2] whereupon the sleeper awoke and he who was in act to make the ablution accomplished it and he who was afar came to prayer; nor had he made an end of [the prayers of] the first inclination, before the mosque was full of people; then would he pray his second inclination, repeating a short chapter in haste. But, on the morning in question, he hurried over his devotions, both first and second inclinations, repeating in each a short chapter; then, turning to his companions, said to them, 'Come, let us go out to meet the bride and bridegroom;' at which they wondered, understanding not his words; but he went out and they followed him, till they came to the gate of the city, where they met the young Muslim and his bride coming towards them and saluted them. Omar carried the bride and bridegroom into Medina and bade make a marriage-feast; and the Muslims came and ate. Then the young Muslim went in to his bride, and God the Most High vouchsafed him children by her, who fought in His way and preserved their genealogies, for they gloried therein. And how excellent is what is said on the subject:

Night cccclxxvii.

I saw thee weeping at the gates and moaning passing sore, Whilst all, except the curious, to answer thee forbore.
Hath evil eye ensorcelled thee or hath misfortune fall'n On thee and doth a barrier keep thee from the loved one's door?
Awake, O wretch, devote thyself this day to God His praise; Repent and turn thee to the Lord, as men have turned of yore.

[1] *Koran* vi. [2] *Koran* iv.

The rains of the Forgiving One, belike, shall wash away The past and on the sinner's head the grace of God shall pour;
Ay, and the captive, shackled though he be, shall yet escape, And in the prison of God's wrath the slave shall pine no more.

And they ceased not to be in all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

IBRAHIM BEN EL KHAWWAS AND THE CHRISTIAN KING'S DAUGHTER.

(Quoth Sidi Ibrahim ben el Khawwas,[1] on whom be the mercy of God), My soul was instant with me, once upon a time, to go forth into the country of the infidels; and I strove with it and essayed to put away this thought from me, but it persisted and would not be denied. So I went forth and journeyed about the land of the unbelievers and traversed it in all its parts, for the grace of God enveloped me and His protection encompassed me, so that I met not a Christian, but he turned away his eyes and held aloof from me, till I came to a great city at whose gate I found a company of black slaves, clad in armour and bearing iron maces in their hands. When they saw me, they rose to their feet and said to me, 'Art thou a physician?' I said, 'Yes.' Quoth they, 'By order of the King,' and carried me before their monarch, who was a handsome man of majestic aspect. When I came into his presence, he looked at me and said, 'Art thou a physician?' 'Yes,' answered

[1] Apparently some well-known saint, the title *sidi* (my lord) being one peculiar to men renowned for sanctity. *Khawwas* means "basket-maker," and this surname denotes that the saint in question, in all probability, earned his living by basket-making, like the pious King in the story of the saint to whom God gave a cloud, etc. See supra, p. 28. It is incumbent upon devout Muslims, even to the Khalifs, to earn their bread by manual labour of some kind. See "The Devout Prince," Vol. IV. p. 249.

I; and he said to his officers, 'Carry him to her and acquaint him with the condition, ere he enter.' So they took me out and said to me, 'Know that the King hath a daughter, who is stricken with a sore distemper, which no physician hath availed to cure: and none goeth in to her and treateth her, without curing her, but the King putteth him to death. So bethink thee what thou wilt do.' Quoth I, 'The King sent me to her; so carry me to her.' Accordingly, they brought me to her door and knocked; and I heard her cry out from within, saying, 'Admit the physician, lord of the wondrous secret!' And she recited the following verses:

Open the door, for the physician's here; And see, I have a secret wonder-dear.
How many near in spirit distant are! How many spirit-distant yet are near!
I was an exile midst you, but the Truth[1] Willed that my solace should eftsoon appear.
Religious kinship bound us and we met, As lover and belov'd, in joy and cheer.
He summoned me to meeting; but the spy And censor 'twixt our loves did interfere.
Out on ye! Leave your chiding and your prate; For unto you I may not lend an ear.
With that which passes by I've no concern; Upon the eternal things my hopes I rear.

And behold, an old man opened the door in haste and said to me, 'Enter.' So I entered and found myself in a saloon strewn with sweet-scented herbs and with a curtain drawn across one corner, from behind which came a sound of groaning, weak as from an emaciated body. I sat down before the curtain and was about to pronounce the salutation, when I bethought me of the words of him whom God bless and preserve, 'Accost not a Jew nor a Christian with the salutation, and when ye meet them in the way, constrain

[1] *El Hacc*, one of the names of God.

them to the straitest part thereof.' So I held my peace, but she cried out from behind the curtain, saying, 'Where is the salutation, that is due from one true believer in the Unity of God and His indivisibility to another, O Khawwas?' I was astonished at her speech and said, 'How knowest thou me?' 'When the heart and thoughts are pure,' answered she, 'the tongue speaks clearly from the secret places of the soul. I besought Him yesterday to send me one of His saints, at whose hands I might have deliverance, and behold it was cried to me from the recesses of my house, "Grieve not; for we will send thee Ibrahim el Khawwas."' Then said I to her, 'What ails thee?' 'It is now four years,' answered she, 'since there appeared to me the manifest Truth, and He [or it] is the story-teller, the comrade, the ally; whereupon my folk looked upon me with evil eyes and taxed me with madness, and there came not in to me physician or visitor from them, but terrified and confounded me.' 'And who led thee to the knowledge of the true faith?' asked I. 'God's manifest signs and His visible portents,' replied she; 'and when the road is patent to thee, thou seest with thine own eyes both proof and prover.'

Whilst we were talking, in came the old man affected to her guard and said to her, 'What doth thy physician?' Quoth she, 'He knoweth the disease and hath hit upon the remedy.' When he heard this, he manifested joy and gladness and accosted me with a cheerful favour, then went and told the King, who bade him entreat me with all consideration. So I visited her daily for seven days, at the end of which time she said to me, 'O Abou Ishac,[1] when shall be our flight to the land of Islam?' 'How canst thou go forth,' replied I, 'and who would dare to attempt thine escape?' 'He,' rejoined she, 'who sent thee to me.' 'Thou sayst well,' answered I. So on the morrow, we went

Night cccclxxxviii.

[1] Surname of El Khawwas.

out by the gate of the city and [men's] eyes were veiled from us, by His commandment, [who] when He desireth aught, saith to it, 'Be,' and it is;[1] so that I journeyed with her in safety to Mecca, where she abode by the House of God seven years, till the days of her life came to an end. The earth of Mecca was her tomb, and never saw I any more steadfast in prayer and fasting than she, may God send down His mercies upon her and have compassion on him who saith:

When they brought me the physician (and indeed upon my face Sickness and constant floods of tears had left full many a trace,)
He drew the veil away and saw nought neath it but a soul Sans life or body or aught else to fill the empty place.
"Indeed," said he to them, "a thing uneath is this to cure; Love hath a secret not to win by sheer conjecture's grace."
Quoth they, "An one know not what is therein and if there be No way its nature to define and symptoms to embrace,
How then shall medicine thereon have anywise effect?" Leave me; indeed, I will not judge, by guess-work, of the case.

THE JUSTICE OF PROVIDENCE.

A certain prophet once worshipped on a high mountain, at whose foot was a spring of running water, and he was wont to sit by day on the mountain-top, where none could see him, calling upon the name of God the Most High and watching those who came to the spring. One day, as he sat looking on the spring, there came up a horseman, who dismounted thereby and taking a bag from his neck, laid it down beside him, after which he drank of the water and rested awhile, then mounted and rode away, leaving the bag behind him. Presently up came another man, to drink of the spring, who saw the bag and finding it full of gold, took it up and made off with it in safety, after he had drunken. A little after, came a woodcutter, with a heavy

[1] *Koran* xxxvi. 82.

faggot on his back, and sat down by the spring to drink, when, behold, back came the horseman, in great concern, and said to him, 'Where is the bag [with the thousand dinars] that was here?' 'I know nothing of it,' replied the woodcutter, whereupon the other drew his sword and smote him and killed him. Then he searched his clothes, but found nothing; so he left him and went away.

When the prophet saw this, he said, 'O Lord, this man hath been slain unjustly, for another had the thousand dinars.' But God answered him, saying, 'Busy thyself with thy service, for the ordering of the affairs of the universe is none of thine affair. Know that the horseman's father had despoiled the second man's father of a thousand dinars; so I gave the son possession of his father's money. As for the woodcutter, he had slain the horseman's father, wherefore I enabled the son to avenge himself.' Then said the prophet, 'Verily, there is none other god than Thou! Glory to Thee! Thou [alone] knowest the hidden things.'[1] Moreover, one of the poets hath made the following verses on the matter:

Night cccclxxix.

The prophet saw what to the eyes of men was evident And fell a-questioning of that which mortal sight outwent.
When what they apprehended not his eyes beheld, "O Lord, What is this thing?" quoth he. "Yon man that's slain was innocent.
One, without travail or fatigue, to riches did attain, Although in poor and needy guise himself he did present;
And, O Creator of mankind, this other one was slain, For all he had committed nought that called for punishment."
"Know," answered God, "his father's good it was thou sawst him take; It came to him by heritage, by right of free descent.
The woodcutter the horseman's sire had slain; so, when his son The occasion found, he took his wreak of him, incontinent.
Put off this thought from thee, for We have, in created things, A secret that of human sight transcendeth the extent.
Submit thee to Our laws and bow unto Our might, for know, Our ordinance for profit works and eke for detriment."

[1] *Koran* v. 108.

THE FERRYMAN OF THE NILE AND THE HERMIT.

(Quoth a certain pious man), I was once a ferryman on the Nile and used to ply between the eastern and the western banks. One day, as I sat in my boat, waiting for custom, there came up to me an old man of a bright countenance, clad in a patched gown and bearing in his hand a gourd-bottle and a staff. He saluted me and I returned his greeting; and he said to me, 'Wilt thou ferry me over and give me to eat for the love of God the Most High?' 'With all my heart,' answered I. So he entered the boat and I rowed him over to the eastern side. When he was about to land, he said to me, 'I desire to lay a trust on thee.' Quoth I, 'What is it?' 'Know,' rejoined he, 'that God hath revealed to me that [my end is at hand and that] thou wilt come to me to-morrow, after the hour of noon, and wilt find me dead under yonder tree. Wash me and wrap me in the shroud thou wilt find under my head and bury me in the sand, after thou hast prayed over me and taken my gown and bottle and staff, which do thou deliver to one who will come and require them of thee.' And I marvelled at his word.

Next day, I forgot what he had said till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when I remembered and hastening to the appointed place, found him under the tree, dead, with a new shroud by his head, exhaling a fragrance of musk. So I washed him and shrouded him and prayed over him, then dug a hole in the sand and buried him, after I had taken his gown and bottle and staff, with which I rowed back to the western side and passed the night there.

On the morrow, as soon as the city gate was opened,

there came to me a young man, whom I had known as a lewd fellow, clad in fine clothes and his hands stained with henna, and said to me, 'Art thou not such an one [the ferryman]?' 'Yes,' answered I; and he said, 'Give me what thou hast in trust for me.' Quoth I, 'What is that?' 'The gown, the bottle and the staff,' replied he. 'Who told thee of them?' asked I; and he answered, 'I know nothing save that I was yesterday at the wedding of one of my friends and spent the night singing [and making merry,] till hard upon day, when I lay down to sleep and take rest; and behold, there stood by me one who said to me, 'God the Most High hath taken such an one the hermit to Himself and hath appointed thee to fill his place; so go to so and so, the ferryman, and take of him the dead man's gown and bottle and staff, that he left with him for thee.' So I brought them out and gave them to him, whereupon he put off his clothes and donned the gown, then taking the gourd and staff, went his way and left me.

I fell a-weeping for wonder and pity; but, that night, whilst I slept, the Lord of Glory (blessed and exalted be He) appeared to me in a dream and said to me, 'O My servant, is it grievous to thee that I have granted to one of My servants to return to Me? Indeed, this is of My bounty, that I vouchsafe to whom I will, for I am able to do all things.' And I repeated the following verses:

The lover with the Loved[1] of will's bereavéd quite; All choice to thee's forbid, an but thou know aright.
Whether to thee He grant favour and grace or hold Aloof from thee, nowise may blame upon Him light.
His very rigours, e'en, except thou glory in, Away! Thou hast no call to stand with the contrite.
Knowst not His presence from His absence? Then art thou In rear and that thou seek'st in front and out of sight.

[1] *Lover* and *Beloved*, mystical names for the believer and God.

If I be haled away to slaughter for Thy sake Or yearning yield Thee up the last spark of my spright,
'Tis in Thy hand; hold off, grant or deny, 'tis one; At that which Thou ordainst 'tis vain to rail or flite.
No aim in this my love have I but Thine approof; So, an thou choose to hold aloof, 'tis good and right.

THE KING OF THE ISLAND.

There was once a rich and notable man of the children of Israel, who had a pious and blessed son. When the former's last hour drew nigh, his son sat down at his head and said to him, 'O my lord, give me an injunction.' 'Dear my son,' replied his father, 'I charge thee, swear not by God, whether truly or falsely.' Then he died and certain lewd fellows of the children of Israel heard of the injunction he had laid on his son and fell to coming to the latter and saying, 'Thy father had such and such monies of mine, and thou knowest it; so give me what is due to me or else make oath [to the contrary].' The man would not disobey his father's injunction, so gave them all they claimed; and they ceased not to deal thus with him, till his wealth was exhausted and he fell into sore distress.

Now he had a pious and blessed wife, who had borne him two little sons; so he said to her, 'The folk have multiplied claims on me and what while I had wherewithal to quit myself of them, I stinted not to give it up; but now there is nothing left us, and if others make claim upon me, we shall be distressed and tormented, I and thou; so it were better for us to flee to some place, where none knows us, and earn our bread among the uttermost of the folk.' Accordingly, he took ship with her and his two children, knowing not whither he should go; but God decreeth; there is no reverser of His decrees;[1] and quoth the tongue of the case:

[1] *Koran* xiii. 41.

O thou, that thy dwelling departest for fear of the foe And ease in thy flight overtakes thee and freedom from woe,
Grudge not at estrangement, for often the exile, by length Of distance from homestead and country, right puissant doth grow.
If the pearls in the prison abided for aye of their shells, Kings' crowns to them never were given for dwelling, I trow.

The ship was wrecked, but the man and his wife and children saved themselves, each on a plank. The waves separated them and the wife was cast up in one country and the elder son in another. The second son was picked up by a ship, and the waves threw the father on a desert island, where he landed and made the ablution. Then he pronounced the call to prayer and fell to his devotions, when, behold, there came up out of the sea creatures of various colours and prayed with him. When he had finished, he went up to a tree and stayed his hunger with its fruits; after which he found a spring of water and drank thereof and praised God, to whom belong might and majesty. He abode thus three days and whenever he stood up to pray, the sea-creatures came out and prayed like as he prayed. Night cccclxxx.

On the fourth day, he heard one crying aloud and saying, 'O just man, that didst so piously honour thy father and so reverest the decrees of thy Lord, grieve not, for God requiteth thee that which thou hast lost. In this island are treasures and things of price, which God willeth thou shalt inherit, and they are in such a place; so bring thou them to light. Moreover, we will send ships unto thee; and do thou bestow largesse on the folk and bid them to thee, and we will incline their hearts unto thee.' So he sought out the appointed place, and God (to whom belong might and majesty) discovered to him the treasures in question. Then ships resorted to him, and he gave abundant largesse to the crews, saying to them, 'Direct the folk unto me and I will give them such and such things

and appoint to them this and that.' Accordingly, there came folk from all parts and countries, nor had ten years passed over him, before the island was peopled and he became its king. None repaired to him, but he entreated him with munificence, and his report was noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of the earth.

Now his elder son had fallen into the hands of a man, who reared him and instructed him in all manner of polite accomplishments; and in like manner, the younger was adopted by one who gave him a good education and brought him up for a merchant. As for their mother, she happened upon a merchant, who gave her charge over his property and made a covenant with her that he would not deal traitorously by her, but would aid her to obey God (to whom belong might and majesty); and he used to carry her with him in his travels by sea and land. Now the elder son heard the report of the King, without knowing who he was; so he made for the island and was well received by the King, who made him his private secretary. After awhile, the other son also sought out the King, attracted by the fame of his piety and justice, and was made by him his steward.

They abode awhile in his service, neither knowing other, till it chanced that the merchant aforesaid, hearing of the King's beneficence and generous dealing with the folk, freighted a ship with rich stuffs and other of the best of the produce of the country, and taking the woman with him, set sail for the island. He arrived there in due course and landing, presented himself before the King with his gift. The latter rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and ordered him a splendid recompense. Now there were, among the gifts, certain drugs, of which he would have the merchant acquaint him with the names and uses; so he said to him, 'Abide with us this night.' Quoth he, 'I have in the ship a pious woman whom God hath com-

Night cccclxxxi.

mitted to my ward, and I have promised her to entrust the care of her to none but myself; for indeed I build upon her prayers and have felt the blessing of her counsels.' 'I will send her two trusty men,' rejoined the King, 'who shall pass the night in the ship and guard her and all that is with her.' The merchant agreed to this and abode with the King, who called his secretary and steward and said to them, 'Go and pass the night in this man's ship and keep it safe, if it please God the Most High.'

So they went up into the ship and seating themselves, one in the bows and the other on the poop, passed a part of the night in repeating the praises of God (to whom belong might and majesty). Then said one to the other, 'Harkye, such an one! The King bade us keep watch and I fear lest sleep overtake us; so, come, let us discourse of stories of fortune and of the good and evil chances we have seen.' 'O my brother,' replied the other, 'as for my tribulations, fate parted me from my mother and a brother of mine, whose name was even as thine; and it befell thus. My father took ship with us from such a place, and the winds and waves rose against us and were contrary, so that the ship was wrecked, and God sundered our union.' 'What was the name of thy mother, O my brother?' asked the first. 'So and so,' answered the other.' 'And of thy father?' 'So and so.' When the first one heard this, he threw himself upon the other's neck, saying, 'By Allah, thou art my very brother!' And each fell to telling the other what had befallen him in his youth, whilst their mother heard all they said, but held her peace and constrained her soul to patience.

When it was morning, one brother said to the other, 'Come, brother, let us go to my lodging and talk there.' 'It is well,' replied the other. So they went away and presently, the merchant came back and finding the woman

in great concern, said to her, 'What hath befallen thee?' Quoth she, 'Thou sentest to me yesternight men who purposed ill to me, and I have been sore troubled with them.' At this, he was wroth and going in to the King, made his complaint to him. Now the King loved the two brothers, for that which he had noted in them of virtue and trustworthiness; so he summoned them forthwith and sending for the woman, that he might hear from her own lips what she had to say against them, said to her, 'O woman, what complaint hast thou against these two men!' 'O King,' replied she, 'I conjure thee, by the Great God, the Bountiful One, the Lord of the Ninth heaven, bid them repeat the words they spoke yesternight.' So he said to them, 'Repeat what ye said and conceal nought thereof.' Accordingly, they repeated their conversation, and behold, the King gave a great cry and rising from his throne, threw himself upon them, saying, 'By Allah, ye are my very sons!' Therewith the woman discovered her face and said, 'And I am their mother.' So they were all united and abode in all delight and solace of life, until death separated them. So glory be to Him who delivereth His servant, whenas he resorteth to Him, and disappointeth not his hope and his trust in Him! And how well saith the poet on the subject:

Each thing hath its appointed time, to it predestinate: With God, my brother, to confirm it lies or abrogate.
Repine thou not at any thing wherewith thou stricken art; For troubles oft in prosperous times do lie for us in wait.
How many an one lies down to sleep, afflicted with what seems A strait, but is at heart a cause of joy and fortunate!
How many a wretch, on whom men's eyes look hatred and contempt, Is by God's wonder-working grace redeemed from low estate!
Lo, this is one who did endure affliction aforetime; Hurt and distress were sore on him and unrelenting fate.
Time severed him from those he held most dear, and each from each, After long union of their loves, was forced to separate.

But his Lord gave him fortune fair and brought him those he loved. In all God doth are monishments for men to meditate.
Glory to Him whose providence embraces all that be, Whose presence, ever near to us, clear proofs do intimate.
He is the Near one, whom no wit conceiveth nor indeed Days' journeys nearer bring to us nor of His distance bate!

ABOULHUSN ED DURRAJ AND ABOU JAAFER THE LEPER.

(Quoth Aboulhusn ed Durraj), I had been many times to Mecca (which God increase in honour) and the folk used to follow me by reason of my knowledge of the road and the watering-places. It chanced one year that I was minded to make the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God and visit the tomb of His prophet (on whom be peace and blessing), and I said to myself, 'I know the road and will go alone.' So I set out and journeyed till I came to El Cadesiyeh[1] and entering the mosque there, saw a leper seated in the prayer-niche. When he saw me, he said to me, 'O Aboulhusn, I crave thy company to Mecca.' Quoth I to myself, 'I wished to avoid companions, and how shall I company with lepers?' So I said to him, 'I will bear no one company.' And he was silent.

Next day I continued my journey alone, till I came to Acabeh,[2] where I entered the mosque and was amazed to find the leper seated in the prayer-niche. 'Glory be to God!' said I in myself. 'How hath this fellow foregone me hither?' But he raised his eyes to me and said, smiling, 'O Aboulhusn, He doth for the weak that which the strong wonder at!' I passed that night in perplexity, confounded at what I had seen, and in the morning set out again by myself; but when I came to Arafat and entered the mosque, behold, there was the leper seated in the

[1] A city in Irak.
[2] A place near Mecca.

Night cccclxxxii.

niche! So I threw myself upon him and kissing his feet, said, 'O my lord, I crave thy company.' But he said, 'This may nowise be.' Whereupon I fell a-weeping and lamenting, and he said, 'Peace: weeping will avail thee nothing.' And he recited the following verses:

For my estrangement dost thou weep,—whenas it came from thee,—
And restoration dost implore, when none, alas! may be?
Thou sawst my weakness and disease, as it appeared, and saidst, "He goes nor comes, or night or day, for this his malady."
Seest not that God (exalted be His glory) to His slave Vouchsafeth all he can conceive of favours fair and free!
If I, to outward vision, be as it appears and eke In body, for despite of Fate, e'en that which thou dost see,
And eke no victual though I have, unto the holy place Where crowds unto my Lord resort, indeed, to carry me,
I have a Maker, hidden are His bounties unto me; Yea, there's no parting me from Him, and without peer is He.
Depart from me in peace and leave me and my strangerhood; For with the lonely exile still the One shall company.

So I left him and continued my journey; and every stage I came to, I found him before me, till I came to Medina, where I lost sight of him and could hear no news of him. Here I met Abou Yezid el Bustani and Abou Bekr es Shibli and a number of other doctors, to whom I told my case and they said, 'God forbid that thou shouldst gain his company after this! This was Abou Jaafer the leper, in whose name, at all tides, the folk pray for rain and by whose blessing prayers are answered.' When I heard this, my longing for his company redoubled and I implored God to reunite me with him. Whilst I was standing on Arafat, one plucked me from behind, so I turned and behold it was Abou Jaafer. At this sight, I gave a loud cry and fell down in a swoon; but, when I came to myself, he was gone.

This increased my yearning for him and the ways were straitened upon me and I prayed God to give me sight of

him; nor was it but a few days after, when one pulled me from behind, and I turned and behold, it was he again. Quoth he, 'I conjure thee, ask thy desire of me.' So I begged him to pray three prayers to God for me; first, that He would make me love poverty; secondly, that I might never lie down to sleep upon known provision; and thirdly, that He the Bountiful One would vouchsafe me to look upon His face. So he prayed for me, as I wished, and departed from me. And indeed God hath granted me the first two prayers; for He hath made me in love with poverty, so that, by Allah, there is nought in the world dearer to me than it, and since such a year, I have never lain down upon assured provision; yet hath He never let me lack of aught. As for the third prayer, I trust that He will vouchsafe me that also, even as He hath granted the two others, for He is bountiful and excellently beneficent. And may God have mercy on him who saith:

Renouncement, lowliness, the fakir's garments be; In patched and tattered clothes still fares the devotee.
Pallor adorneth him, as, on their latest nights, The moons with pallor still embellished thou mayst see.
Long rising up by night to pray hath wasted him, And from his lids the tears stream down, as 'twere a sea.
The thought of God to him his very housemate is; For bosom-friend, by night, th' Omnipotent hath he.
God the Protector helps the fakir in his need, And birds and beasts no less to succour him agree.
On his account, the wrath of God on men descends, And by his grace, the rains fall down on wood and lea.
And if he pray one day to do away a plague, The oppressor's slain and men from tyrants are made free;
For all the folk are sick, afflicted and diseased, And he's the pitying leach withouten stint or fee.
His forehead shines; an thou but look upon his face, Thy heart is calmed, the lights of heaven appear to thee.
O thou that shunnest these, their virtues knowing not, Woe's thee! Thou'rt shut from them by thine iniquity.

Thou think'st them to o'ertake, for all thou'rt fettered fast; Thy sins from thy desire do hinder thee, perdie.
Thou wouldst to them consent and rivers from thine eyes Would run for them, if thou their excellence couldst see.
Uneath to him to smell, who's troubled with a rheum, Are flowers; the broker knows what worth the garments be.
So supplicate thy Lord right humbly for His grace, And Providence, belike, shall help thy constancy;
And thou shalt win thy will and from estrangement's stress And eke rejection's pains shall be at rest and free.
The asylum of His grace is wide enough for all That seek: The One True God, the Conqueror is He!

THE QUEEN OF THE SERPENTS.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a Grecian sage called Daniel, who had scholars and disciples, and the wise men of Greece were obedient to his commandment and relied upon his learning; but God had denied him a son. One night, as he lay musing and weeping over the lack of a son, to whom he might bequeath his learning, he bethought himself that God (blessed and exalted be He) gives ear unto the prayer of those who resort to him and that there is no doorkeeper at the gate of His bounties and that He favours whom He will without stint and sends none empty away. So he besought the Most High, the Bountiful, to vouchsafe him a son, to succeed him, and to endow him abundantly with His favours. Then he returned and lay with his wife, who conceived by him the same night.

Night cccclxxxiii.

A few days after this he took ship for a certain place, but the ship was wrecked and he saved himself on a plank, with the loss of all his books, save only five leaves thereof. When he returned home, he laid the five leaves in a chest and locking it, gave the key to his wife, who was then big with child, and said to her, 'Know that my last hour is at

hand and that the time of my translation from this temporary abiding-place [of the world] to that which is eternal draws nigh. Now thou art with child and wilt haply bear a son after my death. If this be so, name him Hasib Kerimeddin and rear him well. When the boy grows up and says to thee, "What inheritance did my father leave me?" give him these five leaves, which when he has read and digested, he will be the most learned man of his time.' Then he bade her farewell and heaving one sigh, departed the world and all that is therein, the mercy of the Most High God be upon him! His family and friends wept over him and washed him and bore him forth in great state and buried him.

After awhile, his widow bore a handsome boy and named him Hasib Kerimeddin, as her husband had charged her; then she summoned the astrologers, who took the altitude of the planets and drawing the boy's horoscope, said to her, 'Know that this boy will live many years; but a great peril will befall him in the early part of his life, from which if he escape, he will be given the knowledge of wisdom.' She suckled him two years, then weaned him, and when he was five years old, she sent him to school, but he would learn nothing. So she took him from school and set him to learn a trade; but he would not learn and there came no work from his hands. She wept over this and the folk said to her, 'Marry him: peradventure he will take thought for his wife and learn a trade.' So she sought out a girl and married him to her; but marriage wrought no change in him and he still remained idle as before.

One day, some neighbours of hers, who were woodcutters, came to her and said, 'Buy thy son an ass and cords and a hatchet, and let him go with us to the mountain and cut wood. The price of the wood shall be his and ours, and with his share he shall provide thee and his wife.' When she heard this, she rejoiced greatly and bought Hasib

an ass and hatchet and cords; then, carrying him to the woodcutters, delivered him into their hands and commended him to their care. 'Have no concern for the boy,' answered they; 'he is the son of our Sheikh [Daniel,] and our Lord will provide him.' So they carried him to the mountain, where they cut firewood and loaded their asses therewith; then returned to the city and selling what they had cut, spent the price on their families. This they did every day for some time, till one day, as they were cutting wood on the mountain as usual, a violent storm of rain broke over them, and they took refuge in a great cave, till the storm should be past. It chanced that Hasib went apart from the rest into a corner of the cavern and sitting down, fell to smiting the earth [idly] with his axe. Presently, he noted that the ground gave out a hollow sound under the axe; so he dug there awhile and came to a round flagstone, with a ring in it. When he saw this, he was glad and called his comrades the woodcutters, who came to him and speedily clearing away the earth from the stone, pulled it up and found under it a trap door, which, being opened, discovered a cistern full of bees' honey.[1] Then said they to each other, 'We must return to the city and fetch vessels, in which to carry away the honey, and sell it and divide the price, whilst one of us stays by the cistern, to guard it from other than ourselves.' Quoth Hasib, 'I will stay and keep watch over it.' So they left him there and repairing to the city, fetched vessels, which they filled with honey and loading their asses therewith, carried them to the city and sold the contents.

Night cccclxxxiv.

Thus they did several days in succession, sleeping in the city by night, whilst Hasib abode on guard by the cistern, [till but little remained,] when they said to one another, 'It was Hasib found the honey, and to-morrow

[1] Honey is so called by the Easterns, to distinguish it from "date-honey," as they style the drippings from ripe dates.

he will come down to the city and claim the price of it, saying, "It was I found it;" nor is there any means of quitting ourselves of this but that we let him down into the cistern, to get the rest of the honey, and leave him there; so will he perish miserably, and none will know of him.' They all fell in with this and returning to the cavern, said to Hasib, 'Go down into the well and get us the rest of the honey.' So he went down and passed up to them the rest of the honey, after which he said to them, 'Draw me up, for there is nothing left.' They made him no answer, but, loading their asses, went away and left him alone in the cistern. When they reached the city, they repaired to Hasib's mother, weeping, and said to her, 'May thy head outlive thy son Hasib!' 'How did he die?' asked she. Quoth they, 'We were cutting wood in the mountain, when there fell on us a great storm of rain and we took shelter from it in a cavern. Presently, thy son's ass broke loose and fled into the valley, and he ran after it, to turn it back, when there came out upon them a great wolf, who tore thy son in pieces and ate the ass.' When she heard this, she buffeted her face and strewed dust on her head and fell a-mourning for her son, whilst the woodcutters sold the honey, with the proceeds of which they opened shops and became merchants and passed their lives in eating and drinking and making merry; but, every day, they brought Hasib's mother meat and drink.

Meanwhile, when Hasib found himself alone, he began to weep and call for help and say, 'There is no god but God, the Most High, the Supreme! I shall surely perish miserably!' As he was thus bemoaning himself, a great scorpion fell upon him; so he rose and killed it. Then he bethought him and said, 'The cistern was full of honey; how came this scorpion here?' Therewith he rose and examined the well right and left, till he found the crevice

from which the scorpion had fallen and saw light shining through it. So he took out his knife and enlarged the opening, till it was big enough to allow him to pass, when he crept through it and found himself in a passage in the rock. Following this passage, he came to a vast gallery, which led him to a great iron door, made fast with a padlock of silver, in which was a golden key. He looked through the chink of the door and saw a great light shining within; so he took the key and opening the door [found himself in an open space and] walked on till he came to a great pond, full of something that glistened like water. Hard by he saw a high mound of green jasper and on the top of the mound a throne of gold, inlaid with all manner jewels, round which were set many stools, some of gold, some of silver and others of emerald. He climbed the mound and counting the stools, found them twelve thousand in number. Then he mounted the throne and seating himself thereon, sat marvelling at the pond and the stools, till drowsiness overcame him and he fell asleep.

Night cccclxxxv.

Presently, he was aroused by a great snorting and hissing and rustling, and opening his eyes, saw seated on each stool a great serpent, a hundred cubits in length, with eyes that blazed like live coals. At this sight, great fear got hold on him; his spittle dried up, for the excess of his affright, and he despaired of life. Then he turned towards the pond and saw [that what he had taken for water was none other than a multitude of] small serpents, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. After awhile, there came a serpent as big as a mule, bearing on its back a charger of gold, wherein lay another serpent, that shone like crystal and whose face was as that of a woman. Thereupon, one of the serpents seated there came up and lifting her off the dish, set her on one of the stools. Then she cried out to the other serpents in their

language, whereupon they all fell down from their stools and did her homage. But she signed to them to sit, and they did so.

Then she saluted Hasib in human speech and he returned her salutation; and she said to him with fluent speech, 'Have no fear of us, O youth. I am the Queen of the Serpents and their Sultaness.' When he heard this, he took heart and she bade the serpents bring him food. So they brought apples and grapes and pomegranates and pistachio-nuts and filberts and walnuts and almonds and bananas and set them before him, and the Queen said, 'Welcome, O youth! What is thy name?' 'My name is Hasib Kerimeddin,' answered he; and she rejoined, 'O Hasib, eat of these fruits, for we have no other meat, and fear nothing from us.' So he ate his fill and praised God the Most High. Then they took away the tray from before him, and the Queen said to him, 'O Hasib, tell me whence thou art and how camest thou hither.' So he told her his story from first to last, adding, 'God [only] knows what will betide me after this!' Quoth the Queen, 'Nothing but good shall betide thee: but, O Hasib, I would have thee abide with me awhile, that I may tell thee my history and acquaint thee with the rare adventures that have come to my knowledge.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and she said, 'Know then, O Hasib, that

Night cccclxxxvi.

THE ADVENTURES OF BELOUKIYA.

There was once in the city of Cairo a wise and pious king of the children of Israel, who was devoted to the study of books of learning, and he had a son named Beloukiya. When he grew old and weak and was nigh upon death, his grandees and officers of state came in to him, to salute him, and he said to them, "O folk, know

that the hour is at hand of my departure from this world to the next, and I have no charge to lay on you, save to commend my son to your care." Then said he, "I testify that there is no god save God," and heaving one sigh, departed the world, the mercy of God be on him! They laid him out and washed him and buried him in great state. Then they made his son Beloukiya king in his stead; and he ruled the kingdom justly and the people had peace in his time.

It befell one day that he entered his father's treasuries, to look about him, and coming upon a hidden door, opened it and found himself in a little closet, wherein stood a column of white marble. On the top of the column was a coffer of ebony, which he opened and saw therein a casket of gold, containing a book. He read the book and found therein a description of our lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and how he should be sent in the latter days and be the lord of the first and the last: and his heart was taken with love of him. So he assembled all the notables of the scribes and diviners and priests of the children of Israel and read the book to them, adding, "O folk, needs must I bring my father out of his grave and burn him." "Why wilt thou burn him?" asked they, and he answered, "Because he hid this book from me and imparted it not to me." (Now the old king had compiled it from the Pentateuch and the Book of Abraham and had hidden it in his treasury and imparted it to none.) "O King," rejoined they, "thy father is dead; his body is in the dust and his affair is in the hands of his Lord; thou shalt not take him forth of his tomb." So he knew that they would not suffer him to do this thing and leaving them, repaired to his mother, to whom said he, "O my mother, I have found, in one of my father's treasuries, a book containing a description of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep), a prophet who

shall be sent in the latter days, and my heart is taken with his love; wherefore I am resolved to wander over the earth, till I foregather with him; else I shall die of longing for the love of him." Then he doffed his clothes and donned a pilgrim's gown of striped goat's hair cloth and sandals, saying to his mother, "Forget me not in thy prayers." She wept and said, "O my son, what will become of us after thee?" But he answered, saying, "I can endure no longer, and I commit my affair and thine to God the Most High."

Then he set out in the direction of Syria, without the knowledge of any of his people, and coming to the seashore, took passage in a ship, which he found there. They sailed till they came to an island, where they cast anchor and Beloukiya landed with the crew, but, becoming separated from the rest, sat down under a tree and fell asleep. When he awoke, he found that the ship had set sail without him, and in that island he saw serpents as big as camels and palm-trees, who sang the praises of Allah and blessed Mohammed, proclaiming the unity of God and glorifying the Most High; whereat he wondered greatly. When they saw him, they flocked to him and one of them said to him, "Who and whence art thou and whither goest thou?" Quoth he, "My name is Beloukiya; I am of the children of Israel, and am come out in quest of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve), being distracted for love of him. But who are ye, O noble creatures?" "We are of the dwellers in Hell," answered they; "and God the Most High created us for the punishment of unbelievers." "And how came ye hither?" asked he, and they answered, "Know that Hell, of the greatness of its boiling, breathes twice a year, exhaling in the summer and inhaling in the winter, and hence the summer heat and the winter cold. When it exhales, it casts us forth of its maw, and we are drawn in again

Night cccclxxxvii.

with the inhaled breath." Quoth Beloukiya, "Are there greater serpents than you in Hell?" And they said, "We are cast out with the expired breath but by reason of our smallness; for in Hell every serpent is so great, that, were the biggest of us to pass over its nose, it would not be ware of us." "Ye sing the praises of God," said Beloukiya, "and invoke blessings on Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve! Whence know ye of Mohammed?" "O Beloukiya," answered they, "the name of Mohammed is written on the gates of Paradise; and but for him, God had not created Paradise nor heaven nor hell nor earth, for He made all things that be, solely on his account, and hath coupled his name with His own in every place: wherefore we love Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!"

The serpents' converse did but inflame Beloukiya's love for Mohammed and yearning for his sight; so he took leave of them and making his way to the sea-shore, found there a ship lying at anchor, in which he embarked and sailed till he came to another island. Here he landed and walking about, found there serpents, great and small, none knoweth their number save God the Most High, and amongst them a white serpent, more brilliant than crystal, seated in a golden charger borne on the back of another serpent as big as an elephant. Now this was none other than myself; so, when I saw Beloukiya, I saluted him and he returned my salutation, and I said to him, "Who and what art thou and whither goest thou?" "I am of the children of Israel," answered he; "my name is Beloukiya, and I am a wanderer for the love of Mohammed, whose description I have read in the revealed scriptures and of whom I go in quest. But what art thou and what are these serpents about thee?" Quoth I, "I am the Queen of the Serpents; and when thou foregatherest with Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve),

bear him my salutation." Then he took leave of me and journeyed till he came to Jerusalem.

Now there was in that city a man by name Uffan, who was deeply versed in all sciences, more especially in geometry and astronomy and mathematics, as well as in white magic and the Cabala; and he had studied the Pentateuch and the Evangel and the Psalms and the Book of Abraham and had read in certain books that whoso should wear the ring of our lord Solomon, men and Jinn and birds and beasts and all created things would be subject to him. Moreover, he had discovered that Solomon lay buried in a cavern beyond the Seven Seas, with the ring on his finger, which none, man nor genie, could take therefrom, and that none could sail upon the Seven Seas in ships; and he had found out by study that there was a certain herb, whose juice if one expressed and anointed therewith the soles of his feet, he should walk dryshod upon the surface of any sea that God the Most High had created; but none could come at this herb, except he had with him the Queen of the Serpents. Night cccc lxxxviii.

When Beloukiya arrived at Jerusalem, he [entered the temple and] sat down to do his devotions. Presently, Uffan came up and seeing him reading the Pentateuch and worshipping God the Most High, accosted him and asked him who and whence he was and whither bound. "My name is Beloukiya," answered the prince. "I am from the city of Cairo and am come forth, wandering, in quest of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!" Quoth Uffan, "Come with me to my house, that I may entertain thee." "I hear and obey," replied Beloukiya. So the sage took him by the hand and carried him to his house, where he entreated him with the utmost honour and said to him, "O my brother, tell me thy history and how thou camest by the knowledge of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and who directed thee in this road." So he

related to him his story, from first to last, at which Uffan well-nigh lost his wits for wonder and said to him, "O my brother, bring me to the Queen of the Serpents and I will bring thee in company with Mohammed, albeit the time of his coming is yet far distant. For thou must know that I have found in my books that there is a certain herb, whose juice if one express and anoint therewith the soles of his feet, he shall go dryshod upon whatsoever sea God the Most High hath made; and if one have with him the Queen of the Serpents and traverse the mountains where the herbs grow, each herb by which he passes will speak and proclaim its virtues, by the ordinance of God the Most High. So, if we can take the Queen of the Serpents, we will put her in a cage and carry her to the mountains aforesaid; and when we have found the magical herb, we will let her go her way. Then will we anoint our feet with the juice of the herb and fare over the Seven Seas, till we come to the burial-place of our lord Solomon, when we will take the ring off his finger and rule even as he ruled and come to our desire; for, with the aid of the ring, we will enter the Ocean of Darknesses[1] and drink of the Water of Life, and so God will let us tarry till the latter days and we shall foregather with Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!"

Beloukiya consented to lead him to my abiding-place; so Uffan made him a cage of iron and providing himself with two bowls, one full of milk and the other of wine, took ship with Beloukiya and sailed till they came to the island, where they landed and walked on inland. Then Uffan set up the cage, in which he laid a snare, and placing in it the two bowls, withdrew, he and Beloukiya, and concealed themselves afar off. Presently, up came the Queen of the Serpents (that is, myself) and examined the cage. When I smelt the milk, I slid off the back of my bearer and

[1] Mare Tenebrarum.

entering the cage, [drank up the milk. Then I] went to the bowl of wine and drank of it, whereupon my head became giddy and I slept. When Uffan saw this, he ran up and locking the cage upon me, set it on his head and made for the ship, he and Beloukiya. After awhile I awoke and finding myself in a cage of iron on a man's head and seeing Beloukiya walking beside the bearer, said to him, "This is the reward of those who do no hurt to men." "O Queen," answered he, "have no fear of us, for we will do thee no hurt. We would but have thee guide us to the herb whose juice, rubbed upon the soles of the feet, confers the power of walking dryshod upon what sea soever God the Most High hath created; which when we have found, we will return thee to thy place and let thee go thy way."

Then they fared on till they came to the hills where grew the herbs, and as they went, each herb they passed began to speak and avouch its virtues by permission of God the Most High. As they were going along and the herbs speaking right and left, one of the latter spoke out and said, "I am the herb, which if one gather and press and anoint his feet with my juice, he shall fare dryshod over what sea soever God the Most High hath created." When Uffan heard this, he set down the cage and gathering what might suffice them of the herb, bruised it and filled two vials with the juice; and with what was left they anointed their feet. Then they took up the cage and journeyed days and nights, till they reached the island, where they opened the cage and let me out. When I found myself at liberty, I asked them what use they thought to make of the juice of the herb; and they answered, saying, "We purpose to traverse the Seven Seas to the burial-place of our lord Solomon and take the ring from his finger." Quoth I, "Far is it from your power to possess yourselves of the ring!" "Wherefore?" asked they, and I replied, "Because God the Most High vouchsafed unto our lord

Solomon the gift of this ring and peculiarly favoured him therewith, for that he said to Him, 'O my Lord, bestow upon me a dominion, that shall beseem none after me; for Thou art the Giver of gifts.'[1] So the ring is not for you. Had ye taken the herb, whereof whoso eateth shall not die until the first blast [of the last trumpet], it had better availed you than this ye have gotten; for ye shall nowise come at your desire of it."

When they heard this, they repented them exceedingly and went their ways, whilst I went in quest of my subjects and found them fallen in piteous plight, the weaker of them having died in my absence and the stronger grown weak. When they saw me, they rejoiced and flocking about me, enquired what had befallen me. So I told them what had passed, after which I gathered them together and repaired with them to the mountain Caf, where I use to winter, spending the summer in the place where thou now seest me, O Hasib. This, then, is my story and what befell me [with Beloukiya and Uffan].'

Night cccclxxix.

Hasib marvelled at her words and said to her, 'I beseech thee, of thy favour, bid one of thy subjects bring me out to the surface of the earth, that I may go to my people.' 'O Hasib,' replied she, 'thou shalt not depart from us till winter come, and needs must thou go with us to the Mountain Caf and divert thyself with the sight of hills and sands and trees and birds magnifying the One God, the Victorious, besides Marids and Afrits and Jinn, whose number none knoweth save God the Most High.' When Hasib heard this, he was sore chagrined and concerned; then he said to her, 'Tell me of Uffan and Beloukiya; when they departed from thee and went their way, did they win to the burial-place of our lord Solomon or not; and if they won thither, did they avail to take the ring or not?' 'Know,' answered she, 'that, when they left me, they

[1] *Koran* xxxviii. 34.

anointed their feet with the juice of the magical herb, and walking over the water, fared on from sea to sea, beholding the wonders of the deep, till they had traversed the Seven Seas and came in sight of a mighty mountain, soaring high into the air, whereat they rejoiced and said to one another, "Verily we have attained our desire." So they landed and found that the stones of the mountain were of emerald and its dust of musk, and in it was a stream of running water. They entered the passes of the mountain and walked on, till they saw a cavern afar off, surmounted by a great dome, and light shining therefrom. So they made for the dome and entering the cavern, beheld therein a throne of gold set with all manner jewels, and about it stools innumerable, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. On the throne they saw our lord Solomon lying, clad in robes of green silk, gold inwoven and broidered with all manner jewels and precious stones: his right hand was folded upon his breast and on the middle finger was the seal-ring, whose lustre outshone that of all the other jewels in the place.

Then Uffan taught Beloukiya charms and conjurations and said to him, "Repeat these conjurations and stint not therefrom till I take the ring." Then he went up to the throne; but, as he drew near unto it, a mighty serpent issued from beneath it and cried out at him with so terrible a cry that the whole place trembled and sparks flew from its mouth, saying, "Begone, or thou art a dead man!" But Uffan paid no heed to it and busied himself with his incantations. Then the serpent blew such a fiery blast at him, that the place was like to be set on fire, and said to him, "Woe to thee! Except thou turn back, I will consume thee!" Yet was he not troubled at this, but put out his hand to the ring and touched it and strove to draw it off Solomon's finger; whereupon the serpent blew on him [once more] and he became a heap of ashes.

When Beloukiya saw this, he fell down in a swoon, and

Night the Lord (exalted be His majesty) bade Gabriel descend
ccccxc. [and save him], before the serpent should blow on him. So Gabriel descended to the earth and finding Uffan reduced to ashes and Beloukiya fallen of a swoon, aroused the latter and saluting him, enquired how he had come thither. Beloukiya related to him his history, telling him how he had not come thither but for the love of Mohammed, and besought him to tell him where the latter was to be found. "O Beloukiya," replied the angel, "go thy ways, for the time of Mohammed's coming is yet far distant." Then he ascended to heaven, and Beloukiya wept sore and repented of that which he had done, calling to mind my words, whenas I said to them, "Far is it from your power to possess yourselves of the ring." Then he returned to the sea-shore and passed the night there, marvelling at the mountains and seas and islands, that encompassed him, and weeping over his case.

When it was day, he anointed his feet with the magical juice and descending to the water, set out and fared on over the surface of the sea nights and days, marvelling at the terrors and wonders of the deep, till he came to an island as it were Paradise. So he landed and found himself in a great and pleasant island, spacious and goodly, abounding in good things. Its dust was saffron and its gravel cornelian and precious stones; its hedges were of jessamine, its brushwood Comorin and Sumatra aloes-wood and its reeds sugar-cane. Its vegetation was of the goodliest of trees and of the brightest and sweetest of odoriferous flowers, of all kinds and colours: round about it were roses and narcissus and amaranths and gilly-flowers and camomiles and lilies and violets, and therein gazelles frisking and wild cattle coming and going. Its trees were tall and the singing of its birds, as they warbled on the branches and solaced the afflicted lover, was sweeter than the voices of those that chant the Koran. Its streams

were flowing and its springs welling with sweet water; brief, it comprised all beauty and charms.

Beloukiya marvelled at the goodliness of the place, but knew that he had wandered from the road he had come, on his way over the Seven Seas in Uffan's company. He spent the day in exploring the island and at nightfall he climbed into a tree, to sleep; but, as he sat there, pondering the beauty of the place, the sea became troubled and there rose to the surface a great beast, which gave such a terrible cry that the isle trembled to its foundations. As Beloukiya gazed upon him and marvelled at the vastness of his bulk, he came ashore, followed by a multitude of other sea-beasts, each holding in his paw a jewel that shone like a lamp, so that the whole island became as light as day for the lustre thereof. After awhile, there appeared from the inward of the island lions and panthers and lynxes and other beasts of the land, none knoweth their number save God the Most High, who flocked down to the shore and foregathering with the beasts of the sea, conversed with them till daybreak, when they separated and went each his own way.

As soon as it was day, Beloukiya, terrified by what he had seen during the night, came down from the tree and anointing his feet with the magical juice, set out once more upon the surface of the water and fared on days and nights over the second sea, till he came to a great mountain, through whose midst ran a valley without end, the stones whereof were loadstone and its beasts lions and hares and panthers. He landed and wandered from place to place till nightfall, when he sat down on a rock by the seaside, to eat of the dried fish thrown up by the sea. Presently, he turned and saw a huge panther making for him, to devour him; so he anointed his feet in haste with the juice and descending to the surface of the water, fled over the third sea, in the darkness, for it was black night

and there was a high wind; nor did he stay his course till he reached another island, on which he landed and found there trees, [bearing fruits] both soft and hard of skin.[1] So he took of these fruits and ate and praised God the Most High; after which he walked about the island till nightfall, when he lay down to sleep.

Night cccxci.

He spent ten days in exploring the place, after which he again anointed his feet and setting out over the fourth sea, travelled nights and days, till he came to a third island of fine white sand, without trees or grass. He landed and walked about the island awhile, but, finding its only inhabitants sakers, that nested in the sand, he again anointed his feet and sped on over the fifth sea, till he came to a little island, whose soil and hills were of crystal. Therein were the veins wherefrom gold is wrought and marvellous trees with flowers in hue like gold, never had he seen their like in his wanderings. He landed and walked about, till it became dark, when the flowers began to shine like stars. When he saw this, he marvelled and said, "Assuredly, the flowers of this island are of those which wither from the sun and fall to the earth, where the wind smites them and they gather under the rocks and become hermetic powder, which the folk collect and make gold thereof."

He lay there that night and at sunrise he again anointed his feet and descending to the shore, fared on over the sixth sea days and nights, till he came to a fifth island. Here he landed and found mountains covered with trees, whose fruits were as human heads hanging by the hair, and others whose fruits were green birds hanging by the feet; also a third kind, which burnt like fire and whose fruits were like prickly pears,—if a drop [of the juice] thereof fell on a man, he was consumed,—and others, whose fruits wept and laughed, besides many other marvels which he saw there. Then he returned to the sea-shore and finding

[1] *e.g.* cherries and pomegranates.

there a great tree, sat down beneath it till dusk, when he climbed up into the branches to sleep. As he sat, pondering the wonderful works of God, the sea became troubled, and there rose therefrom the daughters of the ocean, each holding in her hand a jewel that shone like the morning. They came ashore and sitting down under the tree, danced and sported and made merry, whilst Beloukiya watched them and marvelled at their gambols, till the morning, when they returned to the sea and disappeared. Then he came down and anointing his feet, set out on the surface of the seventh sea, over which he journeyed two whole months, without getting sight of land, what while he suffered exceeding hunger, so that he was fain to snatch up fish from the surface of the sea and devour them raw, for stress of want.

At the end of this time, he came to a sixth island abounding in trees and streams, where he landed, it being the forenoon. He walked about, looking right and left, till he came to an apple-tree and put out his hand to pluck of the fruit, when, behold, one cried out to him from the tree, saying, "An thou draw near to this tree, I will cut thee in twain." So he looked and saw a giant forty cubits high, after the measure of the people of that day, whereat he was sore affrighted and drew back from the tree. Then he said to the giant, "Why dost thou forbid me to eat of this tree?" "Because," replied the other, "thou art a son of Adam and thy father Adam forgot the covenant of God and disobeyed Him and ate of the tree." Quoth Beloukiya, "Who art thou and to whom doth this island, with its trees, belong?" "My name is Sherahiya," replied the giant, "and I am of the guards of King Sekher, to whom the island belongs and who hath given me charge over it. But who art thou and how comest thou hither?" Beloukiya told him his story and Sherahiya bade him be of good cheer and brought him to eat. So he ate his fill and taking leave

of the giant, set out again and fared on over mountains and sandy deserts for ten days, at the end of which time he saw, in the distance, a cloud of dust hanging like a canopy in the air and making towards it, came presently to a great valley, two months' journey in length, where he heard a mighty clamour of cries and clash of arms and tramp of horse. As he drew near, he saw a multitude of horsemen engaged in sore battle and the blood running from them like a river. Their voices were like thunder and they were armed with bows and javelins and swords and spears and maces of iron and fought with the utmost fury.

Night cccxcii. At this sight, he was sore affrighted and knew not what to do; but, as he hesitated, they caught sight of him and held their hands from one another and left fighting. Then a troop of them came up to him, wondering at his make, and said to him, "What art thou and how camest thou hither?" Quoth he, "I am of the sons of Adam and am come out, distraught for the love of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve; but I have wandered from my road." They marvelled at his speech and said, "Never saw we a son of Adam till now, nor did any ever come to this land." "But what are ye, O creatures?" asked Beloukiya. "We are of the Jinn," answered they; and he said, "What is the cause of the fighting amongst you and where is your abiding-place and what is the name of this valley and this land?" "Our abiding-place is the White Country," replied they. "This place is called the land of Sheddad son of Aad, and every year God the Most High commandeth us to come hither and wage war upon the unbelieving Jinn." "And where is the White Country?" asked Beloukiya. "It is distant five-and-seventy years' journey behind the mountain Caf," answered they, "and we have no other business, when we are not doing battle with the unbelieving Jinn, than to magnify God and hallow Him. Moreover,

we have a king called Sekher, and needs must thou go with us to him, that he may divert himself with thy sight."

Then they took him and fared on with him, till they came to their abiding-place, where he saw a multitude of tents of green silk, none knoweth their number save God the Most High, and in their midst a pavilion of red satin, a thousand cubits in compass, with cords of blue silk and pickets of gold and silver. This was the royal pavilion; so they made their way thither and carried Beloukiya into the presence of King Sekher, whom he found seated upon a throne of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, with the kings and princes of the Jinn on his right hand and on his left his councillors and Amirs and officers of state. So he went up to him and kissing the earth before him, saluted him. The King returned his salute and commanding a chair to be set for him beside himself, bade him sit down and asked him who he was and how he came thither; whereupon Beloukiya related to him all that had befallen him in his wanderings and he marvelled thereat. Then he called for food and the servants spread the tables and set on fifteen hundred platters of gold and silver and brass, some containing twenty and some fifty boiled camels, and other some fifty head of sheep; at which Beloukiya marvelled exceedingly. Then they ate and he ate with them, till he was satisfied, and returned thanks to God the Most High; after which they cleared the tables and set on fruits, and they ate thereof, glorifying God and invoking blessings on His prophet Mohammed. Night cccxciii.

When Beloukiya heard them make mention of Mohammed, he wondered and said to King Sekher, "I have a mind to ask thee some questions." "Ask what thou wilt," rejoined the King, and Beloukiya said, "O King, what are ye and what is your origin and how come ye to know and love Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve?"

"Know," answered the King, "that God created the fire in seven stages, one above the other, at a distance of a thousand years' journey between each two stages. The first stage he named Jehennem and appointed for the punishment of the transgressors of the true-believers, who die unrepentant, and the second he named Lezza and appointed for unbelievers. The name of the third is Jehim and is appointed for Gog and Magog. The fourth is called Saaïr and is appointed for the host of Iblis. The fifth is called Seker and is prepared for those who neglect prayer. The sixth is called Hutemeh and is appointed for Jews and Christians. The seventh is named Hawiyeh and is prepared for hypocrites. The most endurable of them all is Jehennem, being the topmost; yet in it are a thousand mountains of fire, in each mountain seventy thousand valleys of fire, in each valley seventy thousand cities of fire, in each city seventy thousand citadels of fire, in each citadel seventy thousand houses of fire, in each house seventy thousand couches of fire and in each couch seventy thousand kinds of torment. As for the other hells, none knoweth the number of kinds of torment that be therein save God the Most High."

When Beloukiya heard this, he fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he wept and said, "O King, what will our case be?" "Fear not," answered Sekher; "whoso loveth Mohammed and believeth in his religion, the fire shall not burn him, for he is made free therefrom for his sake whom God bless and preserve! As for us, God created us of the fire; for the first that he made in Jehennem were two creatures, whom He called Melit and Khelit. Now Melit was made in the likeness of a pied wolf, with a tail after the likeness of a woman, and Khelit in that of a lion, with a tail like a tortoise, twenty years' journey in length. God commanded their tails to couple and do the deed of kind, and of them were

born serpents and scorpions, whose dwelling is in the fire, that therewith God may torment those whom He casteth therein; and these increased and multiplied. Then God commanded the tails of Khelit and Melit to couple a second time, and Melit's tail conceived by that of Khelit and bore fourteen children, seven male and seven female, who grew up and intermarried, one with the other. They all were obedient to their father, except one of them, Iblis to wit, who disobeyed him and was changed into a worm. Now Iblis was one of the Cherubim, for he had served God till he was raised to the heavens and taken into the especial favour of the Merciful One, who made him chief of the Cherubim. When God created Adam, He commanded Iblis to prostrate himself to him, but he refused; so God expelled him [from heaven] and cursed him. Of his lineage are the devils; and as for the other six males, they are the ancestors of the true-believing Jinn, and we are their descendants."

Night cccccciv.

Beloukiya marvelled at the King's words and besought him to bid one of his officers carry him back to his native land. "That may we not do," answered Sekher, "save by commandment of God the Most High; but, an thou desire to return to thine own country, I will set thee on one of my mares and bid her carry thee to the farthest limit of my dominions, where thou wilt meet with the troops of another king, Berakhiya by name, who will recognize the mare and take thee off her back and send her back to me; and this is all we can do for thee." When Beloukiya heard this, he wept and said, "Do what thou wilt, O King." So Sekher caused bring the mare and setting Beloukiya on her back, said to him, "Beware lest thou alight or strike the mare or cry out in her face; else she will kill thee; but abide quiet on her back till she stop with thee; then dismount and go thy way." Then Beloukiya took leave of the King and setting out, rode on a long while between

the rows of tents, till he came to the royal kitchens, where he stopped and gazed in wonderment on the great cauldrons, each holding fifty camels, hung up over the fire that blazed fiercely under them. King Sekher saw him from afar gazing on the cauldrons, and thinking him to be anhungred, commanded some of his officers to bear him two roasted camels. So they carried them to him and bound them behind him on the mare's back.

Then he took leave of them and fared on, till he came to the limit of King Sekher's dominions, where the mare stood still and Beloukiya dismounted and began to shake the dust of the journey from his clothes. As he was thus engaged, there accosted him a party of men, who recognizing the mare, carried her and Beloukiya before their King, whom he found seated in a splendid pavilion, in the midst of his troops and champions and vassal princes, in like state to that of King Sekher. So he saluted him, and the King returned his greeting and seated him beside himself; after which he called for food and they ate their fill and returned thanks to God. Then they set on fruits, and when they had eaten thereof, King Berakhiya said to his guest, "When didst thou leave King Sekher?" "Two days ago," replied Beloukiya. "Dost thou know," asked Berakhiya, "how many days' journey thou hast come in these two days?" "No," answered he, and the King rejoined, "Thou hast come threescore and ten months' journey; and when thou mountedst the mare, she was affrighted at thee, knowing thee for a son of Adam, and would have cast thee off; so they bound on her back these two camels, to steady her." When Beloukiya heard this, he marvelled and thanked God for safety. Then said the King, "Tell me thy story and what brought thee hither." So he told him his story from first to last, and the King marvelled at his words.'

Night cccxcb.

Here the Queen of the Serpents broke off, and Hasib,

after he had marvelled at her story, again besought her to let one of her subjects conduct him to the surface of the earth, that he might go to his family; but she answered, 'O Hasib, I know that the first thing thou wilt do, after greeting thy family, will be to go to the bath and wash thyself; and as surely as thou dost this, it will be the cause of my death.' Quoth Hasib, 'I swear that I will never again enter the bath, so long as I live, but will wash at home, when washing is incumbent on me.' 'I would not trust thee,' rejoined the Queen, 'though thou shouldst swear to me a hundred oaths; for I know thou art a son of Adam and that to thee no oath is sacred. Thy father Adam made a covenant with God the Most High, who kneaded the clay whereof He fashioned him forty days and made His angels prostrate themselves to him; yet did he perjure himself and forgot his promise and disobeyed the commandment of his Lord.' When Hasib heard this, he held his peace and burst into tears nor did he leave weeping for the space of ten days, at the end of which time he begged the Queen to acquaint him with the rest of Beloukiya's adventures. Accordingly, she began again as follows:

'Beloukiya tarried two months with King Berakhiya, then took leave of him and fared on over wastes and deserts nights and days, till he came to a high mountain, on whose summit he beheld a great angel seated, celebrating the praises of God and invoking blessings on Mohammed. Before him lay a tablet covered with black characters and white, on which his eyes were fixed, and his wings were outspread, one to the western and the other to the eastern horizon. Beloukiya ascended the hill and saluted the angel, who returned his salute and enquired who he was and what brought him thither. Accordingly, he repeated to him his history, from beginning to end, and besought him, in turn, to acquaint him with his own name and

occupation and the meaning of the tablet that lay before him. "My name is Michael," replied the angel, "and I am charged with the alternation of night and day; and this is my occupation till the Day of Judgment."

The prince wondered at his words and at his aspect and the greatness of his size and taking leave of him, fared onward till he came to a vast meadow, full of trees, through which ran seven rivers. In one part of the meadow, he saw a great tree and under it four angels, the first in the likeness of a man, the second in the likeness of a wild beast, the third in the likeness of a bull and the fourth in the likeness of a bird, engaged in magnifying God the Most High and saying, "O my God and my Master and my Lord, I conjure Thee, by Thy splendour and by the glory of Thy prophet Mohammed (on whom be blessing and peace) to vouchsafe Thy mercy and forgiveness to all things created in my likeness; for Thou canst do all things!"

Beloukiya continued his journey, till he came to another mountain and ascending it, found a great angel seated on the summit, glorifying God and hallowing Him and invoking blessings on Mohammed; and he was continually opening and shutting his hands and closing and extending his fingers. The prince accosted him and saluted him; whereupon the angel returned his greeting and enquired who he was and how he came thither. So Beloukiya acquainted him with his adventures and besought him to tell him, in turn, who he was and what was his function and what mountain was that. Quoth the angel, "This is the mountain Caf, that encompasseth the world, and in my grasp are all countries that God hath made. When He is minded to afflict any country with earthquake or famine or slaughter or to bless it with plenty and prosperity, He bids me execute His commandment, and this I do without stirring from my place; for my hands lay hold upon the roots

of the earth." "Hath God created other worlds than this within the mountain Caf?" asked Beloukiya. "Yes," answered the angel; 'He hath made a world white as silver, whose vastness none knoweth but Himself, and hath peopled it with angels, whose meat and drink are the praise and magnification of God and the continual invocation of blessings upon His prophet Mohammed. Every Friday night they assemble on this mountain and worship God until the morning, and the recompense of their devotions they give to the sinners of the faith of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep) and to all who make the [complete] ablution of Friday; and this is their function until the Day of Resurrection." "And hath God created other mountains behind the mountain Caf?" asked Beloukiya. "Yes," replied the angel. "Behind this mountain is a range of mountains of snow and ice, five hundred years' journey in extent, and this it is that wards off the heat of Jehennem from the world, which would else be consumed thereby. Moreover, behind the mountain Caf are forty worlds, each the bigness of this world forty times told, some of gold, some of silver and other some of cornelian. Each of these worlds hath its own colour, and God hath peopled them with angels, that know not Adam nor Eve nor night nor day and have no other business than to celebrate His praises and hallow and magnify Him and make proclamation of His unity and supplicate Him on behalf of the followers of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep).

Thou must know also," continued the angel, "that God hath made the worlds in seven stages, one upon another, and hath created one of His angels, whose size and attributes none knoweth but Himself and who beareth the seven stages upon his shoulders. Under this angel God the Most High hath created a rock and under the rock, a bull, and under the bull, a great fish, and under the fish, a mighty ocean. God once told Jesus (on whom be peace)

of this fish, and he said, 'O Lord, show me the fish, that I may look upon it.' So God commanded an angel to take Jesus and show him the fish. Accordingly, he carried the prophet to the sea, wherein the fish dwelt, and bade him look upon it. He looked, but [at first] saw nothing, when, suddenly, the monster darted past like lightning. At this sight, Jesus swooned away, and when he came to himself, God spoke to him, saying, 'O Jesus, hast thou seen the fish and noted its length and breadth?' 'By Thy splendour and majesty, O Lord,' replied Jesus, 'I saw no fish; but there passed me by a great bull, whose length was three days' journey, and I know not what manner of thing this is.' 'O Jesus,' rejoined the Almighty, 'this that thou sawest and which was three days in passing by thee, was [but] the head of the fish; and know that every day I create forty fish like unto this.' And Jesus marvelled at the power of God the Most High."

Quoth Beloukiya, "What hath God made beneath this nether sea?" "Under the sea," replied the angel, "God created a vast [abyss of] air, under the air the fire and under the fire a mighty serpent, by name Felec; and were it not for the fear of God the Most High, this serpent would swallow up all that is above it, without feeling it. When God created this serpent, He said to it, 'Open thy mouth and I will give thee somewhat to keep for me.' So it opened its mouth and God put Hell into its maw, saying, 'Keep it until the Day of Resurrection.' When that day comes, God will send His angels to bring Hell and chain it up until the Day of Judgment, when, at His commandment, it will open its gates and there will issue therefrom sparks bigger than mountains."

Night ccccxcbii.

When Beloukiya heard these things, he wept sore and taking leave of the angel, fared on westward, till he came in sight of a great shut gate, before which sat two creatures. When he drew near, he saw that one of the gate-keepers

had a lion's favour and the other that of a bull; so he saluted them and they returned his greeting and enquired who and whence he was and whither he was bound. Quoth he, "I am of the sons of Adam, a wanderer for the love of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve; and I have strayed from my road." Then he asked them what they were and what was the gate before which they sat. "We are the guardians of this gate," answered they, "and we have no other business than the praise and glorification of God and the invocation of blessings on Mohammed (whom may He bless and keep)." "What is within the gate?" asked Beloukiya; and they answered, "We know not." Then said he, "I conjure you, by the virtue of your glorious Lord, open to me the gate, that I may see that which is therein." "None may open this gate, of all created beings," replied they, "save Gabriel, the Faithful One, on whom be peace." Then Beloukiya lifted up his voice in supplication to God and besought Him to send down His messenger Gabriel, to open for him the gate; and God gave ear unto his prayer and commanded the angel to descend and open to him the gate of the confluence of the Two Seas. So Gabriel descended and saluting the prince, opened the gate to him, saying, "Enter, for God commandeth me to open to thee." So he entered and Gabriel locked the gate behind him and flew back to heaven.

When Beloukiya found himself within the gate, he looked and beheld a vast ocean, whose water was half salt and half fresh, bounded on either side by ranges of mountains of red cornelian, whereon he saw angels singing the praises of God and hallowing Him. So he went up to these latter and exchanging salutations with them, questioned them of the sea and the mountains. "This place is situate under the empyreal heaven," replied they, "and all the waters of the world fall into this ocean,

whence we are appointed to distribute them to the various parts of the earth, the salt to the seas and the fresh to the lakes and rivers; and this is our employ until the Day of Resurrection. But thou, whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" So he told them his story and asked them of the road. They bade him traverse the ocean, that lay before him; so he anointed his feet with the juice of the magical herb and taking leave of the angels, set out upon the surface of the sea and sped on over the water nights and days, till he met a handsome youth journeying along like himself, whereupon he saluted him and he returned his greeting. After this, he espied four great angels faring over the surface of the sea, and their going was like the blinding lightning; so he stationed himself in their road, and when they came up to him, he saluted them and conjured them by the Almighty, the Glorious One, to tell him their names and whither they were bound. "My name is Gabriel," replied the first angel, "and these my companions are called Israfil and Michael and Azraël. Know that there has appeared in the East a mighty dragon, which has laid waste a thousand cities and devoured their inhabitants; wherefore God the Most High hath commanded us to go to him and seize him and cast him into Jehennem."

Beloukiya marvelled at the vastness of their stature and fared on, as before, days and nights, till he came to an island, where he landed and walked about, till he saw a comely young man of shining visage, sitting weeping and lamenting between two stately tombs. So he saluted him and he returned his salutation, and Beloukiya said to him, "Who art thou and what are these two tombs and why sittest thou here between them, weeping?" The stranger looked at him and wept sore, till he wet his clothes with his tears; then said, "O my brother, mine is a strange and wonderful story; but do thou first tell me

Night cccxcviii.

who thou art and what brought thee hither, and after I will, in turn, relate to thee my history." So Beloukiya sat down by him and related to him all that had befallen him from his father's death, adding, "This is my whole history, and God [alone] knoweth what will betide me after this." When the other heard his story, he sighed and said, "Alas, unhappy one! What things thou hast seen in thy life! [But my experiences are yet more surprising,] for know that I have looked upon our lord Solomon, in his life, and have seen what is past count or reckoning. Indeed, my story is marvellous and my case extraordinary, and I would have thee tarry with me, till I tell thee my history and how I come to be sitting here."'

Here Hasib interrupted the Queen of the Serpents and said to her, 'I conjure thee by God, O Queen, release me and bid one of thy servants carry me forth to the surface of the earth, and I will swear an oath to thee that I will never enter the bath as long as I live.' But she said, 'This is a thing that may not be, nor will I credit thee upon thine oath.' When he heard this, he wept and all the serpents wept on his account and fell to interceding for him with their Queen and saying, 'We beseech thee, bid one of us carry him forth to the surface of the earth, and he will swear an oath to thee never to enter the bath his life long.' Thereupon the queen (whose name was Yumeleika) turned to Hasib and made him swear to her, after which she bade a serpent carry him forth to the surface of the earth; but, as she was about to go away with him, he turned to Queen Yumeleika and said to her, 'I would fain have thee tell me the history of the young man, whom Beloukiya found sitting between two tombs.' So she said, 'Know, O Hasib, that the young man said to Beloukiya, "Know, O my brother, that

Night cccxcix.

THE STORY OF JANSHAH.

My father was a king called Teigmous, who reigned over the land of Kabul and the Benou Shehlan, ten thousand warlike chieftains, ruling each over a hundred walled cities and a hundred citadels; and he was suzerain also over seven vassal princes, and tribute came to him from the East and from the West. He was just and equitable in his rule and God the Most High had given him all this and had bestowed on him this mighty empire, yet had He not vouchsafed him a son, to inherit the kingdom after him, though this was his dearest wish. So one day he summoned the astrologers and men of learning and art and mathematicians and bade them draw his horoscope and look if he should be vouchsafed a son to succeed him. Accordingly, they consulted their books and calculated his nativity and made an observation of the stars on his account; after which they informed him that he would be blessed with a son, but by none other than the daughter of the King of Khorassan. At this news he rejoiced greatly and bestowing on the astrologers treasure beyond count or reckoning, dismissed them. Then he summoned his chief Vizier, a renowned warrior, by name Ain Zar, who was held equal to a thousand cavaliers in battle, and repeating to him what the astrologers had said, bade him make ready to set out for Khorassan and demand the hand of King Behrwan's daughter for him.

The Vizier at once proceeded to equip himself for the journey and encamped without the town with his retinue, whilst King Teigmous made ready the most costly presents for the King of Khorassan, amongst the rest fifteen hundred bales of silk and pearls and rubies and other precious stones, besides gold and silver and a prodigious quantity of all that goes to the equipment of a bride, and

loading them upon camels and mules, delivered them to Ain Zar, with a letter to the following purport. 'King Teigmous to King Behrwan, greeting. Know, O King, that we have taken counsel with the astrologers and sages and mathematicians, and they tell us that we shall have a son, and that by none other than thy daughter. Wherefore I have despatched unto thee my Vizier Ain Zar, with great plenty of bridal gear, to demand her of thee in marriage, and I appoint him to stand in my stead and to enter into the marriage-contract in my name. Yea, and I desire that thou wilt grant him his request without delay or equivocation, for it is my own, and all the favour thou showest him, I take for myself; but beware of crossing me in this, for God hath bestowed upon me the kingdom of Kabul and hath given me dominion over the Benou Shehlan and vouchsafed me a mighty empire; and if I marry thy daughter, we will be as one thing in the kingship, thou and I, and I will send thee every year as much treasure as will suffice thee. And this is my desire of thee.'

So the Vizier departed with a great company and journeyed till he drew near the capital of Khorassan. When King Behrwan heard of his approach, he despatched his principal officers to meet him, with a convoy of provisions and fodder. The two parties foregathered and alighting without the city, exchanged salutations and abode there, eating and drinking, ten days, at the end of which time they mounted and rode on into the town, where they were met by King Behrwan, who came out to receive King Teigmous's Vizier and alighting, embraced him and carried him to his palace. Then Ain Zar brought out the presents and laid them before King Behrwan, together with King Teigmous's letter, which when the King read, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bade the Vizier welcome, saying, 'Rejoice in the accomplishment of thine errand, for if King Teigmous sought of

me my life, I would not deny it to him.' Then he went in forthright to his daughter and her mother and his kinsfolk and acquainting them with the King of Kabul's demand, sought counsel of them, and they said, 'Do what seemeth good to thee.' So he returned straightway to Ain Zar and notified to him his consent; and the Vizier abode with him two months, at the end of which time he said to him, 'We beseech thee to bestow upon us that for which we came and that we may depart to our own country.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the King and assembled his Viziers and officers and the grandees of his realm and the monks and priests. The latter performed the ceremony of marriage between his daughter and King Teigmous [by proxy] and King Behrwan bade decorate the city after the goodliest fashion and spread the streets with carpets [in honour of the occasion]. Then he equipped his daughter for the journey and gave her all manner of presents and rarities and precious metals, and Ain Zar departed with the princess to his own country.

Night v.

When the news of their approach reached King Teigmous, he bade celebrate the wedding festivities and decorate the city; after which he went in to the princess and did away her maidenhead; nor was it long before she conceived by him and accomplishing her months, bore a male child like the moon at its full. When King Teigmous knew that his wife had given birth to a goodly son, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and calling the sages and astrologers and mathematicians, bade them draw the horoscope of the new-born child and tell him what would befall him in his lifetime. So they made their calculations and found that he would, in his fifteenth year, be exposed to great perils and hardships, which if he survived, he would be happy and fortunate during the rest of his life and become a greater and more powerful king than his father. The King rejoiced greatly in this

prediction and named the boy Janshah. Then he delivered him to the nurses, who reared him on goodly wise, till he reached his fifth year, when his father taught him to read the Evangel and instructed him in horsemanship and the use of arms, so that, to King Teigmous's exceeding delight, he became, in less than seven years, a doughty cavalier, proficient in all martial exercises, and was wont to ride a-hunting.

It chanced one day that King Teigmous and his son rode out, a-hunting, into the plains and deserts and hunted till mid-afternoon of the third day, when the prince started a gazelle of a rare colour, which fled before him. So he gave chase to it, followed by seven of King Teigmous's men, all mounted on swift horses, and rode after the gazelle, which fled before them till she brought them to the sea-shore. They all ran at her, to take her; but she escaped from them and plunging into the waves, swam out to a fishing bark, that was moored near the shore, and leapt on board. Janshah and his followers dismounted and boarding the boat, made prize of the gazelle and were about to return to shore with her, when the prince espied a great island in the offing and said to his men, 'I have a mind to visit yonder island.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and launching out, sailed till they came to the island, where they landed and explored the place. Then they again embarked and set out to return homeward, but the night overtook them and they lost their way on the sea. Moreover, a contrary wind arose and drove the boat into mid-ocean, so that, when they awoke in the morning, they found themselves out of sight of land.

Night vi.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous missed his son and commanded his troops to make search for him. So they dispersed on all sides and a company of them, coming to the sea-shore, found there one of the prince's attendants, whom he had left in charge of the horses. They asked

him what was come of his master and the other six servants, and he told them what had passed; whereupon they returned with him to the King and told him what they had learnt. When Teigmous heard their report, he wept sore and cast the crown from his head, biting his hands for vexation. Then he rose forthright and wrote letters and despatched them to all the islands of the sea. Moreover, he fitted out a hundred ships and filling them with troops, sent them in quest of Janshah. They cruised about for ten days, but finding no trace of the prince, returned and told the King, who withdrew with his troops to his capital city, where he abode in sore concern. As for Janshah's mother, when she heard of his loss, she buffeted her face and fell a-mourning for her son [as if he were dead].

Meanwhile, Janshah and his companions drove before the wind till they came to a second island, where they landed and walked about. Presently they came upon a spring of running water in the midst of the island and saw a man sitting thereby. So they went up to him and saluted him, and he returned their greeting in a voice like the pipe of birds. Whilst they were marvelling at the man's speech, he suddenly split himself in twain, and each half went a different way. Then there came down from the hills a multitude of men of all kinds, who no sooner reached the spring, than they divided into two halves and rushed on Janshah and his companions, to eat them. When the latter saw this, they turned and fled seaward; but the cannibals pursued them and caught and ate three of the huntsmen. Janshah and the other three reached the boat in safety and putting out to sea, sailed days and nights, without knowing whither they went. Being pressed by hunger, they killed the gazelle and lived on her flesh, till the winds drove them to a third island, as it were Paradise, full of trees and waters and orchards laden with all manner fruits and streams running under the trees.

The place pleased the prince and he sent his three companions ashore to explore it, whilst he himself remained by the boat. So they landed and searched the island, East and West, but found none; then they fared on inland, till they came to a castle of pure crystal, compassed about with ramparts of white marble, within which was a garden, full of all manner sweet-scented flowers and fruits beyond description, both hard and soft of skin, and trees and birds singing upon the branches. Midmost the garden was a vast basin of water, and beside it a great estrade, on which stood a throne of red gold, set with all kinds of jewels and surrounded by a number of stools. They entered and explored the place in all directions, but found none there, so returned to Janshah and told him what they had seen. When he heard their report, he landed and accompanied them to the palace, which he entered and explored in every part, marvelling at the goodliness of the place. They walked about the gardens and ate of the fruits, till it grew dark, when they returned to the estrade and sat down, Janshah on the throne and the three others on the stools around him. Then the prince called to mind his separation from his father's throne and country and friends and kinsfolk and fell a-weeping and lamenting over their loss, whilst his men wept round him. Night dii.

Presently, they heard a mighty clamour, that came from seaward, and looking in the direction of the sound, were ware of a multitude of apes, as they were a swarm of locusts. Now the palace and island belonged to these apes, who, finding the boat moored to the strand, had scuttled it and after repaired to the palace, where they found Janshah and his servants. The latter were sore affrighted at the sudden appearance of the apes, but a company of them came up to the throne and kissing the earth before the prince, stood before him, with their paws upon their breasts [in token of homage]. Then they

brought gazelles, which they slaughtered and skinned; then, roasting pieces of the flesh, they laid them on platters of gold and silver and spreading the table, made signs to Janshah and his men to eat. So the prince and his followers came down and ate, and the apes with them, till they were satisfied, when the apes took away the meat and set on fruits, of which they ate and praised God the Most High. Then Janshah questioned the apes by signs what they were and to whom the place belonged, and they signed to him in reply, as who should say, 'This island belonged aforetime to our lord Solomon son of David (on whom be peace) and he used to come hither once a year for his pleasance. And know, O King, that thou art become our Sultan and we are thy servants; so eat and drink, and whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do.' So saying, they kissed the earth before Janshah and went their ways.

Night dlii.

The prince lay the night on the throne and his men on the stools about him, and on the morrow, at daybreak, the four Viziers [or chiefs of the apes] presented themselves before him, attended by their followers, who ranged themselves about him, rank upon rank, until the place was full. Then the Viziers exhorted him by signs to do justice amongst them and rule them with equity; after which the apes cried out to each other and went away, all but a few who remained to serve him. After awhile, there came up a company of apes with huge dogs, bridled and saddled like horses, and signed to Janshah and his followers to mount and go with them. So they mounted, marvelling at the greatness of the dogs, and rode forth, attended by the four Viziers and a swarm of apes like locusts, some on foot and others riding [on dogs,] till they came to the sea-shore. Janshah looked for the boat and finding it not, turned to the Viziers and enquired what was come of it, to which they answered, 'Know, O

King, that, when thou camest to our island, we knew that thou wouldst be Sultan over us and we feared lest thou shouldst embark in the boat and flee from us, in our absence; so we sank it.'

When Janshah heard this, he turned to his men and said to them, 'There is nothing for it but to submit patiently to what God the Most High hath ordained; for we have no means of escaping from these apes.' Then they fared on inland, till they came to the banks of a river, on the other side of which was a high mountain, whereon Janshah saw a multitude of ghouls, riding on horses, and marvelled at the vastness of their bulk and the strangeness of their favour; for some of them had heads like oxen and others like camels. So he turned to the apes and said to them, 'What are these ghouls?' And they answered, saying, 'Know, O King, that these ghouls are our mortal enemies and we come hither to do battle with them.' As soon as the ghouls espied the army of the apes, they rushed down to the river-bank and standing there, fell to pelting them with stones as big as maces, and there befell a sore battle between them. Presently, Janshah, seeing that the ghouls were getting the better of the apes, cried out to his men, saying, 'Take your bows and arrows and shoot at them and keep them off from us.' So they shot at the ghouls and slew of them much people, whereupon there befell them sore dismay and defeat and they turned to flee, which when the apes saw, they forded the river and chased the ghouls, killing many of them in the pursuit, to the top of the hill, where they disappeared.

Here Janshah found a tablet of alabaster, whereon were written these words, 'O thou that enterest this land, know that thou wilt become Sultan over these apes and that, so long as thou abidest with them, they will be victorious over the ghouls; nor is there any escape for thee from

them, except by the passes that run east and west through the mountains. If thou take the eastern pass, it will lead thee through a country swarming with ghouls and wild beasts and Marids and Afrits, and thou wilt come, after three months' journeying, to the ocean that encompasses the earth; but, if thou follow the western pass, it will bring thee, after four months' journeying, to the Valley of Ants. When thou comest thither, beware of the ants and fare on, till thou come to a high mountain that burns like fire. After thou hast followed the road, that leads through this mountain, ten days, thou wilt come to a great river, whose current is so swift that it dazzles the eyes. Now this river dries up every Saturday, and on the [opposite] bank is a city inhabited by Jews, who reject the faith of Mohammed; there is not a Muslim amongst them nor is there other than this city in the country. And know also that he who wrote this tablet was the lord Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace!' When Janshah read these words, he wept sore and repeated them to his men. Then they mounted again and returned with the apes, in triumph, to the castle, where Janshah abode, Sultan over them, for a year and a half.

Night div.

At the end of this time, he one day commanded the apes to mount and go forth a-hunting with him, and they rode out into the wastes and wilds and fared on from place to place, till they drew near the Valley of Ants, which Janshah knew by the description of it in the tablet of Solomon. Here he called a halt and they all abode there, eating and drinking, ten days, after which Janshah took his men apart by night and said to them, 'I purpose to flee through the Valley of Ants and make for the town of the Jews; it may be God will deliver us from these apes and we will go our ways.' And they replied, 'We hear and obey.' So they waited till some little of the night was spent, then, donning their armour and girding

themselves with swords and daggers and so forth, they set out and fared on westward till morning.

When the apes awoke and missed Janshah and his men, they knew that they had fled. So they mounted and pursued them, some taking the eastern road and others that which led to the Valley of Ants, nor was it long before the latter came in sight of the fugitives, as they were about to enter the valley, and hastened after them. When Janshah and his men saw them, they fled into the Valley of Ants; but their pursuers soon overtook them and would have slain them, when, behold, a multitude of ants, like swarming locusts, as big as dogs, rose out of the earth and rushed upon the apes. They devoured many apes and the latter killed many of the ants; but help came to the latter and there ensued a sore battle between them till the evening. Now an ant would go up to an ape and smite him and cut him in twain, whilst it was all that half a score apes could do to master one ant and tear him in sunder.

As soon as it became dark, Janshah and his men took to flight and fled along the heart of the valley till the morning. With the break of day, the apes were upon them, which when the prince saw, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Smite with your swords.' So they drew their swords and laid about them right and left, till there ran at one of them an ape, with tusks like an elephant, and smote him and cut him in sunder. Then the apes redoubled upon Janshah and he fled with his followers into the lower part of the valley, where he saw a vast river and by its side, a great host of ants. When the latter espied Janshah, they surrounded him, and one of the huntsmen fell to smiting them with his sword and cutting them in twain; whereupon they all set upon him and killed him. At this pass, up came the apes from over the mountain and fell upon Janshah; but he tore off his clothes and plunging into the river, with his remaining servant, struck out for the middle

Night div.

of the stream. Presently, he caught sight of a tree on the other bank of the river; so he swam up to it and laying hold of one of its branches, swung himself ashore, where he fell to wringing his clothes and spreading them in the sun to dry. As for the huntsman, the current carried him away and dashed him in pieces against the rocks, what while there befell a sore battle between the ants and the apes, until the latter gave up the pursuit and returned to their own land.

Janshah abode alone on the river-bank, weeping, till nightfall, when he took refuge in a cavern and passed the night there, in great fear and grief for the loss of his companions. At daybreak, he set out again and fared on days and nights, eating of the herbs of the earth, till he came to the mountain that burnt like fire, and thence to the river that dried up every Saturday. Now it was a mighty river and on the opposite bank stood a great city, which was the city of the Jews mentioned in the tablet of Solomon. Here he abode till the next Saturday, when the river dried up and he walked over to the other side [dryshod] and entered the city, but saw none in the streets. However, after a while, he came to the door of a house, so he opened it and entering, saw within the people of the house [sitting] in silence and speaking not. Quoth he, 'I am a stranger and hungry;' and they signed to him, as who should say, 'Eat and drink, but speak not.' So he ate and drank and slept till the morning, when the master of the house bade him welcome and asked him whence he came and whither he was bound. Janshah wept sore and told him all that had befallen him and how his father was King of Kabul; whereat the Jew marvelled and said, 'Never heard we of that city, but we have heard from the merchants of the caravans that in that direction lies a country called Yemen.' 'How far is that country from this place?' asked Janshah, and the

Jew said, 'The merchants pretend that it is seven-and-twenty months' journey from their land hither.' 'And when does the caravan come?' asked Janshah. 'Next year it will come,' replied his host; whereat the prince wept and fell a-sorrowing for himself and his followers and lamenting his separation from his father and mother and all that had befallen him in his wanderings. Then said the Jew, 'O young man, do not weep, but abide with us till the caravan comes, when we will send thee with it to thine own country.' So he abode with the Jew two whole months and every day he went out a-walking in the streets of the city for his diversion.

Night dvi.

One day, as he walked about the streets, as of wont, he heard a man crying aloud and saying, 'Who will earn a thousand dinars and a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and grace, at the price of half a day's labour?' But none answered him and Janshah said in himself, 'Were not the work perilous and difficult, he would not offer such a price for half a day's labour.' Then he accosted the crier and said to him, 'I will do the work.' So the man took him by the hand and carried him to a lofty and splendid house, where they found a Jew merchant seated on a chair of ebony, to whom said the crier, 'O merchant, I have cried [for thee] every day these three months, and none hath answered, save this young man.' The Jew bade Janshah welcome and taking him by the hand, carried him into a magnificent saloon and called for food. So the servants spread the table and set on all manner meats, of which the merchant and Janshah ate and washed their hands. Then wine was set on and they drank; after which the Jew rose and bringing Janshah a purse of a thousand dinars and a slave-girl of ravishing beauty, said to him, 'Take the girl and money to thy hire. The work thou shalt do to-morrow.' So saying, he withdrew and Janshah lay with the damsel that night.

On the morrow, the merchant bade his slaves carry him to the bath and clothe him in a costly suit of silk, whenas he came out. So they did as he bade them and brought him back to the house, whereupon the merchant called for wine and harp and lute, and they drank and played and made merry till the half of the night was past, when the Jew retired to his harem and Janshah lay with the fair slave till the morning. Then he went to the bath and on his return, the merchant came to him and said, 'Now must thou do the work for me.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Janshah. So the merchant let bring two mules and setting Janshah on one, mounted the other himself. Then they [rode forth the city and] fared on from morn till noon, when they came to a lofty mountain, to whose height there was no limit. Here the Jew halted and alighting, bade Janshah do the same. The latter obeyed and the merchant gave him a knife and a cord, saying, 'I desire that thou slaughter this [thy] mule.' So Janshah tucked up his sleeves and skirts and going up to the mule, bound her legs with the cord, then threw her down and cut her throat; after which he skinned her and lopped off her head and legs and she became a [shapeless] heap of flesh. Then said the Jew, 'Slit open the mule's belly and enter it and I will sew it up on thee. There must thou abide awhile and whatsoever thou seest in her belly, acquaint me therewith.' So Janshah slit the mule's belly and crept into it, whereupon the merchant sewed it up on him and withdrawing to a distance, hid himself in the skirts of the mountain.

Night dvii. Presently a huge bird swooped down on the dead mule and snatching it up, flew up with it to the top of the mountain, where it set it down and would have eaten it; but Janshah, being ware of this, slit the mule's belly and came forth. When the bird saw him, it took fright at him and flew away; whereupon he stood up and looking right

and left, saw nothing but the carcases of dead men, dried in the sun, and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he looked down and saw the merchant standing at the mountain-foot, looking for him. As soon as the Jew caught sight of him, he called out to him, saying, 'Throw me down of the stones that are about thee, that I may direct thee to a way by which thou mayst descend.' So Janshah threw him down nigh upon two hundred of the stones, with which the summit was strewn and which were all rubies and chrysolites and other precious stones; after which he called out to him, saying, 'Show me the way down and I will throw thee some more.' The Jew made him no answer, but gathered up the stones and binding them on the back of his mule, went his way, leaving Janshah alone on the mountain-top.

When the latter found himself deserted, he began to weep and implore help, and thus he abode three days, after which he rose and fared on over the mountain two months' space, feeding upon herbs, till he came to its skirts and espied afar off a valley, full of trees and streams and birds singing the praises of God, the One, the Victorious. At this sight he rejoiced greatly and stayed not his steps till he came to a cleft in the rocks, through which [in the season of the rains] a torrent fell down into the valley. He made his way down [the dry bed of the water-course] into the valley and walked on therein, gazing right and left, until he came in sight of a great castle, rising high into the air. As he drew near, he saw an old man of comely aspect and face shining with light standing at the gate, with a staff of cornelian in his hand, and going up to him, saluted him. The old man returned his greeting and bade him welcome, saying, 'Sit down, O my son.' So he sat down at the door of the castle and the other said to him, 'How camest thou to this land, that

no son of Adam hath trodden before thee, and whither art thou bound?' When Janshah heard his words, he wept sore at the memory of all he had suffered and his tears choked his speech. 'O my son,' said the old man, 'leave weeping; for indeed thou makest my heart ache.' So saying, he rose and set food before him and bade him eat. He ate and praised God the Most High, after which the old man besought him to tell him his history.

So Janshah related to him all that had befallen him, from first to last, at which he marvelled exceedingly. Then said the prince, 'I prithee, tell me who is the lord of this valley and to whom doth this great castle belong?' 'O my son,' answered the old man, 'this valley and castle and all that is therein belong to the lord Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! As for me, my name is Sheikh Nesr, King of the birds; for thou must know that the lord Solomon committed this castle to my charge and taught me the language of birds and made me king over all the birds that be in the world; wherefore they all come hither once in every year, and I pass them in review. Then they depart; and this is why I dwell here.' When Janshah heard this, he wept sore and said to the Sheikh, 'O my father, how shall I do to win to my native land?' 'Know, O my son,' replied Sheikh Nesr, 'that thou art near the Mountain Caf, and there is no departing for thee from this place; but tarry with me here and eat and drink and divert thyself with viewing the apartments of this castle, till the birds come, when I will give thee in charge to one of them, and he will bring thee to thy native country.'

Night dviii.

So Janshah abode with Sheikh Nesr in all delight of life, taking his pleasance in the valley and eating of its fruits and laughing and making merry with the old man, till the day appointed for the coming of the birds, when the Sheikh gave him the keys of the castle, bidding him amuse himself with exploring all its apartments and viewing what was

therein, but charging him straitly not to open such a door, else he would never again know fair fortune. Then he went forth to meet the birds, which came up, kind by kind, and kissed his hands; and he said to them, 'With me is a youth, whom destiny hath brought hither from a far land, and I desire of you that you take him up and carry him to his own country.' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.'

Meanwhile, Janshah went round about the castle, opening the various doors and viewing the apartments into which they led, till he came to the door which Sheikh Nesr had warned him not to enter. Its fashion pleased him, for it had on it a lock of gold, and he said in himself, 'This door is goodlier than all the others; I wonder what is behind it, that Sheikh Nesr should forbid me to open it. Come what may, needs must I enter and see what is in this apartment; for that which is decreed unto the creature, he must perforce fulfil.' So he unlocked the door and entering, found himself in a vast garden, full of streams and trees, laden with fruits, both hard and soft of skin, whose branches swayed gracefully, whenas the zephyr blew upon them. Midmost the garden was a great lake, the gravel of whose bed was gems and jewels and precious stones; and hard by the lake stood a little pavilion, builded all of gold and silver and crystal, with lattice-windows of jacinth. The floor of this pavilion was paved with green beryl and balass rubies and emeralds and other jewels, set mosaic-fashion, and in its midst was a golden basin, full of water and compassed about with figures of birds and beasts, wroughten of gold and silver and casting water from their mouths. When the zephyr blew on them, it entered their ears [and passed through pipes hidden in their bodies,] and therewith the figures sang out, each in its own tongue. Beside the fountain was a great estrade, and thereon stood a vast throne of cornelian, inlaid with

pearls and jewels, over which was a tent[1] of green silk set up, fifty cubits in compass and embroidered with jewels and precious metals. Within this tent was a closet containing the [magical] carpet of the lord Solomon (on whom be peace), and the pavilion was compassed about with beds of roses and basil and eglantine and all manner sweet-smelling herbs and flowers.

Night dix. Janshah explored the marvels of the place, till he was weary of wonder, when he returned to the pavilion and mounting the throne, fell asleep under the tent set up thereon. He slept there awhile and presently awaking, went forth and sat down on a stool before the door. As he sat, marvelling at the goodliness of the place, there flew up three birds like doves [but as big as vultures] and lighted on the brink of the lake, where they sported awhile. Then they put off their feathers and became three maidens, as they were moons, that had not their like in the world. They plunged into the lake and swam about and toyed and laughed, while Janshah marvelled at their beauty and grace and the justness of their shapes.

Presently, they came up out of the water and fell to walking about and taking their pleasure in the garden; whereat Janshah's reason was like to depart from him and he rose and followed them. When he overtook them, he saluted them and they returned his salute; after which quoth he, 'Who are ye, O illustrious ladies, and whence come ye?' 'We are from the invisible world of God the Most High,' replied the youngest damsel, 'and come hither to divert ourselves.' And he marvelled at their beauty and said to the youngest, 'Have compassion on me and incline unto me and take pity on my case and on all that has befallen me in my life.' 'Leave this talk,' rejoined she, 'and go thy ways;' whereat the tears streamed from his eyes, and he sighed heavily and repeated the following verses:

[1] or canopy.

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

When the maidens heard his verses, they laughed and played and sang and made merry. Then he brought them somewhat of fruit, and they ate and drank and lay with him till the morning, when they donned their feather-vests and becoming doves once more, flew away and disappeared from his sight. His reason well-nigh fled with them, and he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, in which he lay all that day.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Nesr returned from the assembly of the birds and sought for Janshah, that he might send him with the latter to his native land, but found him not and knew that he had entered the forbidden door. So he went thither and seeing it open, entered and found the prince lying aswoon under a tree. He fetched scented waters and sprinkled them on his face, whereupon he revived and turned right and left, but seeing none by him, save the old man, sighed heavily and repeated the following verses: Night dx.

Like the full moon she shines, upon a night of fortune fair, Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air.
She hath an eye, whose sorcery enchanteth every wit, A mouth, as agates, set a-row midst roses red, it were.
The night-black torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips; Beware the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee beware!
Indeed, her glance, her sides are soft, but harder is her heart Than rock to him who loveth her; there is no softness there.
The arrows of her looks she darts from out her eyebrows' bow; They hit and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.
Alas, her beauty! it outdoes all other loveliness; No maid of mortal mould there is that can with her compare.

When the Sheikh heard this, he said, 'O my son, did I not warn thee not to open the door? But now tell me what hath befallen thee.' So Janshah told him all that had passed between him and the three maidens, and Sheikh Nesr said, 'Know, O my son, that these three maidens are of the daughters of the Jinn and come hither every year [for a day], to divert themselves and make merry until mid-afternoon, when they return to their own country.' 'And where is their country?' asked Janshah. 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the old man, 'I know not: but now take heart and put away this love from thee and come with me, that I may send thee to thine own land with the birds.' When Janshah heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon; and presently, coming to himself, said, 'O my father, I care not to return to my native land. I conjure thee by Allah, let me abide with thee, that I may again foregather with the maidens and look upon the face of her I love, though it be but once a year. And know, O my father, that I will never again name my people, though I die before thee.' And he sighed and repeated the following verses:

Would that the phantom[1] never came to mock the lover's pain Anights,
and would this love were not created for men's bane!
Except my heart were all afire with memories of thee, The tears adown
my wasted cheeks would not in torrents rain.
My soul to patience I exhort forever, day and night, Whilst still my
body is consumed with fires of love in vain.

So saying, he fell at Sheikh Nesr's feet and kissed them and wept sore. 'Have compassion on me,' exclaimed he, 'so God take pity on thee!' 'By Allah, O my son,' replied the old man, 'I know nothing of the maidens nor of their country; but, if thy heart be indeed set on one of them, abide with me till this time next year, and when the day

[1] *El kheyal*, the word commonly used by Arab poets to denote the vision of the beloved one in sleep.

of their coming arrives, hide thyself under a tree in the garden. As soon as they have alighted and laid aside their feather-garments and plunged into the lake and are swimming about at a distance from their clothes, run up and seize the vest of her to whom thou hast a mind. When they see thee, they will come ashore and she, whose vest thou hast taken, will accost thee and say to thee with the sweetest of speech and the most bewitching smiles, "Give me my clothes, O my brother, that I may don them and cover my nakedness withal." But be not thou persuaded; for, if thou yield to her wishes and give her back the vest, she will don it and fly away and thou wilt never see her again; but, when thou hast gotten the vest, put it under thine armpit and hold it fast, till I return from the assembly of the birds, when I will make accord between you and send thee back to thy native land, and the maiden with thee. And this, O my son, is all I can do for thee.' Night
When Janshah heard this, his heart was solaced and he abode with Sheikh Nesr yet another year, counting the hours until the day of the coming of the birds. dri.

At last the appointed time arrived and the old man said to him, 'Do as I enjoined thee with the maidens, for I go to meet the birds.' So saying, he departed, whilst Janshah repaired to the garden and hid himself under a tree, where none could see him. Here he abode a first day and a second and a third, but the maidens came not; whereat he was sore troubled and wept and groaned without ceasing, till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he sat, looking now at the lake and now at the sky, and anon at the earth and anon at the open country, whilst his heart fluttered for stress of love and longing. As he was in this case, behold, the three doves appeared in the distance and flew till they reached the garden and lighted down beside the lake. They turned right and left, but saw no one; so they put off their feathers and became three naked maidens,

as they were ingots of virgin silver. Then they plunged into the lake and swam about, laughing and frolicking. Quoth the eldest, 'O my sister, I fear lest there be some one lying in wait for us in the pavilion.' 'O sister,' answered the second, 'since the days of King Solomon, none hath entered the pavilion, be he man or genie. 'By Allah, O my sisters,' added the youngest, laughing, 'if there be any hidden there, he will assuredly take none but me.'

Then they swam out to the middle of the lake, and when Janshah, who was watching them, with a heart fluttering for stress of passion, saw them at a distance from their clothes, he sprang to his feet and running like the darting lightning [to the brink of the lake,] snatched up the feather vest of the youngest damsel, her on whom his heart was set and whose name was Shemseh. At this, the girls turned and seeing him, were affrighted and veiled themselves from him with the water. Then they swam towards the shore and looking on him, saw that he was bright of face as the moon at her full and said to him, 'Who art thou and how comest thou hither and why hast thou taken the clothes of the lady Shemseh?' 'Come hither to me,' replied he, 'and I will tell you my story.' Quoth Shemseh, 'Why hast thou taken my clothes, rather than those of my sisters?' 'O light of mine eyes,' answered he, 'come forth of the water, and I will tell thee my case and why I chose thee out.' 'O my lord and solace of my eyes and fruit of my heart,' rejoined she, 'give me my clothes, that I may put them on and cover my nakedness withal; then will I come forth to thee.' But he replied, saying, 'O princess of fair ones, how can I give thee back thy clothes and slay myself for love-longing? Verily, I will not give them to thee, till Sheikh Nesr, the king of the birds, returns.' 'If thou wilt not give me my clothes,' quoth she, 'withdraw a little

apart from us, that my sisters may come forth and dress themselves and give me somewhat wherewith to cover myself.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and retired into the pavilion, whereupon the two eldest princesses came out and donning their clothes, gave Shemseh somewhat thereof, not enough to fly withal, and she put it on and came forth of the water, as she were the moon at her full or a browsing gazelle.

Then they entered the pavilion, where they found Janshah sitting on the throne; so Shemseh saluted him and sitting down near him, said to him, 'O fair of face, thou hast undone thyself and me; but tell us thy history, that we may know how it is with thee.' At these words, he wept till he wet his clothes with his tears; and when she saw that he was distracted for love of her, she rose and taking him by the hand, made him sit by her side and wiped away his tears with her sleeve. Then said she to him, 'O fair of face, leave this weeping and tell us thy story.' So he related to her all that had befallen him, whereupon she sighed and said, 'O my lord, since thou lovest me so dear, give me my clothes, that I may fly to my people and tell them what has passed between thee and me, and after I will come back to thee and carry thee to thine own country.' When he heard this, he wept and replied, 'Is it lawful to thee before God to slay me wrongfully?' 'O my lord,' said she, 'and how shall I do that?' 'If I give thee thy clothes,' rejoined he, 'thou wilt fly away from me, and I shall die forthright.'

Night dxii.

At this she and her sisters laughed and she said to him, 'Take comfort and be of good cheer, for I must needs marry thee.' So saying, she bent down to him and embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and on his cheeks. They clipped each other awhile, after which they drew apart and sat down on the throne. Then the eldest princess went out into the garden and gathering fruits and

flowers, brought them into the pavilion, and they ate and drank and sported and made merry. Now Janshah was accomplished in beauty and grace and slender and elegant of shape, and the princess Shemseh said to him, 'By Allah, O my beloved, I love thee with an exceeding love and will never leave thee!' When he heard her words, his heart dilated and he laughed for joy; and they abode thus awhile in mirth and gladness.

Whilst they were laughing and taking their pleasure in the pavilion, Sheikh Nesr returned from the assembly of the birds and came in to them; whereupon they all rose to him and saluted him and kissed his hands. He gave them welcome and bade them be seated. So they sat down and he said to Shemseh, 'Verily, this youth loves thee with an exceeding love; so, God on thee, deal kindly with him, for he is of the great ones of mankind and of the sons of the kings, and his father rules over the land of Kabul and is possessed of a mighty empire.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and kissing the Sheikh's hands, stood before him [in token of respect and obedience]. 'If thou speak truly,' said he, 'swear to me by Allah that thou wilt never betray him, what while thou abidest in the chains of life.' So she swore a great oath that she would never betray Janshah, but would assuredly marry him, and added, 'I will never forsake him.' The Sheikh believed in her oath and said to Janshah, 'Thanks be to God, who hath made you at one!' At this the prince rejoiced with an exceeding great joy, and he and Shemseh abode three months with Sheikh Nesr, feasting and making merry.

Night dxiii. At the end of that time, the princess said to Janshah, 'I wish to go with thee to thy native land, that we may marry and abide there.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and took counsel with Sheikh Nesr, who bade him go and commended the princess to his care. Then said she, 'O Sheikh Nesr, bid him give me my feather-vest.' So the

Sheikh bade Janshah give it to her, and he did so; whereupon she donned it and said to the prince, 'Mount my back and keep fast hold of my feathers, lest thou fall off; and do thou shut thine eyes and stop thine ears, so thou mayst not hear the roar of the revolving sphere, as we pass through the air.' He did as she bade him and Sheikh Nesr described to her the land of Kabul, that she might not miss her way, and bade them farewell, commending the prince to her care. She took leave of her sisters and bade them return to her people and tell them what had befallen her with Janshah; then, rising into the air, she flew off, like the wafts of the wind or the dazzling lightning, and stayed not her course from the forenoon till the hour of afternoon prayer, when she espied afar off a valley abounding in trees and streams and alighted there to rest. Janshah dismounted and kissing her between the eyes, sat with her awhile on the bank of a river there; then they rose and explored the valley, taking their pleasure therein and eating of the fruits of the trees, till nightfall, when they lay down under a tree and slept till the morning.

As soon as it was day, the princess arose and taking Janshah on her back, flew on with him till mid-day, when she perceived, by the appearance of the landmarks that Sheikh Nesr had described to her, that they were nearing the city of Kabul and alighted in a wide and blooming champaign, wherein were gazelles feeding and springs welling and rivers flowing and trees laden with ripe fruits. So Janshah dismounted and kissed her between the eyes; and she said to him, 'O my beloved and solace of mine eyes, knowst thou how many days' journey we have come [since yesterday]?' 'No,' answered he, and she said, 'We have come thirty months' journey.' Quoth he, 'Praised be God for safety!' Then they sat down side by side and ate and drank and toyed and laughed.

Presently, there came up to them two of the King's

servants, of those who had been of the prince's company in the chase, and one of them was he whom he had left by the horses, when he embarked in the fishing-boat. As soon as they saw Janshah, they knew him and saluted him; then said they, 'With thy leave, we will go to thy father and bear him the glad tidings of thy coming.' 'Go,' replied the prince, 'and fetch us tents, for we will abide here seven days to rest ourselves, till he make ready and come forth to meet us, that we may enter in due state.' So the officers hastened back to King Teigmous and said to him, 'Good news, O King of the age!' 'What is it?' asked he. 'Is my son Janshah come back?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'he has returned from his absence and is now near at hand in the Kerani meadow.'

Night dxiv.

When the King heard this, he rejoiced greatly and fell down in a swoon for excess of joy; then, coming to himself, he bade his Vizier give each of the men a splendid dress of honour and a sum of money and said to them, 'Take this, in reward for your good tidings, whether ye lie or speak sooth.' 'Indeed, we lie not,' replied the slaves, 'for but now we sat with him and saluted him and kissed his hands, and he bade us go and fetch him tents, for that he would abide in the meadow seven days, till such time as the Viziers and Amirs and grandees should come out to meet him.' Quoth the King, 'How is it with my son?' And they answered, 'He hath with him a houri, as he had brought her out of Paradise.' At this, the King bade beat the drums and sound the trumpets for gladness and despatched messengers to announce the good news to Janshah's mother and to the wives of the Amirs and notables. So the criers spread themselves about the city and acquainted the people with the glad tidings of the prince's coming.

Then the King made ready and setting out, with his officers and troops, for the meadow, came upon Janshah

and Shemseh sitting there. When the prince saw them, he rose and went to meet them; and the troops knew him and dismounted, to salute him and kiss his hands; after which they escorted him to his father, who, at sight of his son, threw himself from his horse's back and clipped him in his arms and wept sore. Then they took horse again and rode till they came to the banks of a river, when the troops alighted and pitched the tents and pavilions and standards, to the sound of trumpets and cymbals and drums and flutes. Moreover, the King caused set up a pavilion of red silk for the princess Shemseh, who put off her feather raiment and entering the pavilion, sat down there.

Presently, the King and his son came in to her, and when she saw Teigmous, she rose and kissed the earth before him. The King sat down and seating Janshah on his right hand and Shemseh on his left, bade her welcome and said to his son, 'Tell me all that hath befallen thee in thine absence.' So Janshah related to him all his adventures, whereat he marvelled greatly and turning to the princess, said, 'Praised be God for that He hath put it into thy heart to reunite me with my son! Verily this is of [His] exceeding[1] bounty! And now I would have thee ask of me what thou wilt, that I may do it in thine honour.' Quoth she, 'I ask of thee that thou build me a palace in the midst of a garden, with water running under it.' And the King answered, 'I hear and obey.'

Night dxv.

As they sat talking, up came Janshah's mother, attended by all the wives of the Viziers and Amirs and notables of the city. When the prince caught sight of her, he rose and leaving the tent, went to meet her and they embraced a long while, whilst the queen wept for excess of joy and repeated the following verses:

[1] Should be "manifest" bounty (*Koran* xxvii. 16).

Joy hath o'ercome me so, that, for the very stress Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become, as 'twere, your nature, O my eyes, So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then the King departed to his pavilion and Janshah carried his mother to his own tent, where they sat talking and complaining, one to the other, of all they had suffered for separation, till there came up some of Shemseh's attendants, to announce the coming of the princess. When the queen heard this, she rose and going to meet Shemseh, saluted her and seated her by her side. They sat awhile and presently the queen and her attendants returned with Shemseh to the latter's tent and sat there.

Meanwhile King Teigmous gave great largesse to his troops and subjects and rejoiced in his son with an exceeding joy, and they abode there ten days, feasting and making merry. At the end of this time, the King commanded to depart, and they all mounted and returned in state to the city, which was decorated after the goodliest fashion, for the folk had adorned the houses with precious stuffs and jewellery and spread costly brocades under the horses' feet. The drums beat for glad tidings and the notables of the kingdom rejoiced and brought rich gifts, and the lookers on were filled with amazement. Moreover, they fed the poor and needy and held high festival for the space of ten days; and the lady Shemseh rejoiced with an exceeding joy, whenas she saw this.

Then King Teigmous summoned architects and builders and men of art and bade them build a magnificent palace in such a garden. So they straightway proceeded to do his bidding, and when Janshah knew of this, he bade the workmen fetch a block of white marble and hollow it out in the likeness of a chest; which being done, he took the feather-vest of the princess Shemseh and laid it therein;

then, closing the opening with melted lead, he commanded them to bury the marble chest in the foundations and build over it the arches on which the palace was to rest, They did as he bade them, nor was it long before the palace was finished on the goodliest wise. Then they furnished it and it was a magnificent palace, standing in the midst of the garden, with streams running from under it. As soon as it was ready, the King caused Janshah's wedding to be celebrated with the greatest magnificence and they brought the bride to the castle in state and went their ways.

When Shemseh entered, she smelt the scent of the feather-vest and knew where it was and had a mind to take it. However, she waited till midnight, when Janshah was drowned in sleep; then rose and going straight to the place where the marble coffer was buried, dug till she came upon it and took it up. She did away the leaden stopper and taking out the feather-vest, put it on. Then she flew up into the air and perching on the summit of the palace, cried out to those who were therein, saying, 'Fetch me Janshah, that I may bid him farewell.' So they told him and he came out and seeing her on the roof of the palace, clad in her feather raiment, said to her, 'Why hast thou done this thing?' 'O my beloved and solace of mine eyes and fruit of my heart,' replied she, 'by Allah, I love thee passing dear and I rejoice with an exceeding joy in that I have brought thee to thy friends and country and seen thy father and mother. And now, if thou love me as I love thee, come to me at the Castle of Jewels.'

Night xxvi.

So saying, she flew away and Janshah fell down in a swoon, being well-nigh dead for despair. His people carried the news to King Teigmous, who mounted at once and riding to the palace, found his son lying on the ground, senseless, whereat he wept and sprinkled rose-

water on his face. When the prince came to himself and found his father at his head, he wept passing sore, and the King asked what had befallen him. So he told him what had happened, and the King said, 'O my son, be not concerned, for I will assemble all the merchants and pilgrims in the land and enquire at them of the Castle of Jewels. If we can find out where it is, we will journey thither and demand the Princess Shemseh of her people, and I hope in God the Most High, that He will give her back to thee.'

Then he went out and calling his four Viziers, bade them assemble all the merchants and travellers in the town and question them of the Castle of Jewels, adding, 'Whoso knows it and can direct us thither, I will give him fifty thousand dinars.' The Viziers accordingly went forth and did as the King bade them, but none could give them news of the Castle of Jewels; so they returned and told the King, who bade bring beautiful slave-girls and concubines and singers and players upon instruments of music, whose like are not found but with kings, and sent them to Janshah, so haply they might divert him from the love of the lady Shemseh. Moreover, he despatched couriers and spies to all the [neighbouring] lands and islands and climes, to enquire for the Castle of Jewels, and they made quest for it two months long, but none could give them news of it. So they returned and told the King, whereupon he wept sore and going in to his son, found him sitting in the midst of the concubines and singers and players on harp and psaltery and so forth, none of whom could avail to console him for the lady Shemseh. 'O my son,' said Teigmous, 'I can find none who knows the Castle of Jewels; but I will bring thee a fairer than she.' When Janshah heard this, his eyes ran over with tears and he recited the following verses:

Patience hath fled, but passion abideth and desire, And all my body's wasted with love and longing dire.
When will the days unite me with Shemseh? Lo, my bones Are all consumed and rotted for separation's fire.

Now there was a King of Hind, by name Kefid, who reigned over a thousand cities, in each of which were as many citadels; he had four Viziers and under him were kings and princes and Amirs. Moreover, he had great plenty of troops and warriors and champions and under his hand were a thousand chieftains, each ruling over a thousand tribes, that could muster each four thousand cavaliers; and indeed he was a king of great might and prowess and his armies filled the whole earth. Between him and King Teigmous there was a fierce feud, for that the latter had made war upon him and ravaged his kingdom and slain his men and carried off his treasures. So, when it came to King Kefid's knowledge that King Teigmous was occupied with the love of his son and with concern and care for his sake, so that he neglected the affairs of the state and his troops were grown few and weak, he summoned his viziers and officers and said to them, 'Ye all know that King Teigmous invaded our dominions and plundered our goods and slew my father and brothers, nor indeed is there one of you, but he hath ravaged his lands and carried off his goods and made prize of his women and slain some kinsman of his. Now to-day I have heard that he is taken up with the love of his son Janshah and that his troops are grown few and weak; and this is the time to take our wreak on him. So don ye your harness of battle forthright and make ready for war without delay, and we will go to him and fall upon him and slay him and his son and possess ourselves of his kingdom.' They all answered with one voice, saying, 'We hear and obey,' and proceeded at once to equip themselves and levy troops. The preparations occupied three months, at the end of

Night dxvii.

which time the King set out at the head of his army, with drums beating and trumpets sounding and banners flying, and fared on till they reached the frontiers of the land of Kabul and entered the dominions of King Teigmous, where they began to ravage the country and do havoc among the folk, slaying the old and taking the young prisoners.

When the news reached King Teigmous, he was exceeding wroth and assembling his grandees and officers of state, said to them, 'Know that Kefid hath come to our country with troops and champions and warriors, whose number none knoweth save God the Most High, and is minded to do battle against us; what deem ye?' 'O King of the age,' replied they, 'let us go out to him and give him battle and drive him forth of our country.' So he commanded them to prepare for battle and brought forth to them hauberks and cuirasses and helmets and swords and all manner warlike gear, such as slay warriors and do to death the champions of mankind. So the troops and warriors and champions flocked to the standards and King Teigmous marched out at the head of his army, with drums and cymbals beating and flutes and clarions sounding and banners flying, to meet the army of Hind.

When he drew near the foe, he called a halt and encamping with his host in the Valley of Zehran, hard by the frontier, despatched to King Kefid the following letter: 'Know that what thou hast done is of the fashion of the lewd rabble and wert thou indeed a king, the son of a king, thou hadst not thus invaded my kingdom and slain my subjects and done unright upon them. Knowest thou not that all this is the fashion of a tyrant? Verily, had I known that thou wouldst dare to invade my dominions, I had come to thee and prevented thee therefrom this long while since. Yet, even now, if thou wilt retire and leave mischief between us and thee, well and good; but if not, come out to me in

the listed field and measure thyself with me in fair fight.' This letter he committed to an officer of his army and sent with him spies to spy him out news.

When the messenger drew near the enemy's camp, he saw a multitude of tents of silk and satin, with pennons of blue silk, and amongst them a great pavilion of red satin, surrounded by guards. He made for this tent and found that it was that of King Kefid and saw therein the latter seated on a chair set with jewels, in the midst of his Viziers and captains and grandees. So he displayed the letter and straightway there came up to him a company of guards, who took it from him and carried it to the King. Kefid read it and wrote the following reply; 'King Kefid to King Teigmous. Know that I mean to take my wreak of thee and wash out the stain on my honour by laying waste thy lands and dishonouring thy women and slaying the old and carrying the young into slavery; and tomorrow, come thou out to combat in the open field, and I will show thee war and battle.' Then he sealed the letter and delivered it to the messenger, who carried it to King Teigmous and informed the latter that he had seen in the enemy's camp warriors and horsemen and footmen beyond count, there was no bound to them. When Teigmous read the answer, he was beyond measure enraged and bade his Vizier Ain Zar take a thousand horse and fall upon the army of Kefid in the middle watch of the night. Night dxbiii.

Meanwhile, King Kefid commanded one of his Viziers, Ghetrefan by name, to take five thousand horse and attack King Teigmous's camp in like manner. So the two parties set out and meeting halfway, man cried out against man and there befell a sore battle between them till daybreak, when Ghetrefan's men were routed and fled back to their camp in confusion. When Khefid saw this, he was exceeding wroth and said to the fugitives, 'What hath befallen you, that ye have lost your captains?' 'O King of the

age,' answered they, 'there met us halfway the Vizier Ain Zar, with champions and cavaliers, so that, before we were ware, we found ourselves in the enemy's midst, face to face with them, and fought a sore battle with them from midnight till morning. Then the Vizier and his men fell to smiting the elephants on the face and shouting out at them, till they took fright and turning tail to flee, trampled down the horsemen, whilst none could see other for the clouds of dust. The blood ran like a torrent and much folk were slain, and indeed, had we not fled, we had all been cut off to the last man.' When Kefid heard this, he exclaimed, 'May the sun not bless you and may his wrath be sore upon you!'

Meanwhile, Ain Zar returned to King Teigmous and told him what had happened. The King gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced greatly and bade beat the drums and sound the trumpets, in honour of the victory; after which he called the roll of his troops and found that two hundred of his stoutest champions had fallen. Then King Kefid marched his army into the field and drew them out in order of battle in fifteen lines of ten thousand horse each, under the commandment of three hundred captains and princes, mounted on elephants and chosen from amongst the doughtiest of his warriors. So he set up his standards and banners and blew the trumpets and beat the drums, whilst the champions sallied forth, offering battle. As for King Teigmous, he drew out his troops in ten lines of ten thousand horse each, and with him were a hundred champions, riding on his right hand and on his left. Then rode forward to the fight each renowned cavalier, with drums and cymbals beating and pipes and hautboys sounding and trumpets blaring, and the two hosts clashed together, whilst the earth for all its wideness was straitened for the multitude of the cavaliers and ears were deafened for the tramp of the horses and the shouting of the men.

The dust volleyed up in clouds and hung vaulted over them, and they fought a sore battle from the first of the day till the coming of the darkness, when they separated and each army drew off to its own camp. Then the two kings mustered their troops and found that they had lost, Kefid five thousand men and Teigmous three thousand of the flower of his braves, whereat they were sore concerned. On the morrow, the two hosts again drew out in battle array, and Kefid cried out to his men, saying, 'Which of you will sally forth into the field and open us the chapter of war and battle?' Thereupon came out from the ranks a warrior named Berkaik, a mighty man of war, riding on an elephant. When he reached the King, he alighted and kissing the earth before him, sought of him leave to challenge the foe to single combat. Then he mounted his elephant and pricking into the middle of the field, cried out, 'Who is for jousting, who is for foining, who is for fighting?' When King Teigmous heard this, he said to his troops, 'Which of you will do battle with this champion?' Whereupon a cavalier came out from the ranks, mounted on a charger, mighty of make, and dismounting, kissed the earth before the King and craved his permission to engage Berkaik. Then he mounted again and drove at Berkaik, who said to him, 'Who art thou, that thou makest mock of me by coming out against me, alone?' 'My name is Ghezenfer ben Kemkhil,' replied the Kabul champion; and the other, 'I have heard tell of thee in my own country; so up and do battle between the ranks of the champions.'

Night drix.

Then Ghezenfer drew a mace of iron from under his thigh and Berkaik took his sword in his hand, and they fought a sore battle, till Berkaik smote Ghezenfer on the head with his sword, but the helmet turned the blow and no hurt betided him therefrom; whereupon Ghezenfer, in his turn, dealt Berkaik so terrible a buffet on the head

with his mace, that he beat him down on to his elephant's back [and killed him]. With this out sallied another horseman and saying to Ghezenfer, 'Who art thou that thou shouldst slay my brother?' hurled a javelin at him with such force that it pierced his thigh and nailed his greaves to his flesh. The Kabul champion, feeling himself wounded, took his sword in his hand and smote at Berkaik's brother and cut him in sunder, and he fell to the earth, wallowing in his blood, whilst Ghezenfer rode back to King Teigmous.

When Kefid saw the death of his champions, he cried out to his troops to set on, as also did the King of Kabul; and the two armies drove at each other. Horse neighed against horse and man cried out upon man and the swords flashed from the scabbards, whilst the drums beat and the trumpets sounded. Then horseman charged upon horseman and every renowned champion pricked forward, whilst the faintheart fled from the push of pike and men heard nought but the clang of arms and the roar of the battle. Slain were the warriors that were slain and they stinted not from the fight till the going down of the sun in the pavilion of the heavens, when the two hosts drew asunder and returned each to its own camp. Then King Teigmous numbered his men and found that he had lost five thousand men and four standards, whereat he was sore concerned; whilst King Kefid in like manner counted his troops and found that he had lost six hundred of the flower of his horsemen and nine standards.

The two armies rested on their arms three days' space, after which Kefid wrote a letter to a king called Facoun el Kelb (to whom he claimed kinship by his mother) and the latter forthwith assembled his troops and marched to the succour of the King of Hind. So, as King Teigmous was sitting at his pleasance, there came one in to him and said, 'I see a cloud of dust rising into the air in the distance.'

Night DXX.

So he despatched a company, to learn the meaning of this, who presently returned and said to him, 'O King, when we drew near the cloud of dust, the wind smote it and it lifted and discovered seven standards and under each standard three thousand horse, making for King Kefid's camp.' Then King Facoun joined himself to the King of Hind and saluting him, enquired how it was with him and what was this war in which he was engaged. 'Knowst thou not,' answered Kefid, 'that King Teigmous is my enemy and the murderer of my father and brothers? Wherefore I am come forth to do battle with him and take my wreak on him.' Quoth Facoun, 'The blessing of the sun be upon thee!' And the King of Hind carried King Facoun to his tent and rejoiced in him with an exceeding great joy.

To return to Janshah. He abode shut up in his palace, without seeing his father or allowing one of the damsels or singing-women in his service to come in to him, for two months' space, at the end of which time he grew troubled and restless at not seeing the King and said to his attendants, 'What ails my father that he cometh not to visit me?' They told him that he had gone forth to do battle with the King of Hind, whereupon quoth Janshah, 'Bring me my horse, that I may go to my father.' But he said in himself, 'I am taken up with the thought of my beloved, and I deem well to journey to the city of the Jews, where haply God shall grant me to meet the merchant, and maybe he will hire me once more and deal with me as before, for none knoweth wherein is good.' So he took with him a thousand horse and set out, the folk deeming that he purposed to join his father in the field, and they fared on till dusk, when they halted for the night in a vast meadow. As soon as he knew that all his men were asleep, the prince rose and girding his middle, mounted his horse and rode out, intending for Baghdad, for that he had heard from the Jews that a caravan came thence to

their city once in every two years and thought to journey thither therewith.

When his men awoke and missed the prince and his horse, they mounted and sought him right and left, but finding no trace of him, rejoined his father and told him what his son had done; whereat he was beyond measure concerned and cast the crown from his head, whilst the sparks were like to fly from his mouth, and he said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I have lost my son, and the enemy is before me.' But his Viziers and vassals said to him, 'Patience, O King of the age! Nought but good ensueth patience.' Then he collected his forces and abandoning his camp, retired to his capital, where he armed the inhabitants and fortified the place, setting up mangonels and other engines upon the walls. King Kefid followed him and sat down before the town, offering battle seven nights and eight days, after which he withdrew to his tents, to tend his wounded. On this wise he did every month, and they ceased not to beleaguer the place thus seven years.

Night dxxi. Meanwhile, Janshah arrived at Baghdad, where he heard from a merchant that the city of the Jews was situate in the extreme Orient and that a caravan would start that very month for the city of Mizrecan in Hind, 'whither do thou accompany us,' said the merchant, 'and we will fare on to Khorassan and thence to the city of Shimaoun and Khouarezm, from which latter place the city of the Jews is distant a year and three months' journey.' So Janshah waited till the time of the departure of the caravan, when he joined himself thereto and journeyed, till he reached the city of Mizrecan, whence he again set out and after enduring great hardships and perils and the extreme of hunger and thirst, arrived at the town of Shimaoun. Nor did he fail in every city to which he came to enquire after the Castle of Jewels, but none could give him news of it

and all said, 'Never heard we this name.' At Shimaoun he made enquiry for the city of the Jews, and they directed him the road thither. So he set out and journeyed nights and days till he came to the place, where he had given the apes the slip, and continued his journey thence to the river, on the opposite bank of which stood the city of the Jews. He sat down on the shore and waited till Saturday came round and the river dried up, when he crossed over to the opposite bank and entering the city, betook himself to the house of his former host. The Jew and his family rejoiced in his return and set meat and drink before him, saying, 'Where hast thou been during thine absence?' 'In the kingdom of God the Most High,'[1] answered he and lay with them that night.

On the morrow he went out to walk about the city and presently heard a crier crying aloud and saying, 'O folk, who will earn a thousand dinars and a handsome slave-girl and do half a day's work for us?' So Janshah went up to him and said, 'I am your man.' Quoth the crier, 'Follow me,' and carrying him to the house of the Jew merchant, where he had been aforetime, said to the latter, 'This young man will do thy work.' The merchant gave him welcome [not recognizing him] and carried him into the harem, where he set meat and drink before him, and he ate and drank. Then he brought him the dinars and the fair slave, with whom he lay that night.

On the morrow, he took the money and the damsel and committing them to his host, returned to the merchant, who mounted and rode out with him, till they came to the foot of the mountain, where they halted and the merchant, bringing out a knife and cords, bade Janshah throw down the mare on which he rode and bind her legs with the cords. So he threw her down and bound her

[1] A formula of evasion.

and slaughtered her and cut off her legs and slit her belly, as the Jew ordered him; whereupon quoth the latter, 'Enter her belly, till I sew it up on thee; and whatsoever thou seest therein, tell me of it, for this is the work the hire whereof thou hast taken.' So Janshah entered the mare's belly and the merchant sewed it up on him, then, withdrawing to a distance, hid himself.

Presently, a great bird swooped down on the carcase and flying up with it to the mountain-top, would have eaten it, which when Janshah felt, he took out his knife and slitting the mare's belly, came forth. The bird was scared at his sight and flew away, and Janshah went up to the edge of the crest and looking down, espied the merchant standing at the foot of the mountain, as he were a sparrow.[1] So he cried out to him, 'What is thy will, O merchant?' 'Throw me down of the stones that lie about thee,' replied the Jew, 'that I may direct thee in the way down.' Quoth Janshah, 'I am he with whom thou didst thus and thus five years agone, and through thee I suffered hunger and thirst and sore toil and much hardship; and now thou hast brought me hither once more and thinkest to destroy me. By Allah, I will not throw thee aught!' So saying, he turned his back on him and set out for the Castle of the lord Solomon.

Night dxxii.

He fared on many days and nights, tearful-eyed and heavy at heart, eating, when he hungered, of the fruits of the earth and drinking, when he thirsted, of its streams, till he came in sight of the castle and saw Sheikh Nesr sitting at the gate. So he hastened up to him and kissed his hands; and the Sheikh bade him welcome and said to him, 'O my son, what ails thee that thou returnest to this place, after I sent thee home with the Princess Shemseh, comforted[2] and glad at heart?' Janshah wept and told

[1] By reason of the great distance.

[2] *Lit.* cool-eyed, *i.e.* having the eyes unheated by tears.

him all that had befallen him and how she had flown away from him, saying, 'An thou love me, come to me at the Castle of Jewels;' at which the old man marvelled and said, 'By Allah, O my son, I know not the Castle of Jewels, nor, by the virtue of our lord Solomon, have I ever in my life heard its name!' 'What shall I do?' said Janshah. 'I am dying of love and longing.' Quoth Sheikh Nesr, 'Take patience until the coming of the birds, when I will enquire at them of the Castle of Jewels.'

So Janshah's heart was comforted and he abode with Sheikh Nesr, until the appointed day arrived, when the Sheikh said to him, 'O my son, learn these names[1] and come with me to meet the birds.' Presently, the birds came flying up and saluted Sheikh Nesr, kind after kind, and he asked them of the Castle of Jewels, but they all made answer that they had never heard of such a place. When Janshah heard this, he wept and lamented, till he swooned away, whereupon Sheikh Nesr called a huge bird and said to him, 'Carry this youth to the land of Kabul,' and described to him the land and the way thither. Then he set Janshah on the bird's back, bidding him sit straight and beware of inclining to either side, or he would fall and be torn to pieces in the air, and to stop his ears from the wind, lest he be dazed by the noise of the revolving sphere and the roaring of the seas.

So the bird took flight and flew with him a day and a night, till he set him down by the King of the Beasts, whose name was Shah Bedra, and said to him, 'We have gone astray.' And he would have taken him up again and flown on with him; but Janshah said, 'Go thy ways and leave me here, till I die or find the Castle of Jewels. I

[1] Apparently some magical formula, consisting of the hidden names of God (which are supposed by the Orientals to have a thaumaturgic power) or what not else enabling one to understand the speech of birds and beasts.

will not return to my country.' So the bird left him with Shah Bedra and flew away. The King bade him welcome and said to him, 'O my son, who art thou and whence comest thou with yonder great bird?' So Janshah told him his story, whereat Shah Bedra marvelled and said, 'By the virtue of the lord Solomon, I know not of this castle; but [when the beasts come to pay their respects to me, we will ask them thereof, and] if any know it, we will reward him bountifully and send thee thither by him.'

Night dxxiii. So Janshah took patience and abode with Shah Bedra, [who gave him certain tablets, inscribed with magical formulas,] saying, 'O my son, commit to memory that which is in these tablets; [so wilt thou be gifted to understand the language of beasts;] and when the beasts come, question them of the Castle of Jewels.' He did as the King bade him, and before long, up came the beasts, kind after kind, and saluted Shah Bedra, who questioned them of the Castle of Jewels; but they all replied, 'We know not this castle, nor ever heard we of it.' At this Janshah wept sore and lamented for that he had not gone with the bird that brought him from Sheikh Nesr's castle; but Shah Bedra said to him, 'Grieve not, O my son, for I have a brother who is older than I; his name is King Shimakh and he rules over all the Jinn in the country. He was once a prisoner to King Solomon, for that he rebelled against him; nor is there among the Jinn an elder than he and Sheikh Nesr. Belike he knows of this castle.' So saying, he set Janshah on the back of a beast and gave him a letter to his brother, commending him to his care.

So the beast set off with the prince and fared on days and nights, till it came to King Shimakh's abiding-place and stood still afar off; whereupon Janshah alighted and walked on, till he found himself in the presence of the

King, to whom he presented his brother's letter, after having kissed his hands. The King read the letter and welcomed the prince, saying, 'By Allah, O my son, in all my life I never saw nor heard of this castle! But tell me thy story and who and whence thou art and whither thou art bound.' So Janshah related to him his history from beginning to end, at which the King marvelled and said, 'O my son, I do not believe that our lord Solomon even ever saw or heard of this castle; but I know a hermit in the mountains, who is exceeding old and whom all birds and beasts and Jinn obey; for he ceased not to conjure against the kings of the Jinn, till they submitted themselves to him in their own despite, by reason of the might of his spells and his enchantments. I myself once rebelled against King Solomon and he sent this hermit against me, who overcame me with his craft and his enchantments and imprisoned me, and since then I have been his vassal. His name is Yegmous and he dwells in a retreat in the mountains called the Hermitage of Diamonds. He is a cunning artificer in all manner strange works and a crafty warlock and necromancer, full of guile and versed in every kind of magic and sorcery and enchantment, and all birds and beasts and mountains obey him and come at his beck, for the stress of his conjurations. Moreover, he hath made him a staff, in three pieces, and this he plants in the earth and conjures over it; whereupon flesh and blood issue from the first piece, sweet milk from the second and wheat and barley from the third. He hath travelled in all countries and quarters and knoweth all ways and regions and places and castles and cities, nor do I think there is any place hidden from his ken. So needs must I send thee to him; haply he may direct thee to the Castle of Jewels; and if he cannot do this, none can, for all things obey him, by reason of his skill in magic.' Night dxxiv.

So saying, Shimakh called a great bird, that had feet like those of an elephant and four wings, each thirty cubits long, and set Janshah on its back, bidding it carry him to the hermit. Now this bird flew but twice a year, and there was with King Shimakh an officer, by name Timshoun, who used every day to carry off two Bactrian camels from the land of Irak and cut them up for it, that it might eat them. So it rose into the air and flew on days and nights, till it came to the mountain of the Citadels[1] and the hermitage of Diamonds,[2] where Janshah alighted and going up to the hermitage, found Yegmous at his devotions. So he entered the chapel and kissing the earth before the hermit, stood [in an attitude of respect]. When Yegmous saw him, he said to him, 'Welcome, O my son, O pilgrim from a far country and stranger in the lands! Tell me the cause of thy coming hither.' So Janshah wept and acquainted him with all that had befallen him and that he was in quest of the Castle of Jewels. Yegmous marvelled greatly at his story and said, 'By Allah, O my son, never in my life heard I of this Castle, nor saw I ever one who had heard of or seen it, for all I was alive in the days of Noah, prophet of God, (on whom be peace) and have ruled the birds and beasts and Jinn ever since his time; nor do I believe that Solomon himself knew of it. But wait till the birds and beasts and chiefs of the Jinn come to do their homage to me and I will question them of it; peradventure, some one of them may be able to give us news of it and God the Most High shall make it easy to thee [to win thither].'

So Janshah abode with the hermit, until the day of the assembly, when Yegmous questioned all the birds and beasts and Jinn of the Castle of Jewels, but they all replied, 'We never saw or heard of such a place.' At this, Janshah fell a-weeping and lamenting and prostrated him-

[1] *Kilaa.* [2] *Elmas.*

self in supplication to God the Most High; but, as he was thus engaged, there flew down from the heights of the air a great black bird, which had tarried behind the rest, and kissed the hermit's hands. The latter asked it of the Castle of Jewels, and it replied, saying, 'O hermit, when I and my brothers were fledglings, we dwelt behind the mountain Caf on a hill of crystal, in the midst of a great desert, and our father and mother used to go and come with our food every day. They went out one day, [in quest of food,] and were absent from us seven days and hunger was sore upon us; but on the eighth day they returned, weeping, and we asked them the reason of their absence. Quoth they, "A Marid swooped down on us and carried us off to the Castle of Jewels and brought us before King Shehlan, who would have slain us; but we told him that we had left a young brood behind us; so he spared our lives [and let us go]." And were my parents yet in the bonds of life,' added the bird, 'they would give thee news of the castle.'

When Janshah heard this, he wept and besought the hermit to bid the bird carry him to the nest he spoke of on the crystal hill, behind the mountain Caf. So the hermit said to the bird, 'I desire thee to obey this youth in whatsoever he may command thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the bird and taking Janshah on its back, flew with him days and nights, till it set him down on the hill of crystal and said, 'This is where our nest was.' Janshah begged it to carry him farther on to where the old birds used to forage for food. So it took him up again and flew on with him seven nights and eight days, till it set him down on the top of a high hill, named Kermous, and left him there, saying, 'I know of no land behind this hill.' Then it flew away and Janshah sat down on the hill-top and fell asleep. When he awoke, he saw somewhat gleaming afar off [as it were lightning] and filling

Night DXXV.

the air with its radiance, and wondered what this could be. So he descended the mountain and made towards the light.

Now this light came from the Castle of Jewels, which was distant two months' journey from Mount Kermous, and its walls were fashioned of red rubies and the buildings within them of yellow gold. Moreover, it had a thousand turrets builded of precious stones and metals, brought from the Sea of Darknesses, and on this account it was named the Castle of Jewels. It was a vast great castle and the name of its king was King Shehlan, the father of Shemseh and her sisters. Now, when the princess Shemseh left Janshah, she returned to the Castle of Jewels and told her father and mother all that had passed between the prince and herself. Quoth they, 'Thou hast not dealt righteously with him:' and she, 'Be sure that he will follow me hither, for he loves me passionately.' So King Shehlan repeated the story to his guards and officers of the Marids of the Jinn and bade them bring him every mortal they should see.

Now, as chance would have it, Shemseh had that very day despatched a Marid on an occasion in the direction of Mount Kermous, and on his way thither he caught sight of Janshah; so he hastened up to him and saluted him. The prince was terrified at his sight, but returned his greeting, and the Marid said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Janshah,' answered he, and bursting into tears, related to the genie his adventures and how he was come thither in quest of the Princess Shemseh and the Castle of Jewels. The Marid was moved to pity by his story and said to him, 'Weep not, for thou art come to thy desire. Know that [yonder stands the Castle of Jewels, where dwells she whom thou seekest]. She loves thee dear and has told her parents of thy love for her, and all in the castle love thee for her sake; so

take comfort and be of good cheer.' Then he took him on his shoulders and made off with him to the Castle of Jewels.

When the news of Janshah's coming reached Shemseh and her father and mother, they all rejoiced with an exceeding joy, and King Shehlan took horse and rode out, with all his guards and Afrits and Marids, to meet the prince. As soon as he came up with him, he dismounted and embraced him, and Janshah kissed his hand. Then Shehlan put on him a robe of honour of vari-coloured silk, laced with gold and set with jewels, and a coronet such as never saw mortal king, and mounting him on a splendid mare of the horses of the kings of the Jinn, brought him in great state to the castle. Janshah was dazzled by the splendour of this castle, with its walls of rubies and other jewels and its pavement of crystal and chrysolite and emerald, and fell a-weeping for very wonderment; but the King wiped away his tears and said, 'Leave weeping and be of good cheer, for thou hast come to thy desire.' Then he carried him into the inner court of the castle, where he was received by a multitude of beautiful damsels and pages and slaves, who seated him in the place of honour and stood to do him service, whilst he was lost in amazement at the goodliness of the place and its walls, that were all builded of precious metals and jewels.

Night dxxvi.

Meanwhile, King Shehlan repaired to his hall of audience, where he sat down on his throne and bidding his attendants bring in the prince, rose to receive him and seated him by his own side on the throne. Then he called for food and they ate and drank and washed their hands; after which in came the Queen, Shemseh's mother, and saluting Janshah, bade him welcome. 'Thou hast come to thy desire after weariness,' quoth she, 'and thine eyes sleep after watching; so praised be God for thy safety!'

So saying, she went away and forthwith returned with the princess Shemseh, who saluted Janshah and kissed his hands, hanging her head in confusion; after which her sisters came up to him and greeted him in like manner.

Then said the Queen to him, 'O my son, our daughter Shemseh hath indeed sinned against thee, but do thou pardon her for our sakes.' When Janshah heard this, he cried out and fell down in a swoon, and they sprinkled on his face rose-water mingled with musk and civet, till he came to himself and looking at Shemseh, said, 'Praised be God who hath brought me to my desire and quenched the fire of my heart!' 'May He preserve thee from the Fire!' replied she. 'But now tell me what hath befallen thee since our parting and how thou madest thy way to this place; seeing that few even of the Jinn ever heard of the Castle of Jewels and we are beyond the dominion of any king nor knoweth any the road hither.'

So he related to her all the adventures and perils and hardships he had suffered for her sake and how he had left his father at war with the King of Hind. Quoth the Queen, 'Now hast thou thy heart's desire, for the princess Shemseh is thy handmaid, we give her to thee; and next month, if it be the will of God the Most High, we will celebrate the marriage festival and send you both back to thy native land, with an escort of a thousand Marids, the least of whom, if thou shouldst bid him slay King Kefid and his people, would destroy them to the last man in the twinkling of an eye.'

Night drrbii.

Then King Shehlan sat down on his throne and summoning his grandees and officers of state, bade them make ready for the marriage festivities and decorate the city seven days and nights. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and busied themselves two months in the preparations, after which they celebrated the marriage of the prince and princess and held a mighty festival, never

was seen its like. Then they brought Janshah in to his bride and he abode with her in all delight and solace of life two years, at the end of which time, he said to her, 'Thy father promised to send us to my native land, that we might pass one year there and the next here.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and going in to King Shehlan at nightfall, told him what the prince had said. Quoth he, 'Have patience with me till the first of the month, that I may make ready for your departure.'

Accordingly, they waited till the appointed time, when the King brought out to them a great litter of red gold, set with pearls and jewels and covered with a canopy of green silk, painted in the liveliest colours and embroidered with precious stones, dazzling the eyes with its goodliness. Moreover, he gave his daughter three hundred beautiful damsels to wait upon her and bestowed on Janshah the like number of white slaves of the sons of the Jinn. Then he mounted the litter, with Janshah and Shemseh and their suite, after the prince and princess had taken leave of the latter's mother and family, and chose out four of his officers to carry the litter.

So the four Marids took it up, each by one corner, and rising with it into the air, flew onward till mid-day, when the King bade them set down the litter and they all alighted. Then they took leave of one another and King Shehlan commended Shemseh to the prince's care, and giving them in charge to the Marids, returned to the Castle of Jewels, whilst the prince and princess remounted the litter, and the Marids, taking it up, flew on for ten whole days, in each of which they accomplished thirty months' journey, till they came in sight of King Teigmous's capital. Now one of them knew the land of Kabul; so, when he saw the city, he bade the others set down the litter there.

Night drrbiii.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous had been routed and fled

into the city, where King Kefid laid close siege to him and he was in sore straits. He sought to make peace with the King of Hind, but the latter would give him no quarter; so, seeing himself without resource or hope of relief, he determined to strangle himself and be at rest from this trouble and misery. Accordingly, he bade his Viziers and officers farewell and entered his house, to take leave of his harem; and the whole place was full of weeping and wailing and lamentation. In the midst of the general desolation, the Marids came down with the litter upon the palace, that was in the citadel, and Janshah bade them set it down in the midst of the Divan. They did his bidding and he descended with his company and seeing all the folk of the city in grief and desolation and sore distress, said to the princess, 'O beloved of my heart and solace of mine eyes, see in what a piteous plight is my father!' Thereupon she bade the Marids fall upon the besieging host and slay them all, even to the last man; and Janshah commanded one of them, by name Keratesh, who was exceeding strong and valiant, to bring King Kefid to him in chains. So they waited till midnight, when they repaired to the enemy's camp, and Keratesh made straight for Kefid's tent, where he found him lying on a couch. So he took him up, shrieking for fear, and flew with him to Janshah, who bade the four Marids bind him on the litter and suspend him in the air over his camp, that he might witness the slaughter of his men. They did as the prince bade them and leaving Kefid, who had swooned for fear, hanging in the air, fell upon the enemy's camp.

As for King Teigmous, when he saw his son, he well-nigh died for excess of joy and giving a loud cry, fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he and his son embraced and wept sore. Then the princess Shemseh accosted the King and kissing his hand, invited him to go up with her to the roof

of the palace and witness the slaughter of his enemies by her father's Marids. So he went up to the roof and sitting down there with his son and daughter-in-law, watched the Marids do havoc among the besiegers and marvelled at their manner of waging war. For one of them smote upon the elephants and their riders with maces of iron and pounded men and beast into one shapeless heap of flesh, whilst another blew in the faces of those who fled, so that they fell down dead, and the third caught up a score of horsemen, beasts and all, and flying up with them into the air, cast them down from on high, so that they were torn in pieces or crushed to atoms in the fall. Night DXXIX.

When King Kefid came to himself, he found himself hanging between heaven and earth and marvelled at this. Then he saw the slaughter of his troops and wept sore and buffeted his face; nor did the carnage cease among the army of Hind for two whole days, till they were cut off even to the last man, when Janshah commanded a Marid, by name Shimwal, to clap King Kefid in irons and lay him in prison in a place called the Black Tower. Then King Teigmous bade beat the drums and despatched messengers to announce the glad news to Janshah's mother, who mounted forthright and rode to the palace, where she no sooner espied her son than she clasped him in her arms and swooned away for stress of joy. They sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she came to herself, when she embraced him again and wept for excess of gladness. When the lady Shemseh knew of her coming, she came to her and saluted her, and they embraced each other and sat down to converse.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous threw open the gates of the town and despatched couriers to all parts of the kingdom, to announce his happy deliverance, whereupon all his vassals and officers and the notables of the realm flocked to give him joy of his victory and of the safe return of

his son and brought him great plenty of rich gifts and presents. Then he made a second bride-feast for the princess Shemseh, and they decorated the city and held high festival; after which they unveiled the bride before Janshah with the utmost magnificence, and the latter presented her with a hundred beautiful slave-girls to wait upon her.

Some days after this, the princess went in to the King and interceded with him for Kefid, saying, 'Let him return to his own land, and if henceforward he be minded to do thee any hurt, I will bid one of the Marids snatch him up and bring him to thee.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Teigmous and bade Shimwal bring him the prisoner, who came and kissed the earth before him. Then he commanded to strike off his chains and mounting him on a lame mare, said to him, 'The princess Shemseh hath interceded for thee: so begone to thy kingdom, but if thou fall again to thine old tricks, she will send one of the Marids to seize thee and bring thee hither.'

Night DXXX. So Kefid set off homeward, in the sorriest of plights, whilst Janshah and his wife abode in all delight and solace of life, passing every second year with Shemseh's father and mother at the Castle of Jewels, whither they betook not themselves but in the litter aforesaid, borne by the Marids and flying between heaven and earth; and the length of their journey thither from the land of Kabul was ten days, in each of which they accomplished thirty months' travel.

They abode on this wise a long while, till, one year, they set out for the Castle of Jewels, as of their wont, and on their way thither alighted in this island to rest and take their pleasure therein. They sat down on the river-bank and ate and drank; after which the princess, having a mind to bathe, put off her clothes and plunged into the water. Her women followed her example and they swam about awhile, whilst Janshah walked on along the bank of

the stream. Presently, as they were swimming about and playing with one another, a huge shark seized the princess by the leg, and she cried out and died forthright, whilst the damsels fled out of the river to the pavilion, to escape from the shark; but, after awhile, they returned and taking her up, carried her to the litter.

When Janshah saw his wife dead, he fell down in a swoon and they sprinkled water on his face, till he recovered and wept over her. Then he despatched the Marids, to bear the sad news to her parents and family, who presently came thither and washed her and shrouded her; after which they buried her by the river-side and made mourning for her. They would have carried Janshah with them to the Castle of Jewels; but he said to King Shehlan, 'I beseech thee to dig me a grave beside her tomb, that, when I die, I may be buried by her side.' Accordingly, the King commanded one of his Marids to do as Janshah wished, after which they departed and left me here to weep and mourn for her till I die; for I," said the young man, "am Janshah and this is my story and the reason of my sojourn between these two tombs." And he repeated the following verses:

Home is no longer home to me, now ye are gone away, Nor is the pleasant neighbour now a neighbour, sooth to say.
The comrade, whom withal therein I companied, no more A comrade is, and eke the lights [of heaven] no lights are they.

When Beloukiya heard Janshah's story, he marvelled and exclaimed, "By Allah, O my brother, methought I had indeed wandered over the world and compassed it about; but thy story maketh me to forget all I have seen. And now," added he, "I beg thee, of thy favour and courtesy, to direct me in the way of safety." So Janshah Night DXXXI.

directed him into the right road, and Beloukiya took leave of him and fared on nights and days, till he came to a great sea; so he anointed his feet with the juice of the magical herb and setting out over the water, sped onward till he came to an island abounding in trees and springs and fruits, as it were Paradise. He landed and walked about, till he saw an immense tree, with leaves as big as the sails of a ship. So he went up to the tree and found under it a table spread with all manner rich meats, whilst on the branches sat a great bird, whose body was of pearls and emeralds, its feet of silver, its beak of red cornelian and its feathers of precious metals, and it was engaged in singing the praises of God the Most High and blessing Mohammed, on whom be benediction and peace!

Night drrrii.

When Beloukiya saw the bird, he said, "What manner of creature art thou and what dost thou here?" Quoth the bird, "I am one of the birds of Eden [and followed Adam,] when God the Most High cast him out thence. Now Adam took with him four leaves of the trees of the garden, to cover his nakedness withal, and they fell to the ground after awhile. One of them was eaten by a worm, and of it came silk: the gazelles ate the second and thence came musk; the third was eaten by bees and gave rise to honey, whilst the fourth fell in the land of Hind and from it sprang all manner spices. As for me, I wandered over the earth, till God gave me this island for a dwelling-place, and I took up my abode here. This table thou seest is spread by God the Most High for the entertainment of all the saints and holy men of the world, who come hither every Friday and visit the place and eat of this food; and after they have eaten, the table is taken up again to heaven; nor doth the food ever waste or corrupt." So Beloukiya ate his fill of the meats and praised God the Most High.

Presently, there came up El Khizr[1] (on whom be peace), at sight of whom Beloukiya rose and saluting him, was about to withdraw, when the bird said to him, "Sit, O Beloukiya, in the presence of El Khizr, on whom be peace!" So he sat down again, and El Khizr asked him who he was and how he came there. Beloukiya related to him all his adventures and enquired how far it was thence to Cairo. "Five-and-ninety years' journey," replied the prophet; whereupon Beloukiya burst into tears, then, falling at El Khizr's feet, kissed them and said to him, "O my lord, I beseech thee to deliver me from this strangerhood; for that I am nigh upon death and know not what to do, and thy reward be with God." Quoth El Khizr, "Pray to God the Most High to allow me to carry thee to Cairo, ere thou perish."

So Beloukiya wept and offered up supplication to God, who granted his prayer and bade El Khizr carry him to his people. Then said the prophet, "Lift thy head, for God hath heard thy prayer; so take fast hold of me with both thy hands and shut thine eyes." The prince did as he was bidden and El Khizr took a step forward, then said to him, "Open thine eyes." So Beloukiya opened his eyes and found himself at the door of his palace at Cairo. He turned, to take leave of El Khizr, but found no trace of him and entered the palace. When his mother saw him, she gave a loud cry and swooned away for excess of joy, and they sprinkled water upon her face. After a while she came to herself and embraced her son and

Night drrriii.

[1] One of the legendary saints of the Muslims, often confounded with Elias and sometimes also with St. George of Cappadocia, but held by the best authorities to have been a true-believing Persian and Vizier to King Kaikobad (founder of the Kayanian dynasty in the sixth century before Christ), who, having found and drunk of the water of life, received the gift of immortality and will not die till the blowing of the first trumpet. The name *El Khizr* (green) denotes his unfading youth.

wept sore, whilst Beloukiya wept and laughed by turns. Then all his friends and kindred came and gave him joy of his safe return, and the good news was noised abroad in the land and there came to him presents from all parts. Moreover, they beat the drums and blew the flutes and rejoiced mightily. Then Beloukiya related to them his adventures, at which they marvelled exceedingly and wept, till all were weary of weeping.'

All this the Queen of the Serpents related to Hasib Kerimeddin, and he said to her, 'But how knowest thou of these things?' 'O Hasib,' answered she, 'it was on this wise. Thou must know that I once had occasion, some five-and-twenty years ago, to send one of my serpents to Egypt and gave her a letter for Beloukiya, saluting him. So she carried the letter to him and he read it and said to the messenger, "I have a mind to go with thee to the Queen of the Serpents, for I have an occasion to her." Quoth she, "Close thine eyes." So he closed them and opening them again, found himself on the mountain where I now am. Then his guide carried him to a great serpent, and he saluted the latter and asked for me. "She hath gone to the Mountain Caf," answered the serpent, "as is her wont in the winter; but next summer she will come hither again. As often as she goeth thither, she appointeth me to reign in her room, during her absence; and if thou have any occasion to her, I will accomplish it for thee." Quoth he, "I beg thee to bring me the herb, which whoso crusheth and drinketh the juice thereof sickeneth not neither groweth grey nor dieth." "Tell me first," said the serpent, "what befell thee since thou leftest the Queen of the Serpents, to go with Uffan in quest of King Solomon's tomb." So he related to her all his travels and adventures, including the history of Janshah, and besought her to grant

him his request, that he might go to his own country." "By the virtue of the lord Solomon," replied she, "I know not where the herb of which thou speakest is to be found." Then she bade the serpent, which had brought him thither, carry him back to Egypt: so the latter said to him, "Shut thine eyes." He did so and opening them again, found himself on the mountain Mukettem.[1] When I returned from the mountain Caf,' added the Queen, 'the serpent my deputy informed me of Beloukiya's visit and repeated to me his story: and this, O Hasib, is how I came to know the adventures of Beloukiya and the history of Prince Janshah of Kabul.'

Hasib marvelled at the Queen's story and wept many tears over it; then he again besought her to let him return to his family; but she said, 'I fear me that, when thou gettest back to earth, thou wilt fail of thy promise and prove traitor to thine oath and enter the bath.' But he swore to her another solemn oath that he would never again enter the bath as long as he lived; whereupon she called a serpent and bade her carry him up to the surface of the earth. So the serpent took him and led him from place to place, till she brought him out on the platform of an abandoned cistern [and there left him].

He walked to the city and coming to his house by the last of the day, at the season of the yellowing of the sun, knocked at the door. His mother opened it and seeing her son, screamed out and threw herself upon him and wept for excess of joy. His wife heard her mother-in-law weeping; so she came out to her and seeing her husband, saluted him and kissed his hands; and each rejoiced in other with an exceeding joy. Then they entered the house and sat down to converse; and presently Hasib asked his mother of the woodcutters, who had left him to perish in

[1] A range of mountains immediately without Cairo on the eastern side.

the cistern. Quoth she, 'They came and told me that a wolf had eaten thee in the valley. As for them, they are become merchants and own houses and shops, and the world is grown wide for them. But every day they bring me meat and drink, and thus have they done since I lost thee.' 'To-morrow,' said Hasib, 'do thou go to them'and say, "My son Hasib hath returned from his travels; so come ye and salute him."'

Accordingly, on the morrow, she repaired to the woodcutters' houses and delivered to them her son's message, which when they heard, they changed colour and gave her each a suit of silk, embroidered with gold, saying, 'Give this to thy son and tell him that we will be with him to-morrow.' So she returned to Hasib and gave him their presents and message. Meanwhile, the woodcutters called together a number of merchants and acquainting them with all that had passed between themselves and Hasib, took counsel with them what they should do. Quoth the merchants, 'It behoves each one of you to give him half his goods and slaves;' and they agreed to do this.

So, next day, each of them took half his wealth and going in to Hasib, saluted him and kissed his hands. Then they laid before him what they had brought, saying, 'This is of thy bounties, and we are in thy hands.' He accepted their peace-offering and said to them, 'What is past is past: that which befell us was decreed of God and destiny avoideth precaution.' Quoth they, 'Come, let us walk about and take our pleasure in the city and visit the bath.' 'Not so,' answered he. 'I have taken an oath never again to enter the bath, so long as I live.' 'At least,' rejoined they, 'come to our houses, that we may entertain thee.' He agreed to this, and each of them entertained him for a night and a day; nor did they cease to do thus for a whole week [for they were seven in number].

Hasib was now master of lands and houses and shops, and all the merchants of the city foregathered with him and he told them all that had befallen him. He became one of the chief of them and abode thus awhile, till, one day, as he was walking in the town, he chanced to pass the door of a bath, whose keeper was one of his friends. When the bathman saw him, he ran up to him and saluted him and embraced him, saying, 'Favour me by entering the bath and washing, that I may show thee hospitality.' Hasib refused, alleging that he had taken a solemn oath never again to enter the bath; but the bathman was instant with him, saying, 'Be my three wives triply divorced, an thou enter not and be washed!' When Hasib heard him thus conjure him by the triple oath of divorcement, he was confounded and replied, 'O my brother, hast thou a mind to ruin me and make my children orphans and lay a load of sin upon my neck?' But the man threw himself at his feet and kissed them, saying, 'I conjure thee to enter, and be the sin on my neck!' Then all the people of the bath set upon Hasib and dragging him in, pulled off his clothes.

So, seeing no help for it, he sat down against the wall and began to pour water on his head; but hardly had he done so, when a score of men accosted him, saying, 'Come with us to the Sultan, for thou art his debtor.' Then they despatched a messenger to the Sultan's Vizier, who straightway took horse and rode, attended by threescore men, to the bath, where he alighted and going in to Hasib, saluted him and said, 'Welcome to thee!' Then he gave the bathman a hundred dinars and mounting Hasib on a charger he had brought with him, returned with him to the Sultan's palace, where he set food before him and clad him in two dresses of honour, each worth five thousand dinars. When they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, the Vizier said to Hasib, 'Know

that God hath been merciful to us, for the Sultan is nigh upon death for leprosy, and the books tell us that his life is in thy hands.' Then he took him and carried him through the seven vestibules of the palace, till they came to the King's chamber.

Now the name of this King was Kerezdan, King of Persia and of the Seven Countries, and under his sway were a hundred sovereign princes, sitting on chairs of red gold, and ten thousand captains, under each one's hand a hundred deputies and as many sword-bearers and axe-men. They found the King lying on a bed, with his head wrapped in a napkin, and groaning for excess of pain. When Hasib saw this ordinance, his wit was dazed for awe of the King; so he kissed the earth before him and invoked blessings on him. Then the Grand Vizier, whose name was Shemhour, rose (whilst all present rose also to do him honour) and welcoming Hasib, seated him on a high chair at the King's right hand; after which he called for food and the tables were laid.

Night dxxxiv.

When they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, Shemhour turned to Hasib and said to him, 'We are all thy servants and will give thee whatsoever thou seekest, even to the half of the kingdom, so thou wilt but cure the King.' So saying, he led him to the royal couch, and Hasib, uncovering the King's face, saw that he was at the last extremity: so he said to the Vizier, 'It is true that I am the son of the prophet Daniel, but I know nothing of his art: for they put me thirty days in the school of medicine and I learnt nothing of the craft. I would well I knew somewhat thereof and might heal the King.' When the Grand Vizier heard this, he bent over Hasib's hand and kissed it, saying, 'Do not multiply words upon us; for, though we should gather together to us physicians from the East and from the West, none could heal the King but thou.' 'How can I heal him,'

rejoined Hasib, 'seeing I know neither his disease nor its remedy?' 'His cure is in thy hands,' replied Shemhour; and Hasib said, 'If I knew the remedy of his sickness, I would heal him.' Quoth the Vizier, 'Thou knowest it right well; the remedy of his sickness is the Queen of the Serpents, and thou knowest her abiding-place and hast been with her.'

When Hasib heard this, he knew that all this came of his entering the bath and repented, whenas repentance availed nothing; then said he, 'What is the Queen of the Serpents? I know her not nor ever in my life heard I of this name.' 'Deny not the knowledge of her,' rejoined the Vizier; 'for I have proof that thou knowest her and hast passed two years with her.' 'I never saw nor heard of her till this moment,' repeated Hasib; whereupon Shemhour opened a book and after making sundry calculations, raised his head and spoke [or read] as follows; 'The Queen of the Serpents shall foregather with a man and he shall abide with her two years; then shall he return from her and come forth to the surface of the earth, and when he enters the bath, his belly will become black.' Then said he, 'Look at thy belly.' So Hasib looked at his own belly and behold, it was black: but he [still denied and] said, 'My belly was black from the day my mother bore me.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I had posted three men at the door of every bath, bidding them note all who entered and let me know when they found one whose belly was black: so, when thou enteredst, they looked at thy belly and finding it black, sent and told me, after we had all but despaired of coming across thee. All we want of thee is to show us the place whence thou camest out and after go thy ways; for we have those with us who will take the Queen of the Serpents and fetch her to us.' Then all the other Viziers and officers and grandees flocked about Hasib and conjured him, till they were weary, to show

them the abode of the Queen; but he persisted in his denial, saying, 'I never saw nor heard of such a creature.'

When the Grand Vizier saw that entreaties availed nothing, he called the hangman and bade him strip Hasib and beat him soundly. So he beat him, till he saw death face to face, for excess of pain, and the Vizier said to him, 'Why wilt thou persist in denial, whenas we have proof that thou knowest the abiding-place of the Queen of the Serpents? Show us the place whence thou camest out and go from us; we have with us one who will take her, and no harm shall befall thee.' Then he raised him and giving him a dress of honour of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels, spoke him fair, till he yielded and consented to show them the place.

At this, the Vizier rejoiced greatly and they all took horse and rode, guided by Hasib, till they came to the cavern where he had found the cistern full of honey. He entered, sighing and weeping, and showed them the well whence he had issued; whereupon the Vizier sat down thereby and sprinkling perfumes upon a chafing-dish, began to mutter charms and conjurations, for he was a crafty magician and diviner and skilled in cabalistic arts. He repeated three several formulas of conjuration and threw fresh incense upon the brasier, crying out and saying, 'Come forth, O Queen of the Serpents!' When, behold, the water of the well sank down and disappeared and a great door opened in the side, from which came a great noise of crying like unto thunder, so terrible that they thought the well would fall in and all present fell down in a swoon; nay, some even died [for fright].

Presently, there issued from the well a serpent as big as an elephant, casting out sparks, like red hot coals, from its mouth and eyes and bearing on its back a charger of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, in the midst whereof lay a serpent with a human face, from whose body issued

such a splendour that the place was illumined thereby. She turned right and left, till her eyes fell upon Hasib, to whom said she, 'Where is the covenant thou madest with me and the oath thou sworest to me, that thou wouldst never again enter the bath? But there is no recourse against destiny nor can any flee from that which is written on his forehead. God hath appointed the end of my life to be at thy hand, and it is His will that I be slain and King Kerezdan healed of his malady.' So saying, she wept sore and Hasib wept with her. As for the Vizier Shemhour, he put out his hand to lay hold of her; but she said to him, 'Hold thy hand, O accursed one, or I will blow upon thee and reduce thee to a heap of black ashes.' Then she cried out to Hasib, saying, 'Put out thine hand and take me and lay me in the brass dish that is with you: then set me on thy head, for my death was fore-ordained, from the beginning of the world, to be at thy hand, and thou hast no power to avert it.' So he took her and laid her in the dish, and the well returned to its natural state.

Then they set out on their return to the city, Hasib carrying the dish on his head, and as they went along, the Queen of the Serpents said to him privily, 'Hearken to me, and I will give thee a friendly counsel, for all thou hast broken faith with me and been false to thine oath; but this was fore-ordained from all eternity. It is this: when thou comest to the Vizier's house, he will bid thee kill me and cut me in three; but do thou refuse, saying, "I know not how to slaughter," and leave him to do it himself. When he has killed me, he will lay the three pieces in a brass pot and set it on the fire. Then there will come a messenger, to bid him to the King, and he will say to thee, "Keep up the fire under the pot, till the scum rises; then skim it off and pour it into a phial to cool. As soon as it is cool, drink it and neither ache

nor pain will be left in all thy body. When the second scum rises, skim it off and pour it into a phial against my return, that I may drink it for an ailment I have in my loins." Then will he go to the King, and when he is gone, do thou wait till the first scum rises and set it aside in a phial; but beware of drinking it, or no good will befall thee. When the second scum rises, skim it off and put it in a phial, which keep for thyself. When the Vizier returns and asks for the second phial, give him the first and note what will happen to him. Then drink the contents of the second phial and thy heart will become the abode of wisdom. After this, take up the flesh and laying it in a brazen platter, carry it to the King and give him to eat thereof. When he has eaten it and it has settled in his stomach, cover his face with a handkerchief and wait by him till noonday, when he will have digested the meat. Then give him somewhat of wine to drink and by the decree of God the Most High he will be healed of his disease and be made whole as he was. This, then, is my charge to thee; give ear unto it and keep it in thy memory.'

Night DXXVI.

Presently, they came to the Vizier's house, and he said to Hasib, 'Come in with me.' So he entered and set down the platter, whilst the troops dispersed and went each his own way, and the Vizier bade him kill the Queen of the Serpents; but he said, 'I am no butcher and never in my life killed I aught. An thou wilt have her slaughtered, kill her with thine own hand.' So Shemhour took the Queen from the platter and slew her, whereat Hasib wept sore and the Vizier laughed at him, saying, 'O wittol, how canst thou weep for the killing of a serpent?' Then he cut her in three and laying the pieces in a brass pot, set it on the fire and sat down to await the cooking of the flesh.

Presently, there came a messenger from the King, who

said to him, 'The King calls for thee forthright;' and he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he gave Hasib two phials and bade him drink the first scum and keep the second against his return, even as the Queen of the Serpents had foretold; after which he went away and Hasib tended the fire under the pot, till the first scum rose, when he skimmed it off and set it aside in one of the phials. After awhile, the second scum rose; so he skimmed it off and putting it in the other phial, kept it for himself.

When the meat was done, he took the cauldron off the fire and sat waiting, till the Vizier came back and said to him, 'Hast thou done as I told thee?' 'Yes,' answered Hasib. Quoth the Vizier, 'What hast thou done with the first scum?' 'I drank it but now,' replied Hasib, and Shemhour said, 'Feelst thou no change in thy body?' 'Yes,' answered Hasib; 'I feel as I were on fire from head to foot.' The crafty Vizier made no reply, but said, 'Give me the second phial, that I may drink what is therein, so haply I may be made whole of this ailment in my loins.' So Hasib brought him the first phial and he drank it off, thinking it contained the second scum. Hardly had he done this, when the phial fell from his hand and he swelled out and dropped down dead; and thus was exemplified in him the saying, 'He, who diggeth a pit for his brother, falleth into it himself.'

When Hasib saw this, he wondered and feared to drink of the second phial; but he remembered the Queen's injunction and bethought him that the Vizier would not have reserved the second scum for himself, had there been aught of hurt therein. So he said, 'I put my trust in God,' and drank off the contents of the phial. No sooner had he done so than God the Most High made the fountains of wisdom to well up in his heart and opened to him the sources of knowledge, and joy and gladness overcame him. Then he laid the serpent's flesh on a platter of brass and went forth to carry it to the palace.

On his way thither, he raised his eyes and saw the seven heavens and all that therein is, even to the lote-tree, beyond which there is no passing,[1] and the manner of the revolution of the spheres. Moreover, God discovered to him the ordinance of the planets and the scheme of their movements and the fixed stars, and he saw the conformation of the sea and land and understood the causes and consequences of eclipses of the sun and moon, whereby he became informed with the knowledge of the arts of geometry and cosmography, as well as those of astrology and astronomy and mathematics and all that hangs thereby. Then he looked at the earth and saw all minerals and vegetables that are therein and knew their virtues and properties, so that he became in an instant versed in medicine and chemistry and natural magic and the art of making gold and silver.

When he came to the palace, he went in to the King and kissing the earth before him, said, 'Thou hast outlived thy Vizier Shemhour.' The King was sore troubled at the news of the Grand Vizier's death and wept sore for him, whilst his grandees and officers wept also. Then said Kerezdan, 'He was with me but now, in all health, and went away to fetch me the flesh of the Queen of the Serpents, if it should be cooked; what befell him, that he is now dead, and what calamity hath betided him?' So Hasib told him how he had drunk the contents of the phial and had forthwith swelled out and died. The King mourned sore for his loss and said, 'What shall I do without him?' 'Grieve not, O King of the age,' rejoined Hasib; 'for I will cure thee in three days and leave no whit of disease in thy body.' At this the King's breast dilated and he said, 'I will well to be made whole of this affliction, though after years.'

So Hasib set the platter before the King and made him

[1] *Koran* liii. 14.

eat a piece of the flesh of the Queen of the Serpents. Then he covered him up and spreading a napkin over his face, bade him sleep. He slept from noon till sundown, when, his stomach having digested the piece of flesh, he awoke. Hasib gave him to drink and bade him sleep again. So he slept till the morning, and on the morrow, Hasib made him eat another piece of the flesh; and thus he did with him three days following, till he had eaten the whole, when his skin began to shrivel up and peel off in scales and he sweated, so that the sweat ran down from his head to his feet. Therewith he became whole and there abode in him no whit of disease, which when Hasib saw, he carried him to the bath and washed his body; and when he came forth, it was like a wand of silver and he was restored to perfect health, nay, sounder than he had ever been.

So he donned his richest robes and seating himself on his throne, made Hasib sit beside him. Then he called for food, and they ate and drank and washed their hands; after which all his Viziers and Amirs and captains and the grandees of his realm and the chiefs of the people came in to him and gave him joy of his recovery; and they beat the drums and decorated the city in token of rejoicing. Then said the King to the assembly, 'O Viziers and Amirs and grandees, this is Hasib Kerimeddin, who hath healed me of my sickness, and I make him my chief Vizier in the room of the Vizier Shemhour. He who loves him loves me and he who honours him honours me and he who obeys him obeys me.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and flocked to kiss Hasib's hand and give him joy of the Vizierate. Night dxxxvi.

Then the King bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour of cloth of gold, set with pearls and jewels, the least of which was worth five thousand dinars. Moreover, he gave him three hundred male white slaves and the like

number of concubines, as they were moons, and three hundred Abyssinian slave-girls, beside five hundred mules laden with treasure and sheep and oxen and buffaloes and other cattle, beyond count, and commanded all his Viziers and Amirs and grandees and notables and the officers of his household and his subjects in general to bring him gifts.

Then Hasib took horse and rode, followed by the Viziers and Amirs and grandees and all the troops, to the house which the King had set apart for him, where he sat down on a chair and the Viziers and Amirs came up to him and kissed his hand and gave him joy of the Vizierate, vying with each other in paying court to him. When his mother and household knew what had happened, they rejoiced greatly and congratulated him on his good fortune, and the woodcutters also came and gave him joy. Then he mounted again and riding to the house of the late Vizier, laid hands on all that was therein and transported it to his own abode.

Thus did Hasib, from a know-nothing, unskilled to read writing, become, by the decree of God the Most High, proficient in all sciences and versed in all manner of knowledge, so that the fame of his learning was blazed abroad in all the land and he became renowned for profound skill in medicine and astronomy and geometry and astrology and alchemy and natural magic and the Cabala and all other arts and sciences.

One day, he said to his mother, 'My father Daniel was exceeding wise and learned; tell me what he left by way of books or what not.' So his mother brought him the chest and taking out the five leaves aforesaid, gave them to him, saying, 'These five scrolls are all thy father left thee.' So he read them and said to her, 'O my mother, these leaves are part of a book. Where is the rest?' Quoth she, 'Thy father was shipwrecked a while before thy birth and lost all his books, save these five scrolls.'

Then she told him how Daniel had committed them to her care, enjoining her, if she bore a male child, to give them to him, when he grew up and asked what his father had left him. And Hasib abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

SINDBAD THE SAILOR AND SINDBAD THE PORTER.

There lived in the city of Baghdad, in the reign of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, a porter named Sindbad, a poor man who carried [burdens] on his head for hire. One day of great heat he was carrying a heavy load and what with the heat and the burden, he became exceeding weary and sweated amain. Presently he came to the gate of a merchant's house, before which the ground was swept and watered, and there the air was temperate. There was a wide bench beside the door; so he set his load thereon, to rest and take breath, and there came out upon him from the porch a pleasant breeze and a delicious fragrance. He sat down on the edge of the bench, to enjoy this, and heard from within the melodious sound of lutes and other stringed instruments and heart-delighting voices singing and reciting all manner verses with clear and goodly speech, together with the song of birds warbling and glorifying God the Most High in various voices and tongues, turtles and mocking-birds and merles and nightingales and cushats and curlews, whereat he marvelled in himself and was moved to great delight. Night drxxvii.

Then he went up to the gate and saw within a great garden, wherein were slaves and pages and such a train of servants and attendants and so forth as is only found with kings and sultans, and there was wafted to him the

fragrance of all manner rich and delicate meats and generous wines. So he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'Glory to Thee, O Lord, O Creator and Provider, who providest whom Thou wilt without stint! O my God, I cry Thee pardon for all sins and repent to Thee of all offences! O Lord, there is no gainsaying Thee in Thine ordinance and Thy dominion, neither wilt Thou be questioned of that Thou dost, for Thou indeed art Almighty, extolled be Thy perfection! Whom Thou wilt Thou makest rich and whom Thou wilt Thou makest poor! Whom Thou wilt Thou exaltest and whom Thou wilt Thou abasest and there is no god but Thou! How great is Thy majesty and how mighty Thy dominion and how excellent Thy governance! Verily, Thou favourest whom Thou wilt of Thy servants, whereby the owner of this place abideth in all delight of life and taketh his ease of pleasant scents and delicious meats and generous wines of all kinds. For indeed Thou appointest unto Thy servants that which Thou wilt and that which Thou hast foreordained unto them; wherefore are some weary and some easeful and some enjoy fair fortune and delight, whilst other some suffer the extreme of travail and misery, even as do I.' And he recited the following verses:

How many by my toil, unresting and unstayed, Do joy in pleasant food and cool, delightful shade!
Indeed, I pass my days in weariness galore; Strange is my case and sore the load upon me laid;
Whilst others, who ne'er knew a burden like to mine, Delight in fortune fair, untroubled nor dismayed.
They take their ease of life and eat and drink at will, With affluence and power by favouring Fate purveyed;
Yet am I like to these and they are like to me, And of a drop of sperm each living soul is made.
Natheless, 'twixt them and me a difference there is, As twere 'twixt vinegar and wine, when all is said.
Yet, nowise, O my God, I think to rail at Thee; Thou'rt wise and just Thy sway and none may Thee upbraid.

When he had made an end of his verses, he took up his burden and was about to fare on, when there came forth the gate to him a little fair-faced page, well-shaped and richly clad, who caught him by the hand, saying, 'Come in and speak with my lord, for he calls for thee.' The porter would have excused himself, but the page would take no refusal; so he left his load with the doorkeeper in the vestibule and followed the boy into the house, which he found goodly of ordinance and full of majesty and cheer, till he brought him to a vast and splendid saloon, wherein he saw a company of nobles and great lords, seated, each according to his rank, at tables heaped with all manner flowers and sweet-scented herbs, besides great plenty of rich meats and fruits and confections and wines of the choicest vintages. There also were fair maids, singing and playing upon instruments of music, and in the highest room sat a man of reverend and majestic aspect, whose cheeks hoariness had smitten, and he was well-made and fair of favour, stately of aspect and full of gravity and venerance and dignity.

The porter was confounded at that which he beheld and said in himself, 'By Allah, this must be either one of the pavilions of Paradise or some king's palace!' Then he saluted the company respectfully, wishing them all kinds of prosperity, and kissing the earth before them, stood in a humble attitude, with his head bowed down. The master of the house bade him draw near and be seated and bespoke him kindly, bidding him welcome. Then he set before him various kinds of rich and delicate meats, and the porter called upon the name of God and ate his fill, after which he exclaimed, 'Praised be God, come what may!' and washing his hands, returned thanks to the company for his entertainment. Quoth the host, 'Thou art welcome and thy day is a blessed one. But what is thy name and condition?' 'O my lord,' answered

Night DXXXVIII.

the other, 'my name is Sindbad the porter, and I carry folk's goods on my head for hire.' The host smiled and rejoined, 'Know, O porter, that my name is even as thine, for I am Sindbad the Sailor; and now I would have thee repeat to me the verses thou didst recite at the gate but now.' The porter was abashed and replied, 'God on thee! Excuse me, for toil and misery and lack of good teach a man ill manners and indiscretion.' 'Be not ashamed,' said the host; 'thou art become my brother; but repeat to me the verses, for they pleased me, when I heard thee recite them at the gate.' So the porter repeated the verses and they pleased the merchant, who said to him, 'Know, O porter, that my story is a wonderful one, and thou shalt hear all that befell me and all I underwent before I won to this state of prosperity and became stablished whereas thou seest me; for I came not to this high estate but after sore travail and great weariness and perils galore, and how much toil and trouble have I not suffered aforetime! Indeed, I have made seven voyages, by each of which hangs a marvellous history, such as confounds the reason, and all this came to pass by the decree of fortune and fore-ordained fate; for there is neither flight nor refuge from that which is written. Know, then, O my lords,' continued he, turning to his guests, 'that

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

My father was one of the richest and most considerable merchants of my native place and died, whilst I was yet a child, leaving me much wealth in money and lands and houses. When I grew up, I laid hands on the whole and ate and drank freely and wore rich clothes and lived lavishly

with my friends and companions of my own age, thinking this way of life would last for ever. Thus did I a great while, till, at last, when I returned to my senses and awoke from my heedlessness, I found my wealth wasted and my case changed, and gone was all I had. At this I was stricken with dismay and confusion and bethought me of a saying of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace), which I had heard aforetime from my father, "Three things are better than other three; the day of death is better than the day of birth, a live dog than a dead lion and the grave than poverty." Then I sold the remains of my property and got together three thousand dirhems, with which I resolved to travel to foreign countries, remembering the saying of the poet:

By sheer endeavour, one winneth to fortune's height, And he who craveth advancement must watch anight.
In midmost ocean the seeker of pearls must plunge And so attaineth to wealth and lordship and might;
And he sans travail who seeketh eminence His life in the quest of vanity wasteth quite.

So I bought me merchandise and what not else was needed for a sea-voyage and embarked, with a company of merchants, on board a ship bound for Bassora. There we took ship again and putting out to sea, sailed days and nights and passed from island to island and ocean to ocean and place to place, buying and selling and bartering everywhere, till we came to an island as it were one of the pleasaunces of Paradise. Here the captain cast anchor and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-stage. So all on board landed and made furnaces[1] and lighting fires therein, busied themselves in various ways, some cooking and some washing, whilst other some walked about the island for their pleasure and the rest fell to eating

[1] The ordinary Eastern furnace is a great jar or pot sunk in the earth, in which a fire of wood is lighted.

and drinking and making merry. I was one of those who explored the place, but, as we were thus variously engaged, behold, the captain cried out to us from the deck at the top of his voice, saying, "Ho, passengers, flee for your lives and leave your gear and hasten back to the ship and save yourselves from destruction, God preserve you! For this is no island, but a great fish stationary in the midst of the sea, on which the sand has settled and trees have sprung up of old time, so that it is become like unto an island; but, when ye lighted fires on it, it felt the heat and moved; and presently it will sink with you into the sea and ye will all be drowned. So leave your gear and save yourselves, ere ye perish!"

Night DXXXI. When we heard the captain's warning, we left our gear and fled back to the ship for our lives and some reached it; but, before the rest, of whom I was one, could do so, the island shook and sank into the abysses of the deep, with all that were thereon, and the surging sea closed over it with its clashing billows. I sank with the others, but God the Most High preserved me from drowning and threw in my way a great wooden tub of those that had served the ship's company for washing. I gripped it for dear life and bestriding it, paddled with my feet, whilst the waves sported with me right and left. Meanwhile the captain made sail and departed with those who had reached the ship, regardless of the drowning men, and I followed the vessel with my eyes, till she disappeared from sight and I looked for nothing but death.

In this plight, the darkness closed in upon me and the winds and waves bore me on all that night and the next day, till the tub brought to with me under the lee of a lofty island, with trees overhanging the water. I caught hold of a branch and made shift to clamber up on to the land, after coming nigh upon death. When I reached the shore, I found my feet cramped and bearing traces of the nibbling

of fish upon their soles, the which I felt not for excess of fatigue and misery. I threw myself down on the ground, like a dead man, and swooned away, nor did I return to my senses till next morning, when the sun revived me. I tried to walk, but found my feet swollen, so made shift to crawl on my hands and knees towards the interior of the island, where I found abundance of fruits and springs of sweet water. I ate of the fruits and drank of the springs; and thus I abode days and nights, till my strength and spirits began to revive and I was able to move about. So I bethought me and cutting myself a staff to lean upon, fell to exploring the island and diverting myself with gazing upon the things that God the Most High had created there.

One day, as I walked along the sea-shore, I caught sight of some live thing in the distance and thought it a wild beast or one of the creatures of the sea; but, as I drew near it, I saw that it was a magnificent mare, tethered on the beach. So I went up to her, but she cried out against me with a great cry, so that I trembled for fear and turned to go away, when there came forth a man from under the earth and followed me, crying out and saying, "Who and whence art thou and how camest thou hither?" "O my lord," answered I, "I am a shipwrecked man, a stranger, to whom God vouchsafed a wooden tub; so I saved myself thereon and it floated with me, till the waves cast me up on this island." When he heard this, he said, "Come with me," and taking me by the hand, carried me into a great underground chamber and made me sit down at the upper end. Then he brought me food and I ate, being anhungred, till I was satisfied and refreshed; after which he questioned me of myself, and I told him all that had befallen me, adding, "For God's sake, O my lord, excuse me; I have told thee the truth of my case; and now I desire that thou tell me who thou art and why thou abidest here under the earth and

why thou hast tethered yonder mare on the brink of the sea." "Know," answered he, "that I am one of several who are stationed in different parts of the island, and we are of the grooms of King Mihrjan and under our hand are all his horses. Every month, at the new moon, we bring hither the best of the King's mares, that have never been covered, and tether them on the sea-shore and hide ourselves in this place under the ground, so that none may see us. Presently, the stallions of the sea scent the mares and come up out of the water and seeing no one, leap the mares and cover them. When they have done their will of them, they try to drag them away with them, but cannot, by reason of the tether; so they cry out at them and set on them with hoofs and teeth, which we hearing, know that the stallions have dismounted; so we run out and shout at them, whereupon they are affrighted and return to the sea. Then the mares conceive by them and bear colts and fillies worth a treasury of money, whose like is not to be found on the face of the earth. This is the time of the coming forth of the sea-horses; and so it please God the Most High, I will carry thee to King Mihrjan and show thee our country. Well is it for thee that thou hast happened on us, else hadst thou perished miserably and none known of thee, for there cometh none hither save ourselves: but I will be the means of the saving of thy life and of thy return to thine own land."

Night dxl.

I called down blessings on him and thanked him for his kindness and courtesy. While we were talking, the stallion came up out of the sea and giving a great cry, sprang upon the mare and covered her. When he had done his will of her, he dismounted and would have carried her away with him, but could not by reason of the tether. She kicked and cried out at him, whereupon the groom took a sword and buckler and ran out, smiting the buckler with the

sword and calling to his companions. With this up came a company of men, shouting and brandishing spears, and the stallion took fright at them and plunging into the sea, like a buffalo, disappeared under the waves. After this, we sat awhile, till the rest of the grooms came up, each leading a mare, and seeing me with their fellow, questioned me, and I repeated my story to them. Thereupon they drew near me and spreading the table, ate and invited me to eat; so I ate with them, after which they took horse and mounting me on one of the mares, set out with me and fared on without ceasing, till they came to the capital city of King Mihrjan, and going in to him, acquainted him with my case. Then he sent for me and gave me a cordial welcome and bade me repeat my story to him. So I related to him all that had befallen me from first to last, whereat he marvelled exceedingly and said to me, "By Allah, O my son, thou hast indeed been miraculously preserved! Were not the term of thy life a long one, thou hadst not escaped from these straits; but praised be God for safety!" Then he spoke comfortably to me and entreated me with kindness and consideration. Moreover, he made me his agent for the port and registrar of all ships that entered the harbour and clad me in sumptuous apparel. In this capacity, I attended him regularly, to receive his commandments, and he favoured me and did me all manner of kindness. Indeed, I was high in credit with him, as an intercessor for the folk and an intermediary between them and him, whenas they would aught of him.

I abode thus a great while and as often as I went down to the port, I questioned the merchants and travellers and sailors of the city of Baghdad, so haply I might hear of an occasion to return to my native land, but could find none who knew it or knew any who resorted thither. At this I was chagrined, for I was weary of long strangerhood; but, one day, going in to King Mihrjan, I found with him a

company of Indians and saluted them. They returned my salutation and asked me of my country; after which I questioned them of theirs and they told me that they were of various castes, some being called Shatriyas, who are the noblest of their castes and neither oppress nor offer violence to any, and others Brahmins, a folk who abstain from wine, but live in delight and solace and merriment and own camels and horses and cattle. Moreover, they told me that the people of India are divided into two-and-seventy castes, and I marvelled at this exceedingly.

Night dxli.

Amongst other things that I saw in King Mihrjan's dominions was an island called Kasil, wherein all night is heard the beating of drums and tabrets, but we were told by the neighbouring islanders and by travellers that the inhabitants are people of diligence and judgment.[1] In this sea I saw also a fish two hundred cubits long and another half that length, with a head like that of an owl, besides many other wonders and rarities, which it would be tedious to recount to you. I occupied myself thus in exploring the islands till, one day, as I stood in the port, with a staff in my hand, according to my wont, I saw a great ship, wherein were many merchants, making for the harbour. When it reached the anchorage, the master furled his sails and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-stage, whereupon the crew fell to unlading the cargo, whilst I stood by, taking note of them. They were long in bringing the goods ashore and I said to the master, "Is there aught left in thy ship?" "Yes,

[1] *Sic* in Boulac, Breslau and Macnaghten Editions. The two other texts of this story, which I have consulted, *i.e.* that of M. Langlès (1814) and of Calcutta (1814-1818), and which are practically the same, substitute for this last phrase the words, "And the sailors say that Ed Dejjal is there." Ed Dejjal is the False Messiah or Antichrist of the Muslims, who, they fable, will come in the latter days and lay waste the earth, at the head of an army of Jews, till encountered and slain by Jesus.

O my lord," answered he; "there are divers bales of merchandise in the hold, whose owner was drowned at one of the islands in our way; so his goods abode in our charge and we purpose to sell them and note their price, that we may carry it to his people in the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace." "What was the merchant's name?" asked I, and he answered, "Sindbad;" whereupon I straitly considered him and knowing him, cried out to him with a great cry, saying, "O master, I am that Sindbad of whom thou speakest and these are my goods; for, when the fish sank under us and we were plunged into the sea, God threw in my way a great tub of wood, of those the crew had used to wash withal, and the winds and waves carried me to this island, where, by God's grace, I fell in with King Mihrjan's grooms and they brought me hither to their master. When the latter heard my story, he entreated me with favour and made me his harbour-master, and I have prospered in his service and found acceptance with him."

Night dxlii.

When the master heard what I said, he exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, there is neither conscience nor good faith left among men!" "O captain," said I, "what mean these words, seeing that I have told thee my case?" And he answered, saying, "Because thou heardest me say that I had with me goods whose owner was drowned, thou thinkest to take them without right; but this is forbidden to thee, for we saw him drown before our eyes, together with many others, nor was one of them saved. So how canst thou pretend that thou art the owner of the goods?" "O captain," said I, "listen to my story and give heed to my words, and my soothfastness will be manifest to thee; for falsehood is of the fashion of the hypocrites." Then I recounted to him all that had befallen me since I left Baghdad with him up to the time when we

came to the fish, which we took for an island, and reminded him of certain things that had passed between him and me; whereupon both he and the merchants were certified of the truth of my story and recognized me and gave me joy of my deliverance, saying, "By Allah, we thought not that thou hadst escaped drowning! But God hath granted thee new life." Then they delivered my bales to me, and I found my name written thereon, nor was aught thereof lacking. So I opened them and making up a present for King Mihrjan of the richest and most costly of the contents, caused the sailors carry it to the palace, where I presented it to the King, acquainting him with what had happened, at which he wondered exceedingly and the truth of all that I had told him was made manifest to him. Wherefore his affection for me redoubled and he showed me exceeding honour and bestowed on me a great present in return for mine. Then I sold my bales and what else I possessed, making a great profit on them, and bought me other goods and gear of the growth and fashion of the island. When the ship was about to start on her homeward voyage, I embarked in her all that I possessed and going in to the King, thanked him for all his favours and craved his leave to return to my country and friends. He gave me leave and bestowed on me great plenty of the stuffs and produce of the country; and I took my leave of him and embarked. Then we set sail and fared on nights and days, by the permission of God the Most High, and Fortune served us and Fate was favourable to us, so that we arrived in safety at Bassora, where I landed, rejoiced at my safe return to my native land. Thence, after a short stay, I set out again for Baghdad and in due time reached that city, with store of goods and commodities of great price. I went straight to my house and all my friends and kinsfolk came to greet me. Then I bought me slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, in great

plenty, and houses and lands and gardens, till I was richer and in better case than before, and gave myself up to feasting and banqueting and making merry with my friends and companions more assiduously than ever, forgetting all I had suffered of fatigue and hardship and strangerhood and all the perils of travel. This, then, is the story of my first voyage, and to-morrow, God willing, I will tell you that of the second of my seven voyages.'

Then Sindbad the Sailor made the porter sup with him and gave him an hundred dinars, saying, 'Thou hast cheered us with thy company this day.' The porter thanked him and went his way, pondering that which he had heard and marvelling at the things that betide mankind. He passed the night in his own house and on the morrow repaired to the abode of Sindbad the Sailor, who received him with honour and seated him by himself. Then, as soon as the rest of the company were assembled, he set meat and drink before them and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in cheerful case, he took up his discourse and bespoke them, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

THE SECOND VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

I abode awhile, as I told you yesterday, in the enjoyment of all the comforts and pleasures of life, until one day the longing seized me to travel again and see foreign countries and traffic and make profit by trade. So I took a great sum of money and buying goods and gear fit for travel, packed them into bales. Then I went down to the river-bank, where I found a handsome new ship about to sail, Night dxliii.

well manned and provided and equipped with sails of fine cloth. I took passage in her, with a number of other merchants, and we weighed anchor the same day. Fair weather attended us, and we sailed from place to place, buying and selling and bartering, till chance brought us to a lovely island, abounding in trees laden with ripe fruits and fragrant flowers and limpid streams and musical with the song of birds; but there was no dweller there, no, not a blower of the fire. The captain made fast with us to this island, and the merchants and sailors landed and walked about, enjoying the shade of the trees and the song of the birds, that chanted the praises of the One, the Victorious, and marvelling at the works of the Omnipotent King. I landed with the rest and sitting down by a spring of sweet water, that welled up among the trees, took out some victual I had with me and ate of that which God the Most High had allotted me. I sat thus, enjoying the pleasant freshness of the breeze and the fragrance of the flowers, till presently I grew drowsy for very pleasance and lying down, soon fell asleep. When I awoke, I found myself alone, for the ship had sailed with all who were therein, and left me behind, nor had one of the merchants or sailors bethought himself of me. I searched the island right and left, but found neither man nor genie, whereat I was beyond measure troubled and my gall was like to burst for excess of chagrin and anguish and concern, for that I was left quite alone, without aught of meat or drink or worldly gear, weary and heart-broken. So I gave myself up for lost and said, "Not always does the pitcher come off unbroken. I escaped the first time and happened on one who brought me to an inhabited place, but this time there is no hope of falling in with such a deliverer." Then I fell a-weeping and wailing and gave myself up to despair, blaming myself for having again adventured upon the perils and hardships

of travel, whenas I was at my ease in my own house in my native city, taking my leisure with pleasant food and rich raiment, and lacking nothing, neither money nor goods, and this the more after all the toils and dangers I had undergone in my first voyage, wherein I had so narrowly escaped destruction. And I repented me of having left Baghdad and exclaimed, "Verily we are God's and to Him we return!" For indeed I was even as one mad, and I rose and walked about the island, unable for trouble to abide in any one place. Then I climbed a tall tree and looked in every direction, but saw nothing but sky and sea and trees and birds and islands and sands. However, after a while, I caught sight of some great white thing, afar off in the interior of the island; so I came down from the tree and making for that which I had seen, found it a huge white dome of vast height and compass. I walked all round it, but found no door thereto, nor could I muster strength or nimbleness to climb it, by reason of its exceeding smoothness and slipperiness. So I marked the spot where I stood and went round about the dome to measure its compass, which I found fifty good paces.

As I stood, casting about how to gain an entrance, the sun was suddenly hidden from me and the air became dark. Methought a cloud had come over the sun, but it was the season of summer and the day drew near to sundown; so I marvelled at this and lifting my head, looked steadfastly at the sun, when I saw that what I had taken for a cloud was none other than an enormous bird, whose outspread wings, as it flew through the air, obscured the sun and veiled it from the island. At this sight my wonder redoubled and I bethought me of a story that I had heard aforetime of pilgrims and travellers, how in certain islands dwells a huge bird, called the roc, which feeds its young on elephants, and was assured that the

Night dxliv.

dome aforesaid was none other than one of its eggs. As I looked and wondered at the marvellous works of God the Most High, the bird alighted on the egg and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs spread out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! When I saw this, I arose and unwinding the linen of my turban, twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound myself fast to the roc's feet, saying in myself, "Peradventure, this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this island."

I passed the night on wake, fearing to sleep, lest the bird should fly away with me at unawares; and as soon as the dawn broke and day appeared, the roc gave a great cry and spreading its wings, flew up with me into the air. It ceased not to soar, till I thought it had reached the limit of the skies, after which it descended, little by little, till it lighted on the top of a high hill. As soon as I found myself on the earth, I made haste to unbind myself, quaking for fear of the bird, though it took no heed of me nor was ware of me, and loosing the linen of my turban from its feet, made off. Presently, I saw it catch up something from the ground and rise into the air with it, and observing this narrowly, saw it to be a huge great serpent, with which it flew away out of sight. I marvelled at this and faring on, found myself on a crest overlooking a great valley, exceeding wide and deep and bounded by vast mountains, that soared high into the air: none could see their summits, for the excess of their height, nor could any avail to climb up thereto. When I saw this, I blamed myself for that which I had done and said, "Would God I had remained in the island! It was better than this desert place; for there I had at least fruits to eat and water to drink, and here are neither trees nor fruits nor streams. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the

Supreme! Verily, as often as I am quit of one peril, I fall into a worse and a more grievous."

However, I took courage and walking along the valley, found that its soil was of diamond, the stone wherewith they pierce jewels and precious stones and porcelain and onyx, for that it is a hard dense stone, whereon neither iron nor steel hath effect, neither can we cut off aught therefrom nor break it, save by means of the leadstone. Moreover, the valley swarmed with huge snakes and vipers, as big as palm-trees, that would have made but one gulp of an elephant; and they came out by night, hiding during the day, lest the rocs and eagles should pounce on them and tear them in pieces, as was their wont, why I know not. And I repented of what I had done and said, "By Allah, I have made haste to bring destruction upon myself!" As I went along, forgetting my hunger and thirst in my concern for my life, the day began to wane and I looked about for a place where I might pass the night, being in fear of the serpents. Presently, I caught sight of a cave near at hand, with a narrow doorway; so I entered and rolled a great stone that I found within to the mouth of the cave and stopped it up, saying in myself, "I am safe here for the night; and as soon as it is day, I will go forth and see what destiny will do." Then I looked within the cave and saw at the further end a great serpent brooding on her eggs, at which my hair stood on end; but I raised my eyes to heaven and committing my case to fate and destiny, abode all that night without sleep till daybreak, when I rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave and went forth, staggering like a drunken man for stress of watching and fear and hunger.

As I walked along the valley, there fell down before me a great piece of meat; but I saw none, at which I marvelled greatly and presently bethought me of a story I had heard aforetime of merchants and pilgrims and travellers, how

the mountains where are the diamonds are fenced about with great perils and terrors, nor can any win thither; but the merchants who traffic in diamonds have a device by which they get them, that is to say, they take a sheep and kill and skin it and cut it in quarters and cast them down from the mountain-tops into the valley, where, the meat being sticky with the fresh blood, some of the jewels cling to it. There they leave it till midday, when the eagles and vultures swoop down upon it and carry it up to the mountain-tops, whereupon the merchants come and shout at them and scare them from the meat. Then they come and taking the diamonds, go their ways with them and leave the meat to the birds and beasts; nor can any come at the diamonds, but on this wise. So, when I saw the carcase fall and bethought me of the story aforesaid, I filled my pockets and girdle and turban and the folds of my clothes with great plenty of the best of the diamonds; and as I was thus engaged, down fell another great quarter of meat before me. Then I unrolled the linen of my turban and setting the meat on my breast, bound myself thereto and lay down on my back, so that I was hidden by the meat, which was thus raised above the ground. Hardly had I done this, when an eagle swooped down upon the meat and driving its talons into it, flew up with it and me clinging thereto and alighted on the top of one of the mountains, where it fell to rending the carcase; but there arose a great noise of shouting and clattering of wood, at which the bird took fright and flew away.

Night dxlv.

Then I loosed myself from the meat, with clothes daubed with blood therefrom, and stood up; whereupon up came the merchant, who had cried out at the eagle, and seeing me standing there, bespoke me not, but was affrighted at me and shook with fear. However, he went up to the carcase and turning it over, found no diamonds sticking to it, whereat he gave a great cry and exclaimed, "Alas, my

disappointment! There is no power and no virtue but in God, with whom we seek refuge from Satan the accursed!" And he bemoaned himself and beat hand upon hand, saying, "Alas, the pity of it! How cometh this?" Then I went up to him and he said to me, "Who art thou and how camest thou hither?" "Fear not," answered I. "I am a man and a good one and a merchant. My story is a rare one and the manner of my coming hither is a marvel. So be of good cheer; thou shalt have of me what will gladden thy heart, for I have with me great plenty of diamonds, each better than aught thou couldst get otherwise, and I will give thee thereof what shall suffice thee; so fear nothing." So saying, I gave him abundance of diamonds and he rejoiced therein and thanked and blessed me. Then we talked together till the other merchants, each of whom had thrown down his piece of meat, hearing me in discourse with their fellow, came up and saluted me. I told them my story and how I came thither, and they gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, a new life hath been decreed to thee, for none ever won to yonder valley and came off thence alive before thee; but praised be God for thy safety!"

I passed the night in their company in a safe and pleasant place, beyond measure rejoiced at my deliverance from the Valley of Serpents and my arrival in an inhabited land; and on the morrow we set out and journeyed along the crest of the mountains, seeing many serpents in the valley, till we came to a wide and fair island, wherein was a grove of great camphor-trees, under each of which a hundred men might shelter. When the folk have a mind to get camphor, they pierce the upper part of the stem with a long gimlet, whereupon the liquid camphor, which is the sap of the tree, runs out, as it were milk, and they catch it in vessels, where it hardens like gum; but, after this, the tree withers and becomes dry firewood. More-

over, there is in this island a kind of wild beast, called a rhinoceros, that feeds upon grass and leaves of trees, as do oxen and buffaloes with us; but it is a huge beast, bigger of body than the camel, and has a great and thick horn, half a score cubits long, amiddleward its head, wherein, when cleft in twain, is the likeness of a man. Travellers say that this beast will carry off a great elephant on its horn and graze about the island and the sea-coast therewith and take no heed of it, till the elephant dies and its fat melting in the sun, runs down into the rhinoceros's eyes and blinds him, so that he lies down on the shore. Then comes the roc and carries off both elephant and rhinoceros, to feed its young withal. Moreover, I saw in this island many kinds of oxen and buffaloes, whose like are not found in our country.

Here I sold some of my diamonds for gold and silver money and bartered others for the produce of the country, and loading them upon beasts of burden, fared on with the merchants from valley to valley and town to town, buying and selling and viewing foreign countries and the works and creatures of God, till we came to Bassora, where we abode a few days, after which I continued my journey to Baghdad and arrived at home with great store of diamonds and money and goods. I foregathered with my friends and relations and gave alms and largesse and made presents to all my friends and companions. Then I betook myself to eating and drinking and making merry with my fellows, and forgot all my sufferings. And all who heard of my return came and questioned me of my adventures and of foreign countries, and I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they wondered exceedingly and gave me joy of my safe return. This, then, is the end of the story of my second voyage; and to-morrow, God willing, I will tell you what befell me in my third voyage.'

Night dxlvi.

The company marvelled at his story and ate the evening meal with him; after which he ordered an hundred dinars to be given to the porter, who thanked him and blessed him and went his way, wondering at what he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was day, he rose and praying the morning-prayer, repaired to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, even as he had bidden him, and gave him good-morrow. The merchant welcomed him and made him sit with him, till the rest of the company arrived; and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in good case, their host began as follows, saying, 'Hearken, O my brothers, to the story of my third voyage, which is more wonderful than those you have already heard. Know that

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

As I told you yesterday, I returned from my second voyage with great increase of wealth, God having requited me all that I had lost, and I abode awhile at Baghdad in the enjoyment of the utmost ease and prosperity, till I was once more seized with longing for travel and adventure and yearned after traffic and gain, for that the heart is naturally prone to evil. So I laid in great plenty of suitable goods and repairing to Bassora, found there a great ship ready to sail, with a numerous company of merchants and others, men of worth and piety and consideration. I took passage with them and we set sail, commending ourselves to the blessing of God the Most High and trusting in Him to bring our voyage to a safe and prosperous issue. We fared on from sea to sea and from island to island and city to city, in all delight and contentment, buying and selling and taking our pleasure, till,

one day, as we sailed midmost the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, the master, who stood in the ship's side, examining the sea in all directions, cried out with a great cry and bade furl the sail and cast out the anchors. Then he buffeted his face and plucked out his beard and rent his clothes, saying, "Alas!" and "Woe worth the day! O merchants, we are all lost!" So we said to him, "O master, what is to do?" and he replied, "Know, O my brethren, (may God preserve you,) that the wind has gotten the better of us and driven us out of our course into mid-ocean, and fate, for our ill fortune, hath brought us to the Mountain[1] of the Zughb,[2] who are a folk like apes, never fell any among them and came off alive, and my heart misgives me that we are all dead men."

Hardly had he made an end of his speech when the ship was boarded by an innumerable multitude of the islanders, who are the most frightful of wild creatures like apes, foul of favour and little of stature, being but four spans high, yellow-eyed and black-a-viced and covered with black hair like felt; none knoweth their language nor what they are, and they shun the company of men. They swarmed like locusts about the vessel and the shore, and we feared to strike them or drive them away, because of their vast multitude, lest, if we slew one, the rest should fall on us and kill us, for numbers prevail over courage; so we let them do their will, albeit we feared they would plunder our goods and gear. They swarmed up the cables and gnawed them in sunder, and on like wise they did with all the ropes of the ship, so that it fell off from the wind and stranded upon the mountain. Then they laid hands on all the merchants and crew, and landing us on the island, made off with the ship and its cargo we knew not whither.

We abode on the island, eating of its herbs and fruits

[1] *i.e.* mountainous island. [2] *i.e.* hairy folk.

and drinking of its streams, till, one day, we espied in its midst what seemed an inhabited house. So we made for it and found it a strong castle, compassed about with lofty walls and having a gate of ebony, with two leaves, both of which stood open. We entered and found within a spacious courtyard, with many high doors opening upon it, and at the farther end a great stone bench and brasiers, with cooking gear hanging thereby and great plenty of bones thereabout; but we saw no one and marvelled thereat exceedingly. Then we sat down in the courtyard and presently falling asleep, slept from the forenoon till sundown, when we were awakened by a rumbling noise in the air. The earth shook under us and behold, there came down upon us from the top of the castle a huge creature, in the likeness of a man, black of colour and tall of stature, as he were a great palm-tree, with eyes like coals of fire and tusks like boar's tusks and a vast big mouth like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had lips like camel's lips, hanging down upon his breast, and ears like two djerms,[1] falling over his shoulders, and the nails of his hands were like lion's claws.

When we saw this frightful monster, we fell down and became as dead men for excess of fear and terror. He sat awhile on the bench, then, coming to us, took me up in his hand and turned me over and felt me, as a butcher feels a sheep, and I but a little morsel in his hands; but finding me lean and in poor case, for stress of toil and trouble and weariness, let me go and took up another, whom in like manner he turned over and felt and let go; nor did he cease to feel the rest of us, one after another, till he came to the master of the ship. Now he was a stout broad-shouldered fellow, fat and in good case; so he

Night dxlviii.

[1] The well-known large boat, used for the Nile traffic in grain, etc. The comparison is to the bird's-eye view of the djerm, as it appears, coming towards a spectator.

pleased the monster, who seized him, as a butcher seizes a beast, and throwing him down, set his foot on his neck and broke it; after which he fetched a long spit and thrusting it into his fundament, brought it forth of the crown of his head. Then, lighting a great fire, he set over it the spit with the dead man thereon, and turned it over the coals, till the flesh was roasted, when he took the spit off the fire and set it [upright in the ground] before him. Then he tore the body, limb from limb, as one joints a fowl, and rending the flesh with his nails, fell to eating of it and gnawing the bones, till there was nothing left but some bones, which he threw on one side. This done, he lay down on the bench and stretching himself out, fell asleep and snored like the death-rattle of a lamb or a cow, with its throat cut; nor did he awake till morning, when he rose and went out.

As soon as we were certified that he was gone, we began to talk with one another, bemoaning ourselves and saying, "Would God we had been drowned in the sea or that the apes had eaten us! That were better than to be roasted over the coals; by Allah, this is a foul death! But what God wills cometh to pass and there is no power and no virtue save in Him, the Most High, the Supreme! We shall assuredly perish miserably and none will know of us; for there is no escape for us from this place." Then we arose and roamed about the island, so haply we might find a means of flight or a place to hide us in, for indeed death was a light matter to us, so we were not roasted and eaten. However, we could find no hiding-place and the evening overtook us; so, of the excess of our terror, we returned to the Castle and sat down.

Presently, the earth shook under us and the black came up to us and turning us over, felt us, one after another, till he found one to his liking, whom he took and served as he had done the captain, killing and roasting and eating him;

after which he lay down on the bench and slept and snored all night, like a beast with its throat cut, till daybreak, when he arose and went out as before. Then we drew together and said to one another, "By Allah, we were better cast ourselves into the sea and be drowned than be roasted and eaten, for this is a vile death!" "Rather let us cast about to kill him," quoth one of us, "and be at peace from him and rid the Muslims of his barbarity and tyranny." Then said I, "O my brothers, if there is nothing for it but to kill him, let us carry some of this wood and planks down to the sea-shore and make a boat, so, if we succeed in killing him, we may either embark in it and let the waters carry us whither God will, or else abide here till some ship pass, when we will take passage therein. If we win not to kill him, we will embark in the boat and put out to sea; and if we be drowned, we shall at least escape being slaughtered and roasted; whilst, if we escape, we escape, and if we be drowned, we die martyrs." "By Allah," said they all, "this is a good counsel;" and we agreed upon this, and set about carrying it out. So we haled the pieces of wood [that lay about] down to the beach and making a boat, moored it to the strand, after which we stowed therein somewhat of victual and returned to the castle.

No sooner was it dark than the earth shook under us and in came the black upon us, as he were a raging dog. He came up to us and feeling us, one by one, took one of us and killed and roasted and ate him, after which he lay down on the bench and snored like thunder. As soon as we were assured that he slept, we arose and taking two iron spits of those set up there, heated them in the fiercest of the fire, till they were red-hot, when we gripped fast hold of them and going up to the giant, as he lay snoring on the bench, thrust them into his eyes and pressed upon them, all of us, with our might, so that his eyes were put out and he became blind. Thereupon he gave a great cry,

that our hearts trembled thereat, and springing up from the bench, fell a-groping after us, blind-fold. We fled from him right and left and he saw us not, for he was altogether blind; but we were in deadly fear of him and gave ourselves up for lost, despairing of escape. Then he made for the door, feeling for it with his hands, and went out, roaring aloud, so that the earth shook under us, for the noise of his roaring, and we quaked for fear.

We followed him out of the castle and betook ourselves to the place where we had moored our boat, saying to one another, "If this accursed wretch abide absent till the going down of the sun and come not to the castle, we shall know that he is dead; and if he come back, we will embark in the boat and paddle till we escape, committing our affair to God." But, as we spoke, up came the black, with other two as they were ghouls, fouler and more frightful than he, with eyes like red-hot coals; which when we saw, we embarked in haste in the boat and casting off the moorings, pushed out to sea. As soon as the giants caught sight of us, they cried out at us and running down to the sea-shore, fell a-pelting us with rocks, whereof some reached us and other some fell into the sea. We paddled with all our might till we were beyond their reach, but the most part of us were slain by the stone-throwing, and the winds and waves sported with us and carried us into the midst of the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. We knew not whither we went and my fellows died one after another, till there remained but myself and two others on board the boat; for, as often as one died, we threw him into the sea. We were sore exhausted for stress of hunger, but we heartened one another and paddled with our might, till the winds cast us upon an island, as we were dead men for fear and hunger and weariness.

Night dxlviii.

We landed and walked about the island, which abounded

in trees and streams and birds, eating of the fruits and rejoicing in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; and thus we did till nightfall, when we lay down and fell asleep for excess of weariness. After a while, we were aroused by a hissing noise, like the wind, and awaking, saw an enormous serpent making for us, which seized one of my companions and swallowed him at one gulp, down to his shoulders; then it gave another gulp and swallowed the rest of him, and we heard his ribs crack in its belly. Then it went its way, and we abode in sore amazement and grief for our comrade and mortal terror for ourselves, saying, "By Allah, this is a marvellous thing! Each kind of death [that besets us] is more terrible than the last. We were rejoicing in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; but now we have fallen into that which is worse. There is no power and no virtue but in God! By Allah, we have escaped from the black and from drowning; but how shall we escape from this ill-omened serpent?"

Then we walked about the island, eating of its fruits and drinking of its streams, till dusk, when we climbed up into a high tree and went to sleep there, I being on the topmost branch. As soon as it was dark night, up came the serpent, looking right and left, and making for the tree on which we were, climbed up to my comrade and swallowed him down to his shoulders. Then it coiled about the tree with him, whilst I heard his bones crack in its belly, and it swallowed him whole, after which it slid down from the tree. When the day broke, I came down, as I were a dead man for excess of fear and anguish, and thought to cast myself into the sea and be at peace from the world; but could not bring myself to this, for life is dear. So I took five broad and long pieces of wood and bound one cross-wise to the soles of my feet and another over my head and

the others in like fashion on my right and left sides and over my breast and made them fast with ropes, which I twisted of the grass of the island. Then I lay down on the ground on my back, so that I was completely fenced in by the pieces of wood, which enclosed me like a bier.

As soon as it was dark, up came the serpent, as usual, and made towards me, but could not get at me to swallow me, for the wood that fenced me in. So it crawled round me on every side, whilst I looked on, like one dead for excess of terror; and every now and then it would go away and come back; but as often as it tried to come at me, it was hindered by the pieces of wood with which I had bound myself on every side. It ceased not to beset me thus from sundown till sunrise, when it made off, in the utmost rage and disappointment. Then I unbound myself, well-nigh dead for fear and sleeplessness, and went down to the sea-shore, whence I saw a ship afar off in the midst of the waves. So I tore off a great branch of a tree and made signs with it, shouting out the while; which when the ship's company saw, they said to each other, "We must stand in and see what this is; belike it is a man." So they steered for the island and presently heard my cries, whereupon they put out a boat and taking me on board, questioned me of my case. I told them all my adventures, at which they marvelled exceedingly and covered my nakedness with some of their clothes. Moreover, they set before me food and cold fresh water, and I ate and drank my fill and was mightily refreshed, and God gave me new life after I had looked for nothing but death. So I praised the Most High and thanked Him for His exceeding mercies, and my heart revived in me, till meseemed as if all I had suffered were but a dream.

We sailed on with a favouring wind till we came to an island called Es Selahiteh, when the captain cast anchor and the merchants and sailors landed with their goods, to

sell and buy. Then the captain turned to me and said, "Hark ye, thou art a stranger and poor and tellest us that thou hast undergone great hardships; wherefore I have a mind to advantage thee with somewhat that may further thee to thy native land, so thou wilt still pray for me." "So be it," answered I; "thou shalt have my prayers." Quoth he, "Know then that there was with us a man, a traveller, whom we lost, and we know not if he be alive or dead, for we have had no news of him; so I purpose to commit his goods to thy charge, that thou mayst sell them in the island. A part of the proceeds we will give thee for thy pains, and the rest we will keep till we return to Baghdad, where we will enquire for his family and deliver it to them. Dost thou agree to this?" I thanked him for his kindness and accepted his offer with gratitude, whereupon he bade the sailors and porters carry the bales in question ashore and deliver them to me. Quoth the ship's clerk to him, "O master, what bales are these and what merchant's name shall I write upon them?" "Write on them the name of Sindbad," answered the captain, "him who was with us in the ship and whom we lost at such an island; for we mean this stranger to sell them, and we will give him a part of the price for his pains and keep the rest, till we return to Baghdad, where, if we find him, we will pay it to him, and if not, we will make it over to his family." And the clerk said, "It is well and justly thought."

Night dxlix.

When I heard my name, I bethought me that these must be my goods; so I waited till all the merchants had landed and were gathered together, talking and chaffering; then, taking courage, I went up to the captain and said to him, "O my lord, knowest thou what manner of man was this Sindbad, whose goods thou hast committed to me to sell?" "I know nothing of him," answered the captain, "save that he was a man from the city of Baghdad, Sindbad

by name, and that we missed him after touching at such an island and have heard nothing of him since then." At this I gave a great cry and said, "O captain, whom God keep, know that I am that Sindbad and that I was not drowned, but that, landing with the rest of the merchants on the island in question, I sat down in a pleasant place by myself and ate somewhat of food I had with me and enjoyed the freshness of the air, till I became drowsy and fell fast asleep; and when I awoke, I found the ship had sailed without me. These, then, are my goods, and all the merchants that fetch jewels from the Valley of Diamonds know me and will bear me witness of the truth of my story; for I related to them how you forgot me and left me behind and told them all that had befallen me."

When the merchants and crew heard my words, they gathered about me and some of them believed me and others disbelieved; but presently one of the merchants, hearing me mention the Valley of Diamonds, came up and said to them, "Hark ye, good people! When I related to you the most wonderful thing of all that befell me in my travels and told you how, being with other merchants, trying for diamonds in the Valley of Serpents and casting down each our quarter of meat, as of wont, there came up a man hanging to mine,—ye believed me not and gave me the lie. Now this is the very man, by token that he gave me diamonds of great value, whose like are not to be found, requiting me more than would have come up sticking to my quarter of meat; and I carried him with me to Bassora, where he took leave of us and went on to his native city, whilst we returned to our own land. This is he, and God hath sent him hither that the truth of my story may be made manifest to you. Moreover, these are his goods, for, when he first foregathered with us, he told us of them and that his name was Sindbad and how he came to be left on the island; and the truth of his words

is manifest." With this the captain came up to me and considered me straitly awhile, after which he said to me, "What was the mark on thy bales?" "Thus and thus," answered I and reminded him of somewhat that had passed between him and me, when I shipped with him from Bassora. Thereupon he was convinced that I was indeed Sindbad and embraced me and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, my lord, thy case is indeed wonderful and thy story extraordinary, but praised be God who hath brought thee and me together again, and hath restored thee thy goods and thy gear!" Then I disposed of my goods, to the best of my skill, and profited largely on them, whereat I rejoiced exceedingly and congratulated myself on my safety and the recovery of my goods. Night dl.

After this we continued our voyage from island to island, trading everywhere, till we came to the land of Hind,[1] where we bought cloves and ginger and all manner of spices; and thence we fared on to the land of Sind,[2] where also we bought and sold. In the course of this voyage in the Indian seas, I saw wonders without number, amongst others a fish like a cow and others like asses; and I saw also a bird that comes out of a sea-shell and lays eggs and hatches them on the surface of the water, never coming up from the sea to the land. Then we set sail again with a fair wind and after a prosperous voyage, arrived in safety, by the blessing of God the Most High, at Bassora, where I abode a few days and after returned to Baghdad, having gained in this voyage what was beyond count and reckoning. I gave alms and largesse and clad the widow and the orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions and friends and forgot all that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had

[1] Southern India. [2] India west of the Indus.

suffered. This, then is the history of my third voyage, and to-morrow, if it be the will of God, you shall hear that of my fourth voyage, which is still more wonderful than those you have already heard.'

Then he bade give the porter an hundred dinars as of wont and called for food. So they spread the tables and the company supped and went their ways, marvelling at what they had heard. The porter passed the night in his own house and as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its light and shone, he rose and praying the morning prayer, betook himself to Sindbad the Sailor, who received him with an open and cheerful favour and made him sit with him till the rest of his friends arrived, when he caused set on food and they ate and drank and made merry. Then Sindbad the Sailor bespoke them and related to them the story of his fourth voyage, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

THE FOURTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

I had not long been in the enjoyment of ease and repose, after my return from my third voyage, when a company of merchants entered Baghdad and foregathering with me, talked with me of foreign travel and traffic, till my soul yearned to go with them and divert itself with the sight of strange countries, and I longed for the society of the various races of mankind and for traffic and gain. So I resolved to travel with them and providing myself with great store of costly goods, more than ever before, transported them to Bassora, where I took ship with the merchants in question, who were of the chief of the town.

We set out, trusting in the blessing of God the Most High, and sailed, with a favouring breeze, from island to island and sea to sea, till, one day, there arose against us a contrary wind and the captain cast out his anchors and brought the ship to a standstill, fearing lest she should founder in mid-ocean. Then we all fell to prayer and humbling ourselves before God the Most High; but, as we were thus engaged, there smote us a furious squall, which tore the sails to rags; the cable parted and [the ship, capsizing,] cast us all into the sea. I kept myself afloat half the day, till, when I had given myself up for lost, God threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, on which I and some others of the merchants clambered and paddled with our feet in the sea. We abode thus a day and a night, the wind and waves helping us on, till, on the forenoon of the second day, the breeze freshened and the waves rose and cast us upon an island, well-nigh dead for cold and weariness and fear and hunger and thirst and lack of sleep. We walked about the shore and found abundance of herbs and roots, of which we ate and stayed our failing spirits, then lay down and slept till morning. Night dli.

As soon as it was light, we arose and walked about the island, till we came in sight of [what seemed] an inhabited house afar off. So we made towards it, but no sooner had we reached the door thereof, than a number of naked men issued from it and without word said, laid hold of us and carried us to their king, who signed to us to sit. So we sat down and they set food before us, whose like we had never seen in all our lives. My companions ate of it, for stress of hunger, but my stomach revolted from it and I would not eat; and my refraining from it was, by God's favour, the cause of my being alive till now: for no sooner had my comrades tasted of it than their reason fled and their condition changed and they began to eat

like madmen. Then the savages gave them to drink of cocoa-nut oil and anointed them therewith; and no sooner had they drunken thereof, than their eyes turned in their heads and they fell to eating greedily, against their wont. When I saw this, I was confounded and grieved for them, nor was I less concerned for myself, for fear of the savages. So I watched them narrowly, nor was it long before I discovered them to be a tribe of cannibals. All who fell in their way, they brought to their king and fed them upon this food and anointed them with cocoa-nut oil, whereupon their bellies expanded, that they might eat amain, whilst their reason fled and they lost the power of thought and became idiots. Then they stuffed them with cocoa-nut oil and the aforesaid food, till they grew fat and stout, when they slaughtered them and roasted them for their king's eating: but, as for the savages themselves, they ate human flesh raw.

When I was ware of this, I was sore dismayed for myself and my comrades, who were now become so brutalized that they knew not what was done with them and the savages committed them to one,[1] who used every day to lead them out and pasture them on the island like cattle. As for me, I wasted away and became sickly for fear and hunger and my flesh shrivelled on my bones; which when the savages saw, they left me alone and took no thought of me, so that one day I gave them the slip and made for the beach, where I espied a man seated on a high place. I looked at him and knew him for the herdsman, who had charge of my fellows, and with him were great plenty of others like unto them. As soon as he saw me, he knew me to be in possession of my reason and signed to me from afar, as who should say, "Turn back and take the right-hand road, for that will lead thee into the king's highway." So I turned back, as he bade me, and fol-

[1] Apparently not a savage.

lowed the right-hand road, now running for fear and now slackening pace, to rest me, till I was out of his sight. By this time, the sun had gone down and the darkness set in; so I sat down to rest and would have slept, but sleep came not to me that night, for stress of fear and hunger and weariness. When the night was half spent, I rose and walked on, till the day broke and the sun rose over hill and plain. Now I was weary and hungry and thirsty; so I ate my fill of the herbs and roots that grew in the island and stayed my stomach, after which I set out again.

I fared on thus, night and day, seven days and nights, staying my hunger with roots and herbs, till, on the morning of the eighth day, I caught sight of something moving in the distance. So I made for it, though my heart quaked for all I had suffered first and last, and found that it was a company of men gathering pepper. As soon as they saw me, they hastened up to me and surrounding me on all sides, asked me who I was and whence I came. I acquainted them with my case and all the hardships and perils I had suffered and how I had escaped from the savages, whereat they marvelled and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, it is wonderful that thou shouldst have escaped from these blacks, who swarm in the island and devour all who fall in with them, nor is any safe from them." Night dlii.

They made me sit by them, till they had made an end of their work, and brought me good food, of which I ate, for I was hungry, and rested awhile; after which they took ship with me and carrying me to the island where they abode, brought me before their king, who received me kindly and questioned me of my case; whereupon I told him all that had befallen me, from the day of my leaving Baghdad. He wondered greatly at my adventures, he and his courtiers, and made me sit by him; then he called for food and I ate with him and washed my hands

and returned thanks to God the Most High for all His mercies. Then I left the King and walked about the city, which I found rich and populous, abounding in markets well stocked with food and merchandise and full of buyers and sellers. So I gave myself joy of having reached so pleasant a place and took my ease there after my fatigues; and I made friends with the townsfolk, nor was it long before I became better considered and more in favour with them and their King than any of the chief men of the realm.

Now I saw that all the people, great and small, rode handsome thorough-bred horses barebacked and without saddles, at which I wondered and said to the King, "O my lord, why dost thou not ride with a saddle? Therein is ease for the rider and increase of power." "What manner of thing is a saddle?" asked he. "I never saw nor used one in all my life." "With thy permission," rejoined I, "I will make thee a saddle, that thou mayst ride on it and see the comfort thereof." And he said, "Do so." So I asked him for wood, which being brought me, I sought out a skilful carpenter and showed him how to make the saddle-tree, portraying him the fashion thereof in ink on the wood. Then I took wool and carded it and made felt of it and covering the saddle-tree with leather, stuffed it and burnished it and bound on the girth and stirrup-leathers; after which I fetched a blacksmith and described to him the fashion of the stirrups and bridle-bit. So he forged a fine pair of stirrups and a bit, and I filed them smooth and tinned them. Moreover, I made fast to them fringes of silk and fitted bridle-leathers to the bit. Then I fetched one of the best of the royal horses and saddling and bridling him, hung the stirrups to the saddle and led him to the King. The thing took his fancy and he thanked me; then he mounted and rejoiced greatly in the saddle and rewarded me handsomely. When the King's Vizier

saw the saddle, he sought of me the like and I made it for him. Moreover, all the grandees and officers of state sought saddles of me; so I fell to making saddles, with the help of the carpenter and blacksmith, whom I had taught the craft, and selling them to all who sought, till I amassed great wealth and became in high honour and favour with the King and his household and officers.

I abode thus till, one day, as I was sitting with the King, in all honour and contentment, he said to me, "Hark ye, such an one! Thou art become one of us and we hold thee in such honour and affection that we cannot part with thee now nor suffer thee to leave our city; wherefore I have somewhat to require of thee, in which I will not have thee gainsay me." "O King," answered I, "what is it thou desirest of me? Far be it from me to gainsay thee in aught, for I am indebted to thee for many favours and bounties and much kindness, and (praised be God!) I am become as one of thy servants." Quoth he, "I have a mind to marry thee to a rich, handsome and agreeable wife, so thou mayst be domiciled with us; and I will lodge thee with me in my palace; wherefore gainsay me not neither cross me in this." When I heard this, I was abashed and held my peace nor could make him any answer, by reason of my much bashfulness before him. Quoth he, "Why dost thou not answer me, O my son?" And I answered, saying, "O King of the age, it is thine to command." So he summoned the Cadi and the witnesses and married me straightway to a noble lady of surpassing beauty, high descent and great wealth. Then he gave me a great and goodly house, together with slaves and officers, and assigned me stipends and allowances. So I became in all delight and ease and contentment and forgot all that had befallen me of weariness and trouble and hardship; for I loved my wife dearly and she loved me no less, and we were at one and abode in the utmost comfort and

Night dliii.

happiness. And I said in myself, "When I return to my native land, I will carry her with me." But whatever is decreed to a man, needs must it be, and none knoweth what shall befall him.

We lived thus a great while, till God the Most High bereft a neighbour of mine of his wife. Now he was a friend of mine; so I went in to condole with him on his loss and found him in very ill plight, full of trouble and weary of heart and mind. I condoled with him and comforted him, saying, "Mourn not for thy wife; God will surely give thee a better in her stead, and thy life shall be long, so it please the Most High." But he wept sore and replied, "O my friend, how can I marry another wife and how shall God replace her to me with a better than she, seeing that I have but one day left to live?" "O my brother," said I, "return to thy senses and forebode not thine own death, for thou art well and in good health and case." "By thy life, O my friend," rejoined he, "to-morrow thou wilt lose me and wilt never see me again till the Day of Resurrection." "How so?" asked I, and he said, "This very day they bury my wife, and me with her in one tomb; for it is the custom with us, if the wife die first, to bury the husband alive with her, and in like manner the wife, if the husband die first; so that neither may enjoy life after the other." "By Allah," cried I, "this is a most vile custom and not to be endured of any!"

Meanwhile, the most part of the townsfolk came in and fell to condoling with my friend for his wife and himself. Presently, they laid the dead woman out and setting her on a bier, carried her and her husband without the city, till they came to a place in the side of a mountain by the sea, where they raised a great stone and discovered the mouth of a stone-lined pit or well, leading down into a vast underground cavern that ran beneath the mountain.

Into this pit they threw the coffin, then, tying a rope of palm-fibres under the husband's armpits, they let him down into the cavern, and with him a great pitcher of fresh water and seven cakes of bread. When he came to the bottom, he did himself loose from the rope and they drew it up; then, stopping the mouth of the pit with the stone, they returned to the city, leaving my friend in the cavern with his dead wife. When I saw this, I said in myself, "By Allah, this kind of death is more horrible than the first!"[1] And I went in to the King and said to him, "O my lord, why do ye bury the live with the dead?" Quoth he, "It has been our custom, from time immemorial, if the husband die first, to bury his wife with him, and the like with the wife, if her husband die first, so we may not sever them, alive or dead." "O King of the age," asked I, "if the wife of a foreigner like myself die among you, deal ye with him as with yonder man?" "Assuredly," answered he; "we do with him even as thou hast seen." When I heard this, my gall-bladder was like to burst, for the violence of my dismay and concern for myself; my wit became dazed and I went in fear lest my wife should die before me and they bury me alive with her. However, after a while, I comforted myself, saying, "Haply I shall die before her, for none knoweth which shall go first and which follow."

Then I applied myself to diverting my mind from this thought with various occupations; but it was not long before my wife sickened and died, after a few days' illness, and the King and the rest of the folk came to condole with me and her family for her loss. Then they washed her and arraying her in her richest clothes and ornaments, laid her on the bier and carried her to the mountain aforesaid, where they lifted the cover of the pit and cast her in; after which all my friends and acquaintances came round me, to

[1] *i.e.* that (of being eaten by the cannibals) from which he had escaped.

bid me farewell in my lifetime and condole with me for myself, whilst I cried out amongst them, saying, "I am a foreigner and not subject to your custom!" They paid no heed to my words, but laying hold of me, bound me by force and let me down into the cavern, with a pitcher of fair water and seven cakes of bread, as of wont. When I came to the bottom, they called out to me to cast myself loose from the cords, but I refused to do so; so they threw them down on me and closing the mouth of the pit with the stone aforesaid, went their ways.

Night Dlib. I found myself in a vast cavern under the mountain, full of dead bodies, that exhaled a fetid and loathsome smell, and fell to blaming myself for what I had done,[1] saying, "By Allah, I deserve all that hath befallen me! What possessed me to take a wife in this city? There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Surpreme! As often as I say, 'I have escaped from one calamity,' I fall into a worse. By Allah, this a fearful death to die! Would I had been drowned at sea or perished in the mountains! It were better than to die this miserable death!" Then I threw myself down on the bones of the dead and lay there, imploring God's help and in the violence of my despair, invoking death, which came not to me, till hunger well-nigh gnawed me in sunder and thirst consumed me, when I sat up and feeling for the bread, ate a morsel and drank a mouthful of water. After this, I arose and exploring the cavern, found that it extended a long way right and left, with hollow places in its sides; and its floor was strewn with dead bodies and rotten bones, that had lain there from of old time. So I made myself a place in the sides of the cavern, afar from the freshly buried dead, and there slept.

I abode thus a long while, knowing not night from day, eating not till I was well-nigh torn in pieces with hunger,

[1] *i.e.* in undertaking another voyage.

neither drinking till driven thereto by excess of thirst, for fear my victual should fail me before my death; and my bread and water diminished, till I had but a little left, albeit I ate but a morsel every day or two and drank but a mouthful. One day, as I sat thus, pondering my case and bethinking me how I should do, when my store was exhausted, the stone that covered the opening was suddenly raised, and the light streamed down upon me. Quoth I, "I wonder what is to do!" Then I espied folk standing about the mouth of the pit, who presently let down a dead man and a live woman, weeping and bemoaning herself, and with her the usual pittance of bread and water. I saw her, but she saw me not; and they closed up the opening and went away. Then I took the thighbone of a dead man and going up to the woman, smote her on the crown of the head, and she fell down in a swoon. I smote her a second and a third time, till she was dead, when I laid hands on her bread and water and found on her great plenty of jewels and ornaments and rich apparel. I carried the victual to my niche in the side of the cavern and ate and drank of it sparingly, no more than sufficed to keep the life in me, lest it come speedily to an end and I perish of hunger and thirst.

I abode thus a great while, killing all the live folk they let down into the cavern and taking their provision of meat and drink, till, one day, as I slept, I was awakened by something routing among the bodies in a corner of the cave and said, "What can this be?" So I sprang up and seizing the thighbone aforesaid, made for the noise. As soon as the thing was ware of me, it fled from me into the inward of the cavern, and behold, it was a wild beast. However, I followed it to the further end, till I saw afar off a tiny point of light, like a star, now appearing and now disappearing. So I made for it, and as I drew near, it grew larger and brighter, till I was

certified that it was a crevice in the rock, leading to the open country; and I said in myself, "There must be some reason for this opening; either it is the mouth of a second pit, such as that by which they let me down, or else it is a [natural] fissure in the rock." So I bethought me awhile and nearing the light, found that it came from a breach in the sea-wall of the mountain, which the wild beasts had made, that they might enter and feed upon the dead bodies. When I saw this, my spirits revived and hope came back to me and I made sure of life, after having looked for nothing but death. So I went on, as in a dream, and making shift to scramble through the breach, found myself on the slope of a high mountain, overlooking the salt sea and cutting off all access thereto from the island, so that none could come at that part of the beach from the city.

I praised God and thanked Him, rejoicing greatly in the prospect of deliverance; then I returned to the cavern and brought out all the food and water I had saved up and donned some of the dead folk's clothes over my own; after which I gathered together all the collars and necklaces of pearls and jewels and trinkets of gold and silver set with precious stones and other ornaments and valuables I could find upon the corpses, and making them into bales with the grave-clothes and raiment of the dead, carried them out to the sea-shore, where I established myself, purposing to wait there till it should please God the Most High to send me deliverance by means of some passing ship. I visited the cavern daily and as often as I found folk buried alive there, I killed them and took their victual and valuables.

Night 616. Thus I abode awhile till, one day, as I sat on the beach, pondering my case, I caught sight of a ship passing in the midst of the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. So I took a piece of a shroud I had with me and tying it

to a staff, ran along the sea-shore, making signals therewith to the people in the ship, till they espied me and hearing my shouts, sent a boat to fetch me off. When it drew near, the crew called out to me, saying, "Who art thou and how camest thou in this place, where never saw we any in our lives?" I answered that I was a merchant, who had been wrecked and saved myself on one of the planks of the ship, with some of my goods, and that, by the blessing of God and my own strength and skill, I had succeeded after severe toil in landing with my gear in that place, where I waited for some one to pass and take me off. So they took me and the bales I had made of the jewels and valuables from the cavern, tied up in clothes and shrouds, and rowed back with me to the ship, where the captain said to me, "How camest thou to yonder place? All my life I have sailed these seas and passed to and fro by this mountain; yet never saw I here any living thing save wild beasts and birds." I repeated to him the story I had told the sailors, but acquainted him with nothing of that which had befallen me in the city and the cavern, lest there should be any of the islanders in the ship. Then I took out some of the best of the jewels and ornaments and offered them to the captain, saying, "O my lord, thou hast been the means of my delivery; so take this from me in requital of thy good offices." But he refused to accept it, saying, "When we find a shipwrecked man on the sea-shore or on an island, we take him up and feed him, and if he be naked, we clothe him; nor take we aught from him, nay, when we reach a port of safety, we set him ashore with a present of our own money and entreat him kindly and charitably, for the love of God the Most High." So I prayed that his life might be long and rejoiced in my escape, trusting to be delivered from my stress.

Then we pursued our voyage and sailed from island to island and sea to sea, till, by God's grace, we arrived

in safety at Bassora, where I tarried a few days, then went on to Baghdad and foregathered with my friends and family, who rejoiced in my happy return and gave me joy of my safety. I laid up in my storehouses all the goods I had brought with me, and gave alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan. Then I gave myself up to pleasure and enjoyment, returning to my old merry way of life; but, whenever I call to mind my sojourn in the cavern among the dead, I am like to lose my reason. This, then, is the story of my fourth voyage, and to-morrow I will tell you that which befell me in my fifth voyage, which was yet rarer and more wonderful than those which forewent it.'

When Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, he called for supper; so they spread the table and the guests ate the evening meal; after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars as usual, and he and the rest of the company went their ways, glad at heart and marvelling at what they had heard, for that each story was more extraordinary than that which forewent it. The porter passed the night in his own house, in all joy and cheer and wonderment, and next morning, as soon as it was day, he prayed the morning prayer and repaired to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, who welcomed him and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when they ate and drank and made merry and the talk went round amongst them. Presently, their host began the story of the fifth voyage and bespoke them, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

Night dlvi.

THE FIFTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

When I had been awhile on shore and had forgotten all my perils and sufferings, I was again seized with the longing to travel and see foreign countries. So I bought costly merchandise and making it up into bales, repaired to Bassora, where I found in the port a fine tall ship, newly built and fitted ready for sea. She pleased me; so I bought her and embarking my goods in her, hired a master and crew, over whom I set certain of my slaves and servants as inspectors. A number of merchants took passage with me and paid me freight; and we set sail in all joy and cheer, promising ourselves a prosperous voyage and much profit. We sailed from place to place, selling and buying and viewing the countries by which we passed, till one day we came to a great uninhabited island, waste and desolate, whereon was a vast white dome. The merchants landed to examine this dome, leaving me in the ship; and when they drew near, behold, it was a huge roc's egg. They fell a-beating it with stones, knowing not what it was, and presently broke it open, whereupon much water ran out of it and the young roc appeared within. So they pulled it forth of the shell and killed it and took of it great store of meat.

Now I was in the ship and knew not what they did, but presently one of them came up to me and said, "O my lord, come and look at the egg that we thought to be a dome." So I looked and seeing the merchants beating it with stones, called out to them to desist, for that the roc would come and break up our ship and destroy us. But they paid no heed to me and gave not over smiting upon the egg, till presently the day grew dark and the sun was hidden from us, as if some great cloud had passed

between us and it. So we raised our eyes and saw that what we took for a cloud was the roc flying between us and the sun, and it was its wings that darkened the day. When it saw its egg broken, it gave a loud cry, whereupon its mate came flying up and they both began circling about the ship, crying out at us with voices louder than thunder. I called out to the master and the crew to put out to sea and seek safety in flight, before we were all destroyed. So the merchants came on board and we cast off and made haste to gain the open sea. When the rocs saw this, they flew off and we crowded sail on the ship, thinking to get beyond their reach; but presently they reappeared and flew after us, each with a huge rock in its claws, that it had brought from the mountains. As soon as the male bird came up with us, he let fall upon us the rock he held in his talons; but the master steered the ship aside, so that the rock missed her by some small matter and plunged into the sea with such violence, that the ship surged up and sank into the trough of the sea and the bottom of the ocean appeared to us. Then the she-bird let fall her rock, which was smaller than that of her mate, and as fore-ordained fate would have it, it fell on the poop of the ship and crushed it, breaking the rudder into twenty pieces; whereupon the vessel foundered and all on board were cast into the sea.

As for me, I struggled for dear life, till God threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, to which I clung and bestriding it, fell a-paddling with my hands and feet. Now the ship had gone down hard by an island and the winds and waves bore me on, till, by permission of God the Most High, they cast me up on the shore of the island, at the last gasp for toil and distress and hunger and thirst. So I landed, more dead than alive, and throwing myself down on the beach, lay there awhile, till I began to recover myself, when I walked about the island and found

it as it were one of the pleasaunces of Paradise, abounding in trees, laden with ripe fruits, and flowers of all kinds and running streams and birds warbling the praises of Him to whom belong power and eternity. So I ate my fill of the fruits and slaked my thirst with the water of the streams and returned thanks to God the Most High and glorified Him; after which I sat till nightfall, hearing no voice and seeing none. Night dlbii.

Then I lay down, well-nigh dead for travail and affright, and slept without ceasing till morning, when I arose and walked among the trees, till I came to a spring of running water, by which sat an old man of venerable aspect, girt about with a waistcloth made of the leaves of trees. Quoth I to myself, "Belike this old man is of those who were wrecked in the ship and hath made his way to this island." So I went up to him and saluted him, and he returned my greeting by signs, but spoke not; and I said to him, "O old man, what ails thee to sit here?" He shook his head and moaned and signed to me, as who should say, "Take me on thy back and carry me to the other side of the stream." And I said in myself, "I will deal kindly with him and do what he desires; it may be God will reward me." So I took him on my shoulders and carrying him to the place to which he pointed, said to him, "Dismount at thy leisure." But he would not get off my back and wound his legs about my neck. I looked at them and seeing that they were like a buffalo's hide for blackness and roughness, was affrighted and would have cast him off; but he clung to me and gripped my neck with his legs, till I was well-nigh choked; the world grew black in my sight and I fell to the ground, senseless. But he [still kept his seat and] beat me with his feet on the back and shoulders, till he enforced me rise, for excess of pain. Then he signed to me with his head to carry him hither and thither among the trees, to the best of the

fruits; and if I refused to do his bidding or loitered, he beat me with his feet more grievously than if I had been beaten with whips. So I carried him about the island, like a captive slave, and he used to do his occasions on my back, dismounting not day nor night; but, when he wished to sleep, he wound his legs about my neck and lay down and slept awhile, then arose and beat me, whereupon I sprang up in haste, unable to gainsay him, because of the pain he inflicted on me. And indeed I repented me of having taken compassion on him and said in myself, "I did him a kindness and it hath turned to my hurt; by Allah, never more will I do any a service so long as I live!"

I abode thus a long while in the utmost wretchedness, hourly beseeching God the Most High that I might die, for stress of weariness and misery, till one day I came to a place wherein was abundance of gourds, many of them dry. So I took a great dry gourd and cutting open the neck, scooped out the inside and cleaned it; after which I gathered grapes from a vine that grew hard by and squeezed them into the gourd, till it was full of the juice. Then I stopped up the mouth and set it in the sun, where I left it for some days, till it became strong wine; and every day I used to drink of it, to comfort and sustain me under my fatigues with that froward devil, and as often as I drank, I forgot my troubles and took new heart.

One day, he saw me drinking and signed to me as who should say, "What is that?" Quoth I, "It is an excellent cordial, that cheers the heart and revives the spirits." Then, being heated with wine, I ran and danced with him among the trees, clapping my hands and singing and making merry. When he saw this, he signed to me to give him the gourd, that he might drink, and I feared him and gave it him. So he took it and draining it, cast it on the ground, whereupon he grew merry and began to jig to

and fro on my shoulders; but presently the fumes of the wine rising to his head, he became helplessly drunk and his every limb relaxed and he swayed to and fro on my back. When I saw that he had lost his senses for drunkenness, I put my hand to his legs and loosing them from my neck, stooped down and threw him to the ground, hardly crediting my deliverance from him and fearing lest he should shake off his drunkenness and do me a mischief. So I took up a great stone from among the trees and smote him therewith on the head with all my might and crushed in his skull and killed him, may God have no mercy on him!

Night dlviii.

Then I returned, with a heart at ease, to my former station on the sea-shore and abode in the island many days, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and keeping a look out for passing ships; till, one day, as I sat on the beach, recalling all that had befallen me and saying, "I wonder if God will save me alive and restore me to my country and my friends!" I suddenly caught sight of a ship making for the island. Presently, it cast anchor and the passengers landed. So I made for them, and when they saw me, they hastened up to me and questioned me of my case and how I came thither. I told them all that had befallen me, whereat they marvelled exceedingly and said, "He who rode on thy shoulders is called the Old Man of the Sea, and none ever fell into his clutches and came off alive but thou; so praised be God for thy safety!" Then they set food before me, of which I ate my fill, and gave me somewhat of clothes wherewith I clad myself and covered my nakedness; after which they took me up into the ship, and we sailed days and nights, till fate brought us to a place called the City of Apes, builded with lofty houses, all of which gave upon the sea. Now every night, as soon as it is dusk, the dwellers in this city use to come forth of the seaward doors of their houses and putting out to

sea in boats and ships, pass the night thus in their fear lest the apes should come down on them from the mountains.

I landed to visit the city, but meanwhile the ship set sail without me and I repented of having gone ashore, and calling to mind my companions and what had befallen me with the apes, first and last, sat down and fell a-weeping and lamenting. Presently one of the townsfolk accosted me and said to me, "O my lord, meseems thou art a stranger to these parts?" "Yes," answered I, "I am indeed an unfortunate stranger, who came hither in a ship that cast anchor here, and I landed to visit the town; but when I would have gone on board again, I found they had sailed without me." "Come," said he, "and embark with us, for, if thou lie the night in the city, the apes will destroy thee." "I hear and obey," replied I and rising, straightway embarked with him in one of the boats, whereupon they put out to sea and anchoring a mile from the land, passed the night there. At daybreak, they rowed back to the city and landing, went each about his business. Thus they did every night, for if any tarried in the town by night, the apes came down on him and killed him. As soon as it was day, the apes left the place and ate of the fruits of the gardens, then went back to the mountains and slept there till nightfall, when they again came down upon the city.

Now this place was in the farthest part of the country of the blacks, and one of the strangest things that befell me during my sojourn there was on this wise. One of those, in whose company I passed the night in the boat, said to me, "O my lord, thou art a stranger in these parts; hast thou any craft at which thou canst work?" "By Allah, O my brother," replied I, "I have no trade nor know I any handicraft, for I was a merchant and a man of substance and had a ship of my own, laden with great store of goods and merchandise; but it foundered at sea and all were drowned but I, who saved myself on a piece of plank, that

God vouchsafed me of His favour." With this, he fetched me a cotton bag and giving it to me, said, "Take this bag and fill it with pebbles from the beach and go forth with a company of the townsfolk, to whom I will commend thee. Do as they do and haply thou shalt gain what may further thy return to thy native land." Then he carried me to the beach, where I filled my bag with small pebbles, and presently we saw a company of folk issue from the town, each bearing a bag like mine, filled with pebbles. To these he committed me, commending me to their care and saying, "Take this man with you, for he is a stranger, and teach him how to gather, that he may get his living, and God will reward you." "We hear and obey," answered they and bidding me welcome, fared on with me till we came to a spacious valley, full of lofty trees, that none might climb.

Now in this valley were many apes, which fled at sight of us and climbed up into the trees; whereupon my companions began to pelt them with the stones they had in their bags, and the apes fell to plucking of the fruit of the trees and casting them at the folk. I looked at the fruits they cast at us and found them to be cocoa-nuts; so I chose out a great tree, full of apes, and going up to it, began to pelt them with stones, and they in return pelted me with nuts, which I collected, as did the rest; so that by the time I had made an end of my bagful of pebbles, I had gotten great plenty of nuts; and as soon as my companions had in like manner gotten as many nuts as they could carry, we returned to the city, where we arrived before the end of the day. Then I went in to the man who had brought me in company with the nut-gatherers and gave him all I had gotten, thanking him for his kindness; but he would not accept them and gave me the key of a closet in his house, saying, "Choose out the worst of the nuts and sell them and provide thyself with the price and

lay up the rest here. And go thou forth every day and gather nuts, as thou hast done to-day, and lay up the rest here, so haply thou mayst collect enough to serve thee for thy return home." "God requite thee!" answered I and did as he counselled me, going out daily with the cocoa-nut gatherers, who commended me to each other and showed me the best-stocked trees.

Thus did I for some time, till I had laid up great store of excellent nuts, besides a large sum of money, the price of those I had sold. I became thus at my ease and bought all I saw and had a mind to and passed my time pleasantly, till, one day, as I stood on the beach, a great ship cast anchor before the city and landed a company of merchants, who proceeded to sell and buy and trade for cocoa-nuts and other commodities. Then I went to my friend and told him of the coming of the ship and how I had a mind to return to my own country; and he said, "It is thine to decide." So I thanked him for his bounties and took leave of him; then, going to the captain of the ship, I agreed with him for my passage and embarked my cocoa-nuts and what else I possessed. We weighed anchor the same day and sailed from place to place; and wherever we stopped, I sold and traded with my cocoa-nuts, and God requited me more than I had lost. Amongst other places, we came to an island abounding in cloves and cinnamon and pepper, and the country people told me that by the side of each pepper-pod grows a great leaf that shades it [from the sun] and casts the water off it in the rainy season; but, when the rain ceases, the leaf turns over and falls down by the side of the pod. Here I took in great store of pepper and cloves and cinnamon, in exchange for cocoa-nuts, and we passed thence to the island of El Usrat, whence comes the Comorin aloes, and thence to another island, five days' journey in length, where grows the Chinese aloes, which

Night dlix.

is better than the Comorin; but the people of the latter island are fouler of case and religion than those of the former, for that they love lewdness and wine-bibbing and know not prayer nor the call to prayer. Thence we came to the island of the pearl-fisheries, and I gave the divers some of my cocoa-nuts and bade them dive on my account and for my luck. They did so and brought up great plenty of large and fine pearls; and they said to me, "By Allah, O my master, thy luck is happy!" Then we sailed on, with the blessing of God the Most High, and arrived safely at Bassora. There I abode a little and then went on to Baghdad, where I foregathered with my friends and family, who gave me joy of my safe return, and laid up all my goods in my storehouses. Then I gave alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan and made presents to my friends and relations; after which I returned to my old merry way of life and forgot all I had suffered in the great profit and gain I had made, for God had requited me fourfold that I had lost. This, then, is the history of my fifth voyage, and now to supper; and to-morrow, come and I will tell you what befell me in my sixth voyage; for it was still more wonderful than this.'

Then he called for food; and the servants spread the table, and they ate the evening-meal, after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars and he returned home, marvelling at all he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was light, he prayed the morning prayer, and betaking himself to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, bade him good-morrow. The merchant made him sit and talked with him, till the rest of the guests arrived. Then the servants spread the table and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry, Sindbad the Sailor began the story of his sixth voyage as follows, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

THE SIXTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

I abode some time, after my return from my fifth voyage, in great joy and comfort, and forgot what I had suffered, till, one day, as I sat making merry and enjoying myself with my friends, there came in to me a company of merchants, bearing signs of travel, and talked with me of travel and adventure and greatness of gain and profit. Their sight recalled to my mind the days of my return from travel, and my joy at once more seeing my native land and foregathering with my friends and relations; and my soul yearned for travel and traffic. So I resolved to undertake another voyage, and buying me rich merchandise, made it up into bales, with which I journeyed from Baghdad to Bassora. Here I found a great ship ready for sea and full of merchants and notables, who had with them goods of price; so I joined myself to them and took passage in the vessel with my goods.

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We left Bassora with a fair wind and sailed from place to place, in all delight and solace of life, buying and selling and profiting and diverting ourselves with the sight of foreign countries, till one day, as we went along, the captain suddenly gave a great cry and cast his turban on the deck. Then he buffeted his face and plucked out his beard and fell down in the waist of the ship, for stress of grief and chagrin. So all the merchants and sailors came about him and asked him what was to do, and he answered, saying, "Know, O folk, that we have wandered from our course and come into a sea whose ways I know not. Yonder is a great mountain, upon which we are drifting, and unless God vouchsafe us a means of escape, we are all dead men; wherefore pray ye to the Most High, that He deliver us from this strait."

Then he climbed the mast and would have loosed the sails; but the wind redoubled upon the ship and drove her backward; whereupon her rudder broke and she turned round three times and fell off towards the mountain. With this the captain came down from the mast, saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme, nor can we avert that which is decreed! By Allah, we are fallen on sure destruction, and there is no way of escape for us!"

Then we all gave ourselves up for lost and fell a-weeping over ourselves and bidding each other farewell. Presently the ship struck upon the mountain and broke up, and all on board her were plunged into the sea. Some were drowned and others made shift to get upon the mountain. I was amongst these latter, and when we got ashore, we found a great island, compassed about with a ring of mountains, whose base was strewn with wrecked ships and goods and gear in countless profusion, cast up by the sea. So we climbed the cliffs into the inward of the island, and my companions, dispersing hither and thither therein, were confounded at what they saw and became as madmen at sight of the countless riches with which its shores were strewn. As for me, I walked on inland, till I came to a stream of sweet water, that welled up at the foot of the mountains and disappeared in the earth under the range of hills on the opposite side. I looked into the bed of this stream and saw therein great plenty of rubies and great royal pearls and all kinds of jewels and precious stones, so that all the channel glittered by reason of their multitude, and they were as gravel in the bed of the rivulets that ran through the fields.

Moreover we found in the island abundance of the finest aloes-wood, both Chinese and Comorin; and there also is a spring of crude ambergris, which exudes over the sides, as it were gum, for the great heat of the sun, and runs

down to the sea-shore, where the monsters of the deep come up and swallowing it, return into the sea. But it burns in their bellies; so they cast it up again and it rises to the top of the water, where it congeals and its colour and qualities are changed. By-and-by, the waves cast it ashore and the ambergris-gatherers collect and sell it. The rest of the ambergris congeals on the banks of the stream and when the sun shines on it, it melts and scents the whole valley with a musk-like fragrance: then, when the sun ceases from it, it congeals again. But none can get to this place where is the crude ambergris, because of the mountains aforesaid, which enclose the island on all sides and on which all ships that approach it are wrecked.

We continued thus to explore the island, marvelling at the riches we found there and the wonderful works of God, but sore troubled and dismayed for our own case. Now we had picked up on the beach some small matter of victual from the wreck and husbanded it carefully, eating but once every day or two, in our fear lest it should fail us and we perish miserably of hunger and thirst. Moreover, we were weak for sea-sickness and my companions died one after another, till there were but a few of us left. Each that died we washed and shrouded in some of the clothes and linen cast ashore by the waves; and after a little, the rest of my fellows died, one by one, till I had buried the last of the party and abode alone on the island, with but a little victual left. And I wept over myself, saying, "Would God I had died before my companions and they had washed me and buried me! It had been better than that I should die and none wash me and shroud me and bury me. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" After awhile I arose and dug me a deep grave on the sea-shore, saying in myself, "When I grow weak and know that

Night dlxi.

death cometh to me, I will lay me down in this grave and die there, so the wind may drift the sand over me and cover me and I be buried therein." Then I fell to reproaching myself for my little wit in leaving my native land and betaking me again to foreign travel, after all I had suffered during my first five voyages, each marked by greater perils and more terrible hardships than its forerunner, especially as I had no need of money, seeing that I had enough and more than enough and could not spend what I had, no, nor half of it, in all my life; and I repented me of my folly, having no hope of escape from my present stress, and bemoaned myself.

However, after a while, I bethought me and said to myself, "By Allah, this stream must have an issue somewhere, and belike its course leads to some inhabited place; so methinks I cannot do better than make me a little boat, big enough to sit in, and carry it down and launching it on the river, embark in it and commit myself to the current. If I escape, I escape, by God's leave; and if I perish, better die in the river than here." So I gathered a number of pieces of aloes-wood and bound them together with ropes from the wreckage; then I chose out from the broken-up ships straight planks of even size and fixed them firmly upon the aloes-wood. On this wise, I made me a boat [or raft] a little narrower than the channel of the stream, and tying a piece of wood on its either side, to serve as an oar, launched it on the river. Then I loaded it with the best of the crude ambergris and pearls and jewels and of the wrecked goods and what was left me of victual, and embarking, did according to the saying of the poet:

Depart from a place, if therein be oppression, And leave the house tell of its builder's fate;
Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it, Life for life never, early or late.

And fret not thy soul for the buffets of fortune: Each stress hath its term
and its fore-ordained date.
He whose death in one land is decreed, in none other His life shall have
end than in that fixed by Fate.

I drifted with the stream, pondering the issue of my affair, till I came to the place where it disappeared beneath the mountains, and the current carried the raft with it into the underground channel. Here I found myself in utter darkness and the stream bore me on through a narrow tunnel, which grew straiter and straiter, till the raft touched either side and my head rubbed against the roof. Then I blamed myself for having undertaken this adventure and said, "If this tunnel grow any straiter, the raft will not pass, and I cannot turn back; so I shall inevitably perish miserably in this place." And I threw myself down on my face on the raft, by reason of the straitness of the channel, whilst the stream ceased not to carry me along the tunnel, which now grew wider and now straiter. I fared on thus, knowing not night from day, for the excess of the darkness that encompassed me and my fear and concern for myself lest I should perish, till, being sore aweary for the intensity of the gloom and worn with hunger and watching, I fell asleep, as I lay on the raft on my face. How long I slept I know not, but, when I awoke, I found myself in the open air and the raft moored to an island in the midst of a number of Indians and blacks.

As soon as the folk saw that I was awake, they came up to me and bespoke me in their language; but I understood not what they said and thought I must be still asleep and that this was a dream that had betided me for stress of trouble and weariness. When they saw I understood them not and made them no answer, one of them came forward and said to me in Arabic, "Peace be on thee, O my brother! Who art thou and what brings thee hither?

How camest thou into this river and what manner of land is beyond yonder mountains, for never knew we any make his way thence to us?" Quoth I, "Who are ye and what is this place?" "O my brother," answered he, "we are husbandmen and gardeners, who came out to water our fields and gardens and finding thee asleep on this raft, laid hold of it and made it fast by us, against thou shouldst awake at thy leisure. So tell us how thou camest hither?" "For God's sake, O my lord," rejoined I, "give me to eat, for I am starving; and after ask me what thou wilt." So he hastened to fetch me food and I ate my fill, till I was refreshed and my life returned to me. Then I returned thanks to God the Most High, rejoicing in the happy issue of my toils, and told them all my adventures from first to last. Night dlxii.

When I had made an end of my story, they consulted among themselves and said to each other, "We must carry him with us and present him to our King, that he may acquaint him with his adventures." So they took me, together with the raft and its lading, and brought me to their King, telling him what had happened; whereupon he saluted me and bade me welcome. Then he questioned me of my condition and adventures, and I repeated to him my story, at which he marvelled exceedingly and gave me joy of my deliverance; after which I fetched from the raft great store of jewels and precious stones and ambergris and aloes-wood and presented them to the King, who accepted them and entreated me with the utmost honour, appointing me a lodging in his own palace. So I consorted with the chief of the islanders, and they paid me the utmost respect. Moreover, all the travellers and merchants who came to the place questioned me of the affairs of my native land and of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and his rule there and I told them of him and of that for which he was renowned, and they praised him for this; whilst

I in turn questioned them of the manners and customs of their own countries. One day, the King himself questioned me of the manners and way of government of my country, and I acquainted him with the fashion of the Khalif's sway in the city of Baghdad and the justice of his rule. The King marvelled at my account of his ordinances and said, "By Allah, the Khalif's ordinances are indeed wise and his fashions praiseworthy and thou hast made me love him by what thou tellest me; wherefore I have a mind to send him a present by thee." "I hear and obey, O my lord," answered I; "I will carry thy present to him and inform him that thou art his sincere lover."

Then I abode with the King in great honour and ease and consideration, till, one day, as I sat in his palace, I heard tell of a company of merchants, that were fitting out a ship for Bassora, and said in myself, "I cannot do better than make the voyage with these." So I rose at once and going in to the King, kissed his hand and acquainted him with my wish to set out with the merchants, for that I longed after my people and family and native land. Quoth he, "Thou art thine own master; yet, if it be thy will to abide with us, on our head and eyes be it, for thou gladdenest us with thy company." "O my lord," answered I, "thou hast indeed overwhelmed me with thy favours; but I weary for a sight of my friends and family and native land." When he heard this, he summoned the merchants in question and commended me to their care, paying my freight and passage-money. Moreover, he bestowed on me great riches from his treasuries and committed to my charge a magnificent present for the Khalif Haroun er Reshid.

Then I took leave of him and of all my intimates and acquaintances in the island and embarked with the merchants aforesaid. We set sail with a fair wind, committing ourselves to the care of God (may He be exalted and

glorified!), and by His permission in due time arrived, after a prosperous voyage, at Bassora, where I passed a few days, equipping myself and packing up my goods. Then I went on to Baghdad, where I sought an audience of the Khalif and laid the King's presents before him. He asked me whence they came and I said to him, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I know not the name of the city nor the way thither!" And I related to him all that had befallen me in my last voyage; at which he wondered exceedingly and bade his scribes record my story and lay it up in his treasuries, for the edification of all who saw it. Then he conferred on me exceeding great favours, and I repaired to my house, where I stored up all my goods and possessions. Presently, my friends came to me and I distributed presents among my family and gave alms and largesse; after which I gave myself up to pleasure and merry-making and forgot all that I had suffered. This, then, O my brothers, is what befell me in my sixth voyage, and to-morrow, if it please God the Most High, I will tell you the story of my seventh and last voyage, which is still more wonderful and extraordinary than that of the first six.'

Then he bade lay the table, and the company ate the evening meal with him; after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars, as of wont, and they all went their ways, marvelling beyond measure at that which they had heard. Next morning, as soon as he had done his devotions, the porter and the rest of the guests betook themselves to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, and when they were all assembled, the host began the story of his seventh voyage, saying, 'Know, O company, that

Night dlxiii.

THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

After my return from my sixth voyage, in which I made abundant profit, I abode some time in all possible ease and delight, feasting and making merry day and night, till I began once more to long to sail the seas and see foreign countries and company with merchants and hear new things. So I packed up a quantity of precious stuffs into bales and repaired with them to Bassora, where I found a ship ready for sea, and in her a company of considerable merchants. I shipped with them and we set forth on our venture, in health and safety, and sailed with a fair wind, till we came to a city called Medinet-es-Sin; but, [awhile after we had left this place,] as we fared on in all cheer and confidence, devising of traffic and travel, there sprang up a violent head wind and a tempest of rain fell on us and drenched us and our goods. So we covered the bales with drugget and canvas, lest they should be spoiled by the rain, and betook ourselves to prayer and supplication to God the Most High, for deliverance from the peril that was upon us. But the captain arose and girding his middle, tucked up his skirts and climbed to the mast-head, whence he looked out right and left and fell a-buffeting his face and plucking out his beard. So we asked him what was to do, and he replied, saying, "Seek ye deliverance of God the Most High from this our strait and bemoan yourselves and take leave of each other; for know that the wind hath gotten the mastery of us and hath driven us into the uttermost of the seas of the world." Then he came down from the mast-head and opening his chest, pulled out a bag of cotton, from which he took a powder like ashes. This he wetted with water and after waiting awhile, smelt it;

then he took out of the chest a little book, in which he read awhile and said to us, "Know that in this book is a marvellous saying, denoting that whoso cometh hither shall surely perish, without hope of escape; for that this part of the world is called the Clime of Kings, in which is the sepulchre of our lord Solomon, son of David, (on whom be peace!) and therein are serpents of vast bulk and fearsome aspect: and what ship soever cometh to these parts, there riseth to her a great fish out of the sea and swalloweth her up with all on board."

Great was our wonder at the captain's speech, but hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the ship was suddenly lifted out of the water and let fall again and we heard a terrible great cry like the hurtling thunder, whereat we were smitten with terror and became as dead men, giving ourselves up for lost. Then there came up to us a huge fish, as big as a great mountain, at whose sight we became wild for terror and made ready for death, marvelling at its vast size and gruesome aspect; when lo, a second fish made its appearance, bigger than the first. So we bemoaned ourselves and bade each other farewell; but, at that moment, up came a third fish bigger than the two first, whereupon we lost the power of thought and reason and were stupefied for the excess of our fear. Then the three fish began circling about the ship and the biggest opened its mouth to swallow it, and we looked into its mouth and behold, it was wider than the gate of a city. So we besought God the most High and called for succour upon His Apostle (on whom be blessing and peace!) when, suddenly, a violent squall of wind arose and smote the ship, which rose out of the water and settled upon a great reef, where it broke up and fell asunder and all on board were plunged into the sea. As for me, I tore off all my clothes but my shirt and swam, till I fell in with a plank, to which I clung and bestrode it, in the most piteous

plight for fear and distress and hunger and thirst, whilst the winds and the waters sported with me and the waves carried me up and down.

Then I reproached myself for my folly in quitting my hardly earned repose to follow new ventures and said to myself, "O Sindbad, every time [thou undertakest a voyage,] thou sufferest hardships and weariness; yet wilt thou not renounce sea-travel; or, an thou say, 'I renounce,' thou liest in thy renouncement. Endure then [with patience] that which thou sufferest, for indeed thou deservest all that betideth thee. Verily, all this is decreed to me of God the Most High, to turn me from my covetousness, whence arises all that I endure, for I have wealth galore." Then I returned to my senses and said, "Verily, this time I repent to God the Most High, with a sincere repentance, of my lust for gain and venture and will never again name travel with my tongue nor in my thought." And I ceased not to humble myself to God the Most High and weep and bewail myself, recalling my former estate of happiness and cheer, and thus I abode two days, at the end of which time I came to a great island,[1] abounding in trees and streams.

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I landed and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters, till I was refreshed and restored and my strength returned to me. Then I walked about, till I came to a great river of sweet water, running with a strong current; whereupon I called to mind the raft I had made aforetime and said to myself, "Needs must I make me another raft [and commit myself to the current;] haply I may win out of this strait. If I escape, I have my desire and I vow to God the Most High to forswear travel; and if I perish, I shall be at peace from toil and misery."

So I gathered together great store of pieces of wood from the trees, (which were all of the finest sandal-wood, though I knew it not,) and made shift to twist grasses and

[1] or peninsula.

creepers into a kind of rope, with which I bound the wood together and so contrived a raft. Then I embarked thereon and committed myself to the current, saying, "If I be saved, it is of God's grace;" and it bore me on three days, whilst I lay on the raft, eating not and drinking, when I was athirst, of the water of the stream, till I was giddy and weak as a new-fledged bird, for stress of fear and hunger and fatigue.

At the end of this time, I came to a high mountain, under which ran the river; which when I saw, I was afraid, by reason of the straitness I had suffered in my former underground journey, and I would fain have stayed the raft and landed in that place; but the current overpowered me and drew it into the subterranean passage; whereupon I gave myself up for lost and said, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" However, after a little, the raft shot out of the tunnel into the open air and I saw beneath me a wide valley, into which the river fell with a noise like thunder and a swiftness as of the wind. The torrent bore me along the valley, holding on to the raft, for fear of falling, whilst the waves tossed me right and left, nor could I avail to stop the raft nor turn it to the shore, till I came to a great and goodly city, wherein was much people.

When the townsfolk saw me on the raft, falling down with the current, they threw out a net and ropes upon the raft and grappling to it, drew it ashore with me, whereupon I fell down amidst them, as I were a dead man for stress of fear and hunger and lack of sleep. After a while, there came up to me an old man of reverend aspect, well stricken in years, who welcomed me and threw over me abundance of handsome clothes, wherewith I covered my nakedness. Then he carried me to the bath and brought me cordial drinks and delicious perfumes. When I came out, he bore me to his house, where his people made

much of me, and stablishing me in a pleasant place, set rich food before me, of which I ate my fill and returned thanks to God the Most High for my deliverance. Then his pages brought me hot water, and I washed my hands, and his handmaids brought me silken napkins, with which I dried them and wiped my mouth. Moreover, he assigned me an apartment in his house and charged his pages and women to wait upon me and do my will. So they were assiduous in my service, and I abode with him in the guest-chamber three days, taking my ease of good eating and drinking and sweet scents, till I recovered from my fatigues and life and strength returned to me.

On the fourth day, my host came in to me and said, "Thou cheerest us with thy company, O my son, and praised be God for thy safety! But wilt thou now come down with me to the bazaar and sell thy goods? Belike with their price thou mayst buy thee wherewithal to traffic." When I heard this, I was silent awhile for amazement and said in myself, "What mean these words and what goods have I?" Then said he, "O my son, be not troubled nor careful, but come with me, and if any offer thee what contenteth thee for thy goods, take it; but, if not, I will lay them up for thee in my storehouses, against a fitting occasion." So I bethought me and said to myself, "Let us do his bidding and see what are these goods of which he speaks." And I said to him, "O my old uncle, I hear and obey; I may not gainsay thee in aught, for God's blessing is on that which thou dost."

So he carried me to the market, where I found that he had taken the raft in pieces and delivered the sandal-wood of which it was made to the broker, to cry for sale. Night dlxv. Then the merchants came and bid for the wood, till its price reached a thousand dinars, when they left bidding and my host said to me, "O my son, this is the current price of thy goods: wilt thou sell them for this or shall

I lay them up for thee in my storehouses, till the price rise?" "O my lord," answered I, "I leave it to thee: do as thou wilt." Then said he, "Wilt thou sell the wood to me for a hundred dinars over and above what the merchants have bidden for it?" And I replied, "I will well." So he bade his servants transport it to his storehouses and carrying me back to his house, counted out to me the purchase money; after which he laid it in bags and setting them in a privy place, locked them up with an iron padlock and gave me the key.

Some days after this, my host said to me, "O my son, I have somewhat to propose to thee, wherein I trust thou wilt do my bidding." Quoth I, "What is it?" And he said, "I am a very old man and have no child but one daughter, who is young and comely and endowed with abounding wealth and beauty. Now I have a mind to marry her to thee, that thou mayst abide with her in this our country, and I will make thee master of all that I possess, for I am an old man and thou shalt stand in my stead." I was silent and made him no answer, whereupon, "O my son," continued he, "do my desire in this, for I wish but thy good; and if thou wilt but do as I say, thou shalt be as my son and all that is under my hand shall be thine. If thou have a mind to traffic and travel to thy native land, none shall hinder thee; so do as thou wilt." "By Allah, O my uncle," replied I, "thou art become to me even as my father, and I am a stranger and have undergone many hardships; nor, for stress of that which I have suffered, is aught of judgment or knowledge left to me. It is for thee, therefore, to decide." With this, he sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter in great state. When I went in to her, I found her a perfect beauty, well shapen and graceful, clad in rich raiment and covered with a profusion of trinkets and necklaces and other ornaments of gold

and silver and precious stones, worth millions of money. She pleased me and we loved one another; and I abode with her in all delight and solace of life, till her father was taken to the mercy of God the Most High. So we washed him and buried him, and I laid hands on all his property. Moreover, the merchants instated me in his office, for he was their chief and none of them bought aught but with his knowledge and by his leave.

When I became acquainted with the townsfolk, I found that at the beginning of each month they underwent a transformation, in that their faces changed and they became like unto birds and put forth wings, wherewith they flew away out of sight and none abode in the city save the women and children; and I said in myself, "When the first day of the month comes, I will ask one of them to carry me with them, whither they go." So, when the time came, I went in to one of the townsfolk and begged him to carry me with him, that I might divert myself with the rest and return with them. "This may not be," answered he; but I importuned him, till he consented. Then I went out with him, without telling any of my family or servants or friends, and he took me on his back and flew up with me so high into the air, that I heard the angels glorying God in the pavilion of the heavens, whereat I wondered and exclaimed, "Praised be God! Extolled be His perfection!"

Hardly had I made an end of speaking, when there came out a fire from heaven and all but consumed the company; whereupon they all fled from it and descended and casting me down on a high mountain, went away, exceeding wroth with me, and left me there alone. When I found myself in this plight, I repented of what I had done and reproached myself for having undertaken that for which I was unable, saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! No sooner

am I delivered from one affliction than I fall into a worse." Presently, as I sat, knowing not whither I should go, there came up two young men, as they were moons, each staying his steps with a rod of red gold. So I went up to them and saluted them. They returned my greeting and I conjured them by Allah to tell me who and what they were. Quoth they, "We are devout servants of the Most High God, abiding in this mountain," and giving me a rod of gold after the likeness of those they had with them, went their ways and left me.

I walked on along the mountain-top, leaning on the staff and pondering the case of the two youths, till I saw a serpent come forth from under the mountain, with a man in her jaws, whom she had swallowed even to the navel, and he was crying out and saying, "Whoso delivereth me from this serpent, God will deliver him from every strait!" So I went up to the serpent and smote her on the head with the staff, whereupon she cast the man forth of her mouth. Then I smote her a second time, and she turned and fled; whereupon he came up to me and said, "Since my deliverance from yonder serpent hath been at thy hands, I will never leave thee, and thou shalt be my comrade on this mountain." "With all my heart," answered I, and we fared on along the mountain, till we fell in with a company of folk, and I looked and saw amongst them the very man who had cast me down there. So I went up to him and spoke him fair, excusing myself to him and saying, "O my friend, it is not thus that brethren should deal with brethren." Quoth he, "It was thou who [well-nigh] destroyed us by glorifying God on my back." "Excuse me," answered I; "for I had no knowledge of this; but if thou wilt take me with thee, I swear not to say a word." So he relented and consented to carry me with him, on condition that, so long as I abode on his back, I should abstain from pronouncing

the name of God or glorifying Him. Then I gave the wand of gold to him whom I had delivered from the serpent and bade him farewell, and my friend took me on his back and flew with me as before, till he brought me to the city and set me down in my own house.

My wife came to meet me and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "Henceforth beware of going forth with yonder folk, neither consort with them, for they are brethren of the devils, and know not the name of God the Most High, neither worship Him." "And how did thy father with them?" asked I. "My father," answered she, "was not of them, neither did he as they; and now he is dead, methinks thou wouldst do well to sell all we have and with the price buy merchandise and return to thine own country and people, and I with thee; for I care not to tarry here, since my father and mother are dead." So I sold all my late father-in-law's property, piecemeal, and looked for one who should be journeying thence [to Bassora,] that I might join myself to him.

Presently, I heard of a company of the townsfolk who had a mind to make the voyage, but could not find a ship; so they bought wood and built them a great ship, in which I took passage with them and paid them the hire. Then we embarked, my wife and I, with all our moveables, leaving our lands and houses and so forth, and set sail, with a favouring wind, for Bassora, where we arrived in due course, after a prosperous voyage. I made no stay there, but freighted another vessel and set out forthright for Baghdad, where I arrived in safety and repairing to my house, foregathered with my kinsfolk and household and laid up my goods in my storehouses. When my friends and family heard of my return, they came to welcome me and give me joy of my safety; and I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they marvelled exceedingly, having given up hope of me, for that I had

been absent from them seven-and-twenty years in this my seventh voyage.

Then I forswore travel and vowed to God the Most High to venture no more by land or sea, for that this last voyage had surfeited me of travel and adventure; and I thanked God and praised and glorified Him for having restored me to my country and home and friends. Consider, therefore, O Sindbad, O landsman,' continued the host, addressing himself to the porter, 'what sufferings I have undergone and what perils and hardships I have endured [before coming to my present state of prosperity].' 'For God's sake, O my lord,' answered the porter, 'pardon me the wrong I did thee.' And they ceased not from friendship and loving fellowship, [abiding] in all cheer and delight and solace of life, till there came to them that which destroyeth delights and sundereth companies, that which layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs, to wit, the Cup of Death, and glory be to the Living One who dieth not!

THE CITY OF BRASS.

It is related that the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan[1] was seated one day in his palace at Damascus, conversing with his grandees and officers of state of the histories of peoples of old time, when the talk turned upon the traditions of our lord Solomon, son of David, (on whom be peace,) and of that which God the Most High had bestowed on him of lordship and dominion over men and Jinn and birds and beasts and reptiles and other created things, and quoth one of those who were present, 'Of a truth we hear from those who forewent us that God (blessed and exalted be He!) vouchsafed unto

[1] Fifth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty, A.D. 685-705.

none the like of that which He vouchsafed unto our lord Solomon and that he attained unto that whereto never attained other than he, in that he was wont to imprison Jinn and Marids and Satans in vessels of copper and stop them with molten lead and seal them with his signet.'

Night dlxvii.

Then said Talib ben Sehl, (who was a seeker after treasures and had books that discovered to him hoards and treasures hidden under the earth,) 'O Commander of the Faithful, (God make thy dominion to endure and exalt thy dignity in the lands!) my father told me of my grandfather, that the latter once took ship with a company, intending for the island of Sicily, and sailed till there arose against them a contrary wind, which drove them from their course and brought them to a great mountain in one of the lands of God the Most High. Quoth my grandfather, "This was in the darkness of the night and as soon as it was day, there came forth to us, from the caves of the mountain, folk black of colour and naked of body, as they were wild beasts, understanding not what was said to them; nor was there any one of them who knew Arabic, except their King, who was of their own kind. When the latter saw the ship, he came down to it with a company of his followers and saluting us, bade us welcome and questioned us of our case. So we told him how we had been driven from our course by a contrary wind, and he said, 'No son of Adam hath ever come to our land before you: but fear not, no harm shall befall you, and rejoice in the assurance of safety and return to your own country.' Then he entertained us three days, feeding on the flesh of birds and wild beasts and fish, than which they had no other meat, and on the fourth day he carried us down to the beach, that we might divert ourselves by looking upon the fishermen. There we saw a fisherman, casting his nets to catch fish, and presently he pulled them up, and behold, in them was a casting-bottle of copper, stopped with lead and sealed with the signet of

Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace. He brought the vessel to land and broke it open, when there came forth a blue smoke, which rose to the zenith, and we heard a terrible voice, saying, 'I repent! I repent! Pardon, O prophet of God! I will never return to that which I did aforetime.' Then the smoke became a terrible great giant, frightful to look upon, whose head was level with the mountain tops, and he vanished from our sights, whilst our hearts were like to burst for terror; but the blacks thought nothing of it. Then we returned to the King and questioned him of the matter; whereupon quoth he, 'Know that this was one of the Jinn whom Solomon, son of David, being wroth with them, shut up in these vessels and cast into the sea, after stopping the mouths with melted lead. Our fishermen ofttimes, in casting their nets, bring up the vessels, which being broken open, there come forth of them genies, who, deeming that Solomon is still alive and pardoneth them, make their submission to him and say, "I repent, O prophet of God!"'

The Khalif marvelled at Talib's story and said, 'Glory be to God! Verily, Solomon was given a mighty dominion.' Now En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani[1] was present, and he said, 'Talib hath spoken sooth, as is proven by the saying of the All-wise, the Primæval One:

And Solomon, when God the Lord of old to him did say, "Take thou the Khalifate and rule with firm and strenuous sway.
Whoso obeyeth thee reward for his obedience, And who gainsayeth thy command, imprison him for aye."

Wherefore he used to put them in vessels of copper and cast them into the sea.'

The poet's words seemed good to the Khalif, and he said, 'By Allah, I long to look upon some of these vessels.'

[1] A famous pre-Islamitic poet. His introduction here is, of course, an anachronism.

'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Talib, 'it is in thy power to do so, without stirring abroad. Send to thy brother Abdulaziz ben Merwan, so he may write to Mousa ben Nuseir,[1] governor of Morocco, bidding him take horse thence to the mountains whereof I spoke and which adjoin the confines of his government, and fetch thee therefrom as many of the vessels in question as thou hast a mind to.' The Khalif approved his counsel and said, 'Thou hast spoken truly, O Talib, and I desire that thou be my messenger to Mousa ben Nuseir, touching this matter; wherefore thou shalt have the white ensign[2] and all thou hast a mind to of wealth and honour and so forth, and I will care for thy family during thine absence.' 'With all my heart, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Talib. 'Go, with the aid and blessing of God,' said the Khalif and bade write a letter to his brother Abdulaziz, his viceroy in Egypt, and another to Mousa ben Nuseir, his viceroy in Northern Africa, bidding him, ceasing all excuse, take guides and go himself in quest of the vessels of Solomon, leaving his son to govern in his room. Moreover, he charged him to be not remiss in the matter and to spare neither men nor money. Then he sealed the letters and committed them to Talib, bidding him advance the [royal] ensigns before him and make his utmost speed; and he gave him treasure and horsemen and footmen, to further him on his way, and made provision for the wants of his household during his absence.

Night dlxviii. So Talib set out and arrived in due course at Cairo, where the governor came out to meet him and entertained him and his company whilst they tarried with him. Then he gave them a guide, to bring them to Upper Egypt,

[1] The conqueror of Spain.

[2] White was the distinctive colour of the house of Umeyyeh, and the gift of a white ensign may therefore be supposed to have conferred absolute power, in the way of requisitions, etc., upon an envoy.

where the Amir Mousa had his abiding-place; and when the latter heard of Talib's coming, he went forth to meet him and rejoiced in him. Talib gave him the Khalif's letter, and he read it and laying it on his head, said, 'I hear and obey the Commander of the Faithful.' Then he assembled his chief officers and acquainting them with the Khalif's commandment, sought counsel of them how he should accomplish it. 'O Amir,' answered they, 'if thou seek one who shall guide thee to the place in question, send for the Sheikh Abdussemed son of Abdulcuddous es Semoudi, for he is a man of experience, who has travelled much and knoweth all the seas and wastes and deserts and countries of the world and the inhabitants and wonders thereof; wherefore send thou for him and he will surely guide thee to thy desire.'

So Mousa sent for him, and behold, he was a very old man, broken down with lapse of years and days. The Amir saluted him and said, 'O Sheikh Abdussemed, our lord the Commander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan, hath commanded me thus and thus. Now I have small knowledge of the land wherein is that which the Khalif desires; but it is told me that thou knowest it well and the way thither. Wilt thou, therefore, go thither with me and help me to accomplish the Khalif's need? So it please God the Most High, thy pains and travail shall not be wasted.' 'I hear and obey the bidding of the Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Sheikh; 'but know, O our lord, that the road thither is long and difficult and the ways few.' 'How far is it?' asked Mousa, and the Sheikh answered, 'It is a journey of two years and some months thither and the like back, and the way is full of perils and terrors and toils and wonders. Now thou art a champion of the Faith[1] and our country is hard

[1] As governor of a newly-conquered country, part of which was still in dispute.

by that of the enemy, and peradventure the Nazarenes may come out upon us in thine absence; wherefore it behoves thee to leave one to rule thy government in thy stead.' 'It is well,' answered the Amir and appointed his son Haroun governor during his absence, requiring the troops to take the oath of fealty to him and bidding them obey him in all he should command, which they promised to do.

Now this Haroun was a man of great prowess and a renowned warrior, and the Sheikh Abdussemed feigned to him that the place they sought was distant [but] four months' journey along the shore of the sea, with camping-places all the way, adjoining one another, and grass and springs, adding, 'God will assuredly make the matter easy to us for thy sake, O lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful.' Quoth the Amir Mousa, 'Knowest thou if any of the kings have trodden this land before us?' 'Yes,' answered the Sheikh; 'it belonged aforetime to Darius the Greek, King of Alexandria.' But he said to Mousa [privily], 'O Amir, take with thee a thousand camels laden with victual and store of gugglets.[1]' 'And what shall we do with these [latter]?' asked the Amir. Quoth the Sheikh, 'In our way is the desert of Cyrene, the which is a vast desert, four days' journey long, and lacketh water, nor therein is voice to be heard or soul to be seen. Moreover, there bloweth the Simoum and [other hot] winds called El Jewajib, that dry up the waterskins; but, if the water be in gugglets, no harm can come to it.' 'True,' answered Mousa and sending to Alexandria, let bring thence great plenty of gugglets. Then he took with him his Vizier and two thousand horse, clad in complete steel, and set out, whilst Abdussemed forewent them, riding on his hackney, to guide them.

[1] *Lit.* ficaä-gugglets, *i.e.* earthenware jars used for holding ficaä, a thin kind of beer, made of barley or raisins.

They fared on diligently, now passing through inhabited countries and now ruins and anon traversing frightful deserts and thirsty wastes and anon mountains that rose high into the air; nor did they leave journeying a whole year's space, till, one morning, when the day broke, after they had travelled all night, the Sheikh found himself in a land he knew not and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Quoth the Amir, 'What is to do, O Sheikh?' And he answered, saying, 'By the Lord of the Kaabeh, we have wandered from our road!' 'How cometh that?' asked Mousa, and Abdussemed replied, 'The stars were obscured and I could not guide myself by them.' 'Where are we now?' said the Amir, and the Sheikh, 'I know not; for I never set eyes on this land till now.' Quoth Mousa, 'Guide us back to the place where we went astray;' but the other said, 'I know it no more.' Then said Mousa, 'Let us push on; it may be God will guide us to it or direct us aright of His power.' So they fared on till the hour of noonday prayer, when they came to a fair and wide champaign, level as it were the sea in a calm, and anon there appeared to them, in the distance, some great thing, high and black, in whose midst was as it were smoke rising to the confines of the sky. They made for this and stayed not in their course, till they drew near thereto, when, behold, it was a high castle, firm of fashion and great and gruesome as it were a lofty mountain, builded all of black stone, with frowning battlements and a door of gleaming China steel, that dazzled the eyes and dazed the wit. Round about it were a thousand steps and in its midst was a dome of lead, a thousand cubits high, which appeared afar off as it were smoke.

When the Amir saw this, he marvelled thereat exceedingly and how this place was void of inhabitants; and the Sheikh, after he had certified himself thereof, said, 'There

is no god but God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' Quoth Mousa, 'I hear thee praise God and hallow Him, and [meseems] thou rejoicest.' 'O Amir,' answered Abdussemed, 'rejoice, for God (blessed and exalted be He!) hath delivered us from the frightful deserts and thirsty wastes.' 'How knowest thou that?' asked Mousa, and the other, 'I know it for that my father told me of my grandfather that he said, "We were once journeying in this land and straying from the road, came to this palace and thence to the City of Brass;" between which and the place thou seekest is two months' travel; but thou must take to the sea-shore and leave it not, for there be wells and watering and camping places, established by King Iskender Dhoulkernein; for, when he went in quest of Morocco, he found by the way thirsty deserts and wastes and wilds and dug therein wells and built cisterns.' Quoth Mousa, 'May God rejoice thee with good news!' and Abdussemed said, 'Come, let us go look upon yonder palace and its marvels, for it is an admonition to whoso will be admonished.'

So the Amir went up to the palace, with the Sheikh and his chief officers, and coming to the gate, found it open. Now this gate was builded with lofty columns and porticoes whose walls were inlaid with gold and silver and precious stones, and there led up to it flights of steps, among which were two wide stairs of coloured marble, never was seen their like; and over the doorway was a tablet, whereon were graven letters of gold in the ancient Greek character. 'O Amir,' said the Sheikh, 'shall I read?' 'Read and may God bless thee!' replied Mousa. 'For all that betideth us in this journey dependeth upon thy blessing.' So the Sheikh, who was a very learned man and versed in all tongues and characters, went up to the tablet and read the following verses:

Their vestiges, after that they once did do, Forewarn us that we in their footsteps must ensue.
O thou, who haltst by the dwellings for news of folk Who have doffed their state and bidden their power adieu,
Enter this palace, for there is the last-left news Of lords in the dust who gathered, a puissant crew.
Death smote them and rent them asunder, and in the dust They lost what they erst did gather with such ado.
'Tis as they had set their burdens down to rest In haste, then mounted and fared on their way anew.

When the Amir heard this, he wept till he lost his senses and said, 'There is no god but God, the Living, the Eternal, who ceaseth not!' Then he entered the palace and was confounded at its beauty and the goodliness of its ordinance. He diverted himself awhile by viewing the figures and images therein, till he came to another door, over which also were written verses, and said to the Sheikh, 'Come, read me these.' So he came forward and read as follows:

How many in their halls have halted for a day Of old, then taken leave and fared upon their way!
They saw what from the shifts of fortune did befall Others than they, therein who lighted down to stay.
That which they stored they shared among themselves and left To others to enjoy its sweets and passed away.
With what delight arrayed were they, what dainties ate And drank! But eaten now within the dust are they.

At this the Amir wept sore; the world grew pale before his eyes and he said, 'Verily, we were created for a mighty matter!' Then they proceeded to explore the palace and found it desert and void of living thing, its chambers and dwelling-places laid waste and desolate. In the midst stood a lofty pavilion, with a dome rising high into the air, and about it were four hundred tombs, builded of yellow marble. The Amir drew near unto these and behold, amongst them was a great tomb, wide and long,

and at its head a tablet of white marble, whereon were graven the following verses:

How often have I stood, how oft set on in fight! How many a thing, indeed, hath passed before my sight!
How much have I consumed of meat and drink, and songs How many have I heard of singing wench and wight!
How much did I command and eke how much forbid! How many a rampired hold, thou'dst deem beyond man's might
To take, I've stormed and sacked and all the cloistered maids, That hid within its walls, discovered to the light!
But, of my ignorance, I sinned that I might win Hopes that must pass away, undurable and slight.
Bethink thee, then, O man, before thou drink the cup Of death, and reckon up thy reckoning forthright.
Yet but a little while and on thy head the dust Shall sure be strewn and life shall fail unto thy spright.

The Amir and his companions wept; then, drawing near unto the pavilion, they saw that it had eight doors of sandal-wood, studded with nails of gold and stars of silver and inlaid with all manner precious stones. On the first door were written these verses:

That which I left, I left it not of generous purpose; nay, But fate and fortune fore-ordained still o'er mankind bear sway.
What while content and prosperous I was, my hoarding-place, Even as a raging lion fierce, I did defend alway.
Ne'er was I still and of my good so niggard, not a grain Of mustard-seed, though I were cast on fire, I gave away,
Till, of the fore-ordained decree of God, the Lord of Might, The Maker and the Fashioner, I stricken was one day.
Death, sudden, irrevocable, in haste upon me came: I could not ward it with my store, nor eke the vast array
Of troops I gathered neath my hand availed me any jot; Nor friend nor neighbour aided me the feet of fate to stay.
All my life's days, or if it were in solace or in stress, Still in my journey to the grave I toiled and wearied aye.
I fared the road that all must fare, till, when the money-bags Are full, though dinar, without cease, to dinar thou shouldst lay,

Before the morrow all hath passed to other than thyself And unto thee a bier-bearer and grave-digger bring they,
And all alone, with but thy load of sins and crimes to bear Thee company, thou meetest God upon thy judgment-day.
See with thy neighbours and thy folk how deals the world nor let Its vanities delude thy wit nor lead thy feet astray.

When Mousa heard these verses, he wept till he swooned away; then, coming to himself, he entered the pavilion and saw therein a long tomb, dreadful to look upon, whereon was a tablet of China steel, bearing the following inscription: 'In the name of the Eternal God, the One, the Everlasting; in His name who begetteth not nor is begotten and to whom there is no like; in the name of God the Lord of Majesty and Might, the Living One who dieth not! O thou who comest to this place, take warning by that which thou seest of the doings of time and the vicissitudes of fortune and be not deluded by the world and its pomps and lies and fallacies and vain allurements, for that it is deceitful and flattering and treacherous, and the things thereof are but a loan, which it will take again from the borrower. It is like unto the dreams of the dreamer and the vain visions of the sleeper or as the mirage of the desert, which the thirsty take for water;[1] and Satan maketh it fair for men even unto death. These are the ways of the world; wherefore put not thou thy trust therein neither incline unto it, for it bewrayeth him who leaneth upon it and committeth himself thereunto in his affairs. Fall not thou into its toils neither take hold upon its skirts, [but be warned by my example]. I possessed four thousand bay horses and a palace, and I had to wife a thousand daughters of kings, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons. Moreover, I was blessed with a thousand sons, as they were fierce lions, and I abode a thousand years, glad of heart and mind, and

Night dlxix.

[1] *Koran* xxiv. 39.

amassed treasures beyond the competence of all the kings of the regions of the earth, deeming that delight would still endure to me; but there fell on me unawares the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies, he who desolates the abodes of men and lays waste the inhabited places, the slayer of great and small, babes and children and mothers, he who hath no compassion on the poor man, by reason of his poverty, neither feareth he kings, because of their commandment and forbiddance. Yea, we abode in security in this palace, till there descended upon us the judgment of the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earths; the vengeance of the Manifest Truth[1] overtook us and there died of us every day two, till a great company of us had perished. When I saw that destruction had entered our dwellings and taken up its abode with us and drowned us in the sea of deaths, I summoned a writer and bade him write these verses and admonitions, the which I let grave, with rule and compass, on these doors and tablets and tombs. Now I had an army of a thousand thousand horsemen, hardy, strong-armed warriors, armed with spears and coats of mail and sharp swords; so I bade them don their long hauberks and gird on their keen swords and mount their high-mettled chargers and couch their dreadful spears; and whenas there fell on us the doom of the Lord of heaven and earth, I said to them, "Ho, all ye soldiers and troopers, can ye avail to ward off that which is fallen on me from the Omnipotent King?" But they availed not unto this and said, "How shall we war with Him to whom no chamberlain bars access, the Lord of the gate that hath no doorkeeper?" Then quoth I to them, "Bring me my treasures." Now I had in my treasuries a thousand cisterns, in each of which were a thousand quintals of red gold and the like of white silver, besides pearls and jewels of all

[1] A name of God.

kinds and other things of price, beyond the competence of the kings of the earth. So they did as I bade them and when they had laid all the treasure before me, I said to them, "Can ye ransom me with all this treasure or buy me therewith one day of life?" But they could not; so I resigned myself to fore-ordained fate and submitted to the judgment of God, enduring patiently that which He decreed unto me of affliction, till He took my soul and made me to dwell in my grave. And if thou ask of my name, I am Koush, the son of Sheddad, son of Aad the Greater.'

An thou wouldst know my name, who lived so long ago, After the shifts of time and fortune's changes, know
I'm Sheddad's son, who held dominion o'er mankind And over all the earth was monarch, high and low.
The stubborn peoples all abased themselves to me And all the North was mine from Adnan to Cairo.
In glory still I reigned; the nations of the earth My mischief feared and I their kings did overthrow.
Yea, armies I beheld and tribes beneath my hand; The world and all therein did dread me, friend and foe.
When I took horse, I saw the number of my troops A million cavaliers, on neighing steeds arow;
And treasures, too, were mine, past reckoning or count, The which I garnered up 'gainst fortune's sudden blow.
Fain had I bought my life with all my wealth, although For but a moment's space to lengthen it; but no,
God would have nought but that He willed should come to pass; So I abode alone, cut off my brethren fro',
And death came to me, death that sunders all mankind, And from my state I passed unto the stead of woe.
There found I all I'd wrought of old, for which in pledge I now abide; and I a sinner was, I trow.
Bethink thee, on a brink that standest, and beware The chances of events and fortune's overthrow.

The Amir Mousa wept till he swooned away, for what he saw of the slaughtering-places of the folk; then, as they went about the palace, viewing its sitting-chambers and pleasaunces, they came upon a table of yellow onyx, up-

borne on four feet of juniper-wood, and thereon these words graven: 'A thousand kings blind of the right eye and a thousand blind of the left and yet other thousand sound of both eyes have eaten at this table, all of whom have departed the world and taken up their sojourn in the tombs and the burial-places.'

All this the Amir wrote down and left the palace, taking with him nothing but the table aforesaid. Then he fared on with his retinue three days' space, under the guidance of the Sheikh Abdussemed, till they came to a high hill, whereon stood a horseman of brass. In his hand he held a lance with a broad head of blinding brightness, whereon were graven the following words: 'O thou that comest hither, if thou know not the way to the Brazen City, rub the hand of this horseman and he will turn round and presently stop. Then take the direction in which he faces and fare on boldly, for it will bring thee, without hardship, to the City of Brass.'

Night DLXX.

The Amir accordingly rubbed the horseman's hand and he revolved, like the dazzling lightning, and stopped, facing in a direction other than that wherein they were journeying. So they took the road to which he pointed and finding it a beaten track, fared on days and nights till they came to a pillar of brass, wherein was one sunken up to his armpits. He had two great wings and four arms, two like men's arms and other two as they were lions' paws, with claws of iron, and he was black and tall, with hair like horses' tails and eyes like blazing coals, slit endlong in his face. Moreover, he had a third eye, as it were that of a lynx, amiddleward his forehead, from which flew sparks of fire, and he cried out, saying, 'Glory to my Lord, who hath adjudged unto me this grievous punishment and sore affliction until the Day of Resurrection!' When the folk saw him, they lost their reason for affright and turned to flee; and the Amir Mousa said to the Sheikh Abdussemed,

'What is this?' 'I know not,' answered he, whereupon quoth Mousa, 'Draw near and question him; haply he will discover to thee his case.' 'God assain the Amir!' replied the Sheikh. 'Indeed, I am afraid of him;' but the Amir rejoined, saying, 'Fear not; he is hindered from thee or any other by that wherein he is.'

So Abdussemed drew near to the pillar and said to him who was therein, 'O creature, what is thy name and what art thou and how camest thou here on this wise?' 'I am an Afrit of the Jinn,' replied he, 'by name Dahish, son of El Aamesh, and am confined here by way of punishment, by the judgment of the Almighty, till it please Him, to whom belong might and majesty, to release me.' Then said Mousa, 'Ask him why he is prisoned in this column.' So the Sheikh asked him of this, and he replied, saying, 'My story is strange and my case extraordinary, and it is on this wise. One of the sons of Iblis had an idol of red cornelian, whereof I was guardian, and there served it a king of the kings of the sea, a prince of great power and prowess, ruling over a thousand thousand warriors of the Jinn, who smote with swords before him and answered to his call in time of need. All these were under my commandment and did my bidding, being all rebels against Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! And I used to enter the [hollow] belly of the idol and command and forbid them thence. Now this King's daughter loved the idol and was frequent in prostration to it and assiduous in its service; and she was the fairest woman of her day, accomplished in beauty and grace and elegance. She was described unto Solomon and he sent to her father, saying, "Give me thy daughter to wife and break thine idol of cornelian and testify that there is no god but God and that I am His prophet. If thou do this, that which is ours shall be thine and thy debt shall be our debt; but, if thou refuse, make ready to answer the summons [of

God] and don thy grave-clothes, for I will come upon thee with an irresistible host, that shall fill the waste places of the earth and make thee even as yesterday that is passed away and hath no returning."

When this message reached the King, his pride revolted from obeying Solomon's bidding and he said to his Viziers, "Know that Solomon, son of David, hath sent, requiring me to give him my daughter to wife and break my idol of cornelian and enter his faith: what say ye of this?" "O mighty King," answered they, "how shall Solomon do thus with thee? Even could he come at thee in the midst of this vast ocean, he could not prevail against thee, for the Marids of the Jinn will fight on thy side and thou wilt seek succour of thine idol whom thou servest, and he will help thee and give thee the victory over him. So thou wouldst do well to consult thy Lord," meaning the idol aforesaid, "and hear what he says. If he say, 'Fight him,' fight him, and if not, not." So the King went in forthright to his idol and offered up sacrifices and slaughtered victims; after which he fell down before him, prostrate and weeping, and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I know thy puissance and thy power confess: Solomon would have me break thee. In my stress,
Lord, to thee for succour I myself address. Order; thy commandment I obey no less.

Then I, of my ignorance and lack of wit and recklessness of the commandment of Solomon and want of knowledge of his power, entered the belly of the idol and made answer as follows:

Solomon I fear not, dread him not to foe, For that, of my wisdom, everything I know.
An he would be waging war upon me, lo! I will creep and snatch his life from him, I trow.

When the King heard this, he hardened his heart and resolved to do battle with the prophet; wherefore he beat

the messenger grievously and returned a flouting answer to Solomon, threatening him and saying, "Thy soul hath suggested to thee a vain thing: dost thou threaten me with lying words? But gird thyself for battle; for, an thou come not to me, I will assuredly come to thee."

The messenger returned to Solomon and told him all that had passed, which when the prophet heard, he was exceeding wroth and levied an army of men and Jinn and birds and beasts and reptiles. He commanded his Vizier Ed Dimiryat, King of the Jinn, to assemble the Marids of the Jinn from all parts, and he gathered together unto him six hundred millions of devils. Moreover, by his order, his Vizier Asef ben Berkhiya levied him an army of men, to the number of a thousand thousand or more. These all he equipped with arms and armour and mounting, with his host, upon his magic carpet, flew through the air, whilst the beasts fared under him and the birds flew overhead, till he lighted down on the island of the refractory King and encompassed it about, filling the earth with his hosts. Then he sent to our King, saying, "Behold, I am come: defend thyself against that which is fallen upon thee, or else make thy submission to me and confess my apostleship and give me thy daughter to wife and break thine idol and worship the one God, the alone Worship-Worth, and testify, thou and thine, that there is no god but God and that I am His prophet. This if thou do, thou shalt have peace and pardon; but, if not, it will avail thee nothing to fortify thyself in this island, for God, blessed and exalted be He, hath commanded the wind to obey me; so I will bid it bear me to thee on my carpet and make thee an example to deter others." But the King made answer to his messenger, saying, "It may not in any wise be as he demandeth; so tell him I come forth to him." Then he gathered together all the Jinn that were under his hand, to the number of a thousand thousand, and added to them

Night dlxxi.

other than they of Marids and Satans from the islands of the sea and the mountain-tops and opened his armouries and distributed to them arms and armour.

Meanwhile the prophet Solomon drew out his host in battle array, dividing the beasts into two bodies, one on the right wing and the other on the left, and bidding them tear the enemies' horses in sunder. Moreover, he commanded the birds to hover over their heads and whenas the assault should be made, that they should [swoop down upon their battle and] tear out their eyes with their beaks and buffet their faces with their wings; and they answered, saying, "We hear and obey God and thee, O prophet of God!" Then Solomon seated himself [on his carpet] on a throne of alabaster, inlaid with jewels and plated with red gold, and commanding the wind to bear him aloft, arrayed the beasts and vipers and serpents before him, setting his Vizier Asef ben Berkhiya and the kings of mankind on his right and his Vizier Ed Dimiryat and the kings of the Jinn on his left. Then they all set on us together, and we gave them battle two days over a vast plain; but, on the third day, disaster befell us and the judgment of God the Most High was executed upon us.

The first to charge upon them were I and my troops, and I said to my companions, "Abide in your places, whilst I sally forth to them and provoke Ed Dimiryat to single combat." And behold, he came forth as he were a vast mountain, casting out fire and smoke, and shot at me a flame of fire; but I swerved from it and it missed me. Then I cast at him, in my turn, a flame of fire, and it smote him; but his poison[1] overcame my fire and he cried out at me so terrible a cry that meseemed the skies were fallen on me, and the mountains shook at his voice. Then he commanded his hosts to charge; so they rushed on us and we on them, each crying out upon other,

[1] *Quære* ichor.

whilst the air was filled with flames and smoke and hearts were like to cleave in sunder. The birds and the flying Jinn fought in the air and the beasts and men and the Jinn of the earth in the dust, and the battle raged and I fought with Ed Dimiryat, till I was aweary. At last, I grew weak and turned to flee from him, whereupon my companions and tribesmen likewise took to flight and my hosts were put to the rout, and Solomon cried out, saying, "Take yonder proud tyrant, accursed and infamous!" Then man fell upon man and genie upon genie and the armies of the prophet charged down upon us, with the beasts on their right hand and on their left, rending our horses and devouring our men, whilst the birds hovered above them in the air, pecking out our eyes with their claws and beaks and buffeting our faces with their wings, till the most of us lay prone upon the face of the earth, like palm-tree trunks, and defeat befell our king and we became a spoil unto Solomon.

As for me, I fled from before Ed Dimiryat; but he followed me three months' journey, till I fell down for weariness and he overtook me and pouncing upon me, made me prisoner. Quoth I, "By the virtue of Him who hath advanced thee and abased me, spare me and bring me before Solomon, on whom be peace!" So he carried me before Solomon, who received me after the foulest fashion and let bring this pillar and hollow it out. Then he set me therein and chained me and sealed me with his signet, and Ed Dimiryat bore me to this place. Moreover, he charged a great angel to guard me, and this pillar is my prison until the Day of Judgment.' Night dlxxii.

The folk marvelled at his story and at the frightfulness of his favour, and the Amir Mousa said, 'There is no god but God! Of a truth Solomon was gifted with a mighty dominion.' Then said the Sheikh Abdussemed to the genie, 'Harkye, I would fain ask thee of a thing, where-

of do thou inform us.' 'Ask what thou wilt,' answered Dahish and the Sheikh said, 'Are there hereabouts any of the Afrits imprisoned in vessels of brass in the time of Solomon, on whom be peace?' 'Yes,' replied the genie; 'there be such in the sea of El Kerker, on the shores whereof dwell a people of the lineage of Noah, on whom be peace; for their country was not reached by the Deluge and they are cut off there from the [other] sons of Adam.' 'And which,' asked Abdussemed, 'is the way to the City of Brass and the place wherein are the vessels of Solomon, and what distance is there between us and it?' Quoth the Afrit, 'It is near at hand,' and directed them in the way thither.

So they left him and fared on till there appeared to them, afar off, a great blackness and therein two fires facing one another, and the Amir Mousa said to the Sheikh, 'What is yonder vast blackness and its twin fires?' 'Rejoice, O Amir,' answered the guide; 'for this is the City of Brass, as it is described in the Book of Hidden Treasures. Its walls are of black stone and it hath two towers of Andalusian brass, which appear to the beholder in the distance as they were twin fires, and hence is it named the City of Brass.'

Then they fared on without ceasing till they drew near the city and saw it as it were a piece of a mountain or a mass of iron cast in a mould. So they lighted down and sought for a gate, but saw none neither found any trace of opening in the walls, albeit there were five-and-twenty gates to the city, but none of them was visible from without. Then said the Amir, 'O Sheikh, I see no sign of any gate to this city;' and he answered, saying, 'O Amir, thus is it described in my Book of Hidden Treasures; it hath five-and-twenty gates; but none thereof may be opened save from within the city.' 'And how,' asked Mousa, 'shall we do to enter the city and view its

wonders?' 'May God assain the Amir!' said Talib. 'Let us rest here two or three days, and God willing, we will make shift to come into the city.'

Then Mousa bade one of his men mount a camel and ride round about the city, so haply he should light upon a gate or breach by which they might enter. So he mounted and rode round the city two days and two nights, without drawing rein to rest, but found the wall thereof as it were one block, without breach or way of ingress; and on the third day, he came again in sight of his companions, amazed at what he had seen of the extent and loftiness of the place, and said, 'O Amir, the easiest place of access is this where you are encamped.' Then Mousa took Talib and Abdussemed and ascended a high hill that overlooked the town. When they reached the top, they turned and beheld beneath them a city, never saw eyes a greater or goodlier, full of lofty palaces and glittering domes and fair-builded mansions and running streams and orchards laden with fruit and flowered pleasaunces, a gated city and an inexpugnable; but it was silent and deserted, without sound or movement or sign of life, except the hooting of the owl in its market-places and the wheel of the birds over its gardens and the croak of ravens in its streets and thoroughfares, bewailing those that had been therein.

The Amir stood awhile, sorrowing for the desolation of the city and saying, 'Glory to Him whom nor ages nor times change, Him who created all things of His might!' Presently, he chanced to look aside and caught sight of seven tablets of white marble afar off. So he drew near them and finding inscriptions graven thereon, called the Sheikh and bade him read these. Accordingly, he came forward and examining the inscriptions, found that they contained matter of admonition and warning and restraint to those of understanding. On the first tablet was inscribed, in the ancient Greek character, the following: 'O

son of Adam, how heedless art thou of that which is before thee! Verily, thy years and months and days have diverted thee therefrom. Knowst thou not that the cup of death is filled for thee and that ere long thou must drain it to the dregs? Look to thyself before thou enter thy grave. Where be they who held the dominion over the lands and abased God's servants and led armies? By Allah, the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies and the Devastator of inhabited houses came down upon them and transported them from their spacious palaces to the narrow room of the grave.'

And at the foot of the tablet were written the following verses:

Where be the kings and where be they the earth who peopled? Where? That which they built thereon they left and to the grave did fare.
There, after death had razed them out, corruption they became, Pledged to the tomb to answer that they did and wrought whilere.
Where be the armies that they raised, the wealth they garnered up? Nothing they served to ward off death or bribe him to forbear.
The Lord of the Ninth Heaven's decree fell down on them in haste: Strongholds and treasures thereagainst all unavailing were.

When the Amir heard this, he cried out and the tears ran down his cheeks and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is surest and most fitting to abstain from the world!' And he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote down what was graven on the tablet.

Then he drew near the second tablet and found these words graven thereon: 'O son of Adam, what hath seduced thee [from the service of] the Ancient of Days and made thee forget that thou must one day pay the debt of death? Knowest thou not, thou that takest thought unto the world and cleavest fast thereto, that it is a perishing dwelling, wherein there is abiding for none? Where be the kings who peopled Irak and possessed the four quarters of the world? Where be they who peopled Ispahan and

the land of Khorassan? The voice of the summoner of death called them and they answered him, and the herald of destruction hailed them and they replied, saying, "Here are we." Verily, that which they builded and fortified profited them not, neither did what they had gathered and provided [against a time of stress] avail for their defence.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven the following verses:

Where be they these halls who builded and their galleries reared on high, Galleries whose stately fashion nought resembles neath the sky?
Armies levied they and warriors, in their fear of him delights Who undoth; but they availed not, when th' appointed day drew nigh.
Where be the Chosroës, sovereigns of the strengths that none might storm? As they'd never been, the countries have they left and fleeted by.

The Amir wept and exclaimed, 'By Allah, we are indeed created for a grave matter!' Then he copied the above inscription and passed on to the third tablet, whereon was written what follows: 'O son of Adam, thou busiest thee with the love of the world and neglectest the commandment of thy Lord. All the days of thy life pass by and thou art content to live thus. Make ready thy provision against the appointed day and prepare to answer the Lord of all creatures.' Night dlxxiii.

And at the foot were written these verses:

Where's he who peopled all the lands, both Hind and Sind, of yore? He who transgressed and sinned and played the tyrant heretofore?
Ethiops and Abyssinians all unto his beck did bow, What while himself he magnified and arrogantly bore.
Look not for news of that which is within his tomb, for thou One who can tidings give of this shalt meet with nevermore.
The stroke of imminent death on him fell and from its assault Not all the halls he built could save nor all his hoarded store.

At this Mousa wept sore, then, going on to the fourth tablet, he read the following inscription thereon: 'O son of Adam, how long shall thy Lord bear with thee and thou

every day sunken in the sea of thy delight? Hath it then been revealed unto thee that thou shalt not die? O son of Adam, let not the deceitful delights of thy days and nights and hours delude thee, but remember that death lieth in wait for thee, ready to spring on thy shoulders, nor doth a day pass but he riseth with thee in the morning and lieth down with thee by night. Beware, then, of his onset and make provision thereagainst. As it was with me, so is it with thee; thou wastest thy whole life and squanderest the delight of thy days. Hearken, therefore, to my rede and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords; for there is no stability in the world; it is but as a spider's web.'

And at the foot of the tablet were written the following verses:

Where's he who traced the house and builded it forthright And fortified its walls and reared it to the height?
Where be the castles' lords? They who abode therein Departed have the strengths they governed, every wight.
All lie within the tombs, in pledge against the day Whereon the secret things shall all be brought to light.
None but the Most High God endureth without cease, The ever Worshipworth, Lord of all power and might.

When the Amir read this, he swooned away and [presently coming to himself] marvelled exceedingly and wrote it down. Then he drew near the fifth tablet and behold, thereon was graven what follows: 'O son of Adam, what is it distracts thee from the obedience of thy Creator and the Author of thy being, Him who reared thee, whenas thou wast little, and fed thee, whenas thou grewest up? Thou art ungrateful for His bounty, albeit He watcheth over thee with His favours, letting down the curtain of His protection over thee. Needs must there be for thee a time more bitter than aloes and hotter than live coals. Provide thee, therefore, against it; for who shall sweeten its bitterness or quench its flaming fires?

Bethink thee who forewent thee of peoples and heroes and take warning by them, ere thou perish.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven the following verses:

Where be the kings of the kings of the earth? Indeed, they are sped, And here, with that which they gathered, they lie in the graveyard's bed.
Once, when they mounted, thou'dst see, in the train of their glory, troops That filled the lands, when they mounted, and over the countries spread.
How many a monarch they humbled, how many an army destroyed! How much in their day they conquered, and how much blood did they shed!
Upon them, in haste, the commandment o' the Lord of the heavens came And after a life all untroubled, o'erthrown were they sudden and dead.

The Amir marvelled at this and wrote it down; after which he passed on to the sixth tablet and found thereon the following inscription: 'O son of Adam, think not that immunity will endure [for ever,] seeing that death is irrevocably decreed unto thy head. Where be thy fathers and thy brethren, where thy friends and dear ones? They have all gone to the dust of the tombs and presented themselves before the Glorious, the Forgiving One, as if they had never eaten nor drunken, and they are a pledge for that which they have earned. So look to thyself, ere thy tomb come upon thee.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven these verses:

Where be the kings of the kings of the Franks and where Is he who, I trow, abode in Tenjeh whilere?
Their works in a book are written, which to the One, The Almighty, one day shall witness against them bear.

At this Mousa marvelled and wrote it down, saying, 'There is no god but God! Indeed, how goodly were these folk!' Then he went up to the seventh tablet and

behold, thereon was written what follows: 'Glory to Him who fore-ordaineth death to all He createth, the Living One, who dieth not! O son of Adam, let not thy days and their delights delude thee, neither thine hours and the sweet of their tides, and know that death cometh to thee and sitteth upon thy shoulders. Beware, then, of his assault and make ready for his onset. As it was with me, so is it with thee; thou wastest the sweet of thy life and the delight of thine hours. Give ear, then, to my rede and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords and know that there is no stability in the world, but it is as it were a spider's web and all that is therein shall cease and die. Where is he who laid the foundations of Amid[1] and builded it and builded Farikin[2] and exalted it? Where be the peoples of the strong places? Whenas they had inhabited them [awhile], they descended, after their might, into the tombs. They have been carried off [by death] and we shall be [in like manner] afflicted. None abideth save God the Most High, God the Forgiving One.'

The Amir Mousa wept and copied all this, and indeed the world was belittled in his eyes. Then he descended the hill and rejoined his troops, with whom he passed the rest of the day, casting about for a means of access to the city. And he said to his Vizier [and] Talib ben Sehl and his chief officers, 'How shall we do to enter this city and view its marvels? It may be we shall find therein wherewithal to propitiate the favour of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'God prolong the Amir's fortune!' replied Talib. 'Let us make a ladder and mount the wall therewith, so haply we may come at the gate from within.' Quoth the Amir, 'This is what came to my thought also, and it is good counsel.' And he called for carpenters and blacksmiths and bade them cut wood and make a ladder

[1] The ancient name of Diarbekir.

[2] *Quære* Meyyafarikin, a town in the same pashalik.

clamped and banded with iron. So they made a strong ladder and wrought at it a whole month. Then all the company laid hold of it and set it up against the wall, and it reached the top as truly as if it had been made for it aforetime. The Amir marvelled at the excellence of their work and said, 'The blessing of God be upon you! It seemeth as though ye had taken the measure of the wall.' Then said he to his men, 'Which of you will mount the ladder and walk along the wall and cast about for a way of descending into the city, so to see how the case stands and let us know how we may open the gate?' Quoth one of them, 'I will go up, O Amir, and descend and open to you.' And Mousa answered, saying, 'Go and the blessing of God go with thee!"

So he mounted the ladder; but, when he came to the top of the wall, he stood up and gazed fixedly down into the city, then clapped his hands and crying out, at the top of his voice, 'By Allah, thou art fair!' cast himself down into the place and was dashed to pieces. Quoth Mousa, 'By Allah, the man is destroyed!' But another came up to him and said, 'O Amir, this was a madman and doubtless his madness got the better of him and undid him. I will go up and open the gate to you, if it be the will of God the Most High.' 'Go,' replied Mousa, 'and may God bless thee! But beware lest thou lose thy head, even as did he.' Then the man mounted the ladder, but no sooner had he reached the top of the wall than he laughed aloud and saying, 'Well done! Well done!' cast himself down into the city and died forthright.

When the Amir saw this, he said, 'If this be the fashion of a reasonable man, what is that of the madman? If all our men do thus, we shall have none left and shall fail of our errand and that of the Commander of the Faithful. Let us depart hence, for we have no concern with this city.' But another of the company said, 'Peradventure

another may be steadier than they.' So a third mounted the wall and a fourth and a fifth and all cried out and cast themselves down, even as did the first; nor did they leave to do thus, till a dozen had perished.

Then said the Sheikh Abdussemed, 'This adventure is reserved for none other than myself, for the man of experience is not like the inexperienced.' Quoth the Amir, 'Indeed, I will not have thee go up, for thou art our guide and if thou perish, we shall all be cut off to the last man.' But he answered, saying, 'Peradventure, that which we seek may be accomplished at my hands, by the grace of God the Most High.' So they all agreed to let him go up, and he arose and heartening himself, said, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful!' and mounted the ladder, calling on the name of God and reciting the Verses of Safety.[1] When he reached the top of the wall, he clapped his hands and gazed fixedly down into the city; whereupon the folk below cried out to him with one accord, saying, 'O Sheikh Abdussemed, for God's sake, cast not thyself down!' And they said, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! If the Sheikh fall, we are all dead men.'

Then he laughed long and loud and sat a great while, reciting the names of God and repeating the Verses of Safety; then he rose and cried out at the top of his voice, saying, 'O Amir, have no fear: no hurt shall betide you, for God (to whom belong might and majesty) hath averted from me the wiles and malice of Satan, by the blessing of the words, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!"' 'O Sheikh,' quoth Mousa, 'what didst thou see?' 'When I came to the top of the wall,' answered Abdussemed, 'I saw ten maidens, as they were moons,

Night dlxxiv.

[1] Certain verses of the Koran (such as, "There is no power and no might, etc., etc.") so called from their supposed efficacy in delivering from danger him who repeats them in his need.

calling and beckoning to me with their hands, as who should say, "Come hither to us;" and meseemed there was below me a lake of water. Therewith I thought to throw myself down, when behold, I espied my twelve companions lying dead; so I restrained myself and recited somewhat of the book of God the Most High, whereupon He dispelled from me the damsels' wiles and sorceries and they disappeared. And doubtless this was an enchantment devised by the people of the city, to repel those who should seek to enter the place.'

Then he walked on along the wall, till he came to the two towers of brass [from which the city took its name,] and saw therein two gates of gold, without locks or visible means of opening; whereat he marvelled and gazed about him awhile, till he espied, amiddleward one of the gates, a horseman of brass with hand outstretched, as if pointing, and thereon somewhat written. So he went up to it and read these words: 'Turn the pin in my navel twelve times, and the gate will open.' Accordingly, he examined the horseman's body and finding in his navel a pin of gold, firm-set and curiously wrought, turned it twelve times, whereupon the horseman revolved like the blinding lightning and the gate swung open with a noise like thunder. He entered and found himself in a long passage, which brought him down some steps into a guardroom, furnished with goodly benches, whereon sat men dead, with richly wrought targets and keen swords and bended bows and arrows on the string hanging at their heads.

Passing on, he came to the outer gate and finding it secured with curiously wrought locks and bars and bolts and other fastenings of wood and iron, said in himself, 'Belike the keys are with yonder dead folk.' So he turned back to the guardroom and seeing, amongst the dead soldiers, an old man seated upon a high bench, who seemed the chiefest of them, said in himself, 'Who knows

but they are with this old man? Doubtless he was the seneschal of the city, and these others were under his hand.' So he went up to him and lifting his gown, saw the keys hanging to his girdle, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and was like to fly for gladness. Then he took them and going up to the gate, undid the locks and drew back the bolts and bars, whereupon the great gate swung open with a noise like the pealing thunder. At this he cried out, saying, 'God is most great!' And the folk without answered him with the same words, rejoicing and thanking him for his deed.

The Amir Mousa also rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the Sheikh's safety and the opening of the city-gate, and they all pressed forward to enter; but Mousa cried out to them, saying, 'O folk, it is not safe that we all enter at once, lest some ill chance betide us. Let half enter and other half tarry without.' So he entered with half his men, bearing their weapons of war, and saw the door-keepers and guards and chamberlains and officers lying dead on couches of silk. Then they passed through the inner gate and coming upon their comrades lying dead, buried them; after which they fared on till they came to a great market-place, full of lofty buildings, none of which overpassed other, and saw all the shops open, with the scales hung out and the brazen vessels ranged in order and the magazines full of all manner goods and the merchants sitting in their places, dead, with shrivelled skin and rotted bones, a warning to those who can take warning; and here they saw four separate markets.

Then they went on till they came to the silk-market, where they found silks and brocades, woven with red gold and white silver upon all manner of colours, and the owners lying dead upon mats of scented goats' leather, as if they would speak; after which they traversed the market of pearls and rubies and other jewels and came to

that of the money-changers, whom they saw sitting dead upon silken carpets, in shops full of gold and silver. Thence they passed to the drug-market, where they saw the shops filled with drugs of all kinds and bladders of musk and ambergris and aloes and camphor and other perfumes in vessels of ivory and ebony and khelenj-wood and Spanish brass, the which is equal in value to gold, and various kinds of Indian cane; but the shopkeepers were all dead, nor was there with them aught of food.

Hard by this last market they came upon a palace, magnificently built and decorated; so they entered and found therein banners displayed and drawn swords and bended bows and bucklers hanging by chains of gold and silver and helmets gilded with red gold. In the vestibules stood benches of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with silken stuffs, whereon lay men, whose skin had dried up on their bones; the unknowing had deemed them sleeping, but, for lack of food, they had perished and tasted the cup of death.

When the Amir Mousa saw this, he stood still, glorifying God the Most High and hallowing Him and contemplating the beauty of the palace and the fair perfection of its ordinance, for it was builded after the goodliest and stablest fashion and the most part of its adornment was of green lapis-lazuli; and on the inner door, which stood open, were written, in characters of gold and ultramarine, the following verses:

Consider what thou seëst here, O mortal, and beware And to thine end take thought before thou hence away must fare.
Needs must each dweller in a house depart therefrom; so look Provision of good works, which thee shall profit, thou prepare.
See here a folk, who did adorn their dwellings and are now Become the pledges of the dust for that they wrought whilere.
They builded, but their building served them nought; they hoarded wealth, That might not save them, when their days of life accomplished were.

How much they hoped for, over that which was to them ordained!
Then to the grave they passed and hope availed them nothing there.
Yea, they descended from their height of glory to the strait Abjection
of the tomb, and ill was this their last repair.
Whenas as they buried were, came one that cried to them and said,
"Where be the thrones, the diadems, the raiment ye did wear?
Where be the faces that were veiled and curtained round about, Whereon,
of yore, were bywords made, so bright they were and fair?"
And the tomb answer for them made to him that questioned them,
Saying, "The roses of the cheeks are faded out fore'er.
Long time they ate and drank their fill; now, after pleasant food, Themselves are eaten in their turn; the worms upon them fare."

When the Amir read this, he wept, till he was like to swoon away, and bade write down the verses, after which he passed on into the inner palace and came to a vast hall, at each of whose four corners stood a lofty and spacious pavilion, enamelled with gold and silver and painted in various colours. Midmost the hall was a great fountain of alabaster, surmounted by a canopy of brocade, and in each of the pavilions was a richly-wrought fountain and cistern paved with marble and streams flowing in channels along the floor and meeting in a great cistern of many-coloured marble.

Night dlxxb.

Quoth the Amir to the Sheikh Abdussemed, 'Come, let us visit yonder pavilions.' So they entered the first and found it full of gold and silver and pearls and rubies and other precious stones and metals, besides chests filled with brocades, red and white and yellow. Then they repaired to the second pavilion and opening a closet there, found it full of arms and armour, such as gilded helmets and Davidean[1] hauberks and Indian swords and Arabian spears and Chorasmian maces and other warlike gear. Thence they passed to the third pavilion, wherein they saw closets locked and covered with curtains wrought with all manner broidery. They opened one of these and found it full of

[1] See note, Vol. II. p. 209.

weapons curiously wrought and inlaid with gold and silver and jewels. Then they entered the fourth pavilion and opening one of the closets there, beheld in it great store of eating and drinking vessels of gold and silver, with platters of crystal and cups set with fine pearls and goblets of cornelian and so forth. So they all fell to taking that to which they had a mind, and each of the soldiers carried off what he could.

When they left the pavilions, they saw in the midst of the palace a door of teak-wood, inlaid with ivory and ebony and plated with glittering gold, over which hung a silken curtain, wrought with all manner broideries, and on this door were locks of white silver, that opened by artifice without a key. The Sheikh Abdussemed went boldly up thereto and by the aid of his knowledge and skill, succeeded in opening the locks, whereupon the door swung back and admitted them into a corridor paved with marble and hung with tapestries broidered with figures of all manner beasts and birds, whose bodies were wroughten of red gold and white silver and their eyes of pearls and rubies, amazing all who saw them. Passing along the corridor, they came to a saloon builded all of polished marble, inlaid with jewels, so wonder-clear and smooth that it seemed to the beholder as there were water running over its floor and whoso walked thereon slipped. The Amir bade the Sheikh strew thereon somewhat, that they might walk over it; which being done, they made shift to pass on till they came to a great pavilion of stone, plated with red gold and crowned with a dome of alabaster, about which were set lattice-windows, painted and jewelled with wands of emerald, beyond the competence of any king; nor had they seen aught goodlier in all the place.

Under this dome was a canopy of brocade, reared upon columns of red gold and wrought with figures of birds with feet of emerald, and beneath each bird was

a network of fine pearls. The canopy was spread above a fountain of ivory and cornelian, plated with glittering gold and set with pearls and rubies and other jewels, and thereby stood a couch and a pillar of red gold. On the top of the pillar was perched a bird fashioned of red rubies and holding in its bill a pearl, that shone like a star; and on the couch lay a damsel, as she were the shining sun, never saw eyes a fairer. She was clad in a robe of fine pearls, with a crown of red gold on her head, filleted with gems, and on her brow were two great jewels, whose light was as the light of the sun. On her breast she wore a jewelled amulet, filled with musk and ambergris and worth the empire of the Cæsars, and round her neck hung a collar of rubies and great pearls, [hollow and] full of odoriferous musk. Whoso looked on her would deem her alive and not dead, for it seemed as if she gazed on them with eyes as they were gazelles' eyes, that followed them from side to side.

Night dlxxvi.

The Amir Mousa marvelled at her beauty and was confounded at the blackness of her hair and the redness of her cheeks and said to her, 'Peace be on thee, O damsel!' But she returned not his salutation and the Sheikh said to him, 'O Amir, verily this damsel is dead and there is no life in her; so how shall she return thy greeting? Indeed, she is but a corpse embalmed with exceeding art; her eyes were taken out after her death and quicksilver set under them, after which they were restored to their sockets. Wherefore they glisten and when the air moves the lashes, she seems to wink and it appears to the beholder as though she looked at him, for all she is dead.' At this the Amir marvelled beyond measure and said, 'Glory be to God who subjecteth His creatures unto death!'

Now the couch, on which the damsel lay, had steps, and thereon stood two slaves, one white and the other

black. The first held a mace of iron and the second a sword of watered steel, whose radiance dazzled the eye; and between them, on one of the steps of the couch, lay a golden tablet, whereon were written, in characters of white silver, the following words: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Praise be to God, the Creator of mankind, the Lord of Lords, the Causer of Causes! In the name of the Eternal God, the Everlasting, the Ordainer of Fate and Fortune! O son of Adam, how unknowing art thou in thine unending hope and how heedless of the inevitable end! Knowst thou not that death calleth for thee and hasteneth to seize upon thy soul? Be ready, therefore, for the last journey and provide thee [for thy departure] from the world; for, assuredly, ere long thou shalt leave it. Where is Noah and his progeny? Where be the kings of the Chosroës and the Cæsars? Where the kings of India and Chaldæa and the monarchs of the four quarters of the earth? Where be the sons of Amalek and the giants of old time? Indeed, the dwelling-places are void of them and they have departed lands and kindred. Where be the kings of the Arabs and the princes of the barbarians? They are dead, all of them, and are become corruption. Where be the lords of high degree? They are all dead. Where are Korah and Haman? Where is Sheddad son of Aad? Where be Canaan and the Lord of the Stakes[1]? By Allah, the Reaper of lives[2] hath cut them off and made void the lands of them. Did they provide them against the appointed day or make ready to answer the Lord of all creatures?

O man, if thou know me not, I will acquaint thee with my name: I am Tedmureh, daughter of the kings of the Amalekites, of those who held dominion over the lands and brought low the necks of mankind. I possessed that which never king possessed and was righteous in my rule

[1] Pharaoh, so called in the Koran. [2] Death.

and did justice among my subjects; yea, I gave gifts and largesse and freed slaves, male and female. Thus lived I many years in all ease and delight of life, till death knocked at my gates and calamities took up their abode with me and with my folk; and it was on this wise. There betided us seven successive years of drought, wherein no drop of rain fell on us from heaven and no green thing sprouted for us on the face of the earth. So we ate what was with us of victual and [when we had made an end thereof], we fell upon the cattle and ate them, till there was nothing left. Then I let bring my treasures and meted them with a measure and sent out trusty men to buy food. They visited all the lands in quest thereof and left not a single city unsought, but found no victual and returned to us with the treasure, after a long absence, disappointed, and gave us to know that they could not avail to barter fine pearls for wheat, bushel for bushel neither weight for weight. So, when we despaired of succour, we displayed all our riches and things of price and shutting the gates of the city, resigned ourselves to the judgment of our Lord and committed our affair to our Master. Then we all died, as thou seest us, and left what we had builded and what we had treasured up. This, then, is our story, and after the substance abideth the trace.'

Then they looked at the foot of the tablet and read these verses:

O son of Adam, let not hope make mock of thee, I pray. From all thy hands have treasured up thou shalt be snatched away.
I see thou covetest the world and all its fleeting show, And young and old have done the like before thee many a day.
Wealth, by fair means and foul, they got; but all their hoarded store, When once their term accomplished was, could buy them no delay.
Armies they led and gathered gold galore, then left their wealth And what they'd built and to the tombs departed straight and lay
Down in a narrow lodging in the dust, and there asleep, In pledge for that they wrought of yore, they do abide alway;

As 'twere a caravan, whose folk had halted for the night And set their burdens in a house, wherein there was no stay,
And quoth its lord to them, 'O folk, there is no sojourn here For you;' and so they girt their beasts and fared upon their way,
Misliking, after lighting down to rest them, to depart Forthright again, filled full of care and trouble and dismay.
So look thou furnish thee with store of good shall gladden thee To-morrow, and the fear of God thy practice govern aye.

And under this was written: 'By Allah, the fear of God is the best of all things, the keystone of certainty and the [only] sure stay. Verily, death is the manifest truth and the sure promise, and therein, O man, is the goal and place of returning. Take warning, therefore, by those who have foregone thee to the dust and hastened in the way of the predestined end. Seest thou not that hoariness calls thee to the grave and that the whiteness of thy locks maketh moan for thee of thy life? Wherefore be thou on the watch, ready for thy departure and account. O son of Adam, what hath seduced thee from the service of thy Lord? Where be the peoples of old time? [They are become] a warning to whoso will take warning. Where be the kings of China and the lords of power and prowess? Where is Sheddad ben Aad and where the cities he built and stablished? Where is the proud tyrant Nimrod and Pharaoh who rebelled against God and denied Him? Death followed hard upon them and laid them low, sparing neither great nor small, male nor female; yea, and the Reaper of Mankind cut them off, by Him who maketh the night to return upon the day!

Know, O thou who comest to this place, that she whom thou seest here was not deluded by the world and its frail delights, for it is deceitful, perfidious, a house of perdition and vanity, and salutary to the creature is the remembrance of his sins; wherefore she feared her Lord and made fair her dealings and provided herself against the appointed day. Whoso cometh to our city and God vouchsafeth him

to enter it, let him take of the treasure what he may, but touch not aught that is on my body, for it is the covering of my nakedness and my furniture for the last journey; wherefore let him fear God and despoil nought thereof; else will he destroy himself. This have I set for a warning from me to him and a trust; wherewith, peace be on you and I pray God to keep you from sickness and calamity.'

Night dlxxbii. When the Amir Mousa read this, he wept till he swooned away and presently coming to himself, wrote down all he had seen and heard and was admonished thereby. Then he bade his men fetch the camels and load them with these treasures and vases and jewels. 'O Amir,' quoth Talib, 'shall we leave yonder damsel with what is upon her? Behold, they are things that have not their equal and whose like is not to be found and more perfect than aught else thou takest; nor couldst thou find a goodlier gift wherewithal to propitiate the favour of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'O man,' replied Mousa, 'heardst thou not what the lady says on the tablet? More by token that she gives it in trust to us, and we are no traitors [that we should betray a trust].' 'And shall we,' rejoined Talib, 'because of these words, leave yonder jewels and riches, seeing that she is dead? What should she do with these that are the adornments of the world and the ornament of the live? We have more right to them than she, seeing that one garment of cotton would suffice for her covering.' So saying, he mounted the steps of the couch, but when he came within reach of the two slaves, the mace-bearer smote him on the back and the other struck him with the sword he held in his hand and cut off his head, and he fell down dead. Quoth the Amir, 'May God have no mercy on thy soul! Indeed, there was enough in these treasures, and covetise assuredly dishonoureth a man.' Then he bade admit the troops; so they entered and loaded the camels with the treasures;

after which they went forth the city and the Amir let shut the gate as before.

They fared on along the sea-shore a whole month, till they came in sight of a high mountain, overlooking the sea and full of caves, wherein dwelt a tribe of blacks, speaking an unknown tongue and clad in skins, with hooded cloaks of the same on their heads. When they saw the troops, they took fright and fled into the caverns, whilst their women and children stood at the doors, looking on the strangers. 'O Sheikh,' said the Amir, 'what are these folk?' 'They are those whom we seek,' answered Abdussemed. So they halted and setting down their loads, pitched their tents; whereupon down came the King of the blacks from the mountain and drew near the camp.

Now he understood the Arabic tongue; so, when he came to the Amir, he saluted him and Mousa returned his greeting and entreated him with honour. Then said he to the Amir, 'Are ye men or Jinn?' 'We are men,' answered Mousa; 'but doubtless ye are Jinn, of the vastness of your stature and your dwelling apart in this mountain, that is cut off from mankind.' 'Nay,' rejoined the black; 'we also are children of Adam, of the lineage of Ham, son of Noah, on whom be peace; and this sea is known as El Kerker.' Quoth Mousa, 'O king, what is your religion and what worship ye?' And he answered, saying, 'We worship the God of the heavens and our religion is that of Mohammed, whom God bless and keep!' 'And how came ye by the knowledge of this,' asked the Amir, 'seeing that no prophet inspired of God hath visited this country?' 'Know, O Amir,' replied the King, 'that there appeared to us [aforetime] from out the sea a man, from whom issued a light that illumined the whole horizon, and he cried out, in a voice that was heard of far and near, saying, 'O children of Ham, bow

down to Him who seeth and is not seen and say, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle!" And he added, "I am Aboulabbas el Khizr." Before this, we used to worship one another, but he called us to the service of the Lord of all creatures. Moreover, he taught us to repeat these words, "There is no god save God alone, who hath no partner, and His are the kingdom and the praise. He giveth life and death and He can do all things." Nor do we draw near unto God (to whom belong might and majesty) but with these words, for we know none other; but every Friday eve we see a light upon the face of the earth and hear a voice saying, "Holy and glorious, Lord of the Spirit and the Angels! What He willeth, is, and what He willeth not, is not. Every blessing is of the grace of God and there is neither power nor virtue save in Him the Most High, the Supreme!"

But ye,' said the black king, 'who and what are ye and what brings you to this land?' Quoth Mousa, 'We are officers of the sovereign of Islam, the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan, who hath heard tell of the lord Solomon, son of David, (on whom be peace), and of that which God the Most High bestowed upon him of supreme dominion, how he held sway over Jinn and beasts and birds and was wont, whenas he was wroth with one of the Marids, to shut him in a vessel of brass and stopping its mouth on him with lead, whereon he impressed his seal, to cast him into the sea of Kerker. Now we have heard tell that this sea is in your country; so the Commander of the Faithful hath sent us hither, to fetch him some of these vessels, that he may look thereon and divert himself with their sight. This, then, is our case and what we seek of thee, O King, and we desire that thou further us in the accomplishment of our errand for the Commander of the Faithful.' 'With all my heart,' replied the black king and carrying them to the guest-house, entreated them

with the utmost honour and furnished them with all they needed, feeding them upon fish.

They abode thus three days, at the end of which time he bade his divers fetch some of the vessels of Solomon from out the sea. So they dived and brought up twelve vessels, whereat the Amir and his company rejoiced in the accomplishment of the Khalif's need. Then Mousa gave the King of the blacks many and great gifts, and he in turn made him a present of wonders of the deep, being fish in human form,[1] saying, 'Your entertainment these three days has been of these fish.' Quoth the Amir, 'Needs must we carry some of these to the Khalif, for they will please him more than the vessels of Solomon.'

Then they took leave of the black king and setting out on their homeward journey, travelled till they came to Damascus, when Mousa went in to the Commander of the Faithful and told him all that they had seen and heard, together with the manner of the death of Talib ben Sehl; and the Khalif said, 'Would I had been with you, that I might have seen what you saw!' Then he took the brazen vessels and opened them, one after another, whereupon the devils came forth of them, saying, 'We repent, O prophet of God! Never again will we return to the like of this thing.' And the Khalif marvelled at this, saying, 'Never gave God unto any man the like of that which He bestowed upon Solomon, son of David!' As for the mermaids, they made them tanks of wood, full of water, and laid them therein; but they died of the great heat.

Then the Khalif divided the spoils of the Brazen City among the faithful, and the Amir Mousa sought leave of him to appoint his son governor of Africa in his stead, that he might betake himself to the holy city of Jerusalem, there to worship God. So the Commander of the Faithful

Night dlxxviii.

[1] *i.e.* mermaids.

invested Haroun with the government and Mousa repaired to Jerusalem, where he died. This, then, is all that hath come down to us of the story of the City of Brass, and God [alone] is All-knowing!

THE MALICE OF WOMEN.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a rich and powerful king, who ruled over many men of war and vassals, and he had grown old without being blessed with a son. At last, when he began to despair of male issue, he sought the intercession of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) with the Most High and implored Him, by the glory of His saints and prophets and martyrs and others of the Faithful that were dear to Him, to grant him a son, to be the solace of his eyes and inherit the kingdom after him. Then he rose forthright and withdrawing to his sitting-chamber, sent for the daughter of his uncle[1] and lay with her. By God's grace, she conceived by him, and when the months of her pregnancy were accomplished, she bore a male child, whose face was as the round of the moon on its fourteenth night. When the boy reached the age of five, he was committed to the charge of a sage of the sages, a very learned man, by name Es Sindibad, who taught him science and polite letters, till, by the time he was ten years old, there was none of his time could vie with him in knowledge and good breeding and understanding. Then his father delivered him to a company of Arabian cavaliers, who instructed him in horsemanship and martial exercises, till he became proficient therein and came and went in the listed field and excelled all his peers and all the folk of his day.

[1] *i.e.* his wife.

One day, his governor, being engaged in observing the stars, drew the youth's horoscope and discovered that, if he spoke one word during the seven following days, he would be a dead man. So he went in straightway to the old King and informed him of this, and he said, 'What shall we do, O sage?' 'O King,' answered the other, 'it is my counsel that he be kept in a place of pleasance, where he may divert himself with hearing music, until the seven days be past.' So the King sent for the fairest of his favourites and committed the prince to her, saying, 'Take thy lord into the palace with thee and let him not leave thee till after seven days.' The damsel accordingly took the prince by the hand and carried him to the palace in question, which was compassed about by a running stream, whose banks were planted with all manner fruit-trees and sweet-scented flowers. Moreover, in this palace were forty apartments and in every apartment ten slave-girls, each skilled in some instrument of music, so that, when she played, the palace danced to her melodious strains; and here the prince passed one night.

Now he was handsome and graceful beyond description, and when the King's favourite looked at him, love gat hold upon her heart and she was ravished with him. So she went up to him and offered herself to him, but he made her no answer; whereupon, being confounded by his beauty, she cried out to him and required him of himself and importuned him. Moreover, she threw herself upon him and strained him to her bosom, kissing him and saying, 'O king's son, grant me thy favours and I will set thee in thy father's stead; yea, I will give him to drink of poison, so he may die and thou enjoy his wealth and kingship.' When the prince heard this, he was sore enraged against her and said to her [by signs], 'O accursed one, so it please God the Most High, I will assuredly requite thee this thy deed, whenas I can speak; for I will go out to

my father and tell him, and he will kill thee.' So saying, he arose, in a rage, and went out from her; whereat she feared for herself. So she buffeted her face and rent her clothes and tore her hair and uncovered her head, then went in to the King and threw herself at his feet, weeping and lamenting. When he saw her in this plight, he was sore concerned and said to her, 'What ails thee, O damsel? How is it with thy lord [my son]? Is he not well?' 'O King,' answered she, 'this thy son, whom thy counsellors avouch to be dumb, required me of myself and I repelled him, whereupon he did with me as thou seest and would have slain me; so I fled from him, nor will I ever again return to him nor to the palace.'

When the King heard this, he was beyond measure wroth and calling his Viziers, bade them put the prince to death. However, they said to each other, 'If we do the King's commandment, he will surely repent of having ordered his son's death, for he is passing dear to him and came to him after he had despaired of an heir; and he will turn on us and blame us, saying, "Why did ye not dissuade me from slaying my son?"' So they took counsel together, to turn him from his purpose, and the chief Vizier said, 'I will warrant you from his mischief this day.' Then he went in to the King and prostrating himself before him, craved leave to speak. The King gave him leave, and he said, 'O King, though thou hadst a thousand sons, yet were it no light matter to thee to put one of them to death, on the report of a woman, speak she truth or falsehood; and belike this is a lie and a trick of her against thy son; for indeed, O King, I have heard tell great plenty of stories of the craft and perfidy of women.' Quoth the King, 'Tell me somewhat of that which hath come to thy knowledge thereof.' And the Vizier answered, saying, 'It hath reached me, O King, that

THE KING AND HIS VIZIER'S WIFE.

There was once a king, who was given to the love of women, and one day, being alone in his palace, he espied a beautiful woman on the roof of her house and could not contain himself from falling in love with her. He asked [his servants] to whom the house belonged and they said, "To thy vizier such an one." So he called the vizier in question and despatched him on an errand to a distant part of the kingdom; then, as soon as he was gone, he made an excuse to gain access to his house. When the vizier's wife saw him, she knew him and springing up, kissed his hands and feet and welcomed him. Then she stood afar off, busying herself in his service, and said to him, "O our lord, what is the cause of thy gracious visit? Such an honour is not for the like of me." Quoth he, "Love of thee and desire to thee have moved me to this." Whereupon she kissed the earth before him a second time and said, "O our lord, indeed I am not worthy to be the handmaid of one of the king's servants; whence then have I the great good fortune to be in such favour with thee?" Then the king put out his hand to her, but she said, "This thing shall not escape us; but take patience, O king, and abide with me all this day, that I may make ready for thee somewhat of victual." So the king sat down on his vizier's couch and the lady brought him a book wherein he might read, whilst she made ready the food. He took the book and beginning to read, found therein moral instances and exhortations, such as restrained him from adultery and broke his intent to commit sin.

After awhile, she returned and set before him a collation of ninety dishes of different kinds and colours, and he ate a spoonful of each and found that the taste of them was one. At this, he marvelled exceedingly and said to the

lady, "O damsel, I see these meats to be many [and various of hue], but the taste of them is one." "God prosper the king!" replied she. "This is a parable I have set for thee, that thou mayst be admonished thereby." "And what is its meaning?" asked he. "May God amend the case of our lord the king!" answered she. "In thy palace are ninety concubines of various colours, but their taste is one." When the king heard this, he was ashamed and rising hastily, went out and returned to his palace, without offering her any affront; but, in his haste and confusion, he forgot his signet-ring and left it under the cushion where he had been sitting.

Presently the vizier returned and presenting himself before the king, kissed the earth and made his report to him of the state of the province in question. Then he repaired to his own house and sat down on his couch, and chancing to put his hand under the cushion, found the king's seal-ring. So he looked at it and knew it and taking the matter to heart, held aloof from his wife nor spoke with her for a whole year, whilst she knew not the reason of his anger. At last, being weary of estrangement, she sent for her father and told him the case, whereupon quoth he, "I will complain of him to the king, some day when he is in presence."

Night dlxxix.

So, one day, he went in to the king and finding the vizier and the cadi of the army before him, made his complaint in the following words. "May God the Most High amend the king's case! I had a fair garden, which I planted with my own hand and spent my substance thereon, till it bore fruit and its fruit was ripe, when I gave it to this thy vizier, who ate of it what seemed good to him, then forsook it and watered it not, so that its flowers withered and its beauty departed and it became waste." Then said the vizier, "O king, what this man says is true. I did indeed care for the garden and ate

thereof, till, one day, going thither, I saw the track of the lion there, wherefore I feared him and withdrew from the garden." The king understood the parable and knew that, by the track of the lion, he meant his own seal-ring, which he had forgotten in his house; so he said, "Return to thy garden, O vizier, and fear nothing, for the lion came not near it. It hath been told me that he went thither, but by the honour of my fathers and forefathers, he offered it no hurt." "I hear and obey," answered the vizier, and returning home, made his peace with his wife and thenceforth put faith in her chastity.

And I have heard also, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'that

THE MERCHANT'S WIFE AND THE PARROT.

There was once a merchant who travelled much, and he had a fair wife, whom he loved, and was jealous over her, by reason of the greatness of his love. So he bought her for a hundred dinars a green parrot, which talked like a man and used to tell him all that passed in his absence. Whilst he was abroad on one of his voyages, his wife fell in love with a young Turk, who used to visit her, and she entertained him and lay with him whilst her husband was away. When the latter returned, the parrot told him what had happened, whereat he was sore enraged and offered to kill his wife; but she said, "O man, fear God and return to thy wits. How can a bird have sense or understanding? If thou wilt that I make this manifest to thee, so thou mayst know its truth from its leasing, go this night and lie with one of thy friends, and in the morning come back and question the parrot [of what passed during the night,] and thou wilt see if it speak truth or not."

The husband accordingly went forth and passed the night with one of his friends, whilst, as soon as it was dark, the wife covered the parrot's cage with a piece of leather and fell to sprinkling water on it from above. Moreover, she fanned it sharply with a fan and flashed light on it from the lantern, as it were the glancing lightning, grinding the while at the hand-mill. Thus she did, without ceasing, till daybreak; and the parrot thought that the sprinkling of the water on its cage was rain and the fanning a stormy wind and the flashing of the lantern lightning and the noise of the hand-mill thunder. When her husband returned, she bade him question the parrot; so he went up to the cage and began to talk with the bird and question it of the past night. Quoth it, "O my lord, who could see or hear aught last night?" "And why so?" asked he. "Because," replied it, "of the much rain and wind and thunder and lightning." "Thou liest," said the merchant. "There was nothing of all this last night." Quoth the bird, "I tell thee but what I saw and heard." Then was he certified that the parrot had lied in all it had told him of his wife and would have made his peace with the latter; but she said, "By Allah, I will not be friends with thee, till thou kill this parrot that lied to thee of me." So he rose and killed the parrot; but, a few days after, he saw the young Turk come forth of his house and knew that the parrot had spoken the truth and repented of having slain it. Then he went in at once to his wife and cut her throat and casting her into the river, vowed never to take another wife. This,' said the Vizier, 'I tell thee, O King, that thou mayst know how great is the craft of women and that haste begetteth repentance.'

So the King turned from putting his son to death, but, next day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the ground before him, said, 'O King, why dost thou delay to

do me justice? Indeed, the kings have heard that thou commandest a thing and thy vizier countermandeth it. Now the obedience of kings is in the fulfilment of their commandments, and every one knows thy justice and equity: so do thou me justice on thy son. I have heard tell that

THE FULLER AND HIS SON.

There was once a fuller, who used every day to go forth to the bank of the Tigris, to clean clothes; and his son was wont to go with him and swim about in the river, whilst his father was fulling, nor did the latter forbid him from this. One day, as the boy was swimming, he was taken with cramp in the arms and sank, whereupon the fuller plunged into the water and caught hold of him; but the boy clung about him and pulled him down and so father and son were both drowned. Thus is it with thee, O King. Except thou prevent thy son and do me justice on him, I fear lest both of you sink together, thou and he. Moreover,' continued she, 'for an instance of the malice of men, I have heard tell that

Night dlxxx.

THE LOVER'S TRICK AGAINST THE CHASTE WIFE.

A certain man loved a beautiful and graceful woman, married to a man whom she loved and who loved her. Moreover, she was chaste and virtuous, like unto me, and her lover found no way to her; so, when his patience was at an end, he bethought him of a device to get his will. Now the husband had a young man, whom he had brought up in his house and who was in high trust with him. So the lover addressed himself to the youth and insinuated himself into his favour by presents and fair words, till he

became more obedient to him than the hand to the mouth and did whatever he bade him. One day, he said to him, "Harkye, such an one; wilt thou not bring me into thy dwelling some time when thy lady is gone out?" "Yes," answered the steward; so, when his master was at the shop and his mistress gone forth to the bath, he took his friend and bringing him into the house, showed him all that was therein.

Now the lover was minded to play a trick upon the lady; so he took white of egg, that he had brought with him in a vessel, and sprinkled it on the merchant's bed, unseen of the young man, after which he left the house and went his way. Presently, the merchant came home and going to the bed, to rest himself, found thereon something wet. So he took it up in his hand and looked at it and deemed it human sperm; whereat he looked at the young man with angry eyes and said to him, "Where is thy mistress?" "She is gone forth to the bath and will return forthright," replied he. When the man heard this, his suspicion was confirmed and he said, "Go and bring her back at once." The steward accordingly fetched her and when she came before her husband, the latter sprang upon her and beat her grievously, then, binding her hands behind her, offered to kill her; but she cried out to the neighbours, who came to her, and she said to them, "My husband has beaten me without cause and is minded to kill me, though I know not what I have done." So they said to him, "Why hast thou dealt thus by her?" And he answered, saying, "She is divorced." Said they, "Thou hast no right to maltreat her; either divorce her or use her kindly, for we know her chastity. Indeed, she hath been our neighbour this long time and we know no evil of her." Quoth he, "When I came home, I found on my bed human sperm, and I know not the meaning of this." Upon this, one of those present came forward and said, "Show it to me." When

he saw it, he smelt it and calling for fire and a frying-pan, fried the white of egg. Then he made the husband and the others taste of it, and they were certified that it was white of egg. So the husband was convinced of his wife's innocence and the neighbours made peace between them; and so the lover's wicked trick came to nought. And know, O King, that this is an instance of the malice of men and their perfidy.'

When the King heard this, he bade put his son to death; but the second vizier came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, hasten not to slay thy son, for he was not vouchsafed to his mother but after she had despaired, and we trust that he will live to become a treasure to thy realm and a guardian of thy good. Wherefore, have patience, O King; belike he will speak and excuse himself; and if thou make haste to slay him, thou wilt surely repent, even as the merchant repented.' Quoth the King, 'And how was it with the merchant, O vizier?' 'O King,' answered the vizier, 'I have heard that

THE NIGGARD AND THE LOAVES OF BREAD.

There was once a merchant, who was niggardly in his eating and drinking. One day, he went on a journey to a certain town and as he walked in the market-streets, he came upon an old woman with two cakes of bread. He asked her if they were for sale, and she said, "Yes." So he chaffered with her and bought them at a low price and took them home to his lodging, where he ate them that day. On the morrow, he returned to the same place and finding the old woman there with other two cakes, bought these also; and thus he did twenty days' space, at the end of which time the old woman disappeared. He made

enquiry for her, but could hear nothing of her, till, one day, as he was walking about the streets, he chanced upon her; so he accosted her and asked why she had ceased to attend the market and bring him the two cakes of bread. At first, she evaded giving him a reply; but he conjured her to tell him; so she said, "Know, O my lord, that I was attending upon a certain man, who had an ulcer on his spine, and his doctor used to knead flour with butter into a plaster and lay it on the place of the pain, where it abode all night. In the morning, I used to take the flour and make it into two cakes, which I sold to thee or another; but presently the man died and I was cut off from making the cakes." When the merchant heard this, he repented, whenas repentance availed nothing, saying, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! There is no power and no virtue but in Him, the Most High, the Supreme!" And he repeated the saying of the Most High, "Whatsoever betideth thee of good, it is from God, and whatsoever betideth thee of ill, it is from thyself,"[1] and vomited till he fell sick.

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Moreover, O King,' continued the second vizier, 'I have heard tell, of the malice of women, that

THE LADY AND HER TWO LOVERS.

There was once a man, who was swordbearer to one of the kings, and he loved a certain woman of the common people. One day, he sent his page to her with a message, as of wont between them, and the latter sat down with her and toyed with her. She inclined to him and pressed him to her bosom, whereupon he sought to lie with her and

[1] *Koran* iv. 81.

she consented unto him; but, as they were thus, the swordbearer knocked at the door. So she clapped the young man into an underground chamber there and opened the door to his master, who came in, sword in hand, and sat down on her bed. Then she came to him and sported and toyed with him, kissing him and pressing him to her bosom, and he took her and lay with her.

Presently, her husband knocked at the door and he said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," replied she. Quoth he, "How shall I do?" And she, "Draw thy sword and stand in the vestibule and rail at me and revile me; and when my husband comes in to thee, do thou go forth and go thy ways." He did as she bade him, and when the husband entered, he saw the king's swordbearer standing with his drawn sword in his hand, reviling and threatening his wife; but, when the other saw him, he was ashamed and sheathing his sword, went forth the house. Quoth the man to his wife, "What means this?" And she answered, saying, "O man, how blessed is the hour of thy coming! Thou hast saved a true-believer from death; and it was on this wise. I was on the housetop, spinning, when there came up to me a youth, panting and distracted for fear of death, fleeing from yonder man, who followed hard upon him with his drawn sword. The young man fell down before me, and kissed my hands and feet, saying, 'O my lady, save me from him who would kill me without just cause!' So I hid him in the underground chamber there and presently in came yonder man to me with his naked sword in his hand, demanding the youth. But I denied him to him, whereupon he fell to reviling and threatening me as thou sawest. And praised be God who sent thee to me, for I was at my wits' end and had none to deliver me!"

"Well hast thou done, O woman!" answered the husband. "Thy reward is with God and may He abundantly requite

thee!" Then he went to the trapdoor and called to the page, saying, "Come forth and fear not; no harm shall befall thee." So he came out, trembling for fear, and the husband condoled with him on what had befallen him, saying, "Be of good cheer: none shall hurt thee;" whilst the page called down blessings on his head. Then they both went forth, nor was either aware of that which the woman had contrived. This, then, O King,' said the vizier, 'is one of the tricks of women; so beware lest thou put faith in their speech.'

The King was persuaded and turned from putting his son to death, but, next day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, do me justice on thy son and be not turned from thy purpose by thy Viziers' prate, for there is no good in wicked viziers, and be not as the king, who relied on the word of a certain wicked vizier of his.' 'And how was that?' asked the King. Quoth she, 'It hath been told me, O august and well-advised King, that

THE KING'S SON AND THE OGRESS.

A certain king had a son, whom he loved and favoured over all his other children; and this son said to him one day, "O my father, I have a mind to go a-hunting." So the King bade furnish him and commanded one of his viziers to bear him company and do all he needed during his absence. The vizier accordingly took all that was necessary for the journey and they set out with a retinue of slaves and servants and officers, and fared on till they came to a green and well-watered champaign abounding in pasture and game. Here the prince called a halt and they loosed the hawks and lynxes and dogs and caught great plenty of game, whereat they rejoiced and abode there some days, in all pleasance and delight of life. Then

the Prince gave the signal for departure, but, as they went along, a beautiful gazelle, as if the sun shone from her forehead, that had strayed from the herd, sprang up before the prince, whereupon his soul longed to make prize of her and he coveted her. So he said to the vizier, "I have a mind to follow yonder gazelle." "Do what seemeth good to thee," said the vizier. So the prince rode after the gazelle, till he lost sight of his companions, and chased her all that day till dusk, when she took refuge in the mountains and the darkness closed in upon him. Then he would have turned back, but knew not the way; whereat he was sore concerned and said, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

He rode on all night, in quest of relief, but found none, and when the day appeared, he fared on at hazard, fearful and exhausted with hunger and thirst and the heat of the sun, until midday, when he came in sight of a great city, with massive walls and lofty turrets; but it was ruined and desolate, nor was there any live thing therein save the owl and the raven. As he stood among the ruins, marvelling at their ordinance, his eyes fell on a young and beautiful damsel sitting weeping, under one of the city walls. So he went up to her and said, "Who art thou and who brought thee hither?" "I am called Bint et Temimeh. daughter of Et Tiyakh, King of the Gray Country," answered she. "I went out one day on an occasion, when an Afrit of the Jinn snatched me up and soared with me between heaven and earth; but as he flew, there fell on him a flame of fire and consumed him, and I dropped here, where I have hungered and thirsted these three days; but, when I saw thee, I coveted life."

The prince was smitten with compassion for her and took her up behind him, saying, "Take heart and be of good cheer; for, if God (blessed and exalted be He) restore me to my people and family, I will send thee back

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to thine own people." Then he rode on, praying to God for deliverance, and presently she said to him, "O King's son, put me down, that I may do an occasion under yonder wall." So he drew bridle and she alighted and hid herself behind the wall. He waited for her a long while and she came back, with the foulest of favours; which when he saw, he quaked for fear of her and his hair stood on end and he turned pale. Then she sprang up behind him, wearing the most hideous of aspects, and presently she said to him, "O King's son, what ails thee that I see thee troubled and thy favour changed?" Quoth he, "I have bethought me of somewhat that troubles me." And she, "Seek aid against it of thy father's troops and warriors." "He whom I fear," answered the prince, "cares nothing for troops, neither can warriors affright him." "Then," rejoined she, "aid thyself against him with thy father's wealth and treasures." Quoth he, "He whom I fear will not be satisfied with wealth and treasures." And she, "Ye pretend that ye have in heaven a God who sees and is not seen and who can do all things." "Yes," answered he; "we have none but Him." "Then," said she, "pray thou to Him; haply He will deliver thee from thine enemy." So he raised his eyes to heaven and began to pray with his whole heart, saying, "O my God, I implore Thee to succour me against that which troubles me." Then he pointed to her with his hand, and she fell to the ground, burnt and black as a coal. Therewith he thanked God and praised Him and fared onward. And God (blessed and exalted be He!) of His grace made the way easy to him and guided him into the right road, so that he reached his father's capital, after he had despaired of life. Now all this befell by the contrivance of the vizier, who travelled with him to the end that he might cause him to perish by the way; but God the Most High succoured him. And this,' said the damsel, 'have I told thee, O King, that thou mayst

know that wicked viziers deal not honestly by their kings neither counsel them with sincere intent, wherefore be thou ware of them in this matter.'

The King gave ear to her speech and commanded to put his son to death; but the third vizier said [to his brother viziers,] 'I will warrant you from the King's mischief this day;' and going in to him, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O King, I am thy loyal counsellor and affectionately solicitous for thee and thine estate, and indeed, I give thee a true counsel; it is that thou hasten not to slay thy son, the solace of thine eyes and the fruit of thine entrails. Belike his offence is but a slight matter, which this damsel hath made great to thee; and indeed I have heard tell that the people of two villages once destroyed each other, because of a drop of honey.' 'How was that?' asked the King, and the Vizier answered, saying, 'Know, O King, that

THE DROP OF HONEY.

A certain man used to hunt the wild beasts in the desert, and one day he came upon a grotto in the mountains, where he found a hollow full of bees' honey. So he took somewhat thereof in a water-skin he had with him and throwing it over his shoulder, carried it to the city, followed by a hunting dog which was dear to him. He stopped at the shop of an oilman and offered him the honey for sale and he bought it. Then he emptied it out of the skin, that he might see it, and in the act a drop fell to the ground, whereupon the flies flocked to it and a bird swooped down upon the flies. Now the oilman had a cat, which pounced upon the bird, and the huntsman's dog, seeing the cat, sprang upon it and killed it; whereupon the oilman ran at the dog and killed it and the huntsman in turn leapt upon the oilman and killed him. Now the oilman

was of one village and the huntsman of another; and when the people of the two places heard what had passed, they took up arms and rose on one another in anger, and there befell a sore battle; nor did the sword leave to play amongst them, till there died of them much people, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. And amongst other stories of the malice of women,' continued the vizier, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

THE WOMAN WHO MADE HER HUSBAND SIFT DUST.

A man once gave his wife a dirhem to buy rice; so she went to the rice-seller, who gave her the rice and began to jest with her and ogle her, for she was fair and graceful, saying, "Rice is not good but with sugar, which if thou wilt have, come in with me awhile." So she went in with him into his shop and he did his will of her and said to his slave, "Weigh her out a dirhem's worth of sugar." But he made the slave a privy sign, and the latter, taking the napkin, in which was the rice, emptied it out and put in its place earth, and for the sugar stones, after which he knotted the napkin up again and left it by her. Now the man's object, in doing this, was that she should come to him a second time; so, when she went forth of the shop, he gave her the napkin and she took it, thinking to have in it rice and sugar, and went her way; but when she returned home and set it before her husband, he found in it earth and stones. So, when she came back with the cooking-pot, he said to her, "Did I tell thee that I had aught to build, that thou bringest me earth and stones?" When she saw this, she knew that the rice-seller's slave had tricked her; so she said to her husband, "O man, in my trouble of mind for what hath befallen me, I went to fetch

the sieve and brought the cooking-pot." "What hath troubled thee?" asked he; and she said, "I dropped the dirhem thou gavest me in the market and was ashamed to search for it before the folk; yet I grudged to lose the money, so I gathered up the earth from the place where it fell and brought it away, thinking to sift it [when I came home]. Wherefore I went to fetch the sieve, but brought the cooking-pot instead." Then she fetched the sieve and gave it to her husband, saying, "Do thou sift it; for thine eyes are better than mine." So he sat, sifting the earth, till his face and beard were covered with dust; and he discovered not her trick, neither knew what had befallen her. This then, O King,' said the vizier, 'is an instance of the malice of women, and consider the saying of God the Most High, "Verily, the malice of you [women] is great!"[1] And again, "Indeed, the malice of Satan is weak [in comparison with that of women]."'[2]

The King gave ear to his vizier's speech and was persuaded thereby and by what he cited to him of the sayings of God and the lights of good counsel arose and shone in the firmament of his understanding and he turned from his purpose of putting his son to death. But, on the fourth day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O august King and lord of good counsel, I have made plainly manifest to thee my grievance and thou hast dealt unjustly by me and hast forborne to avenge me on him who hath wronged me, for that he is thy son and the darling of thy heart; but God (blessed and exalted be He!) will succour me against him, even as he succoured the king's son against his father's vizier.' 'And how was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' replied she, 'that

[1] *Koran* xii. 28.

[2] *Koran* iv. 78. This quotation is misapplied, as the words quoted do not bear the construction here indicated.

THE ENCHANTED SPRINGS.

There was once a king who had an only son; and when the latter grew up to man's estate, he contracted him in marriage to another king's daughter. Now she was beautiful and graceful and her cousin had sought her in marriage of her father, but she would none of him. So, when he knew that she was to be married to another, despite and jealousy gat hold on him and he bethought himself and sent a rich present to the vizier of the bridegroom's father, desiring him to use craft to make an end of the prince or go about with him, to bring him to leave his intent of marrying the princess and adding that he was the lady's cousin and that it was jealousy of her that moved him to this. The vizier accepted the present and sent an answer, saying, "Be of good cheer, for I will do all that thou wishest."

Presently, the bride's father wrote to the prince, bidding him to his capital, that he might go in to his daughter, whereupon the king his father despatched him thither, sending with him the vizier aforesaid and a thousand horse, besides presents and litters and tents and pavilions. The vizier set out with the prince, plotting the while in his heart to do him a mischief; and when they came into the desert, he called to mind a certain spring of running water in the mountains there, called Ez Zehra, whereof what man soever drank became a woman. So he called a halt near the place and presently mounting again, said to the prince, "Hast thou a mind to go with me and look upon a spring of water nigh at hand?" The prince assented, knowing not what should befall him in the future, and they rode on, unattended, till they came to the spring. The prince alighted and washed his hands and drank, whereupon he straightway became a woman. When he knew what had befallen him, he cried out and wept till he

swooned away, and the vizier came up to him and said, "What ails thee?" So he told him what had happened, and the vizier feigned to condole with him and weep for his affliction, saying, "God the Most High succour thee in thine affliction! How came this grievous calamity upon thee, and we carrying thee, rejoicing, that thou mightest go in to the king's daughter? Verily, now I know not whether we shall go to her or not; but it is thine to decide. What dost thou bid me do?" Quoth the prince, "Go back to my father and tell him what hath befallen me, for I will not stir hence till this affliction be removed from me or I die in my grief." So he wrote a letter to his father, telling him what had happened, and the vizier took it and set out to return, leaving the troops with the prince and glad at heart for the success of his plot. As soon as he reached the king's capital, he went in to him and telling him what had passed, delivered to him the prince's letter. The king mourned sore for his son and sent for the wise men and masters of hidden arts, that they might discover to him this thing that had happened to the prince, but none could give him an answer. As for the vizier, he sent to the lady's cousin, giving him the glad news of the prince's misfortune, which when he heard, he rejoiced greatly and thought to marry the princess and wrote to the vizier, thanking him exceedingly and sending him rich presents and great store of treasure.

Meanwhile, the prince abode by the stream three days and nights, eating not nor drinking and committing himself, in his strait, unto God, blessed and exalted be He! who disappointeth not whoso putteth his trust in Him. On the fourth night, there came to him a cavalier with a crown on his head, as he were of the sons of the kings, and said to him, "O youth, who brought thee hither?" The prince told him his story, in a voice broken with tears, and the horseman pitied his case and said to him,

"It was thy father's vizier who brought this thing upon thee, for he is the only man alive that knows of this spring: but mount thou behind me and come with me to my dwelling, for thou art my guest this night." "Tell me first who thou art," said the prince; and the other answered, saying, "I am a king's son of the Jinn, as thou a king's son of mankind; so take heart and be of good courage, for I will surely do away thy grief and trouble; and this is an easy thing unto me."

So the prince mounted behind the stranger, and they rode on, leaving the troops, from the first of the day till midnight, when the King's son of the Jinn said to the prince, "Knowst thou how many days' travel we have accomplished in this time?" "Not I," answered the prince, and the other, "We have come a full year's journey for a swift horseman." The prince marvelled at this and said, "How shall I do to return to my people?" "That is not thine affair, but mine," replied the genie. "As soon as thou art quit of thy trouble, thou shalt be with thy people in less than the twinkling of an eye; for that is an easy matter to me." When the prince heard this, he well-nigh lost his wits for excess of joy; it seemed to him as he were in the mazes of a dream and he exclaimed, "Glory be to Him who can restore the wretched to happiness!" They fared on all that night, and on the morrow they found themselves in a green and smiling country, full of towering trees and warbling birds and excellent fair gardens and splendid palaces and running waters and odoriferous flowers. Here the King's son of the Jinn alighted and bidding the prince do the like, took him by the hand and carried him into one of the palaces, where he found a great and puissant king and abode with him all that day, eating and drinking.

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As soon as it was night, the King's son of the Jinn mounted his courser and taking the prince up behind him, fared on swiftly till morning, when they found themselves

in a black and desert country, full of black rocks and stones, as it were a piece of hell; and the prince said to the genie, "What is the name of this land?" "It is called the Black Country," answered the other, "and belongs to one of the Kings of the Jinn, by name Dhoul Jenahain, against whom none of the other kings may prevail, neither may any enter his dominions without his leave; so abide thou here, whilst I go ask it." So saying, he went away and returning after awhile, they fared on again, till they came to a spring of water welling forth of a black rock, and the King's son of the Jinn bade the prince alight and drink. So he lighted down and drank of the spring, and no sooner had he done so than, by God's grace, he became a man as before. At this he was beyond measure rejoiced and said to the genie, "O my brother, how is this spring called?" Quoth the other, "It is called the Women's Spring, for that no woman drinks thereof but she becomes a man: wherefore do thou praise God the Most High and thank Him for thy restoration and mount." So the prince prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High, after which he mounted again and they fared on diligently all that day, till they came to the genie's palace, where the prince passed the night in all delight and solace of life.

They spent the next day in eating and drinking till nightfall, when the genie said to the prince, "Hast thou a mind to return to thy people?" "Yes," replied he; "for indeed I long for them." Then the king's son of the Jinn called one of his father's slaves, Rajiz by name, and said to him, "Take this young man on thy shoulders and let not the day dawn ere he be with his wife and father-in-law." "I hear and obey," answered the slave, and withdrawing awhile, reappeared in the form of an Afrit. When the prince saw this, he lost his senses for affright, but the genie said to him, "Fear not; no harm

shall befall thee. Mount thy horse and leap him on to the Afrit's shoulders." "Nay," answered he; "I will leave my horse with thee and bestride his shoulders myself." So he bestrode the Afrit's shoulders and shut his eyes, as the genie bade him; whereupon the Afrit rose with him into the air and ceased not to fly between earth and heaven, whilst the prince was unconscious, nor was the last third of the night come before he lighted down with him on the roof of his father-in-law's palace. Then said the Afrit, "Alight and open thine eyes; for this is the palace of thy father-in-law and his daughter." So he alighted and the Afrit flew away and left him on the roof of the palace.

When the day broke and the prince recovered from his trouble, he went down into the palace and his father-in-law, espying him, came to meet him and marvelled to see him descend from the roof of the palace, saying, "We see folk enter by the doors; but thou comest from the skies." Quoth the prince, "What God (may He be hallowed and glorified!) wills, cometh to pass." And he told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, whereat the king marvelled and rejoiced in his safety and bade his vizier make ready splendid bride-feasts. So did he and they held the marriage festival, after which the prince went in to his bride and abode with her two months, then departed with her for his father's capital: but, as for the lady's cousin, he died of jealousy and despite. When the prince and his bride drew near his father's city, the king came out to meet them with his troops and viziers, and so God (blessed and exalted be He!) aided the prince against his bride's cousin and his father's vizier. And I pray God the Most High,' added the damsel, 'to aid thee against thy viziers, O King, and I beseech thee to do me justice on thy son!'

When the King heard this (it being the fourth day), he bade put his son to death; but the fourth vizier entered and kissing the ground before him, said, 'May God stablish and protect the King! O King, be deliberate in doing this thou art resolved upon, for the wise man doth nothing till he have considered the issue thereof, and the proverb says, "He who looks not to the issue of his actions, fortune is no friend to him;" and whoso acteth without consideration, there befalleth him what befell the bathkeeper with his wife.' 'And what was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the vizier, 'that

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THE VIZIER'S SON AND THE BATHKEEPER'S WIFE.

There was once a bathkeeper, to whom resorted the notables and chiefs of the folk, and one day there came in to him a handsome young man of the sons of the viziers, who was fat and stout of body. So he stood to serve him and when the young man put off his clothes, he saw not his yard, for that it was hidden between his thighs, by reason of the excess of his fat, and there appeared thereof but what was like unto a filbert. At this, the bathkeeper fell a-lamenting and smiting hand upon hand, which when the youth saw, he said to him, "O bathkeeper, what ails thee to lament thus?" And he answered, saying, "O my lord, my lamentation is for thee, because thou art in sore straits, for all thy fair fortune and goodliness and exceeding grace, seeing thou hast nought wherewithal to do delight, like unto other men." Quoth the young man, "Thou sayst sooth, but thou mindest me of somewhat I had forgotten." "What is that?" asked the bathkeeper, and the youth said, "Take this dinar and fetch me a handsome woman, that I may prove myself on her." So he took the money

and betaking himself to his wife, said to her, "O woman, there is come in to me in the bath a young man of the sons of the viziers, as he were the moon on the night of her full; but he hath no yard like other men, for that which he hath is but some small matter like unto a filbert. I lamented over his youth and he gave me this dinar and begged me to fetch him a woman, on whom he might approve himself. Now thou art worthier of the money than another, and no harm shall betide us from this, for I will protect thee. So do thou sit with him awhile and laugh at him and take this dinar from him." So she took the dinar and rising, adorned herself and donned the richest of her clothes. (Now she was the fairest woman of her time.) Then she went out with her husband, and he carried her in to the young man in a privy place. When she came in to him, she looked at him and finding him a handsome youth, fair of favour, as he were the moon at its full, was confounded at his beauty and grace; and on like wise his heart and wit were amazed at sight of her. So he rose forthright and locking the door, took the damsel in his arms and pressed her to his bosom and they embraced, whereupon the young man's yard rose on end, as it were that of an ass, and he mounted her breast and swived her, whilst she sobbed and sighed and writhed and wriggled under him. Now the bathkeeper was standing behind the door, awaiting what should betide between them, and he began to call her, saying, "O Umm Abdallah, enough! Come out, for the day is long upon thy sucking child." Quoth the youth, "Go forth to thy child and come back;" but she said, "If I go forth from thee, my soul will depart my body; so I must either leave the child to die of weeping or let him be reared an orphan, without a mother." So she ceased not to abide with him, till he had done his desire of her half a score times, what while her husband stood at the door, calling her and crying

out and weeping and imploring succour. But none came to him and he ceased not to do thus, saying, "I will kill myself!" till at last, finding no way of access to his wife and being distraught with rage and jealousy he went up to the top of the bath and casting himself down therefrom, died.

Moreover, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'there hath reached me another story of the malice of women.' 'What is that?' asked the King, and the Vizier said, 'Know, O King, that

THE WIFE'S DEVICE TO CHEAT HER HUSBAND.

There was once a woman, who had no equal in her day for beauty and grace and perfection; and a certain lewd fellow, setting eyes on her, fell passionately in love with her, but she was chaste and inclined not to adultery. It chanced one day that her husband went on a journey to a certain town, whereupon the young man fell to sending to her many times a day; but she made him no reply. At last, he resorted to an old woman, who dwelt hard by, and complained to her of his suffering for love of the woman and his longing to enjoy her. Quoth she, "I will warrant thee this; no harm shall befall thee, for I will surely bring thee to thy desire, if it please God the Most High." So he gave her a dinar and went his way. Next day she went in to the woman and clapping up an acquaintance with her, fell to visiting her daily, eating the morning with her and the evening meal and carrying away food for her children. Moreover, she used to sport and jest with her, till the wife became corrupted and could not endure an hour without her company.

Now she was wont, when she left the lady's house, to feed a bitch, that was in that quarter, with the fragments

that remained over, and thus she did day by day, till the bitch became fond of her and followed her wherever she went. One day she took a cake of dough and putting therein much pepper and butter, gave it to the bitch to eat, whereupon the animal's eyes began to water, for the heat of the pepper, and she followed the old woman, weeping. When the lady saw this, she was amazed and said to the old woman, "O my mother, what ails this bitch to weep?" "O my daughter," answered she, "hers is a strange story. Know that she was once a most lovely and accomplished young lady and a close friend of mine. A young man of the quarter fell in love with her and his passion increased on him, till he took to his pillow, and he sent to her many times, begging her to have compassion on him, but she refused, albeit I gave her good counsel, saying, 'O my daughter, have pity on him and consent to that which he wishes.' She gave no heed to my advice, until, at last, the young man's patience failing him, he complained to one of his friends, who cast an enchantment on her and changed her into a bitch. When she saw what had befallen her and that there was none to pity her save myself, she came to my house and began to fawn on me and lick my hands and feet and whine and shed tears, till I recognized her and said to her, 'How often did I not warn thee? But my advice profited thee nothing.' However, I had compassion on her case and kept her by me; and as often as she bethinks herself of her former estate, she weeps thus."

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When the lady heard this, she was taken with great fear and said, "By Allah, O my mother, thou affrightest me with this thy story." "Why so?" asked the old woman. "Because," answered the lady, "a certain handsome young man fell in love with me and hath sent many times to me, but hitherto I have repelled him; and now I fear lest there befall me the like of what befell this bitch." "O my

daughter," rejoined the old woman, "look thou to what I counsel thee and beware of crossing me, for I am in great fear for thee. If thou know not his abiding-place, describe him to me, that I may fetch him to thee, and let not any one's heart be angered against thee." So the lady described him to her, and she feigned not to know him and said, "When I go out, I will ask after him." But when she left the lady, she went straight to the young man and said to him, "Be of good cheer, for I have played with the girl's wits, [so that she hath consented;] so come thou to-morrow at noonday and wait at the end of the street, till I come and carry thee to her house, where thou shalt take thine ease with her the rest of the day and all night long." At this the young man rejoiced greatly and gave her half a score dinars, saying, "When I have gotten my desire [of her,] I will give thee other ten dinars."

Then she returned to the lady and said to her, "I have seen him and spoken with him on the matter. I found him exceeding wroth with thee and minded to do thee hurt, but I plied him with fair words till he agreed to come to-morrow at the time of the call to midday prayer." When the lady heard this, she rejoiced exceedingly and said, "O my mother, if he keep his promise, I will give thee ten dinars." Quoth the old woman, "Look to none but me to bring him to thee." When the next day came, she said to the lady, "Make ready the morning meal and adorn thyself and don thy richest clothes and ornaments, whilst I go and fetch him to thee." Accordingly, she clad herself in her richest apparel and made ready food, whilst the old woman went out to look for the young man. The latter came not and she went round looking for him, but could come by no news of him; so she said to herself, "What is to be done? Shall the food she has made ready be wasted and I lose the reward she promised me? Indeed, I will not lose my pains thus, but will look her out

another man and carry him to her." So she walked about the streets till her eye fell on a handsome and elegant young man, who bore on his face the traces of travel.

Now this was the lady's husband; but she knew it not; so she went up to him and saluted him, saying, "Hast thou a mind to meat and drink and a girl adorned and ready?" "Where is this to be had?" asked he. "At home, in my house," answered she and carrying him to his own house, knocked at the door. The lady opened to them and hastened in again, to make an end of her dressing and perfuming; whilst the old woman brought the husband into the saloon and made him sit down. Presently, in came the lady, who no sooner set eyes on her husband than she knew him and guessed how the case stood; nevertheless, she was not taken aback and forthwith bethought her of a device to hoodwink him. "Is this how thou keepest our contract?" cried she. "How canst thou betray me and deal thus with me? Know that, when I heard of thy coming, I sent this old woman to try thee and she hath made thee fall into that against which I warned thee: so now I am certified of thine affair and that thou hast broken faith with me. I thought thee chaste till now, till I saw thee, with my own eyes, in this old woman's company and knew that thou didst frequent loose women."

So saying, she pulled off her slipper and fell to beating him about the head, whilst he excused himself and swore to her by God the Most High that he had never in his life been untrue to her nor had done aught of that whereof she suspected him. But she stinted not to weep and scream and beat him, crying out and saying, "Come to my help, O Muslims!" till he laid hold of her mouth with his hand and she bit it. Moreover, he humbled himself to her and kissed her hands and feet, whilst she continued to cuff him and would not be appeased. At last, she made a privy sign to the old woman to come and hold her hand from

him. So she came up to her and kissed her hands and feet, till she made peace between them and they sat down together; whereupon the husband began to kiss her hands, saying, "God requite thee with all good, for that thou hast delivered me from her!" And the old woman marvelled at the wife's cunning and ready wit. This, then, O King,' said the vizier, 'is one of many instances of the craft and malice and perfidy of women.'

When the King heard this story, he was persuaded by it and turned from his purpose to kill his son; but, on the fifth day, the damsel came in to him with a cup of poison in her hand, calling aloud for help and buffeting her cheeks and face, and said to him, 'O King, either thou shalt do me justice and avenge me on thy son, or I will drink this cup of poison and die, and my blood will be on thy head at the Day of Resurrection. Thy viziers accuse me of malice and perfidy, but there be none in the world more perfidious than men. Hast thou not heard the story of the goldsmith and the Cashmere singing-girl?' 'What befell them, O damsel?' asked the King; and she answered, saying, 'It hath come to my knowledge, O august King, that

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THE GOLDSMITH AND THE CASHMERE SINGING-GIRL.

There lived once, in a city of Persia, a goldsmith who delighted in women and in drinking wine. One day, being in the house of one of his friends, he saw painted on the wall the figure of a beautiful damsel, never beheld eyes a fairer or a more pleasant. He looked at the picture again and again, marvelling at its beauty, and fell so desperately in love with it, that he sickened for passion and came near to die. It chanced that one of his friends came to visit him and sitting down by him, enquired how he did and

what ailed him. "O my brother," replied the goldsmith, "that which ails me is love, and it befell on this wise. I saw the figure of a woman painted on the wall of my brother such an one's house and became enamoured of it." Quoth the other, "This was of thy lack of wit; how couldst thou fall in love with a painted figure on a wall, a thing that can neither harm nor profit, that seeth not neither heareth, that neither taketh nor withholdeth." "Surely," said the sick man, "he who painted yonder picture must have limned it after the likeness of some beautiful woman." "Belike," rejoined his friend, "he painted it from imagination." "In any case," replied the goldsmith, "I am dying for love of the picture, and if there live the original thereof in the world, I pray God to keep me in life, till I see her."

When those who were present went out, they enquired for the painter of the picture and finding that he had departed to another town, wrote him a letter, complaining of their friend's case and asking whether he had drawn the figure of his own invention or copied it from a living model; to which he replied that he had painted it after a certain singing-girl belonging to one of the viziers in the city of Cashmere in the land of Hind. When the goldsmith heard this, he set out for Cashmere, where he arrived, after much travail, and tarried awhile. There he clapped up an acquaintance with a certain druggist, a fellow of a keen and sprightly wit, and being one day in company with him, questioned him of their king and his polity; to which the other answered, saying, "Our king is just and righteous in his governance, equitable and beneficent to his subjects, and misliketh nothing in the world save sorcerers; but, whenever a sorcerer or sorceress falls into his hands, he casts them into a pit without the city and there leaves them to die of hunger." Then he questioned him of the king's viziers, and the druggist told

him of each vizier, his fashion and condition, till the talk came round to the singing-girl and he told him that she belonged to such a vizier.

The goldsmith took note of the latter's abiding-place and waited some days, till he had devised a scheme to his mind; and one night of rain and thunder and stormy winds, he provided himself with thieves' tackle and repaired to the house of the vizier in question, where he grappled a rope ladder with grappling irons to the battlements and climbed up to the roof of the palace. Thence he descended to the inner court and making his way into the harem, found all the slave-girls lying asleep, each on her own couch and amongst them a damsel, as she were the moon on its fourteenth night, lying on a couch of alabaster and covered with a coverlet of cloth of gold. At her head stood a candle of ambergris, and at her feet another, each in a candlestick of glittering gold, and under her pillow lay a casket of silver, in which were her jewels. He raised the coverlet and drawing near her, considered her straitly, and behold, it was she whom he desired and of whom he was come in quest. So he took out a knife and wounded her in the hinder parts, a manifest [but superficial] wound, whereupon she awoke in terror; but, when she saw him, she was afraid to cry out, thinking he came to steal her jewels; so she said to him, "Take the box and what is therein, but slay me not, for it will profit thee nothing." So he took the box and went away.

On the morrow, he donned clothes after the fashion of men of learning and doctors of the law and taking the casket, went in therewith to the king of the city, before whom he kissed the earth and said to him, "O king, I am a loyal well-wisher to thee and come hither, a pilgrim to thy court from the land of Khorassan, attracted by the report of thy just governance and righteous dealing with thy subjects and minded to be under thy standard. I

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reached this city yestereve and finding the gate shut, lay down to sleep without: but, as I lay betwixt sleep and wake, I saw four women come up, one riding on a broom, another on a wine-jar, a third on an oven-peel and a fourth on a black bitch, and knew that they were witches making for the city. One of them came up to me and kicked me with her foot and beat me grievously with a fox's tail she had in her hand, whereat I was wroth and smote her with a knife I had with me, wounding her in the hinder parts, as she turned to flee from me. When she felt the wound, she fled before me and in her flight let drop this casket, which I picked up and opening, found therein these costly jewels. Wherefore do thou take it, for I have no need of it, being a wanderer in the mountains, who have put away the world from my heart and renounced it and all that is in it, seeking [only] the favour of God the Most High." Then he set the casket before the king and went away. The king opened the box and emptying out all the trinkets it contained, fell to turning them over, till he chanced upon a necklace of which he had made gift to the vizier to whom the girl belonged. So he called the vizier in question and said to him, "This is the necklace I gave thee?" He knew it and answered, "It is; and I gave it to a singing-girl of mine." Quoth the king, "Fetch her to me forthwith." So he fetched her to him, and he said, "Uncover her hinder parts and see if there be a wound therein or no." The vizier accordingly bared her backside and finding a knife wound there, said, "Yes, O my lord, there is a wound." Then said the king, "Doubtless, this is the witch of whom the devotee told me," and bade cast her into the witches' well. So they carried her thither forthwith.

As soon as it was night and the goldsmith knew that his plot had succeeded, he repaired to the pit, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, and entering into con-

verse with the warder, sat talking with him till a third part of the night was past, when he broached the matter to him, saying, "Know, O my brother, that this girl is innocent of that they lay to her charge and that it was I brought this calamity upon her." Then he told him the whole story, adding, "Take this purse of a thousand dinars and give me the damsel, that I may carry her to my own land, for the money will profit thee more than keeping her in prison; moreover God will requite thee for us, and we will both offer up prayers for thy safety and prosperity." When the warder heard this story, he marvelled exceedingly at this device and taking the money, delivered the girl to the goldsmith, on condition that he should not abide one hour with her in the city. So the goldsmith took the girl and fared on with her, without ceasing, till he reached his own country, and so he attained his desire. See then, O King,' said the damsel, 'the malice of men and their wiles. Now thy viziers hinder thee from doing me justice [on thy son], but to-morrow both thou and I will stand before the Just Judge, and He shall do me justice on thee, O King.'

When the King heard this, he commanded to put his son to death, but the fifth vizier came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O mighty King, delay and hasten not to slay thy son, for oftentimes haste engendereth repentance; and I fear for thee lest thou repent, even as did the man who never laughed again.' 'And how was that, O vizier?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the Vizier, 'that

THE MAN WHO NEVER LAUGHED AGAIN.

There was once a man who was rich in lands and houses and goods and slaves, and he died and went to the mercy of God the Most High, leaving a young son, who, when he grew up, gave himself to feasting and hearing music

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and singing and wasted his substance in gifts and prodigality, till he had squandered all the money his father left him. Then he betook himself to selling his slaves and lands and houses and spent the proceeds on like wise, till he was reduced to beggary and must needs labour for his living. He abode thus a year's space, at the end of which time he was sitting one day under a wall, awaiting who should hire him, when there came up to him a man of comely aspect and apparel and saluted him. "O uncle," said the young man, "hast thou known me aforetime?" "Not so, O my son," replied the other, "I know thee not at all; but I see the trace of gentle breeding on thee, despite thy present case." "O uncle," rejoined the poor man, "needs must Fate and fore-ordained fortune be accomplished; but, O uncle, bright of face, hast thou any occasion wherein thou wouldst employ me?" "Yes," said the other, "I wish to employ thee in an easy matter." "What is it?" asked the young man, and the stranger, "I have with me ten old men in one house, but we have none to serve us; so, if thou wilt take service with us, thou shalt have food and clothing to thy heart's content, besides what cometh to thee of money and other good, and haply God will restore thee thy fortune by our means." "With all my heart," replied the youth. "But," said the other, "I have a condition to impose on thee." Quoth he, "What is that?" And the old man said, "O my son, it is that thou keep our secret in what thou seest us do, and if thou see us weep, that thou question us not of the cause of our weeping." "It is well, O uncle," replied the young man; whereupon the other bade him, "Come with me, O my son, with the blessing of God the Most High!"

So he followed him to the bath, where he caused cleanse his body of the crusted dirt, after which he sent for a handsome garment of linen and clad him therein. Then he carried him to a lofty and spacious house, wherein were

sitting-chambers facing one another and saloons, in each a fountain of water, with the birds warbling over it, and windows on every side, giving upon a fair garden within the house. The old man brought him into one of the sitting-chambers, which was paved and lined with vari-coloured marble and spread with silken carpets, and the roof thereof decorated with ultramarine and glittering gold; and here he found ten old men in mourning apparel, seated opposite one another, weeping and wailing. He marvelled at their case and was about to ask the reason, when he remembered the condition and held his peace. Then he who had brought him delivered to him a chest containing thirty thousand dinars and said to him, "O my son, spend from this chest what is fitting for our entertainment and thine own; and be thou faithful and remember that wherewith I charged thee as to secrecy." "I hear and obey," answered he and served them days and nights, till one of them died, whereupon his fellows washed him and shrouded him and buried him in a garden behind the house; nor did death cease to take them, one after another, till there remained but he who had hired the youth.

Then the two dwelt together alone for years and years, nor was there with them a third save God the Most High, till the old man fell sick; and when the other despaired of his life, he went up to him and condoling with him, said, "O uncle, I have served you twelve years and have not failed of your service a single hour, but have been loyal and faithful to you and served you with my might." "Yes, O my son," answered the old man, "thou hast served us [well; but now] my comrades are gone to the mercy of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and needs must I die also." "O my lord," said the other, "thou art in danger of death and I would fain have thee acquaint me with the cause of your weeping and wailing and of your unceasing mourning and lamentation." "O my son,"

answered the old man, "it concerns thee not to know this, so importune me not of what I may not do: for I have vowed to God the Most High that I would acquaint none of His creatures with this, lest he be afflicted with what befell me and my comrades. If, then, thou desire to be delivered from that into which we fell, look thou open not yonder door," and pointed to a certain part of the house; "but, if thou have a mind to suffer what we have suffered, then open it and thou shalt learn the cause of that which thou hast seen us do; and whenas thou knowest it, thou wilt repent, what time repentance will avail thee not." Then his sickness increased on him and he accomplished his term [of life] and departed to the presence of his Lord; and the young man washed him with his own hands and shrouded him and buried him with his comrades; after which he abode alone in the house and took possession of all that was therein.

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Yet he was uneasy and troubled concerning the case of the old man, till, one day, as he sat pondering the words of his dead master and his injunction not to open the door, he suddenly bethought himself to go and look for it. So he repaired to the part whither the dead man had pointed and sought till, in a dark and unfrequented corner, he found a little door, over which the spider had spun its webs and which was fastened with four locks of steel. Then he recalled the old man's warning and restrained himself and went away; and he held aloof from it seven days, whilst all the time his heart would have him open it. On the eighth day his curiosity got the better of him and he said, "Come what will, I must open the door and see what will happen to me. Nothing can avert what is decreed and fore-ordained of God the Most High nor doth aught befall but by His will." So saying, he rose and broke the locks and opening the door, found himself in a narrow passage, which he followed for three hours, at the

end of which time he came out on the shore of a vast ocean and fared on along the beach, marvelling at this sea, [of which he had no knowledge] and turning right and left, till, presently, a great eagle swooped down upon him and seizing him in its talons, flew away with him betwixt heaven and earth, till it came to an island in the midst of the sea, where it cast him down and flew away, leaving him dazed and knowing not whither he should go.

After awhile, as he sat pondering his case, he caught sight of the sails of a ship in the midst of the sea, as it were a star in the mid-heaven; and his heart clave to it, so haply his deliverance might be therein. He continued gazing at the ship, till it drew near, when he saw that it was a galley builded all of ivory and ebony, inlaid with glittering gold, with oars of sandal and aloes-wood. In it were ten damsels, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons, who, when they saw him, came ashore to him and kissed his hands, saying, "Thou art the king, the bridegroom!" Then there came to him a young lady, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky, bearing a silken napkin, wherein were a royal robe and a crown of gold set with all manner rubies and pearls. She threw the robe over him and set the crown on his head, after which the damsels bore him in their arms to the galley, where he found all kinds of silken carpets and hangings of various colours. Then they spread the sails and stretched out into mid-ocean.

[Quoth the young man] Indeed, when they put to sea with me, meseemed it was a dream and I knew not whither they went with me. Presently, we drew near to land, and I saw the shore full of troops magnificently arrayed and clad in complete steel, none knoweth their number save God, blessed and exalted be He! As soon as the galley had made fast to the land, they brought me five horses of noble breeds, housed and saddled with gold, inlaid with

all manner pearls and precious stones. I chose out one of them and mounted it, whilst they led the four others before me. Then they raised the banners and the standards over my head, whilst the troops ranged themselves right and left, and we set out, with drums beating and cymbals clashing, and rode on,—whilst I debated in myself whether I were on sleep or on wake, believing not in that my estate, but taking all this for the pageant of a dream,—till we drew near to a green champaign, full of palaces and gardens and trees and streams and flowers and birds chanting the praises of God, the One, the Victorious. At our approach, an army poured out from amid the palaces and gardens, as it were the torrent, when it pours down [from the mountains,] and overflowed the plain. The troops halted at a little distance from me and there rode forth from amongst them a king, preceded by some of his chief officers on foot.

He came up to the young man and dismounted, whereupon the latter dismounted also, and they saluted each other after the goodliest fashion. Then said the King, "Come with us, for thou art my guest." So they took horse again and rode on in great state, conversing as they went, till they came to the royal palace, where they alighted and the king taking the young man by the hand, led him into the palace, followed by his suite, and making him sit down on a throne of gold, seated himself beside him. Then he unbound the chinband from his face; and behold, the king was a young lady, like the sun shining in the cloudless sky, accomplished in beauty and elegance and amorous grace and all perfection. Quoth she to the young man, who was lost in wonder at her beauty and grace and at the splendour and affluence he saw about him, "Know, O King, that I am the queen of this country and that all the troops thou hast seen, whether horse or foot, are women, there is no man amongst them; for in

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this our state the men delve and sow and reap and occupy themselves with the tillage of the earth and other mechanical crafts and arts, whilst the women govern and fill the great offices of state and bear arms."

At this he marvelled past measure and as they were in discourse, in came a tall gray-haired old woman of venerable and majestic aspect, and it was told him that this was the vizieress. Quoth the queen to her, "Bring me the Cadi and the witnesses." So she went out to do this, and the queen, turning to him, conversed with him in friendly fashion and enforced herself to reassure him and do away his shamefastness with speech blander than the zephyr, saying, "Art thou content to take me to wife?" Thereupon he arose and would have kissed the earth before her; but she forbade him and he replied, saying, "O my lady, I am the least of thy servants." "Seest thou all these servants and soldiers and riches and treasures?" asked she; and he answered, "Yes." Quoth she, "All these are at thy commandment; dispose of them and give and bestow as seemeth good to thee." Then she pointed to a closed door and said, "All these things are at thy disposal, save yonder door; that shalt thou not open, else wilt thou repent, when repentance will avail thee not." Hardly had she made an end of speaking when the vizieress entered, followed by the Cadi and the witnesses, all old women of reverend and majestic aspect, with their hair streaming over their shoulders; and the queen bade them draw up the contract of marriage between herself and the young man. So they performed the marriage-ceremony and the queen made a great bride-feast, to which she bade all the troops; and after they had eaten and drunken, he went in to his bride and found her a clean maid.

So he did away her maidenhead and abode with her seven years in all delight and solace of life, till, one day, he bethought himself of the forbidden door and said in

himself, "Except there were therein treasures greater and finer than any I have seen, she had not forbidden me therefrom." So he rose and opened the door, when, lo, behind it was the very bird that had brought him to the island, and it said to him, "An ill welcome to a face that shall never prosper!" When he saw it and heard what it said, he fled from it; but it followed him and seizing him in its talons, flew with him an hour's journey betwixt heaven and earth, till it set him down in the place whence it had first carried him off and flew away. When he came to his senses, he called to mind his late great and glorious estate and all the honour and fair fortune he had lost and fell to weeping and wailing.

He abode two months on the sea-shore, where the bird had set him down, hoping yet to return to his wife, till, as he sat one night wakeful, mourning and musing, he heard one speaking and saying, "How great were the delights! Far, far from thee is the return of that which is past!" When he heard this, he redoubled in his regrets and despaired of recovering his wife and his late fair estate; so he returned, weary and broken-hearted, to the house where he had dwelt with the old men and knew that they had fared even as he and that this was the cause of their weeping and mourning; wherefore he held them excused. Then, being overcome with chagrin and regret, he took to his chamber and gave himself up to mourning and lamentation; and he ceased not to weep and lament and left eating and drinking and pleasant scents and laughter, till he died and they buried him beside the old men. See, then, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'what cometh of haste; verily, it is unpraiseworthy and begetteth repentance; and in this I give thee true and loyal counsel.'

Night dxci. When the King heard the Vizier's story, he turned from slaying his son; but, on the sixth day, the favourite came in to him with a naked knife in her hand and said to him,

'Know, O my lord, that, except thou hearken to my complaint and protect thy right and thine honour against these thy viziers, who are banded together against me, to do me wrong, I will kill myself with this knife, [and my blood will testify against thee on the Day of Judgment]. Indeed, they pretend that women are full of tricks and malice and perfidy and design by this to defeat me of my right and hinder the King from doing me justice; but, behold, I will prove to thee that men are more perfidious than women by the story of a king of the kings and how he gained access to the wife of a certain merchant.' 'And what passed between them?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O august King,' replied she, 'that

THE KING'S SON AND THE MERCHANT'S WIFE.

A certain jealous merchant had a beautiful wife; and of the excess of his fearfulness and jealousy of her, he would not abide with her in any town, but built her a pavilion without the city, apart from all other buildings, and fortified it with high walls and strong doors, secured with curious locks; and when he had occasion to go into the city, he locked the doors and hung the keys about his neck. One day, when the merchant was abroad, the king's son of the city came forth, to take his pleasure in the open country without the walls, and coming to the solitary pavilion, stood still to examine it. Presently, he caught sight of a lovely lady looking out of one of the windows and being smitten with amazement at her grace and beauty, cast about for a means of getting to her, but could find none. So he called to one of his attendants, who brought him pen and paper and inkhorn, and wrote her a letter, setting forth his case for love of her. Then he set it on the point of an arrow and shot it at the pavilion, and it fell

in the garden, where the lady was then walking with her maidens. She bade one of the latter hasten and bring her the letter, for she could read writing; and when she had read it and saw what he said in it of his love and passion and longing, she wrote him a reply, to the effect that she was smitten with a yet fiercer passion for him and threw the letter down to him from one of the windows of the pavilion. When he saw her, he picked up the reply and after reading it, came under the window and said to her, "Let me down a string, that I may send thee this key, which do thou take and keep by thee." So she let down a string and he tied the key to it.

Then he went away and repairing to one of his father's viziers, complained to him of his passion for the lady and that he could not live without her; and the vizier said, "And how dost thou bid me contrive?" Quoth the prince, "I would have thee lay me in a chest and commit it to the merchant, feigning to him that it is thine and desiring him to keep it for thee in his country-house some days, that I may have my will of her; then do thou demand it back from him." The vizier answered, "With all my heart." So the prince returned to his palace and fixing the padlock, the key whereof he had given the lady, on a chest he had by him, entered the latter, whereupon the vizier locked it upon him and setting it on a mule, carried it to the pavilion of the merchant. The latter, seeing the vizier, came forth to him and kissed his hands, saying, "Belike our lord the vizier hath some need or business which we may have the pleasure of accomplishing for him?" "Yes," answered the vizier; "I would have thee set this chest in the priviest place in thy house and keep it till I seek it of thee." So the merchant made the porter carry it in and set it down in one of his storehouses, after which he went out upon some occasion of his. As soon as he was gone, his wife went up to the chest and

unlocked it with the key the prince had given her, whereupon there came forth a youth like the moon. When she saw him, she donned her richest apparel and carried him to her sitting-chamber, where they abode seven days, eating and drinking and making merry; and as often as her husband came home, she put the prince back into the chest and locked it upon him.

One day, the King asked for his son and the vizier hurried off to the merchant's [town] house and sought of him the chest. The merchant accordingly repaired in haste to his pavilion, at a time other than of his wont, and knocked at the door. When his wife was ware of him, she hurried the prince back into the chest, but, in her confusion, forgot to lock it. The merchant bade the porters take it up and carry it to his house in the town. So they took up the box by the lid, whereupon it flew open and discovered the prince lying within. When the merchant saw him and knew him for the King's son, he went out to the vizier and said to him, "Go in, thou, and take the King's son; for none of us may lay hands on him." So the vizier went in and taking the prince, went away with him. As soon as they were gone, the merchant put away his wife and swore that he would never marry again. And I have heard tell also, O King,' continued the damsel, 'that

Night dxcii.

THE PAGE WHO FEIGNED TO KNOW THE SPEECH OF BIRDS.

A certain man of condition once entered the slave-market and saw a page put up for sale; so he bought him and carrying him home, gave him in charge to his wife, with whom he abode awhile. One day the man said to his wife, "Go forth to-morrow to the garden and take thy pleasure therein." And she replied, "With all my heart."

When the page heard this, he made ready in secret meat and drink and fruits and dessert and sallied forth with them privily that night to the garden, where he laid the meat under one tree, the drink under another and the fruits and conserves under a third, in the way his mistress should pass. Next morning, the husband bade him accompany the lady to the garden; so she took horse and riding thither with him, dismounted and entered.

Presently, as they were walking about, a crow croaked, and the page said, "Thou sayst truly," whereupon his mistress said to him, "Dost thou know what the crow said?" "Yes, O my lady," answered he; "he said, 'Under yonder tree is meat; go and eat it.'" So she went up to the tree and finding a dish of meat ready dressed, was assured that the youth understood the speech of birds and marvelled exceedingly. They ate of the meat and walked about awhile, taking their pleasure in the garden, till the crow croaked a second time, and the page again replied, "Thou sayst well." "What said he?" asked the lady, and the page, "O my lady, he says that under such a tree is a pitcher of old wine and a gugglet of water flavoured with musk." So she went up to the tree and finding the wine and water there, redoubled in wonderment and the page was magnified in her eyes. They sat down and drank, then arose and walked in another part of the garden. Presently, the crow croaked again and the page said, "Right." Quoth the lady, "What says he now?" and the page, "He says that under yonder tree are fruits and confections." So they went thither and found all as he said and sat down and ate. Then they walked about again till the crow croaked a fourth time, whereupon the page took up a stone and cast it at him. Quoth she, "What said he, that thou shouldst stone him?" "O my lady," answered he, "he said what I cannot tell thee." "Say on," rejoined she, "and be not abashed, for there

is nought between me and thee." But he ceased not to say, "No," and she to press him to speak, till at last she conjured him to tell her, and he answered, "The crow said to me, 'Do with thy mistress even as doth her husband.'"

When she heard this, she laughed till she fell backward and said, "This is a light matter, and I may not cross thee therein." So saying, she went up to a tree and spreading the carpet under it, [lay down and] called to him to come and do her need, when, behold, her husband, who had followed them unawares and saw this, called out to the page, saying, "Harkye, boy! What ails thy mistress to lie there, weeping?" "O my lord," answered the page, "she fell off the tree and was [all but] killed; and none but God (may He be exalted and glorified!) restored her to thee. Wherefore she lay down awhile to recover herself." When the lady saw her husband standing by her, she rose and made a show of weakness and pain, saying, "O my back! O my sides! Come to my help, O my friends! I shall never survive this." So her husband was deceived and sending the page for the horse, set her thereon and carried her home, the boy holding one stirrup and the man the other and saying, "God vouchsafe thee ease and recovery!"

These then, O King,' said the damsel, 'are some instances of the craft and perfidy of men; wherefore let not thy viziers turn thee from succouring me and doing me justice.' Then she wept, and when the King saw her weeping, (for she was the dearest to him of all his slave-girls,) he once more commanded to put his son to death; but the sixth vizier entered and kissing the earth before him, said, 'May God the Most High advance the King! Verily I am a loyal counsellor to thee, in that I counsel thee to deal deliberately in the matter of thy son; for falsehood is as smoke and truth is a strongly stablished Night dxciii.

[fortress]; yea, and the light thereof dispels the darkness of falsehood. Know that the perfidy of women is great, even as saith God the Most High in His Holy Book, "Verily, the malice of you [women] is great." And indeed I have heard tell of a certain woman who befooled the chiefs of the state on such wise as never did any before her.' 'And how was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the vizier, 'that

THE LADY AND HER FIVE SUITORS.

A certain woman of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveller. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, for pure weariness, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, who returned her passion, and they loved each other with an exceeding love. One day, the youth fell out with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the chief of the police, and he cast him into prison. When the news came to his mistress, she well-nigh lost her wits and rising, donned her richest clothes and repaired to the house of the chief of the police, whom she saluted and presented with a petition to the effect that the prisoner was her brother, who had been unjustly accused and condemned on false witness, and that she had none other to come in to her nor to provide for her support and beseeching him of his grace to release him. When the magistrate had read the petition, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her; so he said to her, "Go into the house, till I bring him before me; then will I send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," answered she, "I have none save God the Most High. Indeed, I am a stranger and may not enter any one's house." Quoth the chief of the police, "I will not let him go, except thou enter my

house and I take my will of thee." "If it must be so," rejoined she, "thou must come to my house and sit and sleep and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy house?" asked he. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for such a time.

Then she went out from him, leaving his heart taken with love of her, and repaired to the Cadi of the city, to whom said she, "O my lord the Cadi, look into my case, and thy reward be with God the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" And she answered, saying, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but him, and it is on his account that I come to thee; for that the chief of the police hath imprisoned him for a wrong-doer, on the evidence of false witnesses. [Indeed, he is wronged] and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the chief of the police." When the Cadi looked on her, he fell in love with her and said to her, "Enter the house and rest awhile with my women, whilst I send to the chief of the police to release thy brother. If I knew the forfeit that is upon him, I would pay it out of my own monies, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleasest me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." But the Cadi answered, saying, "An thou wilt not come in, go thy ways." Then said she, "If thou wilt have it so, O my lord, it will be safer and better in my house than in thine, for here are slave-girls and servants and goers-in and comers-out, and indeed I am a woman who knows nought of this fashion; but necessity compels." "And where is thy house?" asked the Cadi. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the chief of the police.

Then she went to the Vizier, to whom she preferred her petition for the release of her [pretended] brother from prison: but he also required her of herself, saying, "Suffer me to have my desire of thee and I will set thy brother

free." Quoth she, "If thou wilt have it so, be it in my house, for there it will be safer both for me and for thee. It is not far distant and thou knowest that which behoveth us [women] of cleanliness and elegance." "Where is thy house?" asked he. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the two others.

Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" asked he; and she replied, "The chief of the police." When the King heard her speech, it transfixed his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Cadi and release her brother. "O King," answered she, "this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or not; and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune; but, if he will come to my house, he will do me the more honour, even as saith the poet:

Friends, have ye seen or heard o' the visit of a wight Whose virtues are indeed illustrious in my sight?"

Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she told him where her house was and appointed him for the same time as the three others.

Night dxciv.

Then she left him and betaking herself to a carpenter, said to him, "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments, one above another, each with its door to lock up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." "My hire will be four dinars," replied the man; "but, O noble lady, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favours, I will ask nothing else of thee." "If thou wilt have it so," rejoined she, "then make the cabinet with five compartments, each to lock up." "It is well," said he; "sit down, O my lady, and I will make it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down, whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had

made an end of it, she carried it home and set it up in the sitting-chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different colour; after which she busied herself in making ready meat and drink and fruits and flowers and perfumes.

When it was the appointed time, she donned her costliest apparel and scented and adorned herself, then spread the room with various kinds of rich carpets and sat down to await who should come. The Cadi was the first to appear, and when she saw him, she rose and kissed the earth before him, then made him sit down by her on the couch and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by, he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, put off thy clothes and turban and don this yellow cassock and this kerchief, whilst I bring thee meat and drink; and after thou shalt do thy desire." So saying, she took his clothes and turban and clad him in the yellow cassock and the kerchief; but hardly had she done this, when there came a knocking at the door. Quoth he, "Who is that at the door?" And she answered, "My husband." "What is to be done?" said the Cadi; "and where shall I go?" "Fear nothing," replied she; "I will hide thee in this cabinet." Quoth he, "Do as seemeth good to thee." So she took him by the hand and pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door on him.

Then she went to the door, where she found the chief of the police; so she kissed the earth before him and brought him into the saloon, where she made him sit down and said to him, "O my lord, this is thy house and I am thy handmaid, and thou shalt pass all this day with me; wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping gown." So she took away his clothes and made him don the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her; after which she sat down by him on the couch and they sported

awhile, till he put out his hand to her; but she said to him, "O my lord, this day is thine, all of it, and none shall share in it with thee; but first, of thy favour and grace, write me an order for my brother's release, that my heart may be at ease." "I hear and obey," answered he; "on my head and eyes be it;" and wrote a letter to his treasurer, to the following effect: "As soon as this letter reaches thee, do thou, without delay and without fail, set such an one free, neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began again to toy with him on the couch, when, behold, some one knocked at the door. Quoth he, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she. "What shall I do?" asked he, and she said, "Enter this cabinet, till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment and locked the door on him; and all this time the Cadi heard what they said and did.

Then she went to the door and opened it, whereupon the Vizier entered. She kissed the earth before him and received him with all worship, saying, "O my lord, thou honourest us by thy coming to our house; may God never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated him on the couch and said to him, "O my lord, these thy clothes and turban are the apparel of the vizierate; so leave them to their own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep." So he put off his clothes and turban and she dressed him in a blue cassock and a tall red cap, after which she began to toy with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her; but she put him off, saying, "O my lord, this shall not escape us." Presently there came a knocking at the door, and the Vizier said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she. Quoth he, "What is to be done?" "Fear

nothing," said she; "but enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee." So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on him, after which she went out and opened the door and in came the King.

When she saw him, she kissed the earth before him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the couch at the upper end. Then said she to him, "Verily, O King, thou dost us honour, and if we brought thee the whole world and all that therein is as a gift, it would not equal a single one of thy steps towards us: but give me leave to speak one word." "Say what thou wilt," answered he, and she said, "O my lord, take thine ease and put off thy clothes and turban." So he put off his clothes, which were worth a thousand dinars, and she clad him in a patched gown, not worth ten dirhems, and fell to talking and jesting with him, whilst the folk in the cabinet heard all that passed, but dared not say a word. Presently, the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his desire of her; but she said, "This thing shall not escape us; but, first, I had promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting-chamber, and I have that which shall content thee." At that moment, some one knocked at the door and he said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she, and he, "Make him go away of his own accord, or I will go forth to him and send him away perforce." "Nay, O my lord," replied she; "have patience till I send him away by my skilful contrivance." "And how shall I do?" asked the King; whereupon she took him by the hand and making him enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him.

Then she went out and opened the door, when the carpenter entered and saluted her. Quoth she, "What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?"

Night dxcb.

"What ails it, O my lady?" asked he, and she said, "The [top] compartment is too strait." "Not so," answered he; and she, "Go in thyself and see; it is not wide enough for thee." Quoth he, "It is wide enough for four," and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon she locked the door on him. Then she took the letter of the chief of the police and carried it to the treasurer, who kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all that had passed and he said, "And how shall we do now?" Quoth she, "We will remove hence to another city, for there is no tarrying for us here after this." So they packed up their goods and loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city.

Meanwhile, the five abode in the cabinet three whole days, without eating or drinking, until at last the carpenter could retain his water no longer; so he made water on the King's head, and the King made water on the Vizier's head, and the Vizier on the Chief of the Police, who did the like with the Cadi; whereupon the latter cried out and said, "What filth is this? Doth not this strait that we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?" The Chief of the Police recognized the Cadi's voice and answered, saying, "God increase thy reward, O Cadi!" And when the Cadi heard him, he knew him for the Chief of the Police. Then the latter lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" and the Vizier answered, saying, "God increase thy reward, O Chief of the Police!" whereupon he knew him to be the Vizier. Then the Vizier lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" But when the King heard his Vizier's voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair. Then said the Vizier, "May God curse the woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the chiefs of the state, except the King." Quoth the King, "Hold thy peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd baggage." "And I,"

cried the carpenter, "what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four dinars, and when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, to divert the King and do away his chagrin.

Presently the neighbours came up to the house and seeing it deserted, said to one another, "But yesterday our neighbour the wife of such an one was in it; but now there is no sound to be heard therein nor soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the King or the Chief of the Police and we be cast into prison and regret that we did not this thing before." So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw the cabinet and heard the men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a genie in the cabinet?" "Let us heap faggots about it," quoth another, "and burn it with fire." When the Cadi heard this, he cried out at them, saying, "Do it not!" And they said to one another, "Verily, the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Thereupon the Cadi repeated some verses of the sublime Koran and said to the neighbours, "Draw near to the cabinet." So they drew near, and he said, "I am so and so the Cadi, and ye are such an one and such an one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbours, "And how came ye here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end. Night xxxvi.

Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors and let out the Cadi and the Vizier and the Chief of the Police and the King and the Carpenter; and when they saw how they were accoutred, each fell a-laughing at the others. Now she had taken away all their clothes; so each of them sent to his people for fresh clothes and put them on and went out, covering himself therewith from the sight of the folk. See, therefore, O our lord

the King,' said the vizier, 'what a trick this woman played off upon the folk! And I have heard tell also that

THE MAN WHO SAW THE NIGHT OF POWER.

A certain man had longed all his life to look upon the Night of Power,[1] and it befell that, one night, he looked up at the sky and saw the angels and Heaven's gates opened and beheld all things in the act of prostration before their Lord, each in its several room. So he said to his wife, "Harkye, such an one, God hath shown me the Night of Power, and it hath been proclaimed to me, from the invisible world, that three prayers will be granted unto me; so do thou counsel me what I shall ask." Quoth she, "O man, the perfection of man and his delight is in his yard; so do thou pray God to greaten thy yard and magnify it." So he lifted up his hands to heaven and said, "O my God, greaten my yard and magnify it." Hardly

[1] One of the last nights of Ramazan, (supposed, on the authority of a tradition of the Prophet, to be either the 20th, 22nd, 24th or 28th of the month,) on which the Koran is said to have been revealed *en bloc* to Gabriel, who communicated it piece-meal to Mohammed, beginning at once with chapter xcvi. (or, according to some, chapter lxxiv.). On this night the Muslims believe that the affairs of the universe are settled for the ensuing year, that all created things prostrate themselves in adoration to Allah (cf. the mediæval legend of Christmas Eve, when the cattle were fabled to worship God in the stalls, etc.), salt water becomes sweet, the angels descend to bless the faithful and all prayers, prayed in cognisance of the fact, are granted. "Verily we sent it [the Koran] down on the Night of Power, and what giveth thee to know what is the Night of Power? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months; the angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) descend therein, by leave of their Lord, with every commandment. Peace is it till the breaking of the dawn." —*Koran* xcvii. "By the Manifest Book, we sent it down on a blessed night . . . . . whereon is apportioned each determined decree, as a commandment from us."—*Koran* xliv. 1, 2 and 3.

had he spoken when his yard became as big as a calabash and he could neither sit nor stand nor move; and when he would have lain with his wife, she fled before him from place to place. So he said to her, "O accursed woman, what is to be done? This is thy wish, by reason of thy lust." "Nay, by Allah," answered she; "I did not ask for this huge bulk, for which the gate of a street were too strait. Pray God to make it less." So he raised his eyes to heaven and said, "O my God, rid me of this thing and deliver me therefrom." And immediately his yard disappeared altogether and he became smooth [like a woman]. When his wife saw this, she said, "I have no occasion for thee, now thou art become yardless;" and he answered her, saying, "All this comes of thine ill-omened counsel and the infirmity of thy judgment. I had three prayers accepted of God, wherewith I might have gotten me my good, both in this world and the next, and now two are gone in pure waste, by thy lewd wish, and there remaineth but one." Quoth she, "Pray God the Most High to restore thee thy yard as it was." So he prayed to his Lord and his yard was restored to its first case. Thus the man lost his three wishes by the ill counsel and lack of sense of the woman; and this, O King,' said the vizier, 'have I told thee, that thou mightest be certified of the thoughtlessness of women and their little wit and silliness and see what comes of hearkening to their counsel. Wherefore be not persuaded by them to slay thy son, the darling of thy heart, and thus blot out thy remembrance after thee.'

The King gave ear to his vizier's words and forbore to put his son to death; but, on the seventh day, the damsel came in, shrieking, and lighting a great fire in the King's presence, made as she would cast herself therein; whereupon they laid hands on her and brought her before him. Quoth he, 'Why hast thou done this?' And she answered, saying, 'Except thou do me justice on thy son, I will cast

myself into the fire and accuse thee of this on the Day of Resurrection, for I am weary of life and before coming hither, I wrote my last dispositions and gave alms of my goods and resolved upon death. And thou wilt repent with all repentance, even as did the King of having punished the pious woman.' 'How was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' replied she, 'that

THE STOLEN NECKLACE.

There was once a devout woman, who had renounced the world and devoted herself to the service of God. Now she used to resort to a certain king's palace, the dwellers wherein looked for a blessing by reason of her presence, and she was held of them in high honour. One day, she entered the palace, according to her wont, and sat down beside the queen. Presently the latter gave her a necklace, worth a thousand dinars, saying, "Keep this for me, whilst I go to the bath." So she entered the bath, which was in the palace, and the pious woman laid the necklace on the prayer-carpet and stood up to pray. As she was thus engaged, there came a magpie, which snatched up the necklace, [unseen of her,] and carrying it off, hid it in a crevice in one of the palace-walls. When the queen came out of the bath, she sought the necklace of the recluse, and the latter searched for it, but found it not nor could light on any trace of it; so she said to the queen, "By Allah, O my daughter, none has been with me. When thou gavest me the necklace, I laid it on the prayer-carpet, and I know not if one of the servants saw it and took it without my heed, whilst I was engaged in prayer. God only knows what is come of it!" When the King heard what had happened, he bade his consort put the woman to the question by fire and beating; so they tortured her with all manner tortures, but could not bring

her to confess or to accuse any. Then he commanded to lay her in irons and cast her into prison, and they did as he bade.

One day, after this, as the King sat in the inner court of his palace, with the queen by his side and water flowing around him, he saw the magpie fly into a crevice of the wall and pull out the lost necklace, whereupon he cried out to a damsel who was with him, and she caught the bird and took the necklace from it. By this the King knew that the pious woman had been wronged and repented of that he had done with her. So he sent for her and fell to kissing her head and sought pardon of her, weeping. Moreover, he commanded great treasure to be given to her, but she would none of it. However, she forgave him and went away, vowing never again to enter any one's house. So she betook herself to wandering in the mountains and valleys and worshipped God the Most High till she died. And for an instance of the malice of the male sex,' continued the damsel, 'I have heard tell that

THE TWO PIGEONS.

A pair of pigeons once stored up wheat and barley in their nest in the winter, and when the summer came, the grain shrivelled and became less; so the male pigeon said to his mate, "Thou hast eaten of this grain." "No, by Allah," replied she; "I have not touched it!" But he believed her not and beat her with his wings and pecked her with his bill, till he killed her. When the cold season returned, the corn swelled out and became as before, whereupon he knew that he had slain his mate unjustly and wickedly and repented, when repentance availed him not. Then he lay down by her side, mourning over her and weeping for grief, and left eating and drinking, till he fell sick and died.

But,' added the damsel, 'I know a story of the malice of men more extraordinary than either of these.' 'Let us hear it,' said the King; and she said, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

STORY OF PRINCE BEHRAM OF PERSIA AND THE PRINCESS ED DETMA.

There was once a king's daughter, by name Ed Detma, who had no equal in her time for beauty and elegance and symmetry and amorous grace and the art of ravishing men's wits, nor was there one more accomplished than she in horsemanship and martial exercises and all that behoveth a cavalier, and all the kings' sons sought her in marriage; but she would none of them, saying, "None shall marry me except he overcome me at push of pike and stroke of sword in the open field. If any can do this, I will willingly wed him; but, if I overcome him, I will take his horse and clothes and arms and write with fire upon his forehead, 'This is the freedman of Ed Detma.'" So the sons of the kings flocked to her from far and near, and she overcame them and put them to shame, stripping them of their arms and branding them with fire.

At last, the son of a king of the kings of the Persians, by name Behram, heard of her and journeyed from afar to her father's court, bringing with him men and horses and great store of wealth and royal treasures. When he drew near the city, he sent her father a rich present and the king came out to meet him and received him with the utmost honour. Then the prince sent a message to him by his vizier, demanding his daughter's hand in marriage; but the king answered, saying, "O my son, I have no power over my daughter Ed Detma, for she hath sworn by her soul to marry none except he overcome her in the listed field." Quoth the prince, "It was to this intent that I

journeyed hither from my father's court." And the king said, "Thou shalt meet her to-morrow." Accordingly, on the morrow, he sent to bid his daughter, who donned her harness of war, and the folk, hearing of the coming encounter, flocked from all sides to the field. Presently the princess rode into the lists, armed cap-a-pie and vizor down, and the prince pricked out to meet her, equipped at all points after the goodliest fashion. Then they drove at each other and fought a great while, wheeling and feinting and advancing and retreating, till the princess, finding in him such valour and horsemanship as she had seen in none else, began to fear lest he should put her to shame before the bystanders and knew that he would assuredly overcome her, unless she could contrive to trick him. So she raised her vizor and discovered her face, more brilliant than the full moon, which when he saw, he was confounded by her beauty and his strength failed and his heart faltered. When she knew this, she fell upon him at unawares and tore him from his saddle, and he became in her hands as he were a sparrow in the clutches of an eagle, knowing not what was done with him for amazement and confusion. So she took his horse and clothes and armour and branding him with fire, let him go.

When he recovered from his stupor, he abode several days without eating or drinking, for despite and love of the princess that had taken hold upon his heart. Then he sent a letter by certain of his slaves to his father, advising him that he could not return home, till he had gotten his will of the princess or died for lack of her. When his father read the letter, he was sore concerned for his son and would have succoured him with troops and soldiers; but his viziers dissuaded him from this and exhorted him to patience; so he committed his affair to God the Most High.

Meanwhile, the prince cast about for a means of coming

to his desire and disguising himself as a decrepit old man, repaired to a garden, in which the princess used to walk most of her days. Here he sought out the gardener and said to him, "I am a stranger from a far country and from my youth upward I have been a gardener, and none is more skilled than I in the care of trees and the culture of fruits and flowers and so forth." When the gardener heard this, he rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and carried him into the garden, where he commended him to his underlings, and the prince betook himself to the service of the garden and the tending of the trees and the bettering of their fruits.

One day, as he was thus employed, he saw some slaves enter the garden, leading mules laden with carpets and vessels, and asked them the meaning of this, to which they replied that the princess was minded to take her pleasure. When he heard this, he hastened to his lodging and fetching some of the jewels and raiment he had brought with him from Persia, sat down in the garden and spread them out before him, shaking and trembling, as if for decrepitude, and making a show of extreme old age. Presently a company of damsels and eunuchs entered, with the princess in their midst, as she were the moon among stars, and dispersed about the garden, plucking the fruits and diverting themselves. By and by they espied the prince sitting under one of the trees and making towards him, found him, [as it seemed,] a very old man, whose hands and feet trembled for decrepitude, and before him store of precious jewels and splendid ornaments. So they marvelled at his case and asked him what he did there with the jewels. Quoth he, "I would fain buy me one of you to wife therewith." They laughed at him and said, "If one of us marry thee, what wilt thou do with her?" "I will give her one kiss," answered he, "and let her go." Then said the princess, "I give thee

Night dxcviii.

this damsel to wife." So he rose and coming up to her, trembling and staggering and leaning on a staff, kissed her and gave her the jewels and ornaments; whereat she rejoiced and they went away, laughing at him. Next day, they came again to the garden and finding him seated in the same place, with more jewels and ornaments than before, said to him, "O old man, what wilt thou do with these jewels?" And he answered, saying, "I wish to take one of you to wife with them, even as yesterday." So the princess said, "I marry thee to this damsel;" and he came up to her and kissed her and gave her the jewels, and they went away.

But the princess said in herself, "I have more right to all these fine things than my waiting-women, and no harm can betide me." So, on the morrow, she went down privily into the garden, in the habit of one of her damsels, and presenting herself before the prince, said to him, "O old man, the king's daughter hath sent me to thee, that thou mayst marry me." He looked at her and knew her; so he answered, "With all my heart," and gave her jewels and ornaments of the costliest. Then he rose to kiss her, and she off her guard and fearing nothing; but, when he came up to her, he suddenly laid hold of her with a strong hand and throwing her down, did away her maidenhead. Then he pulled the beard from his face and said to her, "Dost thou not know me?" "Who art thou?" asked she, and he answered, "I am Behram, the king's son of Persia, who have changed my favour and am become a stranger to my people and estate for thy sake and have lavished my treasures for thy love."

So she rose from under him in silence and spoke not a word of reply to him, being dazed for what had befallen her and seeing nothing for it but to be silent, for fear of disgrace; and she bethought herself and said, "If I kill him, it will profit me nothing, and nought will serve me

but that I flee with him to his own country." Then she gathered together her wealth and treasures and sent to him, acquainting him with her resolve, to the intent that he also might equip himself; and they agreed upon a night on which to depart. So, at the appointed time, they mounted swift horses and set out under cover of the night, nor did day break till they had traversed a great distance; and they fared on till they drew near his father's capital in the land of the Persians. When the king heard of his son's coming, he came out to meet him with his troops and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. Then, after a few days, he sent the princess's father a splendid present, with a letter to the effect that his daughter was with him and demanding her wedding equipage. Ed Detma's father received the messengers with exceeding joy, (for that he had deemed his daughter lost and had grieved sore for her loss,) and invested them with robes of honour; after which he made bride-feasts and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, let draw up the marriage contract between his daughter and the prince of Persia. Then he made ready her equipage and despatched it to her, and Prince Behram abode with her till death sundered them.

See, therefore, O King,' continued the favourite, 'the malice of men in their dealing with women. As for me, I will not go back from my due till I die.' So the King once more commanded to put his son to death; but the seventh vizier came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, have patience with me whilst I speak words of good counsel to thee; for he who is patient and acteth deliberately attaineth unto his hope and enjoyeth his desire, but whoso acteth hastily, repentance overtaketh him. Now I have seen how this damsel hath profligately striven to abuse the King and incite him to unnatural cruelties; but I his slave, whom he hath overwhelmed with his favours and bounties, do proffer him true and loyal

counsel; for that I, O King, know of the malice of women that which none knoweth but myself; and [in particular] there hath come to my knowledge, on this subject, the story of the old woman and the son of the merchant.' 'And what fell out between them, O vizier?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the seventh vizier, 'that

THE HOUSE WITH THE BELVEDERE.

There was once a wealthy merchant, who had a son who was very dear to him, and the latter said to him one day, "O my father, I have a boon to ask of thee." Quoth the merchant, "O my son, what is it, that I may give it thee and bring thee to thy desire, though it were the light of mine eyes." "Give me money," rejoined the youth, "that I may journey with the merchants to the city of Baghdad and see its sights and look upon the palace of the Khalifs; for the sons of the merchants have described these things to me and I long to see them for myself." "O my child, O my little son," answered his father, "how can I endure to part from thee?" But the youth said, "I have said my say and needs must I journey to Baghdad with or without thy consent; for such a longing for its sight hath fallen upon me as can only be assuaged by the going thither." Night dxcix.

When the merchant saw that there was no help for it, he provided his son with goods to the value of thirty thousand dinars and gave him in charge to certain merchants in whom he trusted. Then he took leave of the youth, who journeyed with his friends the merchants till they reached Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, where he entered the market and wishing to hire a house, was shown one so handsome and spacious and elegant that he well-nigh lost his wits for admiration; for therein were gardens and fountains and running waters and pavilions facing one another, with

floors of coloured marbles and ceilings inlaid with gold and lapis lazuli, and its gardens were full of warbling birds. So he asked the porter what was its rent, and he replied, "Ten dinars a month." Quoth the young man, "Speakest thou truly or dost thou jest with me?" "By Allah," answered the porter, "I speak nought but the truth, for none who taketh up his abode in this house lodgeth in it more than a week or two." "And how is that?" asked the other. "O my son," replied the porter, "whoso taketh this house cometh not forth of it, except sick or dead, wherefore it is known among the folk of Baghdad, so that none offereth to take it, and thus cometh it that its rent is fallen so low." At this the young merchant marvelled exceedingly, saying, "Needs must there be some reason for this." However, after considering awhile and seeking refuge with God from Satan the Stoned, he rented the house and took up his abode there. Then he put away apprehension from his thought and busied himself with selling and buying; and some time passed over him without any ill case befalling him.

One day, as he sat at the door, there came up a grizzled old woman, as she were a speckled snake, calling aloud on the name of God and magnifying Him at a great rate and at the same time putting away the stones and other obstacles from the path. Seeing the youth sitting there, she looked at him and marvelled at his case;[1] whereupon quoth he to her, "O old woman, dost thou know me or am I like any thou knowest?" When she heard him speak, she hastened up to him and saluting him, said, "How long hast thou dwelt in this house?" "Two months, O my mother," answered he. And she said, "O my son, it was at this that I marvelled; for I know thee not, neither dost thou know me, nor yet art thou like unto any one I know; but I marvelled for that none other than

[1] *i.e.* at seeing him in occupation of a house of so fatal a repute.

thou hath taken up his abode in this house but hath gone forth from it, dead or sick, saving thee alone. Doubtless thou hast not gone up to the upper story neither looked out from the belvedere there." So saying, she went her way and he fell a-pondering her words and said, "I have not gone up to the top of the house; nor did I know that there was a belvedere there."

Then he arose forthright and going in, searched the house, till he espied, in a corner among the trees, a narrow door, over which the spider had spun its webs, and said in himself, "Belike the spider hath not spread its web over the door, but because death is within." However, he heartened himself with the saying of God the Most High, "Say, nought shall befall us save what God hath prescribed unto us;"[1] and opening the door, ascended a narrow flight of stairs, till he came to the top, where he found a belvedere, in which he sat down to rest and enjoy the view. Presently, he caught sight of an elegant house hard by, surmounted by a lofty belvedere, overlooking the whole of Baghdad, in which sat a damsel fair as a houri. No sooner had he set eyes on her, than her beauty took possession of his whole heart and made away with his reason, afflicting him with the pains of Job and the grief of Jacob. Fire was lighted in his entrails and he said, "They say that whoever takes up his abode in this house dies or falls sick. If this be so, this damsel is assuredly the cause. Would I knew how I shall win free of this affair, for my senses are gone!"

Then he descended from the turret, pondering his case, and sat down in the house, but could not rest. So, after a while, he went out and sat at the door, absorbed in melancholy thought, and presently up came the old woman, praising and magnifying God [aloud], as she went. When he saw her, he rose and accosting her courteously, said to

[1] *Koran* ix. 51.

her, "O my mother, I was in health and well-being, till thou madest mention to me of the belvedere; so I found the door and ascending to the top of the house, saw thence what took away my senses; and now methinks I am a lost man, and I know no physician for me but thyself." When she heard this, she laughed and said, "No harm shall befall thee, so God please." Whereupon he went into the house and coming back with a hundred dinars in his sleeve, said to her, "Take this, O my mother, and deal with me as lords with slaves and succour me quickly; for, if I die, my blood will be laid to thy charge at the Day of Resurrection." "With all my heart," answered she; "but, O my son, thou must lend me thine aid in some small matter, whereby hangs the accomplishment of thy desire." Quoth he, "What would thou have me do, O my mother?" "Go to the silk-market," said she, "and enquire for the shop of Aboul Feth ben Caidam. Sit down by him and salute him and say to him, 'Give me the face-veil thou hast by thee, figured with gold:' for he hath none handsomer in his shop. Then buy it of him at his own price and keep it till I come to thee to-morrow, God willing." So saying, she went away and he passed the night [as] upon coals of tamarisk-wood.

Next morning, he took a thousand dinars in his pocket and repairing to the silk-market, sought out the shop of Aboul Feth, whom he found a man of dignified aspect, surrounded by servants and attendants; for he was a merchant of great wealth and consideration, and of the goods that God the Most High had bestowed upon him was the damsel who had ravished the young man's heart. She was his wife and had not her match for beauty, nor was her like to be found with any of the sons of the kings. So he saluted him and Aboul Feth returned his salute and bade him be seated. Accordingly, he sat down by him and said to him, "O merchant, I wish to look at such a

face-veil." So he bade his servants bring him a parcel of silk from the inner shop and opening it, brought out a number of veils, whose beauty amazed the youth. Among them was the veil he sought; so he bought it for fifty dinars and bore it home, well pleased.

Night &c.

Hardly had he reached his house when up came the old woman, to whom he gave the veil. She bade him bring a live coal, with which she burnt one of the corners of the veil, then folded it up as before and repairing to Aboul Feth's house, knocked at the door. Quoth the damsel, "Who is there?" And she answered, "I, such an one." Now the damsel knew her for a friend of her mother, so, when she heard her voice, she came out and opening the door to her, said, "What dost thou want, O my mother? My mother has left me and gone to her own house." "O my daughter," answered the old woman, "I know thy mother is not with thee, for I have been with her in her house, and I come not to thee, but because I fear to miss the hour of prayer; wherefore I desire to make my ablutions with thee, for I know thou art clean and thy house pure."[1] The damsel admitted her and she saluted her and called down blessings upon her. Then she took the ewer and went into the lavatory, where she made her ablutions and prayed in a place there. Presently, she came out again and said to the damsel, "O my daughter, I doubt thy servants have been in yonder place and defiled it; so do thou show me another place where I may pray, for the prayer I have prayed I account void." Thereupon the damsel took her by the hand and said to her, "O my mother, come and pray on my carpet, where my husband sits." So she stood there and prayed and worshipped and bowed and prostrated herself; and presently, she took the damsel unawares and made shift to slip the veil under

[1] One of the conditions of prayer among the Muslims is that it be performed in a clean place.

the cushion, unseen of her. Then she prayed for her and went away.

At nightfall, Aboul Feth came home and sat down upon the carpet, whilst his wife brought him food and he ate what sufficed him and washed his hands; after which he leant back upon the cushion. Presently, he caught sight of a corner of the veil protruding from under the cushion; so he pulled it out and knowing it for that he had sold to the young man, at once suspected his wife of unchastity. So he called her and said, "Whence hadst thou this veil?" And she swore an oath to him [that she knew not whence it came,] saying, "None hath come to me but thou." Then he was silent for fear of scandal, and said in himself, "If I open up this chapter, I shall be put to shame before all Baghdad;" for he was one of the intimates of the Khalif and had nothing for it but to hold his peace. So he asked no questions, but said to his wife, whose name was Muhziyeh, "I hear that thy mother lies ill of heart-ache and all the women are with her, weeping over her; so do thou go to her." Accordingly, she repaired to her mother's house and found her well, ailing nothing; and the latter said to her, "What brings thee here at this hour?" So she told her what her husband had said and sat with her awhile; but, presently, up came porters, who brought all her clothes and paraphernalia and what not else belonged to her of goods and vessels from her husband's house and deposited them in that of her mother. When the latter saw this, she said to her daughter, "Tell me what hath passed between thee and thy husband, to bring about this." But she swore to her that she knew not the cause thereof and that there had befallen nothing between them, to call for this conduct. Quoth her mother, "Needs must there be a cause for this." And she answered, saying, "I know of none, and after this, with God the Most High be it to make provision!" Whereupon her mother fell a-weeping

and lamented her daughter's separation from the like of this man, by reason of his sufficiency and fortune and the greatness of his rank and estate.

On this wise, things abode some days, after which the old woman paid a visit to Muhziyeh in her mother's house and saluted her affectionately, saying, "What ails thee, O my daughter, O my beloved one? Indeed, thou hast troubled my mind." Then she went in to her mother and said to her, "O my sister, what is this about thy daughter and her husband? I hear he has put her away. What hath she done to call for this?" Quoth the mother, "Peradventure her husband will return to her by the virtue of thy prayers; so do thou pray for her, for thou art a constant faster and a stander up by night to pray." Then the three women fell to talking and the old woman said to the damsel, "O my daughter, have no care, for, God willing, I will make peace between thee and thy husband before many days." Then she left them and going to the young merchant, said to him, "Make ready a handsome entertainment for us, for I will bring her to thee this very night." So he rose and provided all that was fitting of meat and drink and so forth and sat down to await them; whilst the old woman returned to the girl's mother and said to her, "O my sister, we make a splendid bride-feast to-night; so let thy daughter go with me, that she may divert herself and make merry with us and forget her troubles; and I will bring her back to thee even as I took her away." So the mother dressed her daughter in her finest clothes and jewels and accompanied her to the door, where she commended her to the old woman's care, saying, "Look thou let none of the creatures of God the Most High see her, for thou knowest her husband's rank with the Khalif; and do not tarry, but bring her back to me as soon as possible."

The old woman carried the girl to the young man's house, and she entered, thinking it the place where the

Night wedding was to be held: but, when she came into the
Dri. saloon, the youth sprang up to her and embraced her and kissed her hands and feet. She was confounded at his beauty, as well as at the elegance of the place and the profusion of meat and drink and flowers and perfumes that she saw therein, and deemed all this but a dream. When the old woman saw her amazement, she said to her, "The name of God be upon thee, O my daughter! Fear not; I am here with thee and will not leave thee for a moment. Thou art worthy of him and he of thee." So the damsel sat down, in great confusion; but the young man jested and toyed with her and entertained her with stories and verses, till her breast dilated and she became at her ease. Then she ate and drank and growing warm with wine, took the lute and sang and inclined to the youth's beauty. When he saw this, he was drunken without wine and his life was a light matter to him [compared with her love].

Presently the old woman went out and left them alone together till the next morning, when she went in to them and gave them good morrow and said to the damsel, "How hast thou passed the night, O my lady?" "Well," answered the girl, "thanks to thine adroitness and the excellence of thine intermediation." Then said the old woman, "Come, let us go back to thy mother." But the young man pulled out a hundred dinars and gave them to her, saying, "Take this and leave her with me to-night." So she left them and repaired to the girl's mother, to whom quoth she, "Thy daughter salutes thee, and the bride's mother is instant with her to abide with her this night." "O my sister," replied the mother, "bear her my greeting, and if it please the girl, there is no harm in her staying the night; so let her do this and divert herself and come back to me at her leisure, for all I fear for her is chagrin on account of her husband."

The old woman ceased not to make excuse after excuse

and to put off cheat upon cheat upon the girl's mother, till Muhziyeh had tarried seven days with the young man, of whom she took a hundred dinars each day for herself; but at the end of this time, the girl's mother said to her, "Bring my daughter back to me forthright; for I am uneasy about her, because she has been so long absent, and I misdoubt me of this." So the old woman went out, angered at her words, and going to the young man's house, took the girl by the hand and carried her away, leaving him lying asleep on his bed, for he was heavy with wine. Her mother received her with joy and gladness and rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy, saying, "O my daughter, my heart was troubled about thee, and in my uneasiness I offended against this my sister with an injurious speech, that wounded her." "Rise and kiss her hands and feet," replied Muhziyeh; "else art thou no mother of mine; for she hath been to me as a servant in doing all I needed." So the mother went up to the old woman and made her peace with her.

Meanwhile, the young man recovered from his drunkenness and missed the damsel, but was content to have enjoyed his desire. Presently, the old woman came in to him and saluted him, saying, "What thinkest thou of my fashion?" Quoth he, "It was excellently well contrived of thee." Then said she, "Come, let us mend what we have marred and restore the girl to her husband, for we have been the cause of their separation." "How shall I do?" asked he, and she answered, "Go to Aboul Feth's shop and salute him and sit down by him, till thou seest me pass by, when do thou rise in haste and catch hold of my dress and revile me and rail at me, demanding of me the veil. And do thou say to the merchant, 'O my lord, thou knowest the face-veil I bought of thee for fifty dinars? I gave it to a slave-girl of mine, who burnt a corner of it by accident; so she gave it to this old woman, who took it,

promising to get it darned and return it, and went away, nor have I seen her from that day to this.'" "With all my heart," replied the young man and rising forthright, repaired to the shop of the silk merchant, with whom he sat till he saw the old woman pass, telling her beads on a rosary she held in her hand; whereupon he sprang up and laying hold of her clothes, began to revile and rail at her, whilst she answered him with fair words, saying, "Indeed, my son, thou art excusable."

The people of the bazaar flocked round them, saying, "What is to do?" and he replied, "Know, O folk, that I bought a veil of this merchant for fifty dinars and gave it to my slave-girl, who wore it awhile, then sat down to fumigate it.[1] Presently, a spark flew out of the chafing dish and lighting on the edge of the veil, burnt a hole in it. So we committed it to this pestilent old woman, that she might give it to who should darn it and return it to us, and we have never set eyes on her again till this day." "This young man speaks the truth," answered the old woman. "I did indeed have the veil of him, but I took it with me into one of the houses where I use to visit and forgot it there, nor do I know where I left it; and being a poor woman, I feared its owner and dared not face him."

Night dcii. Now the girl's husband was listening to all they said and when he heard the tale that the crafty old woman had contrived with the young man, he rose to his feet and said, "God is Most Great! I crave pardon of the Almighty for my offences and what my heart suspected!" And he praised God who had discovered to him the truth. Then he accosted the old woman and said to her, "Dost thou use to visit us?" "O my son," replied she, "I visit you and other than you, for the sake of alms; but from that day to this, none hath given me any news of the veil."

[1] With the smoke of aloes-wood or other perfume.

Quoth the merchant, "Hast thou asked at my house?" "O my lord," answered she, "I did indeed go to thy house and ask; but they told me that the lady of the house had been divorced by her husband; so I asked no farther." With this, the merchant turned to the young man and said, "Let the old woman go her way; for the veil is with me." So saying, he brought it out from the shop and gave it to the darner before all the folk. Then he betook himself to the damsel and giving her some money, took her again to wife, after making abundance of excuses to her and asking pardon of God, because he knew not what the old woman had done. This then, O King,' said the Vizier, 'is an instance of the malice of women, and for another to the same purport, I have heard tell that

THE KING'S SON AND THE AFRIT'S MISTRESS.

A certain king's son was once walking alone for his pleasure, when he came to a green meadow, abounding in trees laden with fruit and birds singing on the branches, and a river running through it. The place pleased him; so he sat down there and taking out some conserves he had brought with him, began to eat. Presently, he espied a great smoke rising up to heaven and taking fright, climbed up into a tree and hid himself among the branches. Thence he saw an Afrit rise out of the midst of the stream, with a chest of marble, secured by a padlock, on his head. He set down the chest on the sward and opened it, and there came forth a damsel like the sun shining in the cloudless sky. He gazed on her awhile, then laid his head in her lap and fell asleep, whereupon she lifted up his head and laying it on the chest, rose and walked about.

Presently, she chanced to raise her eyes to the tree in

which was the prince, and seeing him, signed to him to come down. He refused, but she swore to him that, except he came down and did as she bade him, she would wake the Afrit and point him out to him, when he would straightway kill him. The prince, fearing she would do as she said, came down, whereupon she kissed his hands and feet and conjured him to do her occasion, to which he consented; and when he had satisfied her desires, she said to him, "Give me the seal-ring on thy finger." So he gave it to her and she laid it in a silken handkerchief she had with her, wherein were more than fourscore others. When the prince saw this, he asked her what she did with all these rings and she answered, saying, "Know that this Afrit carried me off from my father's palace and shut me in this box, which he carries about on his head wherever he goes; and he hardly leaves me a moment, of the excess of his jealousy over me, and hinders me from what I desire. When I saw this, I swore that I would deny my favours to no one, and these rings thou seest are after the tale of the men who have had to do with me; for I took from each a ring and laid it in this handkerchief. And now go thy ways, that I may look for another than thee, for the Afrit will not awake yet awhile."

So the prince returned to his father's palace, hardly crediting what he had heard, and when the King heard that his son had lost his ring, he bade put him to death, knowing not how the damsel had beguiled him. (Now she feared this not, neither took any account thereof.) Then he rose and entered his palace; but his Viziers came in to him and prevailed with him to abandon his purpose. The same night, the King sent for them and thanked them for having dissuaded him from slaying his son; and the latter also thanked them, saying, "It was well done of you to counsel my father to let me live, and God willing, I will abundantly requite you." Then he related to them

how he had lost the ring, and they offered up prayers for his long life and advancement and withdrew. See then, O king,' said the Vizier, 'the malice of women and what they do unto men.'

The King hearkened to the Vizier's counsel and again countermanded his order to slay his son. Next morning, it being the eighth day, as the King sat in his audience-chamber in the midst of his grandees and amirs and officers and men of learning, the prince entered, with his hand in that of his governor, Es Sindibad, and praised his father and his Viziers and grandees in the most eloquent words and thanked them; so that all who were present wondered at his eloquence and fluency and the excellence of his speech. His father rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and calling him to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he called Es Sindibad and asked him why his son had kept silence these seven days, to which he replied, 'O my lord, it was I who enjoined him to this, in my fear for him of death; for, when I took his nativity, I found it written in the stars that, if he should speak during this period, he would surely die; but now the danger is over, by the King's fortune.'

At this the King rejoiced and said to his Viziers, 'If I had killed my son, would the fault have fallen on me or the damsel or Es Sindibad?' But they refrained from answering and Es Sindibad said to the prince, 'Answer thou, O my son.' Quoth he, 'I have heard tell that certain guests once alighted at a merchant's house, and he sent his slave-girl to the market, to buy a jar of milk. So she bought it and set out on her return; but, on her way home, there passed over her a kite, holding a serpent in its claws, and a drop of the serpent's venom fell into the jar of milk, unknown of the girl. So, when she came back, the merchant took the milk from her and drank of it, he and his guests; but hardly had it settled in their

Night dciii.

stomachs when they all died. Now, tell me, O King, whose was the fault in this case?' Some said, 'It was the fault of the company, who drank the milk, without examining it.' And other some, 'That of the girl, who left the jar uncovered.' But Es Sindibad said to the prince, 'What sayst thou, O my son?' 'I say,' answered the prince, 'that the folk err; it was neither the fault of the damsel nor of the company, for their appointed hour was come, with the exhaustion of their divinely-decreed provision, and God had fore-ordained them to die thus.'

When the courtiers heard this, they marvelled greatly and lifted up their voices, calling down blessings on the prince and saying, 'O our lord, thou hast made a peerless answer, and thou art the wisest man of thy time.' 'Indeed, I am no sage,' answered the prince; 'the blind sheikh and the three-year-old child and the five-year-old were wiser than I.' 'O youth,' said the bystanders, 'tell us the stories of these three who were wiser than thou.' 'With all my heart,' answered he, 'I have heard tell that

THE SANDAL-WOOD MERCHANT AND THE SHARPERS.

There was once a rich merchant, who was a great traveller. One day, being minded to journey to a certain city, he asked those who came thence what kind of goods brought most profit there. "Sandal-wood," answered they; "for it sells at a high price." So he laid out all his money in sandal-wood and set out for the city in question. When he arrived there, it was the close of the day, and he met an old woman driving her sheep. Quoth she to him, "Who art thou, O man?" and he answered, saying, "I am a stranger, a merchant." "Beware of the townsfolk, said she, "for they are cheats and robbers, who impose on strangers

that they may get the better of them and devour their substance. Indeed, I give thee good counsel."

Then she left him and on the morrow there met him a man, who saluted him and said to him, "O my lord, whence comest thou?" "From such a place," answered the merchant. "And what merchandise hast thou brought with thee?" asked the other. "Sandal-wood," replied he; "for I hear it is high of price with you." Quoth the townsman, "He erred who told thee that; for we burn nothing but sandal-wood under our cooking-pots, and its value with us is but that of firewood." When the merchant heard this, he sighed and repented and knew not whether to believe him or not. Then he alighted at one of the khans of the city and when it was night, he saw a merchant make a fire of sandal-wood under his cooking-pot. Now this was the man who had spoken with him and this was a trick of his. When the townsman saw the merchant [looking at him,] he said to him, "Wilt thou sell me thy sandal-wood for a measure of whatever thy soul shall desire?" "I sell it to thee," answered the merchant, purposing to take gold, and the buyer transported all the wood to his own house and stored it up there.

Next morning, the merchant, who was a blue-eyed man, went out to walk in the city; but, as he went along, one of the townsfolk, who was also blue-eyed and had but one eye, caught hold of him, saying, "Thou art he who stole my eye and I will never let thee go [till thou restore it to me]." The merchant denied this, saying, "I never stole [thine eye]: the thing is impossible." Whereupon the folk collected round them and besought the one-eyed man to grant him till the morrow, that he might give him the price of his eye. So the merchant procured one to be surety for him, and they let him go. Now his shoe had been rent in the struggle with the one-eyed man; so he stopped at a cobbler's stall and bade him mend it,

and he should have of him what would content him. Then he went on, till he came to some people sitting playing at forfeits and sat down with them, to divert his grief and anxiety. They invited him to play with them and he did so; but they practised on him and overcoming him, offered him his choice, either to drink up the sea or disburse all he had. "Have patience with me till to-morrow," said he, and they granted him the delay he sought; whereupon he went away, sore concerned for what had betided him and knowing not how he should do, and sat down in a place [apart], heavy at heart and full of melancholy thought.

Presently, the old woman passed by and seeing him thus, said to him, "Meseems the townsfolk have gotten the better of thee, for I see thee troubled and heavy of heart. Tell me what ails thee." So he told her all that had passed and she said, "As for him who cheated thee in the matter of the sandal-wood, thou must know that with us it is worth ten dinars a pound. But I will give thee a counsel, whereby I trust thou shalt deliver thyself; and it is this. By such and such a gate lives a blind sheikh, a cripple, who is knowing, wise and experienced, and all resort to him and ask him what they will, and he counsels them what will be for their advantage; for he is versed in craft and magic and trickery. Now he is a sharper and the sharpers resort to him by night [and recount to him the tricks they have played during the day], and he [passes judgment upon them and] tells them which got the better and which was bettered. So go thou to his lodging and hide thyself from thine adversaries, so thou mayst hear what they say, unseen of them; and haply thou shalt learn from the sheikh some subterfuge that may avail to deliver thee from them."

Night deb.

So he went to the place in question and hid himself near the blind man. Before long, up came the latter's company

who were wont to take him as their judge, and amongst them the merchant's four adversaries. They saluted the sheikh and each other and sat down round him, whereupon he set food before them and they ate. Then each began to tell what had befallen him that day, and amongst the rest came forward he of the sandal-wood and told how he had bought of one sandal-wood, below its price, and had agreed to pay for it a measure of whatever the seller should desire. Quoth the old man, "Thine opponent hath the better of thee." "How can that be," asked the other, "seeing that, if he say, 'I will take the measure full of gold or silver,' I will give it him and still be the gainer?" And the sheikh answered, "And if he say, 'I will take the measure full of fleas, half male and half female,' what wilt thou do?" So the sharper knew that he was beaten.

Then came forward the one-eyed man and said, "O Sheikh, I met a blue-eyed man to-day, a stranger to the town; so I picked a quarrel with him and caught hold of him, saying, 'It was thou robbedst me of my eye;' nor did I let him go, till some became surety for him that he should return to me to-morrow and satisfy me for my eye." Quoth the sheikh, "If he will, he may have the better of thee." "How so?" asked the sharper; and the sheikh said, "He may say to thee, 'Pluck out thine eye, and I will pluck out one of mine; then will we weigh them both, and if thine eye be of the same weight as mine, thou speakest truth in what thou avouchest.' So wilt thou owe him the price of his eye and be stone blind, whilst he will still see with his other eye." So the sharper knew that the merchant might baffle him with this subterfuge.

Then came the cobbler and said, "O sheikh, a man brought me his shoe to-day, saying, 'Mend this shoe and thou shalt have of me what will content thee.' Now nothing will content me but all he hath." Quoth the sheikh, "If he will, he may take his shoe from thee and

give thee nothing." "How so?" asked the cobbler, and the sheikh, "He has but to say to thee, 'The Sultan's enemies are put to the rout; his foes are become weak and his children and helpers are multiplied. Art thou content or no?'" "If thou say, 'I am content,' he will take his shoe and go away; and if thou say, 'I am not content,' he will take his shoe and beat thee therewith over the face and neck." So the cobbler owned himself beaten.

Then came forward the gamester and said, "O sheikh, I played at forfeits with a man to-day and beat him and adjudged him to drink up the sea or give up to me all his wealth." "If he will," replied the sheikh, "he may baffle thee." "How so?" asked the sharper, and the sheikh, "He has but to say, 'Take the mouth of the sea in thine hand and give it me and I will drink it.' But thou wilt not be able to do this; so he will baffle thee with this subterfuge." When the merchant heard this, he knew how it behoved him to deal with his adversaries. Then the sharpers went their way and the merchant returned to his lodging.

On the morrow, the gamester came to him and summoned him to redeem his forfeit; so he said to him, "Give me the mouth of the sea and I will drink it up." Whereupon he confessed himself beaten and redeemed his forfeit by paying a hundred dinars. Then came the cobbler and sought of him what should content him. Quoth the merchant, "Our lord the Sultan hath overcome his foes and put his enemies to nought and his children are multiplied. Art thou content or no?" "I am content," replied the cobbler and giving up the shoe without payment, went away. Next came the one-eyed man and demanded the price of his eye. "Pluck out thine eye," said the merchant, "and I will pluck out one of mine. Then will we weigh them, and if they are equal in weight, I will acknowledge

the truth of thine avouchment and pay thee the price of thine eye; but, if they differ, thou liest and I will sue thee for the price of my eye." Quoth the one-eyed man, "Grant me time;" but the merchant answered, saying, "I am a stranger and grant time to none, nor will I part from thee, [till thou satisfy me]." So the sharper ransomed his eye by paying him a hundred dinars and went away. Last of all came the buyer of the sandal-wood and said, "Take the price of thy ware." "What wilt thou give me?" asked the merchant, and the other, "We agreed for a measure of whatever thou shouldst desire; so, if thou wilt, take it full of gold and silver." "Not I," answered the merchant. "Nothing will serve me but I must have it full of fleas, half male and half female." "This is a thing none may avail unto," said the sharper, and confessing himself beaten, returned him his sandal-wood and redeemed himself from him with a hundred dinars, to be off his bargain. Then the merchant sold the sandal-wood at his own price and returned to his own country.

As for the three-year-old child,' continued the prince, 'I have heard tell that

THE DEBAUCHEE AND THE THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILD.

A certain profligate man, who was addicted to women, once heard of a beautiful and graceful woman who dwelt in a town other than his own. So he journeyed thither, taking with him a gift, and wrote her a letter, seeking access to her and setting out all that he suffered for longing and desire for her and how the love of her had driven him to forsake his native land and come to her. She gave him leave to visit her and received him with all honour and worship, kissing his hands and entertaining him with the best of meat and drink. Now she had a little three-year-

old son, whom she left and busied herself in cooking rice. Presently the man said to her, "Come, let us go to bed;" and she, "My son is sitting looking at us." Quoth the man, "He is a little child, understanding not neither knowing how to speak." "Thou wouldst not say thus," answered the woman, "if thou knewest his intelligence." When the boy saw that the rice was done, he fell to weeping bitterly, and his mother said to him, "What ails thee to weep, O my son?" "Give me some rice," answered he, "and put butter in it." So she ladled him out somewhat of rice and put butter therein; and he ate a little, then began to weep again. Quoth she, "What ails thee now?" And he answered, saying, "O my mother, I want some sugar with my rice." At this the man was angered and said to him, "Thou art none other than a curst child." "It is thou who art curst," answered the boy, "seeing thou weariest thyself and journeyest from city to city, in quest of lewdness. As for me, I wept because I had somewhat in my eye, and my weeping brought it out; and now I have eaten rice with butter and sugar and am content; so which is the curst of us twain?" The man was confounded at this rebuke from a little child and grace entered him and he repented. Wherefore he laid not a finger on the woman, but went out from her forthright and returned to his own country, where he lived a contrite life till he died.

As for the story of the five-year-old child,' continued the prince, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

THE STOLEN PURSE.

Four merchants once owned a thousand dinars in common; so they laid them in one purse and set out to buy goods therewith. On their way, they happened on a beautiful garden; so they left the purse with a woman

who kept the garden and entered. After they had walked about awhile and eaten and drunken and made merry, one of them said to the others, "I have with me scented fuller's earth; come, let us wash our heads therewith in this running water." Quoth another, "We lack a comb;" and a third, "Let us ask the keeper; belike she hath a comb." Thereupon one of them arose and accosting the keeper, whereas his comrades could see him, but not hear what he said, said to her, "Give me the purse." Quoth she, "I will not give it up, except ye be all present or thy fellows bid me give it thee." Then he called to his companions, saying, "She will not give it me." And they said to her, "Give it him," thinking he meant the comb. So she gave him the purse and he took it and made off.

When the three others were weary of waiting, they went to the keeper and said to her, "Why wilt thou not give him the comb?" "He asked me for nought but the purse," answered she, "and I gave it not but with your consent, and he went his way with it." When they heard this, they buffeted their faces and said to her, "We authorized thee only to give him the comb." And she, "He named not a comb to me." Then they laid hands on her and haled her before the Cadi, to whom they made their complaint, and he condemned her to make good the purse and bound a number of her debtors surety for her. So she went forth, confounded and knowing not what she should do. Night dcvi.

Presently, she met a five-year-old boy, who, seeing her troubled, said to her, "What ails thee, O my mother?" But she gave him no answer, making no account of him, because of his tender age, and he repeated his question a second and a third time, till, at last, she told him all that had passed. "Give me a dirhem, to buy sweetmeats withal," said the boy; "and I will tell thee how thou mayst acquit thyself." So she gave him a dirhem and

said to him, "What hast thou to say?" "Return to the Cadi," quoth he, "and say to him, 'It was agreed between myself and them that I should not give them back the purse, except all four of them were present. Let them all four come and I will give them the purse, as was agreed.'" So she went back to the Cadi and said to him as the boy had counselled; and he said to the merchants, "Was it thus agreed between you?" "Yes," answered they. "Then bring me your fellow," said the Cadi, "and take the purse." So they went in quest of their fellow, whilst the keeper came off scot free and went her way without hindrance.'

When the King's viziers and those who were present in the assembly heard the prince's words, they said to his father, 'O our lord the King, of a truth thy son is the most accomplished man of his time,' and they called down blessings upon the King and the prince. Then the King strained his son to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes and questioned him of what had passed between the favourite and himself; and the prince swore to him, by God the Supreme and by His Holy Prophet, that it was she who had required him of love and he refused. 'Moreover,' said he, 'she promised me that she would give thee poison to drink and kill thee, so should the kingship be mine; whereupon I waxed wroth and said to her, [by signs] "O accursed one, when I can speak, I will requite thee." So, in her fear of me, she did as thou hast seen.' The King believed his words and sending for the damsel, said to those present, 'How shall we put this damsel to death?' Some counselled to cut out her tongue and other some to burn it with fire; but, when she came before the King, she said to him, 'My case with thee is like unto the story of the fox and the folk.' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

STORY OF THE FOX AND THE FOLK.

A fox once made his way into a city by the wall and entering a currier's store-house, played havoc with what was therein and spoiled the skins for the owner. One day, the currier set a trap for him and taking him, beat him with the hides, till he fell down senseless, whereupon the man, deeming him to be dead, cast him out into the road by the city-gate. Presently, an old woman came up and seeing the fox, said, "A fox's eye, hung about a child's neck, is salutary against weeping." So she pulled out his right eye and went away. Then came a boy, who said, "What does this tail on this fox?" and cut off his brush. After a while, up came a man and saying, "A fox's gall clears away dimness from the eyes, if they be anointed therewith," [took out his knife and made to slit the fox's paunch]; but the latter said in himself, "We bore with the pulling out of the eye and the cutting off of the tail; but, as for the slitting of the paunch, there is no putting up with that." So saying, he sprang up and made off through the gate of the city.'

Quoth the King, 'I excuse her, and in my son's hands be her doom. If he will, let him torture her, and if he will, let him put her to death.' Quoth the prince, 'Forgiveness is better than vengeance and it is of the fashion of the noble;' and the King repeated, 'It is for thee to decide, O my son.' So the prince set her free, saying, 'Depart from our neighbourhood and may God pardon what is past!'

Therewith the King rose from his couch of estate and seating his son thereon, crowned him with his crown and bade the grandees of his realm swear fealty and do homage to him. And he said, 'O folk, indeed, I am stricken in years and desire to withdraw apart and give myself up to the service of my Lord, and I call you to witness that I

divest myself of the royal dignity, even as I have divested myself of my crown, and set it on my son's head.' So the troops and officers swore fealty to the prince, and his father gave himself up to the worship of his Lord nor stinted from this, whilst his son abode in his kingship, doing justice and righteousness; and his power was magnified and his dominion strengthened and he abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

END OF VOL. V.