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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 SIXTH.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

JOUDER AND HIS BROTHERS.

There was once a merchant named Omar and he had three sons, the eldest of whom was called Salim, the second Selim and the third Jouder. He reared them all till they came to man's estate, but the youngest he loved more than his brothers, who, seeing this, waxed jealous of Jouder and hated him. Now their father was a man stricken in years, and when he saw that his two eldest sons hated their brother, he feared lest trouble should befall him from them after his death. So he assembled a company of his kinsfolk, together with divers men of learning and assessors of the Cadi's court, and letting bring all his money and stuff, said to them, 'O folk, divide ye this money and stuff into four parts, according to the law.' They did so, and he gave one part to each of his sons and kept the fourth himself, saying, 'This was my good and I have divided it among them; and now they have no farther claim upon me nor upon each other; so, when I die, no difference shall arise between them, seeing that I have parted the inheritance among them in my lifetime; and this that I have kept shall be for my wife, their mother, wherewithal to provide for her subsistence [after my death].'

A little while after this he died, and neither of the two **Night dcbii.**

elder brothers was content with his share, but sought more of Jouder, saying, 'Our father's good is in thy hands.' So he appealed to the judges and those who had been present at the partition came and bore witness of that which they knew, wherefore the judge forbade them from each other; but Jouder and his brothers spent much money in bribes to him. After this, they left him awhile, but presently they began again to torment him and he again appealed to the magistrate, [who again gave judgment in his favour;] but all three once more lost much money in bribes. Nevertheless Salim and Selim forbore not to seek his hurt [and to carry the case] from court to court, losing, he and they, till they had given all their good for food to the oppressors[1] and they became poor, all three. Then the two elder brothers went to their mother and took her money and beat her and laughed at her and drove her away. So she betook herself to her son Jouder and told him how his brothers had dealt with her and fell to cursing them. 'O my mother,' said he, 'do not curse them, for God will requite each of them his deed. See, I am become poor, and so are my brethren, for contention begetteth loss of good, and we have contended amain, I and they, before the judges, and it hath profited us nothing: nay, we have wasted all our father left us and are disgraced among the folk by reason of our testimony, [one against the other]. Shall I then contend with them anew on thine account and shall we appeal to the judges? This may not be; rather do thou take up thine abode with me, and the cake of bread I eat I will share with thee. Do thou pray for me and God will give me the means of thy support. Leave them to receive of Him the recompense of their deed, and console thyself with the saying of the poet:

[1] *Ez zulmeh*, a popular name for the officers of the civil power, as opposed to the religious, alone acknowledged by all Muslims.

If a lewd fellow should transgress against thee, let him be, And wait
till God shall punish him who doth iniquity;
Neither oppress, for if a mount another should oppress, The evil-doer
would be crushed therefor, assuredly.

And he comforted her till she consented and took up her dwelling with him. Then he got him a net and went a-fishing every day in the river or the lakes or some other place in which there was water; and one day he would earn ten paras, another twenty and another thirty, which he spent upon his mother and himself, and they ate and drank well. But, as for his brothers, they plied no craft and sold not neither bought; misery and ruin and overwhelming calamity overtook them and they wasted that which they had taken from their mother and became wretched naked beggars. Bytimes they would come to their mother, humbling themselves to her exceedingly and complaining of hunger; and she, a mother's heart being pitiful, would give them some mouldy bread; or, if there were any cooked meat of the day before, she would say to them, 'Eat it quickly and go, before your brother comes; for it would be grievous to him and he would harden his heart against me, and ye would disgrace me with him.' So they would eat in haste and go.

One day they came in to their mother, and she set cooked meat and bread before them. As they were eating, in came their brother Jouder, at whose sight their mother hung her head in shame and confusion, fearing lest he should be wroth with her. But he smiled in their faces, saying, 'Welcome, O my brothers! This is indeed a blessed day. How comes it that ye visit me this blessed day?' Then he embraced them and entreated them lovingly, saying to them, 'I thought not that ye would have deserted me nor that ye would have forborne to visit me and your mother.' 'By Allah, O my brother,' said they, 'we longed sore for thee and nought withheld us but shamefastness

because of what befell between us and thee; but indeed we have repented amain. It was Satan's doing, the curse of God the Most High be upon him! And now we have no blessing but thee and our mother.' 'And I,' rejoined Jouder, 'I have no blessing but you twain.' And his mother exclaimed, 'God whiten thy face, O my son, and increase thy prosperity, for thou art the best of us all!' Then he said to his brothers, 'Welcome to you both! Abide with me; for God is bountiful and good aboundeth with me.' So he made peace with them and they ate the evening meal and passed the night with him.

Night dcbiii.

Next morning, after they had broken their fast, Jouder shouldered his net and went out, trusting in [God] the Opener [of the gates of sustenance,] whilst the two others also went forth and were absent till noon, when they returned and their mother set the midday meal before them. At nightfall, Jouder came home, bearing meat and vegetables, and they abode thus a month's space, Jouder catching fish and spending their price on his mother and his brothers, and the latter eating and amusing themselves, till, one day, he went down to the river-bank and casting his net, brought it up empty. He cast it a second time, but again it came up empty and he said to himself, 'There are no fish in this place.' So he removed to another place and cast the net there, but with no better success. And he ceased not to remove from place to place till nightfall, but caught not a single gudgeon and said in himself, 'Strange! Is the river drained of fish or what?' Then he shouldered the net and made for home, chagrined and concerned for his mother and brothers and knowing not how he should feed them that night.

Presently he came to a baker's oven and saw the folk crowding for bread, with money in their hands, whilst the baker took no note of them. So he stood there, sighing, and the baker said to him, 'Welcome, O Jouder! Dost

thou want bread?' But he was silent and the baker continued, 'If thou hast no money, take thy sufficiency and thou shalt have credit.' So Jouder said, 'Give me ten paras' worth of bread and take this net in pledge.' 'Nay, good fellow,' rejoined the baker, 'the net is thy means of earning thy livelihood, and if I take it of thee, I shall close up against thee the door of thy subsistence. Take ten paras' worth of bread and take these other ten paras, and to-morrow bring me fish for the twenty.' 'On my head and eyes be it,' answered Jouder and took the bread and money, saying, 'To-morrow God will provide me the means of acquittance.' Then he bought meat and vegetables and carried them home to his mother, who cooked them, and they supped and went to bed.

Next morning he arose at daybreak and took the net, and his mother said to him, 'Sit down and break thy fast.' But he said, 'Do thou and my brothers breakfast,' and went down to the river, where he ceased not to cast and shift about all day, without aught falling to him, till the hour of afternoon-prayer, when he shouldered his net and went away, sore dejected. His way led him perforce by the shop of the baker, who, when he saw him, counted out to him the loaves and the money, saying, 'Come, take it and go; if it be not for to-day, it will be for to-morrow.' Jouder would have excused himself, but the baker said to him, 'There needs no excuse; if thou hadst caught aught, it would be with thee; so, when I saw thee empty-handed, I knew thou hadst gotten nought; and if to-morrow thou have no better luck, come and take bread and be not ashamed, for I will give thee credit.' So Jouder took the bread and money and went home. Next day he sallied forth and fished from lake to lake until the time of afternoon-prayer, but caught nothing; so he went to the baker and took the bread and silver as usual.

Thus he did seven days running, till he became disheartened and said in himself, 'To-day I will go to Lake Caroun.' So he went thither and was about to cast his net, when there came up to him unawares a Moor clad in a splendid habit and riding a mule with trappings embroidered with gold and on her back a pair of saddle-bags of the same stuff. The Moor alighted and said to him, 'Peace be upon thee, O Jouder, son of Omar!' 'And on thee, O my lord the pilgrim!'[1] replied the fisherman. Quoth the Moor, 'O Jouder, I have need of thee and if thou obey me, thou shalt get great good and shalt be my companion and do my occasions for me.' 'O my lord,' replied Jouder, 'tell me what is in thy mind and I will obey thee, without demur.' Quoth the Moor, 'Repeat the First Chapter of the Koran.'[2] So he recited it with him and the Moor, bringing out a silken cord, said to Jouder, 'Bind my hands fast behind me with this cord and cast me into the lake; then wait awhile and if thou see my hands appear above the water, cast thy net over me and draw me out in haste; but if I come up, feet foremost, then know that I am dead; in which case do thou leave me and take the mule and saddle-bags and carry them to the merchants' bazaar, where thou wilt find a Jew, by name Shemaiah. Deliver him the mule and he will give thee a hundred dinars, which do thou take and go thy ways and keep the matter secret.' So Jouder bound his hands behind his back and he kept saying, 'Tighter.' Then said he, 'Push me into the lake.' So he pushed him in and he sank.

Jouder stood waiting some time, till, at last, the Moor's feet appeared above the water, whereupon he knew that he was dead. So he left him and drove the mule to the

[1] It need hardly be remarked that "pilgrim" [*i.e.* one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca] is a title of honour among the Muslims.

[2] A customary practice in confirmation of an agreement.

bazaar, where he found the Jew seated on a stool at the door of his storehouse. When the latter saw the mule, he said, 'The man hath perished and nought undid him but covetise.' Then he took the mule from Jouder and gave him a hundred dinars, charging him keep the matter secret. So Jouder went to the baker and giving him a dinar, took what bread he needed. The baker reckoned up what was due to him and said, 'I still owe thee two days' bread.' 'Good,' answered Jouder and went on to the butcher, to whom he gave a dinar and took meat, saying, 'Keep the rest of the dinar on account.' Then he bought vegetables and going home, found his brothers importuning their mother for food, whilst she said, 'Have patience till your brother comes home, for I have nothing.' So he went in to them and said, 'Take and eat;' and they fell on the victual like ghouls. Then he gave his mother the rest of the dinars, bidding her, if his brothers came to her, give them wherewithal to buy food and eat in his absence.

Night deix.

Next morning he took his net and going down to Lake Caroun, was about to cast his net, when there came up to him a second Moor, riding on a mule, more handsomely accoutred than he of the day before and having with him a pair of saddle-bags, in each pocket of which was a casket. 'Peace be on thee, O Jouder!' said the Moor. 'And on thee be peace, O my lord the pilgrim!' replied Jouder. Quoth the Moor, 'Did there come to thee yesterday a Moor riding on a mule like this of mine?' At this Jouder was alarmed and replied, 'I saw none,' fearing lest the other should say, 'Whither went he?' and if he answered, 'He was drowned in the lake,' that he should charge him with having drowned him; wherefore he could not but deny. 'Harkye, good fellow,' rejoined the Moor, 'this was my brother, who is gone before me.' Quoth Jouder, 'I know nothing of him.' Then said the Moor,

'Didst thou not bind his hands behind him and throw him into the lake, and did he not say to thee, "If my hands appear above the water first, cast thy net over me and pull me out in haste; but, if my feet appear first, know that I am dead and carry the mule to the Jew Shemaiah, who will give thee a hundred dinars?" And did not his feet appear first and didst thou not carry the mule to the Jew and take of him the hundred dinars?' 'Since thou knowest all this,' replied Jouder, 'why dost thou question me?' Quoth the Moor, 'I would have thee do with me as thou didst with my brother.' Then he gave him a silken cord, saying, 'Bind my hands behind me and throw me in, and if I fare as did my brother, take the mule to the Jew and he will give thee other hundred dinars.' Quoth Jouder, 'Come.' So he came and he bound him and pushed him into the lake, where he sank.

After awhile, his feet appeared above the water and Jouder said, 'He is dead and damned! So God will, may Moors come to me every day, and I will bind them and push them in and they shall die: and I will be content with a hundred dinars for each dead man.' Then he took the mule to the Jew, who exclaimed, on seeing him, 'The other is dead?' 'May thy head live!' answered Jouder, and the Jew said, 'This is the reward of the covetous.' Then he took the mule and gave Jouder a hundred dinars, with which he returned to his mother. 'O my son,' said she, 'whence hast thou this money?' So he told her and she said, 'Go not again to Lake Caroun, for I fear for thee from the Moors.' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'I do but cast them in by their own wish, and what am I to do? This craft brings me in a hundred dinars a day and I return speedily; wherefore, by Allah, I will not leave going to Lake Caroun, till the trace of the Moors is cut off and not one of them is left.'

So, on the morrow, he went down to the lake and stood

there, till there came up a third Moor, riding on a mule and still more richly accoutred than the first two, who said to him, 'Peace be on thee, O Jouder, O son of Omar!' And the fisherman returned his salute, saying in himself, 'How comes it that they all know me?' Quoth the Moor, 'Have any Moors passed by here?' 'Two,' answered Jouder. 'Whither went they?' asked the Moor, and Jouder said, 'I bound their hands behind them and cast them into the lake, where they were drowned, and the same fate is in store for thee.' The Moor laughed and rejoined, saying, 'O good fellow, every living soul hath its appointed term.' Then he alighted and gave the fisherman the silken cord, saying, 'Do with me as thou didst with them.' 'Put thy hands behind thy back,' said Jouder, 'that I may pinion thee, for I am in haste, and time flies.' So he put his hands behind him and Jouder bound him and cast him in. Then he waited awhile, till presently the Moor thrust his hands forth of the water and called out to him, saying, 'Ho, good fellow! Cast out thy net!' So Jouder cast the net over him and drew him ashore, and behold, in each hand he held a fish as red as coral. Quoth the Moor, 'Bring me the two caskets [that are in the saddle-bags].' So Jouder brought them and opened them to him, and he laid in each casket a fish and shut them up.

Then he pressed Jouder to his bosom and kissed him on the right cheek and the left, saying, 'God save thee from all stress! By Allah, hadst thou not cast the net over me and pulled me out, I should have kept my grip of the two fish till I sank and was drowned, for I could not get ashore [of myself.]' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' quoth Jouder, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me the true history of the two drowned men and the fishes and the Jew.' 'Know, O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'that these that were drowned were my two brothers, by name Abdusselam and Abdulahed.

Night der.

My own name is Abdussemed, and the Jew also is our brother: his name is Abdurrehim and he is no Jew, but a true believer of the Maliki school.[1] Our father, whose name was Abdulwedoud, taught us magic and the art of solving mysteries and bringing to light hidden treasures, and we applied ourselves thereto, till we compelled the Afrits and Marids of the Jinn to do us service. By-and-by, our father died and left us much wealth, and we divided amongst us his treasures and talismans, till we came to the books, when we fell out over a book called the "The Fables of the Ancients," whose like is not in the world, nor can its price be paid of any nor its value made good with gold and jewels; for in it are particulars of all the hidden treasures of the earth and the solution of all mysteries. Our father was wont to make use of this book, of which we had some small matter by heart, and each of us desired to possess it, that he might come at what was therein.

Now there was in our company an old man, by name the Diviner El Abten, who had reared our father and taught him divination and magic, and he said to us, "Bring me the book." So we gave it him and he said, "Ye are my son's sons, and it may not be that I should wrong any of you. So whoso is minded to have the book, let him address himself to achieve the treasure of Es Shemerdel and bring me the celestial planisphere and the kohl-pot and the seal-ring and the sword. For the ring hath a Marid that serves it called Er Raad el Casif. And whoso hath possession thereof, neither King nor Sultan may prevail against him; and if he will, he may therewith make himself master of the earth, in all its length and breadth. As for the sword, if its bearer draw it and brandish it against an army, the army will be put to the rout, and if he say the while, 'Slay yonder host,' there will come forth of the sword lightning and fire, that will slay

[1] See note, Vol. II. p. 127.

the whole host. As for the planisphere, its possessor has only to turn its face toward any country with whose sight he hath a mind to divert himself, and therein he will see that country and its people, as they were before him, and he sitting in his place; and if he be wroth with a city and have a mind to burn it, he has but to turn the face of the planisphere towards the sun's disc, saying, 'Let such a city be burnt,' and that city will be consumed with fire. As for the kohl-pot, whoso anointeth his eyes therefrom, he shall see all the treasures of the earth. And I make this condition with you that none but he who achieves the treasure and brings me the four precious things that be therein shall have any claim to this book."

We all agreed to this, and he continued, saying, "O my sons, know that the treasure of Es Shemerdel is under the governance of the sons of the Red King,[1] and your father told me that he had himself essayed to open the treasure, but could not achieve it; for the sons of the Red King fled from him into the land of Egypt and took refuge in a lake there, called Lake Caroun, whither he pursued them, but could not prevail over them, by reason of their stealing into that lake, which was guarded by a spell. So he returned, empty-handed, and complained to me of his ill-success, whereupon I made him an astrological calculation and found that the treasure could only be achieved by means of a young fisherman of Cairo, by name Jouder ben Omar, the place of foregathering with whom was at Lake Caroun, for that he should be the means of the taking the sons of the Red King and that the charm should not be dissolved, save if he should bind the hands of the seeker of the treasure behind him and cast him into the lake, there to do battle with the sons of the Red King. An he were he to whom the adventure was reserved, he should lay hands upon them; but, if it were not destined to him,

Night dcxi.

[1] One of the chief of the Kings of the Jinn.

he should perish and his feet appear above the water. As for him who was successful, his hands would appear first above the water, whereupon it behoved that Jouder should cast the net over him and draw him ashore."

Quoth my brothers Abdusselam and Abdulahed, "We will essay the adventure, though we perish;" and I said, "And I also will go;" but my brother Abdurrehim (he whom thou hast seen in the habit of a Jew) said, "I have no mind [to this]." So we agreed with him that he should repair to Cairo in the disguise of a Jewish merchant, so that, if one of us perished in the lake, he might take his mule and saddle-bags and give the bearer a hundred dinars. The first that came to thee the sons of the Red King slew, and so did they with the second; but against me they could not prevail and I laid hands on them.' Quoth Jouder, 'And where are they?' 'Didst thou not see me shut them in the caskets?' asked the Moor. 'Those were fish,' said Jouder. 'Nay,' answered the Moor, 'they are Afrits in the guise of fish. But, O Jouder,' continued he, 'thou must know that the treasure can only be achieved by thy means: so wilt thou do my bidding and go with me to the towns of Fez and Mequinez and open the treasure? And after I will give thee what thou wilt and thou shalt ever be my brother in the bond of God and return to thy family with a joyful heart.' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' said Jouder, 'I have on my hands a mother and two brothers, whose provider I am; and if I go with thee, who shall give them bread to eat?' 'This is an idle excuse,' replied the Moor; 'if it be but a matter of spending-money, I will give thee a thousand dinars for thy mother, wherewith she may provide herself till thou come back; and indeed thou shalt return before four months.'

Night dcxii.

When Jouder heard mention of the thousand dinars, he consented and the Moor, pulling out the money, gave it to him, whereupon he carried it to his mother and told her

what had passed, saying, 'Take these thousand dinars and provide thyself and my brothers withal, whilst I journey to Morocco with the Moor, for I shall be absent four months, and great good will betide me; so pray for me, O my mother!' 'O my son,' answered she, 'thou desolatest me and I fear for thee.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'no harm can befall him who is in God's keeping, and the Moor is a man of worth.' And he went on to praise his fashion to her. 'May God incline his heart to thee!' said she. 'Go with him, O my son: peradventure, he will give thee somewhat.' So he took leave of her and rejoined the Moor Abdussemed, who said to him, 'Hast thou consulted thy mother?' 'Yes,' answered Jouder; 'and she blessed me.' 'Then mount behind me,' said the Moor.

So Jouder mounted behind him on the mule, and they rode on from noon till the time of afternoon prayer, when the fisherman was anhungred, but seeing no victual with the Moor, said to him, 'O my lord the pilgrim, belike thou hast forgotten to bring aught to eat by the way?' 'Art thou hungry?' asked the Moor. 'Yes,' answered Jouder. So Abdussemed alighted and made Jouder alight and take down the saddle-bags; then he said to him, 'O my brother, what wilt thou have?' 'Anything,' replied Jouder. 'God on thee,' rejoined the Moor, 'tell me what thou hast a mind to.' 'Bread and cheese,' said Jouder; and the other, 'O good fellow, bread and cheese befit thee not; wish for something good.' 'Just now,' replied Jouder, 'everything is good to me.' Quoth the Moor, 'Dost thou like fricasseed fowl?' 'Yes,' answered Jouder. 'Dost thou like rice and honey?' asked he, and Jouder said, 'Yes.' And the Moor went on to ask him if he liked this dish and that, till he had named four-and-twenty kinds of meats; and Jouder thought to himself, 'He must be mad. Where are all these dishes to come from, seeing he hath neither cook nor kitchen?' And he said to him, 'Enough: thou makest

me long for all these meats, and I see nothing.' Quoth the Moor, 'Thou art welcome, O Jouder!' and putting his hand into the saddle-bags, pulled out a dish of gold, containing two hot fricasseed fowls. Then he put in his hand a second time and pulled out a golden dish, full of kabobs;[1] nor did he give over taking out dishes from the saddle-bags, till he had brought forth the whole of the four-and-twenty he had named, whilst Jouder looked on in amazement.

Then said the Moor, 'Eat, good fellow.' And Jouder said to him, 'O my lord, meseems thou carriest in yonder saddle-bags a kitchen and cooking-folk!' The Moor laughed and replied, 'These are enchanted saddle-bags and have a servant, who would bring us a thousand dishes an hour, if we called for them.' Quoth Jouder, 'By Allah, this is indeed a fine pair of saddle-bags!' Then they ate their fill and threw away what was left; after which the Moor replaced the empty dishes in the saddle-bags and putting in his hand, drew out an ewer. They drank and making the ablutions, prayed the afternoon-prayer; after which Abdussemed replaced the ewer and the two caskets in the saddle-bags and throwing them over the mule's back, mounted and took Jouder up behind him. Then said he, 'O Jouder, knowest thou how far we have come, since we left Cairo?' 'Not I, by Allah,' replied he, and Abdussemed, 'We have come a whole month's journey.' 'And how is that?' asked Jouder. 'Know, O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'that this mule under us is a Marid of the Jinn, that every day performs a year's journey; but, for thy sake, she hath gone at her leisure.'

Then they set out again and fared on westward till nightfall, when they halted and the Moor brought out the evening meal from the saddle-bags, and in like manner, in the morning, he took forth wherewithal to break their fast.

[1] Rissoled mutton.

So they rode on four days, alighting at midnight and sleeping till the morning, when they fared on again; and all that Jouder had a mind to, he sought of the Moor, who brought it out of the saddle-bags. On the fifth day, they arrived at Fez and Mequinez and entered the city, where all who met the Moor saluted him and kissed his hands; and he rode through the streets, till he came to a certain door, at which he knocked, whereupon it opened and out came a girl like the moon, to whom said he, 'O Rehmeh, O my daughter, open us the upper chamber.' 'On my head and eyes, O my father!' replied she and went in, swaying to and fro with a graceful and voluptuous gait, that ravished Jouder's reason, and he said, 'This is none other than a King's daughter.' So she opened the upper chamber and the Moor, taking the saddle-bags from the mule's back, said, 'Go, and God bless thee!' When behold, the earth opened and swallowing the mule, closed up again as before. And Jouder said, 'O Protector! praised be God who hath kept us in safety on her back!' 'Marvel not, O Jouder,' quoth the Moor; 'I told thee that the mule was an Afrit; but come with us into the upper chamber.'

So they went up into the upper chamber, and Jouder was amazed at the profusion of rich furniture and pendants of gold and silver and jewels and other rare and precious things that he saw there. As soon as they were seated, the Moor bade Rehmeh bring him a certain bale and opening it, took out a dress worth a thousand dinars, which he gave to Jouder, saying, 'Don this dress, O Jouder! and welcome to thee!' So Jouder put it on and became as he were one of the Kings of the West. Then the Moor laid the saddle-bags before him, and putting in his hand, pulled out dish after dish, till they had before them a tray of forty kinds of meat, when he said to Jouder, 'Come, O my lord, eat and excuse us, for that we know not what

Night dcxiii. meats thou wouldest have; but tell us what thou hast a mind to, and we will set it before thee without delay.' 'By Allah, O my lord the pilgrim,' replied Jouder, 'I love all kinds of meat and mislike none; so ask me not of aught, but bring all that cometh to thy thought, for I have nought to do but to eat.'

He abode twenty days with the Moor, who clad him in a new dress every day, and all this time they ate from the saddle-bags; for the Moor bought neither meat nor bread nor aught else nor cooked, but brought everything out of the bags, even to various kinds of fruit. On the twenty-first day, he said to Jouder, 'Come, this is the day appointed for opening the treasure of Shemerdel.' So he rose and they went afoot without the city, where they found two slaves, each holding a mule. The Moor mounted one mule and Jouder the other, and they rode on till noon, when they came to a stream of running water, on whose banks they alighted and Abdussemed signed with his hand to the slaves and said, 'To it!' So they took the mules and going each his own way, were absent awhile, after which they returned, bearing, one a tent, which he pitched, and the other carpets, which he spread in the tent and laid cushions thereabout. Then they brought the saddle-bags and the caskets containing the two fish; whereupon the Moor arose and said, 'Come, O Jouder!' So Jouder followed him into the tent and sat down beside him; and he brought out dishes of meat from the saddle-bags and they ate the morning meal.

Then the Moor took the two caskets and conjured over them, whereupon there came from within voices that said, 'Here are we, at thy service, O diviner of the world! Have mercy on us!' But he ceased not to repeat conjurations and they to call for help, till the two caskets flew in sunder and there came forth two men, with their hands bound behind them, saying, 'Pardon, O diviner of the

world! What wilt thou with us?' Quoth he, 'I will burn you with fire, except ye make a covenant with me, to open to me the treasure of Es Shemerdel.' 'We promise this to thee,' answered they, 'and we will open the treasure to thee, so thou produce to us Jouder ben Omar, the fisherman, for it may not be opened but by his means, nor can any enter therein but he.' 'He of whom ye speak,' answered the Moor, 'I have brought, and he is here, listening to you and looking at you.' Thereupon they covenanted with him to open the treasure to him, and he released them.

Then he brought out a hollow wand and tablets of red cornelian and laid the latter on the former; after which he took a chafing-dish and laying charcoal thereon, blew one breath into it and it kindled forthwith. Then said he to Jouder, 'O Jouder, I am now about to begin the necessary conjurations and fumigations, and when I have once begun, I may not speak, or the conjuration will be naught; so I will tell thee first what thou must do.' 'Say on,' replied Jouder. 'Know, then,' said the Moor, 'that, when I have recited the charm and thrown on the perfumes, the water will dry up from the river's bed and discover to thee a door of gold, the bigness of the city-gate, with two rings of metal thereon; whereupon do thou go down to the door and knock lightly and wait awhile; then knock a second time more loudly than the first and wait another while; after which give three knocks, one after another, and thou wilt hear a voice say, "Who knocks at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the mysteries?" Do thou answer, "I am Jouder ben Omar, the fisherman;" and the door will open and there will come forth one with a sword in his hand and say to thee, "If thou be that man, stretch forth thy neck, that I may strike off thy head." Then do thou stretch forth thy neck and fear not; for, when he lifts his hand and smites thee,

he will fall down before thee, and in a little thou wilt see him a body without a soul; and the blow shall not irk thee nor shall any harm befall thee; but, if thou gainsay him, he will slay thee. When thou hast undone his enchantment by obedience, enter and go on till thou seest another door, at which do thou knock, and there will come forth to thee a horseman with a lance on his shoulder and say to thee, "What brings thee hither, where neither man nor genie may enter?" And he will shake his spear at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will smite thee and fall down forthright and thou shalt see him a body without a soul; but if thou cross him, he will slay thee.

Then go on to the third door, whence there will come forth to thee a man with a bow and arrows in his hand and take aim at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will shoot at thee and fall down before thee, a body without a soul; but if thou cross him, he will kill thee. Then go on to the fourth door and knock, and there will come forth to thee a huge lion, which will rush upon thee, opening his mouth as if he had a mind to devour thee. Have no fear of him, neither flee from him; but, when he cometh to thee, give him thy hand and he will bite at it and fall down straightway, nor shall aught [of hurt] betide thee. Then enter the fifth door, where thou shalt find a black slave, who will say to thee, "Who art thou?" Say, "I am Jouder," and he will answer, "If thou be that man, open the sixth door." Then do thou go up to the door and say, "O Jesus, tell Moses to open the door;" whereupon the door will fly open and thou wilt see two dragons, one on the left hand and another on the right, which will open their mouths and fly at thee, both at once. Do thou put forth to them thy hands and they will bite each a hand [and fall down dead;] but if thou resist them, they will kill thee.

Night deriv.

Then go on to the seventh door and knock, whereupon there will come forth to thee thy mother and say, "Welcome,

O my son! Come, that I may greet thee!" But do thou say to her, "Hold off from me and put off thy clothes." And she will make answer, "O my son, I am thy mother that suckled thee and brought thee up: how then wouldst thou strip me naked?" Then do thou say, "Except thou put off thy clothes, I will kill thee!" and look to thy right, where thou wilt see a sword hanging up. Take it and draw it upon her, saying, "Strip!" whereupon she will wheedle thee and humble herself to thee; but have thou no pity on her nor be beguiled, and as often as she puts off aught, say to her, "Off with the rest!" nor do thou cease to threaten her with death, till she put off all that is upon her and fall down, when the enchantment will be dissolved and the charms undone, and thou wilt be safe.

Then enter the hall of the treasure, where thou wilt see the gold lying in heaps; but pay no heed to aught thereof and go on to the upper end of the hall, where thou wilt find a niche, with a curtain drawn before it. Draw back the curtain and thou wilt see the enchanter Es Shemerdel lying upon a couch of gold, with something at his head, round and shining like the moon, which is the celestial planisphere. He is girt with the sword; on his finger is the ring and about his neck is a chain, to which hangs the kohl-pot. Bring me the four talismans, and look thou forget not aught of that which I have told thee, or thou wilt repent and be put to fear.' And he repeated his directions to Jouder a second and a third and a fourth time, till he said, 'I have them by heart: but who may face all these enchantments that thou namest and endure against these mighty terrors?' 'O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'fear not, for they are semblances without life;' and he went on to hearten him, till he said, 'I put my trust in God.'

Then Abdussemed threw perfumes on the chafing-dish, and addressed himself to reciting conjurations. Presently

the water disappeared and discovered the bed of the river and the door of the treasure, whereupon Jouder went down to the door and knocked. Therewith he heard a voice saying, 'Who knocks at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the mysteries?' Quoth he, 'I am Jouder son of Omar;' whereupon the door opened and there came forth one with a drawn sword, who said to him, 'Stretch forth thy neck.' So he stretched forth his neck and the figure smote him and fell down, lifeless. Then he went on to the second door and did the like, nor did he cease to do thus, till he had undone the enchantments of the first six doors and came to the seventh door, from which there issued forth to him his mother, saying, 'Greeting, O my son!' 'What art thou?' said he; and she answered, saying, 'O my son, I am thy mother who bore thee nine months [in my womb] and gave thee suck and reared thee.' Quoth he, 'Put off thy clothes.' 'Thou art my son,' said she, 'how wouldst thou strip me naked?' But he said, 'Strip, or I will strike off thy head with this sword;' and he put out his hand to it and drew it upon her, saying, 'Except thou strip, I will slay thee.' Then the strife became long between them and as often as he redoubled on her his menaces, she put off somewhat of her clothes and he said to her, 'Put off the rest,' whilst she kept saying, 'O my son, thou hast disappointed my fosterage of thee,' till she had nothing left but her trousers. Then said she, 'O my son, is thy heart stone? Wilt thou dishonour me by discovering my nakedness. Indeed, this is unlawful, O my son!' And he answered, 'Thou sayst sooth; it behoves not that thou put off thy trousers.'

No sooner had he uttered these words, than she cried out and said, 'He hath made default: beat him!' Whereupon there fell upon him blows like rain and the servants of the treasure flocked to him and dealt him a beating that he forgot not in all his life; after which they thrust

him forth and cast him down without the treasure and the doors shut of themselves as before, whilst the waters of the river returned to their bed. When the Moor saw this, he took Jouder up in haste and repeated conjurations over him, till he came to his senses, when he said to him, 'What hast thou done, O dolt?' 'O my brother,' answered Jouder, 'I undid all the enchantments, till I came to my mother and there befell between her and myself a long contention. But I made her put off her clothes, till but her trousers remained upon her and she said to me, "Do not dishonour me; for to discover one's nakedness is forbidden." So I left her her trousers out of pity, and behold, she cried out and said, "He hath made default; beat him!" Whereupon there came out upon me folk, whence I know not, and beating me till I was nigh upon death, thrust me out; nor do I know what befell me after this.' Quoth the Moor, 'Did I not warn thee not to swerve from my directions? Verily, thou hast done ill by me and by thyself: for if thou hadst made her take off her trousers, we had attained our desire; but now thou must abide with me till this day next year.'

Night dcxv.

Then he cried out to the two slaves, who struck the tent forthright and loaded it [on muleback;] then they were absent awhile and presently returned with the two mules; and they mounted and rode back to the city of Fez, where Jouder abode with the Moor, eating and drinking well and donning a rich dress every day, till the appointed day arrived, when the Moor said to him, 'Come with me, for this is the appointed day.' And Jouder said, 'It is well.' So the Moor carried him without the city, where they found the two slaves with the mules, and mounting, rode on till they came to the river. Here the slaves pitched the tent and furnished it and the Moor brought forth the tray of food and they ate the morning meal; after which Abdussemed brought out the wand and the tablets as before

and kindling the fire in the chafing-dish, made ready the perfumes. Then said he to Jouder, 'O Jouder, I wish to renew my injunctions to thee.' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' answered he, 'if I have forgotten the beating, I have forgotten the injunctions.' 'Dost thou indeed remember them?' asked the Moor, and he said, 'Yes.' Quoth the Moor, 'Keep thy wits, and think not that the woman is thy very mother; nay, she is but an enchantment in her semblance, whose purpose is to catch thee tripping. Thou camest off alive the first time, but, if thou make default this time, they will kill thee.' 'If I slip this time,' replied Jouder, 'I deserve to be burnt of them.'

Then Abdussemed cast in the perfumes and recited the conjurations, till the river dried up; whereupon Jouder descended and knocked at the door. It opened and he entered and undid the several enchantments, till he came to the seventh door and the semblance of his mother appeared before him, saying, 'Welcome, O my son!' But he said to her, 'How am I thy son, O accursed one? Strip!' And she began to wheedle him and put off garment after garment, till but her trousers remained; and he said to her, 'Strip, O accursed one!' So she put off her trousers and became a body without a soul. Then he entered the hall of the treasure, where he saw gold lying in heaps, but paid no heed to it and passed on to the niche at the upper end, where he saw the enchanter Es Shemerdel lying on a couch of gold, girt with the sword, with the ring on his finger, the kohl-pot on his breast and the celestial planisphere over his head. So he unbuckled the sword and taking the ring, the kohl-pot and the planisphere, went forth, when, behold, music sounded for him and the servants of the treasure cried out, saying, 'Mayst thou enjoy that which thou hast gained, O Jouder!' Nor did the music leave sounding, till he came forth of the treasure to the Moor, who gave over his conjurations and

rising, embraced him and saluted him. Then Jouder gave him the four talismans, and he took them and cried out to the slaves, who carried away the tent and brought the mules.

So they mounted and returned to the city of Fez, where the Moor fetched the saddle-bags and brought forth dish after dish of meat, till the tray was full, and said to Jouder, 'Eat, O Jouder, O my brother!' So he ate till he was satisfied, when the Moor emptied what remained of the meats into other dishes and returned the empty platters to the saddle-bags. Then he said to Jouder, 'O Jouder, thou hast left thy native land on our account and hast accomplished our need; wherefore thou hast a right to a reward of us. Seek, therefore, what thou wilt; it is God the Most High that giveth unto thee by our means. Ask thy will and be not ashamed, for thou art deserving.' 'O my lord,' answered Jouder, 'I ask first of God the Most High and then of thee, that thou give me yonder saddle-bags.' So the Moor called for them and gave them to him, saying, 'Take them, for they are thy due, and if thou hadst asked of me aught else, I had given it thee. Eat from them, thou and thy family, and know that the manner of their usance is on this wise; put thy hand therein and say, "O servant of these saddle-bags, I conjure thee by the virtue of the mighty names that have power over thee, bring me such a dish!" And he will bring thee whatsoever thou askest, though thou shouldst call for a thousand different dishes a day. But, O good fellow, these will not profit thee, save by way of victual, and thou hast wearied thyself with us and we promised thee to send thee home, rejoicing; so we will join to these other saddle-bags, full of gold and jewels, and bring thee back to thy native land, where thou shalt become a merchant and clothe thyself and thy family; nor shalt thou want for spending-money.'

So saying, he filled him a pair of saddle-bags, half with

gold and half with jewels and precious stones, and sending for a slave and a mule, said to him, 'Mount this mule, and the slave shall go before thee and guide thee in the way, till thou come to the door of thy house, where do thou take the two pairs of saddle-bags and give him the mule, that he may bring it back. But let none into thy secret; and so we commend thee to God.' 'May God increase thy good!' replied Jouder and laying the two pairs of saddle-bags on the mule's back, mounted and set forth. The slave went on before him and the mule followed him all that day and night, and on the morrow he entered Cairo by the Gate of Victory, where he saw his mother seated, saying, 'Charity, for the love of God!' At this sight he well-nigh lost his wits and alighting, threw himself upon her: and when she saw him, she wept. Then he mounted her on the mule and walked by her stirrup, till they came to the house, where he set her down and taking the saddle-bags, left the mule to the slave, who took her and returned with her to his master, for that both slave and mule were Afrits.

As for Jouder, it was grievous to him that his mother should beg; so, when they were in the house, he said to her, 'O my mother, are my brothers well?' And she replied, 'They are both well.' Quoth he, 'Why dost thou beg by the wayside?' 'Because I am hungry, O my son,' answered she; and he, 'Before I went away I gave thee a hundred dinars one day, the like the next and a thousand on the day of my departure.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'they cheated me and took the money from me, saying, "We will buy goods with it." Then they drove me away, and I fell to begging by the wayside, for stress of hunger.' 'O my mother,' said Jouder, 'no harm shall befall thee, now I am come; so have no concern, for these saddle-bags are full of gold and jewels and good aboundeth [with me].' Quoth she, 'Verily, thou art blessed, O my son!

May God accept of thee and increase thee of His bounties! Go, O my son, fetch us some victual, for I slept not last night for stress of hunger, having gone to bed supperless.'

He laughed and said, 'Welcome to thee, O my mother! Call for what thou wilt to eat, and I will set it before thee forthright; for I have no occasion to buy from the market, nor need I any to cook.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'I see nought with thee.' And he said, 'I have with me in these saddle-bags all manner of meats.' 'O my son,' rejoined she, 'whatever is ready will serve to stay hunger.' 'True,' answered he, 'when there is no choice, men are content with the least thing; but where there is plenty, they like to eat what is good: and I have plenty; so call for what thou hast a mind to.' 'O my son,' said she, 'give me some hot bread and a piece of cheese:' but he answered, saying, 'O my mother, this befits not thy condition.' 'Then give me to eat of that which befits my condition,' quoth she; 'for thou knowest it.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'what befits thy condition is rissoled meat and fricasseed fowls and savoury rice and sausages and stuffed cucumbers and stuffed lamb and stuffed ribs [of mutton] and vermicelli with pounded almonds and nuts and honey and sugar and fritters and almond patties.' But she thought he was laughing at her and making mock of her; so she said to him, 'Alas! Alas! what is come to thee? Dost thou dream or art thou mad?' 'Why deemest thou that I am mad?' asked he, and she replied, 'Because thou namest to me all manner rich meats; who can avail unto their price, and who knows how to dress them?' Quoth he, 'As I live, thou shalt eat of all that I have named to thee, and that forthright.' And she said, 'I see nothing.' Then said he, 'Bring me the saddle-bags.'

So she fetched them and feeling them, found them empty. However, she laid them before him and he thrust in his hand and pulled out dish after dish, till he had set

before her all he had named. Whereupon, 'O my son,' said she, 'the saddle-bags are small and moreover they were empty; yet hast thou taken thereout all these dishes. Where then were they all?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'know that these are enchanted saddle-bags, which the Moor gave me, and they have a servant, whom, if one desire aught, he has but to adjure by the names [which have power over him,] saying, "O servant of the saddle-bags, bring me such a dish!" and he will bring it.' Quoth his mother, 'And may I put out my hand and ask of him?' 'Do so,' replied he. So she put out her hand and said, 'O servant of the saddle-bags, [I conjure thee,] by the virtue of the names that have power over thee, bring me stuffed ribs [of mutton].' Then she thrust in her hand and found a dish containing delicate stuffed ribs of lamb. So she took it out, and called for bread and what else she had a mind to; after which Jouder said to her, 'O my mother, when thou hast made an end of eating, empty what is left of the food into platters other than these and restore the empty dishes to the saddle-bags, for the charm is upon this condition, and keep the saddle-bags carefully.' So she arose and laid them up in a safe place. 'And look that thou keep this secret,' added he; 'and whenever thou hast a mind to aught, take it forth of the saddle-bags and give alms and feed my brothers, whether I be absent or present.'

Then he fell to eating with her, and while they were thus engaged, in came his two brothers, whom a man of the quarter had apprised of his return, saying, 'Your brother is come back, riding on a mule, with a slave before him, and wearing a dress that hath not its like.' So they said to each other, 'Would we had not ill-treated our mother! She will surely tell him how we did by her, and then how sore will be our disgrace with him!' But one of them said, 'Our mother is tender-hearted, and if she tell

him, our brother is yet tenderer over us than she; and if we excuse ourselves to him, he will accept our excuse.' So they went in to him and he rose to them and saluting them after the friendliest manner, bade them sit and eat. So they ate till they were satisfied, for they were weak with hunger; after which Jouder said to them, 'O my brothers, take what is left and distribute it to the poor.' 'O brother,' replied they, 'let us keep it to sup withal.' But he said, 'When supper-time comes, ye shall have more than this.' So they took the rest of the victual and going out, gave of it to every poor man who passed by them, saying, 'Take and eat,' till there was nothing left. Then they brought back the dishes and Jouder said to his mother, 'Put them in the saddle-bags.'

Night derbi.

When it was night, he entered the saloon and took forth of the saddle-bags a table of forty dishes; after which he went up [to the upper chamber] and sitting down between his brothers, said to his mother, 'Bring the supper.' So she went down to the saloon and finding there the dishes ready, laid the tray and brought up the forty dishes, one after another. Then they ate the evening meal, and when they had done, Jouder said to his brothers, 'Take and feed the poor and needy.' So they took what was left and gave alms thereof, and presently he brought forth to them sweetmeats, whereof they ate, and what was left he bade them give to the neighbours. On the morrow, they broke their fast after the same fashion, and thus they fared ten days, at the end of which time quoth Salim to Selim, 'How comes it that our brother sets before us a banquet in the morning and another at noon and a third at sundown, besides sweetmeats at night, and all that is left he gives to the poor? Verily, this is the fashion of Sultans. Yet we never see him buy aught, and he hath neither cook nor kitchen, nor doth he light a fire. Whence hath he this great plenty? Hast thou not a mind to enquire the cause

of all this?' 'By Allah, I know not,' replied Selim. 'But knowest thou any who will tell us the truth of the case?' And Salim said, 'None will tell us but our mother.'

So they laid a plot and going in to their mother one day, in Jouder's absence, said to her, 'O our mother, we are hungry.' 'Rejoice,' answered she; '[for ye shall presently be satisfied;]' and going into the saloon, sought of the servant of the saddle-bags hot meats, which she took out and set before her sons. 'O our mother,' said they, 'this meat is hot; yet hast thou not cooked, neither kindled a fire.' Quoth she, 'It comes from the saddle-bags;' and they, 'What manner of thing are these saddle-bags?' 'They are enchanted,' replied she and told them their virtue, enjoining them to secrecy. Quoth they, 'O our mother, the secret shall be kept; but teach us the manner of this.' So she taught them the fashion thereof and they fell to putting their hands into the saddle-bags and taking forth whatever they had a mind to.

Then quoth Salim [privily] to Selim, 'O my brother, how long shall we abide with Jouder servant-wise and eat of his charity? Shall we not cast about to get the saddle-bags from him and make off with them?' 'And how shall we make shift to do this?' asked Selim. 'We will sell him to the galleys,' replied Salim; and Selim said, 'How shall we do that?' Quoth Salim, 'We will go to the Captain [of the galleys] of the Sea of Suez and bid him to an entertainment, with two of his company. What I say to Jouder do thou confirm, and at the end of the night I will show thee what I will do.'

So they agreed upon this and going to the captain's lodging, said to him, 'O captain, we have come to thee on an errand that will content thee.' 'Good,' answered he; and they, 'We two are brethren, and we have a third brother, a lewd, good-for-nothing fellow. When our father died, he left us some money, which we shared amongst

us, and he took his part and wasted it in lewdness and debauchery, till he was reduced to beggary, when he came upon us and cited us before the magistrates, avouching that we had taken his good and that of his father, and we disputed the matter before the judges and lost the money. Then he waited awhile and attacked us a second time, till he brought us to poverty; nor will he desist from us, and we have no peace for him; wherefore we would have thee buy him of us.' Quoth the captain, 'Can ye go about with him and make shift to bring him to me here? If so, I will pack him off to sea forthright.' 'We cannot avail to bring him here,' answered they; 'but be thou our guest [this night] and bring with thee two of thy men, no more; and when he is asleep, we will fall upon him, we five, and gag him. Then shalt thou carry him forth the house, under cover of the night, and do with him as thou wilt.' 'So be it,' rejoined the captain. 'Will ye sell him for forty dinars?' 'Yes,' said they. 'Come to such a street, by such a mosque, after nightfall, and thou shalt find one of us awaiting thee.'

Then they repaired to Jouder and waited awhile, after which Salim went up to him and kissed his hand. Quoth Jouder, 'What ails thee, O my brother?' And he made answer, saying, 'Know that I have a friend, who hath many a time bidden me to his house in thine absence and hath ever hospitably entreated me, and I owe him a thousand kindnesses, as my brother here knoweth. I met him to-day and he invited me to his house, but I said to him, "I cannot leave my brother [Jouder]." Quoth he, "Bring him with thee;" and I answered, saying, "He will not consent to that; but if ye will be my guests, thou and thy brothers . . . . . ;" for his brothers were sitting with him, and I invited them, thinking that they would refuse. But he accepted my invitation, saying, "Look for me at the gate of the Mosque, and I will come to thee, I and my

brothers." And now I fear they will come and am ashamed before thee. So wilt thou set my heart at rest and entertain them this night, for thy good is abundant, O my brother? Or if thou consent not, give me leave to take them into the neighbours' house.' 'Why shouldst thou carry them into the neighbours' house?' replied Jouder. 'Is our house then so strait or have we not wherewithal to give them to sup? Shame on thee to consult me! Thou hast but to call for what thou needest and have rich meats and sweetmeats and to spare. Whenever thou bringest home folk in my absence, ask thy mother, and she will set before thee victual more than enough. Go and fetch them; blessings have descended upon us.'[1]

So Salim kissed his hand and going forth, sat at the gate of the mosque till after sundown, when the Captain and his men came up to him, and he carried them to the house. When Jouder saw them, he bade them welcome and made them sit and entreated them friendly, knowing not what he was to suffer at their hands. Then he called to his mother for supper, and she fell to taking dishes out of the saddle-bags, whilst he said, 'Bring such and such meats,' till she had set forty different dishes before them. So they ate till they were satisfied and the tray was taken away, the sailors thinking the while that this liberal entertainment came from Salim. When a third part of the night was past, Jouder set sweetmeats before them and Salim served them, whilst his two brothers sat with the guests, till they sought to sleep. So Jouder lay down and the others with him, who waited till he was asleep, when they fell upon him and gagging and binding him, before he was awake, carried him forth of the house, under cover of the night. Then they packed him off to Suez, where they shackled him and set him to work as a [galley] slave; and he ceased not to serve thus in silence a whole year.

Night derbii.

[1] *i.e.* we look upon their visit as a blessing.

As for his brothers, they went in next morning to his mother and said to her, 'O mother, our brother Jouder is not awake.' Quoth she, 'Do ye wake him.' 'Where lieth he?' asked they, and she replied, 'With the guests.' 'Peradventure,' rejoined they, 'he went away with them whilst we slept. It would seem that he had tasted of foreign travel and yearned to find hidden treasures; for we heard him talk with the Moors, and they said to him, "We will take thee with us and open the treasure to thee."' 'Hath he then been in company with Moors?' asked she; and they answered, saying, 'Were they not our guests yesternight?' 'Most like he hath gone with them,' said she; 'but God will direct him aright; for there is a blessing upon him and he will surely come back with great good.' And she wept, for it was grievous to her to be parted from her son.

Then said they to her, 'O accursed woman, dost thou love Jouder with all this love, whilst as for us, whether we be absent or present, thou neither joyest in us nor sorrowest for us? Are we not thy sons, even as Jouder is thy son?' 'Ye are indeed my sons,' answered she; 'but ye are reprobates who deserve no favour of me, for I have never had any satisfaction of you since your father's death; whilst, as for Jouder, I have had abundant good of him and he has comforted my heart and entreated me with honour; wherefore it behoves me to weep for him, because of his goodness to me and to you.'

When they heard this, they reviled her and beat her; after which they sought for the saddle-bags, till they found the two pairs and took the enchanted one and all the gold and jewels from the other, saying, 'This was our father's good.' 'Not so, by Allah!' said their mother. 'It belongs to your brother Jouder, who brought it from the land of the Moors.' 'Thou liest,' answered they; 'it was our father's property; and we will dispose of it.'

Then they divided the gold and jewels between them; but a dispute arose between them concerning the enchanted saddle-bags, each saying, 'I will have them;' and they came to high words over this. Then said she, 'O my sons, ye have divided the gold and the jewels, but this may not be divided, nor can its value be made up in money; and if it be cut in twain, its virtue will be annulled; so leave it with me and I will give you to eat from it at all times and be content to take a morsel with you. If ye give me aught to clothe me, it will be of your favour, and each of you shall traffic with the folk for himself. Ye are my sons and I am your mother; wherefore let us abide as we are, lest your brother come back and we be disgraced.' But they hearkened not to her words and passed the night, wrangling with one another.

Now it chanced that a sergeant of the King's guards was a guest in the adjoining house and heard them through the open window. So he looked out and listening, heard all that passed between them. Next morning, he presented himself before the King of Egypt, whose name was Shems ed Dauleh, and told him all he had heard, whereupon he sent for Jouder's brothers and put them to the torture, till they confessed; and he took the two pairs of saddle-bags from them and clapped them in prison, appointing a sufficient daily allowance to their mother.

Meanwhile, Jouder abode a whole year in service at Suez, till, one day, being in a ship bound on a voyage over the sea, a wind arose against them and cast the vessel upon a rock, where she broke up and all on board were drowned, save Jouder. He got ashore in safety and fared on inland, till he reached an encampment of Bedouins, who questioned him of his case, and he told them what had befallen him. Now there was amongst them a merchant, a native of Jiddah,[1] who took pity on him and said

[1] The port of Mecca.

to him, 'O Egyptian, wilt thou take service with me and I will clothe thee and carry thee with me to Jiddah?' So Jouder took service with him and followed him to Jiddah, where he showed him much favour. After awhile, the merchant set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, taking Jouder with him, and when they reached the city, the latter repaired to the temple, to make the round of the Kaabeh. As he was making the prescribed circuits, he saw his friend Abdussemed the Moor doing the like; and when the latter caught sight of him, he saluted him and asked him how he did; whereupon Jouder wept and told him all that had befallen him. **Night dcxviii.**

The Moor carried him to his lodging and entreated him with honour, clothing him in a dress of unmatched richness and saying to him, 'Thou hast seen the end of thine ills, O Jouder.' Then he levelled a tablet of sand and drew a geomantic figure, by which he discovered what had befallen Salim and Selim and said to Jouder, 'Such and such things have befallen thy brothers and they are now in the King of Egypt's prison; but do thou abide with me and accomplish thy religious duties at thine ease, and all shall be well.' 'O my lord,' replied Jouder, 'let me go and take leave of the merchant with whom I am and after I will come back to thee.' 'Dost thou owe money?' asked the Moor, and he answered, 'No.' 'Go,' said Abdussemed, 'and take leave of him and come back forthright, for men of honour owe a duty to those whose bread they have eaten.'

So Jouder returned to the merchant and took leave of him, saying, 'I have fallen in with my brother.' 'Bring him here,' said the merchant, 'and we will make him an entertainment.' But Jouder answered, saying, 'He has no need of that; for he is a man of wealth and hath many servants.' Then the merchant gave Jouder twenty dinars, saying, 'Acquit me of responsibility;' and he bade him farewell and went forth from him. As he went along, he

saw a poor man, so he gave him the twenty dinars and returned to the Moor, with whom he abode till they had accomplished the rites of the pilgrimage, when Abdussemed gave him the ring, that he had taken from the treasure of Es Shemerdel, saying, 'This ring will bring thee to thy desire, for it is enchanted and hath a servant, by name Er Raad el Casif; so whatever thou hast a mind to of the things of this world, rub this ring and its servant will appear and do all thou biddest him.'

Then he rubbed the ring before him, whereupon the genie appeared, saying, 'Here I am, O my lord! Ask what thou wilt and it shall be given thee. Hast thou a mind to people a ruined city or lay waste a flourishing one or slay a king or put an army to the rout?' 'O Raad,' said Abdussemed, 'this is become thy lord; do thou serve him faithfully.' Then he dismissed him and said to Jouder, 'Rub the ring and the genie will appear; and do thou command him to do whatever thou desirest, for he will not gainsay thee. Now go to thine own country and take care of the ring, for it will enable thee to baffle thine enemies.' 'O my lord,' answered Jouder, 'with thy leave, I will set out homeward.' Quoth the Moor, 'Summon the genie and mount upon his back; and if thou say to him, "Bring me to my native city this very day," he will not gainsay thy commandment.'

So he took leave of the Moor and rubbed the ring, whereupon Er Raad presented himself, saying, 'Here am I; ask and it shall be given to thee.' 'Carry me to Cairo this day,' said Jouder. 'Thy commandment shall be done,' answered the genie and taking him on his back, flew with him from noon till midnight, when he set him down in the courtyard of his mother's house and disappeared. Jouder went in to his mother, who rose at sight of him and greeted him, weeping. Then she told him how the king had beaten his brothers and cast them into prison and

taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; which when he heard, it was grievous to him and he said to her, 'Grieve not for this; I will show thee what I can do and bring my brothers hither forthright.' So he rubbed the ring, whereupon the genie appeared, saying, 'At thy service! Ask and thou shalt have.' Quoth Jouder, 'Bring me my two brothers from the prison.'

So the genie sank into the earth and came not up but in the midst of the gaol where Salim and Selim lay in piteous plight and sore affliction, for the misery of prison, so that they wished for death and one of them said to the other, 'By Allah, O my brother, affliction is long upon us! How long shall we abide in this prison? Death would be relief.' As he spoke, the earth clove in sunder and out came Er Raad, who took them up and plunged with them into the earth. They swooned away for excess of fear, and when they recovered, they found themselves in their mother's house and saw her seated, with Jouder by her side. Quoth he, 'I salute you, O my brothers! I rejoice to see you.' And they bowed their heads and fell a-weeping. Then said he, 'Weep not, for it was the devil and covetise that led you to do thus. How could you sell me? But I comfort myself with the thought of Joseph, whose brothers did with him worse than ye with me, when they cast him into the pit. Repent unto God and crave pardon of Him, and He will forgive you, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful. As for me, I pardon you and bid you welcome: no harm shall befall you.' Then he comforted them and set their hearts at ease and related to them all he had suffered, till he fell in with Abdussemed, and told them also of the ring that the latter had given him. 'O our brother,' said they, 'forgive us this time; and if we return to our old ways, do with us as thou wilt.' Quoth he, 'No harm shall befall you; but tell me what the king did with you.' 'He beat us and threatened us,' answered they, 'and

Night dcxix.

took the two pairs of saddle-bags from us.' He shall answer for this,' said Jouder and rubbed the ring, whereupon Er Raad appeared.

When his brothers saw the genie, they were affrighted and thought Jouder would bid him slay them; so they fled to their mother, saying, 'O our mother, we throw ourselves on thy mercy: do thou intercede for us!' And she said to them, 'Fear nothing, O my sons!' Then said Jouder to the genie, 'I command thee to bring me all that is in the king's treasury, together with the two pairs of saddle-bags he took from my brothers, and look thou leave nothing.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Er Raad and disappearing, straightway returned with the two pairs of saddle-bags and all else that was in the treasury and laid them before Jouder, saying, 'O my lord, I have left nothing in the treasury.' Jouder gave the treasure to his mother to keep and laying the enchanted saddle-bags before him, said to the genie, 'I command thee to build me this night a lofty palace and overlay it with liquid gold and furnish it magnificently: and let not the day dawn, ere thou be quit of the whole work.' 'Thy commands shall be obeyed,' replied the genie and sank into the earth. Then Jouder brought forth food and they ate and took their ease and lay down to sleep.

Meanwhile, Er Raad summoned his attendant Jinn and commanded them to build the palace. So some of them fell to hewing stones and some to building, whilst others plastered and painted and furnished; nor did the day dawn before the ordinance of the palace was complete; whereupon Er Raad came to Jouder and said to him, 'O my lord, the palace is ready, if it please thee to come and look on it.' So Jouder went forth with his mother and brothers and saw a palace, whose like there was not in the whole world. It stood upon the marge of the highway and confounded all minds with the goodliness of its ordinance; and withal it had cost him nothing. Then he said to his

mother, 'Wilt thou take up thine abode in this palace?' 'I will well, O my son,' answered she and called down blessings upon him.

Then he rubbed the ring and bade the genie fetch him forty handsome white slave-girls and forty male white slaves, besides the like number of black slaves, male and female. 'Thy will shall be done,' answered Er Raad and betaking himself, with forty of his attendant Jinn, to Hind and Sind and Persia, carried off every handsome girl and boy they saw, till they had made up the required number. Moreover, he sent other fourscore, who fetched handsome black slaves, male and female, forty of either sex, and carried them all to Jouder's house, which they filled. Then he showed them to Jouder, who was pleased with them and bade him bring a suit of the richest raiment for each of them and dresses to boot for himself and his mother and brothers. So the genie brought all that was needed and clad the female slaves, saying to them, 'This is your mistress: kiss her hands and cross her not, but serve her, white and black.' The male slaves also clad themselves and kissed Jouder's hands; and he and his brothers arrayed themselves in the robes the genie had brought them and became, Jouder as he were a king and his brothers as viziers. Now his house was spacious; so he lodged Salim and his slave-girls in one part thereof and Selim and his slave-girls in another, whilst he and his mother took up their abode in the new palace; and each in his own place was like the Sultan.

Meanwhile, the king's treasurer, thinking to take something from the treasury, went in and found it altogether empty, even as saith the poet:

Once was it as a beehive stocked and full of bees galore; But when they left it, it became devoid of all its store.[1]

[1] The point of this verse is an untranslatable play upon the double meaning of the word *kheliyeh*, which signifies "beehive" and is also the feminine of the word *kheliy* "empty."

And he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he left the door open and going in to the King, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have to tell thee that the treasury hath become empty during the night.' Quoth the King, 'What hast thou done with my treasures that were therein?' 'By Allah,' replied the treasurer, 'I have not done aught with them nor know I what is come of them! I visited the place yesterday and saw it full; but, when I went in to-day, I found it altogether empty, albeit the doors were locked and [the walls] unpierced and the locks unbroken, nor hath a thief entered it.' 'Are the two pairs of saddle-bags gone?' asked the king. 'Yes,' replied the treasurer; whereupon the king's reason fled from his head and he rose to his feet, saying, 'Go thou before me.' So the treasurer forewent him to the treasury and he found nothing there, whereat he was sore enraged and said, 'Who hath dared to violate my treasury, fearing not my wrath?'

Night dcxx.

Then he went forth and held a Divan, to which he summoned all his chief officers, who came, thinking each that the king was wroth with him; and he said to them, 'Know that my treasury hath been plundered during the night, and I know not who has done this thing and dared thus to outrage me, without fear of my wrath.' 'How so?' asked they. Quoth he, 'Ask the treasurer.' So they asked him, and he replied, saying, 'I visited the treasury yesterday and it was full, but when I entered it this morning, I found it empty, though the doors were unpierced and the locks unbroken.' They all marvelled at this and could make the king no answer, when in came the sergeant, who had denounced Salim and Selim, and said to Shems ed Dauleh, 'O king of the age, all this night I have not slept for that which I saw.' And the king said, 'And what didst thou see?' 'Know, O king of the age,' answered the

sergeant, 'that all night long I have been amusing myself with watching builders at work, and when it was day, I saw a palace ready built, whose like is not in the world. So I asked about it and was told that Jouder had come back with great wealth and slaves and servants and that he had freed his brothers from prison and built this palace, wherein he is as a Sultan. Quoth the king, 'Go, look in the prison.' So they went thither and finding Salim and Selim gone, returned and told the king, who said, 'It is plain now who is the robber; he who took Salim and Selim out of prison it is who hath stolen my treasures.' 'O my lord,' said the Vizier, 'and who is he?' 'Their brother Jouder,' replied the king, 'and he hath taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; but, O Vizier, do thou send him an Amir with fifty men to seal up his goods and lay hands on him and his brothers and bring them to me, that I may hang them.' And he was sore enraged and said, 'Quick, fetch them to me, that I may put them to death.'

But the Vizier said to him, 'Be thou clement, for God is clement and hasteth not to punish His servants, when they transgress against Him. Moreover, he who can build a palace in one night, as these say, none in the world can vie with him; and I fear lest the Amir catch a mischief of Jouder. Have patience, therefore, whilst I devise for thee some means of getting at the truth of the case, and so shalt thou come to thy desire, O King of the age.' Quoth the king, 'Counsel me how I shall do, O Vizier.' And the Vizier said, 'Send him an Amir, to bid him to an entertainment, and I will make much of him for thee and make a show of affection for him and ask him of his estate; after which we will see. If we find him stout of heart, we will use craft with him, and if weak, then do thou seize him and do with him thy will.' The King agreed to this and despatched one of his Amirs, by name Othman, to invite Jouder and say to him, 'The King bids thee to an enter-

tainment;' and the King said to him, 'Return not but with him.'

Now this Othman was a proud conceited fool; so he went forth upon his errand, and when he came to Jouder's palace, he saw at the door an eunuch seated upon a chair of gold, who rose not at his approach, but sat as if none were near, though there were with the Amir fifty men. Now this eunuch was none other than Er Raad el Casif, the servant of the ring, whom Jouder had commanded to put on the guise of an eunuch and sit at the gate of the palace. So the Amir rode up to him and said to him, 'O slave, where is thy lord?' 'In the palace,' answered he, without stirring from his leaning posture; whereupon Othman waxed wroth and said to him, 'O pestilent slave, art thou not ashamed, when I speak to thee, to answer me, sprawling at thy length like a good-for-nought?' 'Begone,' answered the eunuch, 'and do not multiply words.' When Othman heard this, he was filled with rage and drawing his mace, would have smitten the eunuch, knowing not that he was a devil; but the latter leapt upon him and taking the mace from him, dealt him four blows with it. When the fifty men saw their lord beaten, it was grievous to them; so they drew their swords and ran at the slave, thinking to kill him; but he said, 'Do ye draw swords on us, O dogs?' And fell upon them with the mace, and every one whom he smote, he broke his bones and drowned him in his blood. So they gave back before him and fled in confusion, whilst he followed them, beating them, till he had driven them far from the palace; after which he returned and sat down on his chair at the gate, caring for no one.

Night dcxxi.

Meanwhile the Amir and his company returned, beaten and discomfited, to Shems ed Dauleh, and Othman said, 'O King of the age, when I came to the palace gate, I saw an eunuch seated there in a chair of gold and he was passing arrogant; for, when he saw me coming, he lay

back in his chair and entreated me contemptuously, neither offered to rise to me. So I began to speak to him and he answered me without stirring, at which passion got the better of me and I drew the mace upon him, thinking to smite him. But he snatched it from me and beat me and my men therewith and overthrew us. So we fled from him and could not prevail against him.' At this, the King was wroth and said, 'Let a hundred men go down to him.' So the hundred men went down to him, but he fell upon them with the mace and smote upon them till he put them to the rout; whereupon they returned to the King and told him what had passed, saying, 'O King of the age, he beat us and we fled for fear of him.' Then the King sent two hundred men against him, but these also he put to the rout, and Shems ed Dauleh said to his Vizier, 'O Vizier, I charge thee take five hundred men and bring this eunuch in haste, and with him his master Jouder and his brothers.' 'O King of the age,' replied the Vizier, 'I need no soldiers, but will go down to him alone and unarmed.' 'Go,' said the King, 'and do as thou seest fit.'

So the Vizier laid down his arms and donning a white habit, took a rosary in his hand and set out alone and afoot. When he came to the palace gate, he saw the eunuch sitting there; so he went up to him and seating himself courteously by his side, said to him, 'Peace be on thee!' 'And on thee be peace, O mortal!' answered the slave. 'What wilt thou?' When the Vizier heard him say 'O mortal,' he knew him to be of the Jinn and quaked for fear; then he said to him, 'O my lord, is thy master Jouder here?' 'Yes,' answered the eunuch, 'he is in the palace.' 'O my lord,' said the Vizier, 'go thou to him and say to him, "King Shems ed Dauleh salutes thee and bids thee honour his dwelling [with thy presence] and eat of a banquet he hath made for thee."' And the eunuch said, 'Abide here, whilst I consult him.'

So the Vizier stood in a respectful attitude, whilst the Marid went up into the palace and said to Jouder, 'Know, O my lord, that the King sent to thee an Amir and fifty men, and I beat them and drove them away. Then he sent a hundred men and I beat them also; then two hundred, and these also I put to the rout. And now he hath sent thee the Vizier, unarmed, bidding thee to visit him and eat of his banquet. What sayst thou?' 'Go,' answered Jouder; 'bring the Vizier hither.' So the Marid went down and said to him, 'O Vizier, come speak with my lord.' 'On my head be it,' replied he and going in to Jouder, found him seated, in greater state than the King, upon a carpet, the like of which the King could not spread, and was amazed at the goodliness of the palace and the magnificence of its furniture and decoration, which made him seem as he were but a beggar in comparison.

So he kissed the earth before Jouder and called down blessings on him; and Jouder said to him, 'What is thy business, O Vizier?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'thy friend King Shems ed Dauleh salutes thee and longs to look upon thy face; wherefore he hath made thee an entertainment. So wilt thou heal his heart [and eat of his banquet]?' Quoth Jouder, 'If he be indeed my friend, salute him and bid him come to me.' 'On my head be it,' replied the Vizier. Then Jouder rubbed the ring and bade the genie bring him a dress of the best, which he gave to the Vizier, saying, 'Don this dress and go tell the King what I say.' So the Vizier donned the dress, the like of which he had never worn, and returning to the King, told him what had passed and praised the palace and that which was therein, saying, 'Jouder bids thee to him.' So the King called for his charger and mounting with all his guards, set out for Jouder's palace.

Meanwhile Jouder summoned the Marid and said to him, 'It is my will that thou bring me some of the Afrits at thy command in the guise of guards and station them

before the palace, that the King may see them and be awed by them; so shall his heart tremble and he shall know that my power is greater than his.' So Er Raad brought him two hundred Afrits of great stature and strength, in the guise of guards, magnificently armed and equipped, and when the King came and saw these tall and stout troops, his heart feared them. Then he entered the palace, and found Jouder sitting in such state as neither King nor Sultan could match. So he saluted him and made his obeisance to him; yet Jouder rose not to him nor did him honour neither bade him be seated, but left him standing, so that fear entered into him and he could neither sit nor go away and said in himself, 'If he feared me, he would not leave me thus unheeded; belike he will do me a mischief, because of that which I did with his brothers.' Then said Jouder, 'O King of the age, it beseems not the like of thee to wrong the folk and take away their goods.' 'O my lord,' replied the King, 'be not wroth with me, for covetise impelled me to this and the fulfilment of fore-ordained fate; and were there no offence, there would be no forgiving.' And he went on to excuse himself and sue to him for pardon and indulgence, reciting amongst other things the following verses:

Night dcxxii.

O thou of noble sires and nature frank and free, Reproach me not for what I've done to anger thee.
An thou have wrought unright, God pardon thee, quoth I; And if I've sinned, do thou on like wise pardon me!

And he ceased not to humble himself before him, till he said, 'God pardon thee!' and bade him sit. So he sat down and Jouder invested him with the garments of pardon and bade his brothers spread the table. When they had eaten, he clad the King's company in robes of honour and gave them largesse; after which he bade the King depart. So he went forth and thereafter came every day to visit Jouder and held not his Divan save in his house: where-

fore friendship and usance waxed great between them, and they abode thus awhile, till one day the King, being alone with his Vizier, said to him, 'O Vizier, I fear lest Jouder kill me and take the kingdom from me.' 'O King of the age,' replied the Vizier, 'as for his taking the kingdom from thee, have no fear of that, for his present estate is greater than that of the King, and to take the kingdom would be a lowering of his rank; but, if thou fear that he kill thee, thou hast a daughter: give her to him to wife and thou and he will be of one condition.'

'O Vizier,' said the King, 'be thou intermediary between us and him.' And the Vizier said, 'Do thou bid him to an entertainment and pass the night with him in one of thy saloons. Then command thy daughter to don her richest clothes and ornaments and pass by the door of the saloon. When he sees her, he will fall in love with her, and when we know this, I will turn to him and tell him that she is thy daughter and engage him in converse and lead him on, so that thou shalt [seem to] know nothing of the matter, till he asks her of thee in marriage. When thou hast married him to the girl, thou and he will be as one thing and thou wilt be safe from him; and if he die, thou wilt inherit all he hath, both great and small.' 'Thou sayst sooth, O my Vizier,' replied the King and made a banquet and invited Jouder thereto. So he came to the King's palace and they sat in the saloon in great good cheer till the end of the day.

Now the King had commanded his wife to array the girl in her richest clothes and ornaments and carry her by the door of the saloon. She did as he bade her, and when Jouder saw the princess, who had not her match for beauty and grace, he looked fixedly at her and said, 'Alas!' And his joints were loosened for love and passion and desire were sore upon him; transport and love-liking gat hold upon him and he turned pale. Quoth the Vizier, 'May no hurt betide thee, O my lord! Why do I see thee pale and

undone?' 'O Vizier,' asked Jouder, 'whose daughter is yonder damsel? Verily, she hath captived me and ravished my reason.' 'She is the daughter of thy friend the King,' replied the Vizier; 'and since she pleases thee, I will speak to him that he marry thee to her.' 'Do so, O Vizier,' quoth Jouder, 'and as I live, I will bestow on thee what thou wilt and will give the King whatsoever he shall ask to her dowry; and we will become friends and kinsfolk.' And the Vizier said, 'It shall go hard but thy desire be accomplished.' Then he turned to the King and said to him, 'O King of the age, thy friend Jouder seeks alliance with thee and will have me ask of thee for him the hand of thy daughter, the princess Asiyeh; so disappoint me not, but accept my intercession, and what dowry soever thou askest he will give thee.' Quoth the King, 'The dowry I have already received, and as for the girl, she is his handmaid; I give her to him to wife and he doth me favour in accepting her.'

Night dcxxiii.

They spent the rest of the night together and on the morrow the King held a court, to which he summoned great and small, together with the Sheikh el Islam. Then Jouder demanded the princess in marriage and the King said, 'The dowry I have received.' So they drew up the contract of marriage and Jouder sent for the saddle-bags containing the jewels and gave them to the King as his daughter's dowry. Then the drums beat and the pipes sounded and they held high festival, whilst Jouder went in to the girl. Thenceforward he and the King were as one and they abode thus awhile, till Shems ed Dauleh died; whereupon the troops proclaimed Jouder Sultan, and he refused; but they importuned him, till he consented and became King in his father-in-law's stead. Then he bade build a congregational mosque over the latter's tomb in the Bundecaniyeh quarter and endowed it. Now the quarter in which he dwelt was called the Yemaniyeh quarter; but,

when he became Sultan, he built therein a congregational mosque and other buildings, wherefore the quarter was named after him and was called the Jouderiyeh quarter.

Moreover, he made his brother Salim his Vizier of the right and his brother Selim his Vizier of the left hand; and thus they abode a year and no more; for, at the end of that time, Salim said to Selim, 'O my brother, how long is this to last? Shall we pass our whole lives in service to our brother Jouder? We shall never enjoy lordship or fortune whilst he lives: so how shall we do to kill him and take the ring and the saddle-bags?' 'Thou art craftier than I,' answered Selim; 'do thou contrive us a device, whereby we may kill him.' 'If I do this,' said Salim, 'wilt thou agree that I be Sultan and have the ring and that thou be my right-hand Vizier and have the saddle-bags?' 'I consent to this,' replied Selim, and they agreed to kill their brother for love of the world and of dominion.

So they laid a snare for Jouder and said to him, 'O our brother, we have a mind to glory in thee and would fain have thee enter our houses and eat of our victual and solace our hearts.' 'So be it,' replied Jouder. 'In whose house shall the banquet be?' 'In mine,' said Salim, 'and after thou hast eaten of my victual, thou shalt be the guest of my brother.' 'It is well,' answered Jouder and went with him to his house, where he set before him poisoned food, of which when he had eaten, his flesh rotted from his bones [and he fell down dead]. Then Salim came up to him and would have drawn the ring from his finger, but it resisted him; so he cut off the finger with a knife. Then he rubbed the ring and the Marid presented himself, saying, 'At thy service. Ask what thou wilt.' Quoth Salim, 'Put my brother Selim to death and take the two bodies, the poisoned man and the slaughtered, and cast them down before the troops.' So the Marid took Selim and slew him; then, carrying the two bodies forth, he cast them down

before the chief officers of the army, who were sitting at meat in the verandah of the house. When they saw Jouder and Selim slain, they held their hands from the food and fear gat hold of them and they said to the Marid, 'Who hath dealt thus with the Sultan and the Vizier?' 'Their brother Salim,' answered the Marid. And behold Salim came in to them and said, 'O soldiers, eat and make merry, for Jouder is dead and I have taken to me the seal-ring, of which the Marid before you is the servant; and I bade him kill my brother Selim, lest he dispute the kingdom with me, for he was a traitor and I feared lest he should deal traitorously with me. So now I am become Sultan over you; will ye accept of me? If not, I will rub the ring and bid the Marid slay you all, great and small.' Quoth they, 'We accept thee to King and Sultan.'

Night dcxxiv.

Then he summoned the Divan and bade bury his brothers; and some of the folk followed the funeral, whilst others went before him in state procession to the palace, where he sat down upon the throne and they proclaimed him king; after which he said, 'It is my will to marry my brother Jouder's wife.' Quoth they, 'Wait till the days of widowhood are accomplished.' But he answered, saying, 'I know not days of widowhood nor aught else. As my head liveth, I will go in to her this very night.' So they drew up the marriage contract and sent to tell the princess Asiyeh, who replied, 'Bid him enter.' Accordingly, he went in to her and she received him with a show of joy and welcome; but by and by she gave him poison in water and made an end of him. Then she took the ring and broke it, that none might possess it thenceforward, and rent the saddle-bags; after which she sent to the Sheikh el Islam and other the great officers of state, telling them what had passed and saying to them, 'Choose you out a king to rule over you.' And this is all that hath come down to us of the story of Jouder and his brothers.

THE HISTORY OF GHERIB AND HIS BROTHER AGIB.

There was once of old time a mighty king called Kundemir, who had been a brave and doughty man of war in his day, but was grown very old and decrepit. It pleased God to vouchsafe him, in his extreme old age, a son, whom he named Agib,[1] because of his beauty and grace, and committed to the midwives and nurses and handmaids and serving-women, and they reared him till he was seven years old, when his father gave him in charge to a priest of his own people and faith. The priest taught the boy the laws and tenets of their infidel faith and instructed him in philosophy and all manner of other knowledge, and it needed but three full-told years before he was proficient therein and his resolve waxed strong and his judgment sound; yea, and he became learned, eloquent and accomplished, consorting with the wise and disputing with the doctors of the law. When his father saw this of him, it pleased him and he taught him to ride and thrust with spears and smite with swords, till by the end of his twentieth year he was an accomplished cavalier, versed in all martial exercises and surpassing in all things all the folk of his day. But he grew up a stubborn tyrant and an arrogant devil, using to ride forth to the chase with a thousand horse and make raids upon the neighbouring lands, waylaying caravans and carrying off the daughters of kings and nobles; wherefore many were the complaints against him to his father, who cried out to five of his servants, saying, 'Seize me yonder dog and beat him!' So they seized the prince and binding his hands behind him, beat him till he lost his senses; after

[1] *i.e.* wonderful.

which the king imprisoned him in a chamber, where one might not know heaven from earth or length from breadth;[1] and there he abode two days and a night. Then the Amirs went in to the King and kissing the earth before him, interceded with him for the prince, and he released him.

Agib dissembled with his father for ten days, at the end of which time he went in to him by night and smote off his head, as he slept. When the day rose, he mounted the throne and bade his men arm themselves in complete steel and stand before him and on his either hand with drawn swords. By and by, the Amirs and captains entered and finding their king slain and his son Agib seated on the throne, were confounded and knew not what to do. But Agib said to them, 'O folk, ye see what hath befallen your king. Whoso obeyeth me, I will entreat him with munificence, and whoso gainsayeth me, I will do with him even as I did with my father.' When they heard this, they feared lest he should do them a mischief; so they replied, 'Thou art our king and the son of our king;' and kissed the earth before him; whereupon he thanked them and rejoiced in them. Then he let bring money and apparel and clad them in sumptuous dresses of honour and showered largesse upon them, wherefore they loved him and obeyed him. In like manner he dealt with the governors of the provinces and the Sheikhs of the Bedouins, both tributary and independent, so that all the kingdom submitted to him and the folk obeyed him and he reigned and commanded and forbade.

He abode thus five months, till, one night, he had a vision in sleep and awoke trembling, nor did sleep visit him again till the morning. As soon as it was day, he mounted his throne and his officers stood before him, right and left. Then he called the astrologers and expounders of dreams and said to them, 'As I slept last

[1] By reason of its darkness.

night, my father appeared to me, with his yard uncovered, and there came forth of it a thing the bigness of a bee, which grew till it became as a mighty lion, with claws like daggers. As I lay, wondering and alarmed at this, behold, it ran upon me and smiting me with its claws, rent my belly in sunder; whereupon I awoke, affrighted and trembling. Expound to me the meaning of this dream.' The interpreters looked at one another and answered, after consideration, 'O mighty King, this dream points to a child born of thy father, between whom and thee shall be strife, and he shall get the better of thee: so be thou ware of him, by reason of this thy dream.' When Agib heard their words, he said, 'I have no brother whom I should fear; so this your speech is a lying one.' 'We tell thee but what we know,' answered they; but he was wroth with them and beat them.

Then he rose and going in to his father's palace, examined his concubines and found one of them seven months gone with child; whereupon he bade two of his slaves carry her to the sea-shore and drown her. So they took her forth to the sea-shore and were about to drown her, when they looked at her and seeing her to be of surpassing beauty and grace, said to each other, 'Why should we drown this damsel? Let us rather carry her to the forest and live with her there in rare dalliance.' So they took her and fared on with her nights and days, till they brought her to a distant forest, abounding in fruit trees and streams, where they thought to take their will of her; but each said, 'I will lie with her first.' And they fell out one with the other concerning this. As they were thus engaged, a company of blacks fell upon them, and they drew their swords and defended themselves; but the blacks slew them both in less than the twinkling of an eye. So the damsel abode alone and wandered about the forest, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters, till in

due time she gave birth to a boy, brown but clean-limbed and comely, whom she named Gherib,[1] by reason of her strangerhood. Then she cut his navel and wrapping him in some of her own clothes, gave him suck, mournful at heart and sorrowing for the fair estate she had lost and full of fear for her loneliness.

Night dcxxb.

One day, there came horsemen and footmen into the forest, with hounds and hawks and horses laden with storks and cranes and herons and young ostriches and divers and other waterfowl and hares and gazelles and wild oxen and lynxes and wolves and lions. Presently, they came upon the damsel, sitting suckling her child, and said to her, 'Art thou a mortal or a genie?' 'I am a mortal, O chief of the Arabs,' answered she. So they told their chief, whose name was Merdas, prince of the Benou Kehtan, and who had come forth to hunt that day with five hundred of his kinsmen and the nobles of his tribe, and he bade them bring her before him. They did so and she related to him her story, at which he marvelled. Then they took her and returned, hunting by the way, to their encampment, where the Amir appointed her a separate dwelling-place and five damsels to serve her; and he loved her with an exceeding love and went in to her and lay with her. She straightway conceived by him, and when her months were accomplished, she bore a male child and named him Sehim el Leil. He grew up with his brother Gherib among the nurses and throve and waxed upon the lap of the Amir Merdas; and the latter in due time committed the two boys to a doctor of the law, who instructed them in the things of their faith; after which he gave them in charge to a valiant cavalier of the Arabs, who taught them to smite with swords and thrust with spears and shoot with bows, till, by the time they reached the age of fifteen, they knew all that they needed and surpassed all

[1] *i.e.* stranger.

the warriors of their tribe; for each of them would undertake a thousand horse.

Now Merdas had many enemies, and the men of his tribe were the bravest of all the Arabs, being all doughty cavaliers, none might warm himself at their fire.[1] Amongst his neighbours was an Amir, by name Hissan ben Thabit, who was his friend; and he took to wife a noble lady of his tribe and bade all his friends to the wedding, amongst them Merdas, prince of the Benou Kehtan, who accepted his invitation and came with three hundred horsemen of his tribe, leaving other four hundred to guard the women. Hissan received him with honour and seated him in the highest room. Then came all the cavaliers to the bridal and he made them bride-feasts and held high festival by reason of the marriage, after which the guests departed to their dwelling-places. When Merdas came in sight of his camp, he saw dead men lying and birds hovering over them right and left and his heart sank within him at the sight. Then he entered the camp and was met by Gherib, clad in complete mail, who gave him joy of his safe return. Quoth Merdas, 'What meaneth this, O Gherib?' And Gherib answered, 'El Hemel ben Majid attacked us with five hundred horse.'

Now the reason of this was that the Amir Merdas had a daughter called Mehdiyeh, never saw eyes a fairer than she, and El Hemel, prince of the Benou Nebhân, heard of her charms; whereupon he took horse with five hundred of his men and rode to Merdas to demand her hand; but he refused and sent him away disappointed. So he abode his time, till Merdas was absent on his visit to Hissan, when he fell upon the camp of the Benou Kehtan with his braves and slew a number of their warriors, and the rest fled to the mountains. Now Gherib and his brother had ridden forth a-hunting with a hundred horse and

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

returned not till midday, when they found that El Hemel had sacked the camp and carried off the women and children captives, and Mehdiyeh among them. When Gherib saw this, he lost his wits for rage and cried out to Sehim, saying, 'They have plundered our camp and carried off our women and children! Up and at the enemy, that we may deliver the captives!' So Gherib and Sehim and their hundred horse rushed upon the foe, and Gherib's wrath redoubled, and he reaped a harvest of heads, giving the warriors to drink of the cup of death, till he won to El Hemel and saw Mehdiyeh among the captives. Then he drove at the prince of the Benou Nebhan and transfixing him with his lance, hurled him from the saddle; nor was the time of the afternoon prayer come before he had slain the most part of the foe and put the rest to the rout and rescued the captives; whereupon he returned to the camp in triumph, bearing El Hemel's head on the point of his lance and reciting the following verses:

I'm he whose might is known upon the battle-day: Earth's Jinn do quake to see my shadow in the way.
I have a sword, which when my right hand shakes on high, Death hastens from my left to plunge into the fray;
And eke a spear I have, whereon if any look, Like to the crescent moon they see its steel point ray.
Gherib I'm called, that am the champion of my tribe: What if my men be few! My heart knows not dismay.

Hardly had he made an end of this when up came Merdas, to whom he related all that had passed in his absence. So Merdas alighted and entered his pavilion, and the men stood about him. Then all the people of the tribe fell to praising Gherib and saying, 'But for Gherib, O our lord, not one of the tribe had been saved!' So Merdas thanked him and said, 'Thou hast well requited our pains in rearing thee, O Gherib!'

Night dcxxvi.

Now, when Gherib delivered Mehdiyeh from El Hemel, she smote him with the arrows of her glances and he fell

into the toils of her love, wherefore his heart could not forget her and he became drowned in passion and love-longing. Sleep forsook him and he had no delight of meat or drink, but would spur his horse up to the mountain-tops, where he would spend the day in reciting verses and return at nightfall; and indeed the signs of love-liking and distraction were manifest upon him. He discovered his secret to one of his companions and it became noised abroad in the camp, till it reached the ears of Merdas, who thundered and lightened and rose and sat down and puffed and snorted and reviled the sun and the moon, saying, 'This is the reward of him who rears bastards! Except I kill Gherib, I shall be put to shame.'

Then he opened out his mind to one of the elders of his tribe and took counsel with him of killing Gherib. 'O Amir,' replied he, 'it was but yesterday that he freed thy daughter from captivity. If thou must needs kill him, let it be by the hand of another than thyself, so the folk may not misdoubt of thee.' Quoth Merdas, 'Advise me how I may compass his death, for I look to none but thee for this.' 'O Amir,' answered the other, 'wait till he goes forth to hunt, when do thou take a hundred horse and lie in wait for him in the caves, till he passes; then take him off his guard and fall upon him and cut him in pieces, so shalt thou be quit of his reproach.' 'This should serve,' said Merdas and chose out a hundred and fifty of his stoutest horsemen, whom he lessoned to his will. Then he watched Gherib till, one day, he went forth to hunt and rode far away amongst the hills and valleys; whereupon Merdas followed him with his men and lay in wait for him by the way against he should return from the chase; but, as they lay in ambush among the trees, there fell upon them five hundred Amalekites, who slew of them threescore and made fourscore and ten prisoners and pinioned Merdas.

Now the reason of this was that when Gherib put El Hemel and his men to the sword, the rest fled to their lord's brother and told him what had happened, whereat his gorge rose and he gathered together his Amalekites and choosing out five hundred cavaliers, each fifty cubits high,[1] set out with them in quest of revenge for his brother. By the way he fell in with Merdas and his company and there happened between them what happened; after which he bade his men alight and rest, saying, 'O folk, the idols have given us an easy revenge; so guard ye Merdas and his men, till I carry them away and put them to death on the foulest wise.' When Merdas found himself a prisoner, he repented of what he had done and said, 'This is the reward of tyranny.' Then they lay down to sleep, and the enemy passed the night, rejoicing in their victory, whilst Merdas and his men despaired of life and made sure of death.

Meanwhile, Sehim el Leil, who had been wounded in the fight with El Hemel, went in to his sister Mehdiyeh, and she rose to him and kissed his hands, saying, 'May thy hand never wither nor thine enemies have occasion to rejoice! But for thee and Gherib, we had not escaped captivity. But know, O my brother,' continued she, 'that thy father hath ridden forth with a hundred and fifty horse, purposing to kill Gherib; and thou knowest it would be foul wrong to kill him, for that it was he who saved your honour and rescued your goods.' When Sehim heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he donned his battle-harness and mounting, rode in quest of Gherib. He presently came up with him and found that he had taken great plenty of game; so he saluted him and said to him, 'O my brother, why didst thou go forth, without

[1] This is a poetical exaggeration, not intended to be taken literally, and means merely tall strong men or "Amalekites," which latter name is often given by the Arabs to a doughty and large-limbed man of war.

telling me?' 'By Allah,' replied Gherib, 'it was but that I saw thee wounded and thought to give thee rest.' Then said Sehim, 'O my brother, beware of my father!' and told him how Merdas was abroad with a hundred and fifty men, seeking to kill him. Quoth Gherib, 'Allah will make his treason to return on his own head.'

Then they set out, to return to the camp, but the night overtook them by the way and they rode on in the darkness, till they drew near the valley where the enemy lay and heard the neighing of horses; whereupon said Sehim, 'O my brother, my father and his men are ambushed in yonder valley; let us flee from it.' But Gherib dismounted and throwing his bridle to his brother, said to him, 'Stay here till I come back to thee.' Then he went on till he came in sight of the folk, when he saw that they were not of his tribe and heard them name Merdas and say, 'We will not kill him save in his own land.' Wherefore he knew that Merdas was their prisoner and said, 'As Mehdiyeh liveth, I will not depart hence till I have delivered her father, that she may not be troubled!' Then he sought till he came upon Merdas and found him bound with cords; so he sat down by his side and said to him, 'God deliver thee, O uncle, from these bonds and humiliation!' When Merdas saw Gherib, his reason fled and he said to him, 'O my son, I am at thy mercy: deliver me in right of my fosterage of thee!' Quoth Gherib, 'If I deliver thee, wilt thou give me Mehdiyeh?' 'O my son,' answered the Amir, 'by all that is sacred to me, she is thine to all time!' So he loosed him, saying, 'Make for the horses, for thy son Sehim is there:' and Merdas crept along till he came to his son, who rejoiced in him and gave him joy of his escape.

Meanwhile, Gherib unbound one after another of the prisoners, till he had freed the whole ninety and they were all far from the enemy. Then he sent them their arms

and horses, saying to them, 'Scatter yourselves round about the enemy and cry out, "O sons of Kehtan!" And when they awake, do ye remove from them and encircle them.' So he waited till the last watch of the night, when he cried out, 'O sons of Kehtan!' and his men answered, saying, 'O sons of Kehtan!' as with one voice; and the mountains echoed their crying, so that it seemed to the enemy as though the whole tribe [of the Benou Kehtan] were upon them; wherefore they all snatched up their arms and fell upon one another with slaughter. Gherib and his men held aloof, and they fought with one another till daybreak, when Merdas and Gherib and their ninety warriors fell in upon them and killed some of them and put the rest to flight. Then they took the arms and horses of the dead and the fugitives and returned to the camp, whilst Merdas could hardly credit his deliverance.

Night dcxxvii.

When they reached the encampment, the folk all came forth to meet them and rejoiced in their safe return. Then they alighted and betook them to their tents; and all the youths of the tribe flocked to Gherib's tent and great and small saluted him and did him honour. When Merdas saw this, he was more jealous of Gherib than before and said to his kinsfolk, 'Verily, hatred of Gherib grows on my heart, and why but because I see these flocking about him! And to-morrow he will demand Mehdiyeh of me.' Quoth his confidant, 'O Amir, ask of him somewhat he cannot avail unto.' This pleased Merdas, and on the morrow, as he sat on his divan, with the Arabs about him, Gherib entered, followed by his men and surrounded by the youth of the tribe, and kissed the earth before Merdas, who rose to do him honour, making a show of joy in him and seating him beside himself.

Then said Gherib, 'O uncle, thou madest me a promise; do thou fulfil it. 'O my son,' answered the Amir, 'she is thine to all time; but thou lackest good.' 'O uncle,' said

Gherib, 'ask of me what thou wilt, and I will fall upon the Amirs of the Arabs in their dwellings and on the kings in their cities and bring thee wealth enough to cover the land from East to West.'[1] 'O my son,' rejoined Merdas, 'I have sworn by all the idols that I would give Mehdiyeh to none but him who should take my wreak [of mine enemy] and do away my reproach.' 'O uncle,' said Gherib, 'tell me with which of the kings thou hast a feud, that I may go to him and break his throne over his head.' 'O my son,' replied Merdas, 'know that I once had a son, a champion of the champions, and he went forth one day to hunt with a hundred horse. They fared on from valley to valley, till they had wandered far away into the mountains and came to the Valley of Flowers and the Castle of Ham ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Kheled.[2]

Now in this place dwells a black giant, seventy cubits high, who uses to pluck up trees by the roots and fight with them; and he came out upon my son and his men and slew them all, save three, who escaped and bore me the news. So I assembled my braves and went forth to fight the giant, but could not avail against him; wherefore I was baulked of my revenge and swore that I would not give my daughter in marriage but to him who should avenge me of my son.' 'O uncle,' said Gherib, 'I will go to the giant and avenge thy son on him with the help of God the Most High.' And Merdas answered, saying, 'O Gherib, if thou get the victory over him, thou wilt gain of him such booty of wealth and treasures as fires may not devour.' Quoth Gherib, 'Swear to me [before witnesses] that thou wilt give me Mehdiyeh to wife, that I may go to seek my fortune with a heart at ease.' So Merdas swore this to him and took the elders of the tribe to witness;

[1] It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the Bedouin idea of wealth is limited to flocks and cattle. Hence the figure used.

[2] *Quare* Aad. See post.

whereupon Gherib went away, rejoicing in the [anticipated] fulfilment of his hopes, and went in to his mother, to whom he related what had passed. 'O my son,' said she, 'know that Merdas hates thee and doth but send thee to this mountain, to bereave me of thee; so take me with thee and let us depart the tents of this tyrant.' But he answered, saying, 'O my mother, I will not depart hence till I have compassed my desire and overcome my enemy.'

Then he slept, till the morning arose with its light and shone, and hardly had he mounted his charger when his friends, the young men, came up to him, two hundred stout cavaliers, and cried out to him, saying, 'Take us with thee; we will help thee and keep thee company by the way.' And he rejoiced in them and said, 'God requite you for us with good! Come, my friends, let us go.' So they set out and fared on for two days, till the evening of the second day, when they halted at the foot of a high scarped hill and unbridled their horses. As for Gherib, he left the rest and fared on into the mountain, till he came to a cave, whence issued a light. So he entered and found, at the upper end of the cave, an old man, three hundred and forty years old, whose eyebrows hung down over his eyes and whose moustaches hid his mouth. His aspect filled Gherib with awe and veneration, and the hermit said to him, 'O my son, methinks thou art of the idolaters that worship stones in the stead of the All-powerful King, the Creator of Night and Day and the revolving sphere.' When Gherib heard his words, his nerves quivered and he said, 'O elder, where is this lord of whom thou speakest, that I may worship him and take my fill of his sight?' 'O my son,' replied the old man, 'this is the Supreme Lord, none in the world may look upon Him; He seeth and is not seen. He is the Most High of aspect and is present everywhere in His works. He it is who maketh all things to be and ordereth the march of time; He is the Creator

of men and Jinn and sendeth the prophets to guide His creatures into the right way. Whoso obeyeth Him, He bringeth into Paradise, and whoso disobeyeth Him, He casteth into the fire.'

'And how, O uncle,' asked Gherib, 'doth he say who worships this mighty Lord who hath power over all?' 'O my son,' answered the old man, 'I am of the tribe of Aad, which were transgressors in the land and believed not in God. So He sent unto them a prophet named Houd, but they believed not in him and he destroyed them by means of a deadly wind; but I believed, I and some of my tribe, and we were saved from destruction. Moreover, I was present with the tribe of Themoud and saw what befell them with their prophet Salih. After Salih, God the Most High sent a prophet called Abraham the Friend to Nimrod son of Canaan, and there befell what befell between them. Then my companions died and I continued in this cave to serve God the Most High, Who provideth me without my taking thought.' 'O uncle,' quoth Gherib, 'what shall I say, that I may become of the servants of this mighty Lord?' 'Say,' replied the old man, '"There is no god but God and Abraham is the Friend of God."'

So Gherib embraced the faith of submission[1] with heart and tongue and the old man said to him, 'May the sweetness of submission and belief be stablished in thy heart!' Then he taught him somewhat of the ordinances and scriptures of Islam and said to him, 'What is thy name?' And he answered, 'My name is Gherib.' 'O Gherib,' said the old man, 'whither art thou bound?' So he told him all his history, till he came to the mention of the Ghoul of the Mountain, whereupon quoth the other, 'O Gherib, art thou mad that thou goest forth against the Ghoul of the Mountain alone?' 'O my lord,' replied Gherib, 'I have with me two hundred horse.' 'O Gherib,'

Night dcxxviii.

[1] Islam.

rejoined the hermit, 'hadst thou ten thousand, yet shouldest thou not prevail against him, for his name is *The-Ghoul-who-eats-men-we-pray-God-for-safety*, and he is of the children of Ham. His father's name was Hindi, who peopled Hind and named it, and he left this son after him, whom he called Saadan the Ghoul. Now, even in his father's lifetime he was a cruel tyrant and an arrogant devil and had no other food than men's flesh. His father forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden and redoubled in his frowardness, till Hindi banished him and drove him forth of Hind, after battle and sore travail. Then he came to this country and fortified himself therein, making his dwelling in this place, whence he uses to sally forth and waylay all that come and go. Moreover, he hath begotten five stout and warlike sons, each one of whom will do battle with a thousand braves, and he hath filled the valley with his booty of horses and camels and oxen and sheep, besides other treasure and goods. Wherefore I fear for thee from him; so do thou implore God the Most High to succour thee against him by the word of Unity,[1] and when thou drivest at the infidels, say, "God is Most Great!" for this saying confoundeth those who misbelieve.'

Then he gave him a mace of steel, a hundred pounds in weight, with ten rings, which clashed like thunder, when the wielder brandished it, and a sword forged of a thunderbolt, three cubits long and three spans broad, wherewith if one smote a rock, it would cleave it in sunder. Moreover, he gave him a hauberk and target and a book [of the law] and said to him, 'Return to thy people and expound Islam to them.' So Gherib left him, rejoicing in his newly-gained faith, and returned to his companions, who saluted him, saying, 'What made thee tarry thus?' Whereupon he

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

told them all that had befallen him and expounded to them Islam, and they all embraced the faith of submission.

Next morning, Gherib mounted and rode to the hermit to bid him farewell, after which he set out to return to his camp. On his way, there met him a horseman armed cap-a-pie, so that only his eyes appeared, who made at him, saying, 'Put off what is on thee, O dog of the Arabs; or I will slay thee!' Therewith Gherib drove at him and there befell between them a battle such as would make a new-born child turn gray and melt the flinty rock with its terror; but presently the stranger did off his face-veil, and behold, it was Gherib's half-brother Sehim el Leil.

Now the manner of his coming thither was on this wise. When Gherib set out in quest of the Ghoul of the Mountain, Sehim was absent and on his return, not seeing his brother, he went in to his mother, whom he found weeping. So he asked the reason and she told him what had happened, whereupon, without allowing himself aught of rest, he donned his harness of war and mounting, pricked after Gherib, till he overtook him and there befell between them what befell. When, therefore, he discovered his face, Gherib knew him and saluted him, saying, 'What moved thee to do this?' Quoth Sehim, 'I had a mind to measure myself with thee in the field and make trial of my force in cutting and thrusting.' Then they rode on, till they drew near the valley, and on the way Gherib expounded Islam to Sehim, who embraced the faith.

Meanwhile, the Ghoul espied the dust of their horses' feet and said to his sons, 'O my sons, mount and fetch me yonder booty.' So the five took horse and made for the party. When Gherib saw the five giants approaching, he spurred towards them and cried out, saying, 'Who and what are ye and what do ye want?' Whereupon Felhoun, the eldest of the five, came out and said, 'Dismount and bind one another and we will drive you to our father, that

he may roast some of you and boil other, for it is long since he hath tasted human flesh.' When Gherib heard this, he drove at Felhoun, shaking his mace, so that the rings resounded like the pealing thunder and the giant was confounded. Then he smote him a light blow with the mace between the shoulders, and he fell to the ground like a great palm-tree; whereupon Sehim and some of his men fell upon him and bound him; then, putting a rope about his neck, they haled him along like a cow.

When his brothers saw him a prisoner, they rushed upon Gherib, who took three of them captive and the fifth fled back to his father, who said to him, 'What is behind thee and where are thy brothers?' Quoth he, 'A beardless youth, forty cubits high, hath taken them prisoner.' 'May the sun pour no blessing on you!' replied Saadan and going down from his hold, tore up a huge tree, with which he went in quest of Gherib and his folk on foot, for that no horse might carry him, because of the bigness of his body. His son followed him and they went on till they came up with Gherib and his company, when the Ghoul fell upon them, without word said, and killed five men with his club. Then he made at Sehim and struck at him with his club, but Sehim avoided the blow and it fell harmless; whereat Saadan was wroth and throwing down the weapon, sprang upon Sehim and caught him up as the merlin catches up the sparrow.

When Gherib saw his brother in the Ghoul's clutches, he cried out, saying, 'God is most Great! By the favour of Abraham the Friend, whom God bless and preserve!' And spurred his charger at Saadan, shaking his mace, till the rings resounded. Then he cried out again, 'God is most great!' and smote the Ghoul full on the ribs with his mace, whereupon he fell to the ground, insensible, and loosed his hold of Sehim; nor did he come to him-

Night dcxxix.

self before he was bound and shackled. When his son saw this, he turned and fled; but Gherib drove after him and smiting him with his mace between the shoulders, unhorsed him. So they bound him with his father and brothers and haltering them with ropes, haled them all six along like camels, till they reached the Ghoul's castle, which they found full of goods and treasures and things of price; and there they found also twelve hundred Persians, bound and shackled.

Gherib sat down on Saadan's chair, which had aforetime belonged to Sasa ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Aad, with Sehim on his right and his companions standing on his either hand, and sending for the Ghoul of the Mountain, said to him, 'How findest thou thyself, O accursed one?' 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'in the sorriest of plights for abasement and mortification; my sons and I, we are bound with ropes like camels.' Quoth Gherib, 'It is my will that you enter my faith, that is, the faith of Islam, and acknowledge the Unity of the All-knowing King, Creator of light and darkness and of all things,—there is no God but He, the Requiting King,—and confess the prophethood of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!' So the Ghoul and his sons made profession of Islam after the goodliest fashion, and Gherib bade loose their bonds, whereupon Saadan wept and would have kissed his feet, he and his sons: but Gherib forbade them and they stood with the rest.

Then said Gherib, 'Harkye, Saadan!' 'At thy service, O my lord!' answered he. Quoth Gherib, 'What are these captives?' 'O my lord,' replied the Ghoul, 'these are my booty from the land of the Persians and are not the only ones.' 'And who is with them?' asked Gherib. 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'there is with them the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of King Sabour of Persia, and a hundred damsels like moons.' When Gherib heard this, he

marvelled and said, 'How came ye by these?' 'O Amir,' replied Saadan, 'I went forth one day with my sons and five of my slaves in quest of booty, but finding no spoil in our way, we dispersed over deserts and plains and fared on, so haply we might happen on somewhat of prey and not return empty-handed, till we found ourselves in the land of the Persians. Presently, we espied a cloud of dust in the distance and sent one of our slaves to reconnoitre, who returned after a while and said, "O my lord, this is the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians and Medes and Turcomans, who is on a journey, attended by two thousand horse." Quoth I, "Mayst thou be gladdened with good news! We could have no finer purchase than this." Then I and my sons fell upon the Persians and slew of them three hundred men and took the princess and twelve hundred cavaliers prisoners, together with all that was with her of treasure and riches, and brought them hither.'

Quoth Gherib, 'Hast thou offered any violence to the princess Fekhr Taj?' 'Not I,' replied Saadan, 'as thy head liveth and by the virtue of the faith I have [but now] embraced!' 'It was well done of thee, O Saadan,' said Gherib; 'for her father is king of the world and he will surely despatch troops in quest of her and lay waste the dwellings of those who took her. And whoso looks not to the issue of events, Fate is no friend to him. But where is the damsel?' And Saadan, 'I have set apart a pavilion for her and her damsels.' Quoth Gherib, 'Show me her lodging,' and Saadan answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he carried him to the pavilion, where he found the princess mournful and cast down, weeping for her former estate of honour and delight. When Gherib saw her, he thought the moon was near him and magnified God the All-hearing and seeing. The princess also looked at him and saw him a princely cavalier, with valour shining from

between his eyes and testifying for him and not against him; so she rose and kissed his hands, then threw herself at his feet, saying, 'O hero of the age, I cast myself on thy mercy; protect me from this Ghoul, for I fear lest he do away my maidenhead and after devour me. So take me to serve thine handmaids.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou shalt be restored in safety to thy father and the seat of thy worship.' Whereupon she prayed that he might live long and have advancement in rank.

Then he caused unbind the Persians and turning to the princess, said to her, 'What brought thee forth of thy palace to the deserts and wastes, so that the highway-robbers made prize of thee?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'my father and all the people of his realm are Magians, who worship the fire, and not the All-powerful King. Now in our country is a monastery called the Monastery of the Fire, whither every year the daughters of the Magians and worshippers of the Fire resort at the time of their festival, after which they return to their houses. So I and my damsels set out, as of wont, attended by two thousand horse, whom my father sent with me to guard me; but by the way this Ghoul fell upon us and killed some of us and taking the rest captive, imprisoned us in this hold. This, then, is what befell me, O valiant champion, whom God guard against the shifts of fortune!' And Gherib said, 'Fear not; for I will bring thee to thy palace and the seat of thy worship.' Wherefore she blessed him and kissed his hands and feet.

Then he went out from her, after having commanded to treat her with honour, and slept till morning, when he made the ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer, after the rite of our father Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace,) whilst the Ghoul and his sons and Gherib's company did the like after him. Then he turned to the Ghoul and said to him, 'O Saadan, wilt thou not show me the Valley of

Flowers?' 'I will well, O my lord,' answered he. So Gherib and his company and Fekhr Taj all rose and went forth, whilst Saadan commanded his slaves and slave-girls, (of whom he had a hundred and fifty female and a thousand male slaves, to pasture his sheep and oxen and camels) to slaughter and cook and make ready the morning-meal and bring it to them among the trees.

When they came to the valley, they found it beautiful passing measure, full of trees growing singly and in clusters and birds warbling on the branches. There sang the mocking-bird, trilling out her melodious notes, and the cushat filling with her warble the mansions of God's creation, and the nightingale, with her voice like that of a man, and the merle, that the tongue fails to describe, and the turtle, whose plaining maddens men for love, and the ringdove and the popinjay answering her with fluent tongue. There also were trees laden with all manner of fruits, of each two kinds, the pomegranate, sweet and sour, the almond-apricot,[1] the camphor-apricot[2] and the almond of Khorassan and the plum, with whose branches entwine the boughs of the myrobalan, and the orange, as it were a flaming cresset, and the shaddock, weighing down its branches, and the lemon, that cures lack of appetite, and the citron, sovereign against the jaundice, and the date, red and yellow, the [especial] handiwork of God the Most High. Of the like of this place saith the poet El Welhan: Night DCXXX.

When its birds sing in the dawn o'er its limpid lake, El Welhan yearns for its sight ere morning break.
For as it were Paradise 'tis with its fragrant gales And its fruits and its streams that run through its shady brake.

Gherib marvelled at the beauty of the place and bade

[1] So called because it is the result of a graft upon an almond-tree. Its kernel is sweet and it has a special delicacy of flavour, attributed by the Arabs to the graft. See Russell's Natural History of Aleppo, p. 21.
[2] So called from the flavour of its kernel.

them set up there the pavilion of Fekhr Taj, daughter of the Chosroës; so they pitched it among the trees and spread it with rich carpets. Then he sat down and the slaves brought food and they ate till they were satisfied; after which quoth Gherib, 'Harkye, Saadan!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' answered the Ghoul. 'Hast thou any wine?' asked Gherib, and Saadan replied, 'Yes, I have a cistern full of old wine.' 'Then,' said Gherib, 'bring us some of it.' So Saadan sent ten slaves, who returned with great plenty of wine, and they ate and drank and made merry. And Gherib bethought him of Mehdiyeh and recited the following verses:

I mind me of the happy days of union and delight, And all my heart's on fire with love and longing for thy sight.
By God, I did not leave thy side of my unfettered will, But by the strange and evil chance of Fate in my despite!
Peace be upon thee, O my love, a thousand times be peace! Whilst I, afar from thee, remain a sad and weary wight.

They abode there three days, eating and drinking and taking their pleasure in the valley, at the end of which time they returned to the castle. Then Gherib called Sehim and said to him, 'Take a hundred horse and go to thy father and mother and thy people, the Benou Kehtan, and bring them all to this place, here to pass the rest of their days, whilst I carry the Princess of Persia back to her father. As for thee, O Saadan,' continued Gherib, addressing the Ghoul, 'abide thou here with thy sons, till I return to thee.' 'And why,' asked Saadan, 'wilt thou not carry me with thee to the land of the Persians?' 'Because,' answered Gherib, 'thou stolest away King Sabour's daughter and if his eye fall on thee, he will eat thy flesh and drink thy blood.' When the Ghoul heard this, he laughed a great laugh, as it were the pealing thunder, and said, 'O my lord, if the Persians and the Medes united against me, I would make them quaff the cup of death.' 'Doubtless it

is as thou sayest,' rejoined Gherib; 'but abide thou here till I return to thee.' And the Ghoul answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then Sehim departed with his comrades of the Benou Kehtan for the dwelling-places of their tribe, and Gherib set out with Fekhr Taj and her company, intending for the cities of Sabour, King of the Persians.

Meanwhile, King Sabour abode awaiting his daughter's return from the Monastery of the Fire, and when the appointed time passed by and she came not, fires raged in his heart. Now he had forty viziers, whereof the wisest and chiefest was called Daidan: so he said to him, 'O vizier, the day of my daughter's return is past and I have no news of her; so do thou send a courier to the Monastery of the Fire to learn what is come of her.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Daidan, and summoning the chief of the couriers, despatched him forthright to the Monastery. When he reached it, he asked the monks of the princess, and they said, 'We have not seen her this year.' So the courier returned to the city of Isbanir[1] and told the vizier, who went in to the king and told him. When Sabour heard this, he was sore concerned and casting his crown on the ground, tore his beard and fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled water upon him, and presently he came to himself, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, and repeated the words of the poet:

When in thine absence to mine aid patience and tears I call, Tears come obedient to my word, but patience not at all.
What if the days have parted us? Indeed, 'tis of their wont; For unto Fortune perfidy, alas! is natural.

Then he called ten of his captains and bade them take

[1] Apparently Ctesiphon, the ancient dual capital of the Chosroës, situate on the Tigris below Baghdad. The place is elsewhere spoken of as "The Cities," a circumstance which confirms this supposition, *Medaïn* or *Medaïn Kisra* (the cities of Chosroës) being the Arabic name of Ctesiphon.

each a thousand horse and ride in different directions, in quest of his daughter. So they mounted forthright and departed; whilst the princess's mother clad herself and her women in black and strewed ashes and sat weeping and lamenting.

Night dcxxi.

Meanwhile Gherib and the princess journeyed on ten days, and on the eleventh day, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance and rose to the confines of the sky; whereupon Gherib called the Amir of the Persians and bade him go and learn the cause thereof. 'I hear and obey,' replied he and pricked his charger, till he came within the cloud of dust, where he saw folk and enquired of them. Quoth they, 'We are of the Benou Hettal and are questing for plunder; our Amir is Semsam ben Jirah and we are five thousand horse.' The Persian returned in haste and told Gherib, who cried out to his men and to the Persians, saying, 'Don your arms!' They did as he bade them and presently up came the Arabs, shouting, 'Booty! Booty!' Quoth Gherib, 'God confound you, O dogs of Arabs!' Then he set spurs to his horse and drove at them in valiant wise, shouting, 'God is most great! Ho for the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!' And there befell between them a sore battle and great was the clash of arms and the din of the mellay; nor did they leave fighting, till the day fled and the darkness came, when they drew off from one another.

Then Gherib numbered his men and found that five of the Benou Kehtan had fallen and three-and-seventy of the Persians; but of the Benou Hettal they had slain more than five hundred horse. As for Semsam, he alighted and sought neither food nor sleep, but said, 'In all my life I never met such a fighter as this youth! Anon he fights with the sword and anon with the mace: but to-morrow I will go forth and defy him to single combat and cut off these Arabs.' Now, when Gherib returned to his

camp, the princess met him, weeping and affrighted for the terror of that which had befallen, and kissed his foot in the stirrup, saying, 'May thy hands never wither nor thine enemies rejoice, O champion of the age! Praised be God Who hath saved thee alive this day! Verily, I am in fear for thee from yonder Arabs.' When Gherib heard this, he smiled in her face and comforted her, saying, 'Fear not, O princess! Were this desert full of the enemy, yet would I scatter them, by the might of God the Most High.' She thanked him and prayed that he might be given the victory over his enemies; after which she returned to her women and Gherib went to his tent, where he cleansed himself of the blood of the infidels, and they lay on their arms that night.

Next morning, the two hosts mounted and sought the field. The first to prick into the plain was Gherib, who spurred his charger till he was near the infidels and cried out, 'Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me!' Whereupon there came out a buirdly giant of the lineage of the tribe of Aad, armed with an iron mace, twenty pounds in weight, and drove at Gherib, saying, 'O scum of the Arabs, take what cometh to thee and know that thy last hour is at hand!' So saying, he aimed a blow at Gherib, but he avoided it and the mace sank a cubit into the ground. Now the Bedouin was bent in twain with the blow; so Gherib smote him with his mace and clove his forehead in sunder; and he fell down dead and God hurried his soul to the fire. Then Gherib made his horse wheel and curvet before the foe and offered battle. So there came out to him a second and a third and a fourth and so on, till ten had come forth to him and he slew them all.

When the infidels saw his swashing blows and the slaughter he made, they hung back and forbore to go forth to him, whereupon Semsam looked at them and said,

'May God not bless you! I will go forth to him.' So he donned his battle-harness and spurring his charger into the midst of the field, cried out to Gherib, saying, 'Out on thee, O dog of the Arabs! what art thou that thou shouldst defy me in the open field and slay my men?' And Gherib answered, 'Up and take thy wreak for the slaughter of thy braves!' So Semsam ran at Gherib, who awaited him with a dilated breast and a heart well pleased, and they hewed at one another with maces, till the two hosts marvelled and every eye was fixed on them. Then they wheeled about [and fetching a compass] in the field, [met] and struck at each other; but Gherib avoided Semsam's stroke and dealt him a buffet that beat in his breast and cast him to the ground, dead; whereupon all his host set upon Gherib as one man, and he ran at them, crying out, 'God is most Great! He giveth help and victory [to His servants] and forsaketh those who reject the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!'

Night dcxxii. When the infidels heard the name of the All-powerful King, the One, the Victorious, whom the sights comprehend not, but He comprehendeth all sights,[1] they looked at one another and said, 'What is this saying that makes us tremble in every nerve and weakens our resolution and causes the life to fail in us? Never in our lives heard we aught goodlier than this saying! Let us leave fighting, that we may ask its meaning.' So they held their hands from the battle and dismounted; and their chiefs assembled and held counsel together, seeking to go to Gherib and saying, 'Let ten of us go to him!' So they chose out ten of their best, who set out for Gherib's camp. Now he and his people had alighted and returned to their tents, marvelling at the withdrawal of the infidels from the fight. Presently, the ten elders came up and seeking speech of Gherib, kissed the earth before him and wished him glory and

[1] *Koran* vi. 103.

long life. Quoth he to them, 'What made you leave fighting?' 'O my lord,' answered they, 'thou didst affright us with the words thou shoutedst out at us.' Then said Gherib, 'What calamity do ye worship?' 'We worship Wedd and Souwaa and Yeghouth,' answered they, 'lords of the tribe of Noah;' and Gherib, 'We serve none but God the Most High, Maker of all things and Provider of every living creature. He it is who created the heavens and the earth and stablished the mountains, who maketh water to well from the rocks and the trees to grow and feedeth the wild beasts in the deserts; for He is God, the One, the All-powerful.'

When they heard this, their bosoms expanded to the words of the faith of Unity and they said, 'Verily, this God is a great lord, compassionate and merciful. What shall we say, to become of those that submit themselves to Him?' Quoth Gherib, 'Say, "There is no god but God and Abraham is the friend of God."' So the ten made sincere profession of the true faith and Gherib said to them, 'If the sweetness of Islam be indeed stablished in your hearts, go to your people and expound the faith to them; and if they profess, they shall be saved, but if they refuse, we will burn them with fire.' So they returned and expounded Islam to their people and set forth to them the way of truth and righteousness, and they embraced the faith of submission with heart and tongue.

Then they repaired on foot to Gherib's tent and kissing the earth before him, wished him power and advancement, saying, 'O our lord, we are become thy slaves; command us what thou wilt, for we hearken to thee and obey thee and will never leave thee, for God hath guided us into the right way at thy hands.' 'May God abundantly requite you!' answered he. 'Return to your dwellings and take your goods and your children and forego me to the Valley of Flowers and the castle of Sasa ben Shith, whilst I carry

the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians, back to her father and return to you.' 'We hear and obey,' said they and straightway returned to their encampment, rejoicing in Islam, and expounded the faith to their wives and children, who became true believers. Then they dismantled their dwellings and set forth, with their goods and cattle, for the Valley of Flowers. Now Gherib had charged them, saying, 'If the Ghoul of the Mountain come out to you and offer to attack you, do ye call upon the name of God, the Creator of all things, and he will leave his hostile intent and receive you hospitably.' So, when they came in sight of the castle of Shith, Saadan and his sons sallied forth to them and would have fallen upon them; but they called aloud upon the name of God the Most High, and straightway he received them kindly and asked them of their case. They told him all that had passed between Gherib and themselves, whereupon he rejoiced in them and lodged them with him and loaded them with kindnesses.

Meanwhile, Gherib and his company fared on five days' journey towards the city of Isbanir, and on the sixth day, they saw in the distance a cloud of dust. So Gherib sent one of the Persians to learn the meaning of this and he went and returned, swiftlier than a bird in its flight, saying, 'O my lord, these be a thousand horse of our comrades, whom the King hath sent in quest of his daughter.' When Gherib heard this, he commanded his men to halt and pitch the tents. So they halted and waited till the new comers reached them, when they went to meet them and told Touman, their captain, that the princess was with them; whereupon he went in to Gherib and kissing the earth before him, enquired for her. Gherib sent him to her tent, and he entered and kissed her hands and feet and acquainted her with what had befallen her father and mother. She told him in return all that had befallen her

and how Gherib had delivered her from the Ghoul of the Mountain, who would else have eaten her, adding, 'And indeed, it behoves my father to give him the half of his kingdom.' Then Touman returned to Gherib and kissed his hands and feet and thanked him for his good dealing, saying, 'With thy leave, O my lord, I will return to Isbanir and acquaint the King with the good news of his daughter's approach.' 'Go,' answered Gherib, 'and take of him the gift for glad tidings.'

So Touman returned with all diligence to Isbanir and entering the palace, kissed the earth before the King, who said to him, 'What is the news, O bringer of glad tidings?' Quoth Touman, 'I will not speak, till thou give me the reward for good news.' 'Tell me thy good news,' answered the King, 'and I will content thee.' So Touman said, 'O King, I bring thee the glad tidings of the return of the princess Fekhr Taj.' When Sabour heard his daughter's name, he fell down in a swoon and they sprinkled rose-water on him, till he recovered and said to Touman, 'Draw near to me and tell me all.' So he came forward and acquainted him with all that had befallen the princess; and Sabour beat hand upon hand, saying, 'Alas, unhappy Fekhr Taj!' And he bade give Touman ten thousand dinars and conferred on him the government of the city of Ispahan. Then he cried out to his Amirs, saying, 'Mount, all of you, and go forth to meet the princess Fekhr Taj!' Whilst the chief eunuch went in to the queen-mother and told her and all the harem the good news, whereat she rejoiced and gave him a dress of honour and a thousand dinars. Moreover, the people of the city heard of this and decorated the streets and houses.

Then the King and Touman took horse and rode till they fell in with Gherib, when Sabour dismounted and made some steps towards Gherib, who also dismounted and advanced to meet him; and they embraced and

saluted each other, and Sabour bent over Gherib's hand and kissed it and thanked him for his favours. They pitched their tents in face of one another and Sabour went in to his daughter, who rose and embracing him, told him all that had befallen her and how Gherib had rescued her from the clutches of the Ghoul of the Mountain. 'By thy life, O princess of fair ones,' said the King, 'I will overwhelm him with gifts!' 'O my father,' rejoined she, 'make him thy son-in-law, that he may be to thee a help against thine enemies, for he is passing valiant.' This she said because her heart was enamoured of Gherib. 'O my daughter,' answered her father, 'knowst thou not that King Khired Shah seeks thee in marriage and that he hath cast the brocade[1] and given a hundred thousand dinars [to dowry], and he is King of Shiraz and its dependencies and is lord of empire and horsemen and footmen?' 'O my father,' said the princess, 'I desire not that whereof thou speakest, and if thou constrain me to that I have no mind to, I will kill myself.' So Sabour left her and went in to Gherib, with whom he sat awhile and could not take his fill of looking upon him; and he said in himself, 'By Allah, my daughter is excusable if she love this Bedouin!' Then he called for food and they ate and passed the night together.

On the morrow, they took horse and rode till they arrived at the city of Isbanir and entered, stirrup to stirrup, and it was a great day for them. Fekhr Taj repaired to her palace and the abiding-place of her rank, where her mother and her women received her with cries of joy. As for King Sabour, he sat down on his throne and seated Gherib on his right hand, whilst the princes and viceroys and chamberlains and viziers and officers stood on either hand and gave him joy of the recovery of his daughter. Quoth Sabour, 'Whoso loveth me let him

[1] *Quære*, another form of "throwing the handkerchief."

bestow a robe of honour on Gherib,' and there fell dresees of honour on him like rain. Then Gherib abode the king's guest ten days, at the end of which time he would have departed, but Sabour clad him in a dress of honour and swore by his faith that he should not depart for a month. Quoth Gherib, 'O King, I am plighted to one of the girls of the Arabs and I desire to go in to her.' 'Whether is the fairer,' asked the King, 'thy betrothed or Fekhr Taj?' 'O King of the age,' replied Gherib, 'what is the slave beside the lord?' And Sabour said, 'Fekhr Taj is become thy handmaid, for that thou didst rescue her from the clutches of the Ghoul, and she shall have none other husband than thee.'

Thereupon Gherib rose and kissed the earth, saying, 'O King of the age, thou art a king and I am but a poor man, and belike thou wilt ask a heavy dowry.' 'O my son,' replied the King, 'know that Khired Shah, lord of Shiraz, seeks her in marriage and hath appointed a hundred thousand dinars to her dower; but I have chosen thee before all men, that I may make thee the shield of my kingship and the sword of my vengeance.' Then he turned to his chief officers and said to them, 'Bear witness against me that I give my daughter Fekhr Taj in marriage to my son Gherib.' With that he joined hands with him and she became his wife. Then said Gherib, 'Appoint me a dower and I will bring it to thee, for I have in the Castle of Sasa wealth and treasures beyond count.' 'O my son,' answered Sabour, 'I want of thee neither gold nor treasure and I will take nothing for her dower save the head of Jemrcan, King of Desht and the city of Ahwaz.' 'O King of the age,' rejoined Gherib, 'I will fetch my people and go to thine enemy and lay waste his realm.' Quoth Sabour, 'May God requite thee with good!' and dismissed the assembly, thinking that, if Gherib went forth against Jemrcan, he would never return.'

Night dcxxxiv.

Next morning, the King mounted with Gherib and all his troops and rode forth to the tilting-ground, where he said to his men, 'Do ye tilt with spears and gladden my heart.' So the Persian cavaliers tilted, one against the other, and Gherib said, 'O King of the age, I have a mind to tilt with the horsemen of the Persians, but on one condition.' 'What is that?' asked the King. 'It is,' answered Gherib, 'that I shall don a light tunic and take a headless spear, with a pennon dipped in saffron, whilst the Persians tilt against me with sharp spears. If any conquer me, I will give myself to him; but, if I conquer him, I will mark him on the breast and he shall leave the lists.' Then the King cried to the commander of the troops to bring forward the champions of the Persians; so he chose out twelve hundred of his stoutest champions, and the King said to them, in the Persian tongue, 'Whoso slayeth this Bedouin may ask of me what he will.' So they strove with each other for the precedence and advanced upon Gherib and truth was distinguished from falsehood and jest from earnest. Quoth Gherib, 'I put my trust in God, the God of Abraham the Friend, Who hath power over all and from whom nothing is hidden, the One, the Almighty, whom the sight comprehendeth not!'

Then a giant of the Persian champions pricked out to him, but Gherib let him not stand long before him ere he marked him and filled his breast with saffron, and as he turned away, he smote him on the nape with [the butt of] his spear, and he fell to the ground and his pages carried him forth of the lists. Then a second champion came forth against him and he overcame him and marked him on the breast; and thus did he with champion after champion, till he had overcome them all and marked them on the breast; for God the Most High gave him the victory over them and they went forth of the lists. Then the servants set food before them and they ate and drank, till

Gherib's wits were dazed. By and by, he went out upon an occasion and would have returned, but lost his way and entered the palace of Fekhr Taj. When she saw him, her reason fled and she cried out to her women, saying, 'Go to your own places!' So they withdrew and she rose and kissed Gherib's hand, saying, 'Welcome to my lord, who delivered me from the Ghoul! Indeed I am thine handmaid for ever.' Then she drew him to her bed and embraced him, whereupon desire was hot upon him and he broke her seal and lay with her till the morning. Now the King thought that he had departed; but on the morrow he went in to him and Sabour rose to him and made him sit by his side.

Then entered the [tributary] kings and kissing the earth, stood on either hand and fell to talking of Gherib's valour and saying, 'Extolled be He who gave him such prowess, and he so young in years!' As they were thus engaged, the King espied from the palace-windows the dust of horse approaching and cried out to his scouts, saying, 'Out on you! Go and bring me news of yonder dust!' So one of them took horse and riding off, returned after a while and said, 'O King, this is the dust of a hundred horse, and the name of their chief is Sehim el Leil.' Quoth Gherib, 'O my lord, this is my brother, whom I had sent on an errand, and I will go forth to meet him.' So saying, he mounted, with his hundred men of the Benou Kehtan and a thousand Persians, and rode forth to meet his brother in great state, [that is to say if greatness may be attributed to the creature] for [real] greatness belongeth to God alone. When they came up with each other, they dismounted and embraced, and Gherib said to Sehim, 'O my brother, hast thou brought our tribe to the Castle of the Ghoul of the Mountain and the Valley of Flowers?' 'O my brother,' answered Sehim, 'when the perfidious dog Merdas heard that thou hadst mastered the Ghoul of the

Mountain and his stronghold, he was sore chagrined and said, "Except I depart hence, Gherib will come and take my daughter Mehdiyeh without dower." So he took his daughter and his goods and set out with his tribe for Irak, where he entered the city of Cufa and put himself under the protection of King Agib, seeking to give him his daughter to wife.' When Gherib heard his brother's story, he well-nigh gave up the ghost for rage and said, 'By the virtue of the faith of submission, the faith of Abraham the Friend, and by the Supreme Lord, I will assuredly go to the land of Irak and make fierce war upon it.'

Then they returned to the city and going in to the King, kissed the earth before him. He rose to Gherib and saluted Sehim; after which the former told him what had happened and he put ten captains at his command, under each one's hand ten thousand horse of the stoutest of the Persians and the Arabs, who equipped themselves and were ready to depart at the end of three days. Then Gherib set out and journeyed till he reached the Castle of Sasa, where the Ghoul and his sons came forth to meet him and dismounting, kissed his feet in the stirrups. He told them all that had passed and the Ghoul said, 'O my lord, do thou abide in this castle, whilst I repair to Irak with my sons and servants and lay waste town and hamlet and bring thee all its defenders bound hand and foot.' But Gherib thanked him and said, 'O Saadan, we will all go.' So they all made ready and set out for Irak, leaving a thousand horse to guard the castle.

Meanwhile, Merdas arrived at the city of Cufa and going in to Agib, kissed the earth before him and wished him what is usually wished to kings. Then he made him a handsome present, saying, 'O my lord, I come to throw myself on thy protection.' 'Tell me who hath wronged thee,' answered Agib, 'that I may protect thee against him, though it were Sabour, King of the Persians and Turco-

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mans and Medes.' 'O King,' replied Merdas, 'he who hath wronged me is none other than a youth whom I reared in my bosom. I found him in his mother's lap in a certain valley and took her to wife. She brought me a son, whom I named Sehim el Leil, and her own son, whose name was Gherib, grew up on my knees and became a consuming lightning and a great calamity,[1] for he slew El Hemel, prince of the Benou Nebhan, and routed footmen and overcame horsemen. Now I have a daughter, who befits thee alone, and he sought her of me; so I required of him the head of the Ghoul of the Mountain [to her dowry;] wherefore he went to him and engaging him in single combat, made him prisoner and took the castle of Sasa ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Aad, wherein are the treasures of the ancients and the moderns, and the Ghoul is become one of his liegemen. Moreover, I hear that he is become a Muslim and goeth about, summoning the folk to his faith. He is now gone to carry the princess of Persia, whom he delivered from the Ghoul, back to her father, King Sabour, and will not return but with the treasures of the Persians.'

When Agib heard Merdas's story, he changed colour and was in ill case and made sure of destruction; then he said to Merdas, 'Is his mother with thee or with him?' 'She is with me,' answered Merdas; 'in my tents.' Quoth Agib, 'What is her name?' and Merdas said, 'Her name is Nusreh.' 'It is indeed she,' rejoined Agib and sent for her. When she came before him, he looked on her and knew her and said to her, 'O accursed woman, where are the two slaves I sent with thee?' 'They slew each other on my account,' replied she; whereupon he drew his sword and smote her and cut her in twain. Then they took her up and cast her out; but trouble entered into Agib's heart and he said to Merdas, 'Give me thy daughter

[1] *i.e.* a mighty man of war.

to wife.' 'She is one of thine handmaids,' answered he; 'I give her to thee to wife, and I am thy slave.' Quoth Agib, 'I desire to look upon this whoreson, Gherib, that I may make an end of him and cause him taste all manner of torments.' Then he bade give Merdas, to his daughter's dowry, thirty thousand dinars and a hundred pieces of silk fringed and brocaded with gold and a hundred pieces of bordered stuffs and handkerchiefs and collars of gold. So he went forth with this splendid dowry and set himself to equip Mehdiyeh with all diligence.

Meanwhile, Gherib fared on till he came to El Jezireh, which is the first town of Irak and is a walled and fortified city, and here he called a halt. When the people of the city saw his army encamp before it, they shut the gates and manned the walls, then went to the king of the city, who was called Damigh[1] for that he used to brain the champions in the open field, and told him. So he looked forth from the battlements of the palace and seeing an immense army of Persians encamped before the city, said to the citizens, 'O folk, what do yonder Persians want?' 'We know not,' answered they.

Now Damigh had among his officers a man called Sebulkifar, keen of wit and subtle as he were a flame of fire; so he called him and bade him go to the stranger host and find out who they were and what they wanted and return quickly. Accordingly, he sped like the wind to the Persian camp, where a company of Arabs met him and said to him, 'Who art thou and what dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'I am a messenger and an ambassador from the lord of the city to your chief.' So they took him and carried him through the lines of tents and standards, till they came to Gherib's pavilion and told him of the envoy. He bade them bring him in and they did so, whereupon he kissed the earth before Gherib and wished him length of days

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

and honour. Quoth Gherib, 'What is thine errand?' and Sebulkifar answered, saying, 'I am an envoy from the lord of the city of Jezireh, Damigh, brother of King Kundemir, lord of the city of Cufa and the land of Irak.' When Gherib heard his father's name, the tears ran from his eyes and he looked at the messenger and said, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Sebulkifar,' answered he. 'O Sebulkifar,' said Gherib, 'return to thy master and tell him that the commander of this host is called Gherib, son of Kundemir, King of Cufa, whom his son Agib slew, and he is come to avenge his father on the perfidious dog Agib.'

So Sebulkifar returned to the city, rejoicing, and told Damigh all he had heard. The latter thought himself in a dream and said to the messenger, 'O Sebulkifar, is this thou tellest me true?' 'As thy head liveth,' replied Sebulkifar, 'it is true.' Then Damigh took horse forthright with his chief officers and rode out to the camp, where Gherib met him and they embraced and saluted one another; after which Gherib carried him to his pavilion and they sat down on beds of estate. And Damigh rejoiced in Gherib, his brother's son, and turning to him, said, 'I also have yearned to avenge thy father, but could not avail against the dog thy brother; for that his troops are many and mine few.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'I am come to avenge my father and blot out our reproach and rid the realm of Agib.' Quoth Damigh, 'O son of my brother, thou hast two wreaks to take, that of thy father and that of thy mother.' 'And what ails my mother?' asked Gherib. 'Thy brother Agib hath slain her,' replied Damigh and told him what had befallen, whereupon Gherib's reason fled and he swooned away and came nigh upon death. No sooner did he come to himself than he cried out to the troops, saying, 'To horse!' But Damigh said to him, 'O son of my brother, wait till I make ready mine estate and mount with my men and

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fare with thee and at thy stirrup.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'I have no patience to wait; do thou equip thy troops and join me at Cufa.'

So Gherib mounted with his troops and rode, till he came to the town of Babel, whose folk took fright at him. Now there was in this town a king called Jemek, under whose hand were twenty thousand horsemen, and there gathered themselves together to him from the villages [round about] other fifty thousand horse, who pitched their tents under the walls of the city. Then Gherib wrote a letter and sent it to King Jemek by a messenger, who came up to the city-gate and cried out, saying, 'I am a messenger;' whereupon the keeper of the gate went in and told Jemek, who said, 'Bring him to me.' So the messenger entered and kissing the earth before the King, gave him the letter. Jemek opened it and read as follows: 'Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds and of all things, Who provideth all creatures and hath power over all! These from Gherib, son of Kundemir, lord of Irak and Cufa, to Jemek. As soon as this letter reaches thee, let not thy reply be other than to break thine idols and confess the unity of the All-knowing King, Creator of light and darkness and of all things, the All-powerful; and except thou do as I bid thee, I will make this day the blackest of thy days. Peace be on those who follow in the way of righteousness, fearing the issues of frowardness, and obey the Most High King, Lord of this world and the next, Him who saith to a thing, "Be;" and it is.'

When Jemek read this letter, his eyes rolled and his colour changed and he cried out to the messenger, saying, 'Go to thy lord and say to him, "To-morrow, at daybreak there shall be battle and conflict and it shall appear who is the master."' So he returned and told Gherib, who bade his men make ready for battle, whilst Jemek pitched his tents in face of Gherib's camp and his troops poured forth

like the swollen sea and passed the night in expectation of battle. As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted and drew up in battle-array and beat their drums and spurred their swift horses, filling the plains; and the champions came out.

The first who sallied forth to the field was the Ghoul of the Mountain, bearing on his shoulder a terrible big tree, and he cried out between the two hosts, saying, 'I am Saadan the Ghoul: who is for fighting, who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come forth to me.' And he called out to his slaves, saying, 'Out on you! Bring me firewood and fire, for I am hungry.' So the slaves brought firewood and kindled a fire midmost the lists. Then there came out to him a man of the infidels, an Amalekite of the unbelieving Amalekites, bearing on his shoulder a mace as it were the mast of a ship, and drove at the Ghoul, saying, 'Woe to thee, O Saadan!' When the Ghoul heard this, he was angered and raising his club, aimed at the infidel a blow, that whistled through the air. The other met the stroke with his mace, but it beat down his guard and descending with its own weight and that of the mace upon his head, beat in his brain-pan, and he fell like a great palm-tree; whereupon Saadan cried to his slaves, saying, 'Take this fat calf and roast him quickly.' So they hastened to skin the infidel and roasted him and brought him to the Ghoul, who ate his flesh and crunched his bones.

When the infidels saw how Saadan did with their fellow, their skins quaked and their colour changed and their hearts died within them and they said to one another, 'Whoso goeth out against this Ghoul, he eats him and cracks his bones and maketh him to lack the wind of the world.' Wherefore they quailed for fear of the Ghoul and his sons and turned to fly, making for the town; but Gherib cried out to his troops, saying, 'Up and after

them!' So the Persians and the Arabs drove after the King of Babel and his host and smote them with the sword, till they slew of them twenty thousand or more. Moreover, the fugitives crowded together in the gate of the city and there they slew of them much people; and they could not win to shut the gate. So the Persians and the Arabs entered with them, fighting, and Saadan, taking a mace from one of the slain, fought his way through the foe and broke into the King's palace, where he met with Jemek and smote him with the mace, that he fell senseless to the ground. Then he fell upon those who were in the palace and pounded them into fragments, till those who were left cried out for quarter and Saadan said to them, 'Bind your king.' So they bound Jemek and took him up, and Saadan drove them before him like sheep and brought them before Gherib, after the most part of the people of the city had perished by the swords of the latter's host.

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When Jemek came to himself, he found himself bound and heard Saadan say, 'I will sup to-night off this king Jemek;' whereupon he turned to Gherib and said to him, 'I throw myself on thy mercy.' 'Become a Muslim,' replied Gherib, 'and thou shalt be safe from the Ghoul and from the vengeance of the Living [God] who ceaseth not.' So Jemek professed Islam with heart and tongue and Gherib commanded his bonds to be loosed. Then he expounded the faith to his people and they all became Muslims; after which Jemek returned to the city and despatched thence meat and drink to the camp before Babel, where they passed the night. On the morrow, Gherib gave the signal for departure and they fared on till they came to Meyya Farikin, which they found empty, for its people had heard what had befallen Babel and had fled to Cufa and told Agib. When the latter heard the news, his gorge rose and he assembled his fighting men and bade them make ready to do battle with his brother's

host; after which he numbered them and found them thirty thousand horse and ten thousand foot. So he levied other fifty thousand horse and foot and taking horse with a mighty host, rode forward five days, till he came upon his brother's army encamped before Mosul and pitched his tents in face of theirs.

Then Gherib wrote a letter and said to his officers, 'Which of you will carry this letter to Agib?' Whereupon up sprang Sehim and said, 'O King of the age, I will carry thy letter and bring thee back an answer.' So Gherib gave him the letter and he repaired to the pavilion of Agib, who bade admit him and said to him, 'Whence comest thou?' 'From the King of the Arabs and the Persians,' answered Sehim, 'son-in-law of Chosroës, King of the world, who sendeth thee a letter; so do thou return him an answer.' 'Give me the letter,' said Agib. So Sehim gave him the letter and he tore it open and read as follows: 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! Peace be on Abraham the Friend! As soon as this letter comes to thy hands, do thou confess the unity of the Bountiful King, Causer of causes and Mover of the clouds, and leave worshipping idols. If thou do this thing, thou art my brother and ruler over us and I will pardon thee the deaths of my father and mother, nor will I reproach thee with what thou hast done. But if thou obey not my commandment, behold, I will hasten to thee and cut off thy head and lay waste thy dominions. Verily, I give thee good counsel, and peace be on those who follow in the way of righteousness and obey the Most High King!'

When Agib read these words and knew the threat they contained, his eyes sank into his head and he gnashed his teeth for rage. Then he tore the letter in pieces and threw it away, which vexed Sehim and he cried out upon Agib, saying, 'God wither thy hand for that thou hast done!' With this Agib cried out to his men, saying,

'Seize yonder dog and cut him in pieces with your swords.' So they ran at Sehim; but he drew his sword and fell upon them and killed more than fifty of them; after which he cut his way out and won back, covered with blood, to Gherib, who said, 'What is this, O Sehim?' And he told him what had passed, whereat he grew livid for rage and crying, 'God is most great!' bade the drums beat to battle. So the fighting-men donned their hauberks and coats of strait-woven mail and girt themselves with their swords; the footmen drew out in battle-array, whilst the horsemen mounted and set their long lances in the rest and the champions pricked into the field. Agib and his men also took horse and the two hosts charged down upon each other. Then ruled the Judge of Battle, in whose ordinance is no unright, for a seal is on his lips and he speaketh not, and the blood ran down in streams and laced the earth with curious broidery; heads grew gray [for terror] and the battle raged ever hotter and fiercer. Feet slipped and the valiant stood firm and pushed forward, whilst the faint-heart turned and fled, nor did they leave fighting till the day waned and the night came with the darkness. Then the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart and returned to their tents, where they passed the night.

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Next morning, as soon as it was day, the drums beat to battle, and the warriors donned their harness of war and girt on their fair swords and mounting their stout horses, couched their brown lances and cried out, saying, 'Let there be no budging to-day!' And the two hosts drew out in battle array, like the swollen sea. The first to open the chapter of war was Sehim, who spurred his charger between the two hosts and played with swords and spears and plied all manner of martial exercises, till the choicest wits were confounded. Then he cried out, saying, 'Who is for fighting? Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out!' Whereupon there pricked out

to him a horseman of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire; but it was not long before Sehim pierced him with his lance and overthrew him. Then a second came forth and he slew him also, and a third and he rent him in sunder, and a fourth, and he did him to death; nor did they leave to come out to him and he to slay them, till he had done to death two hundred fighting-men. Then Agib cried to his men to charge, and the two hosts met with a mighty shock and great was the clash of arms and the roar of the battle. The shining swords rang out and the blood ran in streams and men's skulls were as shoes to the horses' feet, nor did they cease from sore smiting till the day waned and the night came with the darkness, when they drew apart and returning to their tents, passed the night there.

As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted and sought the field; and the Muslims looked for Gherib to mount and ride behind the standards as was his wont, but he came not. So Sehim sent a servant to his brother's pavilion, who, finding him not, questioned the tent-keepers, but they answered, 'We know nothing of him.' Whereat he was greatly concerned and went forth and told the troops, who refused to give battle, saying, 'If Gherib be absent from us, his enemy will destroy us.' Now there was for Gherib's absence a cause that we will set out in due order, and it was thus. When Agib returned to his camp on the preceding night, he called one of his officers by name Siyyar and said to him, 'O Siyyar, I have kept thee in reserve for a day like this; and now I bid thee go to Gherib's camp and show thy skill by bringing Gherib himself to me.' And Siyyar said, 'I hear and obey.' So he repaired to the enemy's camp and stealing into Gherib's pavilion, in the darkness of the night, when all the men had gone to rest, passed himself off for a servant and stood to serve Gherib, who presently,

being athirst, called to him for water. So he brought him a flagon of water, drugged with henbane, whereof no sooner had Gherib drunk, than he fell down head foremost; whereupon Siyyar wrapped him in his cloak and carrying him to Agib's tent, threw him down at his feet. Quoth Agib, 'O Siyyar, what is this?' 'This is thy brother Gherib,' answered he; whereat Agib rejoiced and said, 'The blessing of the idols light upon thee! Loose him and wake him.'

So they made him smell to vinegar and he came to himself and opened his eyes; then, finding himself bound and in a tent other than his own, said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then Agib cried out at him, saying, 'O dog, dost thou draw on me and seek to slay me and take on me thy wreak of thy father and mother? This very day I will send thee to them and rid the world of thee.' 'O dog of the infidels,' replied Gherib, 'thou shalt see against whom the wheels of fate shall revolve and who shall be overthrown of the Almighty King, Who knoweth what is in the hearts and Who shall leave thee in hell, tormented and confounded! Have pity on thyself and say with me, "There is no god but God and Abraham is the friend of God!"' When Agib heard Gherib's words, he puffed and snorted and railed at his god of stone and called for the headsman and the carpet of blood; but his vizier, who was at heart a Muslim, though outwardly an infidel, rose and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, deal not hastily, but wait till we know the conquered from the conqueror. If we prove the victors, we shall be free to kill him, and if we be beaten, his being alive in our hands will be a strength to us.' And the Amirs said, 'The vizier says sooth.' So Agib bade lay Gherib in irons and chain him up in his own tent and appointed a thousand stout warriors to guard him.

Night dcxxxix.

Meanwhile Gherib's host, when they awoke and found

not their chief, were as sheep without a shepherd; but Saadan the Ghoul cried out to them, saying, 'O folk, don your harness and trust to your Lord to defend you!' So the Arabs and the Persians donned their hauberks of iron and their strait-knit shirts of mail and mounting their horses, sallied forth to the field, with the chiefs and the ensigns in the van. Then pricked out the Ghoul of the Mountain, with a mace on his shoulder, two hundred pounds in weight, and advanced and retreated, saying, 'Ho, worshippers of idols, come ye out to-day, for it is a day of battle! Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my mischief and whoso knoweth me not, I will make myself known to him. I am Saadan, servant of King Gherib. Who is for jousting? Who is for fighting? Let no faint-heart or weakling come forth to me to-day.' And there came forth to him a champion of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire, and drove at him, but Saadan met him and dealt him a blow with his mace, which beat in his ribs and cast him lifeless to the earth. Then he called out to his sons and slaves, saying, 'Light the fire, and whoso falls of the infidels, do ye roast him well with fire and bring him to me, that I may make the morning meal of him.' So they kindled a fire amiddleward the field and laid the slain man therein, till he was cooked, when they brought him to Saadan, who gnawed his flesh and crunched his bones.

When the infidels saw this, they were sore affrighted, but Agib cried out to his men, saying, 'Out on you! Fall upon him and cut him in pieces with your swords!' So twenty thousand men ran at Saadan, whilst the footmen circled round him and rained darts and arrows upon him, so that he was wounded in four-and-twenty places and his blood ran down upon the earth, and he was alone. Then the host of the Muslims drove at the idolaters, calling for help upon the Lord of the Worlds, and they ceased not

from the battle till the day came to an end, when they drew apart. But the infidels had made Saadan prisoner, as he were a drunken man for loss of blood; and they bound him fast and set him by Gherib. When the latter saw the Ghoul a prisoner, he said, 'There is no force and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! O Saadan, what is this?' 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'it is God (exalted and glorified be He!) Who ordaineth misfortune and deliverance, and needs must this and that betide.' And Gherib said, 'Thou sayst sooth, O Saadan!' But Agib and his host passed the night in joy, and he said to his men, 'To-morrow, we will fall upon the Muslims and leave not one of them alive.'

Meanwhile, the Muslims passed the night, dejected and weeping for their King and for Saadan; but Sehim said to them, 'O folk, be not concerned, for the relief of God the Most High is near.' Then he waited till midnight, when he disguised himself in the habit of a tent-keeper and repairing to Agib's camp, made his way between the tents, till he came to the King's pavilion, where he saw him seated on his throne, in the midst of his princes. So he entered and going up to the candles that burnt in the tent, snuffed them and sprinkled powdered henbane on the wicks; after which he withdrew and waited without the tent, till the smoke of the burning henbane reached Agib and his princes and they fell to the earth like dead men. Then he left them and went to the prison-tent, where he found Gherib and Saadan, guarded by a thousand men, who were drowsed with sleep. So he cried out at the guards, saying, 'Out on you! Sleep not; but watch your prisoners and light the cressets.'

Then he filled a cresset with firewood, on which he strewed henbane, and lighting it, went round about the tent with it, till the smoke of the henbane entered the nostrils of the guards, and they all fell asleep; when he

entered the tent and finding Gherib and Saadan insensible for the smoke of the henbane, which had been wafted in upon them, aroused them by making them smell to a sponge full of vinegar he had with him. Then he loosed their bonds, and when they saw him, they blessed him and rejoiced in him. Then they went forth and took all the guards' arms and Sehim bade them go to their own camp; after which he re-entered Agib's tent, and wrapping him in his cloak, lifted him up and made for the Muslim camp. And the Merciful Lord protected him, so that he reached Gherib's tent in safety and unrolled the mantle before him. Gherib looked and seeing Agib bound, cried out, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory!' And he blessed Sehim and bade him arouse Agib. So he made him smell to vinegar, mixed with frankincense, and he opened his eyes and finding himself bound and shackled, hung down his head. 'O accursed one,' quoth Sehim, 'lift thy head!' So he raised his eyes and found himself amongst Arabs and Persians and saw his brother seated on the throne of his state and the place of his power, wherefore he was silent and spake not. Then Gherib cried out and said, 'Strip me this dog!' So they stripped him and beat him with whips, till his body was weakened and his pride subdued, after which Gherib set over him a guard of a hundred cavaliers.

Night dcxl.

Presently, they heard shouts of 'There is no god but God!' and 'God is Most Great!' from the infidel camp. Now the reason of this was that King Damigh, Gherib's uncle, had set out from El Jezireh, with twenty thousand horse, ten days after his nephew, and on nearing the field of battle, had despatched one of his riders to get news. The scout was absent a whole day, after which he returned and told Damigh all that had passed. So he waited till the night, when he fell upon the infidels, crying out, 'God

is Most Great!' and put them to the edge of the sword. When Gherib heard the crying aforesaid, he said to Sehim, 'Go and find out the cause of these shouts.' So Sehim repaired to the field of battle and questioned the camp followers, who told him that King Damigh had come up with twenty thousand men and fallen upon the idolaters by night, saying, 'By the virtue of Abraham the friend, I will not forsake my brother's son, but will do a brave man's part and beat back the infidels and please the Omnipotent King!'

So Sehim returned and told Gherib, who cried out to his men, saying, 'Don your arms and mount your horses and let us succour my uncle!' So they mounted and fell upon the infidels with the sharp sword. By the morning, they had killed nigh fifty thousand of them and made other thirty thousand prisoners, and the rest of Agib's army dispersed over the length and breadth of the land. Then the Muslims returned in triumph and Gherib rode out to meet his uncle, whom he saluted and thanked for his help. Quoth Damigh, 'I wonder if that dog Agib fell in this day's battle.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'have no care for him; know that he is with me in chains.' When Damigh heard this, he rejoiced mightily and the two kings dismounted and entered the pavilion, but found no Agib there; whereupon Gherib exclaimed, 'O glory of Abraham the Friend! What an evil end is this to a glorious day!' and he cried out to the tent-keepers, saying, 'Out on you! Where is my enemy?' Quoth they, 'When thou mountedst and we went with thee, thou didst not bid us guard him;' and Gherib exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' But Damigh said to him, 'Hasten not nor be concerned, for where can he go, and we in pursuit of him?'

Now the manner of Agib's escape was on this wise. His man Siyyar, being in the camp in disguise, saw Gherib

mount and ride forth, leaving Agib unguarded, and could hardly credit his eyes; so he waited awhile and presently crept to the tent and taking Agib, who was senseless for the pain of the beating, on his back, made off with him into the open country and fared on at the top of his speed all that night and next day, till he came to a spring of water, under an apple-tree. There he set Agib down and washed his face, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing Siyyar, said to him, 'O Siyyar, carry me to Cufa, that I may recover there and levy horsemen and soldiers, wherewith to overcome mine enemy: and know, O Siyyar, that I am anhungred.' So Siyyar went out to the desert and caught an ostrich-poult and brought it to his lord. Then he gathered firewood and striking a light, kindled a fire, by which he roasted the bird and fed Agib with its flesh and gave him to drink of the water of the spring, till his strength returned to him; after which he went to one of the Bedouin encampments, and stealing a horse thence, mounted Agib upon it and journeyed on with him till they drew near the city of Cufa. The governor of the city came out to meet and salute the King, whom he found weak with the beating his brother had inflicted on him; and Agib entered the city and calling his physicians, bade them heal him in less than ten days' time. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and tended him till he became whole of the sickness that was upon him and of the beating. Then he commanded his viziers to write letters to all his vassals, and he wrote one-and-twenty letters and despatched them to the different governors, who assembled their troops and set out for Cufa by forced marches.

Night dcxli.

Meanwhile, Gherib, being troubled for Agib's escape, despatched a thousand horse in quest of him, who dispersed on all sides and sought him a day and a night, but found no trace of him; so they returned and told Gherib, who called for his brother Sehim, but found him not; whereat

he was sore concerned, fearing for him from the vicissitudes of fortune. However, presently, Sehim entered and kissed the earth before Gherib, who rose, when he saw him, and said, 'Where hast thou been, O Sehim?' 'O King,' answered he, 'I have been to Cufa and find that the dog Agib hath made his way thither and is cured of his wounds. Moreover, he hath written letters to his vassals, who have brought him troops.' When Gherib heard this, he gave command to depart; so they struck the tents and marched for Cufa. When they came in sight of the city, they found it compassed about with a host like the swollen ocean, having neither beginning nor end. So Gherib encamped with his troops in face of the infidels and set up his standards, and the dark fell down upon the two hosts, whereupon they lighted fires and kept watch till daybreak. Then Gherib rose and making the ablution, prayed two inclinations, according to the rite of our father Abraham; after which he commanded the drums to sound the point of war. Accordingly, the drums beat to battle and the standards waved, whilst the fighting-men armed and mounted and sought the lists.

The first to open the chapter of war was King Damigh, who spurred his charger between the two armies and displayed himself and played with swords and spears, till both hosts were confounded and marvelled at him; after which he cried out, saying, 'Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me; for I am King Damigh, brother of King Kundemir.' Then there came forth a horseman of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire, and drove at Damigh, without word said; but the King received him with a lance-thrust in the breast, that the point issued from between his shoulders and God hurried his soul to the fire, and ill was the abiding-place [to which he went]. Then came forth a second and he slew him also, and a third, and they ceased not to come

out to him and he to slay them, till he had made an end of six-and-seventy fighting-men.

Therewith the infidels hung back and would not encounter him; but Agib cried out to his men and said, 'Out on you, O folk! If ye all go forth against him, one after another, he will not leave one of you, sitting or standing. Charge on them, all at once, and sweep the earth clean of them and make their heads a pavement for your horses' hoofs!' So they waved the awe-striking standard and host fell upon host; the blood rained in streams upon the earth and the Judge of battle ruled, in whose ordinance is no unright. The valiant stood firm on his feet in the stead of war, whilst the faint-heart gave back and fled, thinking the day would never come to an end nor the night draw the curtains of the dusk; and they ceased not to battle and smite with swords, till the day waned and the night darkened with the shadows. Then the drums of the infidels beat the retreat, but Gherib, refusing to stay his arms, drove at the idolaters, and the believers in the unity of God followed him. How many heads and hands they sundered, how many necks and sinews they shore, how many knees and spines they crushed and how many grown men and youths they did to death! With the first peep of dawn the infidels broke and fled, and the Muslims followed them till noon and took over twenty thousand of them, whom they brought back bound.

Then Gherib sat down before the gate of Cufa and commanded a herald to proclaim pardon and safety to all who should leave the worship of idols and acknowledge the One All-knowing God, the Creator of mankind and of light and darkness. So proclamation was made as he bade in the streets of Cufa, and all that were therein embraced the true faith, great and small. Moreover, they all issued forth and made good their submission before King Gherib, who rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy and his breast

expanded and he was glad. Then he enquired of Merdas and his daughter Mehdiyeh, and being told that he had taken up his abode behind the Red Mountain, called Sehim and said to him, 'Find out for me what is come of thy father.' Sehim tarried not, but mounting, set his brown spear in the rest and fared on till he reached the Red Mountain, where he sought for his father, but found no trace of him nor of his tribe; but in their stead he saw an elder of the Arabs, a very old man, broken with excess of years, and asked him of the folk and whither they were gone. 'O my son,' replied he, 'when Merdas heard of Gherib's descent upon Cufa, he was smitten with great fear and taking his daughter, set out with his slaves, male and female, and all his tribe, into the deserts, and I know not whither he is gone.' So Sehim returned to Gherib and told him what he had learnt, whereat he was greatly concerned. Then he sat down on his father's throne and opening his treasuries, distributed largesse to his braves. And he took up his abode in Cufa and sent out spies, to get news of Agib. Moreover, he summoned the grandees of the realm, who came and did him homage; as also did the townsfolk, and he bestowed on them sumptuous dresses of honour and commended the people to their care.

Night dcxlii. One day, he went out to hunt, with a hundred horse, and fared on till he came to a valley, abounding in trees and fruits and streams and birds. It was a pasturing-place for antelopes and gazelles, delightsome to the spirit, and the fragrance of its flowers brought repose from the languor of strife. It was a brilliant day; so they encamped in the valley and passed the night there. On the morrow, Gherib made the ablution and prayed the morning prayers, offering up praise and thanks to God the Most High; when, behold, there arose a great clamour and tumult in the meadows, and he bade Sehim go and see what was the matter. So Sehim mounted and rode till he saw horsemen

carrying off women and children, captive and crying out, and plundered goods and haltered horses; whereupon he questioned the shepherds and they said, 'This is the harem of Merdas, Chief of the Benou Kehtan, and his goods and those of his tribe; for yesterday Jemrcan slew Merdas and made prize of his women and children and household stuff and those of his tribe. It is his wont to go a-raiding and waylay travellers, and he is a mighty man of war; neither Arabs nor kings can avail against him and he is the scourge of the land.'

When Sehim heard this, he returned to Gherib and told him the case, wherefore fire was added to his fire and his blood boiled to avenge himself and wipe out his reproach. So he rode after the robbers, till he overtook them and fell upon them, crying out and saying, 'God is Most Great! Down with the covetous oppressors, who deny Him!' And he slew in one onset one-and-twenty fighting-men. Then he halted in mid-field, with no coward's heart, and cried out, saying, 'Where is Jemrcan? Let him come out to me, that I may make him quaff the cup of humiliation and rid the earth of him!' Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when out came Jemrcan,—a huge tall Amalekite, as he were a calamity of calamities or a piece of a mountain, cased in steel, and bearing a passing heavy club of China steel, wherewith if he smote a mountain, he crushed it,—and drove at Gherib like a fierce tyrant, without speech or salutation. Gherib met him like a hungry lion, and the brigand aimed a blow at his head with his club; but he evaded it and the club smote the earth and sank therein half a cubit deep. Then Gherib took his mace and smiting Jemrcan on the wrist, crushed his fingers and the club dropped from his grasp; whereupon Gherib bent down from his saddle and snatching it up, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, smote him therewith full on the ribs, and he fell to the earth like a huge palm-

tree. So Sehim took him and binding him, haled him off with a rope, and Gherib's men fell on those of Jemrcan and slew fifty of them and put the rest to flight; nor did they draw bridle till they reached their camp and raised their voices in clamour; whereupon all who were in the stronghold came out to meet them and they told them what had passed, and when they heard that their chief was a prisoner, they set out for the valley, vying with each other in their haste to deliver him.

Meanwhile King Gherib dismounted and called for Jemrcan, who humbled himself before him, saying, 'I throw myself on thy mercy, O champion of the age!' 'O dog of the Arabs,' replied Gherib, 'dost thou waylay the servants of God the Most High and fearest not the Lord of the Worlds?' 'O my lord,' said Jemrcan, 'and who is the Lord of the Worlds?' 'O dog,' rejoined Gherib, 'and what calamity dost thou worship?' 'O my lord,' answered the brigand, 'I worship a god made of dates kneaded with butter and honey, and whiles I eat him and make me another.' When Gherib heard this, he laughed, till he fell backward, and said, 'O unhappy wretch, there is none worship-worth save God the Most High, who created thee and all things and provideth all creatures, from whom nothing is hidden and who hath power over all.' Quoth Jemrcan, 'And where is this mighty god, that I may worship him?' 'O fellow,' answered Gherib, 'know that this god's name is Allah, and it is He who created the heavens and the earth and maketh the trees to grow and the waters to run. He created beasts and birds and Paradise and Hell-fire and secludeth Himself from all eyes, seeing and being seen of none. Extolled be His perfection! There is no god but He!' When Jemrcan heard these words, the ears of his heart were opened and his skin shuddered and he said, 'O my lord, what shall I say that I may become one of you and that

this mighty Lord may accept of me?' 'Say,' replied Gherib, '"There is no god but God and Abraham the Friend is the Apostle of God!"' So he repeated the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity. Then said Gherib, 'Hast thou tasted the sweetness of Islam?' 'Yes,' answered the other; and Gherib said, 'Loose his bonds.' So they unbound him and he kissed the earth before Gherib and his feet.

At this moment they espied a great cloud of dust, that spread till it walled the world, and Gherib bade Sehim go and see what it was. So he went off, like a bird in full flight, and presently returning, said, 'O King of the age, it is the Benou Aamir, the comrades of Jemrcan.' Whereupon quoth Gherib to the latter, 'Ride out to thy people and expound to them Islam, and if they profess, they shall be saved; but, if they refuse, we will put them to the sword.' So Jemrcan mounted and spurring towards his tribesmen, cried out to them; and they knew him and dismounting, came up to him on foot and said, 'We rejoice in thy safety, O our lord!' 'O folk,' said he, 'whoso obeyeth me shall be saved; but whoso gainsayeth me, I will cut him in twain with this sabre.' And they made answer, saying, 'Command us what thou wilt, for we will not gainsay thy commandment.' Quoth he, 'Then say with me, "There is no god but God and Abraham is the friend of God!"' 'O our lord,' asked they, 'whence hast thou these words?' And he told them what had befallen him, adding, 'O folk, know ye not that I am your chief and foremost among you in the field and stead of war, and yet a single man took me prisoner and made me quaff the cup of humiliation?'

Night dcxliii.

When they heard his speech, they spoke the word of Unity, and Jemrcan led them to Gherib, at whose hands they affirmed their profession and wished him glory and victory, after they had kissed the earth before him. Gherib

rejoiced in them and bade them return to their people and expound Islam to them; but they said, 'O our lord, we will never leave thee, whilst we live; but we will go and fetch our families and return to thee.' And Gherib said, 'Go, and join me at the city of Cufa.' So Jemrcan and his comrades returned to their camp and expounded Islam to their women and children, who all to a soul embraced the true faith, after which they dismantled their houses and struck their tents and set out for Cufa, driving before them their horses and sheep and camels.

Meanwhile Gherib returned to Cufa, where the horsemen met him and carried him into the city in state. He entered his palace and sat down on his throne, with his officers standing on either hand. Then the spies entered and informed him that his brother Agib had made his escape and taken refuge with Julned ben Kerker, the lord of the city of Oman and land of Yemen; whereupon Gherib bade his troops make ready to set out in three days' time. Then he expounded Islam to the thirty thousand men he had taken in the first battle and exhorted them to profess and take service with him. Twenty thousand embraced the faith, but the rest refused and he slew them. Then came Jemrcan and his tribe and kissed the earth before Gherib, who bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and made him captain of his vanguard, saying, 'O Jemrcan, mount with the chiefs of thy kinsmen and twenty thousand horse and fare on before us to the land of Julned ben Kerker.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jemrcan and set forward with his men, leaving the women and children of the tribe in Cufa.

Then Gherib passed in review the harem of Merdas and his eye lit upon Mehdiyeh, who was among the women, whereupon he fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he embraced Mehdiyeh and carried her into a privy chamber,

where he sat with her; and they lay together that night without lewdness. Next morning, he went out and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, invested his uncle Damigh with a dress of honour and appointed him his viceroy over all Irak, commending Mehdiyeh to his care, till he should return from his expedition against Agib; after which he set out for the land of Yemen with twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot.

Now, when Agib and his defeated army came in sight of Oman, King Julned saw the dust of their approach and sent scouts to find out its meaning, who returned and told him that this was the dust of Agib, lord of Irak. And Julned wondered at his coming and said to his officers, 'Go forth and meet him.' So they went forth and met him and pitched tents for him at the gate of the city; and Agib sent in to Julned, weeping and mournful-hearted. Now Julned's wife was the daughter of Agib's father's brother, and he had children by her. So, when he saw his kinsman in this plight, he asked what ailed him and Agib told him all that had befallen him, saying, 'O King, Gherib commandeth the folk to worship the Lord of the Heavens and forbiddeth them from the service of idols and other gods.' When Julned heard this, he was mightily enraged and said, 'By the virtue of the light-giving sun, I will not leave one of thy brother's folk on life! But where didst thou leave them and how many men are they?' 'I left them in Cufa,' answered Agib; 'and they are fifty thousand horse.' Whereupon Julned called his Vizier Jawamerd, saying, 'Take seventy thousand horse and go to Cufa and bring me the Muslims alive, that I may torture them with all manner of tortures.'

So Jawamerd departed with his host and fared on seven days' journey towards Cufa, till he came to a valley abounding in trees and streams and fruits, where he called a halt and they rested till the middle of the night, when

Night DCXLIV.

the Vizier gave the signal for departure and mounting, rode on before them till hard upon daybreak. A little before the dawn, he descended into a well-wooded valley, whose flowers were fragrant and whose birds warbled on the branches, as they swayed gracefully to and fro, and Satan blew into his sides [and puffed him up with pride] and he recited the following verses:

I put my battle-harness on and don my dreadful arms, And here and there on every side I drive through the mellay;
I and my troops, we plunge into the seething sea of war And of my prowess and my might the captives lead away.
The doughtiest horsemen of the world do know me for a fear, A scourge and terror to my foes, my kinsmen's help and stay.
Lo, upon Gherib will I seize and drag him forth in chains! Then, with a joyful heart and proud, I'll homeward wend my way.

Hardly had he made an end of his verses when there came out upon him from among the trees a horseman of noble presence, clad in complete steel, who cried out to him, saying, 'Stand, O brigand of the Arabs! Put off thy clothes and lay down thine arms and dismount and begone!' When Jawamerd heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he drew his sabre and drove at Jemrcan, [for he it was,] saying, 'O thief of the Arabs, wilt thou play the highwayman with me, who am captain of the host of Julned ben Kerker and am come to bring Gherib and his men bound?' When Jemrcan heard these words, he said, 'How grateful is this to my heart!' And made at Jawamerd, reciting the following verses:

I am the cavalier renowned for valour in the field: The foemen everywhere do dread my sabre and my spear.
I'm Jemrcan, whose whole delight is in the press of war, And all the champions of the world my lance-thrust know and fear.
Gherib my lord and sultan is, the high-priest of my faith, That is the lion of the fight, when hosts to strife draw near!
Devout and full of pious dread, a doughty chief is he; Midmost the tented field he slays his enemies like deer.
Despite the gods of unbelief, verses he chants and bids The folk to Abraham his faith, with clarion voice and clear.

Now Jemrcan had fared on with his men ten days' journey from Cufa and called a halt on the eleventh day till midnight, when he bade depart and rode on in advance, till he came to the valley aforesaid and heard Jawamerd reciting his braggart verses. So he drove at him, as he were a ravening lion, and smiting him with his sword, clove him in twain and waited till his captains came up, when he told them what had passed and said to them, 'Let each of you take five thousand men and disperse round about the valley, whilst I and the Benou Aamir fall upon the enemy's van, crying out and saying, "God is Most Great!" When ye hear our shouts, do ye charge them with the same cry and smite them with the sword.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and turning back to their men, spread themselves about the sides of the valley in the fore-dawn twilight.

Presently up came the army of Yemen, like a flock of sheep, filling mountain and plain, and Jemrcan and the Benou Aamir fell upon them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon the Muslims in ambush in the valley cried out in answer and the hills and mountains echoed the cry and all things, green and dry, answered, saying, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny Him!' And the infidels were confounded and smote one another with the keen sabre, whilst the true believers fell upon them like flames of fire and nothing was seen but heads flying and blood spouting and faint-hearts giving back in dismay. By the time they could see each other's faces, two-thirds of the infidels had perished and God hastened their souls to the fire and ill was the abiding-place [to which they went]. The rest took to flight and dispersed about the deserts, whilst the Muslims pursued them, slaying and taking captive till midday, when they returned in triumph with seven thousand prisoners; and but six-and-twenty thousand of the infidels escaped and the most of them wounded.

Then the Muslims collected the arms and horses and tents and baggage of the enemy and despatched them to Cufa with an escort of a thousand horse; whilst Jemrcan and the rest of his force dismounted and expounded Islam to the prisoners, who made profession of the faith with heart and tongue; whereupon they released them and embraced them and rejoiced in them. Then Jemrcan made his troops rest a day and a night and set out with the dawn, intending for the city of Oman; whilst the thousand horse fared back to Cufa with the booty. When they reached the city, they went in to Gherib and told him what had passed, whereat he rejoiced and said to the Ghoul of the Mountain, 'Take horse and follow Jemrcan with twenty thousand men.' So Saadan and his sons mounted and set out for Oman with twenty thousand horse.

Night dcxlb.

Meanwhile, the remains of the defeated army reached Oman and went in to Julned, weeping and crying, 'Woe!' and 'Ruin!' whereat he was amazed and said to them, 'What hath befallen you?' So they told him what had happened and he said, 'Out on you! How many men were they?' 'O King,' answered they, 'there were twenty standards, under each a thousand men.' When Julned heard this, he said, 'May the sun pour no blessing on you! Out on you! Shall twenty thousand overcome you, and you seventy thousand horse and Jawamerd equal to three thousand in the open field!' Then, in the excess of his rage and mortification, he drew his sword and cried out to those who were present, saying, 'Fall on them!' So the courtiers drew their swords upon the fugitives and slew them to the last man and cast them to the dogs. Then Julned cried out to his son (whose name was Courejan and than whom there was no doughtier cavalier in the army of his father, for he was wont to undertake three thousand horse, single-handed), saying, 'Take a hundred thousand horse and go to Irak and lay it waste

altogether.' So Courejan and his host made haste to equip themselves and set out in battle array, with the prince at their head, glorying in himself and reciting the following verses:

I'm El Courejan, the first-born of renown! I vanquish the dwellers in desert and town.
How many a champion I've slain with my sword! Like an ox, to the earth I have stricken him down.
How many a host have I scattered abroad And their heads made like balls roll o'er desert and down!
Now for Irak I'm bound, for the enemies' land, Where my foes in the sea of their blood I will drown.
I will lead away Gherib in chains with his chiefs, So their fate to the wise for a warning be known!

They fared on twelve days' journey, till a great cloud of dust arose before them and covered the horizon and the country, and Courejan sent out scouts to reconnoitre, who returned and said to him, 'O King, this is the dust of the Muslims.' Whereat he was glad and said, 'Did ye count them?' And they answered, saying, 'We counted the standards, and they were twenty in number.' 'By my faith,' quoth the prince, 'I will not send one man-at-arms against them, but will go forth to them alone and strew their heads under the hoofs of the horses!'

Now this was the army of Jemrcan, who, espying the host of the infidels and seeing them as the swollen sea, called a halt; so his troops pitched the tents and set up the standards, calling upon the name of the All-wise Creator of light and darkness, Lord of all creatures, who seeth and is not seen, blessed and exalted be He! There is no god but He! The infidels also halted and pitched their tents, and Courejan said to them, 'Sleep upon your arms, for in the last watch of the night we will mount and trample yonder handful under our feet!' Now one of Jemrcan's spies was standing by and heard what Courejan purposed; so he returned and told his chief, who said to his men,

'Arm yourselves and as soon it is dark, bring me all the camels and mules and hang all the bells and bangles and rattles ye have about their necks.' And they had with them more than twenty thousand camels and mules.

So they waited till the infidels were asleep, when Jemrcan commanded them to mount, and they took horse, committing themselves to God and seeking aid of the Lord of the Worlds. Then said Jemrcan, 'Goad the mules and camels with the points of your spears and drive them to the infidels' camp.' They did as he bade and the beasts rushed upon the enemy's camp, whilst the bells and bangles and rattles jangled and the Muslims followed at their heels, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' till all the hills and mountains resounded with the name of the Most High God, to whom belong glory and majesty! The cattle, hearing this terrible din, took fright and rushed upon the tents and trampled the folk, as they lay asleep; whereupon the idolaters started up in confusion and snatching up their arms, fell upon one another with smiting, till the most part of them were slain.

Night dcxlvi.

When the day broke, they looked at each other and found no Muslims slain, but saw them all on horseback, armed; wherefore they knew that this was a trick that had been played them, and Courejan cried out to the remnant of his folk, saying, 'O sons of whores, what we had a mind to do with them, that have they done with us and their craft hath gotten the better of ours.' And they were about to charge, when, behold, a cloud of dust appeared and the wind smote it, so that it rose and hung vaulted in the air and there appeared beneath it the glint of helmets and gleam of hauberks and splendid warriors, armed with tempered swords and supple spears. When the infidels saw this, they held back from the battle and each army sent out scouts, to know the meaning of this dust, who returned with the news that it was an army of Muslims.

Now this was the host of the Ghoul of the Mountain, whom Gherib had despatched to Jemrcan's aid, and Saadan himself rode in their van. So the two hosts of the true believers joined company and rushing upon the infidels, like a flame of fire, plied them with the keen sword and the straight and quivering spear, whilst the day was darkened and eyes blinded for the much dust. The valiant stood fast and the coward fled and sought the deserts, whilst the blood flowed like a tide over the earth; nor did they cease from the battle till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then the Muslims drew apart from the infidels and returned to their tents, where they ate and slept, till the darkness fled and gave place to the smiling morn; when they prayed the morning-prayer and mounted to battle.

Now, when Courejan found the most part of his men wounded, for indeed two-thirds of their number had perished by sword and spear, he said to them. 'To-morrow, I will go forth into the open field and play the champion in the stead of war.' So, as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its light and shone, the two hosts mounted and unsheathed their swords and couched their brown lances and cried out lustily and drew out in order of battle. The first to open the chapter of war was Courejan, who cried out, saying, 'Let no weakling come out to me to-day!' Whereupon there ran at him a captain of the Benou Aamir and the two drove at each other awhile, like two rams butting. Presently Courejan seized the Muslim by his coat of arms and tearing him from his saddle, threw him to the ground; where the infidels laid hands on him and bound him and bore him off to their tents; whilst Courejan wheeled about and curvetted and offered battle, till another captain came out, whom also he took prisoner; nor did he leave to do thus till he had made prize of seven captains before midday. Then Jemrcan

gave such a cry, that the whole field resounded thereto and both armies heard it, and ran at Courejan with a heart on fire with anger, reciting the following verses:

Harkye, I'm Jemrcan, the champion stout and wight; The terror of my stroke is feared of every knight.
I take the strengths by storm and leave the fortress-walls To mourn the loss of those that held them in their might.
Wherefore, O Courejan, quit thou the erring path; Turn from the froward ways and tread the road of right;
Confess the one true God, who spread the heavens above, Who made the streams to flow and hills to stand upright;
For, if the slave embrace the true, the only faith, Hell's anguish shall he 'scape and win to heaven's delight.

When Courejan heard these words, he puffed and snorted and railed at the sun and the moon and drove at Jemrcan, repeating these verses:

I'm Courejan, the chief and champion of the age! Es Shera's[1] lions flee my shadow in affright!
I take the forts by storm and snare the beasts of prey, And all the horsemen fear to meet me in the fight.
Wherefore, O Jemrcan, if thou believe me not, Up to the middle field and try with me thy might!

Jemrcan met him with a stout heart and they hewed at each other with swords and thrust with spears, till the two hosts lamented for them and great was the clamour between them: nor did they leave fighting till the time of afternoon-prayer was passed and the day began to wane. Then Jemrcan drove at Courejan and smiting him on the breast with his mace, cast him to the ground, as he were the trunk of a palm-tree; and the Muslims bound him and haled him away with ropes like a camel.

When the idolaters saw their prince captive, a blind fury seized on them and they bore down upon the Muslims, thinking to rescue him; but the Muslim champions met them and left [many of] them prostrate on the earth,

[1] *Es Shera*, a mountainous tract in Arabia, infested with lions.

whilst the rest turned and sought safety in flight, with the sword clanking at their backs. The Muslims pursued them till they had scattered them over mountain and desert, when they returned to the spoil, good luck to it for a spoil! great store was there of horses and tents and so forth. Then Jemrcan went in to Courejan and expounded Islam to him, threatening him with death, except he embraced the faith; but he refused; so they cut off his head and sticking it on a spear, fared on towards Oman.

Meanwhile, the survivors of the routed host returned to Julned and made known to him the death of his son and the destruction of his army, whereupon he cast his crown to the earth and buffeting his face, till the blood spouted from his nostrils, fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself and cried to his Vizier, saying, 'Write letters to all my governors and bid them leave not a smiter with the sword nor a thruster with the spear nor a bender of the bow, but bring them all to me.' So he wrote letters and despatched them by runners to the governors, who levied their power and joined the King with an immense army, whose number was ninescore thousand men. Then they made ready tents and camels and swift horses and were about to depart, when up came Jemrcan and Saadan the Ghoul, with seventy thousand horse, as they were fierce lions, all clad in complete steel; which when Julned saw, he rejoiced and said, 'By the virtue of the light-giving Sun, I will not leave one of mine enemies alive, no, not one to carry the news, and I will lay waste the land of Irak, that I may take my wreak for my son, the havoc-making champion; nor shall my fire be quenched!'

Then he turned to Agib and said to him, 'O dog of Irak, it was thou that broughtest this calamity on us! But by the virtue of that which I worship, except I avenge me of mine enemy, I will put thee to death after the

foulest fashion!' When Agib heard this, he was sore troubled and blamed himself; but he waited till nightfall, when he took those who were left to him of his suite apart from the camp and said to them, 'O my kinsmen, know that Julned and I are sore dismayed at the coming of the Muslims, and I know that he will not avail to protect me from my brother nor from any other; so meseems we should do well to make our escape, whilst all men sleep, and flee to King Yaarub ben Kehtan, for that he hath more soldiers and is stronger of kingship.' They fell in with his proposal and he bade them kindle fires at the doors of their tents and set out under cover of the night. So they did his bidding and departing, by day-break were far away.

As soon as it was morning, the drums beat a point of war, and Julned mounted with two hundred and sixty thousand fighting-men, clad cap-a-pie in hauberks and cuirasses and strait-knit coats of mail, and drew out in order of battle. Then Jemrcan and Saadan rode out with forty thousand stalwart fighting-men, under each standard a thousand cavaliers, doughty champions, foremost in the fight. The two hosts drew out in battalia and bared their swords and couched their limber lances, for the drinking of the cup of death. The first to open the chapter of battle was Saadan, as he were a mountain of flint or a Marid of the Jinn. Then pricked out to him a champion of the infidels, and he slew him and casting him to the earth, cried out to his sons and servants, saying, 'Light the fire and roast me this dead man.' They did as he bade and brought him the roast, and he ate it and crunched the bones, whilst the infidels stood looking on from afar; and they cried out, saying, 'O light-giving Sun!' and were affrighted at Saadan.

Then Julned cried out to his men, saying, 'Slay me yonder foul beast!' Whereupon another captain of his host drove at the Ghoul; but he slew him, and he ceased

not to slay horseman after horseman, till he had made an end of thirty men. With this the vile infidels held back and feared to face him, saying, 'Who shall cope with Jinn and Ghouls?' But Julned cried out, saying, 'Let a hundred horse charge him and bring him to me, alive or dead.' So a hundred horse ran at Saadan with swords and spears, and he met them with a heart firmer than flint, proclaiming the unity of the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from another. Then he set on them, crying, 'God is Most Great!' and smote them with his sword and made their heads fly. In one onset he slew of them four-and-seventy and put the rest to flight.

Then Julned cried out to ten of his captains, having each a thousand men under his hand, and said to them, 'Shoot his horse with arrows, till it fall under him, and then lay hands on him.' So ten thousand horse drove at Saadan, who met them with a stout heart; and Jemrcan, seeing this, bore down upon the infidels with his Muslims, crying out, 'God is Most Great!' Before they could win to the Ghoul, the enemy had slain his horse and taken him prisoner; but they ceased not to charge the infidels, though they were amongst them as a white patch on a black bull, till the day grew dark [for dust] and eyes were blinded, and the sharp sword clanged, whilst the valiant stood firm and destruction overtook the faint-heart; nor did they stint from the mellay till the dark fell down, when they drew apart, after there had been slain of the infidels men without number. Night dcxlviii.

Then Jemrcan and his men returned to their tents, in great grief for Saadan, so that neither meat nor sleep was sweet to them, and they counted their host and found that less than a thousand of them had fallen. And Jemrcan said, 'O folk, to-morrow I will go forth into the lists and slay their champions and make prize of them and their families and ransom Saadan therewith, if it please the

Requiting King, whom no one thing distracteth from another!' Wherefore their hearts were comforted and they separated to their tents, rejoicing.

Meanwhile, Julned entered his pavilion and sitting down on his bed of estate, with his grandees about him, called for Saadan and said to him, 'O raging dog and least of the Arabs and carrier of firewood, who was it slew my son Courejan, the champion of the age, slayer of heroes and caster down of warriors?' Quoth the Ghoul, 'Jemrcan slew him, captain of the host of King Gherib, prince of cavaliers, and I roasted and ate him, for I was anhungred.' When Julned heard this, his eyes started from his head for rage and he bade his swordbearer strike off Saadan's head. So he came forward in that intent, but Saadan stretched himself mightily and bursting his bonds, snatched the sword from the headsman and cut off his head. Then he made at Julned; but he cast himself down from the throne and fled; whilst Saadan fell on the bystanders and slew twenty of the King's chief officers, and the rest fled. Therewith great was the crying in the camp of the infidels and the Ghoul sallied forth of the pavilion and falling upon the troops, smote them with the sword, till they opened and left a lane for him to pass; nor did he cease to press forward, cutting at them right and left, till he won free of the tents and made for the Muslim camp. As soon as he was gone, the infidels and their King returned to their tents and Julned said to them, 'O folk, by the virtue of the light-giving sun and by the darkness of the night and the light of the day and the wandering stars, I thought not to have escaped death this day; for, had I fallen into yonder fellow's hands, he had eaten me, as I were a grain of wheat or a barley-corn.' 'O King,' answered they, 'never saw we any do the like of this Ghoul.' And he said, 'To-morrow do ye all don your arms and mount and trample them under your horses' feet.'

Meanwhile the Muslims heard the shouts of the infidels and said to each other, 'Haply, some succour hath reached them;' but, as they stood wondering, up came Saadan. So they all rejoiced in him and gave him joy of his escape, and the gladdest of them all was Jemrcan, who said to them, 'To-morrow, I will show you my fashion and what behoveth the like of me, for, by the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will slay them on the foulest wise and smite them with the edge of the sword, till all who have understanding are confounded at them. But I mean to attack [both] the right and left wings; so, when ye see me drive at the King under the standards, do ye charge resolutely behind me, and with God is it to decree what shall betide!'

So the two hosts lay upon their arms till the day broke and the sun appeared to sight, when they mounted swiftlier than the twinkling of the eye. The raven of ill-omen croaked and the two hosts drew out in battalia and looked at each other with the evil eye. The first to open the chapter of war was Jemrcan, who wheeled and curvetted and offered battle; and Julned and his men were about to charge, when, behold, a cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the plains and obscured the day. Then the four winds smote it and it dispersed and there appeared beneath it cavaliers, black and white, and princely champions, with keen swords and piercing lances, and footmen who knew not fear, as they were lions. At this sight both armies left fighting and sent out scouts, who disappeared within the cloud of dust and returned after a while with the news that the approaching host was one of Muslims, under the command of King Gherib. When the Muslims heard of the coming of their King, they rejoiced and spurring out to meet him, dismounted and kissed the earth before him and saluted him, whilst he welcomed them and rejoiced in their safety. Then Night dcxlviii.

they escorted him to their camp and pitched pavilions for him and set up standards; and Gherib sat down on his couch of estate, with his grandees about him, and they related to him all that had befallen.

Meanwhile, the infidels sought for Agib and finding him not among them nor in their tents, told Julned of this, whereat his gorge rose and he bit his fingers, saying, 'By the light-giving sun, he is a perfidious dog and hath fled into the deserts with his crew of rascals! But nought save hard fighting will serve us to repel these enemies; so fortify your resolves and harden your hearts and beware of the Muslims.' And Gherib also said to the Muslims, 'Fortify your hearts and strengthen your courage and seek aid of your Lord, beseeching Him to vouchsafe you the victory over your enemies.' 'O King,' answered they, 'thou shalt see what we will do in the field and the stead of war.'

So the two hosts slept till the day arose with its light and the sun shone out upon hill and plain, when Gherib prayed two inclinations, after the rite of Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace) and wrote a letter, which he despatched by his brother Sehim to the King of the infidels. When Sehim reached the enemies' camp, the guards asked him what he wanted and he replied, 'I want your ruler.' Quoth they, 'Wait till we consult him;' and he waited, whilst they went in to their King and told him of the coming of a messenger, and he said, 'Bring him to me.' So they brought Sehim before Julned, who said to him, 'Who hath sent thee?' Quoth he, 'King Gherib sends me, whom God hath made ruler over the Arabs and Persians; take his letter and return an answer thereto.' So Julned took the letter and opening it, read as follows: 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Immemorial Lord, the Supreme, the One, the All-knowing, the Lord of Noah and Salih and Houd and Abraham and of all things!

Peace be on him who followeth in the way of righteousness and feareth the issues of frowardness, who obeyeth the Almighty King and preferreth the next world to the present! O Julned, none is worthy of worship save God alone, the One, the Victorious, Creator of night and day and the revolving sphere, who sendeth the holy prophets and maketh the streams to flow and the trees to grow, who vaulted the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet and feedeth the birds in their nests and the wild beasts in the deserts; for He is the All-powerful God, the Forgiving, the Long-suffering, the Protector, whom no eye comprehendeth and who maketh the night to return upon the day, He who sent down the apostles and the Scripture. Know, O Julned, that there is no faith but the faith of Abraham the Friend; so do thou embrace the faith of submission and send me the dog Agib, that I may take my wreak of my father and mother. So shalt thou be saved from the sharp sword in this world and from the fiery torment in the world to come. But, if thou refuse, look for destruction and the wasting of thy realm and the cutting off of thy traces.'

When Julned had read this letter, he said to Sehim, 'Tell thy lord that Agib hath fled, he and his people, and I know not whither he is gone; but, as for Julned, he will not forswear his faith, and to-morrow, there shall be battle between us and the Sun shall give us the victory.' So Sehim returned to his brother with this answer and on the morrow the Muslims donned their arms and bestrode their stout horses, calling aloud on the name of the All-conquering King, Creator of bodies and souls, and magnifying Him. The drums beat to battle, till the earth trembled, and all the lordly warriors and doughty champions sought the field.

The first to open the chapter of battle was Jemrcân, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and played with sword and javelin, till the understanding were amazed;

after which he cried out, saying, 'Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard nor weakling come out to me to-day! I am he who slew Courejan ben Julned; who will come forth to avenge him?' When Julned heard the name of his son, he cried out to his men, saying, 'O sons of whores, bring me yonder horseman who slew my son, that I may eat his flesh and drink his blood.' So a hundred fighting men ran at Jemrcan; but he slew the most part of them and put their chief to flight; which when Julned saw, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge upon him, all at once.' So the two hosts drove at one another and met in the mid-field, like two seas clashing together. The Yemen sword and spear wrought havoc and breasts and bellies were cloven, whilst the two armies saw the angel of death face to face and the dust of the battle rose up to the confines of the sky. Ears were deaf and tongues mute and death came on from every side, whilst the valiant stood fast and the faint-heart turned to flee; and they ceased not from the battle till ended day, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart and returned, each to its tents.

Night dcxlix. Then Gherib sat down on the throne of his kingship and the place of his dominion, whilst his chief officers ranged themselves about him, and said, 'I am sore troubled for the flight of the dog Agib and I know not whither he is gone. Except I overtake him and take my wreak of him, I shall die of despite.' Whereupon Sehim came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, I will go to the army of the infidels and find out what is come of the perfidious dog Agib.' 'Go,' answered Gherib, 'and learn the truth regarding the hog.' So Sehim disguised himself in the habit of the infidels and became as he were of them; then, making for the enemy's camp, he found them all asleep, drunken with war and battle, and only the guards awake. Presently he came to the King's pavilion,

where he found Julned asleep and unattended; so he made him smell to powdered henbane, and he became as one dead. Then Sehim went out and took a mule and wrapping the King in the coverlet of his bed, laid him on her back; after which he threw a mat over him and led the mule to the Muslim camp.

When he came to Gherib's pavilion and would have entered, the guards knew him not and forbade him entrance, saying, 'Who art thou?' He laughed and uncovered his face, and they knew him and admitted him. When Gherib saw him, he said, 'What hast thou there, O Sehim?' 'O King,' answered he, 'this is Julned ben Kerker.' Then he uncovered him, and Gherib knew him and said, 'Arouse him, O Sehim.' So he made him smell to vinegar and frankincense; and he cast the henbane from his nostrils and opening his eyes, found himself among the Muslims; whereupon, 'What is this foul dream?' quoth he and closing his eyes again, would have slept; but Sehim dealt him a buffet, saying, 'Open thine eyes, O accursed one!' So he opened them and said, 'Where am I?' Quoth Sehim, 'Thou art in the presence of Gherib ben Kundemir, King of Irak.' When Julned heard this, he said, 'O King, I am at thy mercy. Know that I am not at fault, but that he who made us come forth to fight thee was thy brother, who embroiled us with thee and fled.' 'Knowest thou whither he is gone?' asked Gherib. 'No, by the light-giving sun,' replied Julned, 'I know not.'

Then Gherib bade lay him in bonds and set guards over him, whilst each captain returned to his own tent, and amongst the rest Jemrcan, who said to his men, 'O sons of my uncle, I purpose this night to do a deed wherewith I may whiten my face with King Gherib.' 'Do what pleases thee,' answered they; 'we hearken and obey thy commandment.' Quoth he, 'Arm yourselves and disperse about the infidels' camp, muffling your steps, so that the very ants

shall not be ware of you; and when you hear me magnify God, do ye the like and cry out, saying, "God is Most Great!" and hold back and make for the gate of the city; and we seek aid from God the Most High.' So the folk armed themselves cap-a-pie and waited till midnight, when they dispersed about the enemy's camp and waited till Jemrcan smote his target with his sword and shouted, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon they all cried out the like, till valley and mountain and hill and sands and ruins rang again with the noise. The infidels awoke in dismay and fell upon one another, and the sword went round amongst them; but the Muslims held aloof and made for the gate of the city, where they slew the warders and entering, made themselves masters of the town, with all that was therein of treasure and women and children.

Meanwhile, Gherib, hearing the noise and clamour of 'God is Most Great!' mounted with all his troops and sent Sehim on in advance. When the latter came near the field of battle, he saw that Jemrcan had fallen upon the infidels with the Benou Aamir by night and made them drink the cup of death. So he returned and told his brother, who called down blessings on Jemrcan. And the infidels ceased not to smite each other mightily with the sharp sword, till the day rose and lighted up the land, when Gherib cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge, O ye noble, and win the favour of the All-knowing King!' So the true believers fell upon the idolaters and plied them with the keen sword and the quivering spear, till they sought to take refuge in the city; but Jemrcan came forth upon them with his tribesmen. So they hemmed them in, as between two mountain-ranges, and slew an innumerable host of them, and the rest fled into the deserts; nor did the Muslims give over pursuing them with the sword, till they had scattered them abroad in the plains and stony wastes. Then they returned to the city of Oman and

Night dcl.

Gherib entered the palace of the King and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, with his lords and officers on his either hand, sent for Julned. They brought him in haste and Gherib expounded to him Islam; but he refused to embrace the faith; wherefore Gherib let crucify him on the gate of the city, and they shot at him with arrows, till he was like unto a hedgehog. Then Gherib bestowed a dress of honour upon Jemrcan and said to him, 'Thou shalt be lord and ruler over this city, and thine be it to loose and to bind therein, for it was thou didst conquer it with thy sword and thy men.' And Jemrcan kissed the King's feet and wished him abiding victory and glory and fair fortune. Moreover, Gherib opened Julned's treasuries and saw what was therein and gave largesse to his captains and standard-bearers and fighting-men, yea, even to the women and children; and thus did he ten days long.

After this, one night he dreamt an ill dream and awoke, troubled and affrighted. So he aroused his brother Sehim and said to him, 'I dreamt that we were in a wide valley, when there swooped down on us two birds of prey, with legs like lances, never in my life saw I greater than they, and we were in fear of them.' 'O King,' answered Sehim, 'this portends some great enemy; be on thy guard, therefore, against him.' Gherib slept not the rest of the night and when the day broke, he called for his courser and mounted. Quoth Sehim, 'Whither goest thou, my brother?' and Gherib answered, saying, 'I am heavy at heart this morning; so I mean to ride abroad ten days and lighten my breast.' Said Sehim, 'Take with thee a thousand men;' but Gherib replied, 'I will not go forth but with thee alone.' So the two brothers mounted and seeking the open country, fared on from valley to valley and from meadow to meadow, till they came to a valley abounding in sweet-smelling flowers and streams and trees laden with

all manner eatable fruits, two of each kind. On the branches were birds warbling their various songs; the mocking-bird trilled out her sweet notes and the turtle filled the place with her voice. There sang the nightingale, whose chant arouses the sleeper, and the merle with its note like the human voice and the cushat and the ring-dove, whilst the popinjay answered them with its fluent tongue.

The valley pleased them and they ate of its fruits and drank of its waters, after which they sat under the shadow of the trees, till drowsiness overcame them and they slept, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! As they lay asleep, two fierce Marids swooped down on them and taking each one on his shoulders, flew up with them into the air, till they were above the clouds. Presently, Gherib and Sehim awoke and found themselves betwixt heaven and earth; so they looked at those who bore them and saw that they were two Marids, each as big as a great palm-tree, with hair like horses' tails and claws like lions' claws; the head of the one was as that of a dog and that of the other as that of an ape. When they saw this, they exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

Now the reason of this was that a certain king of the kings of the Jinn, Muraash by name, had a son called Saaïc, who loved a damsel of the Jinn, named Nejmeh; and the twain used to foregather in the valley, in the guise of birds. Gherib and Sehim saw them thus and deeming them birds, shot at them with arrows and wounded Saaïc, whose blood flowed. Nejmeh mourned over him, then, fearing lest the like should befall herself, caught up her lover and flew with him to his father's palace, where she cast him down at the gate. The warders bore him in and laid him before the King, who, seeing the arrow sticking in his side, exclaimed, 'Alas,

my son! Who hath done with thee this thing, that I may lay waste his abiding-place and hasten his destruction, though he were the greatest of the kings of the Jinn?' Thereupon Saaïc opened his eyes and said, 'O my father, it was a mortal that slew me in the Valley of Springs.' Hardly had he made an end of these words, when his soul departed; whereupon his father buffeted his face, till the blood streamed from his mouth, and cried out to two Marids, saying, 'Go to the Valley of Springs and bring me all who are therein.' So they betook themselves to the valley in question, where they found Gherib and Sehim asleep and snatching them up, carried them to their King, whom they saw seated on the throne of his kingship, as he were a huge mountain, with four heads on his body, the first that of a lion, the second that of an elephant, the third that of a panther and the fourth that of a lynx. The Marids set them down before Muraash and said to him, 'These are they whom we found in the Valley of Springs.'

Night Deli.

Muraash looked at them with wrathful eyes and puffed and snorted and blew sparks from his nostrils, so that all who stood by feared him. Then said he, 'O dogs of mankind, ye have slain my son and kindled fire in my heart.' 'Who is thy son,' asked Gherib, 'and who hath seen him?' Quoth Muraash, 'Were ye not in the Valley of Springs and did ye not see my son there, in the guise of a bird, and did ye not shoot at him with arrows, that he died?' 'I know not who slew him,' replied Gherib; 'and by the virtue of the Great God, the One, the Immemorial, who knoweth all things, and of Abraham the Friend, we saw no bird, neither slew we bird nor beast!'

Now Muraash worshipped the Fire, not the All-powerful King; so, when he heard Gherib swear by God and His greatness and by Abraham the Friend, he knew that he was a Muslim and cried out to his people, saying, 'Bring

me my mistress.'[1] Accordingly they brought a brasier of gold and setting it before him, kindled therein fire and cast on drugs, whereupon there arose therefrom green and blue and yellow flames and the King and all who were present prostrated themselves before the brasier, whilst Gherib and Sehim ceased not to magnify God and attest His greatness and omnipotence. Presently, Muraash raised his head and seeing the two princes standing, said to them, 'O dogs, why do ye not prostrate yourselves?' 'Out on thee, O accursed one!' replied Gherib. 'Prostration befits not, save to the Worshipful King, who bringeth forth all creatures into being from nothingness and maketh water to well from the barren rock, Him who incline the heart of the father unto his new-born child and who may not be described as sitting or standing, the God of Noah and Salih and Houd and Abraham the Friend, who created Paradise and Hell-fire and trees and fruit, for He is God, the One, the All-powerful.'

When Muraash heard this, his eyes started from his head and he cried out to his guards, saying, 'Bind these two dogs and sacrifice them to my mistress.' So they bound them and were about to cast them into the fire, when, behold, one of the merlons of the parapet fell down upon the brasier and broke it and did out the fire, which became ashes flying in the air. Then said Gherib, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny Him and worship the Fire, not the Almighty King!' Quoth Muraash, 'Thou art a sorcerer and hast bewitched my mistress, so that this thing hath befallen her.' 'O madman,' answered Gherib, 'if the fire had soul or movement, it would ward off from itself that which doth it hurt.' When Muraash heard this, he roared and bellowed and reviled the Fire, saying, 'By my faith, I will not kill you save by the fire!'

[1] Fire (*nâr*) is feminine in Arabic.

Then he cast them into prison and calling a hundred Marids, bade them bring much firewood and set fire thereto. So they brought great plenty of wood and made a huge fire, which flamed up mightily till the morning, when Muraash mounted an elephant, bearing on its back a throne of gold set with jewels, and the tribes of the Jinn gathered about him, in their various kinds. Then they brought in Gherib and Sehim, who, seeing the flaming of the fire, sought help of the One God, the All-conquering Creator of night and day, Him who is mickle of might, whom no sight comprehendeth, but who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-knowing; and they ceased not to solicit Him, till, behold, a cloud arose from West to East and pouring down showers of rain, like the swollen sea, quenched the fire.

When the King saw this, he was affrighted, he and his troops, and entered the palace, where he turned to his Vizier and grandees and said to them, 'How say ye of these two men?' 'O King,' answered they, 'were they not in the right, this thing had not befallen the fire; wherefore we say that they speak sooth.' 'Indeed,' rejoined Muraash, 'the truth hath been shown forth to me, ay, and the manifest way, and I am certified that the worship of the fire is false; for, were it [god and] mistress, it had warded off from itself the rain that quenched it and the stone that broke its brasier and beat it into ashes. Wherefore I believe in Him Who created the fire and the light and the shade and the heat. And ye, what say ye?' 'O King,' answered they, 'we also hear and follow and obey.'

So the King called for Gherib and Sehim and embraced them and kissed them between the eyes; whereupon the bystanders all crowded to kiss their hands and heads. Then Muraash sat down on the throne of his kingship and seating Gherib on his right and Sehim on his left hand, said to them, 'O mortals, what shall we say, that we

Night dclii.

may become Muslims?' 'Say,' answered Gherib, '"There is no god but God, and Abraham is the Friend of God!"' So the King and his folk professed Islam with heart and tongue, and Gherib abode with them awhile, teaching them the ritual of prayer. But presently he called to mind his people and sighed, whereupon quoth Muraash, 'Verily, trouble is past and gone and joy and gladness are come.' 'O King,' said Gherib, 'I have many enemies and I fear for my people from them.' Then he related to him his history from first to last, and Muraash said, 'O King of men, I will send one who shall bring thee news of thy people, for I will not let thee go till I have had my fill of gazing on thy face.' Then he called two stout Marids, by name Kailjan and Courjan, and bade them repair to Yemen and bring him news of Gherib's army. They replied, 'We hear and obey,' and departed.

Meanwhile, when the captains of the Muslims arose in the morning and rode to Gherib's palace, to do their service to him, the servants told them that the King had ridden forth with his brother at point of day. So they made for the valleys and mountains and followed the track of the princes, till they came to the Valley of Springs, where they found their arms cast down and their horses grazing and said, 'By the glory of Abraham the Friend, the King is missing from this place!' Then they dispersed and sought in the valley and the mountains three days, but found no trace of them; whereupon they raised lamentations and despatched couriers to all the cities and strengths and fortresses, to seek news of their King. Accordingly, the couriers dispersed hither and thither and sought everywhere for Gherib, but found no trace of him.

Now, when the news came to Agib by his spies that his brother was missing, he rejoiced and going in to King Yaarub ben Kehtan, sought aid of him. He granted him the help he sought and gave him two hundred thousand

Amalekites, with whom he set out for Yemen and sat down before the city of Oman. Jemrcan and Saadan sallied forth and gave him battle, and there were slain of the Muslims much people, wherefore the true believers retired into the city and shut the gates and manned the walls. At this juncture the two Marids arrived and seeing the Muslims beleaguered, waited till the night, when they fell upon the infidels and plied them with sharp swords of the swords of the Jinn, each twelve cubits long, if a man smote therewith a rock, he would cleave it in sunder. They attacked the idolaters, shouting, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny the faith of Abraham the Friend!' whilst fire issued from their mouths and nostrils, and they made great slaughter amongst them. Thereupon the infidels ran out of their tents and seeing these strange things, were confounded and their flesh shuddered and their reason fled. So they snatched up their arms and fell on each other, whilst the Marids shore off their heads, as a reaper cuts grain, crying, 'God is Most Great! We are the henchmen of King Gherib, the friend of Muraash, King of the Jinn!' The sword ceased not to go round amongst them till the night was half spent, when the misbelievers, imagining that the mountains were all Afrits, loaded their tents and treasure and baggage upon camels and made off; and the first to fly was Agib. The Marids ceased not from the pursuit, till they had driven them far away into the hills and deserts; and but fifty thousand infidels of two hundred thousand escaped with their lives and made for their own land, wounded and discomfited. Night dcliii.

Meanwhile, the Muslims gathered together, marvelling at this that had betided the infidels and fearing the tribesmen of the Jinn; but presently the latter returned and said to them, 'O host of the Muslims, your lord King Gherib and his brother Sehim salute you; they are the guests of

Muraash, King of the Jinn, and will be with you anon.' When Gherib's men knew that he was safe and well, they rejoiced greatly and said to the Marids, 'May God rejoice you with good news, O noble spirits!' So Courjan and Kailjan returned to Muraash and Gherib and acquainted them with that which had happened, whereat Gherib's heart was set at ease and he said, 'May God abundantly requite you!'

Then said King Muraash, 'O my brother, I have a mind to show thee our country and the city of Japhet son of Noah, on whom be peace!' 'O King,' replied Gherib, 'do what seemeth good to thee.' So he called for horses and mounting, he and Gherib and Sehim, set out with a thousand Marids, as they were a piece of a mountain cut endlong. They fared on, diverting themselves with the sight of valleys and mountains, till they came to the city of Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace,) where the townsfolk all, great and small, came forth to meet King Muraash and brought them into the city in great state. Then Muraash went up to the palace of Japhet son of Noah and sat down on the throne of his kingship, which was of alabaster, ten stages high, hung with all manner coloured silks and trellised with wands of gold. The people of the city stood before him and he said to them, 'O descendants of Japhet, what did your fathers and grandfathers worship?' Quoth they, 'We found them worshipping the fire and followed their example, as thou well knowest.' 'O folk,' rejoined Muraash, 'it hath been manifested to us that the fire is but one of the creatures of God the Most High, Creator of all things; and when we knew this, we submitted ourselves to God, the One, the All-powerful Maker of night and day and the revolving sphere, whom no sight comprehendeth, but who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-wise. So do ye likewise, and ye shall be saved from the wrath

of the Almighty and from the fiery torment in the world to come.' And they embraced Islam with heart and tongue.

Then Muraash took Gherib by the hand and showed him the palace and its ordinance and all the marvels it contained, till they came to the armoury, wherein were the arms of Japhet son of Noah. Here Gherib saw a sword hanging to a peg of gold and said, 'O King, whose sword is that?' Quoth Muraash, 'It is the sword of Japhet son of Noah, wherewith he was wont to do battle against men and Jinn. The sage Jerdoum forged it and graved on its back names of might. It is named El Mahic,[1] for that it never descends upon a man, but it annihilates him, nor upon a genie, but it crushes him; and if one smote therewith a mountain, it would overthrow it.' When Gherib heard tell of the virtues of the sword, he said, 'I desire to look on this sword;' and Muraash said, 'As thou wilt.' So Gherib put out his hand and taking the sword, drew it from its sheath; whereupon it flashed and death crept and glittered on its edge; and it was twelve spans long and three broad. Now Gherib wished to take it, and Muraash said, 'If thou canst wield it, take it.' 'It is well,' answered Gherib, and took it up, and it was in his hand as a staff; wherefore all who were present, men and Jinn, marvelled and said, 'Well done, O prince of cavaliers!' Then said Muraash, 'Lay thy hand on this treasure, that the Kings of the earth sigh for in vain, and mount, that I may show thee the city.'

Then they took horse and rode forth the palace, with Jinn and men attending them on foot, and passed through the streets and thoroughfares of the town, threading their way through ranks of palaces and deserted mansions and gilded doorways, till they issued from the gates and entered

Night dclix.

[1] The Destroyer.

gardens full of fruit-laden trees and running waters and birds speaking and celebrating the praises of Him to whom belong power and eternity; nor did they cease to take their pleasance in the land till nightfall, when they returned to the palace of Japhet son of Noah and they brought them the table of food. So they ate and Gherib turned to the King of the Jinn and said to him, 'O King, I would fain return to my people and my troops; for I know not their plight after me.' 'By Allah, O my brother,' answered Muraash, 'I will not part with thee for a full month, till I have had my fill of thy sight.'

Gherib could not say him nay, so he abode with him in the city of Japhet, eating and drinking and making merry, till the month was up, when Muraash clad him and Sehim in dresses of honour of gold-inwoven silk and set on Gherib's head a crown jewelled with pearls and diamonds of inestimable value. Moreover, he gave him great store of presents of emeralds and balass rubies and diamonds and other jewels and ingots of gold and silver and ambergris and musk and brocaded silks and other rarities and things of price. All these he made up into loads for him and calling five hundred Marids, said to them, 'Make ready to set out on the morrow, that we may bring King Gherib and Sehim back to their own country.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So they passed the night in the city, purposing to depart on the morrow, but, next morning, as they were about to set forth, they espied a great host advancing upon the city, with horses neighing and drums beating and trumpets sounding, to the number of threescore and ten thousand Marids, flying and diving, under a king called Bercan, and the earth was filled with them.

Now this Bercan was lord of the City of Cornelian and the Castle of Gold and under his rule were five strongholds, in each five hundred thousand Marids; and he and his

people worshipped the fire, not the Omnipotent King. He was the son of Muraash's father's brother and the cause of his coming was on this wise. It chanced that there was among the subjects of King Muraash a misbelieving Marid, who professed Islam hypocritically, and he stole away from his people and made for the Valley of Cornelian, where he went in to King Bercan and kissing the earth before him, wished him abiding glory and fair fortune. Then he told him of Muraash's conversion to Islam, and Bercan said, 'How came he to forsake his faith?' So the rebel told him what had passed and Bercan snorted and puffed and railed at the sun and the moon and the sparkling fire, saying, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will surely slay my cousin and his people and this mortal, nor will I leave one of them on life!' Then he cried out to the tribes of the Jinn and choosing of them seventy thousand Marids, set out and fared on till he came to the city of Japhet and encamped before its gates. When Muraash saw this, he despatched a Marid to learn what the stranger host wanted, bidding him return in haste. So the messenger repaired to Bercan's camp, where the Marids hastened to meet him and said to him, 'Who art thou?' Quoth he, 'I bear a message from King Muraash;' whereupon they carried him in to Bercan, before whom he prostrated himself, saying, 'O my lord, my master hath sent me to thee, to know what brings thee hither.' 'Return to thy lord,' replied Bercan, 'and say to him, "This is thy cousin Bercan, who is come to salute thee."' So the messenger returned and told Muraash, who said to Gherib, 'Abide here whilst I go and salute my cousin and return to thee.' Then he mounted and rode to Bercan's camp. Night 61b.

Now this was a trick of Bercan, to bring Muraash out and seize upon him, and he said to his Marids, who were about him, 'When ye see me embrace my cousin, lay hold of him and bind his hands behind him.' And they

answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So, when Muraash came up and entered Bercan's pavilion, the latter rose to him and embraced him, whereupon the Jinn fell upon Muraash and seized him and bound him. He looked at Bercan and said, 'What manner of thing is this?' Quoth Bercan, 'O dog of the Jinn, wilt thou leave the faith of thy fathers and grandfathers and enter a faith thou knowest not?' 'O son of my uncle,' rejoined Muraash, 'indeed I have found the faith of Abraham the Friend to be the true faith and all other than it vain.' 'And who told thee of this?' asked Bercan. 'Gherib, King of Irak,' answered Muraash, 'whom I hold in the highest honour.' 'By the fire and the light and the shade and the heat,' cried Bercan, 'I will slay both thee and him!' And he cast him into prison.

Now, when Muraash's henchman saw what had befallen his lord, he fled back to the city and told the King's men, who cried out and mounted. Quoth Gherib, 'What is to do?' And they told him what had passed, whereupon he cried out to Sehim, saying, 'Saddle me one of the chargers that King Muraash gave me.' 'O my brother,' said Sehim, 'wilt thou do battle with the Jinn?' 'Yes,' answered Gherib; 'I will fight them with the sword of Japhet son of Noah, seeking help of the God of Abraham the Friend, (on whom be peace,) for He is Lord and Creator of all things.' So Sehim saddled him a sorrel horse of the horses of the Jinn, as he were a castle, and he armed and mounting, rode out with the tribes of the Jinn, armed cap-a-pie. Then Bercan and his host mounted also and the two hosts drew out in battalia in face of one another. The first to open the chapter of war was Gherib, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and drew the enchanted sword, whence issued a glittering light, that dazzled the eyes of all the Jinn and struck terror to their hearts. Then he played with the sword, till their wits were

amazed, and cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! I am Gherib King of Irak. There is no faith save the faith of Abraham the Friend!'

When Bercan heard Gherib's words, he said, 'This is he who seduced my cousin from his faith; so, by the virtue of my faith, I will not sit down on my throne till I have cut off the head of this Gherib and made an end of his life and forced my cousin and his people back to their faith: and whoso baulketh me, I will destroy him.' Then he mounted a paper-white elephant, as he were a tower plastered with gypsum, and goaded him with a pike of steel, whereupon the elephant trumpeted and made for the middle of the field. When Bercan drew near Gherib, he cried out to him, saying, 'O dog of mankind, what made thee come into our land, to debauch my cousin and his people and pervert them from one faith to another? Know that this day is the last of thy worldly days.' And Gherib answered, saying, 'Avaunt, O vilest of the Jinn!' Therewith Bercan drew a javelin and poising it in his hand, cast it at Gherib; but it missed him. So he threw a second javelin at him; but Gherib caught it in mid-air and hurled it at the elephant. It smote him on the flank and came out on the other side, whereupon the beast fell down dead and Bercan was cast to the ground, like a great palm-tree. Before he could stir, Gherib smote him with the sword of Japhet flatlings on the nape of the neck, and he fell down in a swoon; whereupon the Marids swooped down on him and bound him.

When Bercan's people saw their king a prisoner, they drove at the others, seeking to rescue him, but Gherib and the true-believing Jinn fell upon them and bravo for Gherib! indeed that day he pleased God who answereth prayer and slaked his vengeance with the enchanted sword! Whomsoever he smote, he clove him in sunder and before his soul could depart, he became a heap of ashes in the

fire; whilst the two hosts of the Jinn cast flames of fire at one another, till the battle-field was wrapped in smoke. And Gherib tourneyed right and left among the infidels and they gave way before him, till he came to King Bercan's pavilion, with Kailjan and Courjan on his either hand, and cried out to them, saying, 'Loose your lord!' So they unbound Muraash and broke his fetters and he said to them, 'Bring me my arms and my winged horse.' Now he had two flying horses, one of which he gave to Gherib and the other he mounted himself, after he had donned his battle-harness. Then he and Gherib fell upon the enemy, flying through the air on their winged horses, and the true-believing Jinn followed them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' till the earth and hills and valleys and mountains answered them. The infidels fled before them and they returned, after having slain more than thirty thousand Marids and Satans, to the city of Japhet, where the two kings sat down on their beds of estate and sought for Bercan, but found him not; for, whilst they were diverted from him by stress of battle, an Afrit of his servants made his way to him and loosing him, carried him to his folk, of whom he found part slain and the rest in full flight. So he flew up with the King into the air and set him down in the City of Cornelian and Castle of Gold, where Bercan seated himself on the throne of his kingship. Presently, those of his people who had escaped from the battle came in to him and gave him joy of his safety; and he said, 'O folk, where is safety? My army is slain and they took me prisoner and have rent in pieces my repute among the tribes of the Jinn.' 'O King,' answered they, 'it is ever thus that kings still smite and are smitten.' Quoth he, 'Needs must I take my revenge and wipe out my reproach, else shall I be for ever dishonoured among the tribes of the Jinn.' Then he wrote letters to the governors of his fortresses, who came to him with three hundred and

Night Delvi.

twenty thousand fierce Marids and Satans; and he bade them make ready to set out in three days' time.

Meanwhile, when Muraash discovered Bercan's escape, it was grievous to him and he said, 'Had we set a hundred Marids to guard him, he had not fled; but whither shall he go from us?' Then said he to Gherib, 'Know, O my brother, that Bercan is perfidious and will never rest from avenging himself on us, but will assuredly assemble his clans and return upon us; wherefore I am minded to forestall him and fall on him, on the heels of his defeat, whilst he is yet weak by reason thereof.' 'This is well seen,' replied Gherib; and Muraash said, 'O my brother, let the Marids bear thee back to thine own country and leave me to fight the battles of the Faith against the infidels, that I may be lightened of the burden of my sins.' 'By the virtue of the Clement, the Bountiful, the Protector,' answered Gherib, 'I will not go hence till I do to death all the misbelieving Jinn and God hasten their souls to the fire and evil shall be the abiding-place [to which they go;] and none shall be saved but those who worship God the One, the Victorious! But do thou send Sehim back to the city of Oman, so haply he may be healed of his sickness.' For Sehim was sick. So Muraash bade the Marids take up Sehim and the treasures and bear them to the city of Oman; and they took them and made for the land of men.

Then Muraash wrote letters to all his governors and captains of fortresses and they came to him with eightscore thousand men. So they made them ready and departed for the City of Cornelian. In one day, they marched a year's journey and halted in a valley, where they encamped and passed the night. Next morning, as they were about to set forth, the vanguard of Bercan's army appeared, whereupon the Jinn cried out and the two hosts met and fell upon each other in that valley, that the earth trembled with the shock. Then there befell a sore

strife and the battle swayed to and fro with a mighty clamour. Jest gave place to earnest and there was an end of parley, whilst long lives were cut short and trouble and confusion befell the unbelievers; for Gherib charged them, proclaiming the Unity of God, the Worshipful, the Exalted, and shore through necks and made heads roll in the dust; nor did the dark betide before nigh seventy thousand of the infidels were slain, and of the true believers over ten thousand Marids had fallen. Then the drums beat the retreat, and the two hosts drew apart. So Gherib and Muraash returned to their tents, after they had wiped their arms, and the evening meal being set before them, they ate and gave each other joy of their safety. As for Bercan, he returned to his tent, grieving for the slaughter of his champions, and said to his officers, 'If we abide here and do battle thus with them, we shall be cut off to the last man in three days' time.' Quoth they, 'And how shall we do, O King?' 'We will fall upon them under cover of the night,' said Bercan, 'whilst they sleep, and not one of them shall be left to tell the tale. So take your arms and when I give the word of command, fall on your enemies as one man.'

Night dclbii.

Now there was amongst them a Marid named Jendel, whose heart inclined to Islam; so, when he heard the infidels' plot, he stole away from them and going in to King Muraash and King Gherib, told them what Bercan had devised; whereupon Muraash turned to Gherib and said to him, 'O my brother, what shall we do?' Quoth Gherib, 'To-night we will fall upon the infidels and chase them into the mountains and deserts, if it be the will of the Omnipotent King.' Then he summoned the captains of the Jinn and said to them, 'Arm yourselves, you and your men, and as soon as it is dark, steal out of your tents on foot and hide among the mountains; and when ye see the enemy engaged among the tents, do ye fall upon them

from all quarters. Strengthen your hearts and put your faith in your Lord, and ye shall conquer; and behold, I am with you!' So, as soon as it was dark, the infidels attacked the camp, invoking the aid of the light and the fire; but, when they came among the tents, the Muslims fell upon them, calling for help on the Lord of the Worlds and saying, 'O Most Merciful of those that show mercy, O Creator of all created things!' till they left them like mown grass, cut down and dead. By the morning the most part of the unbelievers were bodies without souls and the rest made for the marshes and deserts, whilst Gherib and Muraash returned in triumph and making prize of the enemy's baggage, rested till the morrow, when they set out for the City of Cornelian.

As for Bercan, when he saw that the battle had turned against him and that the most part of his men were slain, he fled with the remnant of his folk to his capital city, where he entered his palace and assembling his tribes, said to them, 'O folk, whoso hath aught of price, let him take it and follow me to the Mountain Caf, to the Blue King, lord of the Parti-coloured Palace; for he it is who shall avenge us.' So they took their women and children and goods and made for the Mountain Caf. Presently Muraash and Gherib arrived at the City of Cornelian and found the gates open and none left to give them news; whereupon they entered and Muraash took Gherib, that he might show him the city, whose walls were builded of emeralds and its gates of red cornelian, with nails of silver, and the roofs of its houses and mansions ceiled with aloes and sandal-wood. So they took their pleasance in its streets and alleys, till they came to the palace of gold and entering, passed through seven vestibules, till they came to a building, whose walls were of royal balass rubies and its pavement of emerald and jacinth. The two kings were astounded at the goodliness of the place and

fared on from vestibule to vestibule, till they came to the inner court of the palace, wherein they saw four estrades, each different from the others, and in the midst a fountain of red gold, compassed about with golden lions, from whose mouths issued water. The estrade at the upper end was hung and carpeted with brocaded silks of various colours and thereon stood two thrones of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels. So Muraash and Gherib sat down on the thrones and held high state in the palace of gold. Then said Gherib to Muraash, 'What thinkest thou to do?' And Muraash answered, saying, 'O King of men, I have despatched a hundred horse to learn where Bercan is, that we may pursue him.'

Night delviii.

Then they abode three days in the palace, till the scouts returned with the news that Bercan had fled to the Mountain Caf and thrown himself on the protection of the Blue King; whereupon quoth Muraash to Gherib, 'What sayst thou, O my brother?' and Gherib answered, saying, 'Except we attack them, they will attack us.' So they made ready for departure and after three days, they were about to set out with their troops, when the Marids, who had carried Sehim back to Oman, returned and kissed the earth before Gherib. He questioned them of his people and they answered, saying, 'After the last battle, thy brother Agib fled to the King of Hind and sought his protection. The King granted his prayer and writing letters to all his governors, levied an army as it were the swollen sea, having neither beginning nor end, with which he purposes to invade Irak and lay it waste.' When Gherib heard this, he said, 'Perish the unbelievers! Verily, God the Most High shall give the victory to Islam and I will show them cutting and thrusting.' 'O King of men,' said Muraash, 'by the virtue of the Mighty Name, I must needs go with thee to thy kingdom and destroy thine enemies and bring thee to thy desire.' Gherib thanked him and

they rested till the morrow, when they set out, intending for the City of Alabaster and the Parti-coloured Palace.

Now this city was builded of alabaster and [precious] stones by Baric ben Fakia, father of the Jinn, and he built also the Parti-coloured Palace, which was so named for that the ordinance of its building was one brick of gold and one of silver, nor was there its like in all the world. When they came within half a day's journey of the city, they halted to rest, and Muraash sent out a scout to reconnoitre, who returned and said, 'O King, in the City of Alabaster are tribesmen of the Jinn in number as the leaves of the trees or as the drops of rain.' So Muraash said to Gherib, 'How shall we do, O king of men?' 'O King,' answered he, 'divide your men into four bodies and encompass the camp of the infidels with them; then, in the middle of the night, let them cry out, saying, "God is Most Great!" and hold aloof and watch what happens among the tribes of the Jinn.' So Muraash did as Gherib counselled and the troops waited till midnight, when they cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! Ho for the Faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!' The unbelievers awoke in affright and snatching up their arms, fell upon each other till the morning, when the most part of them were dead men and but few remained. Then Gherib cried out to the true believers, saying, 'Up and at the remnant of the infidels! Behold, I am with you, and God is your helper!' So the Muslims drove at the enemy and Gherib drew his sword El Mahic and fell upon the foe, cutting off noses and sending heads flying. Presently he came up with Bercan and smote him and bereft him of life and he fell down, drenched in his blood. On like wise he did with the Blue King, and by the forenoon not one of the infidels was left alive to tell the tale.

Then Gherib and Muraash entered the Parti-coloured Palace and found its walls builded of alternate courses of

gold and silver, with sills of crystal and keystones of emerald. In its midst was a fountain adorned with bells and pendants and figures of birds and beasts vomiting forth water, and thereby an estrade furnished with gold-brocaded silks, with borders of gold embroidered with jewels: and they found the treasures of the palace past count or description. Then they entered the inner court, where they found a magnificent seraglio and Gherib saw, among the Blue King's women, a girl clad in a dress worth a thousand dinars, never had he beheld a goodlier. About her were a hundred slave-girls, holding up her skirts with hooks of gold, and she was in their midst as the moon among stars. When he saw her, his reason was confounded and he said to one of the waiting-women, 'Who is yonder damsel?' Quoth they, 'This is the Blue King's daughter, Morning Star.' Then Gherib turned to Muraash and said to him, 'O King of the Jinn, I have a mind to take yonder damsel to wife.' Quoth Muraash, 'The palace and all that therein is are the prize of thy right hand; for, hadst thou not devised a stratagem to destroy the Blue King and Bercan, they had cut us off to the last man: wherefore the treasure is thy treasure and the people thy slaves.' Gherib thanked him for his fair speech and going up to the girl, gazed steadfastly upon her and loved her with an exceeding love, forgetting Fekhr Taj and Mehdiyeh.

Night DCLIX.

Now her mother was the King's daughter of China, whom the Blue King had carried off from her palace and deflowered, and she conceived by him and bore this girl, whom he named Morning Star, by reason of her beauty and grace; for she was the princess of the fair. Her mother died when she was a babe of forty days, and the nurses and eunuchs reared her, till she reached the age of seventeen; but she hated her father and rejoiced in his death. So Gherib put his hand in hers and went in

to her that night and found her a virgin. Then he pulled down the Parti-coloured Palace and divided the spoil with the true-believing Jinn, and there fell to his share one-and-twenty thousand bricks of gold and silver and money and treasure beyond count. Then Muraash took Gherib and showed him the Mountain Caf and all its marvels; after which they returned to Bercan's fortress and dismantled it and shared the spoil thereof.

Then they returned to Muraash's capital, where they abode five days, at the end of which time Gherib sought to go to his own country and Muraash said, 'O King of men, I will ride at thy stirrup and bring thee to thine own land.' 'Nay, by the virtue of Abraham the Friend,' answered Gherib; 'I will not suffer thee to weary thyself thus, nor will I take any of the Jinn save Kailjan and Courjan.' Quoth the King, 'Take with thee ten thousand horsemen of the Jinn, to serve thee;' but Gherib said, 'I will take only as I said to thee.' So Muraash bade a thousand Marids take him up and carry him to his native land, with his share of the spoil; and he commanded Kailjan and Courjan to follow him and obey him; and they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then said Gherib to the Marids, 'Do ye carry the treasure and Morning Star;' for he himself thought to ride his flying charger. But Muraash said to him, 'O my brother, this horse will live only in our clime, and if it come upon the earth, it will die: but I have in my stables a sea-horse, whose like is not found in Irak, no, nor in all the world.' So he caused bring forth the horse, and when Gherib saw it, it interposed between him and his reason.[1] Then they bound it and Kailjan took it on his shoulders and Courjan took what he could carry. And Muraash embraced Gherib and wept for parting from him, saying, 'O my brother, if aught befall thee, to which thou art unable, send for me and I will come to thine aid

[1] *i.e.* his reason was confounded at its beauty.

with an army that may avail to lay waste the whole earth and all that is thereon.' Gherib thanked him for his courtesy and kindness and his zeal for the True Faith and took leave of him; whereupon the Marids set out with Gherib and his goods and after traversing fifty years' journey in two days and a night, alighted near the city of Oman and halted to rest.

Then Gherib sent out Kailjan, to learn news of his people, and he returned and said, 'O King, thy city is beleaguered by a host of infidels, as they were the swollen sea, and thy people are fighting them. The drums beat to battle and Jemrcan goeth forth to them in the field.' When Gherib heard this, he cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great!' and said to Kailjan, 'Saddle me the horse and bring me my arms; for to-day the valiant shall be known from the coward in the stead of war and battle.' So Kailjan brought him all he sought and Gherib armed and girding on El Mahic, mounted the sea-horse and made toward the armies. Quoth Kailjan and Courjan to him, 'Set thy heart at ease and let us go to the infidels and scatter them abroad in the wastes and deserts till, by the help of God the Most High, the All-powerful, we leave not a soul of them on life, no, not a blower of the fire.' But Gherib said, 'By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will not let you fight them without me!'

Night dclx. Now the manner of the coming of that great host was on this wise. When Agib fled from the field, after Yaarub's army had been put to the rout by Kailjan and Courjan, he said to his people, 'If we return to Yaarub ben Kehtan, he will say to us, "But for you, my son and my people had not been slain;" and he will put us to death, even to the last man. Wherefore, methinks we were better go to Terkenan, King of Hind, and beseech him to avenge us.' 'Come, let us go thither,' answered they; 'and the blessing of the Fire attend thee!' So they fared on days and

nights till they reached King Terkenan's capital city and Agib went in to him and kissed the earth before him. Then he wished him what men use to wish to kings and said to him, 'O King, do thou protect me, so may the sparkling fire and the night with its thick darkness protect and defend thee!' Terkenan looked at Agib and said, 'Who art thou and what dost thou want?' 'I am Agib, King of Irak,' replied he; 'my brother hath usurped my throne and gotten the mastery of the land and the people have submitted themselves to him. Moreover, he has embraced the faith of Islam and ceases not to chase me from country to country; and behold, I am come to seek protection of thee and thy power.' When Terkenan heard Agib's words, he rose and sat down and said, 'By the virtue of the Fire, I will assuredly avenge thee and will let none serve other than my mistress the Fire!' And he cried out to his son, saying, 'O my son, make ready to go to Irak and lay it waste and bind all who serve aught but the Fire and punish them and make an example of them; yet slay them not, but bring them to me, that I may ply them with various tortures and make them taste the bitterness of humiliation and leave them a warning to all who will take warning in this time.' Then he chose out to accompany him fourscore thousand fighting-men on horseback and the like number on giraffes, beside ten thousand elephants, bearing on their backs turrets of sandal-wood, trellised with network of gold and railed and plated with gold and silver and guarded with shields of gold and emerald, and store of war-chariots, in each eight men fighting with all kinds of weapons.

Now the prince's name was Raadshah and he was the champion of his time, having no peer for prowess. So he and his army equipped them in ten days' time, then set out, as they were a bank of clouds, and fared on two months' journey, till they came to Oman and encompassed it, to

the joy of Agib, who thought himself assured of victory. So Jemrcan and Saadan and all their fighting-men sallied forth into the field, whilst the drums beat to battle and the horses neighed. At this moment up came King Gherib, who spurred his charger and entered among the infidels, waiting to see who should come forth and open the chapter of war. Then came out Saadan the Ghoul and offered battle, whereupon there issued forth to him one of the champions of Hind; but Saadan scarce let him take his stand in front of him ere he smote him to the earth with his mace and crushed his bones; and so did he with a second and a third, till he had slain thirty fighting-men. Then there pricked out to him an Indian cavalier, by name Bettash el Acran, uncle to King Terkenan and the doughtiest champion of his time, reckoned worth five thousand horse in battle, and cried out to Saadan, saying, 'O thief of the Arabs, what art thou that thou shouldst slay the Kings of Hind and their champions and capture their horsemen? But to-day is the last of thy worldly days.' When Saadan heard this, his eyes waxed bloodshot and he drove at Bettash and aimed a stroke at him with his club; but he evaded it and the force of the blow bore Saadan to the earth; and before he could recover himself, the Indians bound him and haled him off to their tents.

When Jemrcan saw his comrade a prisoner, he cried out, saying, 'Ho for the faith of Abraham the Friend!' and clapping spurs to his horse, ran at Bettash. They wheeled and feinted awhile, till Bettash drove at Jemrcan and catching him by his coat of arms, tore him from his saddle and threw him to the ground; whereupon the Indians bound him and dragged him away to their tents. And Bettash ceased not to overcome all who came out to him, till he had made prisoners of four-and-twenty captains of the Muslims, whereat the latter were sore dismayed. When Gherib saw what had befallen his men, he drew from be-

neath his knee a mace of gold, six-score pounds in weight, which had belonged to King Bercan, and set spurs to his sea-horse, which bore him like the wind into the middle of the field. Then he drove at Bettash, crying out, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who reject the faith of Abraham the Friend!' and smote him with the mace, whereupon he fell to the ground and Gherib, turning to the Muslims, saw his brother Sehim and said to him, 'Bind this dog.' When Sehim heard his brother's words, he ran to Bettash and bound him fast and bore him off, whilst the Muslims wondered who this cavalier could be and the Indians said to one another, 'Who is this horseman that came out from amongst us and hath taken our chief prisoner?'

Night DCLXI.

Meanwhile Gherib continued to offer battle and there came out to him a captain of the Indians, whom he felled to the earth with his mace, and Kailjan and Courjan bound him and delivered him to Sehim; nor did Gherib leave to do thus, till he had taken prisoner two-and-fifty of the doughtiest captains of the army of Hind. Then the day came to an end and the drums beat the retreat; whereupon Gherib left the field and rode towards the Muslim camp. The first to meet him was his brother Sehim, who kissed his feet in the stirrups and said, 'May thy hand never wither, O champion of the age! Tell us who thou art among the braves.' So Gherib raised his vizor and Sehim knew him and cried out, saying, 'This is your king and your lord Gherib, who is come back from the land of the Jinn!' When the Muslims heard Gherib's name, they threw themselves off their horses' backs and crowding about him, kissed his feet in the stirrups and saluted him, rejoicing in his safe return. Then they carried him into the city of Oman, where he entered his palace and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst his officers stood around him, in the utmost joy. Food was set on

and they ate, after which Gherib related to them all that had befallen him with the Jinn in the Mountain Caf, and they marvelled thereat exceedingly and praised God for his safety. Then he dismissed them to their sleeping-places; so they withdrew to their several lodgings, and when none abode with him but Kailjan and Courjan, who never left him, he said to them, 'Can ye carry me to Cufa, that I may take my pleasure in my harem, and bring me back before the end of the night?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'this thou askest is easy.'

Now the distance between Cufa and Oman is threescore days' journey for a diligent horseman, and Kailjan said to Courjan, 'I will carry him going and thou coming back.' So he took up Gherib and flew off with him, in company with Courjan; nor was an hour past before they set him down at the gate of his palace in Cufa. He went in to his uncle Damigh, who rose to him and saluted him; after which quoth Gherib, 'How is it with my wives Morning Star and Mehdiyeh?' And Damigh answered, saying, 'They are both well and in good case.' Then the eunuch went in and acquainted the women of the harem with Gherib's coming, whereat they rejoiced and raised cries of joy and gave him the reward for good news. Presently in came Gherib, and they rose and saluting him, conversed with him, till Damigh entered, when Gherib related to them all that had befallen him in the land of the Jinn, whereat they all marvelled. Then he lay with Morning Star till near daybreak, when he took leave of his uncle and wives and mounted Courjan's back, nor was the darkness dispelled before the two Marids set him down in the city of Oman. Then he and his men armed and he bade open the gates, when, behold, up came a horseman from the host of the Indians, with Jemrcan and Saadan and the rest of the captives, whom he had delivered, and committed them to Gherib. The Muslims

rejoiced in their safety and the drums beat a point of war, whilst the two hosts drew out in battle array.

Night delxii.

The first to open the chapter of war was Gherib, who drove his charger between the two ranks and drawing his sword El Mahic, cried out, saying, 'Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my prowess and whoso knoweth me not, I will make myself known to him. I am Gherib, King of Irak and Yemen, brother of Agib.' When Raadshah heard this, he cried out to his guards, saying, 'Bring me Agib.' So they brought him and Raadshah said to him, 'Thou knowest that this quarrel is thy quarrel and thou art the cause of all this slaughter. Now yonder stands thy brother Gherib amiddleward the field; go thou out to him and bring him to me prisoner, that I may set him on a camel, face to tail, and make a show of him and carry him to the land of Hind.' 'O King,' answered Agib, 'send out to him other than I, for I am in ill case this morning.' But Raadshah puffed and snorted and said, 'By the virtue of the sparkling fire and the light and shade and heat, except thou go out to thy brother and bring him to me in haste, I will cut off thy head and make an end of thee.' So Agib took courage and spurring his horse up to his brother in mid-field, said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs and vilest of all who smite upon tent-pegs, wilt thou contend with kings? Take what cometh to thee and receive the tidings of thy death.' When Gherib heard this, he said to him, 'Who art thou among the kings?' And Agib answered, saying, 'I am thy brother, and to-day is the last of thy worldly days.'

When Gherib was assured that he was indeed his brother Agib, he cried out and said, 'Ho, to avenge my father and mother!' Then giving his sword to Kailjan, he drove at Agib and smote him with his mace a swashing blow, that all but beat in his ribs, and seizing him by the neck-rings, tore him from the saddle and cast him to the ground;

whereupon the Marids fell on him and binding him fast, dragged him off, abject and humiliated; whilst Gherib rejoiced in the capture of his enemy and repeated the following verses of the poet:

I have won to my wish and the end of affrays: Unto Thee, O my Lord, be the thanks and the praise!
I grew up, uncared for and abject and poor; But God hath vouchsafed me the aim of my ways.
I have conquered the lands, I have mastered the folk: But for Thee, I were nothing, O Ancient of Days!

When Raadshah saw how Agib fared with his brother, he called for his charger and donning his harness and coat of arms, mounted and pricked out into the field. As soon as he drew near Gherib, he cried out to him, saying, 'O vilest of Bedouin faggot-bearers, who art thou, that thou shouldst capture kings and warriors? Dismount and put thy hands behind thy back and kiss my feet and set my warriors free and go with me in chains to my kingdom, that I may pardon thee and make thee an elder in our country, so mayst thou eat a morsel of bread there.' When Gherib heard this, he laughed till he fell backward and answered, saying, 'O raging dog and scurvy wolf, thou shalt soon see against whom the shifts of Fate will turn!' Then he cried out to Sehim to bring him the prisoners; so he brought them, and Gherib smote off their heads; whereupon Raadshah drove at him, with the onslaught of a lordly champion and a fierce warrior, and they wheeled and feinted and hewed at each other till nightfall, when the drums beat the retreat and the two Kings returned, each to his own place, where his people gave him joy of his safety. And the Muslims said to Gherib, 'O King, it is not of thy wont to prolong a fight.' 'O folk,' answered he, 'I have done battle with many kings and champions; but never saw I a sturdier swordsman than this one. Had

Night dclxiii.

I chosen to draw El Mahic upon him, I had crushed his bones and made an end of his days: but I went about with him, thinking to take him prisoner and give him part in Islam.'

Meanwhile, Raadshah returned to his pavilion, where his chiefs came in to him and asked him of his adversary, and he said, 'By the sparkling fire, never in my life saw I the like of yonder warrior! But to-morrow I will take him prisoner and lead him away, abject and humbled.' Then they slept till daybreak, when the drums beat to battle and the fighting-men girt on their scimitars and mounting their stout horses, raised their war-cries and drew out into the field, filling all the hills and plains and wide places. The first to open the chapter of battle was the prince of cavaliers and the lion of war, King Gherib, who drove his steed between the two hosts and spurred to and fro, crying, 'Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard nor weakling come out to me to-day!' Before he had made an end of speaking, out came Raadshah, riding on an elephant, as he were a vast tower, in a howdah girthed with silken bands; and between the elephant's ears sat the driver, bearing in his hand a hook, wherewith he goaded the beast and directed him right and left. When the elephant drew near Gherib's horse, the latter, seeing a creature it had never before set eyes on, took fright; wherefore Gherib dismounted and gave the horse to Kailjan. Then he drew El Mahic and advanced to meet Raadshah on foot.

Now it was Raadshah's wont, when he found himself overmatched, to mount an elephant, taking with him an engine called the noose, which was in the shape of a net, narrow at top and wide at bottom, with a running cord of silk passed through rings along its edges. With this he would attack horsemen and casting the net over them, draw the running noose and pull the rider off his horse and make him prisoner; and thus had he conquered many

cavaliers. So, when Gherib came up to him, he raised his hand and casting the net over him, pulled him on to the back of the elephant and cried out to the latter to return to the Indian camp. But Kailjan and Courjan, who had not left Gherib, laid hold of the elephant and falling upon Raadshah, bound him with a rope of palm-fibres, whilst Gherib strove with the net, till he rent it in sunder. Thereupon the two armies drove at each other and met with a shock like two seas crashing or two mountains smiting together, whilst the dust rose to the confines of the sky and all eyes were blinded. The battle waxed fierce and the blood ran in streams, nor did they cease to wage war lustily with push of pike and stroke of sword, till the day departed and the night brought on the darkness, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew asunder.

Now the Muslims were hard pushed that day by reason of the riders on elephants and giraffes, and many of them were slain and most of the rest wounded. This was grievous to Gherib, who commanded the wounded to be cared for and turning to his chief officers, asked them what they counselled. 'O King,' answered they, 'it is but the elephants and giraffes that irk us; were we but quit of them, we should overcome the enemy.' Quoth Kailjan and Courjan, 'We two will draw our swords and fall on them and slay the most part of them.' But there came forward a man of Oman, who had been privy counsellor to Julned, and said, 'O King, I will be surety for the army, if thou wilt but hearken to me and follow my counsel.' And Gherib turned to his captains and said to them, 'Obey this wise man in whatsoever he shall say to you.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So he chose out ten captains and said to them, 'How many men have ye under your hands?' And they replied, 'Ten thousand fighting-men.' Then he carried them into the armoury and armed [five thousand of them with arquebuses

Night Gherib.

and other] five thousand with cross-bows and taught them to shoot therewith.

As soon as it was day, the Indians came out to the field, armed cap-a-pie, with the elephants and giraffes in their van; whereupon Gherib and his men mounted and the drums beat and both hosts drew out in battle array. Then the counsellor cried out to the archers and arquebusiers to shoot, and they plied the elephants and giraffes with shafts and bullets. The arrows and the lead entered the beasts' flanks, and they roared out and turning upon their own ranks, trampled them with their feet. Then the Muslims charged the misbelievers and set on them right and left, whilst the elephants and giraffes trampled them and drove them into the hills and deserts. Moreover, the Muslims followed hard upon them with the keen-edged sword and but few of the giraffes and elephants escaped.

Then Gherib and his folk returned, rejoicing in their victory; and on the morrow they divided the spoil and rested five days; after which King Gherib sat down on his throne and sending for his brother Agib, said to him, 'O dog, how hast thou assembled the kings against us! But He who hath power over all things hath given us the victory over thee. Wherefore do thou embrace Islam and thou shalt be saved, and I will forbear to avenge my father and mother on thee. Moreover, I will make thee King again as thou wast and will myself be under thy hand.' But Agib said, 'I will not leave my faith.' So Gherib bade lay him in irons and appointed a hundred stalwart slaves to guard him; after which he turned to Raadshah and said to him, 'How sayst thou of the faith of Islam?' 'O my lord,' answered Raadshah, 'I will enter thy faith, for, were it not a true faith and a goodly, thou hadst not carried it over us. So put forth thy hand and I will testify that there is no god but God and that Abraham the Friend is His apostle.' At this Gherib rejoiced and said to him,

'Is thy heart indeed stablished in the sweetness of the Faith?' And he answered, saying, 'Yes, O my lord!' Then said Gherib, 'O Raadshah, wilt thou go to thy country and thy kingdom?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'my father will put me to death, for that I have left his faith.' Quoth Gherib, 'I will go with thee and make thee King of the country and constrain the folk to obey thee, by the help of God the Bountiful, the Beneficent.' And Raadshah kissed his hands and feet. Then Gherib rewarded the counsellor, who had been the cause of the rout of the infidels, and gave him great riches; after which he turned to Kailjan and Courjan and said to them, 'O chiefs of the Jinn, it is my will that ye carry me, together with Raadshah and Jemrcan and Saadan, to the land of Hind.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they. So Courjan took up Jemrcan and Saadan, whilst Kailjan took Gherib and Raadshah, and flew on with them from sundown till the end of the night, when they set them down on the terrace of King Terkenan's palace at Cashmere.

Night DCLXV.

Now news was come to Terkenan of the rout of his army and that his son [was a prisoner], whereat he was sore troubled and slept not neither took delight in aught. As he sat in his harem, pondering his case, behold, Gherib and his company descended the stairways of the palace and came in to him; and when he saw his son and those who were with him, he was confounded and fear took him of the Marids. Then Raadshah turned to him and said, 'How long wilt thou persist in thy frowardness, O traitor and worshipper of the Fire? Woe to thee! Leave worshipping the fire and serve the Magnanimous King, Creator of night and day, whom no sight attaineth.' When Terkenan heard his son's speech, he cast at him an iron mace he had by him; but he avoided it and it fell upon a buttress of the palace and smote out three stones. Then

said the King, 'O dog, thou hast destroyed my troops and forsaken thy faith and comest now to make me do likewise!' With this Gherib stepped up to him and dealt him a buffet on the neck, that knocked him down; whereupon the Marids bound him fast and all the women fled.

Then Gherib sat down on the throne and said to Raadshah, 'Do thou justice upon thy father.' So Raadshah turned to him and said, 'O perverse old man, become a Muslim and thou shalt be saved from the fire and the wrath of the Almighty.' And Terkenan said, 'I will die in my own faith.' Whereupon Gherib drew El Mahic and smote him therewith, and he fell to the earth in two pieces, and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill was the abiding-place [to which he went]. Then Gherib bade hang his body over the gate of the palace and they hung one-half on the right hand and the other on the left and waited till day, when Gherib caused Raadshah don the royal habit and sit down on his father's throne, with himself on his right hand and Jemrcan and Saadan and the Marids standing right and left; and he said to Kailjan and Courjan, 'Whoso entereth of the princes and officers, seize him and bind him, and let not a single captain escape you.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.'

Presently, the officers made for the palace, to do their service to the King, and the first to appear was the chief captain, who, seeing Terkenan's dead body cut in half and hanging on either side the gate, was seized with horror and amazement. Then Kailjan laid hold of him by the collar and dragged him into the palace and bound him; and before sunrise they had bound three hundred and fifty captains and set them before Gherib, who said to them, 'Have you seen your King hanging at the palace-gate?' Quoth they, 'Who hath done this thing?' And he answered, 'I did it, by the help of God the Most High; and whoso gainsayeth me, I will do with him likewise.' Then

said they, 'What is thy will with us?' 'I am Gherib, King of Irak,' answered he, 'he who slew your warriors; and now Raadshah has embraced the faith of submission and is become a mighty king and ruler over you. So do ye become true believers and all shall be well with you; but, if you refuse, you shall repent it.' So they pronounced the profession of the faith and were numbered of the people of felicity. Then said Gherib, 'Are your hearts indeed stablished in the sweetness of the Faith?' And they answered, 'Yes;' whereupon he bade release them and clad them in robes of honour, saying, 'Go to your people and expound Islam to them. Whosoever accepts the faith, spare him; but, if he refuse, slay him.' So they went out and assembling the men under their command, expounded Islam to them, and they all professed, except a few, whom they put to death; after which they returned and told Gherib, who praised God the Most High and glorified Him, saying, 'Praised be God who hath made this thing easy to us without strife!'

Night dclxbi.

Then he abode in Cashmere forty days, till he had ordered the affairs of the country and cast down the shrines and temples of the Fire and built mosques and places of worship in their stead, whilst Raadshah made ready for him gifts and treasures beyond count and despatched them to Irak in ships. Then Gherib mounted on Kailjan's back and Jemrcan and Saadan on that of Courjan, after they had taken leave of Raadshah, and before daybreak they were in Oman, where their troops met them and saluted them and rejoiced in them. Then they set out for Cufa, where Gherib called for his brother Agib and commanded to crucify him on the city-gate and shoot at him with arrows. So Sehim brought hooks of iron and driving them into the tendons of Agib's heels, hung him over the gate; and they riddled him with arrows, till he was like a porcupine.

Then Gherib entered his palace and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, passed the day in ordering the affairs of the state. At nightfall he went in to his harem, where Morning Star came to meet him and embraced him and gave him joy, she and her women, of his safety. He lay the night with her and on the morrow, after he had washed and prayed the morning prayer, he sat down on his throne and commanded preparation to be made for his marriage with Mehdiyeh. So they slaughtered three thousand head of sheep and two thousand oxen and a thousand goats and five hundred camels and the like number of horses, beside four thousand fowls and great store of geese; never was such a wedding in Islam to that day. Then he went in to Mehdiyeh and did away her maidenhead and abode with her ten days; after which he committed the kingdom to his uncle Damigh, charging him to rule the people justly, and journeyed with his women and warriors, till he came to the ships laden with presents, which Raadshah had sent him, and divided the treasure among his troops. Then they fared on till they reached the city of Babel, where he bestowed on Sehim a dress of honour and appointed him Sultan of the city. He abode with him ten days, at the end of which time he set out again and journeyed till he reached the castle of Saadan the Ghoul, where they rested five days.

Night dclxbii.

Then said Gherib to Kailjan and Courjan, 'Go ye to Isbanir el Medaïn, to the palace of Chosroës, and find what is come of Fekhr Taj and bring me one of the King's kinsmen, who shall acquaint me with what has passed.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and set out forthright for Isbanir. As they flew between heaven and earth, they caught sight of a mighty army, as it were the swollen sea, and Kailjan said to Courjan, 'Let us descend and see what is this army.' So they alighted and walking among the troops, found them Persians and questioned the soldiers

whose men they were and whither they were bound; to which they made answer, saying, 'We are bound for Irak, to kill Gherib and all who are with him.' When the Marids heard this, they repaired to the pavilion of the Persian general, whose name was Rustem, and waited till the soldiers slept, when they took up Rustem, bed and all, and made for Gherib's camp. They arrived there by midnight and going to the door of the King's pavilion, said, 'Permission;' which when the latter heard, he sat up and said, 'Enter.' So they entered and set down the couch with Rustem asleep thereon. Quoth Gherib, 'Who is this?' and they answered, 'This is a Persian prince, whom we met coming with a great host, thinking to slay thee and thine; and we have brought him to thee, that he may tell thee what thou hast a mind to know.' 'Fetch me a hundred men,' said Gherib, and they fetched them; whereupon he made them draw their swords and stand at Rustem's head.

Then they awoke him and he opened his eyes and finding a vault of steel over his head, shut them again, saying, 'What is this foul dream?' But Kailjan pricked him with his sword-point and he sat up and said, 'Where am I?' Quoth Sehim, 'Thou art in the presence of King Gherib, son-in-law of the King of the Persians. What is thy name and whither goest thou?' When Rustem heard Gherib's name, he bethought himself and said, 'Am I asleep or on wake?' Whereupon Sehim dealt him a buffet, saying, 'Why dost thou not answer?' And he raised his head and said, 'Who brought me from my tent out of the midst of my men?' Quoth Gherib, 'These two Marids brought thee.' So he looked at them and voided in his hose [for affright]. Then the Marids fell upon him, baring their tusks and brandishing their swords, and said to him, 'Wilt thou not rise and kiss the earth before King Gherib?' And he trembled at them and was assured that he was

not asleep; so he stood up and kissed the earth before Gherib, saying, 'The blessing of the Fire be on thee, O King, and long be thy life!' 'O dog of the Persians,' answered Gherib, 'fire is not worshipful, for that it is harmful and profiteth not save for [cooking] food.' 'Who then is worshipful?' asked Rustem; and Gherib replied, saying, 'God alone is worshipworth, who made thee and formed thee and created the heavens and the earth.' Quoth the Persian, 'What shall I say, that I may become of the party of this Lord and enter thy faith?' 'Say,' rejoined Gherib, '"There is no god but God, and Abraham is the friend of God."' So Rustem pronounced the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity.

Then said he to Gherib, 'Know, O my lord, that thy father-in-law, King Sabour, seeks to kill thee and hath sent me with a hundred thousand men, charging me to spare none of you.' Quoth Gherib, 'Is this my reward for having delivered his daughter from death and dishonour? God will requite him his evil intent. But what is thy name?' And the Persian answered, saying, 'My name is Rustem, general of Sabour.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou shalt have the like rank in my army. But tell me, O Rustem, how is it with the princess Fekhr Taj?' 'May thy head live, O King of the age!' answered Rustem. 'What was the cause of her death?' asked Gherib; and Rustem said, 'O my lord, no sooner hadst thou left us, than one of the princess's women went in to King Sabour and said to him, "O my lord, didst thou give Gherib leave to lie with the princess my mistress?" "No, by the virtue of the fire!" answered he, and drawing his sword, went in to his daughter and said to her, "O filthy baggage, why didst thou suffer yonder Bedouin to lie with thee, without wedding or dower?" "O my father," answered she, "thou gavest him leave to lie with me." "Did he have to do with thee?" asked he. But she was

silent and hung down her head. Then he cried out to the midwives and slave-girls, saying, "Bind this harlot's hands behind her and look at her privy parts!" So they did as he bade and said to him, "O King, she hath lost her maidenhead." Whereupon he ran at her and would have slain her, but her mother threw herself between them, saying, "O King, slay her not, lest thou be for ever dishonoured; but shut her in a cell till she die." So he cast her into prison till nightfall, when he called two of his officers and said to them, "Carry her afar off and cast her into the river Jihon and tell none." They did his commandment, and indeed her memory is forgotten and her time is past.'

Night dclxviii.

When Gherib heard this, he said, 'By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will assuredly go to yonder dog and destroy him and lay waste his kingdom!' Then he sent letters to Jemrcan and to the governors of Mosul and Meyya Farikin and turning to Rustem, said to him, 'How many men hadst thou in thine army?' 'A hundred thousand Persian horse,' answered he. And Gherib said, 'Take ten thousand horse and go to thy people and occupy them with war.' So Rustem took ten thousand Arab horse and departed, saying in himself, 'I will do a thing that shall whiten my face with King Gherib.' So he fared on seven days, till there remained but half a day's journey between him and the Persian camp; when he divided his men into four troops and bade them attack the Persians from different sides and fall on them with the sword. So they rode on from eventide till midnight, when they came to the camp of the Persians, who were asleep in security, and fell upon them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon the Persians started up from sleep and their feet slipped and the sabre went round amongst them; for the All-knowing King was wroth with them, and Rustem wrought amongst them as fire in dry firewood, till, by the end of the night, the whole

of the Persian host was slain or wounded or fled, and the Muslims made prize of their tents and baggage and horses and camels and treasure-chests. Then they alighted and rested in the tents of the beaten army, till Gherib came up and seeing what Rustem had done, invested him with a dress of honour and said to him, 'O Rustem, it was thou didst put the Persians to the rout; wherefore all the spoil is thine.' So he kissed Gherib's hand and thanked him, and they rested till the end of the day, when they set out for King Sabour's capital.

Meanwhile, the survivors of the defeated army reached Isbanir and went in to Sabour, crying out and saying, 'Alas!' and 'Ruin!' and 'Woe worth the day!' Quoth he, 'What hath befallen you and who hath smitten you with his mischief?' So they told him all that had passed and how his general Rustem had embraced Islam and fallen upon them in the darkness of the night and routed them. When the King heard this, he cast his crown to the ground and said, 'There is no worth left to us!' Then he turned to his son Werd Shah and said to him, 'O my son, there is none for this affair but thou.' 'By thy life, O my father,' answered Werd Shah, 'I will assuredly bring Gherib and his chiefs of the people in chains and slay all who are with him.' Then he numbered his army and found it eleven score thousand men. So they slept, intending to set forth on the morrow; but, next morning, as they were about to depart, a cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the lands and baffled the sharpest sight.

Now Sabour had mounted to take leave of his son, and when he saw this great dust, he despatched a runner to discover the cause thereof, who went and returned, saying, 'O my lord, Gherib and his men are upon you;' whereupon they unloaded their beasts and drew out in order of battle. When Gherib came up and saw the Persians drawn out in battalia, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge,

and the blessing of God be upon you!' So they waved the standards and the Arabs and the Persians drove at each other and people fell upon people. The blood ran in streams and all souls saw death face to face; the brave advanced and pressed forward and the coward turned and fled and they ceased not from the battle till ended day, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart. Then Sabour commanded to pitch his camp before the city-gate, and Gherib set up his tents in front of theirs; and every one went to his tent until the morning.

Night delxix. As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted their strong horses and couched their lances and donned their harness of war; then they raised their war-cries and drew out in battle-array, whilst all the lordly champions and the lions of war came forth.

The first to open the chapter of battle was Rustem, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! I am Rustem, chief of the champions of the Arabs and the Persians. Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me to-day!' Then there came forth to him a champion of the Persians and there befell between them a sore battle, till Rustem smote his adversary with a mace he had with him, seventy pounds in weight, and beat his head down upon his breast, and he fell to the earth, dead and drowned in his blood. This was grievous to Sabour and he commanded his men to charge; so they drove at the Muslims, invoking the aid of the light-giving Sun, whilst the Muslims called for help upon the Magnanimous King. But the infidels outnumbered the true believers and made them drink the cup of death; which when Gherib saw, he drew his sword El Mahic and crying out [his war-cry], fell upon the Persians, with Kailjan and Courjan at his either stirrup; nor did he leave tourneying amongst them with the sword till he hewed his way to the standard-bearer and smote him on the head

with the flat of his sword, whereupon he fell down in a swoon and the two Marids carried him off to their camp. When the Persians saw the standard fallen, they turned and fled towards the gates of the city; but the Muslims followed them with the sword and they crowded together to enter the city, so that they could not shut the gates and there died of them much people. Then Rustem and Saadan and Jemrcan and Sehim and Kailjan and Courjan and all the Muslim braves and the champions of the Faith of Unity fell upon the misbelieving Persians in the gates and the blood of the infidels ran in the streets like a tide, till they threw down their arms and harness and called out for quarter; whereupon the Muslims stayed their hands from the slaughter and drove them to their tents, as one drives a flock of sheep.

Meanwhile, Gherib returned to his pavilion, where he did off his harness and washed himself of the blood of the infidels; after which he donned his royal robes and sat down on his chair of estate. Then he called for the King of the Persians and said to him, 'O dog of the Persians, what moved thee to deal thus with thy daughter? How seest thou me unworthy to be her husband?' And Sabour answered, saying, 'O King, be not wroth with me for that which I did; for I repent me and came out to thee in battle but in my fear of thee.' When Gherib heard this, he bade throw him down and beat him. So they beat him, till he could no longer groan, and cast him among the prisoners. Then Gherib expounded Islam to the Persians and six-score thousand of them embraced the faith, and the rest he put to the sword. Moreover, all the townsfolk professed Islam and Gherib mounted and entered the city in great state.

Then he went into the King's palace and sitting down on his throne, gave gifts and largesse and distributed the booty and treasure among the Arabs and Persians, where-

fore they loved him and wished him power and victory and length of days. But Fekhr Taj's mother remembered her daughter and raised the voice of mourning for her, and the palace was filled with crying and lamentation. Gherib heard this and entering the harem, asked the women what ailed them, whereupon the princess's mother came forward and said, 'O my lord, thy presence put me in mind of my daughter and how she would have joyed in thy coming, had she been alive.' Gherib wept for her and sitting down on his throne, called for Sabour, and they brought him, stumbling in his shackles. Quoth Gherib to him, 'O dog of the Persians, what didst thou with thy daughter?' 'I gave her to such an one and such an one,' answered the King, 'saying, "Drown her in the river Jihon."' So Gherib sent for the two men and said to them, 'Is what he saith true?' 'Yes, O King,' answered they; 'yet did we not drown her, but took pity on her and left her on the banks of the Jihon, saying, "Save thyself and do not return to the city, lest the King put thee to death and us with thee." This is all we know of her.' When Gherib heard this, he summoned the astrologers and said to them, 'Draw me a geomantic figure and find out what is come of Fekhr Taj and whether she is still in the chains of life or dead.' So they levelled a table of sand and drawing a geomantic figure, said, 'O King, the princess is alive and hath borne a male child; but she is with a tribe of the Jinn and will be absent from thee twenty years; look, therefore, how many years thou hast been absent.' So he reckoned up the years of his absence and found them eight years and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he sent for all Sabour's governors of towns and strongholds and they came and did him homage.

Night DCLXX.

One day after this, as he sat in his palace, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance and spread till it covered the whole country and darkened the horizon. So he despatched

the two Marids to reconnoitre, and they went forth and snatching up a horseman of the advancing army, returned and set him down before Gherib, saying, 'Ask this fellow, for he is of the army.' Quoth Gherib, 'Whose army is this?' And the man answered, 'O King, it is the army of Khired Shah, King of Shiraz, who is come to do battle with thee.' Now the manner of Khired Shah's coming was on this wise. When Gherib defeated Sabour's army, as hath been related, and took the King himself, the latter's son fled, with a handful of his father's men, to Shiraz, where he went in to King Khired Shah and kissed the earth before him, whilst the tears ran down his cheeks. When the King saw him in this case, he said to him, 'Lift thy head, O youth, and tell me what makes thee weep.' 'O King,' answered the prince, 'a King of the Arabs, by name Gherib, hath fallen on us and taken the King my father prisoner and slain the Persians and made them drink the cup of death.' And he told him all that had befallen. Quoth Khired Shah, 'Is my wife[1] well?' And the prince answered, saying, 'Gherib hath taken her.' 'As my head liveth,' cried the King, 'I will not leave a Bedouin or a Muslim on the face of the earth!' So he wrote letters to his governors, who levied their troops and joined him with an army of fourscore and five thousand men. Then he opened his armouries and distributed arms and armour to the troops, after which he set out with them and journeyed till he came to Isbanir and encamped before the city-gate.

With this Kailjan and Courjan came in to Gherib and kissing his knee, said to him, 'O King, heal our hearts and give us this army to our share!' And he said, 'Up and at them!' So they flew up into the air and lighting down in the pavilion of the King of Shiraz, found him seated on his chair of estate, with the Prince of Persia sitting on his

[1] *i.e.* Fekhr Taj, who had been promised him in marriage. See suprà, p. 76.

right hand, and about him his captains, with whom he was taking counsel for the slaughter of the Muslims. Kailjan caught up the Prince and Courjan the King and flew back with them to Gherib, who caused beat them, till they fainted. Then the Marids returned to the Shirazi camp and drawing their swords, which no mortal man might wield, fell upon the infidels, and God hurried their souls to the fire and evil was the abiding-place [to which they went], whilst they saw nothing but two swords flashing and reaping men, as a husbandman reaps corn. So they forsook their tents and mounting their horses bare-backed, fled for their lives. The Marids pursued them two days and slew of them much people, after which they returned and kissed Gherib's hand. He thanked them for that which they had done and said to them, 'The spoil of the infidels is yours alone: none shall share with you therein.' So they called down blessings on him and going forth, gathered the booty together and abode in their own place.

Night dclxxi.

Meanwhile, the remains of the beaten army drew not bridle, till they reached the city of Shiraz and there lifted up the voice of weeping for those that had been slain of them. Now King Khired Shah had a brother by name Siran the Sorcerer, than whom there was no greater wizard in his day, and he lived apart from his brother in a certain stronghold, called the Castle of Fruits, in a place abounding in trees and streams and birds and flowers, half a day's journey from Shiraz. So the fugitives betook them thither and went in to Siran, weeping and crying out. Quoth he, 'O folk, what ails you to weep?' And they told him all that had happened, whereupon the light in his eyes became darkness and he said, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will slay Gherib and all his men and leave not one alive to tell the tale!' Then he pronounced certain magical words and summoned the Red King, who appeared and Siran said to him, 'Go to Isbanir and fall on Gherib, as he sits upon

his throne.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the genie, and gathering his troops, repaired to Isbanir and set upon Gherib. When the latter saw him, he drew his sword El Mahic and he and Kailjan and Courjan fell upon the army of the Red King and slew of them five hundred and thirty and wounded the King himself grievously; whereupon he and his people fled and stayed not in their flight, till they reached the Castle of Fruits and went in to Siran, crying out and saying, 'Woe!' and 'Ruin!' And the Red King said to Siran, 'O sage, Gherib hath with him the enchanted sword of Japhet son of Noah, whomsoever he smites withal, he cuts him in sunder, and with him also are two Marids from the mountain Caf, given him by King Muraash. He it is who slew the Blue King and Bercan, Lord of the Cornelian City, and did to death much people of the Jinn.'

When Siran heard this, he dismissed the Red King and conjuring up a Marid, by name Zuazia, gave him a drachm of powdered henbane and said to him, 'Take the form of a sparrow and go to King Gherib's palace at Isbanir. Wait till he is asleep and there is none with him; then put the henbane up his nostrils and bring him to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Marid and changing himself into a sparrow, flew to Isbanir, where he perched on a window of the palace and waited till all Gherib's attendants retired and the King himself slept. Then he flew down and going up to Gherib, blew the powdered henbane into his nostrils, till he lost his senses, whereupon he wrapped him in the coverlet of the bed and flew off with him, like the storm-wind, to the Castle of Fruits; where he arrived at midnight and laid his prize before Siran. The enchanter thanked him and would have put Gherib to death, as he lay senseless; but a man of his people withheld him, saying, 'O sage, if thou slay him, his friend King Muraash will fall on us with all his Jinn and lay waste our realm.'

'How then shall we do with him?' asked Siran. 'Cast him into the Jihon,' answered the other, 'and he will be drowned and none will know who threw him in.' And Night dclxxii. Siran bade the Marid take Gherib and cast him into the Jihon. So he carried him down to the river-bank, but it was grievous to him to drown him, wherefore he made a raft of wood and binding it with cords, pushed it and Gherib thereon out into the current, which carried it away.

Meanwhile, when Gherib's people awoke in the morning and went in to do their service to their King, they found him not and seeing his rosary on the throne, awaited him awhile, but he came not. So they sought out the chamberlain and said to him, 'Go into the harem and look for the King; for it is not his wont to tarry till this time.' Accordingly, the chamberlain entered the harem and enquired for the King, but the women said, 'We have not seen him since yesterday.' So he returned and told the officers, who were confounded and said, 'Let us see if he have gone to take his pleasure in the gardens.' Then they went out and questioned the gardeners if they had seen the King, and they answered, 'No;' whereat they were sore concerned and searched all the gardens till the end of the day, when they returned, weeping. Moreover, the Marids sought for him all round the town, but returned after three days, without having come on any tidings of him. So the people donned black and made their complaint to the Lord of all Creatures, who doth what pleaseth Him.

Meanwhile, the current bore the raft along for five days, till it brought it to the salt sea, where the waves played with Gherib and his stomach, being troubled, threw up the henbane. Then he opened his eyes and finding himself in the midst of the sea, tossed about by the waves, said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder who hath done this thing with me!' Presently, as he lay, knowing not what to

make of his case, he caught sight of a ship and signalled with his sleeve to the sailors, who came to him and took him up, saying, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'Do ye feed me and give me to drink, till I recover myself, and after I will tell you who I am.' So they brought him water and victual, and he ate and drank and God restored his reason to him. Then said he to them, 'O folk, what countrymen are ye and what is your faith?' 'We are from Kerej,'[1] answered they, 'and worship an idol called Mincash.' 'Perdition to you and your idol!' cried Gherib. 'O dogs, none is worthy of worship save God who created all things, who saith to a thing "Be!" and it is.' When they heard this, they fell upon him in great wrath and would have seized him. Now he was unarmed, but whomsoever he struck, he smote down and deprived of life, till he had felled forty men, after which they overcame him by force of numbers and bound him fast, saying, 'We will not put him to death save in our own country, that we may [first] show him to our King.'

Then they sailed on till they came to the city of Kerej, Night dclxxiii. the builder whereof was a fierce Amalekite and set up at each gate of the city a magical figure of brass, which, whenever a stranger entered, blew a blast on a trumpet, that all in the city heard it and fell upon the stranger and slew him, except he embraced their faith. When Gherib entered the city, the brazen figure stationed at the gate blew such a terrible blast that the King was affrighted and going in to his idol, found fire and smoke issuing from its eyes and mouth and nostrils. Now a devil had entered the belly of the idol and speaking as with its tongue, said to the King of the city, 'O King, there is come to thy city one Gherib, King of Irak, who uses to bid the folk quit their faith and worship his Lord; wherefore, when

[1] A town in Persian Irak.

they bring him before thee, look thou spare him not.' So the King went out and sat down on his throne; and presently, the sailors brought in Gherib, saying, 'O King, we found this youth shipwrecked in the midst of the sea, and he believeth not in our gods.' Then they told him all that had passed and the King said, 'Carry him to the house of the great idol and cut his throat before him, so haply he may look favourably upon us.' But the Vizier said, 'O King, it befits not to slaughter him thus, for he would die forthright; rather let us burn him with fire.'

So the King commanded to cast Gherib into prison and caused wood to be brought; and they made a great pyre and set fire to it, and it burnt till the morning. Then the King and the people of the city came forth and the King sent to fetch Gherib; but his men found him not; so they returned and told the King, who said, 'How made he his escape?' Quoth they, 'We found the doors locked and the chains and shackles cast down.' Whereat the King marvelled and said, 'Hath this fellow flown up to heaven or sunk into the earth?' And they said, 'We know not.' Then said the King, 'I will go and ask my god, and he will tell me whither he is gone.' So he rose and went in, to prostrate himself to his idol, but found it not and began to rub his eyes and say, 'Am I asleep or awake?' Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, 'Where is my god and where is the prisoner? By my faith, O dog of Viziers, hadst thou not counselled me to burn him, I had slaughtered him; for it is he who hath stolen my god and fled; and needs must I be avenged of him!' Then he drew his sword and cut off the Vizier's head.

Now there was a strange cause for Gherib's escape, and it was on this wise. When they had shut him up in a cell adjoining the temple of the idol, he rose to pray, calling upon the name of God the Most High and seeking deliverance of Him, may He be exalted and glorified! The

Marid who had charge of the idol and spoke in its name, heard him and fear gat hold upon his heart and he said, 'Confusion! Who is this that seeth me and whom I see not?' So he went in to Gherib and throwing himself at his feet, said to him, 'O my lord, what must I say that I may become of thy company and enter thy religion?' 'Say,' answered Gherib, '"There is no god but God, and Abraham is the Friend of God."' So the Marid pronounced the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity. Now his name was Zelzal, son of El Muzelzel, one of the chief of the Kings of the Jinn. Then he unbound Gherib and taking him and the idol, made for the upper air. Night dclxxiv.

When the King's soldiers saw what had befallen, they renounced the worship of the idol and drawing their swords, slew the King; after which they fell on one another, and the sword went round amongst them three days, till there abode alive but two men, one of whom overcame the other and killed him. Then the boys attacked the survivor and slew him and fell to fighting amongst themselves, till they were all killed; and the women and girls fled to the hamlets and villages; wherefore the city became desert and none dwelt therein but the owl.

Meanwhile, the Marid Zelzal flew with Gherib towards his own country, the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal and the land of the Enchanted Calf, so called because its King, Muzelzel, had a pied calf, which he clad in housings of gold brocade and worshipped as a god. One day, the King and his people went in to the calf and found him trembling; so the King said, 'O my god, what hath troubled thee?' Whereupon the Satan in the calf's belly cried out and said, 'O Muzelzel, thy son hath deserted to the faith of Abraham the Friend, at the hands of Gherib, King of Irak.' When the King heard this, he was confounded and going forth, sat down upon his throne. Then

he summoned his grandees and told them what he had heard from the idol, whereat they marvelled and said, 'What shall we do, O King?' Quoth he, 'When my son comes and ye see me embrace him, do ye lay hold of him.' And they said, 'We hear and obey.'

After two days came Zelzal and Gherib, with the King's idol of Kerej, but no sooner had they entered the palace-gate than the Jinn seized on them and carried them before Muzelzel, who looked at his son with angry eyes and said to him, 'O dog of a genie, hast thou left thy faith and that of thy fathers and grandfathers?' Quoth Zelzal, 'I have embraced the true faith, and thou, do thou likewise and thou shalt be saved from the wrath of the Almighty King, Creator of Night and Day.' Therewith his father waxed wroth and said, 'O whoreson, dost thou affront me with these words?' Then he bade clap him in prison and turning to Gherib, said to him, 'O wretch of a mortal, how hast thou abused my son's wit and seduced him from his faith?' Quoth Gherib, 'Indeed, I have brought him out of error into the way of righteousness, out of Hell into Paradise and out of idolatry to the true faith.' Whereupon the King cried out to a Marid called Siyyar, saying, 'Take this dog and cast him into the Valley of Fire, that he may perish.'

Now this valley was situate in the desert quarter of the world and was so named by reason of the excess of its heat and the flaming of its fire, which was so fierce that none who fell therein could live an hour, but was destroyed; and it was compassed about by high and slippery mountains, wherein was no opening. So Siyyar took up Gherib and flew with him towards the Valley of Fire, till he came within an hour's journey thereof, when, being aweary, he alighted in a valley full of trees and streams and fruits, and setting down Gherib, chained as he was, fell asleep for weariness. When Gherib saw that he slept

and heard him snore, he strove with his bonds till he burst them; then, taking up a heavy stone, he cast it down on the Marid's head and crushed his bones, so that he died forthright. Then he fared on into the valley and found himself in a great island in mid-ocean, full of all fruits that lips and tongue could desire. So he abode alone on the island, drinking of its waters and eating of its fruits and of fish that he caught, and days and years passed over him, till he had sojourned there seven years.

Night dclxxv.

One day, as he sat, there came down on him from the air two Marids, each carrying a man; and they said to him, 'Who art thou, O fellow, and of which of the tribes art thou?' Now they took him for a genie, because his hair was grown long; and he replied, saying, 'I am no genie,' and told them all that had befallen him; whereupon they grieved for him and said, 'Abide here till we carry these two lambs to our king, that he may make the morning meal of the one and sup on the other, and after we will come back and carry thee to thine own country.' He thanked them and said, 'Where are the lambs?' Quoth they, 'These two mortals are the lambs.' And Gherib said, 'I crave the protection of the God of Abraham the Friend, the Lord of all creatures, who hath power over everything!' Then the Marids flew away and Gherib abode awaiting them two days, when one of them returned, bringing with him a suit of clothes, in which he clad him. Then he took him up and flew with him out of sight of earth, till Gherib heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, and a flaming arrow issued from amongst them and made for the Marid, who fled from it towards the earth. The arrow pursued him, till he came within a spear's cast of the earth, when Gherib leapt from his back, and the fiery shaft overtook the Marid, who became a heap of ashes.

As for Gherib, he fell into the sea and sank two fathoms deep, after which he came to the surface and swam for two

days and two nights, till his strength failed him and he despaired of life. But, on the third day, he caught sight of a steep and mountainous island; so he made for it and landing, walked on inland, where he rested a day and a night, feeding on the fruits of the earth. Then he climbed to the mountain top and descending the opposite slope, fared on two days till he came in sight of a walled and fortified city, abounding in trees and streams. So he made for it, but, when he reached the gate, the warders seized on him and carried him to their queen, whose name was Janshah. Now she was five hundred years old, and every man who entered the city, they brought to her and she lay with him; then, when he had done his work, she put him to death, and so had she slain many men. When she saw Gherib, he pleased her and she said to him, 'What is thy name and faith and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'My name is Gherib, King of Irak, and I am a Muslim.' 'Leave this faith,' said she, 'and enter mine and I will marry thee and make thee king.' But he looked at her with angry eyes and said, 'Thy faith perish with thee!' Quoth she, 'Dost thou blaspheme my idol, the which is of red cornelian, set with pearls and jewels?' And she cried out to her men, saying, 'Imprison him in the house of the idol; peradventure it will soften his heart.' So they shut him up in the temple and locking the doors upon him, went their way. As soon as they were gone, Gherib went up to the idol, which was of red cornelian, with collars of pearls and precious stones about its neck, and lifting it up, dashed it on the ground and broke it in pieces; after which he lay down and slept till daybreak.

Night dclxxvi.

Next morning, the Queen sat down on her bed of estate and said to her men, 'Bring me the prisoner.' So they opened the temple doors and entering, found the idol broken in pieces, whereupon they buffeted their faces, till

the blood ran from the corners of their eyes. Then they made at Gherib, to seize him; but he smote one of them with his fist and killed him, and so did he with another and another, till he had slain five-and-twenty of them and the rest fled to Queen Janshah, crying out. Quoth she, 'What is the matter?' And they said, 'The prisoner hath broken thine idol and slain thy men,' and told her all that had passed. When she heard this, she cast her crown to the ground and said, 'There is no worth left in idols!' Then she mounted with a thousand fighting-men and rode to the temple, where she found Gherib had gotten him a sword and come forth and was slaying men and overthrowing warriors. When she saw his prowess, her heart was drowned in the love of him and she said in herself, 'I have no need of the idol and care for nought but this Gherib, that he may lie in my bosom the rest of my life.' Then she bade her men hold aloof from Gherib, and going up to him, muttered certain magical words, whereupon his arm became benumbed and the sword dropped from his grasp. So they seized him and bound him, as he stood confounded and stupefied.

Then the Queen returned to her palace and seating herself on her throne, bade her people withdraw and leave Gherib with her. When they were alone, she said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, wilt thou break my idol and slay my men?' 'O accursed woman,' answered he, 'had he been a god, he had defended himself!' Quoth she, 'Lie with me and I will forgive thee that which thou hast done.' But he replied, saying, 'I will do nought of this.' And she said, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will punish thee grievously!' So she took water and conjuring over it, sprinkled it upon him and he became an ape. And she used to feed and keep him in a closet, appointing one to care for him; and in this plight he abode two years. Then she called him to her one day and said to him, 'Wilt

thou hearken to me?' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' So she rejoiced and freed him from the enchantment. Then she brought him food and he ate and toyed with her and kissed her, so that she trusted in him. When it was night, she lay down and said to him, 'Come, do thy business.' 'It is well,' answered he and mounting on her breast, seized her by the neck and broke it, nor did he arise from her till life had left her. Then, seeing an open cabinet, he went in and found there a sword of watered steel and a buckler of Chinese iron; so he armed himself cap-a-pie and waited till the day.

As soon as it was morning, he went forth and stood at the gate of the palace. When the Amirs came and would have gone in to do their service to the Queen, they found Gherib standing at the gate, clad in complete steel; and he said to them, 'O folk, leave the service of idols and worship the All-wise King, Creator of Night and Day, who giveth life to dry bones, for He made all things and hath dominion over all.' When they heard this, they ran at him, but he fell on them like a ravening lion and slew of them much people; but, when the night came, they overcame him by dint of numbers and would have taken him, when behold, there descended upon the infidels a thousand Marids, under the command of Zelzal, who plied them with the keen sabre and made them drink the cup of perdition, whilst God hurried their souls to the fire, till but few were left of the people of Janshah and the rest cried out for quarter and believed in the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from another, the Destroyer of tyrants and Exterminator of the Chosroës, Lord of this world and the next.

Night dclxxvii.

Then Zelzal saluted Gherib and gave him joy of his safety; and Gherib said to him, 'How knewest thou of my plight?' 'O my lord,' answered Zelzal, 'my father

kept me in prison two years, after which he released me, and I abode with him another year, till I was restored to favour with him, when I slew him and his subjects submitted to me. I ruled them for a year's space, till, one night, I lay down to sleep, having thee in my mind, and saw thee, in a dream, fighting against Janshah's people; wherefore I took these thousand Marids and came to thee.' And Gherib marvelled at this happy chance. Then he took Janshah's treasures and those of the slain and appointed a ruler over the city, after which the Marids took up Gherib and the treasure and he lay the same night in the palace of Crystal. He abode Zelzal's guest six months, at the end of which time he desired to depart; so Zelzal gave him rich presents and despatched three thousand Marids, who brought the spoils of the city of Kerej and added them to those of Janshah. Then Zelzal loaded forty thousand Marids with the treasure and himself taking up Gherib, flew with his host towards the city of Isbanir, where they arrived at midnight.

Gherib looked and seeing the city invested on all sides by a vast army, as it were the swollen sea, said to Zelzal, 'O my brother, how cometh the city thus beleaguered and what is this army?' Then he alighted on the roof of his palace and cried out, saying, 'Ho, Morning Star! Ho, Mehdiyeh!' Whereupon they started up from sleep in amazement and said, 'Who calleth us at this hour?' Quoth he, 'It is I, your lord, Gherib of the wondrous deeds.' When the princesses heard their lord's voice, they rejoiced and so did the eunuchs and women. Then Gherib went down to them and they threw themselves upon him and raised cries of joy, that all the palace rang again and the captains of the army awoke and said, 'What is to do?' So they made for the palace and said to the eunuchs, 'Hath one of the King's women given birth to a child?' 'No,' answered they; 'but rejoice, for

King Gherib hath returned to you.' So they rejoiced, and Gherib came forth to his comrades, who threw themselves upon him and kissed his hands and feet, returning thanks to God the Most High. Then he sat down on his throne, with his officers about him, and questioned them of the beleaguering army. 'O King,' answered they, 'they sat down before the city three days ago, and we know not what they want; for we have had with them neither battle nor speech.'

Now the name of the commander of the besieging army was Murad Shah and he had with him a hundred thousand horse and three thousand foot, besides two hundred tribesmen of the Jinn; and the manner of his coming was on this wise. When the two men, whom Sabour had charged to drown his daughter Fekhr Taj, let her go, bidding her flee for her life, she went forth distracted, knowing not whither to go and saying, 'Where is thine eye, O Gherib, that thou mayst see my case?' and wandered on from place to place and country to country, till she came to a valley abounding in trees and streams, in whose midst stood a lofty and strong-builded castle, as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. So she betook herself thither and entering the castle, found it hung and carpeted with stuffs of silk, and therein were a hundred beautiful damsels and great plenty of gold and silver vessels. When the damsels saw her, they came up to her and saluted her, deeming her of the damsels of the Jinn, and asked her of her case. Quoth she, 'I am the King's daughter of the Persians,' and told them all that had befallen her; which when they heard, they wept over her and condoled with her, saying, 'Take comfort and be of good cheer, for here shalt thou have meat and drink and raiment, and we all are thy handmaids.' She called down blessings on them and they brought her food, of which she ate till she was satisfied. Then said she to them, 'Who is the owner of this palace

Night dclxxviii.

and lord over you?' Quoth they, 'King Selsal, son of Dal, is our master; he passes a night here once in every month and departs in the morning to rule over the tribes of the Jinn.'

So Fekhr Taj took up her abode with them and after five days she gave birth to a male child, as he were the moon. They cut the cord of his navel and anointing his eyes with kohl, named him Murad Shah, and he grew up in his mother's lap. After a while came Selsal, riding on a paper-white elephant, as he were a tower plastered with gypsum, and attended by the troops of the Jinn. He entered the palace, where the hundred damsels met him and kissed the earth before him, and amongst them Fekhr Taj. When he saw her, he looked at her and said to the others, 'Who is yonder damsel?' And they answered, saying, 'She is the daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians and Turcomans and Medes.' Quoth he, 'Who brought her hither?' And they repeated to him her story; whereat he was moved to pity for her and said to her, 'Grieve not, but take patience till thy son be grown a man, when I will go to the land of the Persians and strike thy father's head from his shoulders and seat thy son on the throne in his stead.' So she rose and kissed his hands and blessed him.

Then she abode in the castle and her son grew up and was reared with the children of the King. They used to ride forth together a-hunting, and he became skilled in the chase of the wild beasts and of the ravening lions and ate of their flesh, till his heart became harder than the rock. When he reached the age of fifteen, his spirit waxed big in him and he said to Fekhr Taj, 'O my mother, who is my father?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'Gherib, King of Irak, is thy father and I am the King's daughter of the Persians,' and she told him her story. Quoth he, 'Did my grandfather indeed give orders to slay thee and my father Gherib?'

And she answered, 'Yes.' Whereupon, 'By the claim thou hast on me for that thou rearedst me,' cried he, 'I will assuredly go to thy father's city and cut off his head and bring it to thee!' And she rejoiced in his speech.

Night delxxix.

Then he used to go a-riding with two hundred Marids till he grew to man's estate, when he fell to making raids and excursions in quest of plunder, till, one day, he attacked the city of Shiraz and took it and cut off the King's head, as he sat on his throne, and slew many of his troops, whereupon the rest, to the number of ten thousand horse, cried out for quarter and kissed his stirrups. He led them to Balkh, where he slew the King of the city and put his men to the rout and made himself master of the riches of the place. Thence he passed to Nourain,[1] at the head of an army of thirty thousand horse, and the King of the city came out to him, with presents and tribute, and did him homage. Then he went on to Samarcand of the Persians and took the city, and after that to Akhlat[2] and took that town also; nor was there any city he came to but he took it. On this wise he became at the head of a great army, and all the booty he made he divided among his soldiers, who loved him for his valour and munificence. At last he came to Isbanir el Medaïn and sat down before it, saying, 'Let us wait till the rest of my army come up, when I will seize on my grandfather and solace my mother's heart by striking off his head in her presence.' So he sent for her, and by reason of this, there was no battle for three days, at the end of which time Gherib and Zelzal arrived with the forty thousand Marids, laden with treasure. Presently came Fekhr Taj, and her son Murad Shah embraced her, saying, 'Abide in thy tent till I bring thy father to thee.' And she sought succour for him of the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earths.

[1] A town of Turkestan. [2] A town of Armenia.

Next morning, as soon as it was day, Murad Shah mounted and rode forth, with the two hundred Marids on his right hand and the kings of men on his left, whilst the drums beat a point of war. When Gherib heard this, he also took horse and calling his people to battle, rode out, with the Jinn on his right hand and the men on his left. Then came forth Murad Shah, armed cap-a-pie, and spurred his charger right and left, saying, 'O folk, let none come forth to me but your King. If he conquer me, he shall be lord of both armies, and if I conquer him, I will slay him, as I have slain others.' When Gherib heard his speech, he said, 'Avaunt, O dog of the Arabs!' And they drove at each other and thrust with spears, till they broke, then hewed at each other with swords, till the blades were notched; nor did they cease to advance and retreat and wheel and feint, till the day was half spent and their horses fell down under them, when they dismounted and gripped each other. Then Murad Shah lifted Gherib up and strove to dash him to the ground; but Gherib seized him by the ears and pulled them with his might, till it seemed to him as if the heavens were falling on the earth and he cried out, with his heart in his mouth, saying, 'I yield myself to thy mercy, O champion of the age!' So Gherib bound him, and the Marids his comrades would have charged and rescued him, but Gherib fell on them with a thousand Marids and was about to smite them down, when they cried out for quarter and threw down their arms.

Night delxxx.

Then Gherib returned to his pavilion, which was of green silk, embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and jewels, and seating himself on his throne, called for Murad Shah. So they brought him, shuffling in his fetters, and Gherib said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, who art thou that thou shouldst ride forth and measure thyself against kings?' 'O my lord,' replied Murad Shah, 'reproach

me not, for indeed I have excuse.' Quoth Gherib, 'What is thine excuse?' And he answered, saying, 'Know, O my lord, that I came out to avenge my mother and my father on Sabour, King of the Persians; for he would have slain them; but my mother escaped and I know not whether he killed my father or not.' 'By Allah!' rejoined Gherib, 'thou art indeed excusable! But who were thy father and mother and what are their names?' Quoth Murad Shah, 'My father was Gherib, King of Irak, and my mother Fekhr Taj, daughter of King Sabour of Persia.' When Gherib heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on him, till he came to himself, when he said to Murad Shah, 'Art thou indeed Gherib's son by Fekhr Taj?' And he answered, 'Yes.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou art a champion, the son of a champion. Loose my son.' And Sehim and Kailjan went up to Murad Shah and loosed him.

Then Gherib embraced him and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'Where is thy mother?' 'She is with me in my tent,' answered Murad Shah; and Gherib said, 'Bring her to me.' So Murad Shah mounted and repaired to his camp, where his men met him, rejoicing in his safety, and asked him of his case; but he answered, saying, 'This is no time for questions.' Then he went in to his mother and told her what had passed; whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy. So he carried her to Gherib, and they embraced and rejoiced in each other. Then Fekhr Taj and Murad Shah embraced Islam and expounded the faith to their troops, who all made profession with heart and tongue. After this, Gherib sent for Sabour and his son Wird Shah and upbraided them for their evil dealing and expounded Islam to them; but they refused to profess. So he crucified them on the gate of the city and the people decorated the town and held high festival. Then Gherib crowned Murad Shah with the

crown of the Chosroës and made him King of the Persians and Turcomans and Medes. Moreover, he made his uncle, King Damigh, King over Irak, and all peoples and lands submitted themselves to Gherib. Then he abode in his kingship, doing justice among his subjects, wherefore all the people loved him, and he and his wives and comrades ceased not from all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, and extolled be the perfection of Him whose glory endureth for ever and whose benefits embrace all His creatures! This is all that hath come down to us of the history of Gherib and Agib.

OTBEH AND REYYA.

(Quoth Abdallah ben Maamer el Caisi), I went one year on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God, and when I had accomplished my pilgrimage, I turned back to visit the tomb of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve! One night, as I sat in the Garden,[1] between the tomb and the pulpit, I heard a low moaning in a soft voice; so I listened and heard one repeat the following verses:

Is it the lamentation of the doves of the lotus-tree That stirs the springs of sadness up in the heart of thee?
Or doth remembrance irk thee of maiden fair and sweet, That hath thy soul afflicted with care and misery?
O night, thou lingerest sadly on one who's sick for love! Of love and lack of patience full sore complaineth he.
Thou makest him still wakeful, who's all with passion's heat Consumed; as on live embers he burns unquenchably.
The full moon is my witness that I am passion's slave, Love-maddened for a maiden who's like the moon to see.
I deemed not I should ever enamoured be, until This wise I was afflicted and knew it not, ah me!

[1] A decorated part of the southern portico of the Prophet's Mosque, situate between his tomb and his pulpit and so called from his saying, "Between my tomb and my pulpit is a garden of the gardens of Paradise."

Then the voice ceased and I abode perplexed, not knowing whence it came to me; but presently it again took up its lament and recited the following verses:

Was it the ghost of Reyya that racked thy heart, when she, By night black-tressed and sombre, in dreams did visit thee?
Doth longing to thine eyelids cleave with its wakefulness, And doth the nightly phantom still rob thy soul of glee?
Unto my night, whilst darkness even as an ocean was, Wherein waves clashed and billowed, sea surging against sea,
I cried, "O night, thou weariest a lover unto whom, Except the morn, nor helper nor succour may there be."
But, "Rail not at my slowness; for love's the present cause Of sadness and affliction," it answered unto me.

Now, at the first of the verses, I sprang up and made for the quarter whence the sound came, nor had the voice made an end of repeating them, ere I was with the speaker and saw a youth of the utmost beauty, the hair of whose face had not sprouted and in whose cheeks tears had worn two furrows. Quoth I to him, 'Fair befall thee for a youth!' And he, 'And thee also. Who art thou?' 'Abdallah ben Maamer el Caisi,' answered I, and he said, 'Dost thou want aught?' Quoth I, 'I was sitting in the Garden and nought hath troubled me this night but thy voice. With my life would I ransom thee! What aileth thee?' And he replied, 'Sit down.' So I sat down and he said, 'I am Otbeh ben el Hubab ben el Mundhir ben El Jemouh the Ansari.[1] I went out in the morning to the Mosque of El Ahzab[2] and occupied myself there awhile with inclinations and prostrations, after which I withdrew apart, to worship [privily]. Presently, up came women, as they were moons, walking with a swaying gait, and midmost them a damsel of surpassing loveliness, accomplished in beauty and grace, who stopped before me and said, 'O

Night dclxxxi.

[1] *i.e.* descendant of one of those citizens of Medina who succoured the Prophet at the time of his flight from Mecca.
[2] In Medina.

Otbeh, what sayst thou of union with one who seeks union with thee?' So saying, she left me and went away; and since then I have had no tidings of her nor come upon any trace of her; and behold, I am distracted and do nought but remove from place to place.' Then he cried out and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, it was as if the damask of his cheeks were dyed with turmeric, and he recited the following verses:

I see you with my heart from lands that yet far distant are; I wonder eke if with your hearts ye see me from afar.
My heart and eyes alike for you do sorrow; yea, with you My soul abideth and the thoughts of you with me still are.
I cannot take delight in life, till I upon you look; Your lack the very pleasantness of Paradise would mar.

'O Otbeh, O son of my uncle,' said I, 'repent to thy Lord and seek pardon for thine offence; for before thee is the terror of the standing up [to judgment].' 'Away!' answered he. 'I shall never leave to love till the two mimosa-gatherers return.'[1]

I abode with him till daybreak, when I said to him, 'Come, let us go to the Mosque [of El Ahzab].' So we went thither and sat there, till we had prayed the midday prayers, when up came the women; but the damsel was not among them. Quoth they to him, 'O Otbeh, what deemest thou of her who seeketh union with thee?' 'And what of her?' asked he. 'Her father hath taken her,' answered they, 'and departed to Es Semaweh.' I asked them the name of the damsel and they said, 'She is called Reyya, daughter of El Ghitrif es Suleimi.' Whereupon Otbeh raised his head and recited these verses:

Reyya hath mounted, O my friends, and fared away at dawn; Unto Semaweh's distant land her caravan is gone.
Friends, I have wept till I can weep no more: hath any tears, That I may borrow them and weep my love from me withdrawn?

[1] Two men of the tribe of Anezeh went forth to gather mimosa-fruit and never returned; hence the proverb.

Then said I to him, 'O Otbeh, I have brought with me great store of wealth, wherewith I desire to succour men of merit; and by Allah, I will lavish it before thee, so thou mayst come to thy desire and more than thy desire! Come with me to the assembly of the Ansaris.' So we arose and went, till we came to their assembly, when I saluted them and they returned my greeting on goodly wise. Then said I to them, 'O assembly, what say ye of Otbeh and his father?' And they answered, saying, 'They are of the chiefs of the Arabs.' Quoth I, 'Know that he is smitten with the calamity of love and I desire your furtherance to Es Semaweh.'[1] And they said, 'We hear and obey.' So they mounted with us and we rode till we drew near the place of the Benou Suleim.

When Ghitrif heard of our coming, he hastened forth to meet us, saying, 'Long life to you, O nobles!' 'And to thee also!' answered we. 'Behold we are thy guests.' Quoth he, 'Ye have lighted down at a most hospitable and well-furnished abode.' So saying, he alighted and cried out, 'Ho, all ye serving folk, come down!' So the slaves came down and spread rugs and cushions and slaughtered sheep and cattle; but we said, 'We will not taste of thy victual, till thou have accomplished our need.' 'And what is your need?' asked he. Quoth we, 'We demand thy noble daughter in marriage for the illustrious and well-born Otbeh ben Hubab ben Mundhir.' 'O my brethren,' said he, 'she whom you demand is her own mistress, and I will go in to her and tell her?' So he arose in anger and went in to Reyya, who said to him, 'O my father, why do I see anger apparent on thee?' And he answered, saying, 'Certain of the Ansaris have come to demand thy hand of me in marriage.' Quoth she, 'They are noble chiefs; the Prophet, on whom be the most excellent of blessings and

[1] Semaweh (*hod.* Semeva), a place on the left bank of the Euphrates, about midway between Cufa and Bassora.

peace, intercedeth for them [with God]. For whom among them do they ask me in marriage?' 'For a youth known as Otbeh ben el Hubab,' answered he; and she said, 'I have heard of this Otbeh that he performs what he promises and attains what he seeks.' Quoth Ghitrif, 'I swear that I will never marry thee to him, for there hath been reported to me somewhat of thy converse with him.' 'What was that?' said she. 'But in any case, I swear that the Ansaris shall not be uncivilly rejected; wherefore do thou make them a fair answer.' 'How so?' asked he; and she, 'Make the dowry heavy to them and they will desist.' Quoth he, 'Thou sayst well,' and going out in haste, said to the Ansaris, 'The girl consents; but she requires a dowry worthy herself; who, then, engageth for this?' 'I,' answered I. Then said he, 'I require for her a thousand bracelets of red gold and five thousand dirhems of the coinage of Hejer and a hundred pieces of woollen stuffs and striped stuffs of Yemen and five bladders of ambergris.' 'Thou shalt have this,' answered I; 'dost thou consent?' And he said, 'I do consent.' So I despatched to Medina the Luminous a company of the Ansaris, who brought all for which I had engaged; whereupon they slaughtered sheep and cattle and the folk assembled to eat of the food.

We abode thus forty days, at the end of which time Ghitrif said to us, 'Take your bride.' So we set her in a litter and her father equipped her with thirty camel-loads of things of price; after which we took leave of him and journeyed till we came within a day's journey of Medina, when there fell upon us horsemen, with intent to plunder, and methinks they were of the Benou Suleim. Otbeh drove at them and slew of them much people, but presently fell back, wounded by a spear-thrust, and dropped to the earth. Then there came to us a succour of the country people, who drove away the highwaymen; but Otbeh's days were

ended. So we said, 'Alas for Otbeh!' Which when the damsel heard, she cast herself down from the camel and throwing herself upon him, cried out grievously and recited the following verses:

Patience I feign, yet natheless am not patient, verily: I soothe my soul
but with the thought that I shall follow thee.
Had my soul dealt but righteously by me, it would indeed Have gone
to death before thyself, forestalling all that be.
None, whenas thou and I are gone away, unto a friend Will just and
righteous be, I trow, nor soul with soul agree.

Then she sobbed once and gave up the ghost. We dug one grave for them and laid them in the earth, and I returned to the dwellings of my people, where I abode seven years. Then I betook me again to the Hejaz and entering Medina the Luminous, to visit [the tomb of the Prophet], said in myself, 'By Allah, I will go again to Otbeh's tomb!' So I repaired thither, and behold, over the grave was a tall tree, on which hung fillets of red and green and yellow stuffs. So I said to the people of the place, 'How is this tree called?' And they answered, 'The tree of the Bride and the Bridegroom.' I abode by the tomb a day and a night, then went my way; and this is all I know of Otbeh, may God the Most High have mercy upon him!

HIND DAUGHTER OF EN NUMAN AND EL HEJJAJ.

It is related that Hind daughter of En Numan was the fairest woman of her day, and her beauty and grace were reported to El Hejjaj, who sought in marriage and lavished much treasure on her. So he took her to wife, engaging to give her a dowry of two hundred thousand dirhems in case of divorce, and when he went in to her, he abode with her a great while. One day after this, he went in to

her and found her looking at her face in the mirror and saying:

Hind is an Arab filly born and bred of purest stock And blood, that by
a mongrel mule, alack! hath covered been;
So, if she bear a stallion-colt, God-gifted sure is she; But, if a mule
she bear, the mule must bear the blame, I ween.

When he heard this, he turned back and went his way, unseen of Hind; then, being minded to put her away, he sent Abdallah ben Tahir to her, to divorce her. So Abdallah went in to her and said to her, 'El Hejjaj Abou Mohammed saith to thee, "Here be the two hundred thousand dirhems of thy contingent dowry;" and he hath deputed me to divorce thee.' 'O Ibn Tahir,' replied she, 'I consent gladly; for know that I never for one day took pleasure in him; so, if we separate, by Allah, I shall never regret him, and the two hundred thousand dirhems I give to thee as a reward for the glad tidings thou bringest me of my release from yonder dog of a Thekifi.'[1]

After this, the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan heard of her beauty and symmetry and the amorous grace of her glances and sent to her, to demand her in marriage; and she wrote him in reply a letter, in which, after the customary glorification of God and benediction of His Prophet, she said, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that the dog hath lapped in the vase.' When the Khalif read her answer, he laughed and wrote to her, citing the prophet's saying, 'If a dog lap in the vessel of one of you, let him wash it seven times, once thereof with earth,' and adding, 'Wash the affront from the place of usance.' With this, she could not gainsay him; so she replied to him, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not consent save on condition that El Hejjaj lead

Night dclxxxii.

[1] El Hejjaj's family name was Eth Thekifi or descendant of Thekif.

my camel to thine abiding-place, barefoot and clad as he is.'

When the Khalif read her letter, he laughed long and loudly and wrote to El Hejjaj, bidding him do as she wished. The latter dared not disobey, so he submitted to the Khalif's commandment and sent to Hind, bidding her make ready for the journey. So she made ready and mounted her litter, whilst her damsels and eunuchs rode about her. Then came El Hejjaj with his suite and dismounting at Hind's door, took the halter of her camel and led it along, barefooted, whilst she and her damsels and tirewomen laughed and jeered at him and made mock of him. Then she said to her tirewoman, 'Draw back the curtain of the litter;' and she drew back the curtain, till Hind was face to face with El Hejjaj, whereupon she laughed at him and he recited the following verse:

O Hind, for all thy jeering, how many and many a night, Of yore I've left thee wakeful, lamenting for despite!

And she answered him with these:

We reck not, we, so that our life be safe and free our soul, Of what we lose of goods and gear; it worketh us no dole.
For wealth anew may gotten be and rank and power regained, If but a man of malady and trouble be made whole.

And she ceased not to laugh at him and make sport of him, till they drew near the city of the Khalif, when she threw down a dinar and said to El Hejjaj, 'O camel-driver, I have dropped a dirhem; look for it and give it me.' So he looked and seeing nought but the dinar, said, 'This is a dinar.' 'Nay,' answered she, 'it is a dirhem.' But he said, 'It is a dinar.' Then said she, 'Praised be God who hath given us a dinar in exchange for a paltry dirhem! Give it us.' And he was abashed at this. Then he carried her to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, and she went in to him and became his favourite.

KHUZEIMEH BEN BISHR AND IKRIMEH EL FEYYAZ.

There lived once, in the days of the Khalif Suleiman ben Abdulmelik,[1] a man of the Benou Ased, by name Khuzeimeh ben Bishr, who was notorious for benevolence and excellence and abounding generosity and righteous dealing with his brethren. After a while, times grew strait with him and he became in need of the aid of those on whom he had lavished favour and kindness. So they succoured him a while and then grew weary of him, which when he saw, he went in to his wife, who was the daughter of his father's brother, and said to her, 'O my cousin, I find that my brethren are changed to me; wherefore I am resolved to keep my house till death come to me.' So he shut his doors and abode in his house, living on that which he had by him, till it was spent and he knew not what to do. Now Ikrimeh er Rebaï [surnamed] el Feyyaz,[2] governor of Mesopotamia, had known him, and one day, as he sat in his audience-chamber, mention was made of Khuzeimeh, whereupon quoth Ikrimeh, 'How is it with him?' And they answered, saying, 'He is in a plight past telling, and hath shut his door and keeps the house.' Quoth Ikrimeh, 'This comes but of his excessive generosity: but how is it that Khuzeimeh ben Bishr finds none to succour him or requite him his benefits?' And they replied, 'He hath found nought of this.' Night dclxxxiii.

When it was night, Ikrimeh took four thousand dinars and laid them in one purse; then, bidding saddle his beast, he mounted and rode privily to Khuzeimeh's house, attended only by one of his servants, carrying the money. When he came to the door, he alighted and taking the

[1] Seventh Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty, A.D. 715-717.
[2] The overflowing [in bounty].

purse from the servant, made him withdraw afar off; after which he went up to the door and knocked. Khuzeimeh came out to him, and he gave him the purse, saying, 'Better thy condition with this.' He took it and finding it heavy, put it from his hand and laying hold of the bridle of Ikrimeh's horse, said, 'Who art thou? My soul be thy ransom!' 'O man,' answered Ikrimeh, 'I come not to thee at the like of this time desiring that thou shouldst know me.' Khuzeimeh rejoined, saying, 'I will not let thee go till thou make thyself known to me.' And Ikrimeh said, 'I am Jabir Athrat el Kiram.'[1] Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'Tell me more.' But Ikrimeh answered, 'No,' and went away, whilst Khuzeimeh went in to his wife and said to her, 'Rejoice, for God hath sent us speedy relief; if these be but dirhems, yet are they many. Arise and light the lamp.' But she said, 'I have not wherewithal to do this.' So he spent the night handling the coins and felt by their roughness that they were dinars, but could not credit it.

Meanwhile, Ikrimeh returned to his own house and found that his wife had missed him and enquiring for him, had been told of his riding forth, wherefore she misdoubted of him and said to him, 'The governor of Mesopotamia rideth not abroad, unattended and secretly, after such an hour of the night, save to a wife or a concubine.' 'God knows,' answered he, 'that I went not forth to either of these.' 'Tell me then,' said she, 'wherefore thou wentest forth?' and he, 'I went not forth at this hour save that none should know it.' But she rejoined, saying, 'I must needs be told.' Quoth he, 'Wilt thou keep the matter secret, if I tell thee?' and she said, 'Yes.' So he told her the state of the case, adding, 'Wilt thou have me

[1] *i.e.* A repairer of the slips of the noble, an evasive answer meant to put Khuzeimeh off the scent of his benefactor's identity by making him believe that this was the latter's real name, a deception easy to practise among the Arabs, whose names all have a manifest meaning.

swear to thee?' 'No, no,' answered she; 'my heart is set at ease and trusteth in that which thou hast told me.'

As for Khuzeimeh, as soon as it was day, he made his peace with his creditors and set his affairs in order; after which he made ready and set out for the Court of the Khalif, who was then sojourning in Palestine. When he came to the royal palace, he sought admission of the chamberlain, who went in and told the Khalif of his presence. Now he was renowned for his beneficence and Suleiman knew of him; so he bade admit him. When he entered, he saluted the Khalif after the usual fashion, and the latter said to him, 'O Khuzeimeh, what hath kept thee so long from us?' 'Evil case,' answered he. Quoth the Khalif, 'What hindered thee from having recourse to us?' And he said, 'My infirmity, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'And why,' asked Suleiman, 'comest thou to us now?' 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Khuzeimeh, 'that I was sitting one night late in my house, when one knocked at the door;' and he went on to tell him of all that had passed between Ikrimeh and himself. 'Knowest thou the man?' asked Suleiman. 'No, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Khuzeimeh, 'he was disguised and would say nought but "I am Jabir Athrat el Kiram."' When Suleiman heard this, his heart burned within him to know the man, and he said, 'If we knew him, we would requite him his generosity.' Then he tied Khuzeimeh an ensign[1] and made him governor of Mesopotamia, in the stead of Ikrimeh; and he set out for El Jezireh.[2]

When he drew near the city, Ikrimeh and the people of the place came forth to meet him and they saluted each other and went on into the town, where Khuzeimeh took

[1] In token of deputation of authority, a ceremony usual on the appointment of a viceroy.

[2] The capital of Mesopotamia, a town on the Tigris about midway between Mosul and Diarbekir.

up his lodging in the government house and bade take security for Ikrimeh and that he should be called to account. So an account was taken against him and he was found to be in default for much money, whereupon Khuzeimeh required him of payment; but he said, 'I have no means of paying aught.' Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'It must be paid;' and Ikrimeh answered, saying, 'I have it not; do what thou hast to do.' So Khuzeimeh ordered him to prison and sent to him again, to demand payment of the money; but he replied, 'I am not of those who preserve their wealth at the expense of their honour; do what thou wilt.' Then Khuzeimeh bade load him with irons and kept him in prison a month or more, till imprisonment began to tell upon him and he became wasted.

Night dclxxxiv.

After this, news of his plight came to his wife, who was sore troubled thereat and sending for a freedwoman of hers, a woman of great wit and judgment, said to her, 'Go forthwith to the Amir Khuzeimeh's gate and say, "I have a counsel for the Amir." If they ask what it is, say, "I will not tell it save to himself;" and when thou winnest to him, ask to see him in private and say to him, "What is this thou hast done? Hath Jabir Athrat el Kiram deserved of thee no better requital than to be cast into strait prison and laden with irons?"' The woman did as she was bidden, and when Khuzeimeh heard her words, he cried out at the top of his voice, saying, 'Alas, the shame of it! Was it indeed he?' And she answered, 'Yes.' Then he bade saddle his beast forthright and summoning the chief men of the city, repaired with them to the prison and opening the door, went in with them to Ikrimeh, whom they found sitting in evil case, worn out and wasted with blows and misery. When he saw Khuzeimeh, he was abashed and hung his head; but the other bent down to him and kissed his face; whereupon he raised his head and said, 'What maketh thee do this?'

'The generosity of thy dealing,' replied Khuzeimeh, 'and the scurviness of my requital.' And Ikrimeh said, 'God pardon us and thee!'

Then Khuzeimeh bade the jailor strike off Ikrimeh's shackles and clap them on his own feet; but Ikrimeh said, 'What is this thou wilt do?' Quoth the other, 'I have a mind to suffer what thou hast suffered.' 'I conjure thee by Allah,' cried Ikrimeh, 'do not so!' Then they both went out and returned to Khuzeimeh's house, where Ikrimeh would have taken leave of him and gone his way; but he forbade him and Ikrimeh said, 'What is thy will of me?' Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'I wish to change thy case, for my shame before the daughter of thine uncle is yet greater than my shame before thee.' So he caused clear the bath and entering with Ikrimeh, served him, himself, after which he bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and mounted him and gave him much money. Then he carried him to his house and asked his leave to make his excuses to his wife and did so.

After this, he besought him to accompany him to the Khalif, who was then abiding at Remleh[1] and he agreed. So they journeyed thither and when they reached the palace, the chamberlain went in and acquainted the Khalif with Khuzeimeh's coming, whereat he was troubled and said, 'Is the governor of Mesopotamia come without our order? This can only be on some grave occasion.' Then he bade admit him and said to him, before he could salute him, 'What is behind thee, O Khuzeimeh?' 'Good, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'What bringeth thee?' asked Suleiman; and he answered, saying, 'I have discovered Jabir el Athrat el Kiram and thought to gladden thee with him, knowing thine excessive desire for his acquaintance and thy longing to see him.' 'Who is he?' asked the Khalif and Khuzeimeh said, 'He is Ikrimeh

[1] In Palestine.

el Feyyaz.' So Suleiman called for Ikrimeh, who approached and saluted him as Khalif; and the prince bade him welcome and making him draw near to his sitting-place, said to him, 'O Ikrimeh, thy good deed to him hath brought thee nought but trouble. But now write in a scroll all thy needs and that which thou desirest.' He did so and the Khalif commanded to do all that he asked and that forthright. Moreover, he gave him ten thousand dinars and twenty chests of clothes over and above that he sought, and calling for a spear, tied him an ensign [and made him governor] over Armenia and Azerbijan and Mesopotamia, saying, 'Khuzeimeh's case is in thy hands; if thou wilt, continue him in his office, and if thou wilt, depose him.' And Ikrimeh said, 'Nay, but I restore him to his office, O Commander of the Faithful.' Then they went out from him and ceased not to be governors under Suleiman ben Abdulmelik all the days of his Khalifate.

YOUNUS THE SCRIBE AND THE KHALIF WELID BEN SEHL.

There lived in the reign of the Khalif Hisham a noted [man of letters] called Younus the Scribe, and he set out one day on a journey to Damascus, having with him a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and grace, whom he had taught all that was needful to her and whose price was a hundred thousand dirhems. When they drew near Damascus, the caravan halted by the side of a lake and Younus went aside with his damsel and took out some victual he had with him and a leather bottle of wine. As he sat at meat, there came up a young man of goodly presence and dignified aspect, mounted on a sorrel horse and followed by two servants, and said to him, 'Wilt thou accept me to guest?' 'Yes,' answered Younus. So the stranger alighted and said, 'Give me to drink of thy wine.' Younus gave him to

drink and he said, 'If it please thee, sing us a song.' So Younus sang this verse:

Charms, never in one mortal yet combined compriseth she, And tears and wakefulness are sweet, for love of her, to me.

At which the stranger rejoiced exceedingly and Younus gave him to drink again and again, till drunkenness got the better of him and he said, 'Bid thy slave-girl sing.' So she sang this verse:

A houri, by whose charms my heart confounded is, ah me! Nor wand nor sun nor moon, indeed, may evened with her be.

The stranger was much pleased with this and they sat drinking till nightfall, when they prayed the evening-prayer and the youth said to Younus, 'What brings thee hither?' He answered, '[I come in quest of] wherewithal to discharge my debts and better my case.' Quoth the stranger, 'Wilt thou sell me this thy slave-girl for thirty thousand dirhems?' 'I must have more than that,' answered Younus. 'Will forty thousand content thee?' asked the other; but Younus said, 'That would only pay my debts, and I should remain empty-handed.' Quoth the stranger, 'I will take her of thee at fifty thousand dirhems[1] and give thee a suit of clothes to boot and the expenses of thy journey and make thee a sharer in my estate, as long as thou livest.' 'I sell her to thee on these terms,' answered Younus. Then said the young man, 'Wilt thou let me take her with me and trust me to bring thee the money to-morrow, or shall she abide with thee till I bring thee her price?' And the fumes of the wine and shamefastness and awe of the stranger led Younus to reply, 'I will trust thee; take her and may God bless thee in her!' Whereupon the stranger bade one of his servants take her up before him on his beast, and mounting his own horse, took leave of Younus and rode away.

[1] About £1250.

Hardly had he left him, when Younus bethought himself and knew that he had erred in selling her and said in himself, 'What have I done? I have delivered my slave-girl to a man with whom I am unacquainted, neither know I who he is; and grant that I did know him, how am I to get at him?' So he abode absorbed in anxious thought, till the morning, when he prayed the appointed prayers and his companions entered Damascus, whilst he sat, perplexed and knowing not what to do, till the sun scorched him and he misliked to abide there and thought to enter the city, but said in himself, 'If I enter Damascus, I cannot be sure but that the messenger will come and find me not, in which case I shall have sinned against myself a second time.' So he sat down in the shade of a wall that was there, and towards end of day, up came one of the servants whom he had seen with the young man, at sight of whom great joy possessed Younus and he said in himself, 'I know not that aught hath ever given me more delight than the sight of this servant.' When the man reached him, he said to him, 'O my lord, we have kept thee long waiting;' but Younus said nothing to him of the anxiety he had suffered. Then said the servant, 'Knowest thou the man who bought the girl of thee?' 'No,' answered Younus, and the servant said, 'It was Welid ben Sehl[1] the Heir Apparent.' And Younus was silent.

Then the other made him mount a horse he had with him and they rode till they came to a house, where they dismounted and entered. Here Younus found the damsel, who sprang up at his sight and saluted him. He asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her and she said, 'He lodged me in this apartment and ordered me all I wanted.' Then he sat with her awhile, till one of the servants of the master of the house came in and bade him

[1] Eleventh Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty, A.D. 743-744.

rise and follow him. So he followed the servant into the presence of his yesternight's guest, whom he found seated on his couch and who said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am Younus the Scribe,' answered the other. 'Welcome to thee, O Younus!' rejoined the prince. 'By Allah, I have long wished to look on thee; for I have heard of thy report. How didst thou pass the night?' 'Well,' answered Younus; 'may God the Most High advance thee!' 'Peradventure,' said the prince, 'thou repentedst thee of that thou didst yesterday and saidst in thyself, "I have delivered my slave-girl to a man whom I know not, neither know I his name nor whence he cometh"?' 'God forbid, O Amir,' replied Younus, 'that I should repent over her! Had I made gift of her to the prince, she were the least of the gifts that are given unto him, for indeed she is not worthy of his rank.' 'By Allah,' rejoined Welid, 'but I repented me of having taken her from thee and said in myself, "This man is a stranger and knows me not, and I have taken him by surprise and acted inconsiderately by him, in my haste to take the damsel!" Dost thou recall what passed between us?' 'Yes,' answered Younus. Quoth Welid, 'Dost thou sell her to me for fifty thousand dirhems?' And Younus said, 'I do.'

Night dclxxxv.

Then the prince called to one of his servants, to bring him fifty thousand dirhems and a thousand and five hundred dinars[1] to boot, and gave them all to Younus, saying, 'The thousand dinars are for thy fair thought of us and the five hundred for the expenses of thy journey and what thou shalt buy for thy people. Art thou content?' 'I am content,' answered Younus and kissed his hands, saying, 'By Allah, thou hast filled my eyes and my hands and my heart!' Quoth Welid, 'By Allah, I have as yet had no privacy of her nor have I taken my fill of her singing. Bring her to me.' So she came and he

[1] Thirty thousand dirhems or about £750.

bade her sit, then said to her, 'Sing.' And she sang these verses:

Thou that comprisest all charms of every kind, O sweet of nature and great of amorous grace,
In Turks and Arabs are beauties all; but none Like thee, my loveling, doth all in all embrace.
O bless thy lover, my fair, with thy promised sight, Though but in visions of dreams, that flit apace!
Sweet are the sleepless nights, for thy sake, to me And goodly even abasement and disgrace.
I'm not the first one distraught for thee; ere me, How many a mortal thou'st slain with that fair face!
Thou, as my portion o' th' world, wouldst me content; To me thou'rt dearer than life and goods and place.

When he heard this, he was greatly delighted and praised Younus's excellent teaching of her and the fair education he had given her. Then he bade his servants bring him a hackney, with its trappings and furniture, for his riding, and a mule to carry his gear, and said to him, 'O Younus, when thou hearest that the Khalifate has fallen to me, come thou to me, and by Allah, I will fill thy hands with good and advance thee to honour and make thee rich as long as thou livest!' So Younus took his goods and departed; and when he heard that Welid had succeeded to the Khalifate,[1] he repaired to him; and by Allah, he kept his promise to him and entreated him with exceeding munificence. Then Younus abode with him in all content and honour and his affairs prospered and his wealth increased and goods and farms became his, such as sufficed him and his heirs after him; nor did he cease to abide with Welid, till he was slain,[2] the mercy of God the Most High be on him!

[1] 6th February, 743.
[2] 16th April, 744, by the rebels in the interest of his cousin and successor, Yezid III.

THE KHALIF HAROUN ER RESHID AND THE ARAB GIRL.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was walking one day with Jaafer the Barmecide, when he espied a company of girls drawing water and went up to them, having a mind to drink. As he drew near, one of them turned to her fellows and recited the following verses:

Bid thou thy spright from my couch, I pray, At the season of slumber turn away,
So I may rest me and eke the fire In my bones that rages may have allay.
For me, the love-lorn, whom passion's hands Turn on the carpet of sickness aye,
Thou knowest well how it is with me: Doth thy favour last for a single day?

The Khalif marvelled at her beauty and eloquence and said to her, 'O daughter of nobles, are these verses thine own or a quotation?' 'They are my own,' answered she. 'If thou say sooth,' rejoined the Khalif, 'keep the sense and change the rhyme.' So she said: Night dclxxxvi.

Bid thou thy phantom forswear my stead At the season of sleep and drowsihead,
So I may rest me and eke the fire Be quenched in my body that rages red.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands Turn on affliction's unrestful bed,
Thou knowest well how it is with me: Can aught of thy favours stand in stead?

Quoth the Khalif, 'This also is stolen.' 'Nay,' replied she, 'it is my own.' 'If it be indeed thine own,' said Er Reshid, 'change the rhyme again and keep the sense.' So she recited the following:

Bid thine image hold off from my place of repose, What time in slumber men's eyes do close,
So I may rest me and eke the fire Be quenched in mine entrails that ever glows.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands Turn on the carpet of wake and woes,
Thou knowest well how it is with me: Are thy favours bought with a price, who knows?

Quoth Er Reshid, 'This too is stolen.' 'Not so,' said she; 'it is mine.' 'If it be so,' rejoined he, 'change the rhyme once more.' And she recited as follows:

Bid thou thine image no more molest My couch at the season of sleep and rest,
So I may ease me and eke the fire Be quenched that flames in my tortured breast.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands On the couch of weeping turn East and West,
My plight thou know'st; will thy favour ne'er Come back, relenting, to make me blest?

Then said the Khalif, 'Of what [part] of this encampment [art thou]?' And she answered, 'Of its midmost in dwelling and of its highest in tent-pole.' Wherefore he knew that she was the chief's daughter of the tribe.[1] 'And thou,' asked she, 'of what [art thou among] the guardians of the horses?' Quoth he, 'Of the highest in tree and of the ripest in fruit.' 'God protect thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' said she and called down blessings on him. Then she went away with the maidens of the Arabs, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Needs must I take her to wife.' So Jaafer repaired to her father and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful hath a mind to thy daughter.' 'With all my heart,' replied he; 'she is a gift as a handmaid to His Highness our lord the Commander of the Faithful.' So

[1] The tent of the chief of the tribe stands in the midst of the encampment and is higher than the rest.

he equipped her and carried her to the Khalif, who took her to wife and went in to her, and she became of the dearest of his women to him.

Moreover, he bestowed on her father largesse such as succoured him among the Arabs, till he was transported to the mercy of God the Most High. The Khalif, hearing of his death, went in to her, troubled; and when she saw him thus, she entered her chamber and putting off all that was upon her of rich apparel, donned mourning raiment and raised lament for her father. It was said to her, 'What is the reason of this?' And she answered, saying, 'My father is dead.' So they went in to the Khalif and told him and he rose and going in to her, asked her who had given her to know of her father's death; and she answered, 'It was thy face, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'Since I have been with thee, I never saw thee thus till now, and there was none for whom I feared save my father, by reason of his great age; but may thy head live, O Commander of the Faithful!' When the Khalif heard this, his eyes filled with tears and he condoled with her; but she ceased not to mourn for her father, till she followed him [to the grave,] may God have mercy on them both!

EL ASMAÏ AND THE THREE GIRLS OF BASSORA.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was exceeding restless one night and rising from his bed, fared from chamber to chamber, but could not compose himself to sleep. As soon as it was day, he said, 'Fetch me El Asmaï.'[1] So the eunuch went out and told the doorkeepers, who sent for the poet and when he came, informed the Khalif. The latter bade admit him and said to him, 'O Asmaï, I wish

[1] One of the most celebrated of Er Reshid's court poets. See note, Vol. IV. p. 8.

thee to tell me the best thou hast heard of stories of women and their verses.' 'I hear and obey,' answered El Asmaï. 'I have heard great store of women's verses; but none pleased me save three lines I once heard from three girls.' 'Tell me of them,' said the Khalif. 'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the poet, 'that I once abode a year in Bassora, and one day, as I was walking about, the heat was sore upon me and I sought for a place where I might take the noonday rest, but found none. Presently, however, I came upon a porch swept and watered, at the upper end whereof was an open lattice-window, whence exhaled a scent of musk and thereunder a wooden bench. I entered the porch, and lying down on the bench, would have slept, when, behold, I heard from within a girl's sweet voice talking and saying, "O my sisters, we are sat here to spend this day in each other's company; so come, let us each put down a hundred dinars and recite a line of verse; and whoso recites the goodliest and sweetest line, the three hundred dinars shall be hers." "With all our hearts," said the others; and the eldest recited the following verse:

Night dclxxxvii.

By Allah, I should delight in him, if in dreams to my couch came he!
But, an he visited me on wake, 'twould yet more marvellous be.

Quoth the second:

Only his image, in very deed, in slumber visited me; And 'Welcome!'
straightway I said to him, 'a welcome fair and free!'

Then said the youngest:

With my soul and my folk I will ransom him, whom my bedfellow still
I see Each night and whose scent is pleasanter than the scent of
musk to me!"

Quoth I, "If [the speaker] have beauty after the measure [of the goodliness] of this [her speech], the thing is every way complete." Then I rose and was about to go away, when the door opened and out came a slave-girl, who said

to me, "Sit, O elder." So I sat down again, and she gave me a scroll, wherein was written, in characters of the utmost beauty, with straight Alifs,[1] big-bellied Has[1] and rounded Waws,[1] the following: "We would have the Sheikh (whose days God prolong) to know that we are three maidens, sisters, sitting in friendly converse, who have laid down each a hundred dinars, on condition that whoso recites the best and most agreeable line of verse shall have the whole three hundred dinars; and we appoint thee judge between us: so decide as thou seest best, and peace be on thee!" Quoth I to the girl, "Bring me inkhorn and paper." So she went in and returning after a little, brought me a silvered inkhorn and gilded pens, with which I wrote the following verses:

I've heard of young beauties once that sat in converse frank and free And
talked the talk of a man who's seen and proved all things that be;
Three like the dawnings of new-born day, they ravished every heart;
Yea, tormentful to the yearner's soul were they, these maidens three.
They'd cloistered them, where no vision lewd their modesty might
affront; The eyes of the spy were shut in sleep and none was there
to see.
So they discovered the secret thoughts in their breasts that hidden lay
And then to making of verse they fell, for pastime, in their glee.
Quoth one of them thus,—a loveling rare, fulfilled of amorous grace,
Her teeth for the sweet of her speech did smile at every word
spake she,—
"By Allah, I should delight in him, if in dreams to my couch came he!
But, an he visited me on wake, 'twould yet more marvellous be."
And when she had ended that which she gilt with smiles, the second
sighed And warbled these words with a trilling note, like a bird
upon a tree:
"Only his image, in very deed, in slumber visited me, And, "Welcome,"
straightway quoth I to him, "a welcome fair and free!"
But the third did better than th' other twain, for, answering, thus said
she, With a word of her own that was sweeter still and goodlier,
perdie,

[1] *Alif* (ا), *Ha* (ه) and *Waw* (و), the first, twenty-seventh and twenty-sixth letters of the Arabic alphabet.

"With my soul and my folk I will ransom him, whom my bedfellow
still I see Each night and whose scent is pleasanter than the scent
of musk to me!"
So, when I considered that which they said and sentence passed thereon,
I judged not so as to give the wits a cause for mockery;
Nay, judgment I gave for the youngest maid and deemed her verse the
best, For that I judged the words she spake e'en nearest the truth
to be.

Then I gave the scroll to the girl, who went in with it, and presently I heard a noise of dancing and clapping of hands and tumult. Quoth I to myself, "It is time for me to go." So I rose from the bench and was about to go away, when the damsel cried out to me, saying, "Sit down, O Asmaï!" "Who gave thee to know that I was El Asmaï?" asked I, and she, "If thy name be unknown to us, thy poetry is not." So I sat down again and behold, the door opened and out came the first damsel, with a dish of fruits and another of sweetmeats. I ate of both and praised their fashion and would have gone away; but she cried out, saying, "Sit down, O Asmaï!" Wherewith I raised my eyes to her and saw a rosy palm in a saffron sleeve, meseemed it was the full moon breaking out from under the clouds. Then she threw me a purse containing three hundred dinars and said to me, "This is mine and I give it to thee in requital of thy judgment."

Quoth the Khalif, 'Why didst thou decide for the youngest?' 'O Commander of the Faithful, whose life God prolong,' answered El Asmaï, 'the eldest said, "I should delight in him, if he visited my couch in sleep." Now this is restricted and dependent upon a condition, that may befall or may not befall; whilst, for the second, an image of dreams came to her in sleep, and she saluted it; but the youngest said that she actually lay with her lover and smelt his breath sweeter than musk and she engaged her soul and her folk for him, which she had not

done, were he not dearer to her than her soul.' 'Thou didst well, O Asmaï,' said the Khalif and gave him other three hundred dinars, in payment of his story.

IBRAHIM OF MOSUL AND THE DEVIL.

(Quoth Abou Ishac Ibrahim el Mausili), I asked Er Reshid once to give me a day's leave that I might be private with the people of my household and my friends, and he gave me leave for Saturday. So I went home and betook myself to making ready meat and drink and other necessaries and bade the doorkeepers shut the doors and let none come in to me. However, presently, as I sat in my sitting-chamber, with my women about me, I was ware of an old man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in white clothes and a shirt of fine stuff, with a doctor's hood on his head and a silver-handled staff in his hand, and the house and porch were full of the sweet smell of the essences with which he was scented. I was greatly vexed at his coming in to me and thought to turn away the doorkeepers; but he saluted me after the goodliest fashion and I returned his greeting and bade him be seated. So he sat down and entertained me with stories of the Arabs and their verses, till my anger left me and methought my servants had sought to pleasure me by admitting a man of such good breeding and elegant culture.

Then said I to him, 'Art thou for meat?' 'I have no need of it,' answered he. 'And for drink?' asked I. 'That is as thou wilt,' said he. So I drank off a pint of wine and poured him out the like. Then said he, 'O Abou Ishac, wilt thou sing us somewhat, so we may hear of thy fashion that wherein thou excellest high and low?' His words vexed me; but I dissembled my annoyance and taking the lute, played and sang. 'Well done, O Abou Ishac!' said he; whereat my anger redoubled and I said

to myself, 'Is it not enough that he should come in to me, without my leave, and importune me thus, but he must call me by my name, as though he knew not the right way to address me?' Quoth he, 'If thou wilt sing again, we will requite thee.' I swallowed my annoyance and took the lute and sang again, taking pains with what I sang and rising thereto altogether, because of his saying, 'We will requite thee.' He was delighted and said, 'Well done, O my lord!' Then said he, 'Dost thou give me leave to sing?' 'As thou wilt,' answered I, deeming him weak of wit, in that he should think to sing before me, after that which he had heard from me. So he took the lute and swept the strings, and by Allah, meseemed they spoke in the Arabic tongue, with a sweet and liquid and murmurous voice; then he began and sang the following verses:

Night dclxxxviii.

A heart that is cankered with grief I have: who will sell me therefor A heart that of cankers is whole, unwounded of ulcer or sore?
But no, not a soul will consent to barter a heart against mine; For whoso should buy were condemned to sickness and woe evermore.
He'd groan with the groaning of him who's wounded and choking with wine, For the longing that lives in my heart and gnaws at its innermost core.

And by Allah, meseemed the doors and the walls and all that was in the house answered and sang with him, for the beauty of his voice, so that methought my very limbs and clothes answered him, and I abode amazed and unable to speak or move, for the trouble of my heart. Then he sang these verses:

Hark ye, O doves of Liwa,[1] come back unto your nest: With longing for your voices my bosom is opprest.
Back to the copse they winged it and me well-nigh did slay; Well-nigh to them my secrets I had made manifest.

[1] El Liwa, a beautiful valley of Arabia frequently referred to by the poets.

They call on one departed, with cooing, as it were They'd drunken wine and madness did sojourn in their breast.
Ne'er saw mine eyes, I swear it, the like of them for doves! They weep; yet not a tear-drop is from their eyes exprest.

And also these:

O wind of Nejed, when thou blowst from Nejed far and wide, Thy wafts add longing unto that for which long time I've sighed!
Lo, in the freshness of the morn, from out the trellised boughs Of laurel and of cassia, to me a turtle cried.
She moaned, as moans the youth for love, and eke discovered thus The secret of my yearning pain, that yet I fain would hide.
They say that, when a lover's near, he wearies of his love, And that by absence passion's cured; 'tis false, for I have tried
Both remedies, but am not cured of that which is with me, Withal that nearness easier is than distance to abide.
Yet nearness of abode, forsooth, may nowise profit thee, An if the grace of her thou lov'st be unto thee denied.

Then said he, 'O Ibrahim, sing this song after me and do after the fashion thereof in thy singing and teach it to thy slave-girls.' Quoth I, 'Repeat it to me.' But he answered, 'There needs no repetition; thou hast it by heart,' and vanished from my sight. At this I was amazed and running to my sword, drew it and made for the door of the harem, but found it closed and said to the women, 'What have ye heard?' Quoth they, 'We have heard the sweetest and goodliest of singing.' Then I went forth, in amazement, to the door of the house and finding it locked, questioned the doorkeepers of the old man. 'What old man?' said they. 'By Allah, no one hath gone in to thee this day!' So I returned, pondering the matter, when, behold, he cried out from one of the corners of the house, [though I saw none,] saying, 'Fear not, O Abou Ishac; no harm shall befall thee. It is I, Abou Murreh,[1] who have been thy boon-companion this day.' Then I mounted

[1] *i.e.* Father of Bitterness, a name for the Devil.

and rode to Er Reshid, to whom I told what had passed, and he said, 'Repeat to me the airs thou heardest from him.' So I took the lute and played and sang them to him; for, behold, they were rooted in my heart. The Khalif was charmed with them and drank thereto, albeit he was no great wine-bibber, saying, 'Would he would some day pleasure us with his company, as he hath pleasured thee!' Then he ordered me a present and I took it and went away.

THE LOVERS OF THE BENOU UDHREH.

(Quoth Mesrour the Eunuch), The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was very wakeful one night and said to me, 'See which of the poets is at the door to-night.' So I went out and finding Jemil ben Maamer el Udhri[1] in the antechamber, said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' Quoth he, 'I hear and obey,' and going in with me, saluted the Khalif, who returned his greeting and bade him sit down. Then he said to him, 'O Jemil, hast thou any new stories to tell us?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'Whether wouldst thou liefer hear, that which I have seen with mine eyes or that which I have [but] heard tell?' 'Tell me something thou hast actually seen,' said the Khalif. Quoth Jemil, 'It is well, O Commander of the Faithful; incline thy heart to me and lend me thine ears.' The Khalif took a cushion of red brocade, embroidered with gold and stuffed with ostrich-feathers, and laying it under his thighs, propped up his elbows thereon; then he said to Jemil, 'Now for thy tale, O Jemil!'

'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'that I was once desperately enamoured of a certain girl

[1] See note, Vol. II. p. 25. The introduction here of Jemil is an anachronism, as he died many years before Er Reshid's birth.

and used to pay her frequent visits, for that she was my desire and delight of all the things of this world. After a while, her people removed with her, by reason of scarcity of pasture, and I abode some time without seeing her, till I grew restless for desire and longed for her sight and my soul urged me to journey to her. One night, I could hold out no longer; so I rose and saddling my she-camel, bound on my turban and donned my oldest clothes. Then I girt myself with my sword and slinging my spear behind me, mounted and rode forth in quest of her. I fared on diligently till, one night, it was pitch dark and exceeding black and I heard on all sides the roaring of lions and howling of wolves and the cries of the wild beasts; whereat my reason was troubled and my heart sank within me; but for all that I ceased not to press on, descending into valleys and climbing mountains, whilst my tongue ceased not to call on the name of God the Most High.

As I went along thus, sleep overtook me and the camel carried me aside out of my road, till, presently, something[1] smote me on the head, and I woke, startled and alarmed, and found myself in a meadow,[2] full of interlacing trees and streams and birds on the branches, warbling their various notes. So I alighted and taking my camel's halter in my hand, fared on softly with her, till I won clear of the trees and came out into the open country, where I adjusted her saddle and mounted again, knowing not where to go nor whither the fates should lead me; but, presently, peering into the desert, I espied a fire afar off. So I smote my camel and made toward the fire. When I drew near, I saw a tent pitched and thereby a spear stuck in the ground, with a pennon flying and horses tethered and camels feeding, and said in myself, "Doubtless there hangs some grave matter by this tent, for I see none other than

[1] Apparently the branch of a tree. [2] Or verdant tract of country.

it in the desert." So I went up to it and said, "Peace be upon you, O people of the tent, and the mercy of God and His blessings!" Whereupon there came forth to me a young man, nineteen years old, who was as the shining full moon, with valour written between his eyes, and answered, saying, "And on thee be peace, O brother of the Arabs, and God's mercy and blessing! Methinks thou hast lost thy way?" "Even so," replied I. "Direct me aright, God have mercy on thee!" "O brother of the Arabs," rejoined he, "of a truth this our land is infested with lions and the night is exceeding dark and cold and dreary, and I fear lest the wild beasts tear thee in pieces; wherefore do thou alight and abide with me this night in ease and comfort, and to-morrow I will put thee in the right way."

Accordingly, I alighted and hobbled my camel with the end of her halter; then I put off my heavy upper clothes and sat down. Presently the young man took a sheep and slaughtered it and kindled a brisk fire; after which he went into the tent and bringing out fine salt and powdered spices, fell to cutting off pieces of the flesh of the sheep and roasting them over the fire and feeding me therewith, weeping one while and sighing another. Then he groaned heavily and wept sore and recited the following verses:

Nothing is left him but a fluttering spright, Ay, and an eye bereavéd of its light;
Nor in his members is a single joint But sickness there is constant day and night.
His tears flow ever and his heart burns aye; Yet for all this still silent is the wight.
His foes weep, pitying him; alas for those Who pity in th' exultant foe excite!

By this I knew that the youth was a distracted lover,—for none knoweth passion save he who hath tasted the savour thereof,—and said to myself, "Shall I ask him?"

But I bethought me and said, "How shall I intrude on him with questioning, and I in his abode?" So I restrained myself and ate my sufficiency of the meat. When we had made an end of eating, the young man arose and entering the tent, brought out an elegant basin and ewer and a silken napkin, fringed with broidery of red gold, and a casting-bottle full of rose-water, mingled with musk. I marvelled at his elegance and the daintiness of his fashion and said in myself, "Never knew I of elegance in the desert." Then we washed our hands and talked a while, after which he went into the tent and making a partition between himself and me with a piece of red brocade, said to me, "Enter, O chief of the Arabs, and take thy rest; for thou hast suffered toil and travel galore this night and in this thy journey." So I entered and finding a bed of green brocade, pulled off my clothes and passed a night such as I had never passed in my life.

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I lay, pondering the young man's case, till it was dark night and all eyes slept, when I was aroused by the sound of a low voice, never heard I a softer or sweeter. I raised the curtain and saw, by the young man's side, a damsel, never beheld I a fairer of face, and they were both weeping and complaining, one to the other, of the pangs of passion and desire and of the excess of their longing for each other's sight. "By Allah," quoth I, "I wonder who this can be! When I entered this tent, there was none therein but this young man. Doubtless this damsel is of the daughters of the Jinn and is enamoured of this youth; so they have secluded themselves with one another in this place." Then I considered her attentively and behold, she was a mortal and an Arab girl, whose face, when she unveiled it, put to shame the shining sun, and the tent was illumined by the light of her countenance. When I was assured that she was his mistress, I bethought me of a lover's jealousy; so I let fall the curtain and covering my

face, fell asleep. As soon as it was day, I arose and donning my clothes, made the ablution and prayed such prayers as were due from me. Then I said to my host, "O brother of the Arabs, wilt thou add to thy favours by directing me into the right road?" "At thy leisure, O chief of the Arabs," answered he. "The time of a guest's stay is three days, and I am not one to let thee go before that time."

So I abode with him three days, and on the fourth day, as we sat talking, I asked him of his name and lineage. Quoth he, "As for my lineage, I am of the Benou Udhreh; my name is such an one, son of such an one and my father's brother is called such an one." And behold, O Commander of the Faithful, he was the son of my father's brother and of the noblest house of the Benou Udhreh. "O my cousin," said I, "what moved thee to leave thy fair estate and that of thy fathers and thy slaves and handmaids and seclude thyself alone in this desert?" When he heard my words, his eyes filled with tears and he replied, saying, "Know, O my cousin, that I was passionately enamoured of the daughter of my father's brother and distracted for love of her; so I sought her in marriage of her father, but he refused and married her to a man of the Benou Udhreh, who went in to her and carried her to his abiding-place this last year. When she became thus removed from me and I was prevented from looking on her, the pangs of passion and excess of love-longing and desire drove me to forsake my people and friends and fortune and take up my abode in this desert, where I have grown used to my solitude." "Where are their dwellings?" asked I. And he said, "They are hard by, on the top of yonder hill; and every night, at the dead time when all eyes sleep, she steals secretly out of the camp, unseen of any, and I satisfy my desire of her converse and she of mine." So I abide thus, comforting [or solacing] myself with her [company] a part of the night, till God accomplish that which is to be;

either I shall compass my desire, in spite of the envious, or God will determine for me, and He is the best of those that determine."

When I knew his case, O Commander of the Faithful, I was concerned for him and pexplexed by reason of [my] jealousy [for his welfare]; so I said to him, "O my cousin, wilt thou that I counsel thee a plan, wherein, if it please God, thou shalt find a source of amendment and the way of advisement and success and whereby God shall do away from thee that thou dreadest?" "Say on, O my cousin," answered he. Quoth I, "When it is night and the girl cometh, set her on my camel; for she is swift of going, and mount thou thy courser, whilst I mount one of these she-camels. So will we fare on with her all night and by the morrow, we shall have traversed deserts and plains, and thou wilt have attained thy desire and won the beloved of thy heart. God's earth is wide, and by Allah, I will succour thee with heart and wealth and sword, as long as I live!" "O cousin," answered he, "wait till I take counsel with her, for she is prudent and quick-witted and hath insight into affairs." Night dcxci.

When the night darkened and the hour of her coming arrived, and he awaiting her at the appointed season, she delayed beyond her usual time, and I saw him go forth the door of the tent and opening his mouth, inhale the wafts of air that came from her quarter, as if to snuff her odour, and he repeated the following verses:

Wind of the East, thou waftest a gentle air to me, From out the loved one's country, the place where sojourns she.
O wind, thou bear'st a token from her I hold so dear: Canst thou not give me tidings when will her coming be?

Then he entered the tent and sat awhile, weeping; after which he said to me, "O my cousin, some mischance must have betided the daughter of my uncle, to hinder her from coming to me this night. But abide where thou art, till I bring thee news." And he took his sword and buckler

and was absent a while of the night, after which he returned, carrying something, and called to me. So I hastened to him and he said, "O my cousin, knowst thou what hath happened?" "No, by Allah!" answered I. Quoth he, "Verily, I am smitten with mourning for my cousin this night; for she was coming to me, as of wont, when a lion met her in the way and rent her, and there remaineth of her but what thou seest." So saying, he threw down what he had in his hand, and behold, it was the damsel's turban and what was left of her bones. Then he wept sore and casting down his shield, took a bag and went forth again, saying, "Stir not hence, till I return to thee, if it please God the Most High."

He was absent a while and presently returned, bearing in his hand a lion's head, which he threw on the ground and called for water. So I brought him water, with which he washed the lion's mouth and fell to kissing it and weeping: and he mourned for her passing sore and recited the following verses:

O lion, that thyself indeed didst on perdition throw, Perished hast thou and for her loss hast filled my heart with woe.
Thou hast bereaved me of my love and eke the cold earth's womb Hast made her dwelling till the day that calls up high and low.
To Fate, that with the loss of her afflicteth me, quoth I, "Now God forbid that one to take her place to me thou show!"

Then said he to me, "O cousin, I conjure thee by Allah and the rights of kindred and sympathy betwixt us, keep my charge. Thou wilt presently see me dead before thee; whereupon do thou wash me and shroud me and these that remain of my cousin's bones in this mantle and bury us both in one grave and write thereon these verses:

Upon the earth a life we lived of solace and delight; In land and house foregathered we full many a day and night.
But fortune and the shifts of time did rend our loves apart And now within its bosom strait the shroud doth us unite.

Then he wept sore and entering the tent, was absent awhile, after which he came forth, groaning and crying out. Then he gave one sob and departed this world. When I saw that he was indeed dead, it was grievous to me and so sore was my sorrow for him that I had well-nigh followed him for excess of lamentation over him. Then I laid him out and did as he had enjoined me, shrouding the damsel's remains with him in one garment and burying them in one grave. I abode by their grave three days, after which I departed and continued to pay frequent visits to the place for two years. This then is their story, O Commander of the Faithful.'

The Khalif was pleased with Jemil's story and rewarded him with a dress of honour and a handsome present.

THE BEDOUIN AND HIS WIFE.

The Khalif Muawiyeh was sitting one day in his palace at Damascus, in a room the windows whereof were open on all four sides, that the breeze might enter from all quarters. Now it was a day of excessive heat, with no air stirring, and in the middle of the day, when the heat was at its sultriest, the Khalif, chancing to look forth, saw a man coming along, scorched by the heat of the ground and limping, as he fared on barefoot. Muawiyeh considered him awhile and said to his courtiers, 'Hath God [may He be blessed and glorified!] created any more wretched than he who needs must stir abroad at such an hour and in such weather as this?' Quoth one of them, 'Peradventure, he seeketh the Commander of the Faithful.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the Khalif, 'if he seek me, I will assuredly give to him, and if he be wronged, I will succour him. Ho, boy! Stand at the door, and if yonder Arab seek to come in to me, forbid him not therefrom.'

So the page went out and presently the Arab came up to

him and he said, 'What dost thou want?' 'I want the Commander of the Faithful,' answered the other, and the page said, 'Enter.' So he entered and saluted the Khalif, who said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am a man of the Benou Temim,' answered the Arab. 'And what brings thee here at this season?' asked Muawiyeh. Quoth the Arab, 'I come to thee, complaining to thee and imploring thy protection.' 'Against whom?' asked the Khalif. 'Against Merwan ben el Hekem,[1] thy deputy,' answered the man and recited the following verses:

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O Muawiyeh, pitiful, munificent and kind, Thou in whom righteousness and grace and wisdom are combined,
I come to thee for that my way on earth is strait on me: O help! nor cut thou off my hope, but justice let me find.
Vouchsafe thou me redress 'gainst him, the tyrant who hath wrought Me such unright as death itself were lighter to my mind.
Unjustly hath he dealt by me and tyrant-wise bereft Me of my wife, of Suad, dear to me o'er all her kind.
Yea, he in truth hath gone about to slay me, ere my tale Of days be told or come the term to me of God assigned.

When Muawiyeh heard him recite these verses, with the fire flashing from his mouth, he said to him, 'Thou art welcome, O brother of the Arabs! Tell me thy tale and expound to me thy case.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Arab, 'I had a wife, whom I loved passing dear and who was the solace of my eyes and the delight of my heart; and I had a herd of camels, with whose produce I made shift to maintain my condition; but there came upon us a year [of calamity], which killed off hoof and horn and bereft me of all I had. When what was in my hand failed me and I fell into evil case, I became abject and burdensome to those who had used to wish to visit me; which when my wife's father knew, he took her from me and abjured me and drove me forth without pity.

[1] Governor of Medina under Muawiyeh and afterwards [A.D. 683-4] fourth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty.

So I repaired to thy deputy, Merwan ben el Hekem, and sought succour of him. He summoned my father-in-law and questioned him, and he denied any knowledge of me. "May God amend the Amir!" said I. "If it please him to send for the woman and question her of her father's saying, the truth will appear." So he sent for her; but no sooner had he set eyes on her than he fell passionately in love with her and becoming my rival, denied me succour and was wroth with me. Moreover, he sent me to prison, and I became as I had fallen from heaven and the wind had cast me down in a far country. Then said Merwan to my father-in-law, "Wilt thou give her to me to wife, at a [present] dowry of a thousand dinars and [a contingent one of] ten thousand dirhems, and I will engage to quit her of yonder Arab?" Her father was seduced by the bribe and agreed to the bargain; whereupon Merwan sent for me and looking at me like an angry lion, said to me, "O Arab, put away Suad." "I will not put her away," answered I; but he set on me a company of his servants, who tortured me with all manner tortures, till I found no help for it but to do as he bade. So I divorced her and he sent me back to prison, where I abode till the days of her purification were accomplished, when he married her and set me free. So now I come to thee, hoping in thee, and imploring thy succour and throwing myself on thy protection.' And he recited the following verses:

A fire is in the heart of me, That flameth still unquenchably.
My body's sick and leaches all Are baffled by my malady.
Yea, and live coals, that cast forth sparks, For ever in mine entrails be:
Mine eyes rain tears without relent That down my cheeks in torrents flee;
Nor have I hope of help except In God my Lord and eke in thee.

Then he was convulsed, and his teeth chattered and he fell down in a fit, writhing like a slain snake. When Muawiyeh heard his story, he said, 'Verily, Merwan ben el Hekem hath transgressed against the laws of the Faith

Night dcxciii. and hath done oppression and violated the harem of a true believer! O Arab, thou comest to me with a story, the like whereof I never heard! Then he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote to Merwan as follows: 'It hath reached me that thou transgressest the laws of the Faith with regard to thy subjects. Now it behoves him who is a governor to keep his eyes from their lusts and restrain his soul from its delights.' And after he wrote many words, which [quoth he who tells the tale] I omit, for brevity's sake, and amongst them these verses:

Thou wast invested with a rule whereto thou art unapt: Ask pardon [out on thee!] of God for thine adulterous deed.
Lo, the unhappy man to us complaining came of thee; Of severance he made his moan and for redress did plead.
Hark ye, I've ta'en an oath to God, I'll not be false unto, Nay, I will quit me of what's due unto my faith and creed;
An if thou cross me in this thing I write to thee, I swear, Vultures and eagles presently upon thy flesh shall feed.
Divorce Suad and by Kumeit and Nesr ben Dhiban Unto my presence all equipped, despatch her with all speed.

Then he folded the letter and sealing it with his seal, delivered it to El Kumeit and Nesr ben Dhiban [whom it was his wont to employ on matters of weight, because of their trustiness] who took the letter and carried it to Medina, where they went in to Merwan and saluting him, delivered to him the letter and told him how the case stood. He read the letter and fell a-weeping; but it was not in his power to refuse obedience to the Khalif; so he went in to Suad and acquainting her with the case, divorced her in the presence of Kumeit and Nesr; after which he equipped her and delivered her to them, together with a letter to the Khalif, under his own hand and seal, to the following purport:

Prince of the Faithful, hasten not: with a good grace thy vow I will accomplish, nor constraint to force me dost thou need.

Why styl'st thou me adulterer and traitor? If she pleased My fancy, 'twas in me no sin, as eke thou wilt concede;
For lo, there comes to thee a sun; amongst all folk that be, Mortals or Jinn, there's none may match with her in very deed.

So the messengers returned with Suad to Damascus and delivered to Muawiyeh the letter, which when he had read, he said, 'Verily, he hath obeyed handsomely, but he is extravagant in his praise of the woman.' Then he called for her and found her such a beauty as he had never seen, for grace and elegance and symmetry; moreover, he talked with her and found her fluent of speech and happy in diction and expression. Quoth he, 'Bring me the Arab.' So they fetched the man, who came, sore disordered for the evil dealing of fortune, and Muawiyeh said to him, 'O Arab, if thou wilt give her up to me, I will give thee in her stead three slave-girls, high-bosomed maids like moons, and a thousand dinars with each. Moreover, I will assign thee on the treasury such an annual sum as shall content and enrich thee.' When the Arab heard this, he gave a groan [and swooned away], so that Muawiyeh thought he was dead. When he revived, the Khalif said to him, 'What ails thee?' And the Arab answered, 'With heavy heart and in sore need, I appeal to thee from the injustice of Merwan ben el Hekem; but to whom shall I appeal from thine injustice?' And he recited the following verses:

God save the Khalif! Make me not, as one, I prithee, who For succour from the burning sands unto the fire doth sue.
Suad restore to one distraught, afflicted, morn and eve In memory who passeth still and anguish ever new.
Loose thou my bonds and give her back, nor grudge her unto me. Thou'lt find me no ungrateful one, if thus with me thou do.

Then said he, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wert thou to give me all the riches of the Khalifate, yet would I not take them without Suad.' And he recited this verse:

My heart to love other than Suad to me Denies, for my drink and my victual is she.

Quoth the Khalif, 'Thou confessest to having divorced her and Merwan hath done the like; so now we will give her her choice. If she choose other than thee, we will marry her to him, and if she choose thee, we will restore her to thee.' 'Be it so,' replied the Arab. So Muawiyeh said to her, 'What sayst thou, O Suad? Which dost thou choose? The Commander of the Faithful, with his power and glory and dominion and palaces and treasures and all else thou seest at his command, or Merwan ben el Hekem, with his violence and tyranny, or this Arab, with his hunger and poverty?' So she recited the following verses:

This man, for all he be in hunger and distress, Dearer to me than folk and neighbour is, nathelesse;
Yea, he is more to me than he who wears the crown, Merwan his governor and all who wealth possess.

Then said she, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not forsake him by reason of the shifts of fortune or the perfidies of Fate, for there is between us old companionship, that may not be forgotten, and love beyond proof; and indeed it is but just that I should have patience with him in his stress, even as I shared fair fortune with him in better days.' The Khalif marvelled at her wit and love and constancy and ordering her ten thousand dirhems, delivered her to the Arab, who took his wife and went away.

THE LOVERS OF BASSORA.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was sleepless one night; so he sent for El Asmaï and Hussein el Khelia[1] and said to them, 'Tell me a story and do thou begin, O Hussein.'

[1] Abou Ali el Hussein, surnamed El Khelia [the Wag] on account of his gay and licentious humour, a well-known poet of the Court of the early Abbaside Khalifs. He was a native of Bassora and a boon-companion of Abou Nuwas; but his introduction here is an anachronism, as he did not make his appearance at court till the succeeding reign, that of Er Reshid's son, El Amin.

'It is well, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Hussein. 'Some years ago, I went down to Bassora, to present to Mohammed ben Suleiman er Rebiy[1] an ode I had composed in his honour; and he accepted it and bade me abide [at his court]. One day, I went out to El Mirbed,[2] by way of El Muhalliyeh,[3] and being oppressed by the great heat, went up to a great door, to ask for drink, when I was aware of a damsel, as she were a swaying willow-wand, with languishing eyes, eyebrows arched and finely pencilled and smooth and polished cheeks. She was clad in a shift the colour of a pomegranate-flower, and a vest of Senaa[4] work; but the whiteness of her body overcame the redness of her shift, through which glittered two breasts like twin pomegranates and a belly, as it were a roll of fine Egyptian linen, with creases like scrolls of pure white paper, filled with musk. Round her neck she wore a [chain and] amulet of red gold, that fell down between her breasts, and on the table of her forehead were browlocks like jet. Her eyebrows joined one another and her eyes were like lakes; she had an aquiline nose and thereunder teeth like pearls. In fine, pleasantness prevailed in every part of her; but she seemed dejected and distracted and came and went in the vestibule, walking upon the hearts of her lovers, whilst her legs made mute the voices of their ankle-rings; and indeed she was as saith the poet:

Each member of her charms so sweet and good Hath given rise to its similitude.

I was smitten with awe of her, O Commander of the Faithful, and drew near to salute her, and behold, the house and vestibule and street were fragrant with musk.

[1] Governor of Bassora, but not in El Hussein's time.
[2] A place near Bassora.
[3] A quarter of Bassora.
[4] Senaa, capital of the Arabian province of Yemen.

So I saluted her and she returned my greeting with a dejected voice and a grieving heart, consumed with the ardour of passion. Then said I to her, "O my lady, I am an old man and a stranger, and sore oppress of thirst. Wilt thou order me a draught of water, and God will requite thee?" "Away, O old man!" answered she. "I am distracted from [all thought of] meat and drink." "By what ailment, O my lady?" asked I. Quoth she, "I love one who dealeth not justly by me and desire one who will none of me. Wherefore I am afflicted with the wakefulness of those who watch the stars." "O my lady," said I, "is there on the face of the earth one to whom thou hast a mind and who hath no mind to thee?" "Yes," answered she; "and this by reason of the perfection of beauty and amorous grace with which he is endowed." "And why standest thou in this porch?" asked I. "This is his road," answered she, "and the hour of his passing by." "O my lady," said I, "have ye ever foregathered and had such commerce as might cause this passion?" At this she heaved a deep sigh; the tears rained down upon her cheeks, as they were dew falling upon roses, and she recited these verses:

Night dcxcv.

Even as two cassia-boughs entwined above a mead we were; We drank the fragrance of delights in all life has of fair.
But this branch rent itself away from that, and now thou seest One lone and yearning unto that which was its mate whilere.

Quoth I, "And what betideth thee of thy love for this youth?" She answered, "I see the sun upon the walls of his people and I think that it is he; or haply I catch sight of him unexpectedly and am confounded and the blood and the life flee from my body and I abide without reason for weeks." "Excuse me," said I; "for I also have suffered, for love-longing, that which is upon thee of distraction of soul and wasting of body and loss of strength; and I see in thee pallor and emaciation, such as testify of the fever-fits

of passion. But how shouldst thou be unsmitten of passion, and thou a sojourner in the land of Bassora?" "By Allah," said she, "before I became enamoured of this youth, I was endowed with the uttermost of amorous grace and was resplendent with beauty and perfection and ravished all the princes of Bassora, till he fell in love with me!" "And who parted you?" asked I. "The vicissitudes of fortune," answered she; "but the manner of our separation was a strange one; and it was on this wise.

One New Year's day I had invited the damsels of Bassora and amongst them a girl belonging to Siran, who had bought her out of Oman for fourscore thousand dirhems. She was madly in love with me and when she entered, she threw herself upon me and well-nigh tore me in pieces with bites and pinches. Then we withdrew apart, to drink wine at our ease, till our meat was ready and our delight was complete, and she toyed with me and I with her, and now I was upon her and now she upon me. Presently, the fumes of the wine moved her to strike her hand on the ribbon of my trousers, whereby it became loosed, unknown of either of us, and my trousers fell down in our play. At this moment, he came in, unobserved, and seeing me thus, was wroth and made off, as doth the Arab filly, when she hears the tinkle of her bridle. This, O elder, was three years ago, and since that time I have never ceased to excuse myself to him and entreat him with soft words and implore his indulgence, but he will neither cast a look at me nor write me a word nor speak to me by a messenger nor hear aught from me." Quoth I, "Is he an Arab or a foreigner?" And she, "Out on thee! He is of the princes of Bassora." "Is he old or young?" asked I. She looked at me laughingly and said, "Thou art certainly a fool! He is like the moon at its full, smooth-cheeked and beardless, nor is there any defect in him except his aversion to me." "What is his name?" asked I, and she,

Night dcxcv.

"What wilt thou do with him?" "I will do my endeavour to come at him," answered I, "that I may bring about reunion between you.' Quoth she, "I will tell thee, on condition that thou carry him a letter." And I said, "I have no objection to that." Then said she, "His name is Zemreh ben el Mughaireh, hight Aboussekhaa, and his palace is at El Mirbed."

Therewith she called to those within for inkhorn and paper and tucking up her sleeves, showed two wrists like bracelets of silver. She headed her letter with "In the name of God etc.;" then wrote as follows, "O my lord, the forbearance of an invocation at the head of this my letter proclaimeth my insufficiency, and know that if my prayer had been answered, thou wouldst not have left me; for how often have I prayed that thou shouldest not leave me, and yet thou didst leave me! Were it not that distress with me transcends the bounds of restraint, that which thy servant hath forced herself to do in writing this letter were succourable to her, for all her despair of thee, of her knowledge of thee that thou wilt forbear to answer. Do thou fulfil her desire, O my lord, of a sight of thee from the porch, as thou passest in the street, wherewith thou wilt revive the dead soul in her. Or better still, do thou write her a letter with thine own hand (which God endow with all excellence!) and appoint it in requital of the privities that were between us in the nights of time past, whereof thou knowest. O my lord, was I not to thee a lover wasted with passion? If thou answer my prayer, I will give thee thanks and to God praise; and so peace be on thee!"

Then she gave me the letter and I went away. Next morning I repaired to the Viceroy's door, where I found an assembly of the notables of Bassora, and amongst them a youth who adorned the place and surpassed in grace and majesty all who were there; and indeed the Amir

Mohammed set him above himself. I asked who he was and behold, it was Zemreh himself: so I said to myself, "Verily, there hath betided yonder unhappy one that which hath betided her!"[1] Then I betook myself to El Mirbed and waited at the door of his house, till he came riding up in state, when I accosted him and invoking lavish blessings on him, gave him the letter. When he read it, he said to me, "O old man, we have taken another in her stead. Wilt thou see the substitute?" And I answered, "Yes." Whereupon he called out a woman's name, and there came forth a damsel who put to shame the sun and moon, swelling-breasted, walking the gait of one who hastens without fear, to whom he gave the letter, saying, "Do thou answer it." When she read it, she turned pale and said to me, "O old man, ask pardon of God for this that thou hast brought." So I went out, dragging my feet, and returned to her. When she saw me, she said, "What is behind thee?" I answered, "Evil and despair." And she said, "Have thou no concern of him. Where are God and Providence?" Then she ordered me five hundred dinars and I took them and went away.

Some days after I passed by the place and saw there horsemen and footmen. So I went in and lo, these were the companions of Zemreh, who were begging her to return to him; but she said, "No, by Allah, I will not look him in the face!" And she prostrated herself in gratitude to God and exultation over Zemreh. Then I drew near her, and she pulled out to me a letter, wherein was written, after the invocation of the Deity, the following: "O my lady, but for my forbearance towards thee, [may God prolong thy life!] I would relate somewhat of what betided from thee and set out my excuse, in that thou transgressedst against me, whenas thou wast manifestly a sinner against thyself and me in breach of vows

[1] *i.e.* she had no power to avert that which was fated to betide her.

and lack of faith and preference of another to me; for, by Allah, on whom we call for help against that which was of thy free-will, thou didst transgress against the love of me; and so peace be on thee!" Then she showed me the presents and things of price he had sent her, which were of the value of thirty thousand dinars. I saw her again after this, and Zemreh had married her.'

Quoth Er Reshid, 'Had not Zemreh been beforehand with us, I had certainly had to do with her myself.'

ISAAC OF MOSUL AND HIS MISTRESS AND THE DEVIL.

[Quoth Isaac ben Ibrahim el Mausili], I was in my house one night in the winter-time, when the clouds spread themselves [over the sky] and the rains poured down in torrents, as from the mouths of water-skins, and the folk forbore to come and go about the ways by reason of that which was therein of rain and mire. Now I was heavy at heart for that none of my brethren came to me nor could I go to them, for the mud and mire: so I said to my servant, 'Bring me wherewithal I may divert myself.' So he brought me meat and drink, but I had no heart to eat, without some one to bear me company, and I ceased not to look out of window and watch the ways till nightfall, when I bethought myself of a damsel belonging to one of the sons of El Mehdi,[1] of whom I was enamoured and who was skilled in singing and playing upon instruments of music, and said to myself, 'Were she here with us to-night, my joy would be complete and my night would be abridged of the melancholy and restlessness that are upon me.'

At this moment one knocked at the door, saying, 'Shall

[1] Third Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty [A.D. 775-785] and father of Haroun er Reshid.

a beloved enter, who standeth at the door?' Quoth I, 'Meseems the plant of my desire hath fruited.' So I went to the door and found my mistress, with a long green skirt wrapped about her and a kerchief of brocade on her head, to fend her from the rain. She was covered with mud to her knees and all that was upon her was drenched with water from the gutters; in short, she was in a rare pickle. So I said to her, 'O my lady, what brings thee hither through all this mud?' Quoth she, 'Thy messenger came to me and set forth to me that which was with thee of love and longing, so that I could not choose but yield and hasten to thee.' I marvelled at this, but was ashamed to tell her that I had sent no messenger; so I said, 'Praised be God that He hath brought us together, after all I have suffered for the pangs of patience! Verily, hadst thou delayed an hour longer, I must have run to thee, because of my much love and longing for thee.' Night dcxcvi.

Then I called to my boy for water, that I might better her plight, and he brought a kettle full of hot water. I bade them pour it over her feet, whilst I set to work to wash them myself; after which I made her doff what she had on and calling for one of my richest dresses, clad her therein. Then I would have called for food, but she refused and I said to her, 'Art thou for wine?' 'Yes,' answered she. So I fetched cups and she said to me, 'Who shall sing?' 'I, O my lady,' answered I. But she said, 'I care not for that.' 'One of my damsels?' suggested I. 'I have no mind to that either,' said she. 'Then,' quoth I, 'do thou sing thyself.' 'Not I,' replied she. 'Who then shall sing for thee?' asked I. Quoth she, 'Go out and seek some one to sing for me.' So I went out, in obedience to her, though I despaired of finding any one at such a time, and fared on till I came to the main street, where I saw a blind man striking the earth with his staff and saying, 'May God not requite with good

those with whom I was! When I sang, they hearkened not, and when I was silent, they despised me.' So I said to him, 'Art thou a singer?' 'Yes,' answered he. Quoth I, 'Wilt thou finish thy night with us and cheer us with thy company?' 'If it be thy will,' replied he, 'take my hand.'

So I took his hand and leading him to my house, said to the damsel, 'O my mistress, I have brought a blind singer, with whom we may take our pleasure and he will not see us.' 'Bring him to me,' said she. So I brought him in and invited him to eat. He ate a little and washed his hands, after which I brought him wine and he drank three cupsful. Then he said to me, 'Who art thou?' And I answered, 'I am Isaac ben Ibrahim el Mausili.' Quoth he, 'I have heard of thee and now I rejoice in thy company.' And I said, 'O my lord, I am glad in thy gladness.' 'O Isaac,' said he, 'sing to me.' So I took the lute, by way of jest, and said, 'I hear and obey.' When I had made an end of my song, he said to me, 'O Isaac, verily thou comest nigh to be a singer!' His words belittled me in mine own eyes and I threw the lute from my hand; whereupon he said, 'Hast thou not with thee some one who is skilled in singing?' 'I have a damsel with me,' answered I; and he said, 'Bid her sing.' Quoth I, 'Wilt thou sing, when thou hast had enough of her singing?' 'Yes,' answered he. So she sang and he said, 'Nay, thou hast achieved nought.' Whereupon she threw the lute from her hand in anger and said, 'We have done our best: if thou have aught, favour us with it.' Quoth he, 'Bring me a lute which no hand has touched.' So I bade the servant bring him a new lute and he tuned it and preluding in a mode I knew not, sang the following verses:

Across the middle dusk of night a maid fares swift and straight, Who knows the visitation-tides, to where her love doth wait.
'Twas but her greeting startled us and eke her voice that said, "Shall a belovéd enter in who standeth at the gate?"

When she heard this, she looked at me askance and said, 'Could not thy breast hold the secret that was between us an hour, but thou must discover it to this man?' But I swore to her [that I had not told him] and excused myself to her and fell to kissing her hands and tickling her breasts and biting her cheeks, till she laughed and turning to the blind man, said to him, 'Sing, O my lord!' So he took the lute and sang as follows:

How often have I visited the fair and side by side, With soft caressing hands have stroked the fingers henna-dyed!
How often have I handled eke the breasts' pomegranates ripe And the plump apples of the cheeks with bites and kisses plied!

So I said to her, 'O my lady, who can have told him what we were about.' 'True,' answered she, and we removed to a distance from him. Presently quoth he, 'I have a need to make water.' And I said, 'O boy, take the candle and go before him.' Then he went out and tarried a long while. So we went in search of him, but could not find him; and behold, the doors were locked and the keys in the closet, and we knew not whether he had flown up to heaven or sunk into the earth. Wherefore I knew that he was Iblis and that he had done me a pander's office and returned, recalling to myself the words of Abou Nuwas in the following verses:

I marvel at Iblis no less for his pride Than the lewdness and meanness that mark his intent.
To Adam himself he refused to prostrate, Yet his lineage to serve as a pimp is content.

THE LOVERS OF MEDINA.

[Quoth Ibrahim Abou Ishac], I was once in my house, when one knocked at the door; so my servant went out and returned, saying, 'A comely youth is at the door, seeking admission.' I bade admit him and there came in to me a young man, on whom were traces of sickness,

and he said, 'I have long wished to meet thee, for I have an occasion to thee.' 'What is it?' asked I. Whereupon he pulled out three hundred dinars and laying them before me, said, 'I beseech thee to accept these and compose me an air to two lines of verse I have made.' 'Repeat them to me,' said I. And he recited the following lines:

Night dcxcbii.

By Allah, O mine eyes that sinned against my heart of yore, Quench with your tears the fire of woe that burneth ever sore.
Fate is of those that chide at me for her, my heart's abode, Whom, though in grave-clothes I be lapped, I never shall see more.

So I set the verses to a plaintive air and sang it to him; whereupon he swooned away and I thought that he was dead. However, after a while, he came to himself and said to me, 'Repeat the air.' But I conjured him by Allah to excuse me, saying, 'I fear lest thou die.' 'Would it might be so!' replied he and ceased not to importune me, till I had pity on him and repeated it; whereupon he cried out grievously and fell into a worse [swoon] than before and I doubted not but that he was dead; but, after I had sprinkled rose-water on him awhile, he revived and sat up. I praised God for his recovery and laying the dinars before him, said to him, 'Take thy money and depart from me.' Quoth he, 'I have no need of the money and thou shalt have the like of it, if thou wilt repeat the air.' My heart rejoiced in the money and I said, 'I will repeat it, but on three conditions: the first, that thou abide with me and eat of my victual, till thou regain strength; the second, that thou drink wine enough to cheer thy heart; and the third, that thou tell me thy story.'

He agreed to this and ate and drank; after which he said, 'I am of the people of Medina and I went forth one day a-pleasuring with my friends and following the road to El Akic,[1] saw a company of girls and amongst them a

[1] A well-known valley near Medina.

damsel as she were a branch pearled with dew, with eyes whose glances stole away his soul who looked on them. They rested in the shade till the end of the day, when they went away, leaving in my heart wounds slow to heal. I returned [next day], to seek news of her, but found none who could tell me of her; so I sought her in the streets and markets, but could come on no trace of her; wherefore I fell ill of grief and told my case to one of my kinsmen, who said to me, "No harm shall befall thee: the days of spring are not yet past and by and by it will rain, whereupon she will go forth, and I will go out with thee, and do thou thy will." His words comforted my heart and I waited till El Akic ran [with water], when I went forth with my friends and kinsmen and sat in the same place as before. We had not sat long before up came the women, like horses running for a wager; and I said to a girl of my kindred, "Say to yonder damsel, 'Quoth yonder man to thee, "He did well who said:

She shot a shaft at me that pierced my bosom through and through;
Then turned away and by that act did wound and scars renew."'"

So she went to her and repeated my words, to which she replied, saying, "Tell him that he said well who answered thus:

'There is with us the like of that whereof thou dost complain: Patience; belike, to heal our hearts relief shall soon ensue.'"

I refrained from further speech for fear of scandal and rose to go away. She rose at my rising, and I followed and she looked back at me, till she saw I had noted her abode. Then she began to come to me and I to go to her, so that we foregathered and met often, till the thing was noised abroad and grew notorious and her father came to know it. However, I ceased not to do my endeavour to meet her and complained of my case to my father, who assembled our kindred and repaired to her father, to ask her in

marriage for me. But her father said, "Had this been proposed to me before he dishonoured her, I would have consented; but now the thing is notorious and I am loath to verify the saying of the folk."'

Then (continues Ibrahim) I repeated the air to him and he went away, after having acquainted me with his abode, and we became friends. Now I was devoted to the Barmecides; so next time Jaafer ben Yehya sat [to receive visits], I attended, as of my wont, and sang to him the young man's verses. They pleased him and he drank some cups of wine and said, 'Out on thee! Whose song is that?' So I told him the young man's story and he bade me ride to him and give him assurance of the attainment of his desire. Accordingly I fetched him to Jaafer, who asked him to repeat his story. He did so and Jaafer said, 'Trust me, I will marry thee to her.' So his heart was comforted and he abode with us.

On the morrow, Jaafer mounted and went in to Er Reshid, to whom he related the story. The Khalif was pleased with it and sending for the young man and myself, commanded me to repeat the air and drank thereto. Then he wrote to the governor of the Hejaz, bidding him send the girl's father and his household to his court in honourable fashion and spare no expense for their outfit. So, in a little while, they came and the Khalif, sending for the man, commanded him to marry his daughter to her lover; after which he gave him a hundred thousand dinars, and the man returned to his people. As for the young man, he abode one of Jaafer's boon-companions, till there happened what happened;[1] whereupon he returned with his household to Medina, may God the Most High have mercy upon all their souls!

[1] *i.e.* the murder of Jaafer and massacre of his kinsmen by the "good" Haroun er Reshid.

EL MELIK EN NASIR AND HIS VIZIER.

There was given to Abou Aamir ben Merwan, Vizier [to El Melik en Nasir of Egypt],[1] a boy of the Christians, than whom never fell eyes on a handsomer. En Nasir saw him and said to the Vizier, 'Whence comes this boy?' 'From God,' answered Abou Aamir; whereupon, 'Wilt thou fright us with stars,' quoth the King, 'and captive us with moons?' Abou Aamir excused himself to him and making up a present, sent it to him with the boy, to whom he said, 'Be thou part of the present: were it not of necessity, my soul had not consented to give thee away.' And he wrote with him these verses:

Behold the full moon, O my lord, that cometh to thy sky; For none, that heaven than earth of moons is worthier, may deny.
My soul, to pleasure thee, I give, nor ever yet of one, His soul to pleasure one who gave, before myself, heard I.

The thing pleased En Nasir and he requited him with much treasure and the Vizier became high in favour with him. After this, a slave-girl, one of the loveliest women in the world, was presented to the Vizier, and he feared lest this should come to the King's ears and he desire her, and the like should happen as with the boy. So he made up a present still costlier than the first and sent it with her to the King, together with these verses: Night DCXCVIII.

My lord, the very sun is this; the moon thou hadst before: So now these planets twain shall meet and glitter side by side;
A combination presaging fair fortune to my life. Do thou with them in all delight of Paradise abide;
For they, by Allah, have no third in beauty nor hast thou A second in dominion in all the world so wide.

Wherefore his credit redoubled with En Nasir; but after a while, one of his enemies maligned him to the King, alleging that there still lurked in him desire for the boy

[1] See Vol. IV. p. 116, note.

and that he ceased not to lust after him, whenever the North wind moved him, and to gnash his teeth for that he had given him away. Quoth the King, 'Wag not thou thy tongue at him, or I will cut off thy head.' However, he wrote Abou Aamir a letter, as from the boy, to the following effect: 'O my lord, thou knowest that thou wast all and one to me and that I never ceased from delight with thee. Albeit I am with the Sultan, yet would I choose rather solitude with thee, but that I fear the King's mischief: wherefore contrive thou to demand me of him.' This letter he sent to Abou Aamir by a little page, whom he enjoined to say, 'This is from such an one: the King never speaks to him.' When the Vizier read the letter and heard the cheating message, he smelt a rat and wrote on the back of the scroll the following lines:

After experience's laws, doth it become a man Of sense unto the lion's lair his steps foolwise to bend?
I'm none of those whose reason love and passion overcrow; Nor am I ignorant of that the envious do pretend.
Wert thou my soul, I gave thee up obediently, and now Shall soul, from body sundered, back again thereunto wend?

When En Nasir knew of this answer, he marvelled at the Vizier's quickness of wit and would never again lend ear to any insinuation against him. Then said he to him, 'How didst thou escape falling into the snare?' And he answered, saying, 'Because my reason is unentangled in the toils of passion.'

THE ROGUERIES OF DELILEH THE CRAFTY AND HER DAUGHTER ZEYNEB THE TRICKSTRESS.

There lived in the Khalifate of Haroun er Reshid two men named Ahmed ed Denef and Hassan Shouman, past masters in trick and cunning, who had done rare things in their time; wherefore the Khalif invested them with

dresses of honour and made them captains of the watch for Baghdad, Ahmed of the right hand and Hassan of the left hand. Moreover, to Ahmed he committed the ward of [the district] without [the city walls] and appointed each of them a stipend of a thousand dinars a month and forty men to be at their commandment. So Ahmed and Hassan went forth in company of the Amir Khalid, the Master of Police, attended each by his forty followers on horseback and preceded by the crier, proclaiming aloud and saying, 'By order of the Khalif, none is captain of the watch of the right hand but Ahmed ed Denef and none is captain of the watch of the left hand but Hassan Shouman, and it behoveth all to give ear to their word and pay them respect.'

Now there was in the city an old woman called Delileh the Crafty, who had a daughter by name Zeyneb the Trickstress. They heard the proclamation aforesaid and Zeyneb said to her mother, 'O my mother, see yonder fellow, Ahmed ed Denef. He came hither from Cairo, a fugitive, and played the double-dealer in Baghdad, till he foisted himself into the Khalif's favour and is now become captain of the watch of the right hand, whilst that mangy knave Hassan Shouman is captain of the left hand, and each has a monthly wage of a thousand dinars and a table spread morning and evening, whilst we abide unemployed and neglected in this house, without estate and without honour, and have none to ask of us.'

Now Delileh was a past mistress in all manner of craft and trickery and double-dealing; she could wile the very serpents out of their holes and Iblis himself might have learnt deceit of her. Her father had been governor of the carrier-pigeons to the Khalif and used to rear them to carry letters and messages, wherefore each bird in time of need was dearer to the Khalif than one of his sons; and in this capacity he had a stipend of a thousand dinars a

month. Moreover, her husband had been town captain of Baghdad and had a monthly wage from the Khalif of a thousand dinars; but he died, leaving two daughters, one of whom was married and had a son, by name Ahmed el Lekit, and the other, Zeyneb, unmarried. So Zeyneb said to her mother, 'Up and play off some trick that may make us notorious in Baghdad, so haply we may get our father's stipends for ourselves.' 'As thy head liveth, O my daughter,' answered the old woman, 'I will play off such rogueries in Baghdad as never did Ahmed ed Denef nor Hassan Shouman!'

Night dcccix.

So saying, she rose and bound her face with the chin-veil and donned clothes such as the Soufi Fakirs wear, trousers of white wool falling over her heels, and a gown of the like stuff and a broad girdle. Moreover, she took an ewer and filled it to the neck with water; after which she set three dinars in the mouth and stopped it up with palm fibre. Then she threw round her neck a rosary as big as a load of firewood and taking in her hand a flag, made of parti-coloured rags, red and yellow and green, went out, saying, 'Allah! Allah!' with tongue celebrating the praises of God, whilst her heart galloped in the race-course of abominations, seeking how she might play some sharping trick in the town. She fared on from street to street, till she came to an alley swept and watered and paved with marble, where she saw a vaulted gateway, with a threshold of alabaster, and a Moorish porter standing at the door, which was of sandal-wood, plated with brass and furnished with a ring of silver.

Now this house belonged to the Chief of the Khalif's Ushers, a man of great wealth in lands and houses and stipends, and he was called the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric[1] for that his blow forewent his word. He was married to a handsome girl, whom he loved and who had

[1] *i.e.* Ill of the Way.

made him swear, on the night of his going in to her, that he would take none other to wife nor lie abroad from her a night. One day, he went to the Divan and saw that each Amir had with him a son or two. Then he entered the bath and looking at his face in the mirror, saw that the white hairs in his beard outnumbered the black and said in himself, 'Will not He who took thy father vouchsafe thee a son?' So he went in to his wife, in an angry mood, and she said to him, 'Good-even to thee.' 'Away from my sight!' answered he. 'From the day I saw thee I have seen nothing of good.' 'How so?' asked she. Quoth he, 'On the night of my going in to thee, thou madest me swear to take no other wife than thee, and to-day I have seen each Amir with a son and some with two. So I bethought me of death and called to mind that I had been blessed with neither son nor daughter and that he who leaves no male child is not remembered. This, then, is the reason of my anger, for thou art barren and conceivest not by me.' 'The name of God be upon thee!' answered she. 'Indeed, I have worn out the mortars with beating wool and pounding drugs, and I am not to blame; the fault of my barrenness is with thee, for that thou art a snub-nosed mule and thy sperm is thin and impregnateth not neither getteth children.' Quoth he, 'When I return from my journey, I will take another wife.' And she said, 'My portion is with God!' Then he went out from her and each of them repented of the sharp words spoken to the other.

As the Amir's wife looked forth of her lattice, as she were a bride of the treasures,[1] for the jewellery upon her, Delileh espied her and seeing her clad in costly clothes and ornaments, said to herself, 'O Delileh, it would be a

[1] The beautiful damsels who guard enchanted treasures, such as that of Es Shemerdel (see supra, p. 17 et seq.), are called by the Arabs "brides of the treasure."

rare trick to entice yonder young lady from her husband's house and strip her of all her clothes and jewels and make off with them!' So she took up her stand under the windows of the Amir's house, and fell to calling aloud upon the name of God and saying, 'Be present, O ye friends of God!' Whereupon all the women of the street looked from their lattices and seeing the old woman clad, after the Soufi manner, in clothes of white wool, as she were a pavilion of light, said, 'God vouchsafe us a blessing by the intermission of this pious old woman, from whose face issueth light!' And Khatoun, the wife of the Amir Hassan, wept and said to her maid, 'Go down and kiss the hand of Sheikh Abou Ali, the porter, and say to him, "Let yonder pious old woman enter, so haply we may get a blessing of her."' So she went down to the porter and kissing his hand, said to him, 'Quoth my mistress to thee, "Let yonder pious old woman come in to her, so she may get a blessing of her;" and belike her benediction may extend to us likewise.' Accordingly, he went up to Delileh and kissed her hand, but she forbade him, saying, 'Away from me, lest my ablution be avoided![1] Thou, also, O Abou Ali, art absorbed [in the contemplation of the Deity,] one of the elect of God and under His especial guardianship. Verily, He shall deliver thee from this servitude.'

Night Dec.

Now the Amir owed the porter three months' wage and he was straitened for want thereof, but knew not how to recover it from him; so he said to the old woman, 'O my mother, give me to drink from thy pitcher, so I may have a blessing through thee.' So she took the pitcher from her shoulder and waved it in the air, so that the stopper flew out and the three dinars fell to the ground. The porter saw them and picked them up, saying in himself, 'Glory to God! This old woman is one of the saints that have hidden treasures at their commandment!

[1] *i.e.* by contact with a person in a state of legal impurity.

It hath been revealed to her that I am in want of money; so she hath conjured me these three dinars out of the air.' Then said he to her, 'O my aunt, take these three dinars that fell from thy pitcher.' 'Away with them from me!' answered she. 'I am of the folk that occupy not themselves with the things of the world. Take them and use them for thine own benefit, in lieu of those the Amir owes thee.' Quoth he, 'Glory to Allah for succour! This is of the chapter of revelation!'

Then the maid accosted her and kissing her hands, carried her up to her mistress, whom she found as she were a treasure, whose guardian spells had been done away; and Khatoun bade her welcome and kissed her hand. 'O my daughter,' said Delileh, 'I come not to thee but by God's [especial] advertisement.' Then Khatoun set food before her; but she said, 'O my daughter, I eat but of the food of Paradise and fast continually, breaking my fast but five days in the year. But I see thee troubled and desire that thou tell me the cause of thy trouble.' 'O my mother,' answered Khatoun, 'I made my husband swear, on my wedding-night, that he would take none other than me to wife, and he saw others with children and longed for them and said to me, "Thou art barren." And I answered, "Thou art a mule that begetteth not." Whereupon he left me in anger, saying, "When I come back from my journey, I will take another wife." So, O my mother, I fear lest he put me away and take another wife, for he hath houses and lands and stipends galore, and if he have children by another, they will possess the property from me.' 'O my daughter,' said Delileh, 'knowest thou not of my master, the Sheikh Aboulhemlat, whom if a debtor visit, God quitteth him his debt, and if a barren woman, she conceiveth?' 'O my mother,' answered Khatoun, 'since the day of my wedding, I have not gone forth the house, no, not even to pay visits of congratulation or con-

dolence.' Quoth the old woman, 'I will carry thee to him and do thou cast thy burden on him and make a vow to him; so peradventure, when thy husband returns from his journey, he will lie with thee and thou shalt conceive by him and bear a girl or a boy: but, be it male or female, it shall be a dervish of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat.'

So Khatoun rose and arraying herself in her richest clothes, donned all her jewellery and said to her maid, 'Keep thou an eye on the house.' And she said, 'I hear and obey, O my lady.' Then she went down and the porter met her and said to her, 'Whither away, O my lady?' 'I go to visit the Sheikh Aboulhemlat,' answered she; and he said, 'Be a year's fast incumbent on me! Verily yon old woman is of the saints of God and full of holiness! Moreover, O my lady, she hath hidden treasure at her commandment, for she gave me three dinars of red gold and divined my case, without my asking her, and knew that I was needy.' Then the old woman went out with Khatoun, saying to her, 'God willing, O my daughter, when thou hast visited the Sheikh Aboulhemlat, there shall betide thee solace of soul and by God's leave thou shalt conceive, and thy husband shall love thee by the blessing of the Sheikh and shall never again say a despiteful word to thee.' Quoth Khatoun, 'I will go with thee to him, O my mother!' But Delileh said in herself, 'Where shall I strip her and take her clothes and jewellery, with the folk coming and going?' Then she said to her, 'O my daughter, walk thou behind me, within sight of me, for thy mother[1] is a woman sorely burthened; every one who hath a burden casteth it on me and all who have pious offerings[2] to make give them to me and kiss my hand.'

So the lady followed her at a distance, whilst her anklets tinkled and the coins and ornaments plaited in the tresses

[1] *i.e.* herself. [2] ex voto.

of her hair clinked as she went, till they reached the bazaar of the merchants. Presently, they came to the shop of a young merchant, by name Sidi Hassan, who had no hair on his face and was very handsome. He saw the lady coming and fell to casting stolen glances at her, which when the old woman saw, she beckoned to her and said, 'Sit down in this shop, till I return to thee.' So Khatoun sat down before the shop of the young merchant, who cast one glance at her, that cost him a thousand sighs. Then the old woman accosted him and saluted him, saying, 'Is not thy name Sidi Hassan, son of the merchant Muhsin?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'who told thee my name?' Quoth she, 'Folk of repute directed me to thee. Know that this young lady is my daughter and her father was a merchant, who died and left her much good. She is come of marriageable age and the wise say, "Offer thy daughter in marriage and not thy son;" and all her life she hath not come forth the house till this day. Now I have had a divine advertisement and it hath been commanded me in secret to marry her to thee; so, if thou art poor, I will give thee capital and will open thee two shops, instead of one.'

When the young merchant heard this, he said in himself, 'I asked God for a bride, and He hath given me three things, coin and caze and clothing.' Then he said to the old woman, 'O my mother, that which thou proposest to me is well; but this long while my mother saith to me, "I wish to marry thee," and I reply, "I will not marry, except on the sight of my own eyes."' 'Rise and follow me,' answered Delileh, 'and I will show her to thee, naked.' So he rose and shut his shop and took a purse of a thousand dinars, saying in himself, 'Belike we may need to buy somewhat or pay the fees for drawing up the [marriage] contract.' The old woman bade him walk behind the young lady, so as to keep her in sight, and

Night dccl.

said to herself, 'Where shall I carry the young merchant and the lady, that I may strip them?'

Then she walked on and Khatoun after her, followed by the young merchant, till she came to a dyery, kept by a master-dyer, by name Hajj Mohammed, a man of ill repute, cutting male and female, like the colocasia-seller's knife,[1] and loving to eat both figs and pomegranates.[2] He heard the tinkle of the ankle-rings and raising his head, saw the lady and the young man. Presently the old woman came up to him and said, 'Art thou not Hajj Mohammed?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'What dost thou want?' Quoth she, 'Folk of repute have directed me to thee. Look at yonder handsome girl, who is my daughter, and that comely beardless youth, who is my son. I brought them both up and spent much money on them. Now I have an old ruinous house, which I have shored up with wood, and the builder says to me, "Go and live in some other place, till this be repaired, lest perchance it fall upon thee." So I went forth to seek me a lodging, and people of worth directed me to thee, and I wish to lodge my son and daughter with thee.' Quoth the dyer in himself, 'Verily, here is fresh butter upon muffins come to me.' But he said to the old woman, 'True is it I have a house and saloon and upper chamber; but I cannot spare any part thereof, for I want it all for guests and for the indigo-growers [who come to me from time to time].' 'O my son,' answered she, 'it will but be for a month or two at the most, till our house be repaired, and we are strangers. Let the guest-chamber be shared between us and thee, and if thou desire that thy guests be ours, we will welcome them

[1] The colocasia is a kind of edible arum and (like the other species of its family) bears both male and female flowers on one spathe.

[2] See Vol. III. p. 179, notes 2 and 3, where sycamore fruit is referred to, instead of pomegranates; but the meaning is the same.

and eat and sleep with them.' So he gave her the keys, one big and one small and one crooked, and said to her, 'The big key is that of the house, the crooked one that of the saloon and the little one that of the upper chamber.'

Delileh took the keys and fared on, followed by the lady and the young merchant, till she came to the street in which was the house. She opened the door and entered, followed by the lady, to whom said she, 'O my daughter, this,' pointing to the saloon, 'is the lodging of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat; but go thou into the upper chamber and loose thy veil and wait till I come to thee.' So she went up and sat down. Presently up came the young merchant, whom Delileh carried into the saloon, saying, 'Sit down, whilst I fetch my daughter and show her to thee.' So he sat down and the old woman went up to Khatoun, who said to her, 'I wish to visit the Sheikh, before the folk come.' 'O my daughter,' said the old woman, 'we fear for thee.' 'Why so?' asked Khatoun. 'Because,' answered Delileh, 'here is a son of mine, a natural who knows not summer from winter, but goes ever naked. He is the Sheikh's deputy, and if he saw a girl like thee come to visit him, he would snatch her earrings and wound her ears and tear her silken clothes.[1] So do thou doff thy jewellery and clothes and I will keep them for thee, till thou hast made thy visit.' So she did off her [upper] clothes and jewels and gave them to the old woman, who said, 'I will lay them for thee on the Sheikh's curtain, that a blessing may betide thee.'

Then she went out, leaving the lady in her shift and trousers, and hid the clothes and jewels in a place on the stairs; after which she betook herself to the young merchant, whom she found awaiting the girl, and he said,

[1] The wearing of gold and silk is held reprehensible by the strict Muslim.

'Where is thy daughter, that I may see her?' But she smote upon her breast and he said, 'What ails thee?' 'Would there were no such thing as ill and envious neighbours!' answered she. 'My neighbours saw thee enter the house with me and asked me of thee; and I said, "This is a bridegroom I have found for my daughter." They envied me on thine account and said to my daughter, "Is thy mother tired of maintaining thee, that she marries thee to a leper?" So I swore to her that she should see thee naked.' Quoth he, 'I take refuge with God from the envious!' and baring his fore-arm, showed her that it was like silver. 'Have no fear,' said she; 'thou shalt see her naked, even as she shall see thee.' And he said, 'Let her come and see me.' Then he put off his sable pelisse and girdle and dagger and the rest of his clothes, except his shirt and trousers, and laid the purse of a thousand dinars with them. Quoth Delileh, 'Give them to me, that I may take care of them.' So she took them and fetching the girl's clothes and jewellery, went out with the whole and locked the door upon them.

Night dccii.

She deposited her purchase with a druggist of her acquaintance and returned to the dyer, whom she found sitting, awaiting her. Quoth he, 'God willing, the house pleaseth thee?' 'There is a blessing in it,' answered she, 'and I go now to fetch porters to carry our goods and bedding thither. But my children would have me bring them meat-patties; so do thou take this dinar and buy the patties and go and eat the morning meal with them.' 'Who shall guard the dyery meanwhile and the people's goods that are therein?' asked the dyer. 'Thy boy,' answered the old woman. 'So be it,' rejoined he and taking a covered dish, went out to do her bidding. As soon as he was gone, she fetched the clothes and jewels she had left with the druggist and going back to the dyery, said to the boy, 'Run after thy master, and I will

not stir hence till you both return.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went away.

Presently, there came up an ass-driver, a scavenger, who had been out of work for a week, and she called to him, saying, 'Hither, O ass-driver!' So he came to her and she said, 'Knowest thou my son the dyer?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'I know him.' And she said, 'The poor fellow is insolvent and loaded with debts, and as often as he is put in prison, I set him free. Now they are about to declare him bankrupt and I am going to return the goods to their owners; so do thou lend me thine ass for that purpose and take this dinar to his hire. When I am gone, take the handsaw and empty out the vats and jars and break them, that, if there come an officer from the Cadi's court, he may find nothing in the dyery.' Quoth he, 'I owe the Hajj a kindness and will do somewhat for the love of God.'

So she laid the things on the ass and made for her own house; and [God] the Protector protected her, so that she arrived there in safety and went in to her daughter Zeyneb, who said to her, 'O my mother, my heart has been with thee! What hast thou done by way of roguery?' 'I have played off four tricks on four people,' answered Delileh; 'the wife of the Chief Usher, a young merchant, a dyer and an ass-driver, and have brought thee all their spoil on the latter's ass.' 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'thou wilt nevermore be able to go about the town, for fear of the Chief Usher, whose wife's clothes and jewellery thou hast taken, and the merchant whom thou hast stripped, and the dyer whose customer's goods thou hast stolen and the owner of the ass.' 'Pshaw, my daughter!' rejoined the old woman, 'I reck not of them, save the ass-driver, who knows me.'

Meanwhile, the dyer bought the meat-patties and set out for the house, followed by his servant, bearing the food on his head. On his way thither, he passed his shop,

where he found the ass-man breaking the vats and jars and saw that there was neither stuff nor liquor left in them and that the shop was in ruins. So he said to him, 'Hold thy hand, O ass-driver!' Whereupon the latter desisted and said, 'Praised be God for thy safety, O Hajj! Indeed, my heart was with thee.' 'Why so?' asked the dyer. 'Thou art become bankrupt and they have filed a docket of thine insolvency.' 'Who told thee this?' asked the dyer. 'Thy mother told me,' answered the other, 'and bade me break the jars and empty the vats, that the apparitors might find nothing in the shop, if they should come.' 'God confound thee!' cried the dyer. 'My mother died long ago.' And he beat his breast, saying, 'Alas for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!' The ass-man also wept and said, 'Alas, for the loss of my ass!' And he said to the dyer, 'Give me back my ass, that thy mother stole from me.' The dyer laid hold of him by the throat and fell to pummelling him, saying, 'Bring me the old woman;' whilst the other pummelled him back, saying, 'Give me back my ass.' So they beat and cursed each other, till the folk collected round them and one of them said, 'What is the matter, O Hajj Mohammed?' Quoth the ass-driver, 'I will tell thee the case,' and related to them his story, saying, 'I thought I was doing the dyer a good turn; but, when he saw me, he said, "My mother is dead," and beat his breast. And now I require my ass of him, for that it is he who hath put this trick on me, that he might make me lose my beast.'

Night dcciii.

Then said the folk to the dyer, 'O Hajj Mohammed, dost thou know this old woman, that thou didst trust her with the dyery and what was therein?' And he answered, saying, 'I know her not; but she took lodgings with me to-day, she and her son and daughter. Quoth one, 'In my judgment, the dyer is bound to indemnify the ass-driver.' 'Why so?' asked another. 'Because,' replied

the first, 'he trusted not the old woman nor gave her his ass, but because he saw that the dyer had entrusted her with the dyery and its contents.' And a third said, 'O Hajj, since thou hast lodged her with thee, it behoves thee to get the man back his ass.' Then they made for the house, and the tale will come round to them again.

Meanwhile, the young merchant abode awaiting the old woman's coming with her daughter, but she came not; whilst the lady in like manner sat expecting her return with leave from her son, the possessed, the Sheikh's deputy, to go in to him. When she was weary of waiting, she rose to visit the Sheikh by herself and went down into the saloon, where she found the young merchant, who said to her, 'Come: where is thy mother, who brought me hither to marry thee?' 'My mother is dead,' answered she; 'art thou the old woman's son the ecstatic, the deputy of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat?' Quoth he, 'The swindling old beldam is no mother of mine; she hath cheated me and taken my clothes and a thousand dinars.' 'And me also hath she swindled,' said Khatoun; 'for she brought me to see the Sheikh Aboulhemlat and stripped me.' Quoth he, 'I look to thee for my clothes and my thousand dinars.' 'And I,' answered she, 'look to thee to make good my clothes and jewellery.'

At this moment in came the dyer and seeing them both stripped of their clothes, said to them, 'Tell me where your mother is.' So they told him their several cases and he exclaimed, 'Alas, for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!' And the ass-driver said, 'Alas for my ass! Give me my ass, O dyer!' Then said the dyer, 'This old woman is a sharper. Come forth, that I may lock the door.' Quoth the young merchant, 'It were a disgrace to thee that we should enter thy house, clothed, and leave it, naked.' So the dyer clad him and the damsel and sent her back to her house. Then he shut the dyery and said to the young

merchant, 'Come, let us go and search for the old woman and hand her over to the chief of the police.' So they and the ass-man repaired to the house of the master of police and made their complaint to him. Quoth he, 'How many old women are there not in the town! Go and seek for her and lay hands on her and bring her to me, and I will torture her for you and make her confess.' So they went out and sought for her all round the town; and so we will leave them for the present.

Presently, Delileh said to her daughter, 'I have a mind to play off another trick.' 'O my mother,' answered Zeyneb, 'I fear for thee;' but the old woman said, 'I am like bean-husks, proof against fire and water.' So she rose and donning a handmaid's habit, of such as serve people of condition, went out to look for some one to swindle. Presently she came to a by-street, spread with carpets and lighted with hanging lamps, and heard a noise of singing-women and beating of tambourines. Here she saw a slave-girl, bearing on her shoulder a boy, clad in trousers embroidered with silver and velvet jacket, with a pearl-embroidered cap on his head and a collar of gold set with jewels about his neck. Now the house belonged to the provost of the merchants of Baghdad, and the boy was his son. Moreover, he had a virgin daughter, to boot, who was promised in marriage, and it was her betrothal they were celebrating that day. There was with her mother a company of ladies and singing-women, and whenever she went up or down, the boy clung to her. So she called the slave-girl and said to her, 'Take thy young master and play with him, till the company break up.'

Said Delileh to the maid, 'What festivities are these in your mistress's house?' 'She celebrates her daughter's betrothal to-day,' answered the girl, 'and she hath singing-women with her.' Quoth the old woman to herself, 'O

Delileh, the thing to do is to spirit away the boy from the maid.' And she cried out, saying, 'O disgrace! O ill luck!' Then, pulling out a brass token, resembling a dinar, she said to the maid, who was a simpleton, 'Take this dinar and go in to thy mistress and say to her, "Umm el Khair rejoices with thee and is beholden to thee for thy favours, and she and her daughters will visit thee on the day of the assembly and handsel the tiring-women."' 'O my mother,' said the girl, 'my young master here catches hold of his mother, whenever he sees her.' 'Give him to me,' answered the old woman, 'whilst thou goest in and comest back.'

So she gave her the child and taking the token, went in; whereupon Delileh made off with the boy to a by-lane, where she stripped him of his clothes and jewels, saying to herself, 'O Delileh, it would indeed be a fine trick, even as thou hast cheated the maid and taken the boy from her, so now to pawn him for a thousand dinars' worth.' So she repaired to the jewel-bazaar, where she saw a Jew goldsmith seated, with a tray full of jewellery before him, and said to herself, 'It would be a rare trick to get a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery from this Jew and leave the boy in pledge with him for it.' Presently the Jew looked at them and seeing the boy, knew him for the son of the Provost of the Merchants.

Now he was a man of great wealth, but would envy his neighbour, if he sold and he himself did not; so, when he saw Delileh, he said to her, 'What seekest thou, O my mistress?' 'Art thou Master Azariah the Jew?' asked she, having first enquired his name; and he answered, 'Yes.' Quoth she, 'This boy's sister, the Provost's daughter of the Merchants, is a promised bride, and to-day they celebrate her betrothal; and she hath need of jewellery. So give me two pairs of gold ankle-rings and a pair of gold bracelets and a girdle and pearl ear-drops and a

poignard and seal-ring.' Accordingly, he brought out to her what she sought and she took of him a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery, saying, 'I will take these on approval; and what pleases them, they will keep and I will bring thee the price and leave the boy with thee till then.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' answered he. So she took the jewellery and made off to her own house, where her daughter asked her how she had sped. She told her all she had done and Zeyneb said, 'Thou wilt never be able to walk abroad again in the town.'

Meanwhile, the maid went in to her mistress and said to her, 'O my lady, Umm el Khair salutes thee and rejoices with thee, and will come, she and her daughters, on the day of the assembly and give the customary presents.' Quoth her mistress, 'Where is thy young master?' 'I left him with her,' answered the maid, 'lest he should cling to thee, and she gave me this, as largesse for the singing-women.' So the lady said to the chief of the singers, 'Take thy money;' and she took it and found it a brass token; whereupon quoth the lady to the maid, 'O baggage, go down and look to thy young master.' Accordingly, she went down and finding neither boy nor old woman, shrieked aloud and fell on her face, and their joy was changed into mourning.

When the Provost came in, his wife told him what had befallen and he went out in quest of the child, whilst the other merchants also went forth and sought, each his own road. Presently, the Provost espied the boy seated, naked, in the Jew's shop and said to the latter, 'This is my son.' 'It is well,' answered the Jew. So he took him up, without asking for his clothes, of the excess of his joy at finding him; but the Jew laid hold of him, saying, 'God succour the Khalif against thee!' Quoth the Provost, 'What ails thee, O Jew?' And he answered, saying, 'The old woman took of me a thousand dinars' worth of

jewellery for thy daughter, and left the boy in pledge for the price; and I had not trusted her, but that I knew the child for thy son.' 'My daughter needs no jewellery,' said the Provost; 'give me the boy's clothes.'

The Jew cried out, saying, 'Come to my aid, O Muslims!' but at that moment up came the dyer and the ass-man and the young merchant, who were going about, seeking the old woman, and enquired the cause of their quarrel. So they told them the case and they said, 'This old woman is a cheat, who has cheated us before you.' Then they told them how she had dealt with them, and the Provost said, 'Since I have found my son, be his clothes his ransom! If I come upon the old woman, I will require them of her.' And he carried the child home to his mother, who rejoiced in his safety. Then said the Jew to the three others, 'Whither go ye?' And they answered, saying, 'We go to look for her.' Quoth the Jew, 'Take me with you. Is there any one of you knows her?' 'I know her,' answered the ass-driver; and the Jew said, 'If we go all together, we shall never catch her; for she will flee from us. Let us each take a different road, and be our rendezvous at the shop of Hajj Mesaoud, the Moorish barber.' They agreed to this and set off, each in a different direction.

Presently, Delileh sallied forth again in quest of prey, and the ass-driver met her and knew her. So he caught hold of her and said to her, 'Out on thee! Hast thou been long at this trade?' 'What ails thee?' asked she; and he answered, 'Give me back my ass.' 'O my son,' said she, 'cover what God covers! Dost thou seek thine ass and the people's things?' Quoth he, 'I want my ass; that's all.' And she said, 'I saw that thou wast poor; so I deposited thine ass for thee with the Moorish barber. Stand off, whilst I speak him fair, that he may give thee the beast.' So she went up to the barber and kissed his

hand and wept. He asked her what ailed her and she said, 'O my son, look at my son who stands yonder. He was ill and exposed himself to the air, which corrupted his wit. He used to buy asses and now, whether he sit or stand or walk, he saith nothing but, "My ass!" Now I have been told by a certain physician that his mind is disordered and that nothing will cure him but drawing two of his grinders and cauterizing him twice on the temples. So do thou take this dinar and call him to thee, saying, "Thine ass is with me."' 'May I fast for a year,' said the barber, 'if I do not give him his ass in his fist!' Now he had with him two journeymen; so he said to one of them, 'Heat the irons.'

Then the old woman went her way and the barber called to the ass-driver, saying, 'Harkye, good fellow! Thine ass is with me; come and take him, and as thou livest, I will give him into thy hand.' So he came to him and the barber carried him into a dark room, where he knocked him down and the journeymen bound him hand and foot. Then he pulled out two of his grinders and cauterized him on both temples; after which he let him go, and he rose and said, 'O Moor, why hast thou used me thus?' Quoth the barber, 'Thy mother told me that thou hadst taken cold, whilst ill, and lost thy reason, so that, whether sitting or standing or walking, thou wouldst say nothing but "My ass!" So here is thine ass in thy fist.' 'God requite thee,' said the other, 'for pulling out my teeth!' Then the barber told him all that the old woman had said and he exclaimed, 'May God torment her!' And the two went out, disputing, and left the shop. When the barber returned, he found his shop empty, for, whilst he was absent, the old woman had taken all that was therein and made off with it to her daughter, to whom she told all that had befallen. The barber, seeing this, caught hold of the ass-driver and said to him, 'Bring me thy mother.'

But he answered, saying, 'She is not my mother, but a sharper, who has swindled much people and stolen my ass.'

At this moment up came the dyer and the Jew and the young merchant, who, seeing the barber holding on to the ass-driver and the latter cauterized on both temples, said to him, 'What hath befallen thee, O ass-driver?' So he told them what had happened to him and the barber did the like; and the others in turn related to the Moor the tricks the old woman had served them. Then he shut up his shop and went with them to the Master of police, to whom they said, 'We look to thee for compensation.' Quoth he, 'How many old women are there not in Baghdad! Doth any of you know her?' 'I do,' answered the ass-man; 'give me ten of thine officers.' So he gave them half a score men and they all five went out, followed by the sergeants, and patrolled the city, till they met the old woman, when they laid hands on her and carrying her to the house of the master of police, stood waiting without, till he should come forth.

Presently the officers fell asleep, for excess of watching with their chief, and Delileh feigned to follow their example, till the ass-man and his fellows slept also, when she stole away from them and going in to the harem of the Master of police, kissed the hand of the mistress of the house and said to her, 'Where is the Chief of the police?' 'He is asleep,' answered the lady; 'what wouldst thou with him?' Quoth Delileh, 'My husband is a slave-merchant and gave me five slaves to sell, whilst he went on a journey. The Master of police met me and bought them of me for a thousand dinars and two hundred for myself, saying, "Bring them to my house." So I have brought them.'

Night dccb.

Now the Master of police had given his wife a thousand dinars, saying, 'Keep them by thee, that we may buy male slaves with them.' So she believed the old woman's story and said to her, 'Where are the slaves?' 'They are

asleep under the window,' replied Delileh; whereupon the lady looked out and seeing the barber clad in a Levantine habit and the young merchant as he were a drunken white slave[1] and the Jew and the dyer and the ass-driver as they were shaven white slaves, said in herself, 'Each of these is worth more than a thousand dinars.' So she opened a chest and gave the old woman the thousand dinars, saying, 'Come back anon and when my husband wakes, I will get thee the other two hundred from him.' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'a hundred of them are thine, under the sherbet-gugglet whereof thou drinkest, and the other hundred do thou keep for me till I come back. Now let me out by the private door.' So she let her out, and [God] the Protector protected her and she made her way home to her daughter, to whom she related all that had passed, saying, 'The one that troubles me most is the ass-driver, for he knows me.' 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'abide quiet [awhile] and let what thou hast done suffice thee, for not always comes the pitcher off unbroken.'

When the chief of the police awoke, his wife said to him, 'I give thee joy of the five slaves thou hast bought of the old woman.' 'What slaves?' asked he. 'Why dost thou mock me?' answered she. 'God willing, they shall become people of condition like unto thee.' 'As my head liveth,' rejoined he, 'I have bought no slaves! Who saith this?' 'The old woman, the brokeress,' replied she, 'from whom thou boughtest them; and thou didst promise her a thousand dinars for them and two hundred for herself.' Quoth he, 'Didst thou give her the money?' 'Yes,' answered she; 'for I saw the slaves with my own eyes, and on each is a suit of clothes worth a thousand dinars; so I sent out to bid the sergeants have an eye to them.'

So he went out and said to the officers, 'Where are the

[1] *i.e.* on account of his beauty. See Vol. III. p. 255, note.

five slaves we bought for a thousand dinars of the old woman?' 'There are no slaves here,' answered they; 'only these five men, who found the old woman and brought her hither. We fell asleep, whilst waiting for thee, and she stole away and entered the harem. Presently out came a maid and said to us, 'Are the five with you with whom the old woman came?' And we answered, 'Yes.' 'By Allah,' cried the Master of police, 'this is a rare great swindle!' And the five men said, 'We look to thee for our goods.' Quoth the Master of police, 'The old woman, your mistress, sold you to me for a thousand dinars.' 'That were not allowed of God,' answered they: 'we are free-born men and may not be sold, and we appeal from thee to the Khalif.' 'None showed her the way to the house save you,' rejoined the Master of police; 'and I will sell you to the galleys for two hundred dinars apiece.'

Just then, up came the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric, who, on his return from his journey, had found his wife stripped of her clothes and jewellery and heard from her all that had passed; whereupon quoth he, 'The Master of police shall answer me this;' and repairing to him, said, 'Dost thou suffer old women to go round about the town and cozen folk of their goods? This is thy business and I look to thee for my wife's property.' Then said he to the five men, 'What is to do with you?' So they told him their stories and he said, 'Ye are oppressed,' and turning to the master of police, said to him, 'Why dost thou detain them?' 'It was they who brought her to my house,' answered he, 'so that she took a thousand dinars of my money and sold them to my women.' 'O Amir Hassan,' cried the five men, 'be thou our advocate in this affair.'

Then said the Master of police to the Amir, 'Thy wife's goods are at my charge and I will be surety for the old

woman. But which of you knows her?' 'We all know her,' answered they. 'Send ten men with us, and we will take her.' So he gave them ten men, and the ass-driver said to them, 'Follow me, for I should know her with blue eyes.'[1] Then they went out and presently they met the old woman coming out of a by-street: so they laid hands on her and brought her to the master of the police, who said to her, 'Where are the people's goods?' And she answered, saying, 'I have neither taken them nor seen them.' Then said he to the gaoler, 'Take her and clap her into prison till the morning.' But he said, 'I will not take her, lest she play a trick on me and I be answerable for her.' So the Master of police took horse and rode out with Delileh and the rest to the bank of the Tigris, where he bade the executioner crucify her by her hair. So he bound her on the cross and drew her up by the pulley; after which the master of police set ten men to guard her and went home. Presently, the night fell down and sleep overcame the watchmen.

Now a certain Bedouin heard one man say to another, 'Praised be God for thy safe return! Where hast thou been?' 'In Baghdad,' answered the other, 'where I breakfasted on honey-fritters.' Quoth the Bedouin to himself, 'Needs must I go to Baghdad and eat honey-fritters;' for in all his life he had never entered Baghdad nor seen fritters of the sort. So he mounted his horse and rode on towards Baghdad, saying in himself, 'It is a fine thing to eat honey-fritters! On the honour of an Arab, I will break my fast on nothing else!' till he came to the place where Delileh was crucified and she heard him saying this. So he went up to her and said to her, 'What art thou?' Quoth she, 'O Sheikh of the Arabs, I throw myself on thy protection!' 'May God indeed protect thee!' answered he. 'But what is the cause of thy crucifixion?' Said

Night decbi.

[1] *i.e.* even were my eyes blue or diseased.

she, 'I have an enemy, an oilman, who fries fritters, and I stopped to buy of him, when I chanced to spit and the spittle fell on the fritters. So he made his complaint to the judge, who commanded to crucify me, saying, "I adjudge that ye take ten pounds of honey-fritters and feed her therewith. If she eat them, let her go, but if not, leave her hanging." And my stomach will not brook sweet things.' 'By the honour of the Arabs,' cried the Bedouin, 'I departed not the camp but that I might eat honey-fritters! I will eat them for thee.' Quoth she, 'None may eat them, except he be hung up in my place.' He fell into the trap and unbound her; whereupon she bound him in her room, after she had stripped him of his clothes and turban and put them on; then, mounting his horse, she rode to her house, where Zeyneb said to her, 'What meaneth this plight?' And she answered, saying, 'They crucified me:' and told her all that had befallen her.

To return to the watchmen; the first who woke roused his companions and they saw that the day had risen. So one of them raised his eyes and said, 'Delileh!' 'By Allah!' answered the Bedouin, 'I have not eaten all night. Have ye brought the honey-fritters?' And they said, 'This is a man and a Bedouin.' Then said one of them to him, 'O Bedouin, where is Delileh and who loosed her?' 'It was I,' answered he; 'she shall not eat the honey-fritters against her will; for her soul abhorreth them.' So they knew that he was a man ignorant of her case, whom she had cozened, and said to one another, 'Shall we flee or abide the accomplishment of that which God hath decreed to us?'

As they were talking, up came the chief of the police, with all the folk whom the old woman had cheated, and said to the guards, 'Arise, loose Delileh.' Quoth the Bedouin, 'We have not eaten to-night. Hast thou brought the honey-fritters?' Whereupon the Master of police

raised his eyes and seeing the Bedouin strung up in place of the old woman, said to the watchmen, 'What is this?' 'Pardon, O our lord!' cried they; and he said, 'Tell me what has happened.' 'We were weary with watching with thee on guard,' answered they, 'and said, "Delileh is crucified." So we fell asleep, and when we awoke, we found the Bedouin strung up in her stead; and we are at thy mercy.' 'God's pardon be upon you!' answered the master of police. 'She is indeed a clever cheat!' Then they unbound the Bedouin, who laid hold of the master of police, saying, 'God succour the Khalif against thee! I look to none but thee for my horse and clothes!' So the chief of the police questioned him and he told him what had passed between Delileh and himself. 'Why didst thou release her?' asked the magistrate, and the Bedouin said, 'I knew not that she was a swindler.' Then said the others, 'O chief of the police, we look to thee for our goods; for we delivered the old woman into thy hands and she was in thy guard; and we cite thee before the Divan of the Khalif.'

Now the Amir Hassan had gone up to the Divan, when in came the master of police with the Bedouin and the five others, saying, 'We are wronged men!' 'Who hath wronged you?' asked the Khalif. So each came forward in turn and told his story, after which said the master of police, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the old woman cheated me also and sold me these five men as slaves for a thousand dinars, albeit they are free-born.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'I take upon myself all that you have lost.' Then he said to the master of police, 'I charge thee with the old woman.' But he shook his collar, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not answer for her; for, after I had strung her up on the cross, she tricked this Bedouin and tied him up in her room and made off with his clothes and horse.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Whom but thee shall I

charge with her?' 'Charge Ahmed ed Denef,' answered the Master of police; 'for he has a thousand dinars a month and one-and-forty followers, at a monthly wage of a hundred dinars each.' So the Khalif said, 'Harkye, Captain Ahmed!' 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he; and the Khalif said, 'I charge thee to bring the old woman before me.' 'I will answer for her,' replied Ahmed.

Then the Khalif kept the Bedouin and the five complainants with him, whilst Ahmed and his men went down to their hall,[1] saying to one another, 'How shall we lay hands on her, seeing that there are many old women in the town?' [And Ahmed said to Hassan Shouman, 'What counsellest thou?'] Whereupon quoth one of them, by name Ali Kitf el Jemel, to Ed Denef, 'Of what dost thou take counsel with Hassan Shouman? Is he any great matter?' 'O Ali,' said Hassan, 'why dost thou disparage me? By the Mighty Name, I will not company with thee at this time!' And he rose and went out in anger. Then said Ahmed, 'O lads, let each sergeant take ten men and search for Delileh, each in his own quarter.' And they agreed to rendezvous in such a place. Night dccbii.

It was noised abroad in the city that Ahmed ed Denef had undertaken to lay hands on Delileh the Crafty, and Zeyneb said to her mother, 'O my mother, if thou be indeed a trickstress, do thou befool Ahmed ed Denef and his company.' 'I fear none but Hassan Shouman,' answered Delileh; and Zeyneb said, 'By my browlock, I will get thee the clothes of all the one-and-forty.' Then she dressed and veiled herself and going to a druggist, who had a saloon with two doors, gave him a dinar and said to him, 'Let me thy saloon till the end of the day and take this dinar to its hire.' So he gave her the keys and she fetched carpets and so forth on the stolen ass and furnishing the

[1] Or barrack.

place, set in each estrade a table of meat and wine. Then she went out and stood at the door, with her face uncovered.

Presently, up came Ali Kitf and his men, and she kissed his hand. He fell in love with her, seeing her to be a handsome girl, and said to her, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth she, 'Art thou Captain Ahmed ed Denef?' 'No,' answered he; 'but I am of his company and my name is Ali Kitf el Jemel.' 'Whither go you?' asked she, and he said, 'We go in quest of a sharkish old woman, who has stolen the people's goods, and we mean to lay hands on her. But who art thou and what is thy business?' Quoth she, 'My father was a vintner at Mosul and he died and left me much money. So I came hither, for fear of the judges, and asked the people who would protect me, to which they replied, "None but Ahmed ed Denef."' 'From this day forth,' said the men, 'thou art under his protection;' and she said, 'Favour me by eating a morsel and drinking a draught.' They consented and entering, ate and drank till they were drunken, when she drugged them with henbane and stripped them of their clothes and arms; and on like wise she did with the three other companies.

Presently, Ahmed ed Denef went out to look for Delileh, but found her not, neither set eyes on any of his followers, and went on till he came to the door where Zeyneb was standing. She kissed his hand and he looked on her and fell in love with her. Quoth she, 'Art thou Captain Ahmed ed Denef?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'Who art thou?' And she said, 'I am a stranger. My father was a vintner at Mosul and he died and left me much wealth, with which I came to this city, for fear of the judges, and opened this wine-shop. The Master of police hath imposed a tax on me, but it is my desire to put myself under thy protection and pay thee what the police would take of me, for thou hast the better right to it.' Quoth he, 'Thou shalt have

my protection and welcome: do not pay him aught.' Then said she, 'Heal my heart and eat of my victual.' So he entered and ate and drank, till he could not sit upright, when she drugged him and took his clothes and arms. Then she loaded her purchase on the ass and the Bedouin's horse and made off with it, after she had aroused Ali Kitf. The latter awoke and found himself naked and saw Ahmed and his men drugged and stripped. So he revived them with the counter-drug and they awoke and saw themselves naked. Quoth Ahmed, 'O lads, what is this? We were going about to catch her, and lo, this strumpet hath caught us! How Hassan Shouman will crow over us! But we will wait till it is dark and then go away.'

Meanwhile Hassan Shouman said to the hall-keeper, 'Where are the men?' As he spoke, up they came, naked; and he recited the following verses:

Men in their purpose are alike and what they hope and fear: 'Tis in the issues, 'twixt the folk, that difference doth appear.
Some men for ignorant are known and other some for wise, Even as in heaven some stars are dull and others bright and clear.

Then he said to them, 'Who hath played you this trick?' and they answered, saying, 'We were in quest of an old woman, and a handsome girl stripped us.' 'She hath done well,' said Hassan. 'Dost thou know her?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered Hassan; 'I know her and the old woman too.' Quoth they, 'What shall we say to the Khalif?' And he said, 'O Denef, do thou shake thy collar before him, and if he ask why thou hast not caught her, say thou, "We know her not; but charge Hassan Shouman with her." And if he give her into my charge, I will lay hands on her.'

So they slept that night and on the morrow they repaired to the Khalif's Divan and kissed the earth before him. Quoth he, 'Where is the old woman, O Captain Ahmed?' But he shook his collar. The Khalif asked him why he

did so, and he answered, 'I know her not; but charge Hassan Shouman to lay hands on her, for he knows her and her daughter also.' Then Hassan interceded for her with the Khalif, saying, 'Indeed, she hath played off these tricks, not because she coveted the folk's goods, but to show her address and that of her daughter, to the intent that thou shouldst continue to her her husband's stipend and that of her father to her daughter. So, if thou wilt spare her life, I will fetch her to thee.' 'By the life of my ancestors,' said Er Reshid, 'if she restore the people's goods, I will pardon her, on thine intercession!' And he gave him the handkerchief of pardon.

So Hassan repaired to Delileh's house and called to her. Her daughter Zeyneb answered him and he said to her, 'Where is thy mother?' 'Upstairs,' answered she; and he said, 'Bid her take the people's goods and come with me to the Khalif; for I have brought her the handkerchief of pardon, and if she will not come with a good grace, let her blame none but herself.' So Delileh tied the kerchief [of truce] about her neck and coming down, gave him the people's goods on the ass and the Bedouin's horse. Quoth he, 'There remain the clothes of my chief and his men.' 'By the Most Great Name,' replied she, 'it was not I who stripped them!' 'Thou sayst sooth,' rejoined Hassan; 'it was thy daughter Zeyneb's doing, and this was a good turn she did thee.' Then he carried her to the Divan and laid the people's goods before the Khalif, who, as soon as he saw the old woman, commanded to throw her down on the carpet of blood. Quoth she, 'I cast myself on thy protection, O Shouman!' So he rose and kissing the Khalif's hands, said, 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful! Indeed, thou gavest me the handkerchief of pardon.' 'I pardon her for thy sake,' said Er Reshid. 'Come hither, O old woman; what is thy name?' 'My name is Delileh,' answered she, and the

Khalif said, 'Thou art indeed crafty and full of artifice.' Whence she was dubbed Delileh the Crafty.

Then said he, 'Why hast thou played all these tricks on the folk and wearied our hearts?' Quoth she, 'I did it not of desire for their goods, but because I had heard of the tricks which Ahmed ed Denef and Hassan Shouman played in Baghdad and said in myself, "I will do the like." And behold, I have returned the folk their goods.' But the ass-driver rose and said, 'I invoke the law of God[1] between her and me; for it sufficed her not to take my ass, but she must needs egg on the barber to pull out my teeth and cauterize me on both temples.' The Khalif bade give him a hundred dinars and ordered the dyer the like, saying, 'Go; set up thy dyery again.' So they called down blessings on his head and went away. The Bedouin also took his clothes and horse and departed, saying, 'It is forbidden to me to enter Baghdad and eat honey-fritters.' And the others took their goods and went away. Night dccbiii.

Then said the Khalif, 'Ask a boon of me, O Delileh!' And she said, 'My father was governor of the carrier-pigeons to thee and I know how to rear them, and my husband was town-captain of Baghdad. Now I wish to have the reversion of my husband and my daughter wishes to have that of her father.' The Khalif granted their requests and she said, 'I ask of thee that I may be portress of thy khan.' Now he had built a khan of three stories, for the merchants to lodge in, and had assigned to its service forty slaves, which latter he had brought from the King of Suleimaniyeh, when he deposed him, and let make collars for them; and there was in the khan a cook-slave, who cooked for the slaves and fed the dogs. 'O Delileh,' said the Khalif, 'I will write thee a patent of guardianship of the khan, and if aught be lost therefrom, thou shalt be answerable for it.' 'It is well,' replied she;

[1] *i.e.* the lex talionis.

'but do thou lodge my daughter in the pavilion at the door of the khan, for it hath terraced roofs, and carrier-pigeons may not be reared to advantage save in an open space.'

The Khalif granted her this also and she and her daughter removed to the pavilion in question, where Zeyneb hung up the one-and-forty dresses of Ahmed ed Denef and his company. Moreover, they delivered to Delileh the forty pigeons that carried the royal messages, and the Khalif appointed her mistress over the forty slaves and charged them to obey her. She made the place of her session behind the door of the khan, and every day she used to go up to the Khalif's Divan, lest he should need to send a message by pigeon-post, whilst the forty slaves abode on guard at the khan; nor did she return till ended day, when they loosed the forty dogs, that they might keep watch over the place by night.

THE ADVENTURES OF QUICKSILVER ALI OF CAIRO: BEING A SEQUEL TO THE ROGUERIES OF DELILEH THE CRAFTY.

There lived once at Cairo, in the days of Selah the Egyptian, who was chief of the Cairo police and had forty men under him, a sharper named Ali, for whom the Master of Police used to set snares and think that he had fallen therein; but, when they sought for him, they found that he had fled like quicksilver, wherefore they dubbed him Quicksilver Ali. One day, as he sat with his men in his hall, his heart became heavy within him and his breast was straitened. The hall-keeper saw him sitting frowning-faced and said to him, 'What ails thee, O my chief? If thy breast be straitened, go out and take a turn in the streets of Cairo, for assuredly walking in its markets will do away thine oppression.' So he went

out and walked the streets awhile, but only redoubled in dejection and heaviness of heart. Presently, he came to a wine-shop and said to himself, 'I will go in and drink wine.' So he went in and seeing seven rows of people in the shop, said to the tavern-keeper, 'Harkye, taverner! I will not sit but by myself.' Accordingly, the vintner seated him in a chamber by himself and set wine before him, of which he drank till he lost his senses. Then he sallied forth again and walked till he came to the street called Red, whilst the people left the road clear before him, out of fear of him.

Presently, he turned and saw a water-carrier going along, with his skin and mug, crying out and saying, 'O exchange! There is no drink but from raisins, there is no love-delight but of the beloved and none sitteth in the place of honour save the man of sense!'[1] So he said to him, 'Here, give me to drink!' The water-carrier looked at him and gave him the mug. He took it and looking into it, shook it up and poured it out on the ground. 'Why dost thou not drink?' asked the water-carrier; and he answered, saying, 'Give me to drink.' So the man filled the cup a second time and he took it and shook it and emptied it on the ground; and thus he did a third time. Quoth the water-carrier, 'If thou wilt not drink, begone.' And Ali said, 'Give me to drink.' So he filled the cup a fourth time and gave it him; and he drank and gave the man a dinar. The water-carrier looked at him with disdain and said, 'Good luck to thee! Good luck to thee! Little folk are one thing and great folk another!' When Ali heard this, he caught hold of the man's gown and drawing on him a poignard of price, such an one as that whereof the poet speaks when he says, Night dccix.

[1] Nonsense-words, strung together for the sake of the jangle of rhymes between the words *zebib* (raisins), *hebib* (beloved) and *lebib* (man of sense). The water-carrier was apparently selling *nebiz* or raisin-wine, as a flavouring for his water.

A whittle of watered steel, perfect of temper and bright, With vipers' poison it plies the folk whom it meets in fight;
If it fall, it sundereth limbs and sheddeth the blood forthright And picks up a jewel, to boot, from marble hard and white.

said to him, 'O old man, speak reasonably to me! Thy water-skin is at the utmost worth three dirhems, and the cups I emptied on the ground held a pint or so of water.' 'It is well,' replied the water-carrier; and Ali said, 'I gave thee a dinar: why, then, dost thou belittle me? Hast thou ever seen any more valiant than I or more generous?' 'Ay,' answered the water-carrier; 'I have seen one more valiant than thou and eke more generous; for, never, since women have borne children, was there on the face of the earth a man of valour who was not generous.' 'And who is he whom thou deemest braver and more generous than I?' asked Ali.

'Know,' replied the other, 'that I had a strange adventure of late. My father was Sheikh of the water-carriers in Cairo, and when he died, he left me five camels and a mule and shop and house: but the poor man is never content; or, if he be content, he dieth. So I said to myself, "I will go to the Hejaz," and taking a file of camels, bought [goods] on credit, till I had run in debt for five hundred dinars, all of which I lost in the pilgrimage. Then I said in myself, "If I return to Cairo, the folk will put me in prison for their goods." So I returned with the Syrian pilgrims to Aleppo, andt hence I went on to Baghdad, where I sought out the Sheikh of the water-carriers of the city and repeated the first chapter of the Koran to him. He questioned me of my case and I told him what had befallen me, whereupon he assigned me a shop and gave me a water-skin and gear. So I sallied forth, trusting in God to provide, and went round about the city. I offered the cup to one, that he might drink; but he said, "I have eaten nought whereon to drink; for a niggardly fellow invited

me to-day and set two gugglets before me; so I said to him, 'O son of the sordid, hast thou given me aught to eat, that I should drink after it?' So go thy ways, O water-carrier, till I have eaten somewhat. Then come and give me to drink." Then I accosted another and he said, "God provide thee!" And so I went on till noon, without taking aught, and I said to myself, "Would I had never come to Baghdad!"

Presently, I saw the folk running; so I followed them and saw a long file of cavaliers, riding two and two and clad in steel, with double neck-rings and felt bonnets and burnouses and swords and bucklers. I asked one of the folk whose suite this was, and he answered, "That of Captain Ahmed ed Denef." Quoth I, "And what is he?" "He is town-captain of Baghdad," answered the other, "and to him is committed the care of the suburbs. He gets a thousand dinars a month from the Khalif and Hassan Shouman has the like. Moreover, each of his men gets a hundred dinars a month; and they are now returning to their barrack from the Divan." Ahmed saw me and cried out to me to give him to drink. So I filled the cup and gave it him, and he shook it and emptied it out, like unto thee; and thus he did a second time. Then I filled the cup a third time and he took a draught; after which he said to me, "O water-carrier, whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," answered I, and he, "May God keep Cairo and her people! What brings thee hither?" So I told him my story and gave him to know that I was a debtor fleeing from debt and distress. Quoth he, "Thou art welcome to Baghdad." Then he gave me five dinars and said to his men, "Be generous to him, for the love of God." So each of them gave me a dinar and Ahmed said to me, "What while thou abidest in Baghdad, thou shalt have of us the like every time thou givest us to drink."

Accordingly, I paid them frequent visits and good ceased

not to come to me from the folk, till, one day, reckoning up the profit I had made of them, I found it a thousand dinars and said in myself, "The best thing I can do is to return to Egypt." So I went to Ahmed's house and kissed his hand, and he said, "What seekest thou?" Quoth I, "I have a mind to depart;" and I repeated the following verses:

The stranger's sojourning in any land of lands Even as the building is of mansions on the wind.
The waftings of the breeze cast down what he hath built, And now to fare away the stranger hath a mind.

"The caravan is about to start for Cairo," added I, "and I wish to return to my people." So he gave me a mule and a hundred dinars and said to me, "I desire to send somewhat by thee. Dost thou know the people of Cairo?"
Night decx. "Yes," answered I; and he said, "Take this letter and carry it to Quicksilver Ali of Cairo and say to him, 'Thy captain salutes thee and he is now with the Khalif.'" So I took the letter and journeyed back to Cairo, where I paid my debts and plied my trade of a water-carrier; but I have not delivered the letter, because I know not the abode of Quicksilver Ali.' Quoth Ali, 'O elder, be of good cheer: I am that Ali, the first of the lads of Captain Ahmed: give me the letter.' So he gave him the letter and he opened it and read as follows:

'I've written unto thee, adornment of the fair, A letter that indeed the passing winds shall bear.
Could I but fly, I'd flown for longing after thee; But how shall he who's clipped of pinions wing the air?

From Captain Ahmed ed Denef to the eldest of his sons, Quicksilver Ali of Cairo, greeting. Thou knowest that I tormented Selaheddin the Cairene and befooled him till I buried him alive and reduced his lads to obey me, and amongst them Ali Kitf el Jemel; and I am now become town-captain of Baghdad and overseer of the suburbs. If thou be still mindful of our love, come to me; haply thou

shalt play some trick in Baghdad that may advance thee to the Khalif's service, so he may appoint thee stipends and allowances and assign thee a lodging, which is what thou desirest, and so peace be on thee.'

When Ali read this letter, he kissed it and laying it on his head, gave the water-carrier ten dinars; after which he returned to his lodging and told his comrades and commended them to one another. Then he changed his clothes and donning a tarboosh and a travelling cloak, took a case, containing a bamboo spear, four-and-twenty cubits long, made in several pieces, to fit into each other. Quoth his lieutenant, 'Wilt thou go a journey, whenas the treasury is empty?' 'When I reach Damascus,' answered Ali, 'I will send you what shall suffice you.' Then he set out and fared on, till he overtook a caravan about to start, whereof were the Provost of the Merchants and forty other merchants. They had all loaded their beasts, except the Provost, whose loads lay upon the ground, and Ali heard his caravan-leader, who was a Syrian, say to the muleteers, 'Help me, one of you!' But they mocked him and reviled him. Quoth Ali in himself, 'None will suit me so well to travel withal as this leader.'

Now Ali was beardless and well-favoured; so he went up to the leader and saluted him. The latter welcomed him and said, 'What seekest thou?' 'O my uncle,' replied Ali, 'I see thee alone with forty mule-loads of goods; but why hast thou not brought men to help thee?' 'O my son,' rejoined the other, 'I hired two lads and clothed them and put in each one's pocket two hundred dinars; and they helped me till we came to the Dervishes' Convent,[1] when they ran away.' Quoth Ali, 'Whither are you bound?' 'To Aleppo,' answered the Syrian, and Ali said, 'I will help thee.' So they loaded the beasts and the Provost mounted his mule and they set out. The leader rejoiced

[1] El Khanekeh.

in Ali and loved him and made much of him and they fared on till nightfall, when they halted and ate and drank. Then came the time of sleep and Ali lay down and made as if he slept; whereupon the Syrian laid himself near him and Ali rose and sat down at the door of the merchant's pavilion. Presently, the Syrian turned over and would have taken Ali in his arms, but found him not and said in himself, 'It would seem as though he had promised another and he hath taken him; but I have the first right and another night I will keep him.'

Ali sat at the door of the tent till nigh upon daybreak, when he returned and lay down near the Syrian, who found him by his side, when he awoke, and said in himself, 'If I ask him where he has been, he will leave me and go away.' So he dissembled with him and they went on till they came to a forest, in which was a cave, where dwelt a ferocious lion. Now, whenever a caravan passed, they would draw lots among themselves and throw him on whom the lot fell to the lion. So they drew lots and the lot fell upon the Provost of the Merchants. Now the lion stopped the way, awaiting his prey, wherefore the Provost was sore distressed and said to the leader, 'God disappoint thy enterprise and bring thy journey to nought! I charge thee, after my death, give my loads to my children.' Quoth Ali, 'What meaneth all this?' So they told him the case and he said, 'Why do ye run from the cat of the desert? I warrant you I will kill him.'

So the Syrian went to the Provost and told him of this and he said, 'If he kill him, I will give him a thousand dinars.' 'And we,' said the other merchants, 'will reward him likewise.' With this Ali put off his mantle and there appeared upon him armour of steel; then he took a whinyard of steel and [opening it] turned the ring;[1] after

[1] So as to fix it in the handle and prevent it shutting up, when used to strike with.

which he went forth alone and standing in the road before the lion, cried out at him. The lion ran at him, but Ali smote him between the eyes with his cutlass and cut him in sunder, whilst the caravan-leader and the merchants looked on. Then said he to the leader, 'Have no fear, O my uncle!' and the Syrian answered, saying, 'O my son, I am thy servant for all time.' Then the Provost embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and gave him the thousand dinars, and each of the other merchants gave him twenty dinars.

He deposited all the money with the Provost and they slept that night till the morning, when they set out again, intending for Baghdad, and fared on till they came to the Lion's Wood and the Valley of Dogs, where lay a Bedouin brigand and his tribe, who sallied forth on them. The folk fled from the highwaymen and the Provost said, 'My goods are lost!' When, behold, up came Ali in a coat of leather, full of bells, and bringing out his long lance, fitted it together. Then he seized one of the Arab's horses and mounting it, shook his bells and cried out to the Bedouin chief, saying, 'Come out to me with spears!' The Bedouin's mare took fright at the noise of the bells and Ali struck the chief's spear and broke it. Then he smote him on the neck and cut off his head. When the Bedouins saw their chief fall, they all ran at Ali, but he cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great!' and falling on them, put them to flight. Then he raised the chief's head on the point of his spear and returned to the merchants, who rewarded him liberally and continued their journey.

When they reached Baghdad, Ali took his money from the Provost and committed it to the Syrian, saying, 'When thou returnest to Cairo, enquire for my lodging and give the money to my deputy.' Then he slept that night and on the morrow he entered the city and enquired for Ahmed

ed Denef's lodging; but none would direct him thereto.[1] So he walked on, till he came to a square called En Nefz, where he saw children at play, and amongst them a lad called Ahmed el Lekit,[2] and said to himself, 'Thou shalt not get news of them but of their little ones.' Then he turned and seeing a sweetmeat-seller, bought cakes of him and called to the children; but Ahmed el Lekit drove the rest away and coming up to him, said, 'What seekest thou?' Quoth Ali, 'I had a son and he died and I saw him in a dream asking for sweetmeats: wherefore I have bought sweetmeats and wish to give each child some.' So saying, he gave Ahmed a cake, and he looked at it and seeing a dinar sticking to it, said, 'Begone! I am no catamite: seek another than I.' 'O my son,' answered Ali, 'it is a sharp fellow who takes the hire, even as is he who gives it. I have sought all day for Ahmed ed Denef's barrack, but none would direct me thereto; so the dinar is thine, if thou wilt guide me thither.' Quoth the lad, 'I will run before thee, till I come to the place, when I will catch up a stone with my foot and kick it against the door; and so shalt thou know it.'

So he ran on and Ali after him, till they came to the place, when the boy caught up a pebble and kicked it against the door. Ali laid hold of him and would have taken the dinar from him, but could not; so he said to him, 'Go: thou deservest liberality, for thou art a sharp fellow, whole of wit and stout. God willing, if I become captain to the Khalif, I will make thee one of my lads.' Then the boy made off and Ali went up to the door and knocked; whereupon quoth Ahmed ed Denef to the doorkeeper, 'Open the door; that is the knock of Quicksilver Ali.'

Night decxi.

[1] Apparently because of the fear in which the people of the city held the notorious rascal and swashbuckler whom Er Reshid had made town-captain of Baghdad.

[2] *i.e.* the sister's son of Zeyneb the Trickstress; see supra, p. 236.

So he opened the door and Ali entered and saluted Ahmed, who embraced him, and the forty saluted him. And Ahmed gave him a suit of clothes, saying, 'When the Khalif made me captain, he clothed my lads and I kept this suit for thee.' Then they seated him in the place of honour and setting on meat and drink, ate and drank and made merry till the morning, when Ahmed said to Ali, 'Look thou walk not about Baghdad, but abide here.' 'Why so?' asked Ali. 'I came not hither to be shut up, but to look about me and divert myself.' 'O my son,' rejoined Ahmed, 'think not that Baghdad is like Cairo. Baghdad is the seat of the Khalifate: sharpers abound in it and rogueries spring in it as plants spring in the earth.' So Ali abode in the barrack three days, at the end of which time Ahmed said to him, 'I wish to present thee to the Khalif, that he may assign thee an allowance.' But he answered, saying, 'When the time comes.' So he let him go his own way.

One day, as Ali sat in the barrack, his breast became straitened and his soul troubled and he said to himself, 'Come, let us walk awhile in Baghdad and lighten my heart.' So he went out and walked from street to street, till he came to the bazaar, where he entered a cookshop and ate the morning-meal; after which he went out to wash his hands. Presently, he saw forty slaves, with bonnets of felt and cutlasses of steel, come walking, two by two; and last of all came Delileh the Crafty, riding on a mule and clad in a coat of mail, with a gilded helmet on her head. Now she was returning from the Divan to the khan of which she was portress; and when she espied Ali, she looked at him fixedly and saw that he resembled Ahmed ed Denef in height and breadth. Moreover, he was clad in a striped cloak and a burnouse, with a steel cutlass by his side, and valour shone from his eyes, testifying for him and not against him. So she returned to the

khan and going in to her daughter, fetched a table of sand, which she levelled and drew a geomantic figure, by which she discovered that the stranger's name was Ali of Cairo and that his fortune overrode her own and that of her daughter. 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'what has befallen thee, that thou hast recourse to the table of sand?' 'O my daughter,' answered Delileh, 'I have seen this day a young man who resembles Ahmed ed Denef, and I fear lest he come to hear how thou didst strip Ahmed and his men and enter the khan and play us a trick, in revenge for what we did with his chief and the forty; for methinks he hath taken up his lodging with Ed Denef.' 'What is this?' rejoined Zeyneb. 'Methinks thou hast taken his measure.'

Then she donned her finest clothes and went out into the town. When the people saw her, they all made love to her and she promised and retracted and listened and coquetted and passed from market to market, till she saw Ali coming, when she went up to him and rubbed her shoulder against him. Then she turned and said, 'God preserve folk of discrimination!' Quoth he, 'How goodly is thy fashion! To whom dost thou belong?' 'To the gallant like thee,' answered she; and he said, 'Art thou married or single?' 'Married,' replied she. 'Shall it be in my lodging or thine?' asked Ali, and she said, 'I am a merchant's daughter and a merchant's wife and in all my life I have never been out of doors till to-day, when I made ready food and thought to eat, but found I had no mind thereto [without company]. When I saw thee, love of thee entered my heart: so wilt thou solace my soul and eat a mouthful with me?' Quoth he, 'Whoso is invited, let him accept.' So she went on and he followed her from street to street: but presently he bethought himself and said, 'What wilt thou do and thou a stranger? Verily it is said, "Whoso doth whoredom in his strangerhood, God

will send him back disappointed." But I will put her off with fair words.' So he said to her, 'Take this dinar and appoint me a day other than this.' 'By the Mighty Name,' answered she, 'it may not be but thou shalt go home with me this very day and I will take thee to friend.'

So he followed her till she came to a house with a lofty porch and a padlock on the door and said to him, 'Open this lock.' 'Where is the key?' asked he. And she answered, 'It is lost.' Quoth he, 'He who opens a lock without a key is a knave, whom it behoves the judge to punish, and I know not how to open doors without keys.' With this she raised her veil and showed him her face, at which he took one look that cost him a thousand sighs. Then she let fall her veil on the lock and repeating over it the names of the mother of Moses, opened it without a key and entered. He followed her and saw swords and armour of steel hanging up; and she put off her veil and sat down with him. Quoth he to himself, '[Needs must thou] accomplish what God hath decreed to thee,' and bent to her, to take a kiss of her cheek; but she covered it with her hand, saying, 'This beseemeth not but by night.' Then she brought a tray of food and wine, and they ate and drank; after which she rose and drawing water from the well, poured from the ewer over his hands, whilst he washed them.

Presently, she cried out and beat upon her breast, saying, 'My husband had a signet ring of ruby, which was pledged to him for five hundred dinars, and I put it on; but it was too large for me, so I straitened it with wax, and when I let down the bucket into the water, the ring [must have] dropped into the well. So turn thy face to the door, whilst I put off my clothes and go down into the well and fetch it.' Quoth Ali, 'It were shame on me that thou shouldst go down into the well, whilst I am present; none shall do it but I.' So saying, he put off his clothes

and tied the rope about himself and she let him down into the well. Now there was much water therein and she said to him, 'The rope is too short; loose thyself and drop down.' So he did himself loose from the rope and dropped into the water, in which he sank fathoms deep, without touching the bottom of the well; whilst she veiled herself and taking his clothes, returned to her mother, to whom said she, 'I have stripped Ali the Egyptian and cast him into the Amir Hassan's well, from which there is no chance of his escaping.'

Night dccxii.

Presently, the Amir Hassan, the master of the house, who had been absent at the Divan, came home and finding the door open, said to his groom, 'Why didst thou not lock the door?' 'O my lord,' answered the groom, 'indeed I locked it with my own hand.' Quoth the Amir, 'As my head liveth, some thief hath entered my house!' Then he went in and searched right and left, but found none and said to the groom, 'Fill the ewer, that I may make the ablution.' So the man lowered the bucket into the well; but, when he drew it up, he found it heavy and looking down, saw one sitting therein; whereupon he let it fall into the water and cried out, saying, 'O my lord, an Afrit came up to me out of the well!' Quoth the Amir, 'Go and fetch four doctors of the law, that they may read the Koran over him, till he go away.' So he fetched the doctors and the Amir said to them, 'Sit round the well and exorcise me this Afrit.' They did as he bade them; after which the groom and another servant lowered the bucket again and Ali clung to it and hid himself under it, till he came near the top, when he sprang out and landed among the doctors, who fell a-cuffing each other and crying out, 'Afrit! Afrit!'

The Amir looked at Ali and seeing him a young man, said to him, 'Art thou a thief?' 'No,' answered Ali, 'Then what dost thou in the well?' asked the Amir; and

Ali said, 'I was asleep and dreamt a dream of dalliance;[1] so I went down to the Tigris to wash myself and dived, whereupon the current carried me under the earth and I came up in this well.' 'Tell the truth,' said the Amir. So Ali told him all that had befallen him, and the Amir gave him an old gown and let him go. He returned to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging and told him all that had passed. Quoth Ahmed, 'Did I not tell thee that Baghdad is full of women who play tricks upon men?' And Ali Kitf el Jemel said, 'I conjure thee by the Mighty Name, tell me how it is that thou art the chief of the lads of Cairo and yet hast been stripped by a girl?' This was grievous to Ali and he repented him of not having followed Ahmed's advice.

Then Ed Denef gave him another suit of clothes and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'Dost thou know the girl?' 'No,' answered Ali; and Hassan said, 'It was Zeyneb, the daughter of Delileh the Crafty, the portress of the Khalif's khan: and hast thou fallen into her toils, O Ali?' 'Yes,' replied he; and Hassan said, 'O Ali, it was she who took thy chief's clothes and those of all his men.' Quoth Ali, 'This is a disgrace to you all.' Then said Hassan, 'And what thinkest thou to do?' And he answered, 'I purpose to marry her.' 'Put away that thought from thee,' rejoined the other, 'and console thy heart of her.' Quoth Ali, 'O Hassan, do thou counsel me how I shall do to marry her.' 'With all my heart,' replied his comrade. 'If thou wilt drink from my hand and march under my banner, I will bring thee to thy will of her.' And Ali answered, saying, 'I will well.'

So Hassan made him put off his clothes and taking a saucepan, heated therein somewhat as it were pitch, with which he anointed him, and he became like unto a black

[1] Emissio seminis, even involuntary, entails total ablution upon a Muslim.

slave. Moreover, he anointed his lips and smeared his eyes with red kohl. Then he clad him in a slave's habit and giving him a tray of kabobs and wine, said to him, 'There is a black cook in the khan, and thou art now become his like; so go thou to him and accost him in friendly fashion and speak to him in the blacks' lingo, saying, "It is long since we foregathered in the beer-shop." He will answer thee, "I have been too busy for this; for I have on my hands forty slaves, for whom I cook the morning and the evening meals, besides making ready a tray for Delileh and the like for her daughter Zeyneb and the dogs' food." And do thou say to him, "Come, let us eat kabobs and drink wine." Then go in with him into the saloon and make him drunk and question him of his service, how many and what dishes he has to cook, and ask him of the dogs' food and the keys of the kitchen and the larder; and he will tell thee, for a man, when he is drunk, tells all that he would conceal, were he sober. [When thou hast learned all this of him,] drug him and don his clothes and sticking the two knives in thy girdle, take the vegetable-basket and go to the market and buy meat and greens, with which do thou return to the khan and enter the kitchen and the larder and cook the food. Dish it up and put henbane in it, so as to drug the dogs and the slaves and Delileh and Zeyneb. Then serve up and when they are all asleep, go up into the upper chamber and bring away all the clothes thou wilt find hanging there. And if thou have a mind to marry Zeyneb, bring also the forty carrier-pigeons.'

So Ali went to the khan and going in to the cook, saluted him and said, 'It is long since I have foregathered with thee in the beer-shop.' Quoth the cook, 'I have been busy cooking for the slaves and the dogs.' Then he took him and making him drunk, questioned him of his duties. Said the cook, 'Every day I cook five dishes for the morning and the like for the evening meal; and yesterday they sought of me a sixth dish, rice dressed with honey and saffron, and a seventh, a mess of cooked pomegranate-seed.' 'And what is the order of thy service?' asked Ali. 'First,' answered the cook, 'I serve up Zeyneb's tray, then that of Delileh; then I serve the slaves and give the dogs their sufficiency of meat, and the least that satisfies them is a pound each.' But, as fate would have it, he forgot to ask him of the keys. Then he drugged him and donned his clothes; after which he took the basket and went to the market. There he bought meat and greens and returning to the khan, with the two knives stuck in his girdle, saw Delileh seated at the gate, watching those who went in and out, and the forty slaves with her, armed.

He took courage and entered; but Delileh knew him and said to him, 'Back, O captain of thieves! Wilt thou play a trick on me in the khan?' When he heard this, he turned and said to her, 'What sayst thou, O portress?' 'What hast thou done with the cook?' asked she. 'What cook?' answered he. 'Is there here another cook than I?' 'Thou liest,' rejoined she; 'thou art Quicksilver Ali the Cairene.' And he said to her, in slaves' lingo, 'O portress, are Cairenes black or white? I have always been a servant.' Then said the slaves to him, 'What is the matter, cousin?' Quoth Delileh, 'This is none of your cousin, but Quicksilver Ali the Egyptian; and meseems he hath either killed your cousin or drugged him.' But they said, 'Indeed this is our cousin, Saadullah the cook.' 'Not so,' answered she; 'it is Quicksilver Ali, and he hath dyed his skin.' Quoth the sharper, 'And who is Ali? I am Saadullah.' Then she fetched ointment of proof, with which she anointed Ali's forearm and rubbed it; but the black did not come off; whereupon quoth the slaves, 'Let him go and dress us the morning meal.' 'If he be indeed your cousin,' said Delileh, 'he knows what you sought of

him yesternight and how many dishes he cooks every day.' So they asked him of this and he said, 'Every day I cook you five dishes for the morning and the like for the evening meal, lentils and rice and broth and fricassee and sherbet of roses, and [yesternight ye sought of me] a sixth dish and a seventh, to wit, rice dressed with honey and saffron and cooked pomegranate-seed.' And the slaves said, 'Right.' Then said Delileh, 'Take him in, and if he knows the kitchen and the larder, he is indeed your cousin; but, if not, kill him.'

Now the cook had a cat, which he had brought up, and whenever he entered, it would stand at the door of the kitchen and spring on his shoulders, as soon as he went in. So, when Ali entered, the cat saw him and jumped on his shoulders; but he threw it off and it ran before him to the door of the kitchen and stopped there. He guessed that this was the kitchen-door; so he took the keys and seeing one with traces of feathers thereon, knew it for the key of the kitchen and opened the door therewith. Then he entered and setting down the greens, went out again, guided by the cat, which ran before him and stopped at another door. He guessed that this was the larder and seeing one of the keys with marks of grease thereon, knew it for the key and opened the door therewith; whereupon quoth the slaves, 'O Delileh, were he a stranger, he had not known the kitchen and the larder, nor had he been able to distinguish the keys thereof from the rest; verily, he is our cousin Saadullah.' Quoth she, 'He knew the places by the cat and distinguished the keys, one from the other, by their appearance: but this imposeth not upon me.' Then he returned to the kitchen, where he cooked the morning-meal and carrying Zeyneb's tray up to her apartment, saw all the stolen clothes hanging up; after which he went down and carried Delileh her tray and gave the slaves and the dogs their ration. The like he did at

sundown and drugged Delileh's food and that of Zeyneb and the slaves.

Now the doors of the khan were opened and shut with the sun: so he went forth and cried out, saying, 'O dwellers in the khan, the watch is set and we have loosed the dogs; so whoso stirs out after this hath but himself to blame.' Now he had delayed the dogs' supper and put poison therein; so, when he set it before them, they ate of it and died. Then he went up and took all the clothes and the carrier-pigeons and opening the gate, made off to the barrack of the Forty, where he found Hassan Shouman, who asked him how he had fared. So he told him what had passed and he praised him. Then he caused him put off his clothes and made a decoction of herbs, with which he washed him, and his skin became white as before; after which he donned his own clothes and going back to the khan, clad the cook in the clothes he had taken from him and made him smell to the counter-drug: whereupon he awoke and going forth to the greengrocer's, bought vegetables and returned to the khan.

When the day broke, one of the lodgers in the khan came out of his chamber and seeing the gate open and the slaves drugged and the dogs dead, went in to Delileh, whom he found lying drugged, with a scroll on her neck and at her head a sponge steeped in the counter-drug. He set the sponge to her nostrils and she awoke and said, 'Where am I?' Quoth he, 'When I came down from my chamber, I saw the gate of the khan open and the dogs dead and found the slaves and thee drugged.' So she took up the scroll and read therein these words, 'None did this thing save Ali the Egyptian.' Then she awoke the slaves and Zeyneb by making them smell to the counter-drug and said to them, 'Did I not tell you that this was Ali of Cairo? But do ye conceal the matter.' Then she said to her daughter, 'How often have I told

thee that Ali would not forego his revenge? He hath done this in requital of that which thou didst with him and he had it in his power to do with thee other than this; but he refrained therefrom out of courtesy and a desire that there should be friendship between us.' So saying, she put off her man's clothes and donned woman's attire and tying the kerchief [of truce] about her neck, repaired to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging.

Now when Ali entered with the clothes and the carrier-pigeons, Hassan Shouman gave the hall-keeper the price of forty pigeons and he bought them and cooked them before the men. Presently there came a knock at the door and Ahmed ed Denef said to the hall-keeper, 'That is Delileh's knock: rise and open to her.' So he admitted her and Hassan said to her, 'What brings thee hither, O ill-omened old woman? Verily, thou and thy brother Zureic the fish-monger are of a piece!' 'O captain,' answered she, 'I am in the wrong and my neck is at your mercy; but tell me which of you it was that played me this trick?' Quoth Ahmed, 'It was the first of my lads.' 'For God's sake,' rejoined Delileh, 'intercede with him to give me back the carrier-pigeons and what not, and thou wilt lay me under great obligation.' When Hassan heard this, he said to Ali, 'God requite thee, O Ali! Why didst thou cook the pigeons?' And Ali answered, 'I knew not that they were carrier pigeons.' Then said Ahmed to the hall keeper, 'Bring us the cooked pigeons.' So he brought them and Delileh took a piece and tasting it, said, 'This is none of the carrier-pigeons' flesh, for I fed them on grains of musk and their flesh is become even as musk.' Quoth Hassan, 'An thou wilt have the carrier-pigeons, comply with Ali's desire.' 'What is that?' asked she, and Hassan answered, saying, 'He would have thee marry him to thy daughter Zeyneb.' 'I have no power over her except of affection,' said she; and Hassan said to Ali, 'Give her the pigeons.'

Night Decrib.

So he gave them to her, and she took them and rejoiced in them.

Then said Hassan to her, 'Needs must thou give us a sufficient answer.' 'If it be indeed his wish to marry her,' replied Delileh, 'it availed nothing to play this trick upon us: it behoveth him rather to demand her in marriage of her uncle Captain Zureic, him who cries out, saying, "A pound of fish for two farthings!" and hangs up in his shop a purse containing two thousand dinars; for he is her guardian.' When the forty heard this, they all rose and cried out, saying, 'What manner of talk is this, O strumpet? Dost thou wish to bereave us of our brother Ali of Cairo?' Then she returned to the khan and said to her daughter, 'Ali the Egyptian seeks thee in marriage.' Whereat Zeyneb rejoiced, for she loved him because of his forbearance towards her, and asked her mother what had passed. So she told her, adding, 'I made it a condition that he should demand thy hand of thine uncle, so I might make him fall into destruction.'

Meanwhile Ali turned to his fellows and said to them, 'What manner of man is this Zureic?' 'He was chief of the sharpers of the land of Irak,' answered they, 'and could all but pierce mountains and lay hold upon the stars. He would steal the very kohl from the eye and in brief, he had not his match for roguery; but he hath repented and forsworn his old way of life and opened him a fish shop. Moreover, he has amassed two thousand dinars by the sale of fish and laid them in a purse with strings of silk, to which he has tied bells and rings and rattles of brass. Every time he opens his shop, he hangs up the purse on a peg within the door and cries out, saying, "Where are ye, O sharpers of Egypt, O cutters of Irak, O tricksters of the land of the Persians? Behold, Zureic the fishmonger hath hung up a purse in front of his shop, and whoso pretendeth to sleight and cunning and can take it by craft,

it is his." So the light-fingered gentry come and try to take the purse, but cannot; for he lays at his feet cakes of lead, whilst he fries his fish and tends the fire; and whenever a thief thinks to take him unawares and makes a snatch at the purse, he casts a disc of lead at him and kills him or does him a mischief. So, O Ali, wert thou to tackle him, thou wouldst be as one who jostles a funeral, unknowing who is dead;[1] for thou art no match for him, and we fear his mischief for thee. Indeed, thou hast no call to marry Zeyneb, and he who leaves a thing alone lives without it.' 'This were shame, O comrades,' answered Ali. 'Needs must I take the purse: but bring me a woman's habit.'

So they brought him women's clothes and he clad himself therein and stained his hands with henna. Then he took a lamb and killing it, took out the guts and filled them with the blood and bound them between his thighs; after which he donned women's trousers and walking boots. Moreover, he made himself a pair of false breasts with pelican's pouches and filled them with milk[2] and tied round his hips a piece of linen, which he stuffed with cotton, [to represent a big belly and buttocks], girding himself over all with a silk handkerchief well starched. Then he veiled himself and went out, whilst all who saw him exclaimed, 'What a fine pair of buttocks!' Presently he saw an ass-driver coming, so he gave him a dinar and mounting, rode till he came to Zureic's shop, where he saw the purse hung up and the gold glittering through the meshes. Now Zureic was frying fish, and Ali said to the ass-man, 'O driver, what is that smell?' 'It is the smell of Zureic's fish,' answered he. Quoth Ali, 'I am

[1] *i.e.* one who gratuitously meddles in matters that concern him not; a popular saying similar in character to the well-known verses, "They who in quarrels interpose, Must often wipe a bloody nose."

[2] *Leben*, sic in all the texts; probably a copyist's mistake for *tebn* (straw).

with child and the smell irketh me; go, fetch me a piece of the fish.' So the man said to Zureic, 'What ails thee to fry fish so early and annoy pregnant women with the smell? I have here the wife of the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric, and she is with child; so give her a piece of fish, for the child stirs in her belly. O Protector, O my God, avert from us this day's mischief!' So Zureic took a piece of fish and would have fried it, but the fire had gone out and he went in, to rekindle it.

Meanwhile Ali dismounted and sitting down, pressed upon the lamb's gut till it burst and the blood ran out from between his legs. Then he cried out, saying, 'O my back! O my side!' Whereupon the driver turned and seeing the blood running, said, 'What ails thee, O my lady?' 'I have miscarried,' answered Ali, whereupon Zureic looked out and seeing the blood, was affrighted and fled into the [inner] shop. Quoth the driver, 'God torment thee, O Zureic! The lady has miscarried and thou art no match for her husband. Why must thou make a stench so early in the morning? I bade thee bring her a piece, but thou wouldst not.' So saying, he took his ass and went his way, whilst Ali put out his hand to the purse; but no sooner had he touched it than the bells and rings began to jingle and the gold to chink. Quoth Zureic, 'Thy perfidy is discovered, O gallows-bird! Wilt thou put a cheat on me and thou in a woman's habit? Take what cometh to thee!' And he threw a cake of lead at him, but it went askew and lighted on another; whereupon the people rose against Zureic and said to him, 'Art thou a tradesman or a swashbuckler? If thou be a tradesman, take down thy purse and spare the folk thy mischief.' 'In the name of God! On my head be it,' answered he.

As for Ali, he made off to the barrack and told Hassan Shouman what had happened, after which he put off his woman's clothes and donning a groom's habit, took a dish

and five dirhems. Then he returned to Zureic's shop and the fishmonger said to him, 'What dost thou want, my master?' He showed him the five dirhems and Zureic would have given him of the fish in the tray, but he said, 'I must have hot fish.' So he put fish in the pan and finding the fire dead, went in to relight it; whereupon Ali put out his hand to the purse and caught hold of the end of it. The bells and rings and rattles jingled and Zureic said, 'Thy trick hath not deceived me. I knew thee by the grip of thy hand on the dish and the dirhems, for all thou art disguised as a groom.' So saying, he threw the lead at him, but he avoided it and it fell into the pan full of hot fish and broke it and overturned it, fat and all, upon the shoulders of the Cadi, who was passing. The fat ran down inside his clothes to his privy parts and he cried out, saying, 'O my privities! What a pickle you are in! Alas, unhappy that I am! Who hath played me this trick?' 'O my lord,' answered the people, 'it was some boy that threw a stone into the pan: but for God's protection, it had been worse.' Then they turned and seeing the piece of lead and that it was Zureic who had thrown it, said to him, 'O Zureic, this is not allowed of God! Take down the purse, or it will be the worse for thee.' 'If it please God,' answered he, 'I will take it down.'

Night dccxb.

Meanwhile, Ali returned to the barrack and told his comrades what had passed and they said, 'Thou hast exhausted two-thirds of his sharpness.' Then he changed his groom's dress for that of a merchant and going out, met a snake-charmer, with a bag of serpents and another of gear, to whom said he, 'O charmer, come and amuse my lads, and thou shalt have largesse.' So he accompanied him to the barrack, where he fed him and drugging him, took his clothes and put them on. Then he took the bags and repairing to Zureic's shop, began to play the flute. Quoth Zureic, 'God provide thee!' But Ali took out the

serpents and cast them down before him; whereat the fish-seller, who was afraid of snakes, fled from them into the [inner] shop. Then Ali picked up the snakes and thrusting them back into the bag, put out his hand and caught hold of the end of the purse. The bells rang and the rings and rattles jangled, and Zureic said, 'Wilt thou never cease to play me tricks? Now thou feignest thyself a serpent-charmer.' So saying, he took up a piece of lead and hurled it at Ali; [but he avoided it,] and it fell on the head of a groom, who was passing by, in attendance upon his master, a trooper, and knocked him down. Quoth the soldier, 'Who did that?' And the folk said, 'It was a stone fell from the roof.' So the soldier passed on and the people, seeing the piece of lead, went up to Zureic and said to him, 'Take down the purse;' and he said, 'God willing, I will take it down this very night.'

Ali ceased not to play tricks upon Zureic, till he had made seven different attempts for the purse, but without success. Then he returned the snake-charmer his clothes and gear and gave him a present; after which he went back to Zureic's shop and heard him say, 'If I leave the purse here to-night, he will break in and take it; I will carry it home with me.' So he shut his shop and putting the purse in his sleeve, set out home, and Ali followed him till he came near his house, when he saw a wedding toward in a neighbour's house and said in himself, 'I will go home and give my wife the purse and change my clothes and return to the wedding.' Now he was married to a black girl, one of the freedwomen of the Vizier Jaafer, and she had borne him a son, whom he named Abdallah, and he had promised her to spend the money in the purse on the occasion of the boy's circumcision and marriage. So he went into his house and Ali, following him by stealth, stepped into a closet, whence he could hear and see all that passed. When Zureic entered, his wife saw that

his face was overcast and asked him what had vexed him. Quoth he, 'God hath afflicted me this day with a sharking fellow, who hath made seven attempts to get the purse, but without avail.' And she said, 'Give it to me, that I may lay it up against the boy's festival-day.' So he gave her the purse and changed his clothes, saying, 'Keep the purse safely, O Umm Abdallah, for I am going to the wedding.' But she said, 'Sleep awhile.' So he lay down and fell asleep. Presently, Ali rose and going on tiptoe to the purse, took it and went to the house of the wedding and stood there, looking on.

Meanwhile, Zureic dreamt that he saw a bird fly away with the purse and awaking in affright, said to his wife, 'Rise; look for the purse.' So she looked and finding it gone, buffeted her face and said, 'Alas, the blackness of thy fortune, O Umm Abdallah! A thief hath taken the purse.' 'By Allah,' quoth Zureic, 'it can be none other than the rascal [who has plagued me all day!] He has followed me home and taken the purse; and needs must I go and get it back.' 'Except thou bring it,' answered his wife, 'I will lock the door on thee and leave thee to pass the night in the street.' So he went up to the house of the wedding, and seeing Ali looking on, said to himself, 'This is he who took the purse; but he lodges with Ahmed ed Denef.' So he ran on before him to the barrack and climbing up at the back, made his way into the saloon, where he found every one asleep. Presently there came a knock at the door and Zureic said, 'Who is there?' 'Ali of Cairo,' answered the knocker; and Zureic said, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' Ali thought it was Hassan Shouman and answered, 'Yes; open the door.' Quoth Zureic, 'I cannot open to thee till I see the purse; for the chief and I have laid a wager about it.' 'Put out thy hand,' said Ali. So he put out his hand through the hole of the door and Ali laid the purse in it; whereupon Zureic

took it and going forth, as he had come in, returned to the wedding.

Ali stood awhile at the door, but none opened to him; and at last he gave a thundering knock that awoke all the men and they said, 'That was Ali of Cairo's knock.' So the hall-keeper opened to him and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' 'Enough of jesting, O Shouman,' replied Ali. 'Didst thou not swear that thou wouldst not open to me till I showed thee the purse, and did I not give it thee through the hole of the door?' 'By Allah,' said Hassan, 'it was not I who took it, but Zureic!' Quoth Ali, 'Needs must I get it again,' and repaired to the house of the wedding, where he heard the buffoon say, 'Largesse, O Abou Abdallah! Good luck to thee with thy son!' Quoth Ali, 'My luck is in the ascendant,' and going to the fishmonger's house, climbed over the back wall and found his wife asleep. So he drugged her and clad himself in her clothes. Then he took the child in his arms and went round, searching, till he found a basket containing gimblet-cakes, which Zureic, of his niggardliness, had kept from the Feast of the New Moon. Presently, the fishmonger returned and knocked at the door, whereupon Ali imitated his wife's voice and said, 'Who is at the door?' 'Abou Abdallah,' answered Zureic, and Ali said, 'I swore that I would not open the door to thee, except thou broughtest back the purse.' Quoth the fishmonger, 'I have brought it.' 'Then give it into my hand,' said Ali, 'before I open the door;' and Zureic answered, saying, 'Let down the basket and take it therein.' So Ali let down the basket and the other put the purse therein, whereupon Ali took it and drugged the child. Then he aroused the woman and making off by the back way as he had entered, returned with the child and the purse and the basket of cakes to the barrack and showed them all to the forty, who praised his dexterity. Then he

gave them the cakes, which they ate, and delivered the boy to Hassan Shouman, saying, 'This is Zureic's child; hide it.' So he hid it and fetching a lamb, gave it to the hall-keeper, who cooked it whole, wrapped in a cloth, and laid it out, with a shroud over it, as it were a dead body.

Meanwhile Zureic stood awhile, waiting at the door, then gave a thundering knock, and his wife said to him, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' 'Didst thou not take it up in the basket but now?' answered he, and she said, 'I let no basket down to thee, nor have I set eyes on the purse.' 'By Allah,' quoth he, 'the sharper hath been beforehand with me and hath taken the purse again!' Then he searched the house and found the basket of cakes gone and the child missing and cried out, saying, 'Alas, my child!' Whereupon the woman beat her breast and said, 'I will complain of thee to the Vizier, for none has killed my child but this sharper, and all because of thee.' Quoth Zureic, 'I will answer for him.' So he tied the kerchief [of truce] about his neck and going to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging, knocked at the door. The hall-keeper admitted him and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'What brings thee here?' Quoth he, 'Do ye intercede with Ali the Cairene to restore me my child and I will give him the purse.' 'God requite thee, O Ali!' said Hassan. 'Why didst thou not tell me it was his child?' 'What has befallen him?' asked Zureic, and Hassan answered, saying, 'We gave him raisins to eat, and he choked and died; and here he is.' Quoth Zureic, 'Alas, my child! What shall I say to his mother?' Then he rose and opening the shroud, saw it was a lamb cooked whole and said, 'Thou makest sport of me, O Ali!' Then they gave him the child, and Ahmed ed Denef said to him, 'Thou didst hang up the purse, proclaiming that it should be the property of any sharper who should avail to take it, and Ali has taken it; so it is his.' Quoth Zureic, 'I make him a present of it.' But

Ali said to him, 'Do thou accept it on account of thy niece Zeyneb.' And Zureic replied, 'I accept it.'

Then said the forty, 'We demand of thee Zeyneb in marriage for Ali of Cairo.' But he answered, saying, 'I have no control over her but of courtesy.' Quoth Hassan, 'Dost thou grant our suit?' 'Yes,' replied he; 'I will grant her in marriage to him who can avail to her dowry.' 'And what is her dowry?' asked Hassan. Quoth Zureic, 'She hath sworn that none shall mount her breast except he bring her the robe of Kemer, daughter of Azariah the Jew, and her crown and girdle and pantable of gold.' 'If I do not bring her the robe this very night,' said Ali, 'I renounce my claim to her.' 'O Ali,' rejoined Zureic, 'if thou play any tricks on Kemer, thou art a dead man.' 'Why so?' asked Ali, and the other said, 'Her father Azariah is a skilful magician, wily and perfidious, and has the Jinn at his service. He has without the city a palace, the walls whereof are one brick of gold and one of silver and which is only visible to the folk whilst he is therein: but, when he goes forth, it disappears. He brought his daughter this robe I speak of from an enchanted treasure, and every day he lays it in a dish of gold and opening the windows of the palace, cries out, saying, "Where are the sharpers of Cairo, the cutters of Irak, the master-thieves of the land of the Persians? Whoso availeth to take this robe, it is his." So all the light-fingered gentry essayed the adventure, but availed not to take it, and he turned them into apes and asses.' But Ali said, 'I will assuredly take it and Zeyneb shall be displayed therein.'[1]

Night DCCXVI.

So he went to the shop of the Jew and found him a man of stern and forbidding aspect, seated with scales and weights and gold and silver and nests of drawers and so forth before him, and a mule tethered hard by. Presently he rose and shutting his shop, laid the gold and silver in

[1] *i.e.* on her wedding-night.

two purses, which he placed in a pair of saddle-bags and set on the mule's back. Then he mounted and rode, followed, without his knowledge, by Ali, till he came some way without the city, when he took out a little dust from a purse he carried in his pocket and muttering over it certain magical words, sprinkled it in the air. No sooner had he done this than there appeared a palace, which had not its like, and the Jew mounted the steps without alighting; after which he dismounted and taking the saddle-bags off the mule's back, dismissed the latter, which was a genie he had pressed into his service, and it vanished. Then he entered the palace and sat down, whilst Ali watched him from behind the door. Presently he arose and opening the lattices, took a wand of gold, [which he set up in the open window,] and hanging thereto a golden tray by chains of the same metal, laid in it the robe and cried out, saying, 'Where are the sharpers of Cairo? Where are the cutpurses of Irak, the master-thieves of the land of the Persians? Whoso can take this robe by practice, it is his!' Then he pronounced certain conjurations and behold, a tray of food spread itself before him. He ate and conjured a second time, whereupon the tray disappeared and a table of wine appeared in its stead, and he drank. Quoth Ali, 'I know not how I am to take the robe, except if he be drunken.'

Then he stole up behind the Jew, with his drawn sword in his hand; but the other turned and conjured, saying to his hand, 'Hold with the sword;' whereupon Ali's right arm was arrested and abode half-way in the air, holding the sword. He put out his left hand to the weapon, but it also abode fixed in the air, and so with his right foot, leaving him standing on one foot. Then the Jew dispelled the charm from him and Ali became as before. Then Azariah levelled a table of sand and drew a geo-

mantic figure, by which he found that the intruder's name was Quicksilver Ali of Cairo; so he turned to him and said, 'Who art thou and what dost thou here?' 'I am Ali of Cairo,' answered the sharper, 'of the band of Ahmed ed Denef. I sought the hand of Zeyneb, daughter of Delileh the Crafty, and she demanded thy daughter's robe to her dowry; give it to me and become a Muslim, if thou wouldst save thy life.' 'After thy death,' answered the Jew. 'Many have gone about to steal the robe, but could not avail thereto; so, if thou wilt take good advice, thou wilt begone and save thyself; for they only seek the robe of thee, that thou mayst fall into destruction; and indeed, had I not found by geomancy that thy fortune overrideth my own, I had cut off thy head.'

Ali rejoiced to hear that his luck overrode that of the Jew and said to him, 'There is no help for it but I must have the robe and thou must become a true believer.' 'Is this thy last word?' asked the Jew, and Ali answered, 'Yes.' So the Jew took a cup and filling it with water, conjured over it and said to Ali, 'Quit this shape of a man for that of an ass.' Then he sprinkled him with the water and straightway he became an ass, with hoofs and long ears, and fell to braying after the manner of asses. The Jew drew a circle round him, which became a wall against him, and drank on till the morning, when he said to Ali, 'I will ride thee to-day and give the mule a rest.' So he locked up the robe and tray and rod in a cupboard and conjured over Ali, who followed him. Then he laid the saddle-bags on his back and mounting, rode forth of the palace, whereupon it disappeared and he rode into Baghdad, till he came to his shop, where he alighted and emptied the bags of gold and silver into the trays before him. As for Ali, he tied him up by the shop-door, where he stood, hearing and understanding all that passed, without being able to speak.

Presently, up came a young merchant with whom fortune had played the tyrant and who could find no easier way of earning his livelihood than water-carrying. So he brought his wife's bracelets to the Jew and said to him, 'Give me the worth of these bracelets, that I may buy me an ass.' 'What wilt thou do with him?' asked the Jew, and the other answered, 'I mean to fetch water from the river on his back, and earn my living thereby.' Quoth the Jew, 'Take this ass of mine.' So he sold him the bracelets and received Ali of Cairo in part payment, in the shape of an ass, and carried him home. Quoth Ali in himself, 'If the ass-man clap the pannel on me and load me with water-skins and go half a score journeys a day with me, he will ruin my health and I shall die.' So, when the water-carrier's wife came to bring him his fodder, he butted her with his head and she fell on her back; whereupon he sprang on her and smiting her head with his mouth, put out that which his father left him. She cried out and the neighbours came to her assistance and beat him and drove him off her breast. When her husband came home, she said to him, 'Either divorce me or return the ass to [his former] owner.' 'What has happened?' asked he; and she answered, saying, 'This is a devil in the guise of an ass. He sprang upon me, and had not the neighbours beaten him off me, he had done a foul thing with me.'

So he carried the ass back to the Jew, who said to him, 'Why hast thou brought him back?' and he replied, 'He did a foul thing with my wife.' So the Jew gave him his money again and he went away; and Azariah said to Ali, 'Unlucky wretch that thou art, hast thou recourse to knavery to cause him return thee to me? But since it pleases thee to be an ass, I will make thee a laughing-stock to great and small.' Then he mounted him and rode till he came without the city, when he brought out

Night dccxbii.

the powder and conjuring over it, cast it abroad in the air, and immediately the palace appeared. He entered and taking the saddle-bags off the ass, set up the rod and dish and hung out the robe, proclaiming aloud as of his wont. Then he conjured, and meat and wine appeared before him and he ate and drank; after which he took a cup of water and pronouncing certain words thereover, sprinkled it on Ali, saying, 'Quit this shape and return to thy former one.' Ali straightway became a man again and Azariah said to him, 'O Ali, take good advice and be content with [what thou hast felt of] my mischief. Thou hast no call to marry Zeyneb nor to take my daughter's robe, for it is no easy matter for thee; so leave covetise and it will be better for thee. Else will I turn thee into a bear or an ape or set an Afrit on thee, who will cast thee behind the Mountain Caf.' 'O Azariah,' answered Ali, 'I have engaged to take the robe and needs must I have it and thou must become a Muslim; else I will kill thee.' 'O Ali,' rejoined the Jew, 'thou art like a walnut; unless it be broken, it cannot be eaten.'

Then he took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled Ali with it, saying, 'Take the shape of a bear;' whereupon he instantly became a bear and the Jew muzzled him and putting a collar about his neck, chained him to a picket of iron. Then he sat down and ate and drank, now and then throwing him a morsel and emptying the dregs of the cup over him, till the morning, when he rose and laid by the tray and the robe and conjured over the bear, which followed him to the shop. There he tied him up by the chain and he abode, hearing and seeing and understanding, but unable to speak, whilst the Jew sat down and emptied the gold and silver into the trays before him. Presently up came a merchant, who accosted the Jew and said to him, 'Wilt thou sell me yonder bear? I have a wife who is my cousin [and is sick;] and it hath

been prescribed to her to eat bears' flesh and anoint herself with the grease.' At this the Jew rejoiced and said in himself, 'I will sell him to this merchant, so he may slaughter him and we be at peace from him.' And Ali thought in himself, 'By Allah, this fellow means to slaughter me; but deliverance is with God.' Then said the Jew, 'He is a present from me to thee.' So the merchant took him and carried him to the butcher, to whom he said, 'Take thy tools and follow me.' So the butcher took his knives and followed the merchant to his house, where he bound the beast and fell to sharpening his knife; but, when he went up to him to kill him, the bear escaped from his hands and rising into the air, disappeared from sight.

Now the reason of this was on this wise. When the Jew returned to his palace, his daughter questioned him of Ali and he told her what had happened; whereupon, 'Call a genie,' said she, 'and ask him of the youth, whether he be indeed Quicksilver Ali or another who seeketh to put a cheat on thee.' So Azariah called a genie and questioned him of Ali. And he answered, saying, 'It is Ali of Cairo himself. The butcher has bound him and whetted his knife to kill him.' Quoth the Jew, 'Go, snatch him up and bring him hither, ere the butcher slaughter him.' So the genie flew off and snatching Ali out of the butcher's hands, carried him to the palace and set him down before the Jew, who took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Return to thine own shape.' And he straightway became a man again as before. The Jew's daughter Kemer, seeing him to be a handsome young man, fell in love with him and he with her; and she said to him, 'O unlucky one, why dost thou go about to take my robe and enforce my father deal thus with thee?' Quoth he, 'I have engaged to get it for Zeyneb the Trickstress, that I may wed her therewith.' And she

said, 'Others than thou have gone about with my father to get the robe, but could not compass it: so put away this thought from thee.' But he answered, saying, 'Needs must I have it, and thy father must become a Muslim; or I will kill him.'

Then said the Jew, 'See, O my daughter, how this unlucky fellow seeks his own destruction. But I will turn him into a dog.' So he took a cup graven with characters and full of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled Ali therefrom, saying, 'Take the form of a dog.' Whereupon he straightway became a dog, and the Jew and his daughter drank together till the morning, when the former laid up the robe and tray and mounted his mule. Then he conjured over the dog, which followed him, as he rode towards the town, and all the dogs barked at Ali, as he passed, till he came to the shop of a broker, who rose and drove away the dogs, and Ali lay down before him. The Jew turned and looked for him, but finding him not, [rode on].

Presently, the broker shut up his shop and went home, followed by the dog. When his daughter saw the dog enter the house, she veiled her face and said, 'O my father, why dost thou bring a strange man in to me?' 'O my daughter,' answered the broker, 'this is a dog.' 'Not so,' quoth she, 'it is Ali of Cairo, whom the Jew Azariah hath enchanted.' And she turned to the dog and said to him, 'Art thou not Ali of Cairo?' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' Then said her father to her, 'Why did the Jew enchant him?' And she answered, 'Because of his daughter Kemer's robe; but I can release him.' 'If thou canst indeed do him this good office,' said the broker, 'now is the time.' Quoth she, 'If he will marry me, I will release him.' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' So she took a cup of water, graven with certain signs and characters, and conjuring over it, [was about to sprinkle Ali therewith,]

when she heard a great cry and the cup fell from her hand. She turned and lo, it was her father's maid, who had cried out; and she said to her, 'O my mistress, is it thus thou keepest the covenant between me and thee? None taught thee this fashion but I, and thou didst covenant with me that thou wouldst do nought without consulting me and that he who took thee to wife should marry me also, and that one night should be mine and one thine.' And the broker's daughter said, 'It is well.'

When the broker heard the maid's words, he said to his daughter, 'Who taught the maid?' And she answered, 'Ask herself.' So he asked her and she said, 'Know, O my lord, that, when I was with Azariah the Jew, I used to spy upon him and listen to him, when he performed his magical operations; and when he went forth to his shop in Baghdad, I opened his books and read in them, till I became skilled in the Cabala. One day, he was warm with wine and would have me lie with him, but I refused, saying, "I may not grant thee this except thou become a Muslim." He refused and I required him to carry me to the Sultan's market and sell me there. So he sold me to thee and I taught my young mistress, making it a condition with her that she should do nought, without taking counsel with me, and that whoso married her should marry me also, one night for her and one for me.' Then she took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled the dog therewith; saying, 'Return to the form of a man.' And he was straightway restored to his former shape; whereupon the broker saluted him and asked him the manner of his enchantment. So Ali told him all that had passed and the broker said to him, 'Will [not] my daughter and the maid suffice thee?' But he answered, saying, 'Needs must I have Zeyneb [also].'

Night dccxviii.

At this moment there came a knock at the door and the maid said, 'Who is at the door?' 'Kemer, daughter of

Azariah the Jew,' answered the new comer. 'Is Ali of Cairo with you?' 'O Jew's daughter,' answered the young lady, 'if he be with us, what wilt thou with him? Go down, O maid, and open to her.' So the maid let her in, and when Ali saw her, he said to her, 'What brings thee hither, O dog's daughter?' Quoth she, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God. Do men in the faith of Islam give marriage-portions to women or women to men?' 'Men endow women,' answered Ali. 'Then,' said she, 'I come and dower myself for thee, bringing thee, as my marriage-portion, my robe, together with the rod and tray and chains and the head of my father, thine enemy and the enemy of God.' And she threw down the Jew's head before him. Now the manner of her killing her father was as follows. On the night of his turning Ali into a dog, she saw, in a dream, one who said to her, 'Become a Muslim.' And she did so. Next morning, as soon as she awoke, she expounded Islam to her father, but he refused to embrace the faith; so she drugged him and killed him. As for Ali, he took the gear and giving the broker rendezvous for the morrow at the Divan of the Khalif, that he might take his daughter and the maid to wife, set out, rejoicing, to return to the barrack of the Forty.

On his way, he met a sweetmeat-seller, who was beating hand upon hand and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Folk's labour is become sin and men are active but in fraud!' Then said he to Ali, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, taste of this marchpane!' So Ali took a piece and ate it and fell down senseless, for there was henbane therein; whereupon the sweetmeat-seller took the robe and the tray and the rest of the gear and thrusting them into the box in which he kept his sweetmeats, made off. Presently he met a cadi, who called to him, saying, 'Come hither, O sweetmeat-

seller!' So he went up to him and setting down his sack, laid the tray of sweetmeats thereon and said, 'What dost thou want?' 'Marchpane and sugar-almonds,' answered the cadi and taking some in his hand, said, 'These are adulterated.' Then he brought out sweetmeats from his sleeve and gave them to the sweetmeat-seller, saying, 'Look at this ware; how excellent it is! Eat it and make the like.' So he ate and fell down senseless, for the sweetmeats were drugged, whereupon the sham cadi, who was none other than Hassan Shouman, bundled him into the sack and made off with him, tray and chest and all, to the barrack of the Forty. Now the reason of this was as follows. When Ali had been gone some days in quest of the robe and they heard no news of him, Ahmed ed Denef said to his men, 'O lads, go and seek for your brother Ali.' So they sallied forth in quest of him and among the rest Hassan Shouman, disguised in a cadi's habit. He came across the sweetmeat-seller and knowing him for Ahmed el Lekit [Delileh's grandson,] suspected him of having played some trick upon Ali; so he drugged him and did as we have seen.

Meanwhile, the other forty went about, making search in different directions, and amongst them Ali Kitf el Jemel, who, seeing a crowd of people, made towards them and found Quicksilver Ali lying drugged and senseless in their midst. So he revived him and he came to himself and said, 'Where am I?' 'We found thee lying here drugged,' answered El Jemel, 'but know not who drugged thee.' Quoth Ali, 'It was a certain sweetmeat-seller who drugged me and took the gear from me: but where is he gone?' 'We have seen nothing of him,' replied his comrades; 'but come, rise and go home with us.' So they returned to the barrack, where they found Ahmed ed Denef, who greeted Ali and enquired if he had brought the robe. Quoth he, 'I was coming hither with it and the Jew's head and what not

else, when a sweetmeat-seller met me and drugged me and took them from me; but, if I come across him again, I will requite him.'

Presently Hassan Shouman came out of a closet and said to him, 'O Ali, hast thou gotten the gear?' So he told him what had befallen him and added, 'If I knew where to find the knave, I would pay him out.' 'Knowest thou whither he went?' 'Yes,' answered Hassan; 'I know where he is,' and opening the door of the closet, showed him the sweetmeat-seller within, drugged and senseless. Then he aroused him and he opened his eyes and finding himself in presence of Quicksilver Ali and Ahmed ed Denef and the Forty, started up and said, 'Where am I and who has laid hands on me?' 'It was I laid hands on thee,' answered Hassan; and Ali said, 'O perfidious wretch, wilt thou play thy tricks on me?' And he would have slain him: but Hassan said to him, 'Hold thy hand, for this fellow is become thy kinsman.' 'How so?' asked Ali; and Hassan said, 'This is Ahmed el Lekit, Zeyneb's sister's son.'

Then said Ali to the prisoner, 'Why didst thou thus, O Lekit?' and he answered, saying, 'My grandmother, Delileh the Crafty, bade me do it; because Zureic the fishmonger foregathered with her and said, "Quicksilver Ali is a sharper and a past master in craft and knavery, and he will certainly kill the Jew and bring back the robe." So she sent for me and said to me, "O Ahmed, dost thou know Ali of Cairo?" "Yes," answered I; "it was I who directed him to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging, when he first came to Baghdad." Quoth she, "Go and set thy snares for him, and if he have brought back the gear, put a cheat on him and take it from him." So I went round about the city, till I met a sweetmeat-seller and buying his clothes and stock-in-trade and gear for ten dinars, did with thee as thou knowest.' Quoth Ali, 'Go back to thy grand-

mother and Zureic and tell them that I have brought the gear and the Jew's head and bid them meet me to-morrow at the Khalif's Divan, to receive Zeyneb's dowry.' And Ahmed ed Denef rejoiced in this and said to Ali, 'Thou hast not disappointed our pains in rearing thee, O Ali!'

Next morning, Ali took the robe and tray and the rod and chains of gold, together with the Jew's head on a pike, and went up, accompanied by Ahmed ed Denef and the Forty, to the Divan, where they kissed the ground before the Khalif, who turned and seeing a youth of the most valiant aspect, enquired of Ahmed ed Denef concerning him. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Ahmed, 'this is Quicksilver Ali the Egyptian, captain of the brave boys of Cairo, and he is the first of my lads.' And the Khalif loved him for the valour that shone from between his eyes, testifying for him and not against him. Then Ali rose and cast the Jew's head down before him, saying, 'May all thine enemies be like this one, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Whose head is this?' And Ali answered, 'It is the head of Azariah the Jew.' 'Who slew him?' asked the Khalif. So Ali related to him all that had passed, from first to last, and the Khalif said, 'I had not thought thou wouldst kill him, for that he was a sorcerer.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Ali, 'my Lord made me able to his slaughter.' Then the Khalif sent the chief of the police to the Jew's palace, where he found him lying headless; so he laid the body on a bier, and carried it to Er Reshid, who commanded to burn it.

Night DCCXIX.

At this moment up came Kemer and kissing the earth before the Khalif, informed him that she was the Jew's daughter and that she had become a Muslim. Then she renewed her profession before the Commander of the Faithful and said to him, 'Be thou my intercessor with Quicksilver Ali that he take me to wife.' [So Er Reshid

interceded with Ali] and she appointed him her guardian to consent to her marriage with the sharper, to whom he gave the Jew's palace and all its contents, saying, 'Ask a boon of me.' Quoth Ali, 'I beg of thee to let me stand on thy carpet and eat of thy table.' And the Khalif said, 'O Ali, hast thou any lads?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I have forty lads; but they are in Cairo.' 'Send to Cairo,' said the Khalif, 'and fetch them hither. But hast thou a lodging for them?' 'No,' replied Ali; and Hassan Shouman said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I make him a present of my barrack, with all that is therein.' But the Khalif answered, saying, 'O Hassan, thy lodging is thine own.' And bade his treasurer give the court architect ten thousand dinars, that he might build Ali a hall with four estrades and forty sleeping-closets for his lads. Then said he, 'O Ali, hast thou any further wish, that we may order its fulfilment?' 'O King of the age,' answered Ali, 'be thou my intercessor with Delileh the Crafty that she give me her daughter Zeyneb to wife and take the Jew's robe and gear in lieu of dower.' Delileh accepted the Khalif's intercession and took the robe and dish and what not, and they drew up the marriage contracts between Ali and Zeyneb and Kemer, the Jew's daughter and the broker's daughter and the maid. Moreover, the Khalif assigned him stipends and gratuities and a table morning and evening, together with allowances for fodder and what not.

Then Ali fell to making ready for the wedding festivities and after thirty days, he wrote a letter to his comrades in Cairo, wherein he gave them to know of the favours that the Khalif had bestowed upon him and said, 'I have married four girls and needs must ye come to the wedding.' So, after a while, the forty lads arrived and they held high festival. Moreover, he lodged them in his barrack and entreated them with the utmost honour and presented

them to the Khalif, who bestowed on them dresses of honour and largesse. Then the tiring-women displayed Zeyneb before Ali in the robe of the Jew's daughter, and he went in to her and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly that none but he had ridden. Then he went in to the three other girls and found them accomplished in beauty and grace.

After this, it befell that Ali was one night on guard by the Khalif and the latter said to him, 'O Ali, I wish thee to tell me all that has befallen thee from first to last.' So Ali related to him all his adventures and the Khalif bade record them and lay them up in the royal treasuries. So they wrote down all that had befallen him and laid it up with other histories for the people of the Best of Men.[1] And Ali and his wives and comrades abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies; and blessed and exalted be Allah, for He [alone] is All-knowing!

ARDESHIR AND HEYAT EN NUFOUS.

There was once in the city of Shiraz a mighty king called Seif el Aazem Shah, who had grown old, without being blessed with a son. So he summoned the doctors and sages and said to them, 'I am grown old and ye know my case and the state and ordinance of the kingdom, and I fear for my subjects after me, for that up to now God hath not vouchsafed me a son.' 'We will compound thee drugs,' answered they, 'wherein, if it please God the Most High, there shall be efficacy.' So they mixed him drugs, which he used and lay with his wife, and she conceived by leave of God the Most High, who saith to a thing, 'Be,' and it is. When her months were accomplished, she gave

[1] *i.e.* Mohammed.

birth to a son like the moon, whom his father named Ardeshir,[1] and he grew up and throve and applied himself to the study of science and polite letters, till he attained the age of fifteen.

Now there was in Irak a king called Abdulcadir, who had a daughter, by name Heyat en Nufous, and she was like the rising full moon; but she had an aversion to men and the folk scarce dared name them in her presence. The kings of the Chosroës had sought her in marriage of her father; but, when he spoke with her thereof, she said, 'Never will I do this thing; and if thou force me, I will slay myself.' Ardeshir heard of her and fell in love with her and told his father, who, seeing his case, took pity on him and promised him that he should marry her. So he despatched his Vizier to demand her in marriage of King Abdulcadir; but he refused, and when the Vizier returned to King Seif el Aazem and acquainted him with the failure of his mission, he was exceeding wroth and said, 'Shall the like of me send to one of the kings on an occasion and he accomplish it not?' Then he let make proclamation to his troops, bidding them get out the tents and equip them for war with all diligence, though they should borrow money for the necessary expenses; and he said, 'I will not turn back, till I have laid waste King Abdulcadir's dominions and slain his men and plundered his treasures and blotted out his traces!'

When the report of this reached Ardeshir, he rose from his bed and going in to his father, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O mighty King, burden not thyself with this thing and levy not thy troops neither spend thy money. Night dccxx.
Thou art stronger than King Abdulcadir, and if thou loose upon him this thy host, thou wilt lay waste his dominions and spoil his good and slay his men and himself; but, when his daughter comes to know what hath befallen her

[1] Artaxerxes.

father and his people on her account, she will kill herself, and I shall die for love of her; for I can never live after her.' 'And what then thinkest thou to do, O my son?' asked the King. 'I mean to go on my own errand,' answered the prince. 'I will don a merchant's habit and cast about how I may win to the princess and compass my desire of her.' Quoth Seif el Aazem, 'Art thou determined upon this?' And the prince said, 'Yes, O my father;' whereupon the King called to his Vizier and said to him, 'Do thou journey with my son, the darling of my heart, and help him to his desire and watch over him and guide him with thy sound judgment and stand to him in my stead.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier; and the King gave his son three hundred thousand dinars in gold and great store of jewels and precious stones and goldsmiths' ware and stuffs and other things of price. Then Ardeshir went in to his mother and kissed her hands and asked her blessing. She blessed him and opening her treasuries, brought out to him necklaces and trinkets and apparel and all manner of other precious things laid up from the time of the bygone kings, whose price might not be evened with money. Moreover, he took with him of his servants and slaves and cattle all that he needed for the road and clad himself and the Vizier and their company in merchants' habits.

Then he bade his parents and kinsfolk and friends farewell and setting out, fared on over deserts and wastes all tides of the day and watches of the night; and whenas the way was long upon him, he recited the following verses:

Passion and longing and unease are heavy on my spright, Nor is there one to succour me 'gainst destiny's unright.
Arcturus and the Pleiades I watch, as 'twere for love A servant of the stars I'd grown; yea, all the tides of night
Still for the morning-star I look, till, when at last it comes, I'm yearning-maddened and my pain redoubles for its sight.

From the religion of thy love I have not strayed, I swear; Nay, wakeful-lidded aye am I, a love distracted wight.
Though that I hope be hard to win and languor waste me sore And patience after thee to live and helpers fail me quite,
Yet will I constantly await till God our loves unite And mortify the foe and bring to nought the enviers' spite.

Then he swooned away and the Vizier sprinkled rose-water on him, till he came to himself, when he said to him, 'O king's son, possess thy soul in patience; for the issue of patience is solace, and behold, thou art on the way to that thou desirest.' And he ceased not to speak him fair and comfort him, till his trouble subsided and they continued their journey with all diligence. Presently, the prince again became impatient of the length of the way and bethought him of his beloved and recited these verses:

Absence is long and restlessness and care upon me weigh; Yea, and my heart in flames of fire consumeth night and day.
Mine eyes stream still with floods of tears and for the burning stress Of longing that afflicteth me, my very head's grown gray.
O thou my hope, my wishes' term, I swear by Him who made Both branch and leaf and every thing and moulded man of clay,
A load of passion for thy sake, O my desire, I bear; None else amongst the folk of love to bear it might essay.
Question the night of me and it will tell thee if therein, Through all the watches of the dark, my lids in sleep close aye.

Then he wept sore and complained of that which he suffered for stress of passion and love-longing; but the Vizier comforted him and spoke him fair, promising him the attainment of his desire; after which they fared on again, till, in a few days, they came in sight of the White City, [the capital of King Abdulcadir,] soon after sunrise. Then said the Vizier to the prince, 'Rejoice, O king's son, in all good; for see, yonder is the White City, that which thou seekest.' Whereat the prince rejoiced with an exceeding joy and recited the following verses:

Friends, I am longing-hearted, distraught with love and dole: Desire abides and yearning cleaves fast unto my soul.
Even as a mourning mother, who wakes for woe, I moan, When night falls down. None pities nor doth with me condole.
Yet, when from out thy country the winds breathe fresh and sweet, Meseems as if refreshment upon my spirit stole.
My lids, like clouds rain-laden, pour ever, and my heart Swims in their tears' salt ocean, that never leaves to roll.

Then they entered the White City and took up their lodging at the Khan of the Merchants, where they hired three magazines and laid up therein all their goods and gear. They abode in the khan till they were rested, when the Vizier applied himself to devise a plan of conduct for the prince, and said to him, 'I have bethought me of somewhat, wherein methinks will be advantage for thee, so it please God the Most High.' 'O Vizier of good counsel,' replied Ardeshir, 'do what cometh to thy mind, and may God direct thy wit aright!' Quoth the Vizier, 'I purpose to hire thee a shop in the bazaar of the stuff-sellers and set thee therein; for that all, great and small, have occasion to the bazaar, and methinks, when the folk see thee sitting in the shop, their hearts will incline to thee and thou wilt thus be able to attain that thou seekest, for thou art fair of favour and souls incline to thee and eyes rejoice in thee.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' answered Ardeshir.

Night dccxxi.

So the Vizier clad the prince and himself in their richest raiment and putting a purse of a thousand dinars in his pocket, went forth and walked about the city, whilst all who saw them marvelled at the prince's beauty, saying, 'Glory be to Him who created this youth of vile water![1] Blessed be God, the most excellent of Creators!' Great was the talk of him and some said, 'This is no mortal, but a noble angel;'[2] and others, 'Hath Rizwan, the door-

[1] *i.e.* semen hominis. [2] *Koran* xii. 31. (Said of Joseph.)

keeper of Paradise, left the gate unguarded, that this youth hath come forth?' The people followed them to the stuff-market, where they entered and stood, till there came up to them an old man of venerable appearance, who saluted them, and they returned his salute. Then said he to them, 'O my lords, have ye any need, that we may have the honour of accomplishing?' Quoth the Vizier, 'Who art thou, O elder?' And he answered, 'I am the overseer of the market.' 'Know then, O elder,' said the Vizier, 'that this youth is my son and I wish to take him a shop in the bazaar, that he may sit therein and learn to buy and sell and give and take and come to know the ways and habits of merchants.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the overseer and straightway brought them the key of a shop, which he caused the brokers sweep and clean. Then the Vizier sent for a high divan, stuffed with ostrich-down, and set it up in the shop, together with a small prayer-carpet, fringed with broidery of red gold, and a cushion: and he transported thither so much of the goods and stuffs that he had brought with him as filled the shop.

Next morning, the prince came and opening the shop, seated himself on the divan, and stationed two white slaves, clad in the richest of raiment, before him and two black slaves of the goodliest of the Abyssinians without the shop. The Vizier enjoined him to keep his secret from the folk, so thereby he might find assistance in the accomplishment of his wishes; then, charging him to acquaint him with what befell him in the shop, day by day, he left him and returned to the khan. The prince sat in the shop all day, as he were the moon at its full, whilst the folk, hearing tell of his beauty, flocked to the place, without errand, to gaze on his beauty and grace and symmetry and glorify God who created and shaped him, till none could pass through the bazaar for the crowding of the folk about him. Ardeshir turned right and left, abashed at the throng of

people that stared at him, hoping to make acquaintance with some one about the court, of whom he might get news of the princess, but found no way to this, wherefore his breast was straitened.

On this wise the case abode some time, whilst the Vizier daily promised him the attainment of his desire, till, one day, as he sat in the shop, there came up an old woman of venerable and respectable appearance, clad in raiment of [white wool, such as is worn of] devotees and followed by two slave-girls like moons. She stopped before the shop and considered the prince awhile, after which, 'Glory be to God,' said she, 'who fashioned that face and wrought that handiwork to perfection!' Then she saluted him and he returned her greeting and seated her by his side. Quoth she, 'Whence comest thou, O fair of face?' 'From the parts of Hind, O my mother,' answered he; 'and I have come to this city to see the world and look about me.' 'Honour to thee for a visitor!' rejoined she. 'What goods and stuffs hast thou? Show me something handsome, fit for kings.' Quoth he, 'If thou wish for handsome stuffs, I will show them to thee; for I have wares that beseem persons of every condition.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'I want somewhat costly and fair of fashion; brief, the best thou hast.' Said he, 'Thou must needs tell me for whom thou seekest it, that I may show thee goods according to the rank of the person in question.' 'Thou sayst sooth, O my son,' replied she. 'I want somewhat for my mistress Heyat en Nufous, daughter of Abdulcadir, lord of this land and king of this country.'

When Ardeshir heard his mistress's name, his reason fled for joy and his heart fluttered and he gave no order to slave or servant, but, putting his hand behind him, pulled out a purse of a hundred dinars and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'This is for the washing of thy clothes.' Then he brought out of a wrapper a dress worth ten

thousand dinars or more and said to her, 'This is of that which I have brought hither.' When the old woman saw it, it pleased her and she said, 'What is the price of this dress, O perfect in beauty?' 'I will take no price for it,' answered he; whereupon she thanked him and repeated her question; but he said, 'By Allah, I will take no price for it! If the princess will not accept it, I make thee a present of it and it is a guest-gift from me to thee. Praised be God who hath brought us together, so that, if one day I have a want, I shall find thee a helper to me in its accomplishment!' She marvelled at the goodliness of his speech and the excess of his generosity and courtesy, and said to him, 'What is thy name, O my lord?' 'My name is Ardeshir,' answered he; and she said, 'By Allah, this is a rare name! Therewith are kings' sons named, and thou art in the guise of the sons of the merchants.' Quoth he, 'Of the love my father bore me, he gave me this name, but a name signifies nothing.' And she wondered at him and said, 'O my son, take the price of thy goods.' But he swore that he would take nothing.

Then said she to him, 'O my son, truth is the greatest of all things and thou hadst not dealt thus generously by me but for a special reason: so tell me thy case and thy secret thought; belike thou hast some need to the accomplishment of which I may help thee.' Thereupon he laid his hand in hers and swearing her to secrecy, told her the whole story of his passion for the princess and his sufferings by reason thereof. The old woman shook her head and said, 'True, O my son; but the wise say, in the current adage, "If thou wouldst be obeyed, abstain from ordering that which may not be;" and thou, my son, thy name is "Merchant," and though thou hadst the keys of the hidden treasures, yet wouldst thou be called nought but "Merchant." If thou have a mind to advance thyself in rank, according to thy station, seek the hand of

a Cadi's daughter or an Amir's; but why, O my son, aspirest thou to none but the daughter of the King of the age and the time, and she a clean maid, who knows nought of the things of the world and has never in her life seen aught but her palace in which she dwells? Yet, for all her tender age, she is intelligent, shrewd, vivacious and quick-witted, well-advised and prudent in action. Her father hath no other child than her and she is dearer to him than his life. Every morning he comes to her and gives her good-morrow, and all who dwell in the palace stand in awe of her. Think not, O my son, that any dare bespeak her with aught of these words; as for me, there is no way for me thereto. By Allah, O my son, my heart and bowels love thee and were it in my power to give thee access to her, I would assuredly do it; but I will tell thee somewhat, wherein Allah may haply appoint the healing of thy heart, and will venture my life and my goods for thee, till I accomplish thy desire for thee.' 'And what is that, O my mother?' asked he. 'Seek of me the daughter of a Vizier or an Amir,' answered she, 'and I will grant thy request; but it may not be that one should mount from earth to heaven at one bound.'

When the prince heard this, he replied to her with courtesy and reasonableness, saying, 'O my mother, thou art a woman of sense and knowest how things go. Doth a man, when his head irketh him, bind up his hand?' 'No, by Allah, O my son,' said she. 'Even so,' rejoined he, 'my heart seeketh none but her and nought slayeth me but the love of her. By Allah, I am a lost man, an I find not one to counsel me aright and succour me! God on thee, O my mother, have pity on my strangerhood and the streaming of my tears!' 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the old woman, 'thy words rend my heart, but I know not how to help thee.' Quoth he, 'I beseech thee of thy favour, carry her a letter and kiss her hands for me.' So she took

Night dccxxii.

compassion on him and said, 'Write what thou wilt and I will carry it to her.' When he heard this, he was transported for joy and calling for pen and ink and paper, wrote the following verses:

O Heyat en Nufous, be gracious and incline Unto a lover who for severance doth pine.
I was in all delight and ease of life, but now Distraction and despair consume this heart of mine.
I company the night with sorrows in discourse And wakefulness cleaves fast all tides unto mine eyne.
Pity a lover sad, afflicted with desire, Whose lids are ulcered aye with yearning's tears of brine;
And when the morning comes at last, the tardy morn, He's drunken and distraught with passion's heady wine.

Then he folded the letter and kissing it, gave it to the old woman; after which he put his hand to a chest and took out a second purse of a hundred dinars, which he gave her, saying, 'Divide this among the slave-girls.' She refused it and said, 'By Allah, O my son, I am not with thee for aught of this!' But he thanked her and said, 'Thou must indeed take it.' So she took it and kissing his hands, returned to the princess, to whom said she, 'O my lady, I have brought thee somewhat the like whereof is not with the people of our city, and it comes from a handsome young man, than whom there is not a goodlier on the surface of the earth.' 'O my nurse,' answered the princess, 'and whence cometh he?' 'From the parts of Hind,' replied the old woman; 'and he hath given me this dress of gold brocade, embroidered with pearls and jewels and worth the kingdom of Chosroës and Cæsar.' So saying, she opened the dress and spread it out before her, whereupon the whole palace was illumined by its brightness, by reason of the beauty of its fashion and the wealth of pearls and jewels with which it was broidered, and all who were present marvelled at it. The princess examined it and judging it to be worth no less

than a whole year's revenue of her father's kingdom, said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, comes this dress from him or another?' 'From him,' answered she; and Heyat en Nufous said, 'Is he of our town or a stranger?' 'He is a stranger,' replied the old woman, 'newly come hither; and he hath slaves and servants and is fair of face, symmetrical of shape, well-mannered, open-handed and open hearted, never saw I a goodlier than he, except thyself.'

'O my nurse,' rejoined the princess, 'this is an extraordinary thing, that a dress like this, which money cannot buy, should be in the hands of a merchant! What price did he set on it?' 'He would set no price on it,' answered the old woman, 'but gave me back the money thou sentest by me and swore that he would take nought thereof, saying, 'It is a gift from me to the King's daughter; for it beseemeth none but her; and if she will not accept it, I make thee a present of it.' 'By Allah,' said the princess, 'this is indeed rare liberality and wonderful munificence! But I fear the issue of his affair, lest he be brought to necessity. Why didst thou not ask him, O my nurse, if he had any desire, that we might fulfil it for him?' 'O my lady,' answered the nurse, 'I did ask him, and he said to me, 'I have indeed a desire,' but would not tell me what it was. However, he gave me this letter and said, 'Carry it to the princess.' So Heyat en Nufous took the letter and opened and read it; whereupon she was sore chafed and changing colour for anger, cried out to the old woman, saying, 'Out on thee, O nurse! What is the name of this dog who dares to write thus to a king's daughter? What affinity is there between him and me, that this dog should address me thus? By the great God, Lord of the well Zemzem and of the Kaabeh, but that I fear God the Most High, I would send and bind the dog's hands behind him and slit his nostrils and cut off his nose

and ears and crucify him on the gate of the bazaar wherein is his shop!'

When the old woman heard this, she turned pale and trembled in every nerve and her tongue clave to her mouth; but she took courage and said, 'Softly, O my lady! What is there in his letter to trouble thee thus? Is it aught but a memorial, wherein he maketh his complaint to thee of poverty or oppression, from which he hopes to be relieved by thy favour?' 'By Allah, O my nurse,' replied the princess, 'it is nought of this; but verses and shameful words! Needs must the dog be in one of three cases: either he is mad and hath no wit or he seeks his own slaughter, or else he is assisted to his wish of me by some one of exceeding puissance and a mighty Sultan. Or hath he heard that I am one of the light o' loves of the city, who lie a night or two with whosoever seeketh them, that he writeth me shameful verses to debauch my reason withal?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined the old woman, 'thou sayst sooth! But reck not thou of yonder ignorant dog, for thou art seated in thy high-builded and unapproachable palace, to which the very birds cannot soar neither the wind pass over it, and he is distracted. Wherefore do thou write him a letter and chide him roundly and spare him no kind of reproof, but threaten him exceedingly and menace him with death and say to him, "Whence hast thou knowledge of me, that thou darest to write to me, O dog of a merchant, that trudgest far and wide all thy days in deserts and wastes for the sake of gaining a dirhem or a dinar? By Allah, except thou awake from thy sleep and put off thine intoxication, I will crucify thee on the gate of the bazaar wherein is thy shop!"' Quoth the princess, 'I fear lest he [be encouraged to] presume, if I write to him.' 'And what is he,' rejoined the nurse, 'that he should presume to us? Indeed, we write to him but to the intent that

his presumption may be cut off and his fear magnified.' And she ceased not to persuade her, till she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote him the following verses:

O thou that feignest thee the prey of love and wakefulness, Thou that for passion spendst the nights in transport and distress,
O self-deluder, dost thou seek enjoyment of a moon? Did ever any of the moon win grace and love-liesse?
I rede thee hearken to my word; I give thee counsel fair; Desist, for danger, ay, and death do hard upon thee press.
If thou to this request return, a grievous punishment Shall surely fall on thee from us, and ruin past redress.
Be reasonable, then: behold, I give thee good advice: Return unto thy wit and stint from this thy frowardness.
By Him who did all things that be from nothingness create, Who with the golden glittering stars the face of heaven did dress,
I'll surely have thee crucified upon a cross of tree, If in the like of this thy speech thou do again transgress!

Night dccxxiii.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who repaired to Ardeshir's shop and delivered it to him, saying, 'Here is thine answer, and thou must know that, when she read thy verses, she was exceeding wroth; but I soothed her and spoke her fair, till she consented to write thee an answer.' He took the letter joyfully, but, when he had read it and apprehended its purport, he wept sore, whereat the old woman's heart ached and she said, 'O my son, may God spare thine eyes to weep and thy heart to mourn! What can be more gracious than that she should answer thy letter, under the circumstances?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'how shall I do for a subtler device? Behold, she writes to me, threatening me with death and crucifixion and forbidding me from writing to her, and by Allah, I see my death to be better than my life; but I beg thee of thy favour to carry her another letter from me.' 'Write,' said she, 'and I warrant I'll bring thee an answer. By Allah, I will venture my life to bring thee to thy desire, though I die to pleasure thee!'

He thanked her and kissing her hands, wrote the following verses:

Dost thou with slaughter threaten me, for that I love thee dear? Death is decreed and slaughter eke to me were easefulness.
Better death end a lover's woes than that a weary life He live, rejected and reviled, forbidden from liesse.
Visit a lover, for God's sake, whose every helper fails; For praiseworthy it is in men to strive to soothe distress.
An thou on aught determined be, up, then, and do thy will; I am thy worshipper and eke thy bondslave none the less.
What shall I do? I cannot live without thee: otherguise How should it be, since lovers' hearts constraint doth still oppress?
Have ruth, O lady mine, on one who's sick for love of thee; For all who love the noble stand excused of wantonness.

He folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with two purses, containing two hundred dinars, which she would have refused, but he conjured her to take them. So she took them and said, 'Needs must I bring thee to thy desire, despite thine enemies!' Then she returned to the palace and gave the letter to Heyat en Nufous, who said, 'What is this, O my nurse? Here are we in correspondence [with a man] and thou coming and going! Indeed, I fear lest the matter get wind and we be disgraced.' 'How so, O my lady?' rejoined the old woman. 'Who dare speak such a word?' So she took the letter and read it and smote hand on hand, saying, 'Verily, this is a calamity that is fallen upon us, and I know not whence this young man came to us!' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'God on thee, write him another letter; but be round with him this time and say to him, "If thou write me another word after this, I will have thy head struck off."' 'O my nurse,' answered the princess, 'I am assured that the thing will not end after this fashion; it were better to leave it unanswered, and except the dog take warning by my previous threats, I will strike off his head.' Quoth the old woman, 'Then write him a letter and give him to

know this.' So Heyat en Nufous called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thou that, heedless, letst the lessons of experience pass by, Thou whose amorous heart and doating doth for my possession sigh,
Hopest thou, O self-deluder, to the heavens to attain? Dost thou think the moon to come at, shining in the distant sky?
With a fire whose flames are quenchless I will surely burn thee up, And one day with swords destroying slain and slaughtered shalt thou lie!
Yea, before thee the extremest of affliction hidden lies, Such as e'en the parting-places shall with white for terror dye.
Wherefore take a friendly warning and from love-liking abstain, Nor to that which is not seemly evermore thyself apply.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who carried it to Ardeshir, leaving the princess sore incensed by reason of this affair. The prince read the letter and bowed his head to the earth, making as if he wrote with his fingers and speaking not. Quoth the old woman, 'O my son, what ails thee that thou sayst nought?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'what shall I say, seeing that she doth but threaten me and redoubleth in hard-heartedness and aversion?' 'Write her a letter of what thou wilt,' rejoined the nurse. 'I will protect thee, and let not thy heart be cast down, for needs must I bring you together.' He thanked her for her kindness and kissing her hand, wrote the following verses:

A heart that unto him who loves no prayers may mollify; Yea, and a lover for his love's possession who doth sigh
And lids that ever ulcered are with burning tears, what time The shrouding blackness of the dark falls on them from the sky!
Be charitable, then; have ruth on one with passion worn, A lover parted from his love, that may not come her nigh.
Drowned in the sea of tears and burnt with longing, knowing not Slumber nor peace, the whole night long unresting doth he lie.
Cut thou not off my heart's desire; for 'tis afflicted sore, Wasted and palpitating aye, for passion like to die.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with three hundred dinars, saying, 'This is for

the washing of thy hands.' She thanked him and kissed his hands, after which she returned to the palace and gave the letter to the princess, who read it and throwing it from her hand, sprang to her feet, whilst the vein of anger started out between her eyes. Then she walked, shod as she was with pattens of gold, set with pearls and jewels, till she came to her father's palace, and none dared ask her how it was with her. When she reached the palace, she asked for the King, and the slave-girls said to her, 'O my lady, he is gone forth a-hunting.' So she returned, as she were a raging lioness, and spoke to none for the space of three hours, at the end of which time her wrath subsided and her brow cleared.

When the old woman saw that her anger was past, she went up to her and kissing the earth before her, said to her, 'O my lady, whither went those noble steps?' 'To the palace of the King my father,' answered Heyat en Nufous. 'And could no one do thine errand?' asked the nurse. 'No,' replied the princess; 'for I went to acquaint him with that which hath befallen me with yonder dog of a merchant, that he might lay hands on him and on all the merchants of his bazaar and crucify them over their shops and suffer no foreign merchant to abide in our town.' Quoth the old woman, 'And was this thine only reason for going to thy father?' 'Yes,' answered Heyat en Nufous; 'but I found him absent a-hunting and await his return.' 'I take refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing!' exclaimed the old woman, 'Praised be He! O my lady, thou art the most sensible of women and how couldst thou think of telling the King these wild words, which it behoveth none to publish?' 'And why so?' asked the princess. 'Suppose,' said the nurse, 'thou hadst found the King in his palace and told him all this and he had sent after the merchants and commanded to hang them over their shops, the folk would have seen them

hanging and asked the reason and it would have been answered them, "They sought to debauch the King's daughter." Then would they have spread divers reports concerning thee, some saying, "She abode with them half a score days, away from her palace, till they had taken their fill of her;" and other some otherguise; for honour, O my lady, is like milk, the least dust spoils it; or like glass, which, if it be cracked, may not be mended. So beware of telling thy father or any other of this matter, lest thy honour be ruined, for it will never profit thee to tell folk aught. Weigh what I say with thy keen wit, and if thou find it not just, do as thou wilt.'

The princess pondered her words and seeing them to be altogether just, said, 'Thou art right, O my nurse: indeed, anger had blinded my judgment.' Quoth the old woman, 'Thy resolve to tell no one is pleasing to God the Most High; but that is not all: we must not let the insolence of yonder vile dog of a merchant pass without rebuke. Write him a letter and say to him, "O vilest of merchants, but that I found my father absent, I had straightway commanded to hang thee and all thy neighbours. But thou shalt gain nothing by this; for I swear to thee by God the Most High that, if thou return to the like of this talk, I will blot out the trace of thee from the face of the earth!" And deal thou roundly with him in words, so shalt thou discourage him and arouse him from his heedlessness.' 'And will these words cause him to abstain from his offending?' asked the princess. 'How should he not abstain?' replied the old woman. 'Besides, I will talk with him and tell him what has passed.' So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thy hopes unto the winning our favours still cleave fast, And still of us thou seekest thy wishes to attain.
It is his self-delusion alone that slays the man And that which he requireth of us shall be his bane.

No man art thou of prowess, thou hast no hosts at call; Thou'rt neither king nor viceroy, nor kingdom nor domain
Hast; and were this the fashion of one who is our peer, Hoary for war and terrors he had returned again.
Yet that wherein thou sinnest once more I'll pardon thee, So thou from this time forward repent thee and refrain.

Then she gave the letter to the old woman, saying, 'O my nurse, do thou admonish the dog, lest we [be forced to] cut off his head and commit sin on his account.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'I will not leave him a side to turn on!' Then she returned to Ardeshir and gave him the letter. He read it and shook his head, saying, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! O my mother, what shall I do? My fortitude fails me and my patience is exhausted.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'take patience: peradventure, after this God shall bring somewhat to pass. Write that which is in thy mind and I will fetch thee an answer, and be of good cheer; for needs must I bring about union between her and thee, so God please.' He blessed her and wrote the following verses:

Since there is none to succour me in love and to assain, Me who of passion's tyranny am all fordone and slain,
Since flames of fire within my heart by day I do endure And through the weary night I seek a resting-place in vain,
How should I leave to hope in thee, O term of all desire, Or rest content with what I dree of passion and its pain?
I beg the Empyrean's Lord to grant me His approof, Since I with longing for the fair am perished, heart and brain,
Yea, and enjoyment speedily to give me. Oh, consent! For with the terrors of desire I'm smitten and o'erta'en.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with a purse of four hundred dinars. She took the whole and returning to the palace, gave the letter to the princess; but she refused to take it and said, 'What is this?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'this is the answer to

the letter thou wrotest to that dog of a merchant.' Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'Didst thou forbid him, as I told thee?' 'Yes,' answered she; 'and this is his answer.' So the princess took the letter and read it; then turned to the old woman and said to her, 'Where is the result thou didst promise me?' 'O my lady,' replied she, 'saith he not in his letter that he repenteth and will not again offend, excusing himself for the past?' 'Not so, by Allah!' replied the princess. 'On the contrary, he increases [his offending].' 'O my lady,' rejoined the nurse, 'write him a letter and thou shalt see what I will do with him.' Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'There needs no letter nor answer.' 'I must have a letter,' answered the nurse, 'that I may rebuke him roundly and cut off his hopes.' 'Thou canst do that without a letter,' rejoined the princess: but the old woman said, 'I cannot do it without the letter.' So Heyat en Nufous called for inkhorn and paper and wrote these verses:

Again and again I chide thee; but chiding hinders thee ne'er: How many a time with my writing in verse have I bid thee forbear!
Conceal thy passion, I rede thee, nor ever reveal it to men; For, if thou gainsay me, no mercy I'll show thee henceforward nor spare;
Yea, if, in despite of my warning, to this that thou sayst thou return, The herald of death[1] shall go calling for thee and thy death shall declare;
Ere long, on thy body the breezes shall blow, as the hurricane blows, And eke on thy flesh in the desert shall batten the fowls of the air.
Return to fair fashion and comely; 'twill profit thee, trust me; but, if Thou purpose ill-dealing and lewdness, for sure I'll destroy thee, I swear.

When she had made an end of writing this, she cast the scroll angrily from her hand, and the old woman picked it up and carried it to Ardeshir. When he read it, he knew

[1] *Naaï el maut*, the person who announces any one's death to the friends and relations of the deceased and invites them to the funeral.

that she relented not to him, but only redoubled in anger against him, and that he would never win to her, and bethought himself to write her an answer, invoking [God's help] against her. So he called for pen and ink and wrote the following verses:

O Lord, by the Five Elders, deliver me, I pray, From her whose love hath wrought me affliction and dismay.
Thou knowest what I suffer for passion's flames and all My sickness for a maiden who saith me ever nay.
She hath on that no pity wherewith I smitten am: How long o'er this my weakness shall she the tyrant play?
I am for her distracted with agonies of death And find nor friend nor helper, O Lord, to be my stay.
How long, when night its pinions o'er all hath spread, shall I On wake, alas! bemoan me with heart and tongue till day?
Full fain would I forget her, but how can I forget, When for desire my patience is wasted clean away?
Tell me, O bird of parting, is she then fenced and free From fortune's tribulations, that shifts and changes aye?

Then he folded the letter and gave it, together with a purse of five hundred dinars, to the old woman, and she took it and carried it to the princess, who read it and casting it from her hand, said to her, 'O wicked old woman, tell me the cause of all that hath befallen me from thee and from thy cunning and thy favouring of him, so that thou hast made me write letter after letter and ceasest not to go and come between him and me and carry messages, till thou hast brought about correspondence and connection between us. Thou sayest still, "I will ensure thee against his mischief and cut off from thee his speech;" but thou speakest thus only to the intent that I may continue to write thee letters and thou to fetch and carry between us, till thou ruin my repute. Out on thee! Ho, eunuchs, seize her!' So they laid hands on the nurse and Heyat en Nufous commanded them to beat her, and they did so till her whole body streamed with blood and she fainted

away, whereupon the princess caused her waiting-women drag her forth by the feet and cast her without the palace and bade one of them stand by her, till she recovered, and say to her, 'The princess hath taken an oath that thou shalt never re-enter the palace and hath commanded to slay thee without mercy, if thou return hither.'

So, when she came to herself, the damsel told her what the princess said and she answered, saying, 'I hear and obey.' Then the slave-girls fetched a basket and a porter and caused carry her to her own house and sent after her a physician, bidding him tend her assiduously till she recovered. He did as he was commanded and as soon as she was whole of her wounds, she mounted and rode to the shop of Ardeshir, who was sore troubled with concern for her absence from him and longing for news of her. As soon as he saw her, he sprang up and coming to meet her, saluted her. Then he noticed that she was weak and ailing; so he asked her how she did and she told him all that had passed. When he heard this, he was sore concerned and smote hand upon hand, saying, 'By Allah, O my mother, this that hath befallen thee is grievous to me! But what is the reason of the princess's aversion to men?' 'Thou must know, O my son,' answered the old woman, 'that she has a beautiful garden, than which there is not a goodlier on the face of the earth and it chanced that she lay there one night. In the delight of sleep, she dreamt that she went down into the garden, where she saw a fowler set up his net and strew corn thereabout, after which he withdrew and sat down afar off to await what game should fall into it. Before long, the birds flocked to pick up the corn and a male pigeon fell into the net and struggled in it, whereat the others took fright and fled from him. His mate flew away with the rest, but presently returned and coming up to the net, sought out the mesh in which his foot was entangled and ceased not to peck at it with

her bill, till she severed it and released her mate, with whom she flew away. All this while, the fowler sat dozing, and when he awoke, he looked at the net and found it broken. So he mended it and strewed fresh corn, then withdrew to a distance and sat down again to watch it. The birds soon returned and began to pick up the corn, and amongst the rest the pair of pigeons. Presently, the female pigeon fell into the net and struggled to win free; whereupon the other birds all flew away, and her mate fled with the rest and did not return to her. Meantime, slumber had again overcome the fowler and he slept a great while; and when he awoke, he saw the she-pigeon caught in the net; so he went up to her and freeing her feet from the meshes, killed her. The princess awoke, troubled, and said, "Thus do men with women; for women have pity on men and venture their lives for them, when they are in trouble; but if the Lord decree against a woman and she fall into calamity, her mate deserts her and rescues her not, and wasted is that which she did with him of kindness. May God curse her who putteth her trust in men, for they ill requite the kind offices that women do them!" And from that day she conceived an aversion to men.'

'O my mother,' said the prince, 'doth she never go out into the street?' 'No,' answered the old woman; 'but, O my son, I will tell thee somewhat, wherein, God willing, there shall be profit for thee. It is that every year, at the time of the ripening of the fruits, the princess goes forth into her garden, which is of the goodliest of the pleasaunces of the time, and takes her pleasure therein one day, nor lies the night but in her palace. She enters the garden by the private door of the palace which leads thereto, and it wants now but a month to the time of her going forth. So take my advice and go this very day to the keeper of the garden and clap up an acquaintance

with him and insinuate thyself into his good graces, for he lets not a soul enter the garden, because of its communication with the princess's palace. I will let thee know two days beforehand of the day fixed for her coming forth, when do thou repair to the garden, as of thy wont, and make shift to pass the night there. When the princess comes, be thou hidden somewhere and presently show thyself to her. When she sees thee, she will infallibly fall in love with thee; for thou art fair to look upon and love covers all things. So take comfort and be of good cheer, O my son, for needs must I bring about union between her and thee.'

Night dccxxb.

The prince kissed her hand and thanked her and gave her three pieces of Alexandrian silk and three of satin of various colours, and with each piece, linen for shifts and stuff for trousers and a kerchief for the turban and fine white cotton cloth of Baalbek for the linings, so as to make her six complete suits, each handsomer than its fellow. Moreover, he gave her a purse containing six hundred dinars and said to her, 'This is for the fashion.' She took the whole and said to him, 'O my son, wilt thou not acquaint me with thine abiding-place and I also will show thee the way to my lodging?' 'Yes,' answered he and sent a servant with her to note her lodging and show her his own.

Then he rose and bidding his slaves shut the shop, went back to the Vizier, to whom he related all that had passed between him and the old woman. 'O my son,' said the Vizier, 'what wilt thou do, should the princess come out and look upon thee and thou find no favour with her?' Quoth Ardeshir, 'There will be nothing left but to pass from words to deeds and venture my life with her; for I will snatch her up from amongst her attendants and set her behind me on a swift horse and make for the uttermost of the desert. If I escape, I shall have gained my desire

and if I perish, I shall be at rest from this loathed life.' 'O my son,' rejoined the Vizier, 'dost thou think to do this thing and live? How shall we make our escape, seeing that our country is far distant, and how wilt thou deal thus with a king of the kings of the time, who has under his hand a hundred thousand horse, nor can we be sure but that he will despatch some of his troops to waylay us? Verily, there is no good in this project and no man of sense would attempt it.' 'And how then shall we do, O Vizier of good counsel?' asked Ardeshir. 'For, [except I get her,] I am a dead man without recourse.' 'Wait till to-morrow,' answered the Vizier, 'till we behold this garden and note its ordinance and see what betides us with the keeper.'

So, on the morrow, they took a thousand dinars and repairing to the garden, found it compassed about with high and strong walls, abounding in trees and streams and well furnished with goodly fruits. And indeed its flowers breathed perfume and its birds warbled, as it were a garden of the gardens of Paradise. Within the door sat an old man on a bench of stone, and they saluted him. When he saw them and noted the goodliness of their favour, he rose to his feet and returned their salute, saying, 'O my lords, peradventure you have a wish, which we may have the honour of satisfying?' 'Know, O elder,' replied the Vizier, 'that we are strangers and the heat hath overcome us. Now our lodging is afar off at the other end of the town; wherefore we desire of thy courtesy that thou take these two dinars and buy us somewhat of victual and open us meanwhile the door of this garden and seat us in some shaded place, where there is cold water, that we may cool ourselves there, against thou return with the victual, when we will eat, and thou with us, and go our ways, rested and refreshed.' So saying, he pulled out a couple of dinars and put them into the keeper's hand.

Now the keeper was a man of seventy years of age and had never in all his life possessed so much money. So, when he saw the two dinars in his hand, he was transported for joy and forthwith opening the garden gate to the prince and the Vizier, made them enter and sit down under the shade of a wide-spreading tree, laden with fruit, saying, 'Sit here and go no further into the garden, for it hath a privy door communicating with the palace of the princess Heyat en Nufous.' 'We will not budge hence,' answered they. Then he went out to buy what they had ordered and returned, after awhile, with a porter bearing on his head a roasted lamb and bread. They ate and drank together and talked awhile, till, presently, the Vizier, looking about him right and left, caught sight of a lofty pavilion in the midst of the garden; but it was old and the plaster was peeled from its walls and its coigns were broken down. So he said to the gardener, 'O elder, is this garden thine own or dost thou hire it?' 'O my lord,' answered the old man, 'I am neither owner nor tenant of the garden, only its keeper.' 'And what is thy wage?' asked the Vizier. 'A dinar a month,' replied the old man, and the Vizier said, 'Verily, they wrong thee, especially if thou hast a family.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered the gardener, 'I have eight children.' 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' exclaimed the Vizier. 'Thou makest my heart bleed for thee, my poor fellow! What wouldst thou say of him who should do thee a good turn, on account of this family of thine?' 'O my lord,' answered the old man, 'whatsoever good thou dost shall be treasured up for thee with God the Most High!'

Then said the Vizier, 'O old man, this garden of thine is a goodly place; but the pavilion yonder is old and ruinous. Now I mean to repair it and plaster it anew and paint it handsomely, so that it will be the finest thing in the garden; and when the owner of the garden comes and

finds the pavilion reinstated, he will not fail to question thee concerning it. Then do thou say, "O my lord, I set it in repair, for that I saw it in ruins and none could make use of it nor sit in it." If he says, "Whence hadst thou the money for this?" say, "I spent of my own money upon it, thinking to whiten my face with thee and hoping for thy bounties." And he will assuredly recompense thee handsomely. To-morrow, I will bring builders and painters and plasterers to repair the pavilion and will give thee what I promised thee.' Then he pulled out a purse of five hundred dinars and gave it to the gardener, saying, 'Provide thy family with this and let them pray for me and my son here.' When the gardener saw the money, he was transported and fell down at the Vizier's feet, kissing them and calling down blessings on him and his son; and when they went away, he said to them, 'I shall expect you to-morrow: for, by Allah, there must be no parting between us, day or night!' As they went home, the prince said to the Vizier, 'What is the meaning of all this?' and he answered, 'Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof.'

Night DCCXXVI.

Next day, the Vizier sent for the syndic of the builders and carried him and his men to the garden, where the gardener rejoiced in their sight. He gave them the price of victual and what was needful to the workmen for the amendment of the pavilion, and they repaired it and plastered it and decorated it. Then said the Vizier to the painters, 'Harkye, my masters, give ear unto my words and apprehend my wish and my intent. Know that I have a garden like unto this, where I was sleeping one night and saw in a dream a fowler spread his nets and sprinkle corn thereabout. The birds flocked to pick up the grain, and a he-bird fell into the net, whereupon the others took fright and flew away, and amongst the rest his mate: but, after awhile, she returned alone and pecked at the mesh that held his feet, till she set him free and they flew away

together. Now the fowler had fallen asleep and when he awoke and found the net empty, he mended it and strewing fresh corn, sat down at a distance, waiting for game to fall into the snare. Presently the birds assembled again to pick up the corn, and amongst the rest the two pigeons. By and by, the female fell into the net and the other birds took fright at her and flew away, and her mate flew with them and did not return; whereupon the fowler came up and taking the she-bird, killed her. Now, when her mate flew away with the others, a hawk seized him and slew him and ate his flesh and drank his blood, and I would have you pourtray me in lively colours the presentment of this my dream, even as I have related it to you, laying the scene in this garden, with its walls and trees and streams. If ye do this that I have set forth to you and it please me, I will give you what shall gladden your hearts, over and above your wage.'

So the painters applied themselves with all diligence to do what he required of them and wrought it out in masterly wise. When they had made an end of the work, they showed it to the Vizier, who, seeing his [pretended] dream set forth in lively fashion, was pleased and thanked them and rewarded them munificently. Presently, the prince came in, after his wont, and entered the pavilion, knowing not what the Vizier had done. So, when he saw the portraiture of the fowler and the birds and so forth and saw the male pigeon limned in the clutches of the hawk, which had slain him and was eating his flesh and drinking his blood, his understanding was confounded and he returned to the Vizier and said to him, 'O Vizier of good counsel, I have seen this day a wonder, which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eyes, would serve as an admonition to whoso will be admonished?' 'And what is that, O my lord?' asked the Vizier. 'Did I not tell thee,' said the prince, 'of the dream the princess had and how it

was the cause of her aversion to men?' 'Yes,' answered the Vizier; and Ardeshir rejoined, saying, 'O Vizier, by Allah, I have seen the whole dream pourtrayed in painting, as I had beheld it with mine eyes; but with a circumstance that was hidden from the princess, so that she saw it not, and it is upon this that I rely for the attainment of my desire.' 'And what is that, O my son?' said the Vizier. Quoth the prince, 'I saw that, when the male bird flew away and left his mate entangled in the net, a hawk pounced on him and slaying him, ate his flesh and drank his blood; and this was the cause of his failure to return and liberate her. Would that the princess had seen the whole of the dream and beheld, to the end, the story thereof!' 'By Allah, O august King,' replied the Vizier, 'this is indeed a rare and wonderful thing!' And the prince ceased not to marvel at the picture and lament that the princess had not seen the whole of the dream, saying in himself, 'Would she had seen it to the end or might see the whole over again, though but in the illusions of sleep!'

Then said the Vizier to him, 'Thou saidst to me, "Why wilt thou repair the pavilion?" And I answered, "Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof." And behold, now thou seest the issue thereof; for it was I did this thing and caused the painters pourtray the princess's dream thus and paint the male bird in the hawk's clutches, so that, when she comes to the pavilion, she will behold her dream depicted and see how the male pigeon was slain and excuse him and turn from her aversion to men.' When the prince heard the Vizier's words, he kissed his hands and thanked him, saying, 'Verily, the like of thee is fit to be Vizier to the most mighty king, and by Allah, if I accomplish my desire and return to my father, rejoicing, I will acquaint him with this, that he may redouble in honouring thee and advance thee in dignity and hearken to thy word.' The Vizier kissed his hand and they both

went to the gardener, to whom said the Vizier, 'Look at yonder pavilion and see how fine it is!' And he answered, 'This is all of thy bounty.' Then said they, 'O elder, when the owners of the place question thee concerning the re-instatement of the pavilion, say thou, "It was I did it of my own monies," to the intent that there may betide thee favour and good fortune.' Quoth he, 'I hear and obey.' And the prince continued to pay him frequent visits.

Meanwhile, when Heyat en Nufous ceased to receive the prince's letters and messages and the old woman was absent from her, she rejoiced beyond measure and concluded that the young man had returned to his own country. One day, there came to her a covered tray from her father; so she uncovered it and finding therein fine fruits, said to her waiting-women, 'Is the season of these fruits come?' 'Yes,' answered they, and she said, 'Would we might make ready to take our pleasure in the garden!' 'O my lady,' answered they, 'thou sayst well, and by Allah, we also long for the garden!' And she said, 'How shall we do, seeing that every year it is my nurse who taketh us to walk in the garden and pointeth out to us the various trees and plants and I have beaten her and forbidden her from me? Indeed, I repent me of the affront I offered her, for that, in any case, she is my nurse and hath over me the right of fosterage. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' When her women heard this, they all rose and kissing the earth before her, said, 'God on thee, O my lady, do thou pardon her and command her to be brought!' 'By Allah,' answered the princess, 'I am resolved upon this; but which of you will go to her, for I have prepared her a splendid dress of honour?'

Night dccxxbii.

With this two damsels came forward, by name Bulbul and Sewad el Ain, who were comely and graceful and the chief of the princess's women, and said to her, 'We will go to her, O princess!' And she said, 'Do what seemeth

good to you.' So they repaired to the house of the nurse, who received them with open arms and welcomed them. When they had sat awhile with her, they said to her, 'O nurse, the princess pardons thee and desires to take thee back into favour.' 'This may never be,' answered she, 'though I drink the cup of perdition! Hast thou fogotten how she put me to shame before those who love me and those who hate me, when my clothes were dyed with my blood and I well-nigh died for excess of beating, and after this they dragged me forth by the feet like a dead dog and cast me without the door? By Allah, I will never return to her nor fill my eyes with her sight!' Quoth they, 'Disappoint not our pains in coming to thee neither send us away, unsuccessful. Where is thy courtesy to us? Think but who it is that cometh to thee: canst thou wish for any higher of standing than we with the princess?' 'God forbid!' answered she. 'I know well that my station is less than yours, were it not that the princess's favour exalted me above all her women, so that, were I wroth with the greatest of them, she had died of fright.' 'All is as it was,' rejoined they, 'and is in nowise changed. Indeed, it is better than before, for the princess humbles herself to thee and seeks a reconciliation without intermediary.' 'By Allah,' said the old woman, 'were it not for your presence [and intercession] with me, I had never returned to her, no, not though she had commanded to put me to death!' They thanked her for this and she rose and dressing herself, accompanied them to the palace.

When the princess saw her, she rose to her feet and the old woman said, 'Allah! Allah! O King's daughter, whose was the fault, thine or mine?' 'The fault was mine,' answered Heyat en Nufous, 'and it is thine to pardon and forgive. By Allah, O my nurse, thy rank is high with me and thou hast over me the right of fosterage; but thou knowest that God (blessed be He!) hath allotted to His

creatures four things, disposition and life and fortune and death, nor is it in man's power to avert that which is decreed. Verily, I was beside myself and could not govern my anger; but I repent, O my nurse, of what I did.' With this, the nurse's anger ceased from her and she rose and kissed the ground before the princess, who called for a splendid dress of honour and threw it over her, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Things being thus happily accorded, in the presence of the princess's slaves and women, Heyat en Nufous said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, how go the fruits of our garden?' 'O my lady,' replied she, 'I see excellent fruits in the town; but I will enquire of the matter and return thee an answer this very day.'

Then she withdrew, attended with all honour and consideration, and betook herself to Ardeshir, who received her with open arms and rejoiced in her coming, for that he had long expected her. She told him all that had passed between herself and the princess and how the latter was minded to go down into the garden on such a day and said to him, 'Hast thou done as I bade thee with the keeper of the garden and made him taste of thy bounties?' 'Yes,' answered the prince; 'and he is become my good friend: my way is his way and he would well I had need of him.' Then he told her all that had happened and of the paintings that the Vizier had caused to be done in the pavilion: whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, 'God upon thee, do thou set thy Vizier midmost thy heart, for this that he hath done points to the keenness of his wit and he hath helped thee to the attaining thy desire. So rise forthright, O my son, and take a bath and don thy richest clothes; then go to the gardener and make shift to pass the night in the garden, for none may win to enter it, [whilst the princess is there], though he should give the earth full of gold. When thou hast entered, hide thyself where none

Night dccxxviii.

may see thee and stir not till thou hear me say, "O Thou whose bounties are hidden, vouchsafe us assurance from that we fear!" Then come forth and walk among the trees and show thy beauty and grace, which put the moons to shame, to the intent that Heyat en Nufous may see thee and that her heart and soul may be filled with love of thee; so shalt thou attain to thy desire and thy grief be done away.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the prince and gave her a purse of a thousand dinars, which she took and went away.

As for Ardeshir, he went straight to the bath and washed; after which he arrayed himself in the richest of clothes of the apparel of the kings of the Chosroës and girt his middle with a sash wherein were assembled all manner precious stones and donned a turban laced with red gold and embroidered with pearls and jewels. His cheeks shone rosy-red and his lips were scarlet; his eyelids wantoned, gazelle-wise, and he swayed in his gait like a drunken man; beauty and grace covered him, as with a garment, and his flexile shape shamed the swaying branches. Then he put in his pocket a purse containing a thousand dinars and repairing to the garden, knocked at the door. The gardener opened to him and received him with joy and honour; then, observing that his face was overcast, he asked him how he did. 'Know, O elder,' answered Ardeshir, 'that I am dear to my father and he never laid his hand on me till this day, when words arose between us and he reviled me and smote me on the face and beat me with the staff and drove me away. Now I have no friend to turn to and I fear the perfidy of fortune, for thou knowest that a father's anger is no light thing. Wherefore I come to thee, O uncle, seeing that thou art known to my father, and desire of thy favour that thou suffer me abide, till the end of the day, in the garden or pass the night there, till God make accord between my father and myself.'

When the old man heard this, he was sore concerned and said, 'O my lord, give me leave to go to thy father and be the means of reconciliation between him and thee.' 'O uncle,' replied Ardeshir, 'thou must know that my father is of a very impatient nature, and if thou proffer him reconciliation in his heat, he will make thee no answer; but when a day or two have passed, his humour will soften. Then go thou in to him and thereupon he will relent.' 'I hear and obey,' said the gardener. 'But, O my lord, do thou go with me to my house, where thou shalt pass the night with my children and family and none shall reproach this to us.' 'O uncle,' replied Ardeshir, 'I must be alone, when I am angry.' Quoth the old man, 'It were grievous to me that thou shouldst lie alone in the garden, when I have a house.' But Ardeshir said, 'O uncle, I have a purpose in this, that the trouble of my mind may be dispelled from me and I know that in this lies the means of regaining his favour and softening his heart to me.' 'If it must be so,' rejoined the gardener, 'I will fetch thee a carpet to sleep on and a coverlet to cover thyself withal.' And the prince said, 'There is no harm in that, O uncle.' So the keeper opened the garden to him and brought him the carpet and coverlet, knowing not that the princess was minded to visit the garden.

Meanwhile, the nurse returned to the princess and told her that the fruits were ripe on the trees of the garden; whereupon she said, 'O my nurse, go down with me to-morrow into the garden, that we may walk about in it and take our pleasure, so God please; and send meanwhile to the gardener, to let him know our purpose.' So she sent to the gardener to tell him that the princess would visit the garden on the morrow, bidding him leave neither tree-tenders nor water-carriers therein nor let one of all the creatures of God enter the place. So, when word came to him, he set his trenches and channels in order and

going to Ardeshir, said to him, 'O my lord, the place is thy place and I live only in thy favours, besides that my tongue is under thy feet. But do thou excuse me: I must tell thee that the princess Heyat en Nufous, the mistress of this garden, hath a mind to visit it to-morrow at the first of the day and hath bidden me leave none therein to see her. So I would have thee of thy favour go forth of the garden this day, for the princess will only abide in it till the time of afternoon prayer and after it shall be at thy service for months and years.' 'O elder,' said Ardeshir, 'belike we have caused thee some inconvenience?' And the other answered, saying, 'By Allah, O my lord, there hath betided me from thee nothing but honour!' 'If it be so,' rejoined the prince, 'nothing but all good shall befall thee through me; for I will hide in the garden and none shall see me, till the princess has gone back to her palace.' 'O my lord,' said the gardener, 'if she espy the shadow of a human being in the garden, she will strike off my head.' 'Have no fear,' replied the prince; 'I will let none see me. But doubtless to-day thou lackest of spending-money for thy family.' Then he put his hand to his purse and pulled out five hundred dinars, which he gave to him, saying, 'Take this gold and spend it on thy family, that thy heart may be at ease concerning them.' When the gardener saw the gold, his life seemed a light matter to him and he suffered the prince to abide where he was, charging him straitly not to show himself in the garden.

Night dccxxix.

Meanwhile, when the eunuchs went in to the princess at break of day, she bade open the private door leading into the garden and donned a royal robe, embroidered with pearls and jewels, over a shift of fine silk, embroidered with rubies. Under the whole was that which the tongue refuses to describe, whereat the mind was confounded and for love whereof the coward would become brave. On her

head she set a crown of red gold, inlaid with pearls and diamonds, and put her feet in slippers of cloth of gold, embroidered with fine pearls and adorned with all manner precious stones. Then she put her hand on the old woman's shoulder and commanded to go forth by the privy door; but the nurse looked out and seeing the garden full of eunuchs and girls, walking about, eating the fruits and troubling the streams and taking their ease of sport and pleasance therein, said to the princess, 'O my lady, is this a garden or a madhouse?' Quoth the princess, 'What meaneth thy speech, O nurse?' And the old woman answered, saying, 'Verily, the garden is full of slave-girls and eunuchs, near five hundred girls and the like number of eunuchs, eating of the fruits and troubling the streams and scaring the birds and hindering [us] from taking [our] ease and sporting and laughing and what not else; and thou hast no need of them. Wert thou going forth of thy palace into the highway, this would be fitting, as an honour and protection to thee; but thou goest forth of the privy door into the garden, where none of the creatures of God the Most High may look on thee.' 'By Allah, O nurse,' rejoined the princess, 'thou sayst sooth! But how shall we do?' And the old woman said, 'Send them all away and keep only two of the slave-girls, that we may make merry with them.' So she dismissed them all, with the exception of two of her women, who were most in favour with her.

Then, when the old woman saw that her heart was light and that the season was pleasant to her, she said to her, 'Now we can enjoy ourselves aright: come, let us take our pleasance in the garden.' So the princess put her hand on her shoulder and went out by the private door. The two waiting-women walked in front and she followed them, laughing at them and swaying gracefully to and fro in her robes; whilst the nurse forewent her, showing her the trees and feeding her with fruits; and so they fared on

from place to place, till they came to the pavilion, which when the princess beheld and saw that it had been newly repaired, she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, seest thou yonder pavilion? It has been repaired and its walls newly plastered.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered she, 'I heard say that the keeper of the garden had taken stuffs of a company of merchants and sold them and bought bricks and lime and stones and plaster and so forth with the price; so I asked him what he had done with all this, and he said, "I have put the ruined pavilion in repair, and when the merchants sought their due of me, I said to them, 'Wait till the princess visits the garden and sees the repairs and they please her: then will I take of her what she is pleased to bestow on me, and pay you your due.'" Quoth I, "What moved thee to do this thing?" And he said, "I saw the pavilion in ruins, the coigns thrown down and the plaster stripped from the walls, and none had the grace to repair it; so I borrowed the money on my own account and reinstated the place; and I trust in the princess to deal with me as befits her dignity." Quoth I, "The princess is all goodness and generosity and will no doubt requite thee." And he did all this but in hopes of thy bounty.' 'By Allah,' replied the princess, 'he hath dealt nobly in rebuilding it and hath done the deed of a man of worth! Call me my purse-keeper.' The old woman accordingly fetched the purse-keeper, and the princess bade the latter give the gardener two thousand dinars; whereupon the nurse sent a messenger to him, bidding him to the princess's presence.

When the gardener received the summons, he trembled in every limb and said in himself, 'Doubtless, the princess has seen the young man, and this day will be the most unlucky of days for me.' So he went home and told his wife and children what had happened and gave them his last injunctions, and they wept for him. Then he took

leave of them and returning to the garden, presented himself before the princess, with a face the colour of turmeric and scarce able to stand upright. The old woman remarked his plight and hastened to forestall him, saying, 'O old man, kiss the earth in gratitude to God the Most High and be instant in prayer to Him for the princess; for I told her what thou didst in the matter of repairing the ruined pavilion, and she rejoiceth in this and bestoweth on thee two thousand dinars in requital of thy pains; so take them from the purse-keeper and kiss the earth before the princess and bless her and go thy way.' So he took the money and kissed the earth before Heyat en Nufous, calling down blessings on her. Then he returned to his house, and his family rejoiced in him and blessed him[1] who had been the [prime] cause of all this.

Night DCCXXX. As soon as he was gone, the old woman said to the princess, 'O my lady, this is indeed become a fine place! Never saw I a purer white than its plastering nor goodlier than its painting! I wonder if he have repaired the inside also: else hath he made the outside white and [left] the inside black. Come, let us enter and see.' So they entered and found the interior painted and gilded in the goodliest fashion. The princess looked right and left, till she came to the upper end of the estrade, when she fixed her eyes upon the wall and gazed attentively thereat; whereupon the old woman knew that she had lighted on the presentment of her dream and took the two waiting-women with her, that they might not divert her attention. When the princess had made an end of examining the painting, she turned to the old woman, wondering and beating hand on hand, and said to her, 'O my nurse, come and see a wonderful thing. Were it graven with needles on the corners of the eyes, it would serve as an admonition to him who will be admonished.' 'And what is that, O my lady?'

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

asked she. 'Go, look at the upper end of the estrade,' replied the princess, 'and tell me what thou seest there.'

So she went up and came down, wondering, and said, 'By Allah, O my lady, here is depicted the garden and the fowler and his net and the birds and all thou sawest in thy dream; and verily, nothing but urgent necessity withheld the male pigeon from returning to free his mate; for I see him in the talons of a hawk, which has slaughtered him and is drinking his blood and rending his flesh and eating it; and this, O my lady, accounts for his tarrying to return and rescue her from the net. But the wonder is how thy dream came to be thus depicted, for, wert thou minded to set it forth in portraiture, thou hadst not availed thereto. By Allah, this is a wonder that should be recorded in history! Surely, O my lady, the angels, to whom are committed the care of the sons of Adam, knew that the male pigeon was wronged of us, whenas we blamed him for deserting his mate; so they embraced his cause and made manifest his excuse.' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'verily, fate and fore-ordained fortune had course against this bird, and we wronged him.' 'O my lady,' rejoined the nurse, 'adversaries shall meet before God the Most High: but, O my lady, verily, the truth hath been made manifest and the male pigeon's excuse certified to us; for, except the hawk had seized him and killed him, he had not held aloof from his mate, but had returned to her and set her free; but against death there is no recourse, nor, O my lady, is there aught in the world more tenderly solicitous than the male for the female, among all creatures that God the Most High hath created, and especially is it thus with man; for he starves himself to feed his wife, strips himself to clothe her, angers his family to please her and disobeys and denies his parents to give to her. She knoweth his secrets and concealeth them and cannot endure from him an hour. If he be absent from her one night, her eyes

sleep not, nor is there a dearer to her than he. She tenders him more than her parents and they lie down to sleep in each other's arms, with his hand under her neck and her hand under his neck, even as saith the poet in the following verses:

I made my wrist her pillow, yea, and lay with her the night, Saying to it, "Be long," what while the full moon glittered white.
Ah me, that night! God never did the like thereof create; Its first was sweetness and its last was bitter to my spright.

Then he kisses her and she kisses him; and I have heard that a certain king, when his wife fell sick and died, buried himself alive with her, submitting of his own accord to death, for the love of her and the strait companionship that was between them. Moreover, a certain king sickened and died, and when they were about to bury him, his wife said to her people, "Let me bury myself alive with him: else will I slay myself and my blood will be on your heads." So, when they saw she would not be turned from this thing, they left her, and she cast herself into the grave with her dead husband, of the greatness of her love and tenderness over him.' And she ceased not to ply the princess with anecdotes of [mutual fidelity] between men and women, till there ceased that which was in her heart of aversion to the male sex; and when she saw that she had succeeded in renewing in her [the natural] inclination [of women] to men, she said to her, 'It is time to go and walk in the garden.' So they went out and walked among the trees.

Presently the prince chanced to turn and his eyes fell on Heyat en Nufous; and when he saw the justness of her shape and her rosy cheeks and the blackness of her eyes and her exceeding grace and loveliness and her excelling beauty and elegance and her abounding perfection, his reason was confounded and he could not take his eyes off her. His judgment failed him for passion and love over-

passed all limits in him; his entrails were occupied with her service and his heart was aflame with the fire of love-longing, so that he swooned away and fell to the ground senseless. When he came to himself, she had passed from his sight and was hidden from him among the trees; so he sighed from his inmost heart and repeated the following verses: Night dccxxi.

Whenas mine eyes her charms beheld, so wonder-excellent, With passion and with love-longing my heart in twain was rent
And I became forthright o'erthrown, cast down upon the ground, Nor knows the princess that which is with me of languishment.
She turned and ravished in the act the slave of passion's heart: By God, have pity on my pain; have pity and relent!
O Lord, make access near to me, vouchsafe me her I love, Ere to the graveyard I descend and all my life is spent.
I'll kiss her half a score of times and ten, and other ten Be on his wasted cheek who's pined for longing and lament!

The old woman ceased not to carry the princess about the garden, till she brought her to the place where the prince lay in wait, when she said, 'O thou whose bounties are hidden, vouchsafe us assurance from that we fear!' The prince, hearing the signal, left his hiding-place and walked among the trees, swaying to and fro with a proud and graceful gait and a shape that shamed the branches. His brow was pearled with sweat and his cheeks red as the afterglow, extolled be the perfection of God the Supreme in that He hath created! When the princess caught sight of him, she gazed a long while on him and saw his beauty and grace and symmetry and his eyes that wantoned, gazelle-wise, and his shape that outvied the branches of the myrobalan; wherefore her reason was confounded and her soul captivated and her heart transfixed with the arrows of his glances. Then she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, whence came yonder handsome youth?' 'Where is he, O my lady?' enquired the nurse. 'There he is,' answered Heyat en Nufous; 'close at hand, among the trees.' The

old woman turned right and left, as if she knew not of his presence, and said, 'Who can have taught this youth the way into the garden?' Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'Who shall give us news of him? Glory be to Him who created men! Dost thou know him, O my nurse?' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'he is the young merchant who wrote to thee by me.' Quoth the princess (and indeed she was drowned in the sea of her desire and the fire of her passion and love-longing), 'O my nurse, how goodly is this youth! Indeed he is fair of favour. Methinks, there is not on the face of the earth a goodlier than he!'

When the old woman was assured that the love of him had gotten possession of the princess, she said to her, 'O my lady, did I not tell thee that he was a comely youth of a bright visage?' 'O my nurse,' replied Heyat en Nufous, 'kings' daughters know not the ways of the world nor the manners of those that be therein, for that they company with none, neither give nor take. But how shall I do to present myself to him, and what shall I say to him and what will he say to me?' 'What device is left me?' said the old woman. 'Indeed, we were confounded in this matter by thy behaviour.' And the princess said, 'Know, O my nurse, that if any ever died of passion, I shall do so, and behold, I look for nothing but instant death, by reason of the fire of my love-longing.' When the old woman heard her words and saw the transport of her passion for him, she answered, saying, 'O my lady, as for his coming to thee, there is no way thereto; and indeed thou art excused from going to him, because of thy tender age; but follow me and I will accost him. So shalt thou not be put to shame, and in the twinkling of an eye there shall betide familiarity between you.' 'Go before me,' said the princess; 'for the decree of God may not be averted.'

So they went up to the place where Ardeshir sat, as he

were the moon at its full, and the old woman said to him, 'See, O youth, who is present before thee! It is the King's daughter of the age, Heyat en Nufous: bethink thee of her rank and the honour she doth thee in coming to thee and rise and stand before her, out of respect for her.' The prince sprang to his feet forthright and his eyes met hers, whereupon they both became as they were drunken without wine. Then the love of him and desire redoubled upon the princess and she opened her arms and he his, and they embraced; but love-longing and passion overcame them and they swooned away and lay a great while without sense. The old woman, fearing scandal, carried them both into the pavilion and sitting down at the door, said to the two waiting-women, 'Seize the occasion to take your pleasure in the garden, for the princess sleeps.' So they returned to their diversion.

Presently, the lovers recovered from their swoon and found themselves in the pavilion, whereupon quoth the prince, 'God on thee, O princess of fair ones, is this a dream or an illusion of sleep?' Then they embraced and intoxicated themselves without wine, complaining each to each of the anguish of passion; and the prince recited the following verses:

The sun of the day shines out from her forehead's lambent snow And eke from her cheeks flames forth the red of the afterglow;
And whenas athwart the veil her charms to the sight appear, The star of the skyline sets for shame and away doth go.
If lightnings flash from her teeth, in the break of her smiling lips, The veils of the dark are drawn and day through the dusk doth show;
And when with her graceful shape she sways in her swimming gait, The cassia-boughs in the leaf are jealous of her, I trow.
Her sight is enough for me; I care for no other bliss; To God I commend her, the Lord of the heavens and the earth below!
The full moon borrows a part of her beauties, and eke the sun To imitate her were fain, but needs must the strife forego.
For whence should it get her shape and the flexile grace of her gait, And whence should the moon the charms of her mind and her body know?

So who shall reproach it to me, if I'm all in her love absorbed, 'Twixt discord in her and accord divided, 'twixt gladness and woe?
'Tis she who hath captived my heart with the amorous grace of her port; And what shall the true lover's heart protect from so charming a foe?

Night DCCXXXII.

When he had made an end of these verses, the princess strained him to her bosom and kissed him on the mouth and between the eyes; whereupon life returned to him and he fell to complaining to her of that which he suffered for stress of love and tyranny of passion and excess of transport and distraction and all he had endured for the hardness of her heart. She kissed his hands and feet and unveiled her head, whereupon the darkness[1] gathered and the full moons[2] arose and shone therein. Then said she to him, 'O my beloved and the term of my wishes, would the day of estrangement had never been and God grant it may never return between us!' And they embraced and wept together, whilst she recited the following verses;

Thou that the full moon sham'st and eke the sun of day, Thou hast unto thy face committed me to slay;
So with a glance's sword, that shore the heart, on me It fell; and where shall one from glances flee away?
Thine eyebrows are a bow, whence at my heart are launched Arrows of flaming fire and passion and dismay.
The gathering of thy cheeks is Paradise to me: How shall my heart endure from gathering them, I pray?
Thy graceful-swaying shape is as a flowered branch, From which are gathered fruits, the burden of the spray.
In love of thee, indeed, I've put away restraint: Thou drawest me perforce and mak'st me waken aye.
God aid thee with the light of splendour and contract The distance and make near the visitation-day!
Have pity on a heart that's seared for love of thee And entrails that appeal to thee to be their stay!

Then passion overcame her and she was distraught for love and wept copious tears, streaming down like rain. This inflamed the prince's heart and he in turn became

[1] *i.e.* her hair. [2] *i.e.* her eyes.

troubled and distracted for love of her. So he kissed her hands and wept sore, and they ceased not from tender reproaches and converse and reciting verses, nor was there aught between them other than this, until the call to afternoon prayer, when they bethought them of parting and she said to him, 'O light of mine eyes and kernel of my heart, the time of parting is come: when shall we meet again?' 'By Allah,' replied he (and indeed her words pierced him as with arrows), 'I love not the mention of parting!' Then she went forth of the pavilion, and he turned and saw her sighing sighs that would melt the rock and weeping tears like rain; whereupon he for love was sunken in the sea of desolations and recited the following verses:

Distraction, O wish of the heart, aye anew For love of thee irketh me: how shall I do?
By thy face, like the dawn when it breaks through the dark, And thy locks, that resemble the night in their hue,
And thy shape like the branch, when it bends in the breeze And the North wind shakes from it the pearls of the dew,
And the glance of thine eyes like the antelope's gaze, That the eyes of the noble and generous ensue,
And thy waist worn to nought by the weight of thy hips, These so heavy, so slender the other to view,
By the wine of thy spittle, the sweetest of drink, Pure musk and fresh water, to thee do I sue;
O gazelle of the tribe, let thine image in sleep Ease my soul of the grief that enforceth it rue!

When she heard his verses in praise of her, she turned back and embracing him, with a heart on fire for the anguish of parting, fire which nought might assuage save kisses and embraces, said, 'Quoth the byword, Patience behoves a lover and not the lack of it. And I will surely contrive a means for our reunion.' Then she bade him adieu and went away, knowing not where she set her feet, for stress of love; nor did she stay her steps till she found herself in her own chamber. When she was gone, passion

and love-longing redoubled upon the prince and the delight of sleep was forbidden to him, whilst she in her turn tasted not food and her patience failed and her heart sickened for desire.

As soon as it was day, she sent for her nurse, who came and found her in sorry plight. Quoth the princess, 'Question me not of my case; for all I suffer is due to thee. Where is the beloved of my heart?' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'when did he leave thee? Hath he been absent from thee more than this night?' 'Can I endure from him an hour?' rejoined Heyat en Nufous. 'Come, find some means to bring us together speedily, for my soul is like to depart [my body].' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'have patience till I contrive thee some subtle device, whereof none shall be ware.' 'By the Great God,' cried the princess, 'except thou bring him to me this very day, I will tell the King that thou hast corrupted me, and he will cut off thy head!' Quoth the nurse, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, have patience with me, for this is a dangerous matter!' And she humbled herself to her, till she granted her three days' delay, saying, 'O my nurse, the three days will be as three years to me; and if the fourth day pass and thou bring him not, I will go about to slay thee.'

The old woman left her and returned to her lodging, where she abode till the morning of the fourth day, when she summoned the tirewomen of the town and sought of them fine paint and dyes for the painting and adorning of a virgin girl, and they brought her cosmetics of the best. Then she sent for the prince and bringing forth of her chest a suit of woman's apparel, worth five thousand dinars, and a kerchief fringed with all manner jewels, said to him, 'O my son, hast thou a mind to foregather with Heyat en Nufous?' 'Yes,' answered he. So she took a pair of tweezers and pulled out the hairs of his face and anointed his eyes with kohl. Then she stripped him and painted

him with henna from his nails to his shoulders and from his insteps to his thighs and tattooed him about the body, till he was like red roses on tables of alabaster. After a little, she washed him and dried him and bringing out a shift and a pair of trousers, made him put them on. Then she clad him in the dress aforesaid and binding the kerchief about his head, veiled him and taught him how to walk, saying, 'Advance thy left and draw back thy right.' He did as she bade him and walked before her, as he were a houri escaped from Paradise. Then said she to him, 'Fortify thy heart, for we are going to the King's palace, where there will without fail be guards and eunuchs at the gate; and if thou take fright at them and show hesitation or fear, they will suspect thee and examine thee, and we shall both lose our lives: wherefore, an thou feel thyself unable to this, tell me.' 'This thing hath no terrors for me,' answered he; 'so take courage and be of good cheer.'

Then she went out and he followed her, till they came to the gate of the palace, which was full of eunuchs. She turned and looked at him, to see if he were troubled or no, and finding him unchanged, went on. The chief eunuch looked at the nurse and knew her, but seeing a damsel following her, whose charms confounded the reason, he said in himself, 'As for the old woman, she is the nurse; but who is the girl with her? There is none in our land resembleth her in favour or approacheth her in beauty save the princess Heyat en Nufous, who is cloistered and never goeth out. Would I knew how she came into the street and whether or no it was by leave of the King!' Then he rose to discover the matter and nigh thirty eunuchs followed him; which when the old woman saw, her reason fled for fear and she said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! Without doubt we are dead folk this time.' When the chief eunuch heard her say this,

fear gat hold upon him, by reason of that which he knew of the princess's violence and that her father was ruled by her, and he said in himself, 'Belike the King hath commanded the nurse to carry his daughter forth upon some occasion of hers, whereof she would have none know; and if I stop her, she will be wroth with me and will say, "This fellow stopped me, that he might pry into my affairs." So she will go about to kill me, and I have no call to meddle in this matter.'

So saying, he turned back, and the thirty eunuchs with him, and drove the people from the door of the palace; whereupon the nurse entered and saluted the eunuchs with her head, whilst they stood to do her honour and returned her salutation. The prince followed her from door to door, and [God] the Protector protected them, so that they passed all the guards, till they came to the seventh door, which was that of the great pavilion, wherein was the King's throne, and communicated with the apartments of his women and the saloons of the harem, as well as with his daughter's palace. Here the old woman halted and said, 'Glory be to God, O my son, who hath brought us thus far in safety! We cannot foregather with the princess except by night; for night covers the fearful.' 'True,' answered he; 'but what is to be done?' Quoth she, 'Behind the door is a dark and deep cistern, with a cover thereto, wherein thou must hide thyself till nightfall.' So he entered the cistern, and she went away and left him there till ended day, when she returned and carried him into the palace, till they came to the door of Heyat en Nufous's apartment. The old woman knocked at the door and a little maid came out and said, 'Who is there?' 'It is I,' answered the nurse; whereupon the maid returned and told the princess, who said, 'Let her enter, with her companion.'

So they entered and found that the princess had made

ready the sitting-chamber and ranged the lamps and lighted candles of wax in chandeliers of gold and silver and spread the divans and estrades with carpets and cushions. Moreover, she had set on food and fruits and confections and perfumed the place with musk and aloes-wood and ambergris. She was seated among the candles and the lamps, and the light of her face outshone the lustre of them all. When she saw the old woman, she said to her, 'O nurse, where is the beloved of my heart?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I cannot find him; but I have brought thee his own sister; and here she is.' 'Art thou mad?' exclaimed the princess. 'What need have I of his sister? If a man's head irk him, doth he bind up his hand?' 'No, by Allah, O my lady!' replied the old woman. 'But look on her, and if she please thee, let her be with thee.' So saying, she uncovered the prince's face, whereupon Heyat en Nufous knew him and running to him, pressed him to her bosom, and he pressed her to his. Then they both fell down in a swoon and lay without sense a long while. The old woman sprinkled rose-water upon them, till they came to themselves, when she kissed him on the mouth more than a thousand times and recited these verses:

My heart's belov'd in the darkness visited me; I rose in honour of him, till down sat he.
"O thou my only desire," quoth I, "by night Thou dost me visit nor fearest the guards should see!"
"I feared," he answered, "but love hath captive ta'en My soul and spirit and will not set me free."
We clipped with kisses and clung together awhile; For here was safety; nor guards nor spies feared we;
Then rose, undoubting, and shook out skirts, wherein Nowise uncleanness nor aught impure might be.

Night dccxxxiv.

Quoth she, 'Is it indeed true that I see thee in my abode and that thou art my house-mate and my cup-companion?' Then passion redoubled on her and love

was heavy upon her, so that her reason well-nigh fled for joy and she recited the following verses:

With all my soul I'll ransom him who came to me by night In darkness, whilst I waited for the tryst between us plight;
And nought aroused me but his voice lamenting soft and low; And I, "Fair welcome, O my love, to joyance and delight!"
A thousand times his cheek I kissed and yet a thousand times I clipped him close in my embrace, where he was veiled from sight.
Quoth I, "At last have I attained to that I wearied for; So to praise God for this His grace is only due and right."
And then the goodliest of nights we passed, even as we would, Until the curtains of the dark were drawn by morning light.

When it was day, she made him enter a place of concealment in her apartment and he abode there till nightfall, when she brought him out and they sat carousing. Presently, he said to her, 'I wish to return to my own country and tell my father what has passed between us, that he may send his Vizier to demand thee in marriage of thy father.' 'O my love,' answered she, 'I fear, if thou return to thy country and kingdom, thou wilt be distracted from me and forget the love of me or that thy father will not fall in with thy wishes, and I shall die. Meseems the better counsel were that thou abide with me and in my hand, I looking on thy face and thou on mine, till I devise some plan, whereby we may escape together some night and flee to thy country; for my hopes are cut off from my people and I despair of them.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he, and they fell again to their carousal.

He abode with her thus for some time, till, one night, the wine was pleasant to them and they lay not down to sleep till break of day. Now it chanced that one of the Kings sent her father a present, and amongst other things, a necklace of unique jewels, nine-and-twenty in number, to whose price a king's treasures might not suffice. Quoth Abdulcadir, 'This beseemeth none but my daughter Heyat

en Nufous,' and calling an eunuch, whose jaw-teeth the princess had knocked out, bade him carry the necklace to her and say to her, 'One of the kings hath sent thy father this, as a present, and its price may not be paid with money; put it on thy neck.' The slave took the necklace, saying in himself, 'God make it the last thing she shall put on in this world, for that she deprived me of the use of my teeth!' and repairing to the princess's apartment, found the door locked and the old woman asleep before it. He shook her, and she awoke in affright and said, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'The King hath sent me on an errand to his daughter.' 'The key is not here,' answered the old woman. 'Go away, whilst I fetch it.' But he said, 'I cannot go back to the King, without having done his commandment.' So she went away, as if to fetch the key; but fear overtook her and she sought safety in flight.

The eunuch awaited her awhile; then, finding she did not return, he feared that the King would be angry at his delay; so he shook the door, whereupon the bolt gave way and the door opened. He entered and passed on, till he came to the seventh door, [which was that of the princess's chamber], and going in, found the place splendidly furnished and saw candles and flagons there. At this he marvelled and going up to the bed, which was enclosed with a curtain of silk, embroidered with a network of jewels, drew back the curtain and saw the princess asleep in the arms of a young man handsomer than herself; whereat he magnified God the Most High, who had created him of vile water, and said, 'This is a goodly fashion for one who hath an aversion to men! How came she by this fellow? Methinks it was on his account that she knocked out my teeth!' Then he dropped the curtain and made for the door; but the princess awoke in affright and seeing the eunuch, whose name was Kafour, called to him. He made her no answer: so she came down from the bed and

catching hold of his skirt, laid it on her head and kissed his feet, saying, 'Cover what God covers!' Quoth he, 'May Allah not cover thee nor him who would cover thee! Thou didst knock out my teeth and saidst to me, "Let none make mention to me of men and their ways!"' So saying, he disengaged himself from her grasp and running out, locked the door on them and set another eunuch to guard it.

Then he went in to the King, who said to him, 'Hast thou given the necklace to Heyat en Nufous?' 'By Allah,' replied the eunuch, 'she deserves more than that!' And the King said, 'What hath happened? Tell me quickly.' 'I will not tell thee, save in private,' answered Kafour; but the King rejoined, saying, 'Tell me at once and in public.' 'Then grant me immunity,' said the eunuch. So the King threw him the handkerchief of immunity and he said, 'O King, I went in to the princess Heyat en Nufous and found her asleep in a carpeted chamber, in the arms of a young man. So I locked the door on them and came back to thee.' When the King heard this, he started up and taking a sword in his hand, cried out to the chief of the eunuchs, saying, 'Take thy lads and go the princess's chamber and bring me her and him who is with her, as they lie on the bed, coverings and all.' So the chief eunuch and his men repaired to the princess's apartment, where he found her and the prince standing up, dissolved in tears, and said to them, 'Lie down on the bed, as you were.' The princess feared for her lover and said to him, 'This is no time for resistance.' So they both lay down and the eunuchs covered them up and carried them into the King's presence.

Night DCCXXXV.

Abdulcadir pulled off the coverings and the princess sprang to her feet; whereupon he looked at her and would have struck off her head; but the prince threw himself between them, saying, 'The fault was mine, not hers: kill

me before her.' The King made at him, to kill him, but Heyat en Nufous threw herself on her father and said, 'Kill me and not him; for he is the son of a great King, lord of all the land in its length and breadth.' When the King heard this, he turned to his chief Vizier, who was a compend of all that is evil, and said to him, 'What sayst thou of this matter, O Vizier?' Quoth the Vizier, 'What I say is that all who find themselves in such case as this have need of lying, and there is nothing for it but to cut off both their heads, after torturing them with all manner of tortures.' With this the King called the swordsman of his vengeance, who came with his lads, and said to him, 'Take this gallows-bird and strike off his head and after do the like with this harlot and burn their bodies, and consult me not again about them.' So the headsman put his hand to her back, to take her; but the King cried out at him and cast at him somewhat he had in his hand, which had well-nigh killed him, saying, 'O dog, wilt thou show clemency to those with whom I am wroth? Put thy hand to her hair and drag her along by it, so that she may fall on her face.' So he haled the two lovers by their hair to the place of blood, where he tore off a piece of his skirt and bound the prince's eyes therewith, putting the princess last, in the hope that some one would intercede for her. Then he swung his sword three times, whilst all the troops wept and prayed God to send them deliverance, and raised his hand to cut off Ardeshir's head, when, behold, there arose a cloud of dust, that spread till it covered the landscape.

When King Abdulcadir saw this, he said, 'O folk, what is the meaning of yonder dust that obscures the sight?' The Grand Vizier went out to reconnoitre and found behind the cloud men like locusts, beyond count or limit, filling the hills and plains and valleys. So he returned and told the King, who said to him, 'Go down and learn

who they are and who is their commander and salute him for me and ask him the reason of his coming. If he come in quest of aught, we will aid him to his desire, and if he have a feud with one of the kings, we will ride with him; or, if he desire a gift, we will handsel him; for this is indeed a mighty host and a vast power and we fear for our land from its mischief.' Accordingly, the Vizier went forth and walked among the tents and guards and troopers and fared on from the first of the day till near sundown, when he came to tents studded with stars and guards with gilded swords. Passing these, he made his way, through Amirs and Viziers and captains and chamberlains, to the pavilion of the Sultan and found him a mighty King. When the King's officers saw him, they cried out to him, saying, 'Kiss the earth! Kiss the earth!' He did so and would have risen, but they cried out at him a second and a third time. So he kissed the earth again and again and raised his head and would have stood up, but fell down for excess of awe. When at last he stood before the King, he said to him, 'O august King, may God prolong thy days and increase thy sovranty and exalt thy rank! King Abdulcadir salutes thee and kisses the earth before thee and asks on what weighty business thou art come. If thou seek to avenge thee on any king, he will take horse in thy service; or, if thou come in quest of aught wherein it is in his power to help thee, he is at thy service on account thereof.' Now this was Ardeshir's father, who, hearing no news of his son, had levied a mighty army and himself set out in quest of him. So he replied to the Vizier, saying, 'O messenger, return to thy lord and tell him that the most mighty King [Seif el Aazem Shah, King of Shiraz] had a son, who has been long absent from him and news of him have been cut off from him, nor knoweth he what is become of him. If he be in this city, he will take him and depart from you;

but, if any mischief have befallen him among you, his father will lay waste your land and slay your men and make spoil of your goods and your women. Return, therefore, in haste, to thy lord and tell him this, ere evil befall him.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier and turned to go away, when the chamberlains cried out to him, saying, 'Kiss the earth! Kiss the earth!' So he kissed the earth a score of times and rose not till his heart was in his mouth.

Night dccxxxvi.

Then he returned to the city, full of anxious thought concerning the affair of this King and the multitude of his troops, and going in to King Abdulcadir, pale with fear and trembling in every limb, acquainted him with that which he had seen and heard; whereat disquietude and fear for his people laid hold upon him and he said to the Vizier, 'O Vizier, and who is this King's son?' 'It is even he whom thou badest put to death,' answered the Vizier; 'but praised be God who hastened not his slaughter! Else had his father laid waste our lands and spoiled our goods.' 'See now,' quoth the King, 'thy corrupt judgment, in that thou didst counsel us to kill him! Where is the young man, the son of yonder magnanimous king?' 'O mighty King,' answered the Vizier, 'thou didst command him to be put to death.' When the King heard this, he was distracted and cried out in a terrible voice, saying, 'Out on you! Fetch me the headsman forthright, lest death fall on him!' So they fetched the headsman and he said, 'O King of the age, I have smitten off his head even as thou badest me.' 'O dog,' cried Abdulcadir, 'if this be true, I will assuredly send thee after him.' Quoth the headsman, 'O King, thou didst command me to slay him without again consulting thee.' 'I was in my anger,' replied the King; 'but speak the truth, ere thou lose thy life.' And he said, 'O King, he is yet in the chains of life.'

At this Abdulcadir rejoiced and his heart was set at ease; then he called for Ardeshir, and when he came, he stood up to receive him and kissed his mouth, saying, 'O my son, I ask pardon of God for the wrong I have done thee, and say thou not aught that may lower my credit with thy father, the Supreme King.' 'O King of the age,' said the prince, 'and where is my father?' 'He is come hither on thine account,' replied Abdulcadir; and Ardeshir said, 'By thy worship, I will not stir from before thee till I have cleared my honour and that of thy daughter from that which thou laidst to our charge; for she is a clean maid. Send for the midwives and let them examine her before thee. If they find her maidenhead gone, I give thee leave to shed my blood; and if they find her a pure virgin, her innocence and mine will be made manifest.' So he summoned the midwives, who examined the princess and found her a clean maid and told the King, seeking largesse of him. He gave them what they sought, putting off his royal robes to bestow on them, and in like manner he made presents to all who were in the harem. And they brought forth the casting-bottles and perfumed all the officers of state and grandees; and they all rejoiced with an exceeding joy.

Then the King embraced Ardeshir and entreated him with all honour and consideration, bidding his chief eunuchs carry him to the bath. When he came out, he cast over his shoulders a costly robe and set on his head a diadem of jewels. Moreover, he girt him with a sash of silk, embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and jewels, and mounted him on one of his finest horses, with trappings of gold inlaid with pearls and jewels. Then he bade his grandees and captains mount and escort him to his father's presence and charged him tell the latter that King Abdulcadir was at his disposal, hearkening to his word and obeying him in whatsoever he should command

or forbid. 'I will not fail of this,' answered Ardeshir and repaired to his father, who was transported for joy at sight of him and springing up, advanced to meet him and embraced him, whilst joy and gladness spread among his troops. Then came the viziers and chamberlains and captains and kissed the earth before the prince and rejoiced in his coming: and it was a great day with them for joy. Moreover, the prince gave leave to those of King Abdulcadir's officers who had accompanied him and others of the townsfolk, to view the ordinance of his father's host, without let or hindrance, so they might know the multitude of the Great King's troops and the might of his empire. And all who had seen him selling stuffs in the bazaar marvelled how his soul could have consented thereto, considering the nobility of his rank and the loftiness of his dignity; but it was his love and inclination to the princess that constrained him to this.

Meanwhile, news of the multitude of his troops came to Heyat en Nufous, who was still a prisoner under commandment, till they knew what her father should order respecting her, whether pardon and release or death and burning; and she looked down from the top of the palace and turning towards the mountains, saw the whole plain filled with armed men. When she beheld all these troops and knew that they were the army of Ardeshir's father, she feared lest he should be diverted from her by his father and forget her and depart from her, whereupon her father would put her to death. So she called a maid that was with her in her apartment, by way of service, and said to her, 'Go to Ardeshir, son of the Great King, and fear not. When thou comest into his presence, kiss the earth before him and tell him who thou art and say to him, "My lady salutes thee and would have thee to know that she is a prisoner in her father's palace, awaiting his sentence, whether he be minded to pardon her or kill her, and she

beseecheth thee not to forget her or forsake her; for to-day thou art all-powerful; and whatsoever thou commandest, none dare cross thee therein. Wherefore, if it seem good to thee to rescue her from her father and take her with thee, it were of thy bounty, for indeed she suffereth all these tribulations on thine account. But if this seem not good to thee, for that thy desire of her is at an end, speak to thy father, so haply he may intercede for her with her father and depart not, till he have made him set her at liberty and taken surety from him that he will not go about to put her to death nor do her any hurt. This is her last word to thee, may God not bereave [her] of thee, and peace be on thee!"'

Night dccxxxvii.

The maid made her way to Ardeshir and delivered him her mistress's message, which when he heard, he wept sore and said to her, 'Know that Heyat en Nufous is my mistress and that I am her slave and the captive of her love. I have not forgotten what was between us nor the bitterness of the day of separation; so do thou say to her, after thou hast kissed her feet, that I will speak with my father of her, and he will send his Vizier, who sought her aforetime in marriage for me, to demand her hand once more of her father, for he dare not refuse. So, if he send to her to consult her, let her make no opposition; for I will not return to my country without her.' So the maid returned to Heyat en Nufous and kissing her hands, delivered to her the prince's message, which when she heard, she wept for very joy and returned thanks to God the Most High.

Meanwhile, Ardeshir being alone with his father by night, the latter questioned him of his case and he told him all that had befallen him, first and last; whereupon quoth the King, 'What wilt thou have me do for thee, O my son? If thou desire Abdulcadir's ruin, I will lay waste his lands and spoil his treasures and dishonour his family.'

'O my father,' replied Ardeshir, 'I do not desire that, for he hath done nothing deserving thereof; but I wish for union with the princess; wherefore I beseech thee of thy favour to make ready a present for her father, (but let it be a magnificent one,) and send it to him by thy Vizier, the man of just judgment.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the King and sending for the treasures he had laid up from time past, chose out all manner of precious things and showed them to his son, who was pleased with them. Then he called his Vizier and bade him carry the present to King Abdulcadir and demand his daughter in marriage for Ardeshir, saying, 'Accept the present and return him an answer.'

Now from the time of Ardeshir's departure, King Abdulcadir had been troubled and heavy at heart, fearing the laying waste of his kingdom and the spoiling of his realm; so, when the Vizier came in to him and saluting him, kissed the earth before him, he rose to his feet and received him with honour; but the Vizier made haste to fall at his feet and kiss them, saying, 'Pardon, O King of the age! The like of thee should not rise to the like of me, for I am the least of slaves' servants. Know, O King, that Prince Ardeshir hath acquainted his father with some of the favours and kindnesses thou hast done him, wherefore he thanks thee and sends thee, by thy servant who stands before thee, a present, saluting thee and wishing thee all manner of prosperities.' Abdulcadir, of the excess of his fear, could not believe what he heard, till the Vizier laid the present before him, when he saw it to be such as no money could purchase nor could one of the kings of the earth avail to the like thereof; wherefore he was belittled in his own eyes and springing to his feet, praised God the Most High and glorified Him and thanked the prince.

Then said the Vizier to him, 'O noble King, hearken to me and know that the Great King sendeth to thee,

desiring thine alliance, and I come to thee, seeking and craving the hand of thy daughter, the chaste lady and treasured jewel Heyat en Nufous, in marriage for his son Ardeshir: wherefore, if thou consent to this, accepting of him, do thou agree with me for her marriage-portion.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Abdulcadir. 'For my part, I make no objection, and nothing can be more agreeable to me; but the girl is of full age and reason and her affair is in her own hand. So I will refer it to her and she shall choose for herself.' Then he turned to the chief eunuch and bade him go and acquaint the princess with this. So he repaired to the harem and kissing the princess's hands, acquainted her with the Great King's proposal, saying, 'What sayst thou in answer?' 'I hear and obey,' replied she. So the eunuch returned to the King and gave him her answer, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and calling for a sumptuous robe of honour, threw it over the Vizier's shoulders. Moreover, he ordered him ten thousand dinars and bade him carry the answer to the Great King and crave leave for him to pay him a visit. 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier, and returning to his master, delivered him the reply and Abdulcadir's message, whereat he rejoiced greatly and Ardeshir was transported for joy and his breast expanded and he was glad.

Night dccxxxviii.

Moreover, King Seif el Aazem gave King Abdulcadir leave to come forth to visit him; so, on the morrow, he took horse and rode to the camp of the Great King, who came to meet him and saluting him, seated him in the place of honour, and they two sat, whilst Ardeshir stood before them. Then arose an orator of the Great King's court and pronounced an eloquent discourse, giving Ardeshir joy of the attainment of his desire and of his marriage with the princess, queen of kings' daughters. When he sat down, King Seif el Aazem caused bring a chest full of pearls and jewels, together with fifty thousand

dinars, and said to King Abdulcadir, 'I am my son's deputy in all that concerns this matter.' So Abdulcadir acknowledged to have received the marriage-portion and amongst the rest, fifty thousand dinars for the expenses of the nuptial festivities; after which they fetched the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the contract of marriage between the prince and princess, and it was a notable day, wherein all lovers rejoiced and all haters and enviers were mortified. They made the marriage feasts and banquets and Ardeshir went in to the princess and found her an unpierced and unique pearl, a treasured jewel and a filly that none but he had ridden and notified this to her father. Then said King Seif el Aazem to his son, 'Hast thou any wish thou wouldst have fulfilled ere we depart?' 'Yes, O King,' answered he; 'I would fain take my wreak of the Vizier who entreated us evil and the eunuch who forged a lie against us.' So the King sent forthright to Abdulcadir, demanding of him the vizier and the eunuch, whereupon he despatched them to him and he commanded to hang them over the gate of the city.

After this, they abode a little while and then sought of Abdulcadir leave for his daughter to make ready for departure. So he equipped her and mounted her in a travelling-litter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and diamonds and drawn by thoroughbred horses. She carried with her all her waiting-women and eunuchs, as well as the nurse, who had returned, after her flight, and resumed her office. Then King Seif el Aazem and his son mounted and Abdulcadir mounted also with all the officers of his realm, to take leave of his daughter and his son-in-law; and it was a day to be reckoned of the goodliest of days. After they had gone some distance, Seif el Aazem conjured King Abdulcadir to turn back; so he took leave of him [and his son], after he had strained him to his breast and kissed him between the eyes and thanked him for his favours and

commended his daughter to his care. Then he went in to the princess and embraced her; and she kissed his hands and they wept in the stead of parting. Then he returned to his capital and Ardeshir and his company fared on, till they reached Shiraz, where they celebrated the marriage festivities anew. And they abode in all delight and solace and comfort of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, He who layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs.

END OF VOL. VI.

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