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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 SEVENTH.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

JULNAR OF THE SEA AND HER SON KING BEDR BASIM OF PERSIA.

There was once of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the land of the Persians, a king called Shehriman, whose abiding-place was Khorassan. He had a hundred concubines, but by none of them had he been vouchsafed a child, male or female, all the days of his life. One day, he bethought him of this and fell a-lamenting for that the most part of his life was past and he had not been blest with a son, to inherit the kingdom after him, even as he had inherited it from his fathers and forefathers; by reason whereof there betided him sore chagrin and the extreme of care and despite. As he sat thus [absorbed in melancholy thought], one of his officers came in to him and said, 'O my lord, at the door is a merchant, with a slave-girl, than whom a fairer was never seen.' 'Bring them to me,' answered the king, and the merchant and the damsel came in to him.

When Shehriman beheld the latter, he saw that she was like a Rudeini lance,[1] and she was wrapped in a veil of gold-embroidered silk. The merchant uncovered her face,

[1] *i.e.* a lance of the manufacture of Rudeineh, a renowned female spear-maker of Khett Hejer in Arabia.

whereupon the place was illumined by her beauty and her hair hung down to her anklets, in seven tresses, like horses' tails. She had liquid black eyes, heavy buttocks and slender waist; [the sight of her] healed the sickness of the ailing and quenched the fire of the thirsting, for she was even as saith the poet:

I dote on her; for, lo, in beauty she's complete; Yea, staidness crowns her charms and gravity sedate.
Nor tall nor short is she, but of the hinder parts So big, her trousers still therefor are all too strait.
Nor tallness to be blamed nor shortness is in her; Her shape's the golden mean betwixten small and great.
Her tresses overfall her anklets, [black as night,] But still her face is day no darkness may abate.

The king marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry and said to the merchant, 'O elder, what is the price of this damsel?' 'O my lord,' answered the merchant, 'I bought her for two thousand dinars of the merchant who owned her before myself, since when I have travelled with her three years and she hath cost me, up to the time of my coming hither, [other] three thousand dinars: but she is a gift from me to thee.' The king bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and ordered him ten thousand dinars, whereupon he kissed his hands, thanking him for his bounty and beneficence, and departed. Then the king committed the damsel to the tire-women, saying, 'Amend ye the case of this damsel[1] and adorn her and furnish her an apartment and set her therein.' And he bade his chamberlains carry her all that she needed and shut all the doors upon her.

Now his capital city, wherein he dwelt, was called the

[1] *i.e.* do away from her the traces of travel, etc., by means of baths and cosmetics.

White City and was seated on the sea-shore. So they lodged her in an apartment, whose windows overlooked the sea, and Shehriman went in to her; but she rose not to him neither took any note of him. Quoth he, 'It would seem she hath been with folk who have not taught her manners.' Then he looked at her and saw her surpassing in grace and beauty and symmetry, with a face like the round of the moon at its full or the sun shining in the cloudless sky. So he marvelled at her beauty and symmetry and extolled the perfection of God the Creator (magnified be His power!), after which he pressed her to his bosom and seating her on his knees, sucked the dew of her lips, which he found sweeter than honey. Then he called for trays of all kinds of the richest meats and ate and fed her by mouthfuls, till she had enough; but she spoke not one word. The king began to talk to her and asked her of her name; but she abode still silent and spoke not a word nor made him any answer, neither ceased to hang down her head towards the ground; and it was but the excess of her beauty and loveliness and the amorous grace that distinguished her that saved her from his wrath. Quoth he, 'Glory be to God, the Creator of this damsel! How charming she is, save that she speaks not! But perfection belongs [only] to God the Most High.' And he asked the slave-girls whether she had spoken, and they said, 'From the time of her coming till now, we have not heard her say a word.'

Then he summoned some of his women and bade them sing to her and make merry with her, so haply she might speak. So they played before her all manner of instruments of music and sports and what not and sang, till all who were present were moved to mirth, except the damsel, who looked at them in silence, but neither laughed nor spoke, and the king's breast was straitened. Then he dismissed the women and abode alone with the damsel:

after which he put off his clothes and disrobing her with his own hand, looked upon her body and saw it as it were an ingot of silver. So he loved her with an exceeding love and falling upon her, took her maidenhead and found her a clean maid; whereat he rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'By Allah, it is a wonder that the merchants should have suffered a girl so fair of form and face to abide a maid!'

Then he devoted himself altogether to her, heeding none other and forsaking all his [other] concubines and favourites, and abode with her a whole year, as it were one day. Still she spoke not, till, one day, he said to her [and indeed the love of her and passion waxed upon him], 'O desire of souls, verily the love of thee is great with me, and for thy sake I have forsaken all my slave-girls and concubines and women and favourites and have made thee my portion of the world and had patience with thee a whole year; and now I beseech God the Most High, of His favour, to soften thy heart to me, so thou mayst speak to me. Or, if thou be dumb, tell me by a sign, that I may give up hope of thy speech. I pray God (extolled be His perfection!) to vouchsafe me by thee a male child, who shall inherit the kingdom after me; for I am old and lonely and have none to be my heir. Wherefore, I conjure thee, by Allah, if thou love me, return me an answer.'

She bowed her head awhile, [as if] in thought, and presently raising it, smiled in his face; whereat it seemed to him as if lightning filled the room. Then she said, 'O magnanimous king and valorous lion, God hath answered thy prayer, for I am with child by thee and the time of my delivery is at hand, though I know not if the child be male or female. But, had I not conceived by thee, I had not spoken one word to thee.' When the king heard her speech, his face shone with joy and happi-

ness and he kissed her head and hands for excess of gladness, saying, 'Praised be God who hath vouchsafed me the things I desired! First, thy speech, and secondly, thy tidings that thou art with child by me.'

Then he went forth from her and seating himself on the throne of his kingship, in an ecstacy of happiness, bade his vizier distribute to the poor and needy and widows and others a hundred thousand dinars, by way of alms on his account and thank-offering to God the Most High. The vizier did as the king bade him, and the latter, returning to the damsel, sat with her and pressed her to his bosom, saying, 'O my lady, O thou whose slave I am, thou hast been with me a whole year, night and day, waking and sleeping, yet hast not spoken to me till this day. What was the cause of this thy silence?' 'Hearken, O king of the age,' answered she, 'and know that I am a wretched exile, broken-hearted and parted from my mother and my family and my brother.' When the king heard her words, he knew her desire and said, 'As for thy saying that thou art wretched, there is no ground for such a speech, for my kingdom and all that I possess are at thy service and I also am become thy bondman; but, as for thy saying, "I am parted from my mother and brother and family," tell me where they are and I will send and fetch them to thee.'

'Know then, O august king,' answered she, 'that I am called Julnar of the Sea and that my father was of the kings of the sea. He died and left us his kingdom, but one of the other kings arose against us and took it from our hands. My mother also is a woman of the sea and I have a brother called Salih, with whom I fell out and swore that I would throw myself into the hands of a man of the folk of the land. So I came forth of the sea and sat down on the shore of an island in the moon, where a passer-by found me and carrying me to his house, be-

sought me of love; but I smote him on the head, that he all but died; whereupon he carried me forth and sold me to the merchant from whom thou hadst me, and he was a good and virtuous man, pious and loyal and generous. Were it not that thy heart loved me and that thou preferredst me over all thy concubines, I had not remained with thee an hour, but had cast myself from the window into the sea and gone to my mother and kindred; but I was ashamed to go to them, being with child by thee; for they would have deemed ill of me and would not have credited me, though I swore to them, if I told them that a king had bought me with his monies and made me his portion of the world and preferred me over all his wives and all that his right hand possessed. This then is my
Night story and peace be on thee.'
DCCXI. The king thanked her and kissed her between the eyes, saying, 'By Allah, O my lady and light of mine eyes, I cannot endure to be parted from thee one hour; and if thou leave me, I shall die forthright. What then is to be done?' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'the time of my delivery is at hand and my family must be present, that they may tend me; for the daughters of the land know not the fashion of child-bearing of the daughters of the sea, nor do the daughters of the sea know the fashion of the daughters of the land; and when my people come, I shall be reconciled to them and they to me and I will tell them that thou boughtest me with thy money and hast used me with kindness and beneficence. And it behoves that thou confirm my speech to them and that they see thine estate with their own eyes and know that thou art a king, the son of a king.'

'O my lady,' rejoined the king, 'do what seemeth good to thee and that which liketh thee, for I consent to thee in all thou wouldst do. But how do the people of the sea walk therein, without being wetted?' 'O king of

the age,' answered Julnar, 'we walk in the sea with our eyes open, as do ye on the land, by the blessing of the names engraved upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace) and see what is therein and behold the sun and moon and stars and sky, as it were on the face of the earth; and this irketh us nought. Know, also, that in the sea are many peoples and various forms and creatures of all the kinds that be in the land, and that all that is on the land is but a very small matter, compared with that which is in the sea.' And the king marvelled at her words.

Then she pulled out from her bosom two pieces of Comorin aloes-wood and kindling fire in a chafing-dish, threw in somewhat thereof, then gave a loud whistle and spoke words which none understood; whereupon there arose a great smoke and she said to the king, who was looking on, 'O my lord, arise and hide thyself in a closet, that I may show thee my mother and brother and family, whilst they see thee not; for I design to bring them hither, and thou shalt presently see a wonderful thing and marvel at the various creatures and strange shapes that God the Most High hath created.' So he arose straightway and entering a closet, fell a-watching what she should do. She continued her fumigations and conjurations till the sea foamed and became troubled and there rose from it a handsome young man of a bright countenance, as he were the moon at its full, with flower-white forehead, red cheeks and teeth like pearls and jewels. He was the likest of all creatures to his sister [the damsel Julnar], and the tongue of the case spoke these verses in his praise:

The full moon groweth perfect once monthly; but thy face Each day anew's perfected in loveliness and grace.
Yea, and the full moon's dwelling is but in one sign's heart: To thee all hearts, O fair one, are as a dwelling-place.

After him there came forth of the sea a gray-haired old woman and five damsels, as they were moons, bearing a likeness to the damsel Julnar. They all walked upon the surface of the water, till they drew near the window and saw Julnar, whereupon they knew her and went in to her. She rose to them and received them with joy and gladness, and they embraced her and wept sore. Then said they to her, 'O Julnar, how couldst thou leave us four years, and we unknowing of thine abiding-place? By Allah, the world has been straitened upon us, for stress of severance from thee, and we have had no delight of food or drink, no, not for one day, but have wept day and night for the excess of our longing after thee!' Then she fell to kissing the hands of her brother and mother and cousins, and they sat with her awhile, questioning her of her case and of what had befallen her, as well as of her present estate. 'Know,' replied she, 'that, when I left you, I issued from the sea and sat down on the shore of an island, where a man found me and sold me to a merchant, who brought me to this city and sold me to the king of the country for ten thousand dinars. The latter entreated me with honour and left all his concubines and women and favourites on my account and was distracted by me from all he had and all that was in his city.' 'Praised be God,' said her brother, 'who hath reunited us with thee! But now, O my sister, it is my purpose that thou arise and go with us to our country and people.'

When the king heard this, he was transported for fear lest she should accept her brother's words and he himself avail not to stay her, passionately as he loved her, and he became distracted with fear of losing her. But Julnar answered her brother, saying, 'By Allah, O my brother, he who bought me is lord of this city and he is a mighty king and a wise, good and generous in the extreme.

Moreover, he is a man of great worth and wealth and hath neither son nor daughter. He hath entreated me with honour and done me all manner of favour and kindness; nor, from the day of his buying me, have I heard from him an ill word, to grieve my heart; but he hath never ceased to use me courteously, doing nothing without my counsel, and I am in the best of case with him and the perfection of fair fortune. Were I to leave him, he would perish; for he cannot endure to be parted from me an hour; and I, also, if I left him, I should die, for the excess of the love I bear him, by reason of his great goodness to me during the time of my sojourn with him; for, were my father alive, my estate with him would not be like that I enjoy with this great and glorious and puissant king. Moreover, ye see me with child by him and I pray God the Most High to vouchsafe me a son who may inherit of this mighty king that which He hath bestowed upon him of lands and palaces and possessions. Verily, God hath not cut me off, but hath abundantly compensated me [that which I lost], and praised be He for that He hath made me daughter of a king of the sea and my husband the greatest of the kings of the land!' Night dccxli.

When her brother and cousins heard this her speech, their eyes were solaced thereby and they said, 'O Julnar, thou knowest thy value in our eyes and the affection we bear thee and art certified that thou art to us the dearest of all creatures and that we seek but ease for thee, without travail or weariness. Wherefore, if thou be in unease, arise and go with us to our land and people; but, if thou be at thine ease here, in honour and happiness, this is our wish and our aim; for we desire only thy happiness in any case.' Quoth she, 'By Allah, I am here in the utmost ease and comfort and honour and have all that I desire!' When the king heard what she said, his heart was set at rest and he rejoiced and thanked her [inwardly]

for this [her speech]. Moreover, the love of her redoubled on him and entered his inmost heart, and he knew that she loved him as he loved her and desired to abide with him, that she might see his child by her.

Then Julnar called for food and the waiting women laid the tables and set on all kinds of viands, which had been dressed in the kitchen under her own eyes, and fruits and sweetmeats, of which she ate, she and her kinsfolk. But, presently, they said to her, 'O Julnar, thy lord is a stranger to us, and we have entered his house, without his leave or knowledge. Thou hast extolled to us his excellence and hast set before us of his victual and we have eaten; yet have we not companied with him nor seen him, neither hath he seen us nor come to our presence and eaten with us, so bread and salt might be between us.' And they all left eating and were wroth with her, and fire issued from their mouths, as from cressets; which when the king saw, he was transported for excess of fear of them. But Julnar soothed them and going to the closet where was the king her lord, said to him, 'O my lord, hast thou seen and heard how I praised thee and extolled thee to my people and what they said to me of their desire to carry me away with them?' 'I both heard and saw,' answered he. 'May God abundantly requite thee for me! By Allah, I knew not the measure of thine affection for me until this blessed hour and I doubted not of thy love of me!'

'O my lord,' rejoined she, 'is the reward of kindness aught but kindness? Verily, thou hast dealt generously with me and hast entreated me with worship and done me all manner of honour and kindness and preferred me above all thou lovest and desirest, and I have seen that thou lovest me with the utmost love. So how should my heart be content to leave thee and depart from thee, after all thy goodness to me? But now I desire of thy courtesy

that thou come and salute my family, so thou mayst see them and they thee and love and friendship may be between you; for know, O king of the age, that my mother and brother and cousins love thee with an exceeding love, by reason of my praises of thee to them, and say, "By Allah, we will not depart from thee nor go to our country till we have foregathered with the king and saluted him." For they desire to see thee and make acquaintance with thee.' 'I hear and obey,' said the king; 'for this is my own wish.' So saying, he rose and went in to them and saluted them after the goodliest fashion; and they sprang up to him and received him with the utmost honour, after which he sat down and ate with them; and he entertained them thus for the space of thirty days. Then they took leave of the king and queen and departed to their own land, after he had done them all possible honour.

Awhile after this, Julnar accomplished the days of her pregnancy and the time of her delivery being come, she bore a boy, as he were the moon at its full, whereat the utmost joy betided the king, for that he had never in his life [till then] been vouchsafed son or daughter.' So they held high festival and decorated the city seven days, in the extreme of joy and happiness; and on the seventh day came Julnar's mother and brother and cousins, whenas they knew of her delivery. The king received them with joy and said to them, 'I said that I would not give my son a name till you should come and name him of your knowledge.' So they named him Bedr Basim,[1] and all agreed upon this name. Then they showed the child to his uncle Salih, who took him in his arms and began to walk about the chamber with him. Presently he carried him forth of the palace and going down to the salt sea, fared on with him, till he was hidden from the king's sight. Night dccxlii.

[1] Smiling full moon.

When Shehriman saw him take his son and disappear with him in the abysses of the sea, he gave the child up for lost and fell to weeping and wailing; but Julnar said to him, 'O king of the age, fear not neither grieve for thy son, for I love my child more than thou and he is with my brother; so reck thou not of the sea neither fear drowning for him. Except my brother knew that no harm would betide the little one, he had not done this; and he will presently bring thee thy son safe, if it please God the Most High.' Nor was an hour past before the sea became troubled and King Salih came forth, with the little one safe in his arms, quiet and with a face like the moon on the night of her full, and [rising into the air] flew till he reached the palace and came in to them. Then said he to the king, 'Belike thou fearedst harm for thy son, whenas I plunged into the sea with him?' 'Yes, O my lord,' replied the king; 'I did indeed fear for him and thought he would never be saved therefrom.' 'O king of the land,' rejoined Salih, 'we pencilled his eyes with an eye-powder we know of and recited over him the names engraven upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), for this is what we use to do with children born among us; and now thou needst not fear for him drowning or suffocation in all the waters of the world, if he should go down into them; for, even as ye walk on the land, so walk we in the sea.'

Then he pulled out of his pocket a casket, graven and sealed, and breaking open the seals, emptied it; whereupon there fell from it strings of all manner jacinths and other jewels, besides three hundred bugles of emerald and other three hundred hollow jewels, as big as ostrich-eggs, whose light outshone that of sun and moon. Quoth Salih, 'O king of the age, these jewels and jacinths are a present from me to thee. We never yet brought thee a present, for that we knew not Julnar's abiding-place

neither had we any tidings of her; but now that we see thee to be united with her and we are all become as one thing, we have brought thee this present; and every little while, God willing, we will bring thee the like thereof; for that these jewels and jacinths are more plentiful with us than pebbles on the earth and we know the good and bad of them and their whereabouts and the way to them, and they are easy to us.'

When the king saw the jewels, his reason was confounded and his mind bewildered and he said, 'By Allah, one of these jewels is worth my kingdom!' Then he thanked Salih for his bounty and said to Julnar, 'I am abashed before thy brother, for that he hath dealt munificently by me and bestowed on me this splendid present, whereto the folk of the land may not avail.' So she thanked her brother for his deed and he said, 'O king of the age, thou hast the prior claim on us and it behoves us to thank thee, for thou hast entreated our sister with kindness and we have entered thy dwelling and eaten of thy victual; and the poet says:

Had I, or ever Suada did, to weep for love been fain, I should, before repentance came, have solaced heart and brain.
But she before my weeping wept; her tears drew mine, and so Quoth I, "Unto the precedent the merit doth pertain."

And if we stood in thy service, O king of the age, a thousand years, yet might we not avail to requite thee, and this were but a scantling of thy due.'

The king thanked him with effusion and they all abode with him forty days' space, at the end of which time Salih arose and kissed the earth before his brother-in-law. Quoth the latter, 'What wantest thou, O Salih?' And he answered, saying, 'O king of the age, indeed thou hast done us [many] favours, and we crave of thy bounties that thou deal charitably with us and give us leave [to depart];

for we yearn after our people and country and kinsfolk and our homes; so will we never forsake thy service nor that of my sister and her son; and by Allah, O king of the age, it is not pleasant to my heart to part from thee; but how shall we do, seeing that we have been reared in the sea and that [the sojourn of] the land liketh us not?' When the king heard this, he rose to his feet and took leave of Salih of the Sea and his mother and cousins, and they all wept, because of parting, and said to him, 'We will be with thee again anon, nor will we forsake thee, but will visit thee every few days.' Then they flew off and descending into the sea, disappeared from sight.

Night dccxliii. After this, King Shehriman redoubled in honour and kindness to Julnar, and the little one grew up and flourished, whilst his uncle and grandmother and cousins visited the king every few days and abode with him a month or two months [at a time]. The boy ceased not to increase in beauty and grace, with increase of years, till he attained the age of fifteen and was unique in his perfection and symmetry. He learnt reading and writing and history and syntax and lexicography and archery and spearplay and horsemanship and what not else behoveth the sons of kings; nor was there one of the children of the folk of the city, men or women, but would talk of the youth's charms, for he was of surpassing beauty and perfection, even such an one as is described in the saying of the poet:

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

And in that of another:

Upon the table of his cheek, a fringe of jet, I wis, The whiskers grow, and sore thereat my soul's amazement is;
As if his visage were a lamp that burns all night, hung up, Beneath the darkness of his hair, with chains of ambergris.

And indeed the king loved him with an exceeding great love and summoning his vizier and amirs and the chief officers of state and grandees of his realm, required of them a binding oath that they would make Bedr Basim king over them after himself; and they took the oath gladly, for the king was beneficent to the people, pleasant in speech and saying nought but that wherein was advantage for them, brief, a very compend of goodness.

On the morrow Shehriman mounted, with all his troops and amirs and grandees, and went forth into the city and returned. When they drew near the palace, the king dismounted, to wait upon his son, whilst the latter abode on horseback, and he and all the amirs and grandees bore the saddle-cloth of honour before him, each in his turn, till they came to the vestibule of the palace, where the prince alighted and his father and the amirs embraced him and seated him on the throne of kingship, whilst they all stood before him. Then Bedr judged the people, deposing the unjust and appointing the just, till near upon midday, when he descended from the throne and went in to his mother, Julnar of the Sea, with the crown on his head, as he were the moon. When she saw him, with the king before him, she rose and kissing him, gave him joy of the sultanate and wished him and his father length of life and victory over their enemies. He sat with her and rested till the hour of afternoon-prayer, when he took horse and repaired, with the amirs before him, to the tilting-ground, where he played at arms with his father and his grandees, till night-fall, when he returned to the palace, preceded by all the folk.

He rode forth thus every day to the tilting-ground, returning to sit and judge the people and do justice between amir and poor man; and thus he did a whole year, at the end of which time he began to ride out a-hunting and to go round about in the cities and countries under

his rule, proclaiming peace and security and doing after the fashion of kings; and he was unique among the people of his day for glory and valour and just dealing among the folk.

One day, the old king fell sick and his heart forebode him of translation to the mansion of eternity. His sickness increased on him till he was nigh upon death, when he called his son and commended his mother and subjects to his care and caused all the amirs and grandees once more swear allegiance to the prince and assured himself of them by oaths; after which he lingered a few days and was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High. His son and widow and all the grandees and amirs and viziers mourned over him, and they built him a tomb and buried him therein.

They ceased not to mourn for him a whole month, till Salih and his mother and cousins arrived and condoled with them for the king and said, 'O Julnar, though the king is dead, yet hath he left this noble and peerless youth, the fierce lion and the shining moon; and whoso leaveth the like of him is not dead.' Moreover, the grandees and notables of the empire went in to Bedr and said to him, 'O king, there is no harm in mourning for the king: but [continuance of] mourning beseemeth none save women; wherefore occupy thou not thy heart and ours with mourning for thy father; for he hath left thee behind him, and whoso leaveth the like of thee is not dead.' Then they comforted him and diverted him and carried him to the bath. When he came out thence, he donned a rich robe, wroughten with gold and embroidered with jewels and jacinths, and setting the royal crown on his head, sat down on his throne of kingship and ordered the affairs of the folk, doing equal justice between the weak and the strong and exacting from the amir the poor man's due; wherefore the people loved him

Night dccxliv.

with an exceeding love. Thus he abode a great while, whilst, every now and then, his kinsfolk of the sea visited him, and his life was pleasant and his eye unheated [by tears].

It chanced that his uncle Salih went in one night to Julnar and saluted her; whereupon she rose and embracing him, made him sit by her side and asked him how he did, he and his mother and cousins. 'O my sister,' answered he, 'they are well and in great good case, lacking nought save the sight of thy face.' Then she set food before him and he ate, after which talk ensued between them and they spoke of Bedr Basim and his beauty and grace and symmetry and skill in horsemanship and his wit and good breeding. Now Bedr was reclining [upon a day-bed within earshot], and hearing his mother and uncle speak of him, he feigned sleep and listened to their talk. Presently Salih said to his sister, 'Thy son is now seventeen years old and is unmarried, and I fear lest aught befall him and he have no son; wherefore it is my wish to marry him to a princess of the princesses of the sea, who shall be a match for him in beauty and grace.' Quoth Julnar, 'Name them to me, for I know them all.'

So Salih proceeded to name them to her, one by one, but to each she said, 'This one liketh me not for my son; I will not marry him but to one who is his like in beauty and grace and wit and piety and good breeding and worth and dominion and rank and lineage.' Quoth Salih, 'I know none other of the daughters of the kings of the sea; for I have enumerated to thee more than an hundred girls and none of them pleaseth thee: but see, O my sister, whether thy son be asleep or no.' So she felt Bedr and finding on him the signs of sleep, said to Salih, 'He is asleep; what hast thou to say and what is thine object in [assuring thyself of] his sleeping?' 'O my sister,'

replied Salih, 'know that I have bethought me of a girl of the girls of the sea who befitteth thy son; but I fear to name her, lest he be awake and his heart be taken with her love and maybe we shall not avail to win to her; so should he and we and the grandees of the realm be wearied [in vain] and trouble betide us through this; for, as saith the poet:

Love, at the first, is as a drip of water, verily; But, when the mastery it gains, 'tis as a spreading sea.'

'Tell me the name and condition of this girl,' rejoined Julnar; 'for I know all the damsels of the sea, kings' daughters and others; and if I judge her worthy of him, I will demand her in marriage for him of her father, though I spend on her all that my hand possesseth. So tell me who and what she is and fear nought, for my son is asleep.' Quoth Salih, 'I fear lest he be awake; and the poet says:

I fell in love with him, what time his charms described heard I; For whiles it chances that the ear doth love before the eye.'

But Julnar said, 'Speak and be brief and fear nothing, O my brother.' So he said, 'O my sister, none is worthy of thy son save the princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, for that she is like unto him in beauty and grace and brightness and perfection; nor is there, in the sea or on the land, a sweeter or pleasanter of parts than she; for she is fair and graceful and shapely, with red cheeks and flower-white brows, teeth like jewels and great black eyes, heavy buttocks and slender waist and a lovely face. When she turns, she shames the wild cattle and the gazelles, and when she walks, the willow branch is jealous of her. When she unveils, her face outshines the sun and the moon and she enslaves all that look on her; and she is sweet-lipped and soft-sided.'

When Julnar heard what Salih said, she answered, 'Thou sayst sooth, O my brother! By Allah, I have seen her many a time and she was my companion, when we were little; but now I have not set eyes on her for eighteen years and we have no knowledge of each other, for constraint of distance. By Allah, none but she is worthy of my son!' Now Bedr heard all they said and fell in love with the princess on report, wherefore fire was kindled in his heart on her account and he was drowned in a sea without shore or bottom. Then said Salih, 'By Allah, O my sister, there is no greater fool among the kings of the sea than her father nor one more violent of temper! So name thou not the girl to thy son, till we demand her in marriage of her father. If he favour us with his assent, we will praise God the Most High; and if he refuse to give her to thy son to wife, we will say no more about it and seek another in marriage.' 'It is well judged of thee,' answered Julnar, and they said no more; but Bedr passed the night with a heart on fire with passion for the princess Jauhereh. However, he concealed his case and spoke not of her to his mother or his uncle, albeit he was on coals of fire for love of her. Night dccxlv.

Next morning, the king and his uncle went to the bath and washed, after which they came forth and drank wine and the servants set food before them, of which they and Julnar ate, till they were satisfied, and washed their hands. Then Salih rose and said to his nephew and sister, 'With your leave, I would fain go to my mother [and kindred], for I have been with you some days and they await me and their hearts are troubled concerning me.' But Bedr said to him, 'Abide with us this day;' and he consented. Then said the king, 'Come, O my uncle, let us go forth to the garden.' So they sallied forth to the garden and walked about and took their pleasure awhile, after which Bedr lay down under a shady tree, thinking to rest and

sleep; but he called to mind his uncle's description of the princess and her beauty and grace and shed copious tears, reciting the following verses:

If, whilst within mine entrails the fires of hell did stir And flames raged high about me, 'twere spoken in mine ear,
"Which wilt thou have the rather, a draught of water cold Or sight of her thou lovest?" I'd say, "The sight of her."

Then he sighed and wept and lamented, reciting these verses also:

Ah, who shall be my helper in love of a gazelle, Even as the sun in visage, but fairer, sooth to tell?
My heart was free and careless; but now 'tis all on fire With passion for the daughter of King Es Semendel.

When Salih heard what his nephew said, he smote hand upon hand and said, 'There is no god but God! Mohammed is the apostle of God and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! O my son, didst thou hear what passed between thy mother and myself respecting the princess Jauhereh?' 'Yes, O my uncle,' answered Bedr. 'And I fell in love with her by report, through what I heard you say. Indeed, my heart cleaves to her and I cannot live without her.' 'O king,' rejoined his uncle, 'let us return to thy mother and tell her how the case stands and ask her leave that I may take thee with me and seek the princess in marriage of her father; for I fear to take thee without her leave, lest she be wroth with me; and indeed the right would be on her side, for I should be the cause of her separation from thee, even as I was that of her separation from us. Moreover, the [people of the] city would be left without a king and there would be none to govern them and look to their affairs; so should the realm be disordered against thee and the kingship depart from thy hands.' But Bedr said, 'O my uncle, if I return to my mother and consult

her, she will not suffer me to do this; wherefore I will not return to her nor consult her, but will go with thee and tell her not and after return.' And he wept before him.

When Salih heard what his nephew said, he was bewildered concerning his case and said, 'I crave help of God the Most High in any event.' Then, seeing that Bedr was resolved to go with him, without consulting his mother, he drew from his finger a seal-ring, whereon were graven certain of the names of God the Most High, and gave it to him, saying, 'Put this on thy finger, and thou wilt be safe from drowning and other [the perils of the sea] and from the mischief of its beasts and its great fishes.' So Bedr took the ring and put it on his finger. Then they plunged into the sea and fared on till they came to Salih's palace, where they found Bedr's grandmother, the mother of his mother, seated with her kinsfolk, and going in to them, kissed their hands. When the old queen saw Bedr, she rose to him and embracing him, kissed him between the eyes and said to him, 'A blessed coming, O my son! How didst thou leave thy mother Julnar?' 'She is well in health and fortune,' answered he, 'and salutes thee and her cousins.' Night dccxlvi.

Then Salih told his mother how Bedr had fallen in love with the princess Jauhereh by report and was come, purposing to demand her in marriage of her father; which when the old queen heard, she was exceeding wroth with her son and sore troubled and concerned and said to Salih, 'O my son, of a truth thou didst wrong to name the princess Jauhereh before thy nephew, knowing, as thou dost, that her father is stupid and arrogant, little of wit and exceeding violent of temper, grudging his daughter to those who demand her in marriage; for all the kings of the sea have sought her hand, but he would none of them and rejected them all, saying, "Ye are no match for her in beauty nor grace nor aught else." Wherefore we fear to

demand her in marriage of him, lest he reject us, even as he hath rejected others; and we are people of spirit and should return broken-hearted.'

'O my mother,' answered Salih, 'what is to do? For King Bedr says, "Needs must I seek her in marriage of her father, though it cost me my whole kingdom," and avouches that he will die of love and longing for her, if he have her not to wife. Moreover, he is handsomer and goodlier than she; his father was king of all the Persians, whose king he now is, and none but he is worthy of Jauhereh. Wherefore I purpose to carry her father a present of jacinths and jewels, befitting his dignity, and demand her of him in marriage. If he object that he is a king, behold, Bedr also is a king and the son of a king; or, if he object her beauty, behold, Bedr is handsomer than she; or, again, if he object the extent of his dominion, behold, Bedr's dominion is vaster than hers and her father's and he hath greater plenty of troops and guards, for that his kingdom is greater than that of Es Semendel. Needs must I do my endeavour to further the desire of my sister's son, though it cost me my life; because I was the cause of what has happened; and even as I plunged him into the ocean of her love, so will I go about to marry him to her, and may God the Most High help me thereto!' 'Do as thou wilt,' rejoined his mother; 'but beware of giving her father rough words, whenas thou speakest with him; for thou knowest his folly and violence and I fear lest he do thee a mischief, for he knoweth not respect for any.' And Salih answered, 'I hear and obey.'

Then he took two bags full of emeralds and rubies and other jewels and giving them to his servants to carry, set out with Bedr for the palace of Es Semendel. When they came thither, he sought an audience of the king and being admitted to his presence, kissed the earth before him and saluted him after the goodliest fashion. The king rose to

him and receiving him with the utmost honour, bade him be seated. So he sat down and presently the king said to him, 'A blessed coming, O Salih! Indeed, thou hast desolated us [by thine absence]. But what brings thee to us? Tell me thine errand, that we may fulfil it to thee.' Whereupon Salih arose and kissing the earth a second time, said, 'O king of the age, my errand is to God and the magnanimous king and the valiant lion, the report of whose good qualities the caravans have spread far and near and whose renown for goodness and beneficence and clemency and graciousness and liberality is bruited abroad in all climes and countries.'

Then he opened the two bags and displaying their contents before the king, said to him, 'O king of the age, belike thou wilt show favour to me and heal my heart by accepting my present.' Quoth the king, 'With what intent dost thou make me this gift? Tell me thy case and acquaint me with thy need. If it be in my power, I will straightway accomplish it to thee and spare thee toil and trouble; and if I be unable thereunto, God imposeth not upon a soul aught but that whereto it may avail.'[1] So Salih rose and kissing the earth three times, said, 'O king of the age, thou art indeed able to that which I desire; it is in thy power and thou art master thereof; and I impose not on the king a dilemma, nor am I mad, that I should ask of the king a thing whereto he availeth not; for the sage saith, "If thou wouldst be obeyed, ask that which is possible." Wherefore, that of which I am come in quest, the king (whom God preserve!) is able to grant.' 'Ask what thou wouldst have,' replied the king, 'and expound thy case and seek thy desire.' Then said Salih, 'O king of the age, know that I come as a suitor, seeking the unique pearl and the treasured jewel, the princess

Night dccxlviii.

[1] *Koran* ii. 286.

Jauhereh, daughter of our lord the king; wherefore, O king, disappoint thou not thy suitor.'

When the king heard this, he laughed till he fell backward, in derision of him, and said, 'O Salih, I had thought thee a man of worth and sense, seeking nought but what was reasonable and speaking not but advisedly. What then hath befallen thy reason and urged thee to this monstrous matter and mighty hazard, that thou seekest in marriage the daughters of kings, lords of cities and countries? Art thou of a rank to aspire to this great eminence and hath thy wit failed thee to this pass that thou affrontest me with this demand?'

'God amend the king!' replied Salih. 'I seek her not for myself (albeit, an I did, I am her match and more than her match, for thou knowest that my father was king of the kings of the sea, for all thou art now our king), but for King Bedr Basim, lord of the lands of the Persians and son of King Shehriman, whose puissance thou knowest. If thou object that thou art a great king, King Bedr is a greater; and if thou object thy daughter's beauty, he is handsomer than she and fairer of form and more excellent of rank and lineage; and he is the champion of the people of his day. Wherefore, O king of the age, if thou grant my request, thou wilt have set the thing in its place; but, if thou deal arrogantly with us, thou wilt not use us justly nor travel the right road with us. Moreover, O king, thou knowest that the princess Jauhereh, the daughter of our lord the king, must needs be married, for the sage saith, "Needs must for a girl marriage or the grave." So, if thou mean to marry her, my sister's son is worthier of her than any other man.'

When King Es Semendel heard Salih's words, he was exceeding wroth; his reason fled and his soul was like to depart his body for rage, and he said, 'O dog, shall the like of thee dare to bespeak me thus and name my

daughter in the assemblies,[1] saying that the son of thy sister Julnar is a match for her? Who art thou and who are thy sister and her son and who was his father, that thou shouldst dare to say these things to me? What are ye all, in comparison with my daughter, but dogs?' And he cried out to his servants, saying, 'Take yonder good-for-nought's head!' So they drew their swords and fell upon Salih, but he fled and made for the palace gate, where he found more than a thousand horse of his cousins and kinsfolk and servants, armed cap-a-pie in iron and strait-knit coats of mail, with spears and naked swords in their hands, whom his mother had despatched to his succour.

When they saw Salih come running out of the palace, they questioned him and he told them what was to do; whereupon they knew that the king was a violent-tempered fool. So they alighted and drawing their swords, went in to King Es Semendel, whom they found seated upon the throne of his kingship, unaware of their coming and violently enraged against Salih; and they saw his guards and servants and officers unprepared. When the king saw them enter, sword in hand, he cried out to his people, saying, 'Out on you! Take me these dogs' heads!' But, before long, Es Semendel's party were put to the rout and addressed themselves to flight, and Salih and his kinsfolk seized upon the king and bound his hands behind him. When Jauhereh awoke and knew that her father was a captive and his guards slain, she fled forth the palace to a certain island and climbing up into a high tree, hid herself therein. Night dccxlviii.

[1] It is a breach of good manners to name to or before an Arab the women of his family in so many words. When it is desired to enquire after their health, the proper form of question is not, "How is thy wife, thy daughter, etc.?" but "How is thy house?" (*Keif hal ahluk*) or some similar periphrasis.

Now, when the two parties came to blows, some of King Es Semendel's servants fled and Bedr, meeting them, questioned them and they told him what had happened, adding that the king was a prisoner, whereupon Bedr feared for himself and said in his heart, 'Verily, all this turmoil is on my account and none is sought for but I.' So he sought safety in flight, knowing not whither he went; but fate fore-ordained from all eternity drove him to the island where the princess had taken refuge, and he came to the very tree on which she sat and cast himself down, like a dead man, thinking to lie and rest and knowing not that there is no rest for the pursued, for none knoweth what destiny hides for him in the future. As he lay down, he raised his eyes to the tree and they met those of the princess. So he looked at her and seeing her to be like the shining moon, said, 'Glory to Him who created yonder perfect form, Him who is the Creator of all things and Almighty! Glory to the Great God, the Creator, the Shaper and Fashioner! By Allah, except my presentiments deceive me, this is Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel! Methinks that, when she heard of our coming to blows with her father, she fled to this island and hid herself in this tree; but, if this be not the princess herself, it is one yet goodlier than she.'

Then he bethought himself and said, 'I will arise and lay hands on her and question her of her case; and if she be indeed Jauhereh, I will demand her in marriage of herself and so accomplish my desire.' So he stood up and said to her, 'O end of all desire, who art thou and who brought thee hither?' She looked at him and seeing him to be as the full moon, when it breaks from under the black clouds, slender of shape and sweet of smile, answered, saying, 'O fair of fashion, I am the princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, and I took

refuge in this place, because Salih and his men made war on my father and slew his troops and took him prisoner, with some of his men; wherefore I fled, fearing for my life, and know not what fortune hath done with my father.'

When Bedr heard this, he marvelled exceedingly at the strange chance and said in himself, 'Doubtless I have come to my desire by the taking of her father.' Then he looked at Jauhereh and said to her, 'Come down, O my lady; for I am one slain for love of thee and thine eyes have captived me. Know that all these broils and troubles are on thine account and mine; for I am Bedr Basim, King of the Persians, and Salih is my uncle, and he it is who came to thy father to demand thee in marriage. As for me, I have left my kingdom for thy sake, and our meeting here is a rare coincidence. So come down to me and let us go to thy father's palace, that I may beseech my uncle Salih to release him and take thee to wife according to the law.' When Jauhereh heard his words, she said in herself, 'It was on this vile wretch's account, then, that all this hath befallen and that my father hath been made a prisoner and his guards and chamberlains slain and I constrained to flee far away from my palace and seek refuge in this island, a miserable exile. But, an I go not about with him, to defend myself against him, he will possess himself of me and take his will of me; for he is in love and a lover is not blamed for aught that he doth.'

Then she beguiled him with [fair] words and soft speeches, whilst he knew not the perfidy she purposed against him, and said to him, 'O my lord and light of my eyes, art thou indeed King Bedr Basim, son of Queen Julnar?' And he answered, 'Yes, O my lady.' 'May God cut off my father,' rejoined she, 'and make his kingdom to cease from him and heal not his heart neither avert from him strangerhood, if he could desire a comelier than thou or

Night dccxlix.

aught goodlier than these fair fashions of thine! By Allah, he is little of wit and judgment! But, O king of the age, be not thou wroth with him for that which he hath done; for, if thou love me a span, verily I love thee a cubit. Indeed, I have fallen into the snare of thy love and am become of the number of those thou hast slain. The love that was with thee hath transferred itself to me and there is left thereof with thee but a tithe of that which is with me.'

So saying, she came down from the tree and strained him to her bosom and fell to kissing him; whereat passion and desire for her waxed on him and he doubted not but she loved him and trusted in her. So he returned her caresses and said to her, 'By Allah, O princess, my uncle Salih set forth to me not a fortieth part of thy charms, no, nor a quarter of a carat[1] thereof!' Jauhereh pressed him to her bosom and pronounced some unintelligible words; then spat in his face, saying, 'Quit this shape of a man and take that of a bird, the handsomest of birds, white of plumage, with red bill and feet.' Hardly had she spoken, when Bedr found himself transformed into a bird, the handsomest of birds, which shook itself and stood, looking at her.

Now Jauhereh had with her one of her slave-girls, by name Mersineh; so she called her and said to her, 'By Allah, but that I fear for my father, who is his uncle's prisoner, I would kill him! May God not requite him with good! How unlucky was his coming to us; for all this trouble is due to him! But do thou carry him to the Thirsty Island and leave him there to die of thirst.' So Mersineh carried him to the island in question and would have returned and left him there; but she said in herself, 'By Allah, one of such beauty and grace deserveth not

[1] A carat is a twenty-fourth part of anything.

to die of thirst!' So she brought him to another island, abounding in trees and fruits and streams, and leaving him there, returned to her mistress and told her that she had set him on the Thirsty Island.

Meanwhile, King Salih sought for Jauhereh, but, finding her not, returned to his palace and said to his mother, 'Where is my sister's son, King Bedr?' 'By Allah, O my son,' replied she, 'I know nothing of him! For, when he heard that you and King Es Semendel had come to blows and that strife and slaughter had betided between you, he took fright and fled.' When Salih heard this, he grieved for his nephew and said, 'By Allah, O my mother, we have dealt negligently by King Bedr and I fear lest he perish or lest one of King Es Semendel's soldiers or his daughter Jauhereh fall in with him. So should we come to shame with his mother and no good betide us from her, for that I took him without her leave.' Then he despatched guards and scouts throughout the sea and elsewhere to seek for Bedr; but they could learn nothing of him: so they returned and told King Salih, wherefore grief and concern redoubled on him and his breast was straitened for King Bedr.

Meanwhile, Julnar abode many days in expectation of her son's return; but he came not and she heard no news of him. So, when she was weary of waiting, she arose and going down into the sea, repaired to her mother, who rose to her and embraced her and kissed her, as did her cousins. Then she questioned her mother of King Bedr and she answered, saying, 'O my daughter, he came hither with his uncle, who took jacinths and jewels and carrying them to King Es Semendel, demanded his daughter in marriage for thy son; but he consented not and offended against thy brother in words. Now I had sent Salih nigh upon a thousand horse and there befell strife between him and King Es Semendel; but God

aided thy brother against him, and he slew his troops and took himself prisoner. Meanwhile, tidings of this reached thy son, and it would seem as if he feared for himself; wherefore he fled forth from us, without our will, and returned not, nor have we heard any news of him.' Then Julnar enquired for King Salih and his mother said, 'He is seated on the throne of kingship, in the stead of King Es Semendel, and hath sent in all directions to seek thy son and the princess Jauhereh.'

When Julnar heard this, she mourned sore for her son and was sore incensed against her brother Salih for that he had taken him and gone down with him into the sea, without her leave; and she said, 'O my mother, I fear to tarry with thee, lest the state fall into disorder and the kingdom pass from our hands; for I came to thee without letting any know. Wherefore I deem well to return and govern the realm, till it please God to order our son's affair for us. But look ye forget him not neither neglect his case; for, should he come to any harm, it would infallibly be the death of me, since I see the world only in him and delight but in his life.' 'With all my heart, O my daughter,' replied the old queen. 'Ask not what we suffer by reason of his loss and absence.' Then she sent to seek for Bedr, whilst Julnar returned to her king-
Night dom, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, and indeed the
Decl. world was straitened upon her and she was in evil case.

To return to King Bedr. He abode days and nights in the semblance of a bird, in the island where Mersineh had left him, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and knowing not whither to go nor how to fly; till, one day, there came a fowler to the island to catch somewhat wherewithal to get his living. He espied King Bedr in his form of a white bird, with red bill and feet, captivating the sight and bewildering the thought [with his beauty], and said in himself, 'Verily, yonder is a handsome bird:

never saw I its like in make or beauty.' So he cast his net over Bedr and taking him, carried him to the town, to sell him. On his way, one of the townsfolk accosted him and asked the price of the bird. Quoth the fowler, 'What wilt thou do with him?' 'I will kill him and eat him,' answered the other; whereupon said the fowler, 'Who could have the heart to kill this bird and eat him? I mean to present him to the king, who will give me more than thou and will not kill him, but will divert himself by gazing on his beauty and grace, for in all my life, since I have been a fowler, I never saw his like among land or water fowl. The utmost thou wouldst give me for him would be a dirhem, and by the Great God, I will not sell him!'

Then he carried the bird up to the king's palace, and when the latter saw it, its beauty pleased him and the red colour of its feet and beak. So he sent an eunuch to buy it, who accosted the fowler and said to him, 'Wilt thou sell this bird?' 'No,' answered he; 'it is a gift from me to the king.' So the eunuch carried the bird to the king and told him what the man had said; and he took it and gave the fowler ten dinars, whereupon he kissed the earth and went away. Then the eunuch carried the bird to the king's palace and placing him in a handsome cage, set meat and drink by him and hung him up.

When the king came down [from the throne], he said to the eunuch, 'Where is the bird? Bring it to me, that I may look upon it, for, by Allah, it is handsome!' So the eunuch brought the cage and set it before the king, who looked and seeing the food untouched, said, 'By Allah, I know not what it will eat, that I may feed it!' Then he called for food and they laid the tables and the king ate. When the bird saw the meat and fruits and sweetmeats and what not, he ate of all that was before

the king, whereat the latter and all the bystanders marvelled and the king said to his attendants, 'In all my life I never saw a bird eat as doth this!' Then he sent an eunuch to fetch his wife, that she might look upon the bird, and he went in to her and said, 'O my lady, the king desireth thy presence, that thou mayst divert thyself with the sight of a bird he hath bought. It is goodly of aspect and is a wonder of the wonders of the age; for, when we set on the food, it flew down from its cage and perching on the table, ate of all that was thereon.'

So she came in haste; but, when she saw the bird, she veiled her face and turned to go away. The king followed her and said to her, 'Why dost thou veil thy face, when there is none in presence save the eunuchs and women that wait on thee and thy husband?' 'O king,' answered she, 'this is no bird, but a man like thyself.' 'Thou liest,' rejoined he. 'This is too much of a jest. How should he be other than a bird?' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'I do not jest with thee nor do I tell thee aught but the truth; for this bird is King Bedr Basim, son of King Shehriman, lord of the land of the Persians, and his mother is Julnar of the Sea.' 'And how came he in this shape?' asked the king; and she said, 'The princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, hath enchanted him:' and told him all that had befallen King Bedr from first to last; for this queen was the greatest enchantress of her day.

Night dccli.

The king marvelled exceedingly at his wife's words and conjured her, on his life, to free Bedr from his enchantment and not leave him in torment, saying, 'May God the Most High cut off Jauhereh's hand, for a foul witch as she is! How little is her piety and how great her craft and perfidy!' Quoth the queen, 'Do thou say to him, "O Bedr Basim, enter yonder closet!"' So the king bade him enter the closet and he did so.

Then the queen veiled her face and taking in her hand

a bowl of water, entered the closet, where she pronounced over the water certain words, that might not be understood, and sprinkling the bird therewith, said to him, 'By the virtue of these mighty names and holy verses and of the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth, the Quickener of the dead and Appointer of the means of livelihood and the terms of existence, quit this thy present form and return to that in which God created thee!' Hardly had she made an end of these words, when the bird trembled and became a man; and the king saw before him a handsome youth, than whom there was none goodlier on the face of the earth.

When Bedr found himself thus restored to his own shape, he said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is the apostle of God! Glory be to the Creator and Provider of all creatures and the Ordainer of their terms of life!' Then he kissed the king's hand and wished him long life, and the king kissed his hand and said to him, 'O Bedr, tell me thy history from beginning to end.' So he told him his whole story, concealing nought: and the king marvelled thereat and said to him, 'O Bedr, God hath delivered thee from the enchantment: but what hath thy judgment decided and what thinkest thou to do?' 'O king of the age,' answered Bedr, 'I desire of thy bounty that thou equip me a ship with a company of thy servants and all that is needful; for I have been long absent and fear lest the kingdom depart from me. And I misdoubt me my mother is dead of grief for my loss; for she knows not what is come of me nor whether I am alive or dead. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O king, to crown thy favours to me by granting me what I seek.'

The king was moved by Bedr's beauty and sweet speech and said, 'I hear and obey.' So he fitted him out a ship, which he furnished with all that was needful and manned with a company of his servants; and Bedr set sail in it,

after having taken leave of the king. They sailed ten days with a favouring wind; but, on the eleventh day, the sea became exceeding troubled, the ship rose and fell and the sailors availed not to govern her. So they drifted at the mercy of the waves, till the ship drove upon a rock and broke up and all on board were drowned, except Bedr, who got astride one of the planks of the vessel, after having been nigh upon death. The sea and the wind carried the plank along for three days, whilst he knew not whither he went and had no means of directing its motion; till, on the fourth day, the plank grounded with him on the sea-shore in sight of a white city, as it were a passing white dove, goodly of ordinance, with high towers and lofty walls, builded upon a tongue of land that jutted out into the sea and the waves beating against its walls.

When Bedr saw this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, for he was well-nigh dead with hunger and thirst, and dismounting from the plank, would have gone up the beach to the city; but there came down to him mules and asses and horses, in number as the sands [of the sea] and fell a-striking at him and hindering him from landing. So he swam round to the back of the city, where he landed and entering the place, found none therein and marvelled at this, saying, 'I wonder to whom does this city belong, wherein is no king nor any inhabitant, and whence came the mules and asses and horses that hindered me from landing?'

Then he fared on at hazard, musing on his case, till he espied an old man, a grocer, [sitting at the door of his shop]. So he saluted him and the other returned his greeting and seeing him to be a handsome young man, said to him, 'O youth, whence comest thou and what brings thee to this city?' Bedr told him his story; at which the old man marvelled and said, 'O my son, didst thou see any in thy way?' 'Indeed, O my father,' an-

swered Bedr, 'I wondered to see the city void of people.' Quoth the grocer, 'O my son, come up into the shop, lest thou perish.' So Bedr went up into the shop and sat down; whereupon the old man set food before him, saying, 'O my son, come within the shop; glory be to Him who hath preserved thee from yonder she-devil!'

Bedr was sore affrighted at the grocer's words; but he ate his fill and washed his hands; then turned to his host and said to him, 'O my lord, what is the meaning of thy words? Verily, thou hast made me fearful of this city and its people.' 'Know, O my son,' replied the old man, 'that this is the City of the Magicians and its queen is a sorceress and a mighty enchantress, as she were a she-devil, crafty and perfidious exceedingly. All the horses and mules and asses thou sawest were once men and strangers, like unto thee; for whoever enters the city, being a young man like thyself, this misbelieving witch takes him and abides with him forty days, after which she enchants him, and he becomes a horse or a mule or an ass, of those thou sawest on the sea-shore. So, when they saw thee about to land, they feared lest she should enchant thee, even as she had enchanted them, and signed to thee, as who should say, "Do not land,—" of their solicitude for thee, lest she should do with thee like as she had done with them. She possessed herself of this city [and took it] from its people by sorcery and her name is Queen Lab, which, being interpreted, meaneth in Arabic, "The Sun."'

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When Bedr heard what the old man said, he was sore affrighted and trembled like a wind-shaken reed, saying in himself, 'Hardly am I delivered from the affliction wherein I was by reason of sorcery, when fate casts me into yet sorrier case!' And he fell a-musing over his case and that which had betided him. When the grocer

saw the violence of his fear, he said to him, 'O my son, come, sit at the threshold of the shop and look upon yonder creatures and upon their dress and favour and that wherein they are by reason of enchantment, and fear not; for the queen and all in the city love and tender me and will not [do aught to] vex my heart or trouble my mind.' So Bedr came out and sat at the shop-door, looking out upon the folk; and there passed by him creatures without number.

When the people saw him, they accosted the grocer and said to him, 'O elder, is this thy captive and thy prey that [thou hast gotten] in these [latter] days?' 'He is my brother's son,' answered the old man. 'I heard that his father was dead; so I sent for him, that I might quench with him the fire of my longing.' Quoth they, 'Indeed he is a comely youth; but we fear for him from Queen Lab, lest she turn on thee with treachery and take him from thee, for she loves handsome young men.' 'The queen will not gainsay my commandment,' answered the grocer, 'for she loves and tenders me; and when she knows that he is my brother's son, she will not molest him nor afflict me in him, neither trouble my heart on his account.' Then Bedr abode some months with the grocer, eating and drinking, and the old man loved him with an exceeding love.

One day, as he sat in the shop, as of his wont, there came up a thousand eunuchs, with drawn swords, mounted upon Arabian horses and clad in various kinds of raiment and girt with jewelled girdles and Indian swords. They saluted the grocer, as they passed, and were followed by a thousand damsels like moons, clad in various raiment of silks and satin, laced with gold and embroidered with jewels, and armed with spears. In their midst rode a young lady, mounted on an Arabian mare, saddled with a saddle of gold, set with various kinds of jewels and

jacinths. The damsels saluted the grocer and passed on, till up came Queen Lab, in great state, and seeing Bedr sitting in the shop, as he were the moon at its full, was amazed at his beauty and grace and became passionately enamoured of him.

So she alighted and sitting down by King Bedr, said to the old man, 'Whence hadst thou this fair one?' 'He is my brother's son,' answered the grocer, 'and is [but] lately come to me.' Quoth Lab, 'Let him be with me this night, that I may talk with him.' And the old man said, 'Wilt thou take him from me and not enchant him?' 'Yes,' answered she, and he said, 'Swear to me.' So she swore to him that she would not enchant Bedr nor do him any hurt, and bidding bring him a handsome horse, saddled and bridled with a bridle of gold and decked with trappings all of gold, set with jewels, gave the old man a thousand dinars, saying, 'Use this for thine occasions.' Then she took Bedr and carried him off, as he were the full moon on its fourteenth night, whilst all the folk, seeing his beauty, were grieved for him and said, 'By Allah, this youth deserves better than to be bewitched by yonder accursed sorceress!'

Bedr heard all they said, but was silent, committing his case to God the Most High, till they came to the gate of Queen Lab's palace, where the amirs and eunuchs and notables of the realm dismounted and she bade the chamberlains dismiss her officers and grandees, who kissed the earth and went away, whilst she entered the palace with Bedr and her eunuchs and women. Here he found a palace, whose like he had never seen, for in its midst was a great basin full of water, amiddleward a vast garden. He looked at the garden and saw it full of birds of various kinds and colours, warbling in all manner tongues and voices, joyous and plaintive. Brief, [everywhere] he beheld great state and dominion and said,

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'Glory be to God, who of His bounty and clemency provideth those who worship other than Himself!'

The queen sat down at a lattice-window overlooking the garden, on a couch of ivory, whereon was a high bed, and Bedr seated himself by her side. She kissed him and pressing him to her bosom, bade her women bring a table of food. So they brought a table of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels and spread with all manner meats, and the queen and Bedr ate, till they were satisfied, and washed their hands; after which the waiting-women set on flagons of gold and silver and crystal, together with all kinds of flowers and dishes of fruits and confections. Then the queen called for the singing-women, and there came ten damsels, as they were moons, with all manner of musical instruments in their hands. The queen filled a cup and drinking it off, filled another and gave it to Bedr, who took it and drank; and they ceased not to drink till they had enough. Then she bade the damsels sing, and they sang all manner airs, till it seemed to Bedr as if the palace danced with him for delight. His sense was ravished [with the music] and his breast expanded, and he forgot his strangerhood and said in himself, 'Verily, this queen is a handsome young woman, and I will never leave her; for her kingdom is vaster than mine and she is fairer than the princess Jauhereh.'

He ceased not to drink with her till nightfall, when they lighted the lamps and candles and diffused perfumes [from the censers]; nor did they leave drinking, till they were both drunken, and the singing-women sang the while. Then the queen lay down on a bed and dismissing her women, called to Bedr to come and lie with her. So he lay with her, in all delight of life, till the morning, when they entered the bath, that was in the palace, and washed; after which she clad him in the finest of raiment and called for wine. So the waiting-women

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brought the drinking-vessels and they drank. Presently, the queen arose and taking Bedr by the hand, sat down with him on chairs and commanded to bring food, of which they ate and washed their hands. Then the damsels brought the drinking-vessels and fruits and flowers and confections, and they ceased not to eat and drink, whilst the singing-girls sang various airs, till the evening.

They gave not over eating and drinking and merry-making forty days, at the end of which time the queen said to him, 'O Bedr, whether is the pleasanter, this place or the shop of thine uncle the grocer?' 'By Allah, O queen,' answered he, 'this is the pleasanter, for my uncle is but a poor man, who sells pot-herbs.' She laughed at his words, and they lay together in the pleasantest of case till the morning, when Bedr awoke and not finding Queen Lab by his side, was troubled at her absence and perplexed and said, 'Where can she have gone?' And indeed she was absent from him a great while and did not return; so he donned his clothes and went in search of her, but found her not and said in himself, 'Haply, she is gone to the garden.'

So he went out into the garden and came to a running stream, beside which he saw a white she-bird and on the bank a tree full of birds of various colours, and stood and watched the birds, without their seeing him. Presently, a black bird flew down upon the white bird and fell to billing her, after the manner of doves; then he leapt on her and trod her three times, after which she changed and became a woman. Bedr looked at her and behold, it was Queen Lab. So he knew that the black bird was a man enchanted and that she was enamoured of him and had transformed herself into a bird, that he might lie with her; wherefore jealousy got hold upon him and he was wroth with the queen because of the black bird.

Then he returned to his place and lay down on the bed,

and presently she came back and fell to kissing him and jesting with him; but he answered her not a word, being sore incensed against her. She saw what was to do with him and was assured that he had seen what befell between her and the black bird; yet she discovered to him nothing, but concealed that which ailed her. When he had done her occasion, he said to her, 'O queen, give me leave to go to my uncle's shop, for I long after him and have not seen him these forty days.' 'Go,' answered she, 'but do not tarry from me, for I cannot brook to be parted from thee, nor can I endure without thee an hour.' 'I hear and obey,' said he and mounting, rode to the shop of the grocer, who received him with open arms and said to him, 'How hast thou fared with yonder idolatress?' 'I was well, in health and prosperity,' answered Bedr, 'till this last night,'—and told him what had passed in the garden.

When the old man heard this, he said, 'Beware of her, for know that the birds upon the tree were all young men and strangers, whom she loved and enchanted and turned into birds. The black bird thou sawest was one of her officers, whom she loved with an exceeding love, till he cast his eyes upon one of her women, wherefore she changed him into a black bird; and whenas she longs after him, she transforms herself into a she-bird, that he may swive her, for she still loves him passionately. When she found that thou knewest of her case, she plotted evil against thee, for she loves thee not truly. But no harm shall betide thee from her, whilst I protect thee; so fear nothing; for I am a Muslim, by name Abdallah, and there is none in my day better skilled in magic than I; yet do I not make use of the art except upon constraint. Many a time have I put to nought the sorceries of yonder accursed witch and delivered folk from her, and I care not for her, for she can do me no hurt: nay, she fears me with an exceeding fear, as do all in the city who, like her, are

Night dccliv.

magicians and serve the fire, not the Omnipotent King. So, to-morrow, come thou to me and tell me what she doth with thee; for this very night she will cast about to destroy thee, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with her, that thou mayst save thyself from her malice.'

Then Bedr took leave of the old man and returned to the palace, where he found the queen seated, awaiting him. When she saw him, she rose to welcome him and making him sit down, brought him meat and drink, and they ate till they had enough and washed their hands; after which she called for wine and they drank till the night was half spent, when she plied him with wine, till he was drunken and lost sense and wit. When she saw him thus, she said to him, 'I conjure thee by Allah and by that thou worshippest, if I ask thee a question, wilt thou answer me truly?' And he, being drunken, answered, 'Yes, O my lady.' 'O my lord and light of mine eyes,' said she, 'when thou awokest last night and foundest me not, thou soughtest me, till thou foundest me in the garden, in the guise of a white she-bird, and sawest a black bird leap on me and tread me. Now I will tell the truth of this matter. That black bird was one of my servants and I loved him with an exceeding love; but one day he cast his eyes on one of my women, wherefore jealousy gat hold upon me and I transformed him by my spells into a black bird and the woman I put to death. Now I cannot endure without him an hour; so, whenever I lust after him, I change myself into a bird and go to him, that he may leap me and possess me, even as thou hast seen. Art thou not therefore incensed against me, because of this, albeit, by the virtue of the fire and the light and the shade and the heat, I love thee more than ever and have made thee my portion of the world?' He answered, being drunken, 'Thy conjecture of the cause of my anger is correct, and it had no cause other than this.'

With this, she embraced him and kissed him and made a show of love to him; then she lay down to sleep and he by her side. Presently she rose from the bed, and Bedr was awake; but he feigned sleep and watched stealthily, to see what she would do. She took out of a red bag somewhat red, which she planted in the midst of the chamber, and it became a stream, running like the sea; after which she took a handful of barley and strewing it on the ground, watered it with water from the stream, whereupon it became corn in the ear, and she gathered it and ground it into meal. Then she laid it by and returning to bed, lay down by Bedr till morning, when he arose and washed his face and asked her leave to visit his uncle. She gave him leave and he repaired to Abdallah and told him what had passed. The old man laughed and said, 'By Allah, the misbelieving witch plotteth mischief against thee; but reck thou never of her.'

Then he gave him a pound of parched barley[1] and said to him, 'Take this with thee and know that, when she sees it, she will say to thee, "What is this and what wilt thou do with it?" Do thou answer, "Abundance of good things is good;" and eat of it. Then will she bring forth to thee parched grain of her own and bid thee eat of it; and do thou feign to her that thou eatest thereof, but eat of this instead and have a care lest thou eat of hers; for, if thou eat so much as a grain thereof, her spells will have power over thee and she will enchant thee and say to thee, "Leave this form of a man." Whereupon thou wilt quit thine own shape for what shape she will. But, if thou eat not thereof, her enchantments will be avoided and no harm will betide thee therefrom; whereat she will be abashed to the utmost and say to thee, "I did but jest with thee." Then will she make a show of love and

[1] *Sawic*, green grain, toasted and sweetened.

affection to thee; but this will all be but hypocrisy and craft in her. And do thou also make a show of love to her and say to her, "O my lady and light of mine eyes, eat of this parched barley and see how delicious it is." And if she eat thereof, though it be but a grain, take water in thy hand and cast it in her face, saying, "Quit this human form for—" what form soever thou wilt have her take. Then leave her and come to me and I will counsel thee what to do.'

Bedr took leave of him and returning to the palace, went in to the queen, who said to him, 'Welcome and fair welcome to thee!' And she rose and kissed him, saying, 'Thou hast tarried long from me, O my lord.' 'I have been with my uncle,' answered he, 'and he gave me to eat of this parched barley.' Quoth she, 'We have better than that.' Then she laid his parched grain in one dish and hers in another and said to him, 'Eat of this, for it is better than thine.' So he feigned to eat of it, and when she thought he had done so, she took water in her hand and sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Quit this form, vile wretch that thou art, and take that of a one-eyed mule, foul of favour!' But he changed not; which when she saw, she went up to him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'O my beloved, I did but jest with thee; bear me no malice because of this.'

'O my lady,' answered he, 'I bear thee no whit of malice; nay, I am assured that thou lovest me: but eat of this my parched barley.' So she took a mouthful of Abdallah's barley and ate it; but no sooner had she swallowed it than she was convulsed; and Bedr took water in his hand and cast it in her face, saying, 'Quit this human form and take that of a dapple mule.' No sooner had he spoken than she found herself changed into a mule, whereupon the tears rolled down her cheeks and she fell to rubbing her muzzle against his feet. Then

he would have bridled her, but she would not take the bit; so he left her and going to the grocer, told him what had passed. Abdallah gave him a bridle and bade him bridle her therewith. So he returned to the palace, and when she saw him, she came up to him and he set the bit in her mouth and mounting her, rode to the grocer's shop.

When the old man saw her, he rose and said to her, 'God the Most High confound thee, O accursed woman!' Then said he to Bedr, 'O my son, there is no more abiding for thee in this city; so ride her and fare with her whither thou wilt and beware lest thou commit the bridle to any.' Bedr thanked him and taking leave of him, fared on three days, without ceasing, till he drew near another city and there met him an old man, gray-headed and comely, who said to him, 'Whence comest thou, O my son?' 'From the city of yonder enchantress,' answered Bedr; and the old man said, 'Thou art my guest this night.'

Bedr consented and went with him; but by the way they met an old woman, who wept, when she saw the mule, and said, 'There is no god but God! Verily, this mule resembles my son's mule, which is dead, and my heart aches for her; so, God upon thee, O my lord, do thou sell her to me!' 'By Allah, O my mother,' answered he, 'I cannot sell her.' But she said, 'God on thee, do not refuse me, for my son will surely die, except I buy him this mule.' And she importuned him, till he said, 'I will not sell her save for a thousand dinars,' saying in himself, 'Whence should this old woman get a thousand dinars?' Thereupon she brought out from her girdle a purse, containing a thousand dinars, which when Bedr saw, he said, 'O my mother, I did but jest with thee; I cannot sell her.' But the old man looked at him and said, 'O my son, none may lie in this city, for whoso lieth they put to death.'

So Bedr lighted down from the mule and delivered her to the old woman, who drew the bit from her mouth and taking water in her hand, sprinkled the mule therewith, saying, 'O my daughter, quit this form and return to that wherein thou wast aforetime!' Whereupon she was straightway restored to her original shape and the two women embraced and kissed each other. So Bedr knew that the old woman was Queen Lab's mother and that he had been tricked and would have fled; but the old woman gave a loud whistle and there appeared before her an Afrit, as he were a great mountain, whereat Bedr was affrighted and stood still. Then the old woman mounted on the Afrit's back, taking her daughter behind her and Bedr before her, and the Afrit flew off with them; nor was it long before they were in the palace of Queen Lab, who sat down on the throne of kingship and said to Bedr, 'Knave that thou art, now am I come hither and have attained to that I desired, and I will show thee how I will do with thee and with yonder old man the grocer! How many favours have I done him! Yet he doth me ill; for thou hadst not attained thine end but by his intervention.' Then she took water and sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Quit the form wherein thou art for that of a foul-favoured bird, the foulest of all birds!' And immediately he became a foul-favoured bird; and she set him in a cage and cut off from him meat and drink; but one of her women took compassion on him and gave him to eat and drink, without her knowledge.

One day, the damsel took her mistress at unawares and going forth the palace, repaired to the old grocer, to whom she told the whole case, saying, 'The queen is purposed to make an end of thy brother's son.' He thanked her and said, 'Needs must I take the city from her and make thee queen thereof in her stead.' Then he gave a loud whistle and there came forth to him an Afrit

with four wings, to whom said he, 'Carry this damsel to the city of Julnar of the Sea and her mother Ferasheh, for they two are the most powerful magicians on the face of the earth.' And he said to the damsel, 'When thou comest thither, tell them that King Bedr Basim is Queen Lab's captive.'

Then the Afrit took her up and flying off with her, set her down, in a little while, upon the roof of Queen Julnar's palace. So she descended and going in to the queen, kissed the earth and told her what had befallen her son, whereupon Julnar rose to her and thanked her and entreated her with honour. Then she let beat the drums in the city and acquainted her people and the grandees of her realm with the good news that King Bedr was found; after which she and her mother Ferasheh and her brother Salih assembled the tribes of the Jinn and the warriors of the sea; for the kings of the Jinn obeyed them, since the taking of King Es Semendel. Then they all flew up into the air and lighting down on the city of the sorceress, sacked the town and the palace and slew all the misbelievers therein in the twinkling of an eye.

Then said Julnar to the damsel, 'Where is my son?' And the girl brought her the cage and showing her the bird within, said, 'This is thy son.' So Julnar took him forth of the cage and sprinkled him with water, saying, 'Quit this form for that wherein thou wast aforetime.' Nor had she made an end of her speech ere he shook and became a man as before; whereupon his mother embraced him and he wept sore. On like wise did his uncle Salih and his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle and fell to kissing his hands and feet. Then Julnar sent for Abdallah and thanking him for his kind dealing with her son, married him to the damsel, whom he had despatched to her with news of him, and made him king of the city. Moreover, she summoned those

who survived of the inhabitants of the city, (and they were Muslims), and made them swear fealty to him; after which she and her company took leave of him and returned to their own city. The townsfolk came out to meet them, with drums beating, and decorated the city three days and held high festival, of the greatness of their joy for the return of their king.

After this Bedr said to his mother, 'O my mother, there remains but that I marry and we be all united.' 'Thou sayst well, O my son,' answered she; 'but wait till we enquire who befitteth thee among the daughters of the kings.' And his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle all said, 'O Bedr, we will help thee to thy wish forthright.' Then each of them arose and went forth a-questing in the lands, whilst Julnar sent out her waiting-women on the backs of Afrits, bidding them leave not a city nor a king's palace, without noting all the handsome girls that were therein. But, when Bedr saw their endeavour in the matter, he said to Julnar, 'O my mother, leave this thing, for none will content me but Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel; for that she is indeed a jewel, according to her name.'[1] 'I know that which thou seekest,' replied Julnar and sent forthright to fetch King Es Semendel. As soon as he was present, she sent for Bedr and acquainted him with the king's coming, whereupon he went in to him.

When Es Semendel was aware of his presence, he rose to him and saluted him and bade him welcome; and Bedr demanded of him his daughter in marriage. 'She is thine handmaid and at thy service and disposition,' replied the king and despatched some of his officers to fetch her. So they flew up into the air and returned, after a while, with the princess, who, as soon as she saw her father, went up

[1] *Jauhereh* means "a jewel."

to him and embraced him. Then said he to her, 'Know, O my daughter, that I have given thee in marriage to this magnanimous king and valiant lion, Bedr Basim, son of Queen Julnar, for that he is the goodliest and most powerful of the folk of his day and the most exalted of them in degree and the noblest in rank; he befitteth none but thee and thou none but him.' 'O my father,' answered she, 'I may not gainsay thee; do as thou wilt, for indeed chagrin and despite are at an end and I am one of his handmaids.'

So they summoned the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the marriage contract between King Bedr and the princess Jauhereh, and the townsfolk decorated the city and beat the drums in token of rejoicing. Moreover, they released all who were in the prisons, whilst the king clothed the widows and the orphans and bestowed dresses of honour upon the grandees and amirs and notables; and they made bride-feasts and held high festival night and morn ten days, at the end of which time they unveiled the bride, in nine different dresses, before Bedr, who bestowed a dress of honour upon King Es Semendel and sent him back to his country and people and kinsfolk. And they ceased not from the most delightsome of life and the most solaceful of days till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and this is the end of their story, may God have mercy on them all!

KING MOHAMMED BEN SEBAÏK AND THE MERCHANT HASSAN.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the Persians, by name Mohammed ben Sebaïk, who ruled over the land of Khorassan and used every year to go a-raiding into the countries of the unbelievers in Hind and Sind and China and the lands beyond the river [Oxus] and other the lands of the barbarians and others. He was a just, valiant and generous king and loved table-talk and recitals and verses and anecdotes and tales and entertaining stories and traditions of the ancients. Whoso knew a rare story and related it to him, he would bestow on him a sumptuous dress of honour and clothe him from head to foot and mount him on a horse saddled and bridled and give him a thousand dinars, besides other great gifts; and the man would take all this and go his way.

One day there came an old man before him and related to him a rare story, which pleased the king and he ordered him a magnificent present, amongst other things a thousand dinars of Khorassan and a horse with all its trappings. After this, the report of the king's munificence was blazed abroad in all countries and there heard of him a man by name Hassan the Merchant, who was generous, open-handed and learned and an accomplished poet and scholar. Now the king had an envious vizier, a compend of ill, loving none, rich nor poor, and whoso came before the king and he gave him aught, he envied him and said, 'This fashion wasteth wealth and ruineth the country; and this is the king's wont.' But this was nought but envy and despite in this vizier.

Presently, the King heard of Hassan and sending for him, said to him, 'O Hassan, this vizier of mine vexeth and thwarteth me concerning the money I give to poets and story-tellers and glee-men, and I would have thee tell me a goodly history and a rare story, such as I have never heard. If it please me, I will give thee lands galore, with their strong places, in free tenure, in addition to thy fiefs; besides which I will make thee my chief vizier and put my whole kingdom in thy hands; so shalt thou sit on my right hand and rule my people. But, if thou bring me not that which I desire, I will take all that is in thy hand and banish thee my kingdom.' 'Hearkening and obedience [are due] to our lord the king,' replied Hassan. 'But thy slave beseecheth thee to have patience with him a year; then will he tell thee a story, such as thou hast never in thy life heard, neither hath other than thou heard its like nor a better than it.' Quoth the king, 'I grant thee a whole year's delay.' And he called for a splendid dress of honour, in which he clad Hassan, saying, 'Keep thy house and mount not to horse, neither go nor come for a year's time, till thou bring me that I seek of thee. If thou bring it, thou shalt have especial favour and mayst count on that which I have promised thee; but, an thou bring it not, thou art not of us nor we of thee.' And Hassan kissed the ground before the king and went out from the presence.

Night dcclvii.

Then he chose out five of the best of his servants, who could all write and read and were learned, intelligent and accomplished, and gave each of them five thousand dinars, saying, 'I reared you but against the like of this day: so do ye help me to accomplish the king's desire and deliver me from his hand.' 'What wilt thou [have us] do?' said they. 'Our lives be thy ransom!' Quoth he, 'I wish you to go each to a different country and seek out diligently the learned and erudite and accomplished and the tellers

of rare stories and marvellous histories and do your endeavour to procure me the story of Seif el Mulouk. If ye find it with any one, pay him what price soever he asks for it, though he seek a thousand dinars: give him what ye may and promise him the rest and bring me the story; for whoso happens on it and brings it to me, I will bestow on him a sumptuous dress of honour and largesse galore, and there shall be to me none dearer than he.'

Then said he to one of them, 'Go thou to Hind and Sind and all their provinces and dependencies.' To another, 'Go thou to the land of the Persians and to China.' To the third, 'Go thou to the land of Khorassan.' To the fourth, 'Go thou to Northern Africa and all its coasts and districts.' And to the fifth, 'Go thou to Egypt and Syria.' Moreover, he chose them out an auspicious day and said to them, 'Set forth this day and be diligent in the accomplishment of my errand and be not slothful, though the quest cost you your lives.' So they took leave of him and departed, each taking the direction prescribed to him. At the end of four months, four of them returned and told their master that they had searched towns and cities and countries for the thing he sought, but had found nought thereof, wherefore his breast was straitened.

Meanwhile, the fifth servant journeyed till he came to the land of Syria and entered Damascus, which he found a pleasant and safe city, abounding in trees and streams and fruits and birds chanting the praises of God the One, the All-powerful, Creator of Night and Day. Here he abode some days, enquiring for his master's desire, but none answered him and he was on the point of departing thence to another place, when he met a young man running and stumbling in his skirts. So he said to him, 'Whither runnest thou in such haste?' And he answered, saying, 'There is an elder here, a man of learning, who every day at this time takes his seat on a stool and relates

tales and anecdotes and entertaining stories, whereof never heard any the like; and I am running to get a place near him and fear I shall find no room, because of the much people.' Quoth the stranger, 'Take me with thee.' And the young man said, 'Make haste.'

So he shut his door and hastened with him to the place of recitation, where he saw an old man of a bright countenance seated on a stool, holding forth to the people. He sat down near him and addressed himself to listen to his story, till the going down of the sun, when the old man made an end of his tale and the people dispersed from about him; whereupon the messenger accosted him and saluted him, and he returned his salutation and greeted him with the utmost honour and courtesy. Then said the messenger to him, 'O my lord sheikh, thou art a comely and reverend man, and thy discourse is goodly; but I would fain ask thee of somewhat.' 'Ask of what thou wilt,' replied the old man. Then said the other, 'Hast thou the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal?' 'And who told thee of this story?' asked the old man. 'None told me of it,' answered the messenger; 'but I am come from a far country, in quest of this story, and if thou have it and wilt, of thy bounty and charity, impart it to me and make it an alms to me, of the generosity of thy nature, I will pay thee whatever thou askest for its price; for, had I my life in my hand and sacrificed it to thee for this thing, yet were it pleasing to my heart.' 'Be of good cheer,' replied the old man; 'thou shalt have it; but this is no story that one telleth in the beaten way, nor do I give it to every one.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' cried the other, 'do not grudge it me, but ask of me what price thou wilt.' 'If thou wish for the story,' replied the old man, 'give me a hundred dinars and thou shalt have it; but upon five conditions.'

When the messenger knew that the old man had the

story and was willing to sell it to him, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'I will give thee the hundred dinars and ten to boot and take it on the conditions of which thou speakest.' 'Then go and fetch the money,' said the old man, 'and take that thou seekest.' So the messenger kissed his hands and returned, joyful and happy, to his lodging, where he laid a hundred and ten dinars in a purse he had by him. As soon as it was morning, he put on his clothes and taking the dinars, repaired to the story-teller, whom he found seated at the door of his house. So he saluted him and the other returned his salute. Then he gave him the money and the old man took it and carrying the messenger into his house, made him sit down. Then he set before him inkhorn and pen and paper and giving him a book, said to him, 'Write out what thou seekest of the story of Seif el Mulouk from this book.' So the man fell to work and wrote till he had made an end of his copy, when he read it to the old man, and he corrected it and said to him, 'Know, O my son, that my conditions are that thou tell not this story in the beaten road nor before women and girls nor to black slaves nor feather-heads nor boys; but read it only before kings and amirs and viziers and men of learning, such as expounders [of the Koran] and others.' The messenger accepted the conditions and kissing the old man's hand, took leave of him.

Then he set out the same day, glad and joyful, and fared on diligently, of the excess of his contentment, for that he had gotten the story of Seif el Mulouk, till he came to his own country, when he despatched his servant to carry the good news to his master and say to him, 'Thy servant is come back in safety and hath attained his desire and his aim.' (Now there wanted but ten days of the term appointed between Hassan and the king.) Then he himself went in to him and told him all that had

Night dcclviii.

befallen him and gave him the book containing the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal, whereat Hassan rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bestowed on him all the clothes he had on and gave him ten thoroughbred horses and the like number of camels and mules and three black and ten white slaves.

Then the messenger rested in his privy chamber, whilst Hassan took the book and copied out the story plainly in his own hand; after which he presented himself before the king and said to him, 'O king, I have brought thee a story and a rare and pleasant relation, whose like none ever heard.' When the king heard this, he sent forthright for all the amirs, who were men of understanding, and all the learned doctors and folk of erudition and culture and poets and wits, and Hassan sat down and read the story before the king, who marvelled thereat and approved it, as did all who were present, and they showered gold and silver and jewels upon Hassan. Moreover, the king bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour of the richest of his raiment and gave him a great city with its castles and suburbs; and he appointed him one of his chief viziers and seated him on his right hand. Then he caused the scribes write the story in letters of gold and lay it up in his privy treasuries; and whenever, thereafterward, his breast was straitened, he would summon Hassan and he would read him the story, which was as follows:

STORY OF PRINCE SEIF EL MULOUK AND THE PRINCESS BEDIYA EL JEMAL.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king in Egypt called Aasim ben Sefwan, a liberal and beneficent prince, venerable and majestic. He owned many cities and strengths and fortresses and troops and warriors and had a vizier named Faris ben Salih, and he and all his subjects worshipped the sun and the fire, instead of the All-powerful King, the Glorious, the Victorious. Now this king was become a very old man, wasted with age and sickness and decrepitude; for he had lived a hundred and fourscore years and had no child, male or female, by reason whereof he was ever in care and concern night and day.

One day, he was sitting on the throne of his kingship, with his amirs and viziers and captains and grandees in attendance on him, according to their wont, in their several stations, and whenever there came in an amir, who had with him a son or two sons, the king envied him and said in himself, 'Every one of these is happy and rejoiceth in his children, whilst I, I have no child, and to-morrow I shall die and leave my kingdom and throne and lands and treasures, and strangers will take them and none will bear me in memory nor will there abide any remembrance of me in the world.' Then he became drowned in the sea of melancholy thought and for the much thronging of sorrows and anxieties upon his heart, he shed tears and descending from his throne, sat down upon the ground, weeping and humbling himself [in supplication to God].

When the vizier saw him do thus, he cried out to the notables of the realm and others who were present in the

assembly, saying, 'Go to your houses and rest till the king recover from that which aileth him.' So they went away, leaving none in the presence save the vizier, who, as soon as the king came to himself, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O king of the age, what meaneth this weeping? Tell me who hath transgressed against thee or thwarted thee of the kings or castellans or amirs or grandees, that we may all fall on him and tear his soul from his body.' But he spoke not neither raised his head; whereupon the vizier kissed the earth before him a second time and said to him, 'O king of the age, I am even as thy son and thy slave, and indeed I have reared thee on my shoulders; yet know I not the cause of thy grief and chagrin and distress and of this thy case; and who should know but I or who should stand in my stead before thee? Tell me therefore the cause of this thy weeping and affliction.' Nevertheless, the king spoke not neither opened his mouth nor raised his head, but ceased not to weep and cry aloud and lament with an exceeding lamentation and say, 'Alas!'

The vizier took patience with him awhile, after which he said to him, 'Except thou tell me the cause of this thine affliction, I will slay myself before thine eyes, rather than see thee thus distressed.' Then King Aasim raised his head and wiping away his tears, said, 'O vizier of good counsel, leave me to my grief and my affliction, for that which is in my heart of sorrow sufficeth me.' But Faris said, 'O king, tell me the cause of thy weeping. It may be God will appoint thee relief at my hands.' 'O vizier,' replied the king, 'I weep not for treasure nor horses nor aught else, but that I am become an old man, nigh upon a hundred and fourscore years of age, and have not been blessed with a child, male or female: so, when I die, they will bury me and my trace will be blotted out and my name cut off and strangers will take my throne and kingship and none will have me in remembrance.'

Night dclix.

'O king of the age,' rejoined the vizier, 'I am older than thou by a hundred years, yet have I never been blest with a child and cease not day and night from care and concern; so how shall we do, I and thou?' And Aasim said, 'O vizier, hast thou no device or shift in this matter?' Quoth the vizier, 'Know, O king, that I have heard of a king in the land of Seba[1] by name Solomon son of David, who pretendeth to prophetship and [avoucheth that he] hath a mighty Lord who can do all things and whose kingdom is in the heavens and [who hath dominion] over all mankind and birds and beasts and over the wind and the Jinn. Moreover, he knoweth the language of all birds and of all [other] created things; and withal, he calleth all creatures to the worship of his Lord and discourseth to them of their service. So let us send him a messenger in the king's name and seek of him our desire, beseeching him to make petition to his Lord, that He vouchsafe each of us a child. If his faith be true and his Lord avail to do all things, He will assuredly bless each of us with a child, male or female, and if the thing betide thus, we will enter his faith and worship his Lord; else will we take patience and devise us another shift.'

Quoth the king, 'This is well seen, and my heart is lightened by this thy speech; but where shall we find a messenger befitting this grave matter, for that this Solomon is no little king and the approaching him is no light matter? Indeed, I will send him none, on the like of this affair, but thyself, for thou art old and versed in all manner of affairs and the like of thee is the like of myself; wherefore I desire that thou weary thyself and journey to him and occupy thyself diligently with [the accomplishment of] this matter, so haply solace may be at thy hand.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the vizier; 'but rise thou

[1] Sheba.

forthright and seat thyself upon the throne, so the amirs and grandees of the realm and officers and [other] the folk may enter [and apply themselves] to thy service, as of their wont; for they all went forth from thee, troubled at heart on thine account. Then will I go out and set forth on the king's errand.'

So the king arose forthright and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst the vizier went forth and said to the chief chamberlain, 'Bid the folk proceed to their service, as of their wont.' So the troops and captains and notables of the kingdom entered, after they had spread the tables, and ate and drank and withdrew, according to their wont, after which the vizier went out from King Aasim and repairing to his own house, equipped himself for travel and returned to the king, who opened to him the treasuries and provided him with rarities and things of price and rich stuffs and gear without a match, such as nor amir nor vizier could avail to possess. Moreover, he charged him to accost Solomon with reverence, foregoing him with the salutation; 'then,' continued he, 'do thou ask of him thy need, and if he assent, return to us in haste, for I shall be awaiting thee.' Accordingly, the vizier took the presents and setting out, fared on night and day, till he came within fifteen days' journey of Seba.

Meanwhile God (blessed and exalted be He!) spoke unto Solomon and said to him, 'O Solomon, the King of Egypt sendeth unto thee his chief vizier, with a present of such and such rarities and things of price; so do thou despatch thy vizier Asef ben Berkhiya to him, to receive him with honour and meet him at the halting-places with victual; and when he cometh to thy presence, say to him, "The king [thy master] hath sent thee in quest of this and that and thy business is thus and thus." Then do thou propound to him the faith.' Whereupon Solomon bade his vizier take a company of his retainers [and go

forth] to meet the Vizier of Egypt with honour and sumptuous provision at the halting-places. So Asef made ready all that was needed for their entertainment and setting out, fared on till he fell in with Faris and saluted him, entreating him and his company with exceeding honour. Moreover, he brought them victual and provender at the halting-places and said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome to the coming guests! Rejoice in the certain accomplishment of your desire! Be your souls glad and your eyes solaced and your breasts expanded!'

Quoth Faris in himself, 'Who acquainted him with this?' And he said to Asef, 'O my lord, and who gave thee to know of us and our errand?' 'It was Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), told us of this,' answered Asef. 'And who,' asked Faris, 'told our lord Solomon?' 'The Lord of the heaven and the earth told him, the God of all creatures,' replied Asef. Quoth Faris, 'This is none other than a mighty God;' and Asef said, 'And do ye not worship Him?' 'We worship the sun,' answered Faris, 'and prostrate ourselves thereto.' 'O Vizier Faris,' said Asef, 'the sun is but a star of the stars created by God (blessed and exalted be He!). And God forbid that it should be a Lord! For that whiles it appeareth and whiles is absent, but our Lord is [ever] present and never absent and He can do all things.'

Then they journeyed on awhile till they came to the land of Seba and drew near the throne of Solomon son of David, who commanded his hosts of men and Jinn and beasts to rank themselves in their road. So the beasts of the sea and the elephants and leopards and lynxes [and other beasts of the land] ranged themselves on either side of the way, after their several kinds, whilst the Jinn drew out in two ranks in like manner, appearing all to [mortal] sight, without concealment, in divers gruesome forms. So they lined the road on either hand, and

the birds spread out their wings over them, to shade them, warbling one to the other in all manner voices and notes.

When the people of Egypt came to this terrible array, they were adread of them and dared not proceed; but Asef said to them, 'Pass on amidst them and fear them not: for they are subjects of Solomon son of David, and none of them will harm you.' So saying, he entered between the ranks, followed by all the folk and amongst them the Vizier of Egypt and his company, fearful: and they ceased not to fare on till they reached the city, where they lodged the embassy in the guest-house and entertained them sumptuously, entreating them with the utmost honour, for the space of three days.

Then they carried them before Solomon, prophet of God (on whom be peace!), and they would have kissed the earth before him; but he forbade them, saying, 'It befits not that a man prostrate himself save to God (to whom belong might and majesty!), Creator of heaven and earth and all other things; wherefore, whosoever of you hath a mind to stand, let him stand, but let none stand to do me worship.' So they obeyed him and the Vizier Faris and some of his servants sat down, whilst certain of the lesser sort stood to wait on him. When they had sat awhile, the servants spread the tables and they all, men and beasts, ate till they had enough.

Then Solomon bade Faris expound his errand, that it might be accomplished, saying, 'Speak and conceal nothing of that on account whereof thou art come; for I know wherefore ye come and what is your errand. It is thus and thus.' And he told him that which had passed between himself and his master, King Aasim; after which he said to him, 'Is this that I have told thee the truth, O vizier?' 'O prophet of God,' replied Faris, 'this thou hast said is indeed truth and verity; but none was with the king and myself, when we discoursed of this matter,

Night dcclx.

nor was any ware of our case; who then told thee of all these things?' 'My Lord told me,' answered Solomon, 'He who knoweth the perfidy of the eye and what is hidden in the breasts.' Quoth Faris, 'O prophet of God, verily this is none other than a noble and mighty Lord, able unto all things.' And he and his company embraced the faith of Islam.

Then said Solomon to him, 'Thou hast with thee such and such presents and rarities.' And Faris answered, 'Yes.' Quoth the prophet, 'I accept them all and give them unto thee. So do ye rest, thou and thy company, in the place where you have been lodging, so the fatigue of the journey may cease from you; and to-morrow, thine errand shall be accomplished to the uttermost, if it be the will of God the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth and Creator of all creatures.'

So Faris returned to his lodging and on the morrow presented himself before the lord Solomon, who said to him, 'When thou returnest to King Aasim, do ye both go forth to such a place, where ye will find a tree. Mount upon it and sit silent until the mid-hour between the prayer of noon and that of the afternoon, when the mid-day heat hath subsided; then descend and look at the foot of the tree, whence ye will see two serpents issue, one with an ape's head and the other with a head like that of an Afrit. Shoot them with arrows and kill them; then cut off a span's length from their heads and the like from their tails and throw it away. The rest of the flesh cook and cook well and give it to your wives to eat: then lie with them that night and by God's leave, they will conceive and bear male children.' Moreover, he gave him a ring and a signet and a sword and a wrapper containing a tunic embroidered with gold and jewels, saying, 'O Vizier Faris, when your sons grow up to man's estate, give them each two of these things.' Then said

he, 'In the name of God! May the Most High accomplish your desire! And now nothing remaineth for you but to depart, [relying] on the blessing of God the Most High, for the king looketh for thy return night and day and his eye is ever on the road.'

So Faris took leave of the prophet and kissing his hands, set forth at once on his homeward journey, rejoicing in the accomplishment of his errand. He travelled on with all diligence till he drew near to Cairo, when he despatched one of his servants to acquaint King Aasim with his return and the successful issue of his journey; which when the king heard, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his grandees and officers, especially in the vizier's safe return. When they met, the vizier dismounted and kissing the earth before the king, gave him the glad news of the complete achievement of his wish; after which he expounded the true faith to him, and the king and all his people embraced Islam.

Then said Aasim to his vizier, 'Go home and rest this night and a week to boot; then go to the bath and come to me, that I may take counsel with thee of what we shall do.' So Faris kissed the earth and withdrew, with his servants and attendants, to his house, where he rested eight days; after which he repaired to the king and related to him all that had passed between Solomon and himself, adding, 'Do thou rise and go forth with me alone.' So the king and the vizier took two bows and two arrows and repairing to the tree indicated by Solomon, climbed up into it and sat there, without speaking, till near upon the hour of afternoon prayer, when they descended and looking upon the roots of the tree, saw two serpents issue thence. The king looked at them and admired them, marvelling to see them ringed with collars of gold about their necks, and said to Faris, 'O vizier, these snakes have golden collars! By Allah, this is a rare

thing! Let us take them and set them in a cage and keep them to look upon.' But the vizier said, 'These hath God created for their use;[1] so do thou shoot one and I will shoot the other.'

Accordingly, they shot at them with arrows and killed them; after which they cut off a span's length of their heads and tails and threw it away. Then they carried the rest to the king's palace, where they called the cook and said to him, 'Dress this meat daintily, with onion-sauce and spices, and ladle it out into two platters and bring them hither at such an hour, without fail.' So the cook took the meat and went with it to the kitchen, where he cooked it and dressed it in skilful fashion with fine onion-sauce; after which he ladled it out into two platters and set them before the king and the vizier, who took each a dish and gave their wives to eat of the meat. Then they lay that night with them, and by the good pleasure of God (blessed and exalted be He!) and His will and ordinance, they both conceived forthright. Night dcclxi.

The king abode three months, troubled in mind and saying in himself, 'I wonder whether this thing will prove true or not;' till one day, as the queen was sitting, the child stirred in her belly and she felt a pain and her colour changed. So she knew that she was with child and calling the chief of her eunuchs, bade him 'Go to the king, wherever he may be, and say to him, "O king of the age, I bring thee the glad tidings that our lady's pregnancy is become manifest, for the child stirs in her belly."' So the eunuch went out in haste, rejoicing, and finding the king alone, with his head on his hand, pondering this thing, kissed the earth before him and acquainted him with his wife's pregnancy. When the king heard this, he sprang to his feet and in the excess of his joy, he kissed the

[1] *i.e.* that indicated by Solomon.

eunuch's head and hands and pulling off the clothes he had on, gave them to him. Moreover, he said to those who were present in his assembly, 'Whoso loveth me, let him bestow largesse upon this man.' And they gave him of money and jewels and jacinths and horses and mules and gardens what was beyond count or reckoning.

At that moment, in came the Vizier Faris and said to Aasim, 'O king of the age, I was sitting at home alone but now, absorbed in thought, pondering the matter of the pregnancy and saying in myself, "I wonder if this thing be true and whether Khatoun[1] have conceived or not!" when, behold, an eunuch came in to me and brought me the glad news that my wife was indeed pregnant, for that her colour was changed and the child stirred in her belly: whereupon, in my joy, I pulled off all my clothes and gave them to him, together with a thousand dinars, and made him chief of the eunuchs.' 'O vizier,' rejoined the king, 'God (blessed and exalted be He!) hath, of his grace and bounty and goodness, made gift to us of the true faith and brought us out of darkness into light and hath been bountiful to us, of His favour and beneficence; wherefore I am minded to solace the folk and cause them to rejoice.' Quoth Faris, 'Do what thou wilt.'

Then said the king, 'O vizier, go down forthright and set free all who are in the prisons, both debtors and criminals, and whoso transgresseth after this, we will requite according to his desert. Moreover, we forgive the people three years' taxes, and do thou set up kitchens all round about the city walls and bid the cooks hang over the fire all kinds of cooking pots and cook all manner meats nor leave cooking night or day, and let all comers, both of the people of the city and of the neighbouring

[1] His wife's name.

countries, far and near, eat and drink and carry to their houses. And do thou command the people to hold holiday and decorate the city seven days and shut not the taverns night nor day.'

The vizier did as the king bade him and the folk donned their richest apparel and decorated the city and citadel and fortifications, after the goodliest fashion, and passed their time in feasting and sporting and making merry, till the days of the queen's pregnancy were accomplished and she was taken, one night, with the pains of labour hard before dawn. Then the king bade summon all the astrologers and mathematicians and men of learning in the town, and they assembled and sat awaiting the throwing of a bead in at the window, which was to be a signal to them, as well as to the nurses and attendants, that the child was born. Presently, the queen gave birth to a boy like a piece of the full moon, and the astrologers took his altitude and made their calculations and drew his horoscope.

Then they rose and kissing the earth before the king, gave him the joyful tidings that the new-born child was of happy augury and born under a fortunate aspect, 'but,' added they, 'in the first of his life there will befall him a thing that we fear to name to the king.' Quoth Aasim, 'Speak and fear not;' so they said, 'O king, this boy will leave this [his native] land and journey in strange countries and suffer shipwreck and hardship and captivity and distress, and indeed he hath before him many perils and stresses; but, in the end, he shall win free of them and attain to his desire and live the happiest of lives the rest of his days, ruling over subjects and countries and having dominion in the land, in despite of enemies and enviers.'

When the king heard the astrologers' words, he said, 'The matter is obscure; but all that God the Most High decreeth unto the creature of good and bad cometh to

pass and needs must a thousand solaces betide him from this day to that.' So he paid no heed to their words, but bestowed on them dresses of honour, as well upon all who were present, and dismissed them; when, behold, in came the vizier, rejoicing, and kissed the earth before the king, saying, 'Good tidings, O king! My wife hath but now given birth to a son, as he were a piece of the moon.' 'O vizier,' replied Aasim, 'go, bring thy wife and child hither, that she may abide with my wife, and they shall bring up the two boys together in my palace.' So Faris fetched his wife and son and they committed the two children to the nurses.

After seven days had passed over them, they brought them before the king and said to him, 'What wilt thou name them?' Quoth he, 'Do ye name them.' But they replied, 'None nameth a boy but his father.' So he said, 'Name my son Seif el Mulouk, after my grandfather, and the vizier's son Saïd.' Then he bestowed dresses of honour on the nurses and said to them, 'Be ye tender over them and rear them after the goodliest fashion.' So they reared the two boys diligently till they reached the age of five, when the king committed them to a schoolmaster, who taught them to read the Koran and write. When they were ten years old, King Aasim gave them in charge to masters, who taught them horsemanship and archery and spear and ball play and the like, till, by the time they were fifteen years old, they were proficient in all manner of martial exercises, nor was there one to vie with them in horsemanship, for each of them would do battle with a thousand men and make head against them alone.

So, when they came to years of discretion, whenever King Aasim looked on them, he rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy; and when they had attained their twentieth year, he took his vizier apart one day and said to him, 'O vizier, I wish to take counsel with thee concerning

a thing I have a mind to do.' 'Whatever thou hast a mind to do,' replied Faris, 'do it; for thy judgment is blessed.' So the king said, 'O vizier, I am become a very old and decrepit man, sore stricken in years, and I am minded to take up my abode in an oratory, that I may worship God the Most High, and give my kingdom and sultanate to my son Seif el Mulouk, for that he is grown a goodly youth, accomplished in martial exercises and polite letters and the art of government and full of wit and dignity. What sayst thou of this project?'

'It is well seen of thee,' answered the vizier. 'The idea is a blessed and fortunate one, and if thou do this, I will do the like and my son Saïd shall be the prince's vizier, for he is a comely young man and full of knowledge and judgment. Thus will the two be together, and we will order their affair and neglect not their case, but guide them in the way of righteousness.' Quoth the king, 'Write letters and send them by runners to all the cities and provinces and strengths and fortresses, that be under our hands, bidding their chiefs be present on such a day at the Horse-course of the Elephant.' So the vizier went out forthright and despatched letters to this purport to all the deputies and governors of fortresses and others [in authority] under King Aasim; and he commanded also that all in the city should be present, great and small.

When the appointed time drew near, King Aasim let pitch pavilions in the midst of the horse-course and decorate them after the most sumptuous fashion and set up [therein] the great throne whereon he sat not but on festivals. Then he and all his deputies and chamberlains and amirs sallied forth, and he commanded proclamation to be made to the people, saying, 'In the name of God, come forth to the Horse-course!' So all the amirs and viziers and governors of provinces and feudatories came forth to the place of assembly and entering the royal

pavilion, addressed themselves to the service of the king, according to their wont, and abode in their several stations, some standing and others sitting, till all the people were gathered together, when the king commanded to spread the tables and they ate and drank and prayed for him.

Then he commanded the chamberlains to proclaim to the people that they should not depart: so they made proclamation to them, saying, 'Let none of you depart hence till he have heard the king's words!' So they drew the curtains [of the royal pavilion] and the king said, 'Whoso loveth me, let him remain till he have heard my words!' Whereupon the folk all sat down, reassured, after they had been fearful. Then the king rose to his feet and conjuring them all to remain seated, said to them, 'O amirs and viziers and grandees, great and small, and all ye who are present of the people, know ye not that this kingdom was an inheritance to me from my fathers and forefathers?' 'Yes, O king,' answered they, 'we all know that.' And he continued, saying, 'I and you, we all worshipped the sun and moon, till God (blessed and exalted be He!) vouchsafed us the knowledge of the true faith and brought us out of darkness into light, guiding us to the religion of Islam. Know that I am become a very old man, decrepit and feeble, and I desire to take up my abode in an oratory, there to worship God the Most High and crave His pardon for past offences and make this my son Seif el Mulouk ruler. Ye know that he is a goodly youth, eloquent, just and intelligent, learned and versed in affairs; wherefore I am minded presently to resign my kingdom to him and to make him king and sultan over you in my stead, whilst I give myself to the worship of God in an oratory. What say ye then, all of you?'

Thereupon they all rose and kissing the ground before him, made answer with 'Hearing and obedience,' saying,

'O our king and our protector, if thou shouldst set over us one of thy slaves, we would hearken to thy word and obey him: how much more then with thy son Seif el Mulouk? Indeed, we accept of him and approve him, on our heads and eyes!' So the king came down from his seat and seating his son on the great throne, took the crown from his own head and set it on that of Seif el Mulouk and girt his middle with the royal girdle. Then he sat down beside him on the throne of his kingship, whilst the amirs and viziers and notables and all the rest of the folk rose and kissed the earth before him, saying, 'Indeed, he is worthy of the kingship and hath better right to it than another.' Then the ushers made proclamation of safety and offered up prayers for his victory and prosperity. And Seif el Mulouk scattered gold and silver on the heads of the people and conferred dresses of honour and gave gifts and largesse. Night dcclxii.

Then, after a moment, the Vizier Faris arose and kissing the earth, said, 'O amirs and grandees, ye know that I am vizier and that my vizierate dateth from of old, before the accession of King Aasim ben Sefwan, who hath now divested himself of the sovereignty and made his son king in his stead?' 'Yes,' answered they, 'we know that thy vizierate is from father after grandfather.' 'And now,' continued he, 'I put off my office, in favour of this my son Saïd, for he is intelligent, quick-witted and sagacious. What say ye all?' And they answered, saying, 'None is worthy to be vizier to King Seif el Mulouk but thy son Saïd, and they befit one another.' With this Faris arose and taking off his vizier's turban, set it on his son's head and laid his inkhorn of office before him, whilst the amirs and chamberlains said, 'Indeed, he is deserving of the viziership.' After this, King Aasim and Faris the vizier arose and opening the royal treasuries, conferred magnificent dresses of honour on all the viceroys and amirs

and viziers and grandees and other the folk and wrote them new mandates and patents of office in the name of King Seif el Mulouk and his Vizier Saïd. Moreover, he made distribution of money [to the troops] and gave guerdons, and they[1] abode in the city a week and departed each to his own country and place.

Then King Aasim carried his son and his Vizier Saïd back to the palace and commanded the treasurer to bring the ring and signet and sword and wrapper; which being done, he said to the two young men, 'O my sons, let each of you choose two of these things and take them.' The first to make choice was Seif el Mulouk, who put out his hand and took the ring and the wrapper, whilst Saïd took the sword and the signet; after which they both kissed the king's hands and went away to their lodging. Seif opened not the wrapper, but threw it on the couch where he and Saïd slept by night, for it was their wont to lie together.

Presently they spread them the bed and the two lay down, with candles burning over them, and slept till midnight, when Seif awoke and seeing the wrapper at his head, said in himself, 'I wonder what thing of price is in this wrapper that my father gave me!' So he rose and leaving Saïd sleeping, took a candle and carried the wrapper into a closet, where he opened it and found within a tunic of the fashion of the Jinn. He spread it open and saw, wroughten in gold on the lining of the back, the portraiture of a girl of marvellous loveliness, whereon no sooner had he set eyes than his reason fled from his head and he became mad for love thereof, so that he fell down in a swoon and [presently coming to himself], began to weep and lament, beating his face and breast and kissing the portrait. And he recited the following verses:

[1] *i.e.* the notables of the provinces.

Love, at the first, a dribble is of water, that the Fates Bring and impel
'gainst him on whom it falleth to his share;
Till, when the youth into the sea of passion plungeth full, Come great
and grievous things, indeed, impossible to bear.

And also these:

Had I but known how love men's hearts doth take and rack, I'd been
upon my guard against its first attack;
But I myself undid, of purpose, knowing not The things of love nor
what its issues are, alack!

And he ceased not to weep and lament and buffet his face and breast, till Saïd awoke and missing him from the bed and seeing [but] one candle, said in himself, 'Where is Seif el Mulouk gone?' Then he took the candle and went round about the palace, till he came upon the closet in question, where he saw the prince lying, weeping and lamenting passing sore. So he said to him, 'O my brother, what ails thee to weep? Speak to me and tell me what hath befallen thee.' But Seif spoke not neither raised his head and continued to weep and smite upon his breast. Quoth Saïd, 'I am thy vizier and thy brother, and we were reared together, thou and I; so to whom wilt thou unburden thy breast and discover thy secret, if not to me?' And he went on to humble himself and kiss the earth before him a great while, whilst Seif el Mulouk paid no heed to him nor answered him a word, but gave not over weeping.

At last, being affrighted at his case and weary of striving with him, he went out and fetched a sword, with which he returned to the closet, and setting the point to his own breast, said to the prince, 'Awake, O my brother! An thou tell me not what ails thee, I will slay myself and see thee no longer in this plight.' Whereupon Seif raised his head and answered him, saying, 'O my brother, I am ashamed to tell thee what ails me;' but Saïd said, 'I con-

jure thee by Allah, the Lord of Lords, the Liberator of those that are in bondage, the Causer of causes, the One, the Clement, the Bountiful, the Giver of gifts, that thou tell me what ails thee and be not abashed at me, for I am thy slave and thy vizier and counsellor in all things!' Quoth Seif, 'Come and look at this portrait.' So Saïd looked at it awhile and considering it straitly, saw written, at its head, in letters of pearl, these words, 'This is the presentment of Bediya el Jemal, daughter of Shehyal ben Sharoukh, a king of the kings of the true-believing Jinn who have taken up their abode in the city of Babel and sojourn in the garden of Irem.'[1]

Night DCCLXIII. So he said to the king, 'O my brother, knowest thou of what woman this is the portraiture, that we may seek for her?' 'Not I, by Allah, O my brother,' answered Seif: and Saïd said, 'Come and read this writing.' So Seif read it and cried out from his inmost heart, saying, 'Alas! Alas! Alas!' Quoth Saïd, 'O my brother, if the original of the portrait exist and her name be Bediya el Jemal and she be in the world, I will make haste to seek her, that thou mayst without delay attain thy desire. But, God on thee, O my brother, leave this weeping, that the officers of the state may come in, to do their service to thee, and in the forenoon, do thou summon the merchants and fakirs and travellers and pilgrims and enquire of them concerning this city and the garden of Irem; it may be, by the help and blessing of God (extolled and exalted be He!), some one of them will direct us thither.'

So, when it was day, Seif el Mulouk went forth and mounted the throne, hugging the tunic in his arms, for he could neither stand nor sit without it, nor would sleep visit him, except it were with him; and the amirs and

[1] The text adds here, "of the son of Aad the Greater;" but this is evidently a mistake. See post.

viziers and grandees and officers came in to him. When they were all assembled in their places and the Divan was complete, he said to his vizier, 'Go to them and tell them that the king is sick and hath passed the night in ill case.' So Saïd went forth and told the folk what he said; which when the old king heard, he was concerned for his son and summoning the physicians and astrologers, carried them in to Seif el Mulouk.

They looked at him and prescribed him draughts and simples and medicinal waters and wrote him charms and incensed him with aloes-wood and ambergris three days' space; but his malady persisted three months, till King Aasim was wroth with the physicians and said to them, 'Out on you, O dogs! Can none of you cure my son? Except ye heal him forthright, I will put you all to death.' 'O king of the age,' replied the chief physician, 'we know that this is thy son and thou knowest that we fail not of diligence in tending a stranger; so how much more with thy son? But thy son is afflicted with a grievous malady, which if thou desire to know, we will discover it to thee.' Quoth Aasim, 'What find ye then to be my son's malady?' 'O king of the age,' answered the physician, 'thy son is in love and with one to whose enjoyment he hath no way of access.' At this the king was wroth and said, 'How know ye that my son is in love and how came love to him?' 'Ask his vizier and brother Saïd,' answered they; 'for he knoweth his case.'

So the king called Saïd into his privy closet and said to him, 'Tell me the truth of my son's malady.' But Saïd replied, 'I know it not.' Then King Aasim said to the headsman, 'Take Saïd and bind his eyes and strike off his head.' Whereupon Saïd feared for himself and said, 'O king of the age, grant me immunity.' 'Speak,' answered the king; 'and thou shalt have it.' Then said Saïd, 'Thy son is in love.' 'With whom is he in love?'

asked the old king: and Saïd replied, 'With a king's daughter of the Jinn, whose portrait he saw wroughten on the tunic that was in the wrapper given thee by Solomon, prophet of God.'

When the king heard this, he rose, and going in to his son, said to him, 'O my son, what is this portrait whereof thou art enamoured and why didst thou not tell me?' 'O my father,' answered Seif el Mulouk, 'I was ashamed to name this to thee and could not bring myself to discover aught thereof to any; but now thou knowest my case, look how thou mayest do to cure me.' 'What is to be done?' rejoined his father. 'Were she of the daughters of men, we might find a means of coming at her; but she is a king's daughter of the Jinn and who can avail to her, except it be Solomon son of David, and hardly he? Wherefore, O my son, do thou arise forthright and take heart and mount and ride out a-hunting or to the games in the tilting-ground. Divert thyself with eating and drinking and put away grief and concern from thy heart, and I will bring thee a hundred kings' daughters; for thou hast no call to the daughters of the Jinn, over whom we have no power and who are not of our kind.' But Seif said, 'I cannot renounce her nor will I seek another than her.' 'How then shall we do, O my son?' asked King Aasim; and Seif said, 'Bring us all the merchants and travellers and pilgrims in the city, that we may question them of the city of Babel and the garden of Irem. Peradventure, God will guide us thereto.'

So King Aasim summoned all the merchants and strangers and sea-captains in the city and enquired of them for the city of Babel and its peninsula and the garden of Irem; but none of them knew these places nor could any give him tidings thereof. However, when the session broke up, one of them said to the king, 'O king of the age, if thou hast a mind to know this thing,

get thee to the land of China; for it is a vast and safe country, wherein are store of rarities and things of price and folk of all kinds [and nations] and thou shalt not come to the knowledge of this city and garden but from its people; it may be one of them will direct thee to that thou seekest.' Whereupon quoth Seif el Mulouk, 'O my father, equip me a ship, that I may journey to the land of China.'

'O my son,' replied the old king, 'abide thou on the throne of thy kingship and rule thy subjects, and I myself will make the voyage to China and enquire for thee of the city of Babel and the garden of Irem.' But Seif rejoined, saying, 'O my father, this affair concerneth me and none can prosecute the search after it like myself: so, come what will, if thou give me leave to make the voyage, I will depart and travel in foreign countries awhile. If I find tidings of her, my desire will be attained, and if not, belike the voyage will dilate my breast and recruit my spirits; and peradventure by foreign travel my case will be made easy to me, and if I live, I shall return to thee whole and sound.' Night dcclxiv.

The old king looked at his son and saw nothing for it but to do what he wished; so he fitted him out forty ships, manned with twenty thousand men, besides servants, and gave him great plenty of treasures and necessaries and warlike gear, as much as he required. When the ships were laden with water and victual and arms and troops, Seif's father and mother bade him farewell and the former said, 'Depart, O my son, and travel in health and weal and safety. I commend thee to Him who disappointeth not those that put their trust in Him.' So the prince embarked, with his brother Saïd, and they weighed anchor and sailed till they came to the City of China.

When the people heard of the coming of forty ships, full of armed men and stores, they doubted not but they

were enemies come to make war on them and beleaguer them; so they shut the gates of the town and made ready the mangonels. But Seif, hearing of this, despatched two of his chief officers to the King of China, bidding them say to him, 'This is Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim of Egypt, who is come to thy city as a guest, to divert himself by viewing thy country awhile, and not for battle or contention; so, an thou wilt receive him, he will come ashore to thee: else he will return and will not disquiet thee nor the people of thy city.' So they presented themselves at the gates of the city and said, 'We bear a message from King Seif el Mulouk.' Whereupon the townsfolk opened the gates and carried them to their king, whose name was Feghfour Shah and between whom and King Aasim there had been acquaintance erewhen. So, when he heard that the new-comer was the son of King Aasim, he bestowed dresses of honour on the messengers and bidding open the gates, made ready guest-gifts and went forth, with the chief officers of his realm, to meet Seif el Mulouk.

The two kings embraced and Feghfour said to Seif, 'Welcome and fair welcome to him who cometh to us! I am thy servant and thy father's servant: my city is at thy disposal and whatsoever thou seekest shall be brought to thee.' Then he presented him with the guest-gifts and victual, and they took horse, with the Vizier Saïd and the chiefs of their officers and the rest of their troops, and rode from the sea-shore to the city, which they entered with drums beating and cymbals clashing, in token of rejoicing. There they abode forty days, in the enjoyment of fair hospitality, at the end of which time the King of China said to Seif el Mulouk, 'O son of my brother, how is it with thee? Doth my country please thee?' Quoth Seif, 'May God the Most High long honour it with thee, O King!' And Feghfour said, 'Nought hath brought thee hither save some need that hath betided thee; [so

tell me] what thou desirest of my country, and I will accomplish it to thee.' 'O king,' answered Seif, 'my case is a rare one,' and told him how he had fallen in love with the portrait of Bediya el Jemal.

When the King of China heard his story, he wept for pity and solicitude for him and said, 'And what wouldst thou have now, O Seif el Mulouk?' Quoth Seif, 'I would have thee bring me all the pilgrims and travellers and seafarers in the country, that I may question them of the original of this portrait; belike one of them may give me tidings of her.' So Feghfour Shah sent out his lieutenants and officers and chamberlains, to fetch all the pilgrims and travellers in the land, and they brought them before the two kings, and they were a numerous company. Then Seif el Mulouk questioned them of the City of Babel and the Garden of Irem, but none of them returned him an answer, wherefore he was confounded and knew not what to do; but one of the sea-captains said to him, 'O king, if thou wouldst know of this city and garden, get thee to the Islands of the Indian Sea.'

So Seif bade repair the ships; which being done, they launched them on the sea and freighted them with victual and water and all that they needed, and Seif el Mulouk and his Vizier Saïd re-embarked, with all their men, after they had taken leave of King Feghfour Shah. They sailed the seas with a fair wind, in safety and security, four months, till, one day, there came out upon them a wind and the waves smote on them from all sides. The rain and hail descended on them and the sea was troubled for the violence of the wind; by reason whereof the ships drove one against another and broke up, as did the boats, and all on board were drowned, except Seif el Mulouk and some of his servants, who saved themselves in a little boat. Then, by the decree of God the Most High, the wind fell and the sun shone out; whereupon

Seif opened his eyes and seeing no sign of the ships nor aught but sky and water, said to those who were with him in the boat, 'Where are the ships and boats and where is my brother Saïd?' 'O king of the age,' answered they, 'there remain nor ships nor boats nor those who were therein; for they are all drowned and become food for fishes.'

When he heard this, he cried aloud and repeated the words which whoso saith shall not be confounded, and they are, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he fell to buffeting his face and would have cast himself into the sea, but his men withheld him, saying, 'O king, what will this profit thee? Thou hast brought all this on thyself; for, hadst thou hearkened to thy father's words, nought thereof had befallen thee. But this was fore-ordained from all eternity by the will of the Creator of Souls, that the creature might accomplish that which God hath decreed unto him. And indeed, at the time of thy birth, the astrologers predicted to thy father that all manner of troubles should befall thee. So there is nothing for it but patience till God the Most High deliver us from this our strait.' 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' replied the prince. 'Neither is there refuge nor fleeing from that which He decreeth!' And he sighed and recited the following verses:

Night DCCLXV.

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed about my case, for lo! Troubles and griefs beset me sore; I know not whence they grow.
I will be patient, so the folk, that I against a thing, Bitt'rer than very aloes' self,[1] endurèd have, may know.
Less bitter than my patience is the taste of aloes-juice;[1] I've borne with patience what's more hot than coals with fire aglow
In this my trouble what resource have I, save to commit My case to Him who orders all that is, for weal or woe?

Then he became drowned in the sea of melancholy

[1] See note, Vol. I. p. 120.

thought and his tears ran down upon his cheeks, like a great rain. He slept a while of the day, after which he awoke and sought food. So they set food before him and he ate till he had enough, whilst the boat drove on with them they knew not whither. It drifted with them, night and day, at the winds' and waves' will, a great while, till their victual was spent and they knew not what to do and were reduced to the last extremity for hunger and thirst and weariness. At last they sighted an island afar off and the breezes drove them on, till they came thither and making the boat fast to the shore, landed. They left one in the boat, to guard it, and fared on into the island, where they found abundance of fruits of all kinds and ate of them, till they were satisfied.

Presently, they saw a man sitting among the trees, and he was of strange aspect, long-faced and white of beard and body. He called to one of the servants by his name, saying, 'Eat not of those fruits, for they are not ripe; but come hither to me, that I may give thee to eat of these that are ripe.' The man looked at him and thought that he was one of the shipwrecked folk, who had made his way to the island; so he rejoiced greatly at sight of him and went up to him, knowing not what was decreed to him in the secret purpose of God nor what was written on his forehead. But, when he drew near the stranger, he leapt upon his shoulders[1] and twisting one of his legs about his neck, let the other hang down upon his back, saying, 'Go on; for there is no escape for thee from me and thou art become my ass.' Thereupon the man fell a-weeping and cried out to his fellows, saying, 'Alas, my lord! Flee forth of this wood and save yourselves, for

[1] The Boulac and Calcutta Editions add here, "For he was a Marid." But this is a manifest error, as the fabulous creature here introduced is evidently identical with the Old Man of the Sea (see Vol. V. The Fifth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor).

one of the dwellers therein hath mounted on my shoulders, and the rest seek you, that they may ride you likewise.'

When they heard this, they all fled down to the boat and pushed off to sea; whilst the islanders followed them into the water, saying, 'Whither go ye? Come, bide with us and we will ride on your backs and give you meat and drink, and you shall be our asses.' With this, they redoubled their efforts, till they left them in the distance and fared on, trusting in God the Most High; nor did they leave going a whole month, till they came to another island and landed. Here they found fruits of various kinds and busied themselves with eating of them. Presently, they saw, afar off, somewhat lying in the road, as it were a column of silver. So they went up to it and one of the men gave it a push with his foot, when, lo, it was a creature of hideous aspect, long-eyed, cleft-headed and hidden under one of his ears, for he was used, whenas he lay down to sleep, to spread one ear under his head and cover himself with the other. He snatched up the man who had kicked him and carried him off into the inward of the island, and behold, it was all full of ghouls who eat men. So the man cried out to his fellows, saying, 'Flee and save yourselves, for this is the island of the man-eating ghouls, and they mean to tear me in pieces and eat me.'

When they heard this, they fled back to the boat, without gathering any store of the fruits, and putting out to sea, fared on some days till they came to another island, where they found a high mountain. So they climbed to the top and found there a thick wood. Now they were anhungred; so they fell to eating of the fruits; but, before they aware, there came upon them from among the trees black men of terrible aspect, each fifty cubits high, with teeth like elephants' tusks protruding from their mouths, and laying hands on Seif el Mulouk and his

company, carried them to their king, whom they found seated on a piece of black felt laid on a rock, and about him a great company of blacks, standing in his service. Quoth the blacks to him, 'We found these birds among the trees;' and he was anhungred; so he took two of the servants and killed them and ate them; which when Seif saw, he feared for himself and wept and repeated these verses: Night DCCLXVI.

Troubles familiar with my heart are grown and I with them, Erst shunning; for the generous are sociable still.
Not one mere kind of woe alone doth lieger with me lie; Praised be God! there are with me thousands of kinds of ill.

Then he sighed and repeated these also:

Fate with afflictions still hath so beshotten me, With shafts, as with a sheath, my entrails are o'erlaid;
And thus in such a case am I become that, when An arrow striketh me, blade breaketh upon blade.

When the king heard his weeping and wailing, he said, 'Verily, these birds have sweet voices and their song pleaseth me: put them in cages.' So they set them each in a cage and hung them up at the king's head, that he might hear their song. On this wise Seif and his men abode a great while, and the blacks gave them to eat and drink: and now they wept and now laughed, now spoke and now were silent, whilst the king of the blacks delighted in the sound of their voices.

Now this king had a daughter married in another island, who, hearing that her father had birds with sweet voices, sent to him to seek of him some of them. So he sent her, by her messenger, Seif el Mulouk and three of his men in four cages; and when she saw them, they pleased her and she commanded to hang them up in a place over her head. Then Seif fell to marvelling at that which had befallen him and calling to mind his former high

estate and weeping for himself; and the three servants wept for themselves, whilst the king's daughter deemed that they sang. Now it was her wont, whenever any one from the land of Egypt or elsewhere fell into her hands and he pleased her, to advance him to high estate with her; and by the ordinance of God the Most High, it befell that, when she saw Seif el Mulouk, his beauty and grace and symmetry pleased her, and she commanded to loose him and his companions from their cages and bade entreat them with honour.

One day she took Seif apart and would have him lie with her; but he refused, saying, 'O my lady, I am an exile and distraught with passion for a beloved one, nor will I consent to love-delight with other than her.' Then she coaxed him and importuned him, but he held aloof from her, and she could not anywise approach him nor get her desire of him. At last, when she was weary of courting him in vain, she waxed wroth with him and his men and commanded that they should serve her and fetch her wood and water.

They abode thus four years, till Seif el Mulouk became weary of this life and sent to intercede with the princess, so haply she might release them and let them go their ways and be at rest from that their travail. So she sent for him and said to him, 'If thou wilt fall in with my desire, I will set thee free from this thy duresse and thou shalt go to thy country, safe and sound.' And she went on to humble herself to him and wheedle him, but he would not consent to do her will; whereupon she turned from him, in anger, and he and his companions abode in the same plight. The people of the island knew them for the princess's birds and dared not do them any hurt; and she herself was at ease concerning them, being assured that they could not escape from the island. So they used to absent themselves from her two and three

days [at a time] and go round about the island in all directions, gathering firewood, which they brought to the princess's kitchen; and thus they abode five years.

One day, it chanced that the prince and his men were sitting on the sea-shore, devising of what had befallen, and Seif bethought him of his father and mother and his brother Saïd and calling to mind his former high estate, fell a-weeping and lamenting passing sore, whilst his servants wept likewise. Then said they to him, 'O king of the age, how long shall we weep? Weeping availeth not; for this thing was written on our foreheads by the ordinance of God, to whom belong might and majesty. Indeed, the pen runneth with that which He decreeth and nought will serve us but patience. Peradventure God (blessed and exalted be He!), who hath afflicted us with this calamity, will deliver us therefrom.' 'O my brothers,' said Seif, 'how shall we win free from this accursed woman? I see no way of escape for us, except God of His favour deliver us from her; but methinks we may flee and be at rest from this travail.'

'O king of the age,' answered they, 'whither shall we flee? For the whole island is full of man-eating ghouls, and whithersoever we go, they will find us there and either eat us or carry us back to the king's daughter, who will be wroth with us.' Quoth Seif, 'I will contrive you somewhat, whereby it may be God the Most High will help us to escape from this island.' 'And how wilt thou do?' asked they. 'Let us cut some of these long pieces of wood,' answered he, 'and twist ropes of their bark and bind them one with another, and make of them a raft, which we will cast into the sea and load with these fruits. Then will we fashion us oars and embark on the raft; peradventure God the Most High will make it the means of our deliverance from this accursed woman and vouchsafe us a fair wind to bring us to the land of Hind, for

He can do all things.' 'This is well seen,' said they and were mightily rejoiced thereat.

So they arose and fell to work forthright to cut wood for the raft and twist ropes to bind the logs together, and at this they wrought a whole month. Every evening, they gathered somewhat of firewood and carried it to the princess's kitchen, and the rest of the day they busied themselves with working at the raft. When they had made an end of it, they cast it into the sea and loading it with the fruits of the island, embarked at close of day, having told none of their intent. They put out to sea and fared on four months, knowing not whither the raft carried them, till their victual failed them and they were reduced to the utmost extreme of hunger and thirst.

Night dcclxvii.

[One day, as they drifted along,] the sea became troubled and foamed and rose in great waves, and there came forth upon them a frightful crocodile, which put out its claw and snatching up one of the servants, swallowed him. At this sight Seif el Mulouk wept sore and he and the two men that remained to him pushed off from the place where they had seen the monster, sore affrighted. After this, they drifted on till one day they espied a terrible great mountain, rising high into the air, whereat they rejoiced and made towards it with all their might, glad in the prospect of reaching land; but hardly had they sighted the island [on which was the mountain], when the sea boiled and rose in huge waves and a second crocodile raised its head and putting out its claw, took the two remaining servants and swallowed them.

So Seif abode alone and making his way to the island, laboured till he reached the mountain-top, where he found a wood and walking among the trees, fell to eating of the fruits. Presently, he saw among the branches more than twenty great apes, each bigger than a mule, whereat he was seized with exceeding fear. The apes came down

and surrounded him; then they went on before him, signing to him to follow them, and he did so, till he came to a lofty and strong-builded castle, the ordinance whereof was one brick of gold and one of silver. The apes entered and he after them, and he saw in the castle all manner of jewels and precious metals and things of price, such as the tongue fails to describe. Here also he found a young man, exceeding tall of stature, with no hair on his cheeks, and there was no human being but he in the castle.

The two young men greeted each other with delight, and the stranger marvelled exceedingly at sight of Seif el Mulouk and said to him, 'What is thy name and what countryman art thou and how camest thou hither? Tell me thy story and conceal from me nought thereof.' 'By Allah,' answered the prince, 'I came not hither of my own intent nor is this place that which I seek; but I cannot but go from place to place till I compass my desire.' 'And what is it thou seekest?' asked the youth. 'I am of the land of Egypt,' replied Seif, 'and my name is Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim Ben Sefwan;' and told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, [up to his coming to the land of China]. Whereupon the youth arose and stood in his service, saying, 'O king of the age, I was in Egypt [a while since] and heard that thou hadst gone to the land of China; but it is a far cry from China hither. Verily, this is a strange thing and a rare case!'

'True,' answered the prince; 'but, when I left China, I set out, intending for the land of Hind;' and he told him all that had befallen him till he came thither; whereupon quoth the other, 'O king's son, thou hast had enough of strangerhood and its hardships; praised be God who hath brought thee hither! So now do thou abide with me, that I may enjoy thy company till I die, when thou shalt become king over this island, to which no bound is

known, and these apes thou seest, which are skilled in all manner crafts; and all thou seekest thou wilt find here.' 'O my brother,' replied Seif el Mulouk, 'I may not abide in any place till my quest be accomplished, though I compass the whole world in pursuit thereof, so haply God may bring me to my desire or my course lead me to the place, wherein is the appointed term of my days, and I shall die.'

Then the youth signed to one of the apes, and he went out and was absent awhile, after which he returned with other apes, girt with napkins of silk. They laid the table and set on near a hundred dishes of gold and silver, containing all kinds of meats. Then they stood, after the manner of servants before kings, till the youth signed to the chamberlains, who sat down, and he whose wont it was to serve stood, whilst the two princes ate, till they had enough. Then the apes cleared the table and brought basins and ewers of gold, and they washed their hands; after which they set on nigh forty flagons, in each a different kind of wine, and they drank and took their pleasure and made merry; and all the apes danced and gambolled before them, what while they sat at meat; which when Seif saw, he marvelled at them and forgot that which had befallen him of strangerhood and its hardships. At nightfall, they lighted candles in candlesticks of gold and silver and set on dishes of fruits and confections. So they ate; and when the hour of rest was come, the apes spread them beds and they slept.

Night dcclxviii.

Next morning, the young man arose, according to his wont, and waking Seif, said to him, 'Put thy head forth of this lattice and see what stands beneath.' So he put out his head and saw the wide waste and all the desert filled with apes, whose number none knew save God the Most High. Quoth he, 'Here is great plenty of apes, for they fill the whole country: but why are they assembled at this hour?' 'This is their custom,' answered the youth. 'Every Saturday, all the apes in the island come hither, some from two and three days' distance, and stand here till I awake from sleep and put forth my head from this window, when they kiss the ground before me and go about their affairs.' So saying, he put his head out of the window; and when the apes saw him, they kissed the earth before him and went away.

Seif el Mulouk abode with the young man a whole month, at the end of which time he bade him farewell and departed, escorted by a company of nigh a hundred apes, which their king sent with him. They journeyed with him seven days, till they came to the limits of their island, when they took leave of him and returned to their places, while Seif fared on alone over hill and mountain and desert and plain, four months' journey, one day anhungred and the next full of meat, now eating of the herbs of the earth and now of the fruits of the trees, till he repented him of having quitted the young man and was about to retrace his steps to him, when he saw somewhat black afar off and said in himself, 'Is this a city or trees? I will not turn back till I see what it is.' So he made towards it and when he drew near, he saw that it was a lofty palace. Now he who built it was Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace!) and it is of this palace that God the Most High speaketh in His precious Book, whenas he saith, 'And an abandoned well and a high-builded palace.'[1]

Seif el Mulouk sat down at the gate and said in him-

[1] *Koran* xxii. 44. This absurd addition is probably due to some copyist, who thought to show his knowledge of the Koran, but did not understand the meaning of the verse from which the quotation is taken and which runs thus, "How many a city we have destroyed, whilst yet it transgressed, and it was smitten down upon its foundations, and how many an abandoned well and a high-builded palace!"

self, 'I wonder what is within this palace and what king dwelleth there and whether its inhabitants are men or Jinn? Who will tell me the truth of the case?' He sat awhile, considering, but, seeing none go in or out, he rose and committing himself to God the Most High, entered the palace and walked on, till he had counted seven vestibules; but saw no one. Presently he espied, on his right hand, three doors, and before him, a fourth, over which hung a curtain. So he went up to the fourth door and raising the curtain, found himself in a great saloon, spread with silken carpets. At the upper end stood a golden throne, on which sat a young lady, whose face was like the moon, arrayed in kings' raiment and adorned as she were a bride on her wedding-night; and before the throne stood a table, whereon were forty trays spread with dishes of gold and silver, full of rich meats.

The prince went up to the lady and saluted her, and she returned his greeting, saying, 'Art thou of mankind or of the Jinn?' 'I am a man of the best of mankind,' replied he; 'for I am a king, son of a king.' Quoth she, 'What seekest thou? Up and eat of yonder food, and after tell me thy story from first to last and how thou camest hither.' So he sat down at the table and uncovering a tray of meats, ate (for he was hungry) till he had enough; then washed his hands and going up to the throne, sat down by the young lady who said to him, 'Who art thou and what is thy name and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' 'My story is a long one,' replied he; 'but do thou first tell me who and what thou art and why thou dwellest in this place alone.'

Quoth she, 'My name is Dauleh Khatoun and I am the daughter of the King of Hind. My father dwells in the city of Serendib and has a great and goodly garden, there is no goodlier in all the land of Hind; and in this garden is a great tank. One day, I went out into the garden with

my waiting-women and we stripped and entering the tank, fell to sporting and taking our pleasure therein. Presently, before I could be ware, there swooped down on me somewhat, as it were a cloud, and snatching me from amongst my maids, flew up with me betwixt heaven and earth, saying, "Fear not, O Dauleh Khatoun, but be of good heart." Then he flew on with me a little while, after which he set me down in this palace and straightway became a handsome young man, elegantly clad, who said to me, "Dost thou know me?" "No, O my lord," answered I; and he said, "I am the Blue King's son of the Jinn; my father dwelleth in the Castle of El Culzum and hath under his hand six hundred thousand Jinn, flyers and divers. I chanced to see thee, as I was passing, and fell in love with thee; so I snatched thee up from among the slave-girls and brought thee to this strong castle, which is my dwelling-place. None may win hither, whether he be man or genie, and from Hind hither is a hundred and twenty years' journey: wherefore be thou assured that thou wilt never again see the land of thy father and thy mother; but abide with me here, in content and peace, and I will bring thee whatsoever thou seekest."

Night dcclxix.

Then he embraced me and kissed me, saying, "Abide here and fear nothing," after which he went away and presently returned with these tables and carpets and furniture. He comes to me every Tuesday and abides with me three days, and on Friday, at the time of afternoon prayer, he departs and is absent till the following Tuesday. When he is here, he eats and drinks and kisses and embraces me, but does nought [else] with me, and I am a clean maid, even as God the Most High created me. My father's name is Taj el Mulouk, and he knows not what is come of me. This is my story: now tell me thine.'

'My story is a long one,' answered the prince, 'and I

fear lest the Afrit come, whilst I am telling it to thee.' Quoth she, 'He went out from me but an hour before thy coming and will not return till Tuesday: so sit and take thine ease and be thy heart at rest and tell me what hath betided thee, from first to last.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he told her all that had befallen him from first to last, but, when she heard speak of Bediya el Jemal, her eyes ran over with streaming tears and she exclaimed, 'O Bediya el Jemal, I had not thought this of thee! Out upon fortune! O Bediya el Jemal, dost thou not remember me nor say, "Where is my sister Dauleh Khatoun gone?"' And she wept passing sore, lamenting Bediya el Jemal's forgetfulness of her.

Then said Seif, 'O Dauleh Khatoun, thou art a mortal and she is a genie: how then can she be thy sister?' 'She is my foster-sister,' replied the princess, 'and this is how it came about. My mother went out to take her pleasure in the garden, when the pangs of labour seized her and she gave birth to me. As fate would have it, the mother of Bediya el Jemal chanced to be passing with her guards, when she also was taken with the pains of travail; so she alighted in a part of the garden and was there delivered of Bediya el Jemal. She despatched one of her women to seek food and childbirth-gear of my mother, who sent her what she sought and invited her to visit her. So she came to her with her child and my mother suckled Bediya el Jemal; after which the latter and her mother abode with us in the garden two months.

Then Bediya's mother gave my mother somewhat,[1] saying, "When thou hast need of me, I will come to thee in the midst of the garden," and departed to her own

[1] This appears by the sequel (according to the Breslau Edition) to have been certain perfumes, by burning which she could summon the Queen of the Jinn.

country; but she and her daughter used to visit us every year and abide with us awhile. Wherefore, O Seif el Mulouk, if thou wert with me in my own country and Bediya and I were together as of wont, I would go about with her to bring thee to thy desire of her: but I am here and they know not what is become of me, else could they deliver me from this place; but the matter is in God's hands (blessed and exalted be He!) and what can I do?' 'Come,' said Seif, 'let us flee and go whither God wills.' But she answered, 'We cannot do that: for, by Allah, though we fled hence a year's journey, yonder accursed wretch would overtake us in an hour and make an end of us.'

Then said the prince, 'I will hide myself in his way, and when he passes, I will smite him with the sword and slay him.' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'Thou canst not avail to slay him, except thou slay his soul.' 'And where is his soul?' asked he. 'Many a time have I questioned him thereof,' answered she; 'but he would not tell me, till one day I was instant with him and he waxed wroth with me and said to me, "How often wilt thou ask me of my soul? What hast thou to do with my soul?" "O Hatim," answered I, "there remaineth none to me but thou, except God; and my life dependeth on thine, and whilst thou livest, all is well for me; so, except I care for thy soul and set it in the apple of mine eye, how shall I live in thine absence? If I knew where thy soul is, I would, never whilst I live, cease to hold it embraced and would keep it as my right eye."

Whereupon he said to me, "When I was born, the astrologers predicted that I should lose my soul at the hands of the son of a king of mankind. So I took it and put it in the crop of a sparrow, which I shut up in a box. The box I set in a casket, and enclosing this in seven other caskets and seven chests, laid the whole in a

marble coffer, which I buried within the marge of yonder ocean, that encompasseth the earth; for that these parts are far from the world of men and none of them can win thither. So now I have told thee what thou wouldst know, and do thou tell none thereof, for it is a secret between me and thee." "To whom should I tell it," rejoined I, "seeing that none but thou cometh hither with whom I may talk thereof? By Allah, thou hast indeed set thy soul in a right impregnable stronghold, to which none may gain access! How should a man win to it, even if the impossible be ordained and God decree like as the astrologers predicted?"

Night dcclxx.

Quoth the genie, "Peradventure one may come, having on his finger the ring of Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!) and lay his hand with the ring on the surface of the water, saying, 'By the virtue of the names engraven upon this ring, let the soul of such an one come forth!' Whereupon the coffer will rise to the surface and he will break it open and do the like with the chests and caskets, till he come to the little box, when he will take out the sparrow and strangle it, and I shall die."' Then said Seif el Mulouk, 'I am the king's son of whom he spoke, and this is the ring of Solomon son of David on my finger. Come, let us go down to the sea-shore and see if his words be truth or leasing.'

So the two went down to the sea-shore and Dauleh Khatoun stood on the beach, whilst the prince entered the water to his middle, and laying his hand with the ring on the surface of the sea, said, 'By the virtue of the names and talismans engraven on this ring and of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), let the soul of Hatim the genie, son of the Blue King, come forth!' Whereupon the sea became troubled and the marble coffer rose to the surface. Seif took it and shattered it against the rock and broke open the chests and caskets, till he came to the

little box and took thereout the sparrow. Then he and the princess returned to the castle and sat down on the throne. Hardly had they done this, when there arose a terrible great cloud of dust and some huge thing came flying and saying, 'Spare me, O king's son, and slay me not; but make me thy freedman, and I will bring thee to thy desire!' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'The genie cometh; kill the sparrow, lest the accursed wretch enter the palace and take it from thee and slay thee and me after thee.' So the prince wrung the sparrow's neck and it died, whereupon the genie fell down at the door of the palace and became a heap of black ashes.

Then said the princess, 'We are delivered from the hand of yonder accursed wretch; what shall we do now?' 'It behoves us to ask aid of God the Most High, who hath afflicted us,' answered Seif; 'belike He will direct us and help us to escape from this our strait.' So saying, he arose and pulling down half a score of the doors of the palace, which were wroughten of sandal and aloes-wood, with nails of gold and silver, bound them together with ropes of silk and sendal, which were there, and wrought of them a raft, which he made shift, he and the princess, to drag down to the sea-shore. They cast it into the water and making it fast to the beach, returned to the palace, whence they removed all the dishes of gold and silver and jewels and precious stones and metals and what not else was light of carriage and heavy of worth and freighted the raft therewith. Then they fashioned two pieces of wood into the likeness of oars, with which they embarked on the raft and casting off the moorings, let it drift out to sea with them, committing themselves to God the Most High, who contenteth those that put their trust in Him and disappointeth them not.

They fared on thus four months, and when they lay down to sleep, the prince set Dauleh Khatoun behind him

and laid a naked sword at his back, so that, when he turned, the sword was between them. At last, their victual came to an end and they were reduced to sore distress; their souls were straitened and they besought God the Most High to vouchsafe them deliverance from their strait. It chanced, one night, when Seif was asleep and the princess awake, that the raft fell off towards the land and entered a harbour wherein were ships. The princess saw the ships and heard a man (who was none other than the chief and head of the captains) talking with the sailors; whereby she knew that this was the port of some city and that they were come to an inhabited country. So she rejoiced mightily and waking Seif el Mulouk, bade him ask the captain the name of the city and harbour.

Accordingly Seif arose, rejoicing, and said to the captain, 'O my brother, how is this harbour called and what are the names of yonder city and its king?' 'O fool's face! O frosty beard!'[1] replied the captain, 'if thou knewest not the name of this port and city, how camest thou hither?' Quoth Seif, 'I am a stranger and had taken passage in a merchant ship, which was wrecked and sank with all on board; but I saved myself on a plank and made my way hither; wherefore I asked thee the name of the place, and there is no harm in asking.' Then said the captain, 'This is the city of Amariyeh and this harbour is called Kemin el Behrein.' When the princess heard this, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'Praised be God!' 'What is to do?' asked Seif. And she answered, saying, 'O Seif el Mulouk, rejoice in succour near at hand; for the king of this city is my father's brother and his name is Aali el Mulouk. Say to the captain, "Is the Sultan of the city, Aali el Mulouk, well?"'

Night dcclxxi.

[1] *i.e.* simpleton.

The prince put the question to the captain, who was wroth with him and said, 'Thou sayst, "I am a stranger and never in my life came hither." Who then told thee the name of the lord of the city?' When Dauleh Khatoun heard this, she rejoiced and knew him for one of her father's captains, Muïneddin by name. Now he had come out in search of her, after her disappearance, and finding her not, had continued his cruise till he came to her uncle's city. Then she bade Seif say to him, 'O Captain Muïneddin, come and speak with thy mistress!' So he called out to him as she bade, whereat he was exceeding angry and answered, saying, 'O dog, who art thou and how knowest thou me?' Then he said to one of the sailors, 'Give me an ash-stick, that I may go to yonder pestilent fellow and break his head.'

So he took the stick and made for Seif el Mulouk, but, when he came to the raft, he saw Dauleh Khatoun sitting there, as she were a piece of the moon; whereat he was confounded and said to the prince, 'Who is that with thee?' 'A damsel by name Dauleh Khatoun,' replied Seif. When the captain heard the princess's name and knew that she was his mistress and the daughter of his king, he fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he left the raft and those that were thereon and going up to the palace, craved an audience of the king; whereupon the chamberlain went in to the latter and said, 'Captain Muïneddin is come to bring thee good news.' The king bade admit him: so he entered and kissing the earth, said to him, 'O king, thou owest me a gift for glad tidings; for thy brother's daughter Dauleh Khatoun hath arrived here, safe and sound, and is now on a raft in the harbour, in company with a young man like the moon on the night of its full.'

When the king heard this, he rejoiced and conferred a sumptuous dress of honour on the captain. Then he

straightway commanded to decorate the city in honour of the safe return of his brother's daughter, and sending for her and Seif el Mulouk, saluted them and gave them joy of their safety; after which he despatched a messenger to his brother, to let him know that his daughter was found and was with him. As soon as the news reached Taj el Mulouk, he assembled his troops and set out for his brother's capital, where he found his daughter and they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. He sojourned with his brother a week, after which he took his daughter and Seif el Mulouk and returned to Serendib, where the princess foregathered with her mother and they rejoiced and held high festival in honour of her safe return; and it was a great day, never was seen its like.

As for Seif el Mulouk, the king entreated him with honour and said to him, 'O Seif el Mulouk, thou hast done me and my daughter all this good and I cannot requite thee therefor, nor can any requite thee, save the Lord of all creatures; but I wish thee to sit upon the throne in my stead and rule the land of Hind, for I make gift to thee of my throne and kingdom and treasures and servants.' Whereupon Seif rose and kissing the earth before the king, thanked him and answered, saying, 'O King of the age, I accept all thou givest me and return it to thee in free gift: for I covet not kingship nor sultanate nor desire aught but that God the Most High bring me to my desire.' 'O Seif el Mulouk,' rejoined the king, 'these my treasures are at thy disposal: take of them what thou wilt, without consulting me, and God requite thee for me with all good!' Quoth the prince, 'God advance the king! Indeed, there is no delight for me in treasure or dominion, till I attain my desire: but now I have a mind to take my pleasure in the city and view its streets and markets.'

So the king commanded to bring him a horse of the

thoroughbred horses, saddled and bridled; and Seif mounted and rode through the streets and markets of the town. As he looked about him, his eyes fell on a young man, who was crying a tunic for sale at fifteen dinars: so he considered him and saw him to be like his brother Saïd; and indeed it was his very self, but he was pale and changed for long strangerhood and the hardships of travel, so that he knew him not. However, he said to his attendants, 'Take yonder youth and carry him to the palace where I lodge, and keep him with you till my return, that I may question him.' But they understood him to say, 'Carry him to the prison,' and said in themselves, 'Doubtless this is some runaway slave of his.' So they took him and carried him to the prison, where they laid him in irons and left him.

Presently Seif returned to the palace, but he forgot his brother Saïd, and none made mention of him to him. So he abode in prison, and when they brought out the prisoners, to labour upon the public works, they took Saïd with them, and he wrought with the rest. In this plight he abode a month's space, in squalor and misery, pondering his case and saying in himself, 'What is the cause of my imprisonment?' Meanwhile, Seif el Mulouk's mind was diverted from him by rejoicing and other things; but one day, as he sat, he bethought him of Saïd and said to his attendants, 'Where is the young man I gave into your charge on such a day?' 'Didst thou not bid us carry him to the prison?' said they. 'Nay,' answered he; 'I bade you carry him to my palace.' Then he sent his chamberlains for Saïd and they fetched him in irons, and loosing him from his fetters, set him before the prince, who said to him, 'O young man, what countryman art thou?' Quoth he, 'I am from Egypt and my name is Saïd, son of the Vizier Faris.'

When Seif heard this, he rose and throwing himself upon him, hung on his neck, weeping for very joy and saying, 'O Saïd, O my brother, praised be God that I see thee alive! I am thy brother Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim.' Then they embraced and wept together and all who were present marvelled at them. After this, Seif commanded his people to carry Saïd to the bath: and they did so. When he came out, they clad him in sumptuous apparel and carried him back to Seif, who seated him on the couch beside himself. When King Taj el Mulouk heard of the reunion of Seif and his brother Saïd, he was mightily rejoiced and came to them, and the three sat devising of all that had befallen them.

Then said Saïd, 'O my brother Seif el Mulouk, when the ship sank and all on board were cast into the sea, I saved myself on a plank with a company of servants, and it drifted with us a whole month, at the end of which time the wind cast us, by the ordinance of God the Most High, upon an island. So we landed and entering among the trees, fell to eating of the fruits, for we were anhungred. Whilst we were busy eating, there fell on us, at unawares, folk like Afrits and springing on our shoulders, said to us, "Go on with us; for ye are become our asses." So I said to him who had mounted me, "What art thou and why dost thou mount me?" But he twisted one of his legs about my neck, till I was all but dead, and beat upon my back the while with the other leg, till I thought he had broken it. So I fell to the ground on my face, having no strength left in me for hunger and thirst. When he saw this, he knew that I was hungry and taking me by the hand, led me to a pear-tree laden with fruit and said to me, "Eat thy fill of this tree." So I ate till I had enough and rose, against my will, to walk; but, before I had gone far, the creature turned and leaping on

my shoulders again, drove me on, now walking, now running and now trotting, and he the while mounted on me, laughing and saying, "Never in my life saw I an ass like unto thee!"

We abode thus awhile, till, one day, it chanced that we came upon great plenty of vines, covered with ripe fruit; so we gathered a quantity of bunches of grapes and throwing them into a pit, trod them with our feet, till the pit became a great pool. Then we waited awhile and presently returning thither, found that the sun had smitten the grape-juice and it was become wine. So we used to drink of it, till we were drunken and our faces flushed and we fell to singing and dancing, for the hilarity of drunkenness; whereupon our masters said to us, "What is it that reddens your faces and makes you dance and sing?" "Ask us not," answered we. "What is your intent in questioning us of this?" But they insisted, till we told them how we had pressed grapes and made wine. Quoth they, "Give us to drink thereof;" but we said, "The grapes are spent."

So they brought us to a valley, whose length we knew not from its breadth, wherein were vines without beginning or end, each bunch of grapes on them twenty pounds in weight and all within easy reach, and said, "Gather of these." So we gathered great store of grapes and filling therewith a great trench that we found there, bigger than the great tank [in the king's garden], trod them with our feet and did with the juice as before, till it became wine, whereupon we said to them, "It is come to perfection; but in what will ye drink it?" And they answered, saying, "We had asses like unto you; but we ate them and kept their heads: so give us to drink in their skulls." So we give them to drink, and they became drunken and lay down, nigh two hundred of them.

Then said we to one another, "Is it not enough that

they should ride us, but they must eat us also? There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! But we will ply them with wine, till they are overcome with drunkenness, when we will kill them and be at rest from them." So we awoke them and proceeded to fill the skulls and gave them to drink, but they said, "This is bitter." "Why say ye it is bitter?" answered we. "Whoso saith this, except he drink of it ten times, he dieth the same day." When they heard this, they feared death and said to us, "Give us to drink the whole ten times." So we gave them to drink, and when they had drunken the rest of the ten draughts, their senses failed them and they became helplessly drunk. So we dragged them [together] by the hands and laying them one upon another, collected great plenty of dry vine-stalks and branches and heaped it upon and about them: then set fire to the pile and stood afar off, to see what came of them. When the fire was burnt down, we came back and found them a heap of ashes, wherefore we praised God the Most High, who had delivered us from them. Then we sought the sea-shore, where we parted and I and two of the men fared on till we came to a great and thick wood and there busied ourselves with eating fruit.

Night dcclxxii.

Presently, up came a man of high stature, long-bearded and flap-eared, with eyes like cressets, driving before him a great flock of sheep.[1] When he saw us, he rejoiced and said to us, "Welcome and fair welcome to you! Come with me, that I may slaughter you one of these sheep and roast it and give you to eat." Quoth we, "Where is thine abode?" And he said, "Hard by yonder mountain: go

[1] The Boulac and Calcutta Editions add here, "and with him a company of others of his fashion." The Breslau Edition omits these words and it would seem, by what follows, that the ghoul was the only one of his kind on the island.

on towards it till ye come to a cave, where are many guests like yourselves. Enter and sit with them, whilst we make ready for you the guest-meal." We doubted not but he spoke the truth, so fared on, as he bade us, till we came to the cavern, where we found many guests, men like ourselves, but they were all blind; and when we entered, one said, "I am sick;" and another, "I am weak."

So we said to them, "What is this you say and what is the cause of your sickness and weakness?" "Who are ye?" asked they; and we answered, "We are guests." Then said they, "What hath made you fall into the hands of yonder accursed wretch? But there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! This is a ghoul who eats men and he hath blinded us and meaneth to eat us." "And how did he blind you?" asked we. "Like as he will blind yourselves even now," replied they. Quoth we, "And how so?" And they answered, "He will bring you cups of milk and will say to you, 'Ye are weary with travel: take this milk and drink it.' And when ye have drunken thereof, ye will become blind like unto us." Quoth I to myself, "There is no escape for us but by stratagem." So I dug a hole in the earth and sat over it.

Presently in came the accursed ghoul, with cups of milk, of which he gave one to each of us, saying, "Ye come from the desert and are athirst: so take this milk and drink it, whilst I roast you the meat." I took the cup and carrying it to my mouth, [made a show of drinking, but] emptied it into the hole; then I cried out, "Alas! my sight is gone and I am blind!" and clapping my hand to my eyes, fell a-weeping and lamenting, whilst he laughed and said, "Fear not." But, as for my two comrades, they drank the milk and became blind. Then the ghoul arose and stopping up the mouth of the cavern,

came to me and felt my ribs, but found me lean and with no flesh on my bones: so he felt another and finding him fat, rejoiced. Then he slaughtered three sheep and skinned them and fetching iron spits, spitted the flesh thereon and set them over the fire to roast. When the meat was done, he set it before my comrades, who ate and he with them; after which he brought a skin full of wine and drank thereof and lay down on his face and snored.

Quoth I in myself, "He is drowned in sleep: how shall I slay him?" Then I bethought me of the spits and laying two of them in the fire, waited till they were red-hot: whereupon I girded myself and taking a spit in each hand, went up to the ghoul and thrust them into his eyes, pressing upon them with all my might. He sprang to his feet for dear life and would have laid hold of me; but he was blind. So I fled from him into the inner cavern, whilst he ran after me; but I found no place of refuge from him nor whence I might escape into the open country, for the cave was stopped up with stones; wherefore I was bewildered and said to the blind men, "How shall I do with this accursed wretch?" "O Saïd," answered one of them, "climb up to yonder niche and thou wilt find there a sharpened sword: bring it to me and I will tell thee what to do."

So I climbed up to the niche and taking the sword, returned to the blind man, who said to me, "Smite him with the sword in his middle, and he will die forthright." So I ran after the ghoul, who was weary with running after me and felt for the blind men, that he might kill them, and coming behind him, smote him with the sword in his middle and he fell in twain. Then he cried out to me, saying, "O man, an thou desire to kill me, smite me a second time." Accordingly, I was about to deal him another blow; but he who had directed me to the sword

said to me, "Smite him not a second time, for he will not die, but will live and destroy us." So I held my hand, as he bade me, and the ghoul died. Then said the blind man to me, "Open the mouth of the cave and let us go out; so haply God may help us and deliver us from this place." Quoth I, "No harm can come to us now; let us rather abide here and rest and eat of these sheep and drink of this wine, for the land[1] is long."

Night DCCLXXIII.

So we abode there two months, eating of the sheep and of the fruits of the island, till, one day, as we sat upon the beach, we caught sight of a great ship in the distance; so we cried out and made signs to the crew. They feared to draw near, knowing that the island was inhabited by a ghoul who ate men, and would have sheered off; but we ran down to the marge of the sea and made signs to them with the floating ends of our turbans and shouted to them, whereupon one of the sailors, who was sharp of sight, said to the rest, "Harkye, comrades, these seem men like ourselves, for they have not the fashion of ghouls." So they made for us, little by little, till they drew near us and were certified that we were indeed human beings, when they saluted us and we returned their greeting and gave them the glad tidings of the death of the accursed ghoul, wherefore they thanked us.

Then we transported to the ship all that was in the cavern of stuffs and sheep and treasure, together with provision of the fruits of the island, such as should serve us days and months, and embarking, sailed on with a fair wind three days; at the end of which time the wind veered round against us and the sky became exceeding dark, nor had an hour passed, before the wind drove the vessel on to a rock, where it broke up and its planks were rent asunder. However, God the Most High decreed that I

[1] *i.e.* The way out of it.

should lay hold of one of the planks, which I bestrode, and it bore me along two days, for the wind had fallen fair again, and I paddled with my feet awhile, till God the Most High brought me safe to shore and I landed and came to this city, where I found myself a stranger, alone and friendless. And indeed I knew not what to do; for hunger was sore upon me and I was in great straits.

So I hid myself and pulling off my tunic, carried it to the market, saying in myself, "I will sell it and live on its price, till God accomplish His will of me." Then I took the tunic in my hand and cried it for sale, and the folk were looking at it and bidding for it, when, O my brother, thou camest up and seeing me, commandedst me to the palace; but thine attendants took me and carried me to prison, where I abode till thou bethoughtest thee of me and badst bring me before thee. So now I have told thee what befell me, and praised be God for reunion!'

The two kings marvelled exceedingly at Saïd's story and Taj el Mulouk made ready a goodly dwelling for Seif el Mulouk and his vizier. [So they took up their abode therein] and Dauleh Khatoun used to visit Seif el Mulouk there and thank him for his favours and talk with him. One day, he foregathered with her and said to her, 'O my lady, where is the promise thou madest me, in the palace of Japhet son of Noah, saying, "Were I with my people, I would make shift to bring thee to thy desire"?' And Saïd said to her, 'O princess, I crave thine aid to enable him to compass his desire.' 'It is well,' answered she. 'I will do my endeavour for him, that he may attain his wish, if it please God the Most High.' And she turned to Seif el Mulouk and said to him, 'Take comfort and be of good courage.' Then she rose and going in to her mother, said to her, 'Arise with me forthright and let

us purify ourselves and make fumigations, to the intent that Bediya el Jemal and her mother may come and see me and rejoice in me.' 'With all my heart,' answered the queen and rising, betook herself to the garden and burnt of the perfumes [which Bediya's mother had given her to that intent]; nor was it long before Bediya el Jemal and her mother made their appearance.

The Queen of Hind foregathered with the other queen and acquainted her with her daughter's safe return, whereat she rejoiced; and Bediya el Jemal and Dauleh Khatoun foregathered likewise and rejoiced in each other. Then they pitched the pavilions and dressed rich meats and made ready the place of entertainment; whilst the two princesses withdrew to a tent apart and ate and drank and made merry together; after which they sat down to converse, and Bediya said, 'What hath befallen thee in thy strangerhood?' 'O my sister,' replied Dauleh Khatoun, 'ask me not what hath befallen me. Alas, what hardships mortals suffer!' 'How so?' asked Bediya. So she told her how the son of the Blue King had carried her off to the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and how Seif el Mulouk had slain the genie and brought her back to her father; and she told her also all that the prince had undergone of hardships and terrors, before he came to the castle.

Bediya marvelled at her story and said, 'O my sister, this is a wonder of wonders! By Allah, this Seif el Mulouk is indeed a man! But why did he leave his father and mother and betake himself to travel and expose himself to these perils?' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'I have a mind to tell thee the first part of his story; but shame of thee hinders me therefrom.' Quoth Bediya, 'Why shouldst thou have shame of me, seeing that thou art my sister and my friend and there is much between thee and me and I know thou seekest me nought but

good? Tell me then what thou hast to say and be not abashed at me and conceal nothing from me.' 'By Allah,' answered Dauleh Khatoun, 'all the calamities that have betided this poor fellow have been on thine account and because of thee!' 'How so, O my sister?' asked Bediya, and the other said, 'Know that he saw thy portrait wroughten on a tunic that thy father sent to Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!) and he opened it not neither looked at it, but despatched it, with other presents, to Aasim ben Sefwan, King of Egypt, who gave it, still unopened, to his son Seif el Mulouk. The latter unfolded the tunic, thinking to put it on, and seeing thy portrait, became enamoured thereof; wherefore he came forth, love-distraught, in quest of thee, and left his people and kingdom and suffered all these perils and hardships on thine account.'

Night dcclxxiv.

When Bediyà heard this, she blushed and was confounded at Dauleh Khatoun and said, 'This may never be; for mankind accord not with the Jinn.' Then Dauleh Khatoun went on to praise Seif el Mulouk and extol his beauty and fashion and prowess and qualities, saying, 'For God's sake and mine, O my sister, come and speak with him, though but one word!' But Bediya el Jemal said, 'This that thou sayest I will not hear, neither will I assent to thee therein;' and it was as if she heard nought of what the other said and as if no love of Seif el Mulouk and his beauty and fashion and prowess had gotten hold upon her heart. Then said Dauleh Khatoun, 'O Bediya el Jemal, by the milk we have sucked, I and thou, and by that which is graven on the seal of Solomon (on whom be peace!), hearken to these my words; for I pledged myself, in the Castle of Japhet, to show him thy face. So, God on thee, show thyself to him once, for the love of me, and look thyself on him!' And she ceased not to weep and implore her and kiss her hands and feet, till

she consented and said, 'For thy sake, I will show him my face once.'

With that Dauleh Khatoun's heart was glad and she kissed her hands and feet. Then she went to the great pavilion in the garden and bade her women spread it with carpets and set up a couch of gold and place the wine-vessels in order; after which she went in to Seif and Saïd, whom she found seated in their lodging, and gave the former the glad tidings of the accomplishment of his wish, saying, 'Go to the pavilion in the garden, thou and thy brother, and hide yourselves there, so none in the palace may see you, till I come to you with Bediya el Jemal.' So they rose and repaired to the pavilion, where they found the couch of gold set and furnished with cushions, and meat and wine set ready. So they sat awhile, whilst Seif bethought him of his beloved and his breast was straitened and love and longing beset him: wherefore he rose and went forth from the vestibule of the pavilion. Saïd would have followed him, but he said to him, 'O my brother, follow me not, but abide in thy place, till I return to thee.' So Saïd abode seated, whilst Seif went down into the garden, drunken with the wine of desire and distracted for excess of passion and love-longing: yearning agitated him and transport overcame him and he recited the following verses:

O thou gloriously fair,[1] I have no one but thee; I'm the thrall of thy love. Oh, have pity on me!
Thou'rt all that I seek, my desire and my joy, And mine entrails refuse to love other than thee.
Would I knew if thou knowst of my night-long lament, Sleepless-lidded and weeping with tears like a sea.
Bid slumber alight on my lids, so perchance In the visions of dreams I thine image may see.

[1] *Bediya el Jemal.*

Oh, show favour to one, who's distracted for love, And his life from the deaths of thy cruelty free!
So may Allah increase thee in beauty and joy And grant that all creatures thy ransom may be!
At the last, neath my banner all lovers shall rise And all fair ones to gather neath thine shall agree.

Then he wept and recited these also:

All my desire is for a maid, who passeth all in charms; Within my inmost soul she dwells, my heart's most secret core.
Lo, if I speak, my speech is of her charms, and if I'm dumb, She is the cynosure of all my thoughts for evermore.

Then he wept sore and recited the following:

A flame is in my liver, that rages ever higher; My wish art thou of wishes, and longsome is desire.
To thee and to none other I bend and crave thy grace, (For lovers are long-suffering,) so thou mayst turn from ire
And rigour and take pity on one whose body love Hath worn and racked, whose entrails with passion are on fire.
Relent, then; yea, be gracious, show favour and be kind; Ne'er, ne'er will I renounce thee nor of thy service tire.

And also these:

Cares on me came, what time there came the love of thee, And sleep as cruel is as thou thyself to me.
The messenger brings news to me that thou art wroth: Now God forfend the ill whereof he tells should be!

Presently Saïd grew weary of awaiting him and going forth in quest of him, found him walking in the garden, in a state of distraction, reciting the following verses:

By Allah, by Allah the Great and eke by His virtue, the wight[1] The chapter[2] who chanteth aloud of the Koran, "Creator" that hight,
The eyes of me range not at will o'er the beauties of those that I see,
But thine image, Bediya, alone, is my bosom-companion by night!

[1] *Quære* Mohammed.
[2] *Koran* xxxv., better known as the Chapter of the Angels.

So he joined him and they walked about the garden together and ate of its fruits.

Meanwhile, the two princesses came to the pavilion and entering, sat down on the couch of gold, beside which was a window that gave upon the garden. The eunuchs set before them all manner rich meats and they ate, Dauleh Khatoun feeding her foster-sister by mouthfuls, till they were satisfied; when the former called for divers kinds of sweetmeats, and they ate what they would of them and washed their hands. After this, Dauleh Khatoun made ready wine and set on the drinking-vessels and flagons and proceeded to fill and give Bediya to drink, filling for herself and drinking in turn. Then Bediya looked from the window into the garden and gazed upon the fruits and branches that were therein, till her eyes fell on Seif el Mulouk, as he wandered about the garden, followed by Saïd, and she heard him recite verses, pouring forth copious tears the while.

The sight cost her a thousand sighs and she turned to Dauleh Khatoun and said to her (and indeed the wine sported with her senses), 'O my sister, who is that young man I see in the garden, distraught, love-lorn, melancholy, sighing?' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'Dost thou give me leave to bring him hither, that we may look on him?' And Bediya answered, 'If thou canst avail to bring him, do so.' So Dauleh Khatoun called to him, saying, 'O king's son, come up hither and bring us thy beauty and thy grace!' Seif knew her voice and came up into the pavilion; but no sooner had he set eyes on Bediya el Jemal, than he fell down in a swoon; whereupon Dauleh Khatoun sprinkled a little rose-water on him and he came to himself. Night dcclxxv.

Then he rose and kissed the earth before Bediya, who was amazed at his beauty and loveliness; and Dauleh

Khatoun said to her, 'Know, O princess, that this is Seif el Mulouk, to whom, by the ordinance of God the Most High, I owe my deliverance, and he it is who hath endured all manner of afflictions on thine account: wherefore I would have thee look on him with favour.' With this Bediya laughed and said, 'And who keeps faith, that this youth should do so? For there is no [true] love in men.' 'O princess,' answered Seif, 'never shall lack of faith be in me, and all men are not created alike.' And he wept before her and recited these verses:

Harkye, Bediya el Jemal, have ruth upon a wight, Whom thine enchanting, wicked eye hath brought to parlous plight.
By the fair colours in thy cheeks so featly that combine, The colour of the anemone, rose-ruddy, ay, and white,
Afflict not with abandonment one who is sick to death; For long estrangement, see, my frame is worn away outright.
This is the utmost of my wish, the end of my desire, Though unto union should I strive to win, if but I might.

Then he wept sore and love and longing got the mastery over him and he greeted her with the following verses:

Peace from a lover be on thee, a slave of love in vain, Still do the generous the approof of [God] the Generous gain.
Peace be upon thee! Never fail thine image to my dreams Nor hall nor chamber ever cease thy presence to contain!
Indeed, I'm jealous over thee; I may not name thy name. Surely belovéd, come what may, to lover should be fain.
Cut thou not off thy kindnesses from him who loves thee dear; For grief destroys him; yea, he is for suffering all forslain.
I watch the shining stars, and they affright me; ay, my night, For stress of yearning and desire, is long on heart and brain.
What words of asking shall I speak, to help me to my wish? Resource nor patience any dele doth unto me remain.
Upon thee be the peace of God, in time of rigour; peace Be on thee from the lover sad, long-suffering, 'spite his pain!

Then, for the stress of his passion and desire, he repeated these verses also:

If any other be my aim, my lords, but you, Ne'er may I gain of you the grace for which I sue!
Who is there but yourselves doth loveliness comprise? Who else could e'er stir up my soul to love anew?
How should I be consoled for passion, I, indeed, Who've wasted all my life and all my breath for you?

When he had made an end of his verses, he wept sore and she said to him, 'O prince, I fear to grant thee entire acceptance, lest I find in thee neither love nor affection; for oftentimes men's virtues are few and their perfidy great and thou knowest how the lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), took Belkis to his love, but forsook her whenas he saw another fairer than she.' 'O my eye and my soul,' replied Seif, 'God hath not made all men alike, and I, if it be His will, will keep my troth and die at thy feet. Thou shalt see what I will do in accordance with my words and God is my warrant for that I say.' Quoth Bediya, 'Sit and be of good heart and swear to me by thy religion and let us covenant together that we will not be false to each other; and may God the Most High punish whichever of us breaketh faith!'

So he sat down and laid his hand in hers and they swore to each other that neither of them would ever prefer to the other any one, either of mankind or of the Jinn.' Then they embraced awhile and wept for excess of joy, whilst passion overcame Seif el Mulouk and he recited the following verses:

I weep for passion and for love and longing passing sore; Ay, and desire of her my heart and soul do weary for.
Sore is my suffering for the length of severance from thee And all too short my arm and weak to reach my wishes' shore.
Yea, and my grief for that whereby my fortitude's made strait, Unto the railer doth reveal my bosom's secret sore.

The compass of my patience, once so wide, is narrow grown, Nor is there left me any strength with trouble to wage war.
I wonder, will God e'er reknit our sundered lives and heal My heart of all the pain and care that rankle at its core!

Then Seif el Mulouk arose and walked in the garden and Bediya el Jemal arose also and went forth a-walking, followed by a slave-girl bearing food and a flask of wine. The princess sat down and the damsel set the food and wine before her: nor was it long before they were joined by Seif el Mulouk, whom Bediya received with open arms and they sat awhile, eating and drinking. Then said she to him, 'O king's son, [thou must now go to the garden of Irem, where dwells my grandmother, and seek her consent to our marriage. My slave-girl Merjaneh will convey thee thither and there] thou wilt see a great pavilion of red satin, lined with green silk. Take courage and enter the pavilion boldly and thou wilt see therein an old woman sitting on a couch of red gold set with pearls and jewels. Salute her with courtesy and worship; then look at the foot of the couch, where thou wilt see a pair of sandals of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels. Take them and kiss them and lay them on thy head; then put them under thy right armpit and stand before the old woman, in silence and with thy head bowed down. If she ask thee who thou art and how thou camest thither, make her no answer, but abide silent till Merjaneh enter, when she will speak with her and seek to win her approof for thee and cause her look on thee with favour; so haply God the Most High may incline her heart to thee and she may grant thee thy wish.'

Night dcclxxvi.

Then she called Merjaneh and said to her, 'As thou lovest me, do my errand this day and be not slothful therein! If thou accomplish it, thou shalt be free, for the sake of God the Most High, and I will deal bounteously by thee and there shall be none dearer to me than thou,

nor will I discover my secrets to any but thee. So, by my love for thee, do this my occasion and be not slothful therein.' 'O my lady and light of mine eyes,' replied Merjaneh, 'tell me what is it thou requirest of me, that I may accomplish it on my head and eyes.' Quoth Bediya, 'Take this mortal on thy shoulders and carry him to the garden of Irem and the pavilion of my grandmother, my father's mother, and be careful of him. When thou hast brought him into her presence and seest him take the slippers and do them worship, and hearest her ask him who he is and how and why he came thither, do thou come forward in haste and salute her and say to her, "O my lady, I am she who brought him hither and he is the king's son of Egypt. It is he who slew the son of the Blue King and delivered the princess Dauleh Khatoun from the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and brought her back safe to her father: and I have brought him to thee, that he may give thee the glad news of her safety: so be thou gracious to him."

Then do thou say to her, "God on thee, O my lady, is not this young man handsome?" She will reply, "Yes:" and do thou rejoin, "O my lady, indeed he is accomplished in honour and manhood and valour and he is lord and King of Egypt and possesseth all praiseworthy qualities." If she say to thee, "What is his occasion?" do thou make answer, "My lady saluteth thee and saith to thee, how long shall she abide at home, a maid and unmarried? Indeed, the time is long upon her. What then is thine intent in leaving her without a husband and why dost thou not marry her in thy lifetime and that of her mother, like other girls?" If she say, "How shall we do to marry her? An she have any one in mind, let her tell us of him, and we will do her will as far as may be," do thou answer, "O my lady, thy daughter saith to thee, 'Ye were minded aforetime to marry me to Solomon

(on whom be peace !) and wrought him my portrait on a tunic. But he had no lot in me; so he sent the tunic to the King of Egypt and he gave it to his son, who saw my portrait wroughten thereon and fell in love with me: wherefore he left kingdom and father and mother and turning his back on the world and all that is therein, went forth at a venture, a wanderer, love-distraught, and hath suffered the utmost perils and hardships for my sake.' Now thou seest his beauty and grace, and her heart is enamoured of him; so, if ye have a mind to marry her, marry her to this young man and forbid her not from him, for he is a passing goodly youth and King of Egypt, nor wilt thou find a comelier than he; and if ye will not give her to him, she will slay herself and marry none, neither man nor genie." And look, O my minnie Merjaneh,' continued Bediya el Jemal, 'how thou mayst do with my grandmother, to win her consent, and beguile her with soft words, so haply she may do my desire.' Quoth the damsel, 'O my lady, upon my head and eyes, I will serve thee and do what shall content thee.'

Then she took Seif el Mulouk on her shoulders and said to him, 'Shut thine eyes.' He did so and she flew up with him into the sky; and after awhile she said to him, 'O king's son, open thine eyes.' He opened them and found himself in a garden, which was none other than the garden of Irem; and she showed him the pavilion and bade him enter; whereupon he pronounced the name of God and entering, saw the old queen sitting on the couch, attended by her waiting-women. So he drew near her with courtesy and reverence and taking the sandals, did as Bediya had enjoined him. Quoth the old woman, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither? Wherefore dost thou take the sandals and kiss them and when didst thou ask a favour of me and I did not grant it thee?'

With this in came Merjaneh and saluting her reverently, repeated to her what Bediya el Jemal had told her; which when the old queen heard, she cried out at her and was wroth with her and said, 'How shall there be accord between mankind and the Jinn?' But Seif answered her, saying, 'Indeed, I will conform to thy will and be thy servant and die in thy love and will keep faith with thee and regard none but thee: so shalt thou see my truth and lack of falsehood and the excellence of my honourable dealing with thee, if it be the will of God the Most High!' The old woman bowed her head and pondered awhile; after which she raised her head and said to him, 'O fair youth, wilt thou indeed keep faith and troth?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'by Him who raised the heavens and spread out the earth upon the water, I will indeed keep faith!'

Quoth she, 'God willing, I will accomplish thee thy desire: but now go thou into the garden and take thy pleasure therein and eat of its fruits, that have neither like nor equal in the world, whilst I send for my son Shehyal and talk with him of the matter. Nothing but good shall come of it, so God please, for he will not cross me nor depart from my commandment and I will marry thee with his daughter Bediya el Jemal. So be of good heart, O Seif el Mulouk, for she shall assuredly be thy wife.' The prince thanked her and kissing her hands and feet, went forth from her into the garden; whilst she turned to Merjaneh and said to her, 'Go and find my son Shehyal and bring him to me, wherever he is.' So Merjaneh went out in quest of King Shehyal and found him and brought him to his mother.

Meanwhile, as Seif el Mulouk walked in the garden, five Jinn of the people of the Blue King espied him and said to each other, 'Whence cometh yonder fellow and who brought him hither? Belike it is he who slew the

Blue King's son: but we will go about with him and question him and find out who he is.' So they came softly up to him, as he sat in a corner of the garden, and sitting down by him, said to him, 'O fair youth, thou didst rarely in killing the son of the Blue King and delivering Dauleh Khatoun from him; for he was a perfidious dog and had played the traitor with her, and had not God appointed thee to her, she had never won free. But how didst thou slay him?' Seif looked at them and deeming them of the folk of the garden, answered, 'I slew him by means of this ring on my finger.' Therewith they were assured that it was he who had slain him; so they seized on him, two of them holding his hands, whilst other two held his feet and the fifth his mouth, lest he should cry out and King Shehyal's people should hear him and rescue him.

Then they lifted him up and flying away with him, stayed not in their flight till they set him down before their king and said to him, 'O king of the age, we bring thee the murderer of thy son.' 'Where is he?' asked the king: and they replied, 'This is he.' So the Blue King said to Seif, 'How slewest thou my son, the darling of my heart and the light of my eyes, and why didst thou slay him without right, for all he had done thee no injury?' Quoth the prince, 'I slew him, because of his wrongdoing and frowardness, in that he used to seize kings' daughters and sever them from their families and carry them to the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and transgress against them. I slew him by means of this ring on my finger, and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill is the abiding-place [to which he went].'

Therewithal the king was certified that this was indeed he who slew his son; so he called his viziers and said to them, 'Without doubt, this is the murderer of my son: so how do you counsel me to deal with him? Shall I slay

him after the foulest fashion or torture him with the most grievous torments or how?' Quoth the chief vizier, 'Cut off his limbs, one a day.' And another said, 'Beat him grievously every day [till he die].' And a third, 'Cut him in half.' A fourth, 'Cut off all his fingers and burn him with fire.' And a fifth, 'Crucify him.' And so on, each speaking according to his judgment.

Now there was with the Blue King an old amir, versed in affairs and experienced in the circumstance of the times, and he said, 'O king of the age, I have somewhat to say to thee, and it is for thee to judge whether thou wilt hearken to me or not.' Now he was the king's privy counsellor and the chief officer of his empire, and he was wont to give ear to his word and act by his counsel and gainsay him not in aught. So he rose and kissing the ground before the king, said to him, 'O king of the age, if I counsel thee in this matter, wilt thou follow my counsel and grant me indemnity?' 'Set forth thine opinion,' answered the king, 'and thou shalt have indemnity.' Then said he, 'O king of the age, if thou wilt accept my advice and hearken to my word, to slay this young man now is inexpedient, for that he is thy prisoner and in thy power, and whenas thou wilt, thou mayst lay thy hand on him and do with him as thou wilt. Have patience, then, O king of the age, for he hath entered the garden of Irem and is become the [affianced] husband of Bediya el Jemal, daughter of King Shehyal, and one of them. Thy people seized him there and brought him hither and he did not hide his case from them or from thee. So, if thou kill him, King Shehyal will seek to avenge him of thee and wage war on thee for his daughter's sake, and thou canst not avail to cope with him nor make head against his power.' So the king hearkened to his counsel and commanded to imprison Seif el Mulouk.

Meanwhile, Bediya's grandmother, her son Shehyal being come to her, despatched Merjaneh in quest of Seif el Mulouk; but she found him not and returning to her mistress, said, 'I found him not in the garden.' So the old queen sent for the gardeners and questioned them of the prince. Quoth they, 'We saw him sitting under a tree, and five of the Blue King's people alighted by him and spoke with him awhile, after which they took him up and stopping his mouth, flew away with him.' When the old queen heard this, it was no light matter to her and she was exceeding wroth: so she rose to her feet and said to her son, King Shehyal, 'Art thou a king and shall the Blue King's people come to our garden and carry off our guests unhindered, and thou alive?' And she proceeded to provoke him, saying, 'It behoves not that any transgress against us in thy lifetime.' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'this man slew the Blue King's son, who was a genie, and God threw him into his hand. He is a genie and I am a genie: how then shall I go to him and make war on him for the sake of a mortal?' But she answered, saying, 'Go to him and demand our guest of him, and if he be still alive and the Blue King deliver him to thee, take him and return; but if he have slain him, take the king alive and all his household and family and bring them to me, that I may slaughter them with my own hand and lay waste his dominions. Except thou do what I bid thee, I will not hold thee quit of my milk and my bringing up of thee shall be counted unlawful.'

Night dcclxxviii.

So Shehyal rose and assembling his troops, set out, in deference to his mother, desiring to content her and her friends, and in accordance with that which had been foreordained from all eternity; nor did they leave journeying till they came to the country of the Blue King, who met them with his army and gave them battle. The Blue King's host was put to the rout and he and all his sons,

great and small, and grandees and officers taken and bound and brought before King Shehyal, who said to the captive monarch, 'O Azrec,[1] where is my guest, the mortal Seif el Mulouk?' 'O Shehyal,' answered the Blue King, 'thou art a genie and I am a genie, and is it on account of a mortal, who slew my son, the darling of my heart and the delight of my soul, that thou hast done all this and spilt the blood of so many thousand Jinn?'

'Leave this talk,' rejoined Shehyal; 'knowest thou not that a single mortal is better, in God's sight, than a thousand Jinn? If he be alive, bring him to me, and I will set thee free and all whom I have taken of thy sons and people; but if thou have slain him, I will slaughter thee and thy sons.' 'O king,' said Azrec, 'is this fellow of more account with thee than my son?' Quoth Shehyal, 'Thy son was an evildoer, who carried off kings' daughters and shut them up in the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and evil entreated them.' Then said the Blue King, 'He is with me; but make thou peace between us.' So he delivered the prince to Shehyal, who made peace between him and the Blue King, and the latter gave him a writ of absolution for the death of his son. Then Shehyal conferred robes of honour on them and entertained the Blue King and his troops hospitably for three days, after which he took the prince and carried him back to the old queen, who rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy, and Shehyal marvelled at the beauty of Seif el Mulouk and his grace and perfection.

Then Seif related to him his story from beginning to end and Shehyal said, 'O my mother, since it is thy pleasure that this should be, I hearken and obey all that it pleaseth thee to command; wherefore do thou carry him to Serendib and there celebrate his wedding and

[1] Blue.

marry him to her in all state, for he is a goodly youth and hath endured horrors for her sake.' So she and her maidens set out with Seif el Mulouk for Serendib and foregathered with Dauleh Khatoun and Bediya el Jemal in the Queen of Hind's garden. The old queen acquainted the two princesses with all that had passed between Seif el Mulouk and the Blue King; after which King Taj el Mulouk assembled the grandees of his realm and drew up the contract of marriage between Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal; and he conferred splendid robes of honour and gave banquets to the people.

Then Seif el Mulouk rose, and kissing the earth before the king, said to him, 'Pardon, O king! I would fain ask somewhat of thee, but fear lest thou refuse it to me and disappoint my expectation.' 'By Allah,' answered Taj el Mulouk, 'though thou soughtest my soul of me, I would not refuse it to thee, after all the kindness thou hast done me!' Quoth Seif, 'I wish thee to marry the princess Dauleh Khatoun to my brother Saïd, and we will both be thy servants.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Taj el Mulouk, and assembling his grandees a second time, let draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and Saïd; after which they scattered gold and silver [among the people] and the king bade decorate the city. So they held high festival and Seif and Saïd went in to their brides on the same night.

As for Seif el Mulouk, he abode forty days with Bediya el Jemal, at the end of which time she said to him, 'O king's son, is there any regret for aught left in thy heart?' 'God forbid!' answered he. 'I have accomplished my quest and there abideth no regret in my heart: but I would fain visit my father and mother in Egypt and see if they continue well or not.' So Bediya commanded a company of her people to convey them to Egypt, and they carried them to Cairo, where Seif and Saïd foregathered

with their parents and abode with them a week; after which they took leave of them and returned to Serendib; and after this, whenever they longed for their people, they used to go to them and return. Then Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal abode in all delight and solace of life, as did Saïd and Dauleh Khatoun, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. So glory be to the Living One who dieth not, who createth all creatures and decreeth to them death and who is the First, without beginning, and the Last, without end! This is all that hath come down to us of the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal.

HASSAN OF BASSORA AND THE KING'S DAUGHTER OF THE JINN.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a rich merchant, who dwelt in the land of Bassora. [In due time] God the all-hearing and knowing decreed that he should be admitted to the mercy of the Most High; so he died, leaving a widow and a son,[1] by name Hassan, a youth of surpassing beauty and grace, to inherit his wealth. They laid him out and buried him, after which Hassan betook himself to the company of folk [of lewd life], women and boys, consorting with them in gardens and making them [banquets of] meat and wine for months together and occupying himself not with traffic,

[1] In the Calcutta (Macnaghten) Edition the merchant is described as having two sons, one a brazier and the other a goldsmith, but, as the brazier does not again make his appearance in the story, I have followed the Breslau text, which mentions one son only, the goldsmith Hassan.

like as his father had done, for that he exulted in [the assured possession of] abundant wealth.

After he had led this life for some time and had wasted all his ready money, he sold all his father's lands and houses and [spent their price in riotous living, till] there remained in his hand nothing, neither little nor much, nor was one of his friends left who knew him. He abode thus, anhungred, he and his mother, three days, and on the fourth day, as he went along, unknowing whither, there met him a man of his father's friends, who questioned him of his case. So he told him what had befallen him and the other said, 'O my son, I have a brother, a goldsmith; if thou wilt, thou shalt be with him and learn his craft and become skilled therein.' Hassan consented and accompanied him to his brother, to whom he commended him, saying, 'This is my son; do thou teach him for my sake.' So Hassan abode with the goldsmith and busied himself with the craft; and God prospered him, [so that he became proficient therein] and [in due course] opened a shop for himself.

One day, as he sat in his shop in the bazaar, there came up to him a Persian, with a great white beard and a white[1] turban on his head, having the appearance of a merchant, who looked at his handiwork and examined it knowingly. It pleased him and he shook his head, saying, 'By Allah, thou art a cunning goldsmith!' And he continued to look at his wares, whilst Hassan read in an old book he had in his hand and the folk were taken up with his beauty and grace and symmetry, till the hour of afternoon prayer, when the shop became clear of people and the Persian accosted the young man, saying, 'O my son, thou

[1] The white turban is the distinctive sign of the true-believer and was adopted by the Persian to conceal his true character, he being (as appears from the sequel) a Magian or fire-worshipper.

art a goodly youth! What book is that? Thou hast no father and I have no son, and I know an art, than which there is no goodlier in the world. Many have sought of me instruction therein, but I consented not to teach it to any of them; yet will I gladly teach it to thee, for the love of thee hath gotten hold upon my heart and I will make thee my son and set up a barrier between thee and poverty, so shalt thou be quit of this handicraft [and toil] with hammer and charcoal and fire.'

Night dcclxxix.

'O my lord,' said Hassan, 'and when wilt thou teach me this?' 'To-morrow,' answered the Persian, 'if it please God the Most High, I will come to thee and make thee fine gold of copper in thy presence.' Whereupon Hassan rejoiced and sat talking with the Persian till nightfall, when he took leave of him and going in to his mother, saluted her and ate with her; but he was dazed, without thought or reason, by reason of the hold that the stranger's words had gotten upon his heart. So she questioned him and he told her what had passed between himself and the Persian, which when she heard, her heart fluttered and she strained him to her breast, saying, 'O my son, beware of hearkening to the talk of the folk, and especially of the Persians, and obey them not in aught; for they are sharpers and tricksters, who profess the art of alchemy and swindle people and take their good and devour it in vain.' 'O my mother,' answered Hassan, 'we are poor folk and have nothing he may covet, that he should put a cheat on us. Indeed, this Persian is an old man of worth and the signs of virtue are manifest on him; God hath inclined his heart to me and he hath adopted me to son.' She was silent for chagrin, and he passed the night with a heart full of what the Persian had said to him, nor did sleep visit him, for the excess of his joy therein.

On the morrow, he rose and taking the keys, opened the shop, nor was it long before the Persian made his

appearance. Hassan rose to him and would have kissed his hands; but he forbade him from this and said to him, 'O Hassan, set on the melting-pot and mount the bellows.' So he did as the stranger bade him and lighted the charcoal. Then said the other, 'O my son, hast thou any copper?' And he answered, 'I have a broken dish.' So he caused him cut it into small pieces with the shears and cast it into the crucible and blow up the fire with the bellows, till the copper became liquid, when he took from his turban a folded paper and opening it, sprinkled thereout into the pot about half a drachm of somewhat like eye-powder. Then he bade Hassan blow the bellows, and he did so, till the contents of the crucible became a lump of gold.

When he saw this, he was at his wits' end for joy and taking the ingot [forth of the melting-pot], handled it and tried it with the file and found it pure gold of the finest quality: whereupon his reason fled and he was dazed with excess of delight and bent over the Persian's hand to kiss it. But he forbade him, saying, 'Carry the ingot to the market and sell it and take the price in haste and speak not.' So Hassan went down into the market and gave the ingot to the broker, who took it and rubbed it [with the touchstone] and found it pure gold. So they opened the biddings at ten thousand dirhems and the merchants bid against one another for it up to fifteen thousand dirhems, at which price he sold it and taking the money, went home and told his mother what had passed, saying, 'O my mother, I have learnt this art.' But she laughed at him, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And she was silent for vexation.

Night dcclxxx.

Then, of his ignorance, he took a [brass] mortar and returning to the shop, laid it before the Persian, who was still sitting there and who said to him, 'O my son, what

wilt thou do with this mortar?' 'Let us put it in the fire,' answered Hassan, 'and make of it ingots of gold.' The Persian laughed and said, 'O my son, art thou mad that thou wouldst go down into the market with two ingots of gold in one day? Knowst thou not that the folk would suspect us and we should lose our lives? If I teach thee this craft, thou must practise it but once a year; for that will suffice thee from year to year.' 'True, O my lord,' answered Hassan, and sitting down, threw charcoal on the fire and set on the melting-pot. Quoth the Persian, 'What wilt thou, O my son?' And Hassan replied, 'Teach me this craft.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried the Persian, laughing. 'Verily, O my son, thou art little of wit and in nowise fitted for this noble craft. Did ever any in his life learn this art in the beaten way or in the markets? If we busy ourselves with it here, the folk will say, "These practise alchemy;" and the magistrates will hear of us, and we shall lose our lives. Wherefore, O my son, if thou desire this forthright, come with me to my house.'

So Hassan closed his shop and went with him; but by the way he bethought him of his mother's words and stood still, with bowed head, thinking in himself a thousand thoughts. The Persian turned and seeing him thus, laughed and said to him, 'Art thou mad? What! I purpose thee good in my heart and thou misdoubtest I will harm thee! But, if thou fear to go with me to my house, I will go with thee to thine and teach thee there.' 'It is well, O uncle,' answered Hassan, and the Persian said, 'Go thou before me.' So Hassan led the way to his own house, where he left the Persian standing at the door, and going in, told his mother of his coming. She set the house in order for them and when she had made an end of furnishing and adorning it, her son bade

her go to one of the neighbours' houses. So she left the house to them and went her way, whereupon Hassan brought in the Persian.

Then he took a dish and going to the market, returned with food, which he set before the Persian, saying, 'Eat, O my lord, that there may be bread and salt between us, and may God the Most High do vengeance upon him who is unfaithful to the bond of bread and salt!' The Persian smiled and answered, 'True, O my son! Who knoweth the virtue of bread and salt?' Then he came forward and ate with Hassan, till they were satisfied; after which, 'O my son Hassan,' said he, 'bring us some sweetmeats.' So Hassan went to the market, rejoicing in his words, and returned with ten saucers of sweetmeats, of which they both ate and the Persian said, 'May God abundantly requite thee, O my son! It is the like of thee with whom folk company and to whom they discover their secrets and teach what may profit him!' Then said he, 'O Hassan, bring the gear.'

No sooner did Hassan hear this than he went forth, like a colt let out to grass in the Spring, and hastening to the shop, fetched the gear and set it before the Persian, who pulled out a paper and said, 'O Hassan, wert thou not dearer to me than my son, I would not let thee into this mystery, for I have none of the elixir left save what is in this paper; but by and by I will bring the ingredients whereof it is composed and make it before thee and teach thee its fashion; and do thou observe, when I compound the simples and lay them before thee. Know, O my son Hassan, that thou must lay to every ten pounds of copper half a drachm of that which is in this paper, and the whole will presently become virgin gold without alloy. There are in this paper three ounces, Egyptian measure, and when it is spent, I will make thee more.' Hassan took the packet and finding therein a yellow powder, finer

than before, said to the Persian, 'O my lord, what is the name of this substance and where is it found and how is it made?' But he laughed and said, 'Of what dost thou question? Indeed, thou art an impertinent boy! Do and hold thy peace.'

So Hassan arose and fetching a [brass] bowl from the house, cut it up and threw it into the melting-pot; then he scattered on it a little of the powder and it became a lump of pure gold. When he saw this, he rejoiced mightily and was filled with amazement and could think of nothing but the gold; but, whilst he was occupied with taking up the ingot from the melting-pot, the Persian pulled out of his turban in haste a packet of Cretan henbane, which if an elephant smelt, he would sleep from night to night, and cutting off a little thereof, put it in a piece of sweetmeat. Then said he to Hassan, 'O Hassan, thou art become my very son and dearer to me than my soul and my wealth and I have a daughter whose like never have eyes beheld for beauty and grace and symmetry. Now I see that thou befittest none but her and she none but thee; wherefore, if it be the will of God, I will marry thee to her.' 'I am thy servant,' replied Hassan; 'and whatsoever thou dost with me [of good] will be [credited to thee] with God the Most High.' 'O my son,' rejoined the Persian, 'have patience and good shall betide thee.'

Therewithal he gave him the piece of sweetmeat and he took it and kissed his hand, knowing not what was hidden for him in the future. Then he put it in his mouth, but hardly had he swallowed it, when he fell down, head foremost, and was lost to the world; whereupon the Persian rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'Thou hast fallen into my snare, O good-for-nothing dog of the Arabs! This many a year have I sought thee, O Hassan, and now I have got thee!' Then he girt himself and binding Hassan hand and foot, laid him in a chest, which he

emptied for the purpose, and locked it upon him. Moreover, he emptied another chest and laying therein all Hassan's valuables, together with the ingot of gold [and the price of that which he had sold], locked it.

Then he ran to the market and fetching a porter, took up the two chests and made off with them without the city, where he set them down on the sea-shore, hard by a vessel at anchor there. Now this vessel was freighted by the Persian and her captain was awaiting him; so, when the sailors saw him, they came to him and carried the chests on board. Then the Persian called out to the captain, saying, 'Up and let us begone, for I have done my errand and compassed my desire.' So the captain cried out to the crew, saying, 'Weigh anchor and set sail!' And the ship put out to sea with a fair wind.

Meanwhile, Hassan's mother awaited him till nightfall, but heard neither sound nor news of him; so she went to the house and finding it open, entered and saw none therein and missed the chests and valuables; wherefore she knew that her son was lost and that destiny had overtaken him and buffeted her face and tore her clothes, crying out and lamenting and saying, 'Alas, my son! Alas, the fruit of my entrails!' And she recited the following verses:

My patience fails me and unrest is sore upon me; yea, Lament and sickness, after you, redouble on me aye.
By God, no fortitude have I to bear the loss of you! How should I patience have, when all my hopes are fled away?
Since he I love is gone, in sleep how should I have delight? Who can take pleasure in a life of misery and dismay?
Thou'rt gone and hast made desolate both house and folk and eke Troubled the limpid streams whereat I did my thirst allay.
Thou wast mine aid in all distress; my glory and my pride Among mankind, in every need my comfort and my stay.
Nor hast thou ever, until now, been absent from my sight, But unto me thou didst return again, ere ended day!

And she ceased not to weep and bemoan herself till the morning, when the neighbours came in to her and questioned her of her son, and she told them what had befallen him with the Persian, assured that she should never see him again. Then she went round about the house weeping, till she espied two lines written upon the wall; so she sent for a learned man, who read them to her; and they were as follows:

The phantom of Leila came to me in dreams, tow'rds the break of day, When slumber ruled and my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay;
But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me, I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

When she heard this, she cried out and said, 'Yes, O my son! Indeed, the house is desolate and distant the place of visitation!' Then the neighbours took leave of her and went away, after they had prayed that she might be vouchsafed patience and speedy reunion with her son; but she ceased not to weep all tides of the day and watches of the night and built a tomb amiddleward the house, on which she let write Hassan's name and the date of his loss, and thenceforward she quitted it not, but sojourned by it night and day.

Now this Persian was a Magian, who hated Muslims with an exceeding hatred and destroyed all who fell into his power. He was a lewd and filthy villain, an alchemist, an astrologer and a seeker after hidden treasures, such an one as he of whom quoth the poet:

A dog, the son of a dog, is he and his grandfather, too, was one; And when was there ever aught of good in a dog, of a dog the son?

The name of this accursed wretch was Behram the Magian, and he was wont, every year, to take a Muslim and slaughter him for a purpose of his own. So, when he had carried out his plot against Hassan the goldsmith,

they sailed on till dark, when the ship made fast to the shore for the night, and at sunrise, when they set sail again, Behram bade his slaves and servants bring him the chest in which was Hassan. They did so and he opened it and taking out the young man, made him smell to vinegar and blew a powder into his nostrils. Hassan sneezed and cast up the henbane; then, opening his eyes, he looked about him and found himself on board a ship in full sail, amiddleward the sea, and saw the Persian sitting by him; wherefore he knew that the accursed Magian had put a cheat on him and that he had fallen into the very peril of which his mother had bidden him beware. So he spoke the words, which whoso uttereth shall not be confounded, that is to say, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! O my God, be Thou gracious to me in Thine ordinance and give me patience to endure this Thine affliction, O Lord of all creatures!'

Then he turned to the Persian and bespoke him softly, saying, 'O my father, what fashion is this and where is [the bond of] bread and salt and the oath thou sworest to me?' But Behram looked at him and answered, 'O dog, knoweth the like of me [the bond of] bread and salt? I have slain a thousand youths like thee, save one, and thou shalt make up the thousand.' And he cried out at him and Hassan was silent, knowing that the arrow of fate had overtaken him.

Night dcclxxxii.

Then the accursed wretch commanded to loose his bonds and they gave him a little water, whilst the Magian laughed and said, 'By the Fire and the Light and the Shade and the Heat, methought not thou wouldst fall into my toils! But the Fire gave me the victory over thee and helped me to lay hold upon thee, that I might accomplish my need and return and make thee a sacrifice

to it, so it may accept of me.' Quoth Hassan, 'Thou hast betrayed [the bond of] bread and salt.' Whereupon the Magian raised his hand and dealt him a buffet, that he fell and biting the deck, swooned away, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks. Then Behram bade his servants light him a fire and Hassan said, 'What wilt thou do with it?' 'This is the Fire, giver of light and sparks,' replied the Magian. 'This it is I worship, and if thou wilt worship it even as I, I will give thee half my wealth and marry thee to my daughter.' 'Out on thee!' cried Hassan. 'Thou art an infidel Magian, that worshippeth the Fire, instead of the All-powerful King, Creator of Night and Day; and this is nought but a calamity among faiths!'

At this the Magian was wroth and said to him, 'Wilt thou not then fall in with me, O dog of the Arabs, and enter my faith?' But Hassan consented not to this: so the accursed Magian arose and prostrating himself to the fire, bade his servants throw him down on his face. They did so, and he beat him with a whip of plaited hide, till his flanks were laid open, whilst he cried aloud for succour, but none succoured him, and besought protection, but none protected him. Then he raised his eyes to the All-powerful King and sought aid of Him, in the name of the Chosen Prophet. And indeed patience failed him; his tears ran down his cheeks, like rain, and he repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to Thee and eke to Fate, Content, if so Thou please, to suffer and to wait.
Unjustly have they dealt by me and sore oppressed: Belike Thou wilt the past with favours compensate.

Then the Magian commanded his slaves to raise him to a sitting posture and bring him meat and drink. So they set food before him; but he refused to eat or drink; and

Behram's heart was hardened against him and he ceased not to torment him day and night during the voyage, whilst Hassan took patience and humbled himself in supplication to God the Most High, to whom belong might and majesty.

They sailed the sea three months, till God the Most High sent forth upon them a contrary wind and the sea grew black and rose against the ship, by reason of the much wind; whereupon quoth the captain and the sailors, 'By Allah, this is all on account of yonder youth, who hath been these three months in torment with this Magian. Indeed, this is unlawful in the sight of God the Most High.' Then they rose against the Magian and slew his servants and all who were with him; which when he saw, he made sure of death and feared for himself. So he loosed Hassan from his bonds and pulling off the ragged clothes he had on, clad him in others. Moreover, he made his excuses to him and promised to teach him the craft and restore him to his native land, saying, 'O my son, bear me not malice for that I have done with thee.' Quoth Hassan, 'How can I ever again put faith in thee?' But Behram said, 'O my son, but for offence, there were no pardon. Indeed, I did all this with thee, but to try thy patience, and thou knowest that the case is altogether in God's hands.'

The sailors and the captain rejoiced in Hassan's release, and he called down blessings on them and praised God the Most High and thanked Him. With this the wind fell and the sky cleared, and they continued their voyage with a fair breeze. Then said Hassan to Behram, 'O Persian, whither goest thou?' 'O my son,' answered the Magian, 'I am bound for the Mountain of Clouds, where is the elixir which we use in alchemy.' And he swore to him by the Fire and the Light that he had no longer any cause to fear him. So Hassan's heart was

set at ease and he continued to eat and drink and sleep with the Magian, whilst the latter clad him in his own raiment.

Then they sailed on other three months, at the end of which time the ship came to an anchor off a long beach of pebbles of all colours, white and yellow and blue and black and what not, and the Magian rose and said to Hassan, 'Come, let us go ashore: for we have reached our destination.' So Hassan rose and landed with Behram, after the latter had commended his goods to the captain's care. They walked on inland, till they were out of sight of the ship, when Behram sat down and taking from his pocket a little drum of copper and a silken strap, wroughten in gold with talismanic characters, beat the drum with the strap, whereupon there arose a cloud of dust from the further side of the desert.

Hassan marvelled at the Magian's doings and was afraid of him: and he repented of having come ashore with him, and his colour changed. But Behram looked at him and said, 'What ails thee, O my son? By the fire and the light, thou hast nought to fear from me; and were it not that my occasion may not be accomplished save by thy means, I had not brought thee ashore. So rejoice in all good; for yonder cloud of dust is the dust of somewhat we will mount and which will aid us to traverse this desert and make the passage thereof easy to us.' Presently, the dust lifted and discovered three dromedaries, one of which Behram mounted and Hassan another. Then they loaded their victual on the third and fared on seven days, till they came to a wide champaign, in whose midst they saw a pavilion vaulted upon four columns of red gold; so they alighted and entering therein, ate and drank and rested there.

Night dcclxxxiii.

Presently, Hassan chanced to look aside and seeing

something lofty [in the distance], said to the Magian, 'O uncle, what is that?' 'It is a palace,' answered Behram. Quoth Hassan, 'Wilt thou not go thither, that we may enter and rest ourselves there and divert ourselves with viewing it?' But the Persian was wroth and said, 'Name not yonder palace to me; for therein dwells an enemy of mine, with whom there befell me somewhat whereof this is no time to tell thee.' Then he beat the drum and up came the dromedaries, and they mounted and fared on other seven days.

On the eighth day, the Magian said, 'O Hassan, what seest thou?' Quoth Hassan, 'I see clouds and mists between the east and the west.' 'That is neither clouds nor mists,' answered Behram, 'but a vast and lofty mountain, on which the clouds divide, and there are no clouds above it, for the excess of its height and the greatness of its elevation. Yonder mountain is the goal of my journey and thereon is what we seek. It is for that I brought thee hither, for my occasion may not be accomplished save at thy hands.' When Hassan heard this, he gave himself up for lost and said to the Magian, 'By the virtue of that thou worshippest and the faith in which thou believest, I conjure thee to tell me what is the occasion on which thou hast brought me!' Quoth Behram, 'The art of alchemy may not be successfully practised save by means of a herb, that grows in the place where the clouds pass and whereon they divide. Such a place is yonder mountain; the herb grows there and I purpose to send thee up thither [to gather it]; and when we have it, I will show thee the secret of this craft that thou desirest to learn.' Hassan answered, in his fear, 'It is well, O my master.' And indeed he despaired of life and wept for his separation from his mother and people and country, repenting him of having gainsaid her and reciting the following verses:

Consider but thy Lord His doings and how what Thou wouldst of quick relief He brings; nor at thy lot
Fret, nor despair, if thou affliction must endure; For in affliction's self what mercies are there not.

They fared on till they came to the foot of the mountain, where they halted and Hassan saw thereon a palace and said to Behram, 'What is yonder palace?' And he answered, 'It is the abode of Jinn and ghouls and devils.' Then the Magian alighted and making Hassan dismount also, kissed his head and said to him, 'Bear me not malice for that I did with thee, for I will keep guard over thee in thine ascent to the palace; and I conjure thee not to wrong me of aught thou shalt bring therefrom, and I and thou will share therein equally.' And Hassan answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then Behram opened a bag and taking out a handmill and a quantity of wheat, ground the latter in the mill and kneaded three cakes of the flour; after which he lighted a fire and baked them.

Then he took out the drum and beat it with the strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries. He chose out one of them and slew and skinned it; then turned to Hassan and said to him, 'Give ear, O my son Hassan, to what I am about to enjoin on thee.' And Hassan replied, 'It is well.' 'Lie down on this skin,' said Behram, 'and I will sew thee up therein and lay thee on the ground; whereupon the rocs will come to thee and carry thee up to the mountain-top. Take this knife with thee, and when thou feelest that the birds have set thee down, slit open the skin with the knife and come forth. They will take fright at thee and fly away; whereupon do thou look down and speak to me, and I will tell thee what to do.' So saying, he sewed him up in the skin, with the three cakes and a leathern bottle full of water, and withdrew to a distance.

Presently a roc pounced upon him and taking him up, flew away with him to the mountain-top and there set him

down. As soon as Hassan felt himself on the ground, he slit the skin and coming forth, called out to the Magian, who rejoiced at hearing his speech and danced for excess of joy, saying to him, 'Look behind thee and tell me what thou seest.' Hassan looked and seeing great store of rotten bones and wood, told Behram, who said to him, 'This is what we seek. Make six bundles of the wood and throw them down to me, for this is wherewithal we do alchemy.' So he threw him the six bundles and when he had gotten them, he said to Hassan, 'O good-for-nought, I have accomplished my need of thee; and now, if thou wilt, thou mayst abide on this mountain, or cast thyself down to the earth and perish.' So saying, he left him and went away, and Hassan exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! This accursed dog hath played the traitor with me!' And he sat bemoaning himself and reciting the following verses:

When God upon a man possessed of reasoning, Hearing and sight His will in aught to pass would bring,
He stops his ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling;
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back His wit, That therewithal he may receive admonishing.
So say thou not of aught that haps, "How happened it?" For fate and fortune fixed do order everything.

Night DCCLXXXIV.

Then he rose to his feet and looked right and left, after which he walked on along the mountain top, making sure of death. He fared on thus till he came to the other brow of the mountain, under which he saw a dark-blue foaming sea, swollen with clashing billows, each as it were a great mountain. So he sat down and repeated what he might of the Koran and besought God the Most High to ease him of his troubles, either by death or deliverance from that his strait. Then he recited for himself

the funeral-prayer and cast himself down into the sea; but, by God's grace, the winds bore him up, so that he reached the water unhurt, and the angel to whose charge the sea is committed watched over him, so that, by the decree of the Most High, the waves carried him safe to land. So he rejoiced and praised God the Most High and thanked Him; after which he walked on in quest of somewhat to eat, for stress of hunger, and came presently to the place where he had halted with the Magian.

Then he fared on awhile, till he caught sight of a great palace, rising high into the air, and knew it for that of which he had questioned Behram and he had replied, 'An enemy of mine dwelleth there.' 'By Allah,' said Hassan in himself, 'needs must I enter yonder palace; peradventure relief awaits me there.' So he went up to it and finding the gate open, entered the vestibule, where he saw two girls, like moons, seated on a bench, with a table before them, playing at chess. One of them raised her eyes and seeing him, cried out for joy and said, 'By Allah, here is a mortal, and methinks it is he whom Behram the Magian brought hither this year!' Whereupon Hassan cast himself at their feet and wept sore, saying, 'Yes, by Allah, O my ladies, I am indeed that unhappy wretch!'

Then said the younger to the elder damsel, 'Bear witness against me, O my sister, that this is my brother before God and that I will die for his death and live for his life and rejoice for his joy and mourn for his mourning.' So saying, she embraced him and kissed him and taking him by the hand, led him, and her sister with her, into the palace, where she did off his ragged clothes and brought him a suit of kings' raiment, in which she clothed him. Moreover, she made ready all manner viands and set them before him, and sat and ate with him, she and her sister. Then said they to him, 'Tell us thine adventure with yonder wicked dog of a sorcerer, from the time of

thy falling into his hands to that of thine escape from him; and after we will tell thee all that has passed between us and him, so thou mayst be on thy guard against him, if thou see him again.'

Hassan, finding himself thus kindly received, took heart of grace and his reason returned to him and he related to them all that had befallen him with the Magian from first to last. 'Didst thou ask him of this palace?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered Hassan. 'But he said, "Name it not to me; for it belongs to devils and demons."' At this, the two damsels were mightily enraged and said, 'Did the infidel style us devils and demons?' And Hassan answered, 'Yes.' 'By Allah,' cried the younger sister, 'I will assuredly put him to death after the foulest fashion and make him to lack the wind of the world!' 'And how,' asked Hassan, 'wilt thou get at him, to kill him, for he is a crafty magician?' Quoth she, 'He is in a garden by name El Meshid, and needs must I slay him before long.'

Then said her sister, 'All that Hassan hath told us of this dog is true; but now tell him our history, that it may abide in his memory.' So the younger said to him, 'Know, O my brother, that we are the daughters of a king of the mightiest kings of the Jinn, having Marids to troops and guards and servants, and God the Most High blessed him with seven daughters by one wife; but such stiffneckedness got hold upon him and such jealousy and pride beyond compare that he would not give us in marriage to any one and summoning his viziers and officers, said to them, "Can ye tell me of any place inaccessible to men and Jinn and abounding in trees and fruits and streams?" And they said, "What wilt thou therewith, O king of the age?" Quoth he, "I desire to lodge my seven daughters there." "O king," answered they, "the place for them is the Castle of the Mountain of Clouds, built by one of the rebellious Jinn, who revolted

from the covenant of our lord Solomon, on whom be peace. Since his destruction, none hath dwelt there, man nor genie, for it is cut off [from the rest of the world] and none may win to it. It is compassed about with trees and fruits and streams, and around it is running water, sweeter than honey and colder than snow, whereof none drinketh, who is afflicted with leprosy or elephantiasis or what not else, but he is healed forthright."

So our father sent us hither, with an escort of his troops, and provided us with all that we need here. When he is minded to ride [to us], he beats a drum, whereupon all his guards present themselves before him and he chooses whom he shall ride and dismisses the rest; but, when he desireth that we shall visit him, he commandeth the enchanters, his followers, to fetch us, whereupon they come to us and carry us to him, so he may solace himself with our company and we accomplish our desire of him; after which they carry us back again. Our five sisters are gone a-hunting in the desert, wherein are wild beasts past count or reckoning, and we two abode at home, to make them ready food, it being our turn to do this. Indeed, we had besought God (blessed and glorified be He!) to vouchsafe us a man to cheer us with his company and praised be He who hath brought thee to us! So take heart and be of good cheer, for no harm shall befall thee.'

Hassan rejoiced and said, 'Praised be God who guideth us into the way of deliverance and inclineth hearts to us!' Then his [adopted] sister rose and taking him by the hand, led him into a private chamber, where she brought out to him linen and furniture such as no mortal can avail unto. Presently, the other damsels returned from the chase and their sisters acquainted them with Hassan's case; whereupon they rejoiced in him and going in to him in his chamber, saluted him and gave him joy of his

deliverance. Then he abode in familiar intercourse with them, riding out with them to the chase and taking his pleasure with them in that fair palace with its gardens and flowers, whilst they entreated him courteously and cheered him with discourse, till his sadness ceased from him and he recovered health and strength and waxed stout and fat, by dint of fair treatment and pleasant life; for indeed he led the goodliest of lives with the damsels, who delighted in him and he yet more in them. Moreover, the youngest princess told her sisters how the Magian had styled them ghouls and demons, and they swore that they would surely slay him.

Next year, the accursed Magian again made his appearance, having with him a handsome young Muslim, as he were the moon, bound hand and foot and suffering grievous tortures, and alighted with him in view of the palace. Now Hassan was sitting under the trees by the side of the stream; and when he espied Behram, his heart fluttered and he changed colour and smote hand upon hand. Then he said to the princesses, 'O my sisters, help me to slay yonder accursed wretch, for he is come back and in your grasp, and he hath with him, captive, a young Muslim of the sons of the notables, whom he is torturing with all manner of grievous torment. Fain would I slay him and solace my heart of him and earn God's favour by delivering the young Muslim from his mischief and restoring him to his country and friends. This will be an almsdeed from you and ye will reap the reward thereof from God the Most High!'

Night dcclxxxb.

'We hear and obey God and thee, O Hassan,' replied they and binding chinbands about their faces, armed themselves and girt on their swords: after which they brought Hassan a charger of the best and equipped him in complete armour and armed him with goodly weapons. Then they all sallied out and found the Magian ill-using

the young Muslim, to make him enter the hide of a camel that he had killed and skinned. Hassan came behind him, without his knowledge, and cried out at him, saying, 'Hold thy hand, O accursed! O enemy of God and of the Muslims! O dog! O traitor! O thou that servest the fire and walkest in the way of the wicked, worshipping the fire and the light and swearing by the shade and the heat!'

When the Magian heard this, he was startled and disconcerted; so he turned and seeing Hassan, thought to wheedle him and said to him, 'O my son, how madest thou thine escape and who brought thee down to earth?' 'God the Most High delivered me,' answered Hassan, 'He who hath appointed the taking of thy life to be at my hand, and I will torture thee even as thou torturedst me the whole way long. O misbeliever, O heretic, thou hast fallen into perdition and hast wandered from the way; and neither mother nor brother shall avail thee, nor friend nor solemn covenant; for thou saidst, "Whoso is faithless to bread and salt, may God do vengeance upon him!" And thou hast broken the bond of bread and salt; wherefore God hath delivered thee into my hands, and small chance hast thou of escape from me.' 'By Allah, O my son,' rejoined Behram, 'thou art dearer to me than my soul and the light of mine eyes!' But Hassan stepped up to him and smote him hastily between the shoulders, that the sword issued gleaming from the tendons of his throat and God hurried his soul to the fire, and evil is the abiding-place [to which he went].

Then Hassan took the Magian's bag and opening it, took out the drum and beat it with the strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries like lightning. So he loosed the young man from his bonds and setting him on one of the camels, loaded him another with victual and water. Then he bade him go whither he would and he departed,

after God the Most High had thus delivered him from his strait at the hands of Hassan. When the princesses saw Hassan slay the Magian, they rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and encompassed him, marvelling at his valour and prowess. Moreover, they thanked him for his deed and gave him joy of his safety, saying, 'O Hassan, thou hast done a deed, whereby thou hast healed the burning of him that thirsted [for vengeance] and pleased the Glorious King.'

Then they returned to the palace, and he abode with them, eating and drinking and laughing and making merry; and indeed his sojourn with them was pleasant to him and he forgot his mother; nor did he cease to lead this goodly life with them, till, one day, there arose a great cloud of dust, that darkened the sky, and made towards them from the further side of the desert. When the princesses saw this, they said to him, 'Rise, O Hassan, and hide thyself in thy chamber; or, if thou wilt, enter the garden and conceal thyself among the trees and vines; [but fear not,] for no harm shall befall thee.' So he arose and entering his chamber, locked the door upon himself. Presently the dust lifted and discovered a great host, as it were the swollen sea, coming from the king, the father of the damsels.

When they reached the castle, the princesses received them with all honour and entertained them three days; after which they questioned them of their case and errand, and they answered, saying, 'We come in quest of you from the king.' 'And what would the king with us?' asked the princesses. 'One of the kings celebrateth a marriage festival,' answered the envoys, 'and your father would have you be present thereat and divert yourselves therewith.' 'And how long shall we be absent from our place?' asked the damsels. 'The time to come and go,' answered they, 'and to sojourn two months.' So the

princesses arose and going in to Hassan, acquainted him with the case and said to him, 'Verily this place is thy place and our house is thy house; so be of good cheer and fear not nor grieve, for none can come at thee here; but keep a good heart and a cheerful mind, till we return to thee. The keys of our chambers we leave with thee; but, O our brother, we beseech thee, by the due of brotherhood, not to open such a door, for thou hast no call thereto.' Then they took leave of him and went away with the troops, leaving him alone in the palace.

It was not long before his breast grew straitened and his patience came to an end: solitude and sadness were heavy on him and he grieved for his separation from them with an exceeding grief. The palace, for all its vastness, was straitened upon him and finding himself sad and solitary, he bethought him of the damsels and recited the following verses:

The spreading plain all straitened is, for longing, on my sight And all my thoughts are troubled grown, that erst were calm and bright.
Since those I love have fared away, my joy is turned to grief And eke mine eyes with bitter tears brim over day and night.
Sleep hath departed from my lids, for severance from them; Yea, parting-saddened, eke, is grown my heart and all my spright.
I wonder will Fate e'er reknit our loves and Time restore To me, with their companionship, my solace and delight!

Night dcclxxxvi.

He used to go a-hunting by himself in the desert and bring back the game and eat thereof alone: but melancholy and unease redoubled on him, by reason of his loneliness. So he arose and went round about the palace and explored its every part. Moreover, he opened the princesses' apartments and found therein riches and treasures, fit to do away the beholder's wits; but he delighted not in aught thereof, by reason of their absence. His heart was on fire with solicitude respecting the door

they had charged him not to approach or open, and he said in himself, 'My sister had not forbidden me to open this door, except there were behind it somewhat, whereof she would have none to know; but, by Allah, I will arise and open it and see what is within, were death behind it!'

Then he took the key and opening the door, saw nothing therein but a winding stair of Yemen onyx at the upper end of the chamber. So he mounted the stair, which brought him out upon the terraced roof of the palace, whence he looked down upon gardens and orchards, full of trees and fruits and beasts and birds warbling the praises of God the One, the All-powerful, and said in himself, 'This is that wherefrom they forbade me.' Beyond these pleasaunces he saw a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, and he ceased not to explore the [terraces of the] palace right and left, till he came to a pavilion such as neither Cæsar nor Chosroës ever possessed, builded with alternate courses of gold and silver and jacinth and emerald and supported by four columns.

The interior was paved and lined with a mosaic of jacinths and emeralds and balass-rubies and all manner other jewels, and in its midst was a basin of water, over which was a trellis of sandal and aloes-wood, netted with red gold and wands of emerald and set with various kinds of jewels and fine pearls, each the bigness of a pigeon's egg. The trellis was covered with a climbing vine, bearing grapes like rubies, and beside the pool stood a couch of aloes-wood, trellised with red gold and inlaid with great pearls and all manner vari-coloured gems and precious stones, symmetrically disposed. About it the birds warbled, celebrating the praises of God the Most High with sweet and various voices; but, save them, Hassan saw therein none of the creatures of God, whereat he marvelled and said in himself, 'I wonder to which of

the kings this place pertaineth, or is it Many-Columned Irem,[1] whereof they tell, for who [among mortals] can avail to the like of this?' And indeed he was amazed and sat down in the pavilion, marvelling at the beauty of its ordinance and at the lustre of the pearls and jewels and the curious works that were therein, no less than at the gardens and orchards aforesaid and at the birds that sang the praises of God the One, the Almighty, and pondering the traces of him whom God the Most High had enabled to rear that structure, for indeed He is mickle of might.

Presently, he espied ten birds making for the pavilion from the direction of the desert and knew that they were bound for the pool, to drink of its waters: so he hid himself, lest they should see him and fly from him. They lighted on a great and goodly tree and circled round about it; and he saw amongst them an exceeding great and beautiful bird, the goodliest of them all, and the rest encompassed it and did it worship; whilst it pecked them with its bill and flouted them, and they fled from it. Then they entered the pavilion and perched on the couch; after which each bird rent open its skin with its claws and came forth therefrom; and behold, it was but a garment of feathers, and there came forth therefrom ten maidens, whose beauty shamed the lustre of the moon. They all put off their clothes and plunging into the pool, washed and fell to playing and sporting with one another; whilst the chief of them threw the others down and ducked them, and they fled from her and dared not put out their hands to her.

When Hassan beheld her thus, he took leave of his wits and his reason was enslaved, and he knew that the princess had not forbidden him to open the door, save by

[1] See ante, Vol. III. p. 334.

reason of this; for he fell passionately in love with her, for what he saw of her beauty and grace and symmetry, as she played and sported and splashed the others with the water. His mind was amazed at her beauty and his heart taken in the snare of her love; fires were loosed in his heart for her sake and there waxed on him a flame, whose raging might not be quenched, and desire, whose signs might not be hidden. So he stood, looking upon them, whilst they saw him not, with eye gazing and heart burning and soul prompting to evil; and he sighed to be with them and wept for longing, because of the beauty and grace of the chief damsel.

Presently, they came up out of the pool, whilst Hassan marvelled at their beauty and loveliness and the grace and elegance of their movements. Then he cast a glance at the chief damsel and there was manifest to him what was between her thighs, a goodly rounded dome, like a bowl of silver or crystal, which recalled to him the saying of the poet:

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

Then they all put on their dresses and ornaments, and the chief maiden donned a green dress, wherein she excelled all the fair ones of the world for loveliness and the lustre of her face outshone the resplendent full moons: she outdid the branches with the grace of her swaying gait and confounded the wit with apprehension of disdain; and indeed she was as saith the poet:

A damsel lithe and slim and full of agile grace; Thou'dst deem the very sun had borrowed from her face.
She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf That the pomegranate's flower doth in the bud encase.

"How call'st thou this thy dress?" asked we, and she replied A word wherein the wise a lesson well might trace.
"Breaker of Hearts," quoth she, "I call it; for therewith I've broken many a heart among the amorous race."

Then they sat talking and laughing, whilst he stood gazing on them, drowned in the sea of passion and wandering in the valley of melancholy thought. And he said in himself, 'By Allah, my sister forbade me not to open the door, but because of these maidens and lest I should fall in love with one of them!' And he continued to gaze on the charms of the chief damsel, who was the loveliest creature God had made in her time, and indeed she outdid all mortals in beauty. She had a mouth like Solomon's seal and hair blacker than the night of estrangement to the despairing lover; her forehead was as the new moon of the Feast of Ramazan[1] and her eyes were like unto gazelles' eyes. She had a polished aquiline nose and cheeks like blood-red anemones, lips like coral and teeth like strung pearls in carcanets of virgin gold and a neck like an ingot of silver, above a shape like a willow-wand. Her belly was full of folds and dimples, such as enforce the distracted lover to magnify God and extol Him therefor, and her navel held an ounce of musk,[2] most sweet of savour. She had thighs great and plump, like columns of marble or bolsters stuffed with ostrich-down, and between them somewhat as it were a great hummock or a hare with ears laid back; and indeed she surpassed the willow-wand and the bamboo-cane with her

Night DCCLXXXVII.

[1] The appearance of which ends the fast. Being anxiously looked for, it may naturally be supposed to wear a brighter aspect than usual in the eyes of the devout Muslim, exhausted with long fasting. Hence the comparison.

[2] See note, Vol. III. p. 156. A large navel, deep and round like a cup, is considered by the Arabs a beauty in women.

beauty and symmetry, for she was even as saith the poet of her:

There came a lovely maid, whose mouth did dews like honey bear, Yea, and her glances keener far than Indian sabres were.
She put the willow-wand to shame with graceful swaying gait; The lightning from her teeth did flash, whenas she smiled, my fair.
Her cheeks I likened to the rose in blossom; but she laughed In scorn and answered, "He who to the rose doth me compare
And eke pomegranates with my breasts likeneth, hath he no shame? How should pomegranates branches have, my breasts for fruits that wear?
Now, by my grace, my eyes, my soul, ay, and the paradise Of my possession and the hell of my disdain, I swear,
If he to these comparisons return, I will my grace To him deny, nor with my scorn to blast him will I spare!
They say, 'A rose in garth a-bloom [is she;]' but, nay, its flower Is not my cheek nor yet its branch my shape so straight and rare.
If in the gardens of his land the like of me there be, Why then, in quest thereof, forsooth, doth he to me repair?"

They ceased not to laugh and play, whilst Hassan stood watching them, forgetting meat and drink, till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when the chief damsel said to her mates, 'O kings' daughters, it grows late and our country is distant and we have had enough of this place. Come, therefore, let us depart to our own place.' So they put on their feather vests, and becoming birds as before, flew away all together, with the chief damsel in their midst. Then Hassan, despairing of their return, would have arisen and gone away, but could not move; wherefore the tears ran down his cheeks and passion was sore on him and he recited the following verses:

May I be denied the fulfilment o' the troth that to me thou didst plight,
If, since you departed and left me, I've tasted of slumber's delight!
Mine eyes, since the days of your parting, have never been shut in repose,
Nor, since you forsook me, hath slumber been pleasant or sweet to my spright.

Meseemeth, indeed, that I see you, bytimes, in illusions of sleep: Ah would that the visions were real we see in the dreams of the night!
Indeed, I'm desirous of slumber, I crave after sleep, without need, So haply, therein, with the loved one a dream may the lover unite.

Then he walked on, little by little, heeding not how he went, till he reached the foot of the stairs, whence he dragged himself to his own chamber and shutting the door, lay there, sick and drowned in the sea of his solicitude, eating not nor drinking, He passed the night thus, weeping and bemoaning himself, till the morning, when he repeated the following verses:

The birds took wing at nightfall and far away did fly, And whoso dies of passion, no blame on him may lie.
I'll keep love's tidings secret, what while I keep it may; But, if fierce longing conquer, 'twill out unto the spy.
A loved one's image haunts me, whose face is like the moon, Anights; there comes no morning, for passion, in my sky.
I mourn for my belovéd, what while the heart-free sleep, And all the winds of passion their sports upon me ply.
I lavish tears and riches and soul and wit and life; For lavishness is profit in love, as well know I.
The foulest of all evils and woes that may betide Is when a man disfavour from fair ones must aby.
They say that to show favour's forbidden to the fair And that their blood 'tis lawful to shed for love that sigh;
And so unto the lovesick, for all resource, remains His life for love to lavish, in jest, and jesting die.
I cry aloud, distracted with longing for my love; For all the lover's effort is weeping and outcry.

When the sun rose, he went forth of the chamber and ascending to the roof, sat down before the pavilion and awaited the return of the birds, till nightfall; but they came not; wherefore he wept till he fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he dragged himself down the stairs to his chamber; and indeed, the night was come

and the whole world was straitened upon him and he ceased not to weep and bemoan himself, till the day broke and the sun rose over hill and plain. He ate not nor drank nor slept, nor was there any rest for him; but by day he was distracted and by night wakeful, delirious and drunken with melancholy and excess of passion. And he repeated the verses of the poet El Welhan:

Thou that confoundest outright the sun of the morning, heigho! That puttest the branches to shame, though wherefore thou dost not know,
I wonder if fortune and time will ever vouchsafe thy return And will the fires ever be quenched for aye in my bosom that glow?
And will the days ever on me, to hold thee embraced in mine arms, Cheek to cheek, breast to breast, at the hour of meeting and union, bestow?
Who saith there is sweetness in Love? I warrant, he lieth, for lo! In Love there are bitterer days, believe me, than aloes[1] can show.

Night dcc lxxxviii.

As he abode thus in the stress of his love-distraction, alone and finding none to cheer him with company, there arose a cloud of dust from the desert, wherefore he knew that the princesses had returned and ran down and hid himself. Before long, the troops halted round the palace and the seven princesses alighted and entering, put off their arms and harness. As for the youngest, she stayed not to doff her armour, but went straight to Hassan's chamber, where finding him not, she sought for him till she lighted on him in one of the cabinets, thin and feeble, with wasted bones and emaciated body; and indeed his colour was changed and his eyes sunken for lack of food and much weeping, by reason of his love and longing for the damsel. When she saw him in this plight, she was confounded and [well nigh] lost her wits [for amazement]; and she questioned him of his case and what had befallen him, saying, 'Tell me what ails thee, O my brother, that I

[1] *Syn.* patience (*sebr*).

may cast about to do away thine affliction, and I will be thy ransom.' Whereupon he wept sore and answered her with these verses:

Whenas a lover from his love to sever Fate hath wrought; For him save weariness and woe and misery there's nought.
Within him sickness is, without is burning fire of love: His first is memory, his last is melancholy thought.

When she heard this, she marvelled at his eloquence and ready wit and goodliness of speech and at his answering her in verse and said to him, 'O my brother, when didst thou fall into this case and what hath befallen thee, that I find thee speaking in verse and shedding plenteous tears? I conjure thee by Allah, O my brother, by the love that is between us, tell me what ails thee and discover thy secret to me, nor hide from me aught of that which hath befallen thee in our absence; for my breast is straitened and my life troubled on thine account.' He sighed and shed tears like rain, after which he said, 'O my sister, I fear, if I tell thee, that thou wilt not help me to my desire, but wilt leave me to perish miserably in my anguish.' 'No, by Allah, O my brother,' answered she, 'I will not abandon thee, though it cost me my life!'

So he told her all that had befallen him in her absence and that the cause of his distress and affliction was the passion he had conceived for the damsel whom he had seen, when he opened the forbidden door, and how he had not tasted meat nor drink for ten days past. Then he wept sore and recited the following verses:

Restore the heart as it used to be to the bosom and the lids Give back again to sleep and then forsake me, an ye list.
Do ye pretend that the nights have changed the covenant of love? May he [or she] who would change be held unworthy to exist!

The princess wept for his weeping and was moved to

compassion for him; so she said to him, 'O my brother, take comfort and be of good cheer, for I will venture my life to content thee and contrive thee a device wherewith thou mayst get possession of her and accomplish thy desire, if it be the will of God, though it cost me my life and all I hold dear. But I charge thee keep the matter secret and discover not thy case to any of my sisters, lest we both lose our lives. If they question thee of the forbidden door, answer them, "I opened it not, being troubled at heart for your absence and my loneliness here and yearning for you."' And he replied, 'Yes: this is the right course.' So he kissed her head and his heart was comforted and his bosom dilated, and his life returned to him, after he had been nigh upon death for excess of affright, for he had gone in fear of her by reason of his having opened the forbidden door.

Then he sought food of her [and she set it before him]; after which she left him and went in to her sisters, weeping and mourning for him. They questioned her of her case and she told them how she was heavy at heart for her brother, for that he was sick and for ten days no food had entered his stomach. So they enquired the cause of his sickness and she said, 'The cause was our absence from him and our leaving him desolate; for these days we have been absent from him were longer to him than a thousand years, and no wonder, seeing he is a stranger, and solitary and we left him alone, with none to company with him or cheer his heart; more by token that he is but a youth and it is like he called to mind his family and his mother, who is an old woman, and bethought him that she weeps for him all tides of the day and watches of the night; and we used to solace him with our society and divert him from thinking of her.'

When her sisters heard this, they wept in the excess of their sorrow for him and said, ''Fore Allah, he is

excusable!' Then they went out to the troops and dismissed them, after which they went in to Hassan and saluted him. When they saw him in sorry case, with his colour paled and his body wasted, they wept for very pity and sat with him and comforted him and cheered him with discourse, relating to him all the wonders and rarities they had seen by the way and what had befallen the bridegroom with the bride. They abode with him thus a whole month, soothing and caressing him; but every day sickness was added to his sickness, which when they saw, they wept sore for him, and the youngest more than any of them.

At the end of this time, the princesses were minded to ride forth a-hunting and invited their sister to accompany them; but she said, 'By Allah, O my sisters, I cannot go forth with you, whilst my brother is in this plight. Rather will I sit with him and comfort him, till he be restored to health and there cease from him that which is with him of affliction.' They thanked her for her humanity and said to her, 'God will requite thee all thou dost with this stranger.' Then they rode forth, taking with them twenty days' victual; and as soon as the youngest princess knew that they were far from the palace, she went in to Hassan and said to him, 'Come, show me where thou sawest the maidens.' He rejoiced in her words, making sure of attaining his desire, and answered, 'In the name of God! On my head!' Then he essayed to rise and show her the place, but could not walk; so she took him in her arms, and opening the staircase door, carried him up to the top of the palace, and he showed her the pavilion and the pool of water, where he had seen the girls.

Night dcclxxxix.

Then she said to him, 'O my brother, set forth to me their case and how they came.' So he described them to her and especially the damsel of whom he was enamoured; whereupon she knew her and her colour changed and she

was troubled. 'O my sister,' quoth he, 'what ails thee to change colour and be troubled?' And she answered, 'Know, O my brother, that this damsel is the daughter of one of the most puissant kings of the Jinn, and her father hath dominion over men and Jinn and wizards and diviners and tribesmen and guards and countries and islands and cities galore and hath wealth in plenty. Our father is one of his vassals and none can avail against him, for the multitude of his troops and the vastness of his empire and his much wealth. He hath assigned to his daughters a tract of country, a whole year's journey in length and breadth, compassed about with a great river; and thereto none may win, nor man nor genie. He hath an army of women, smiters with swords and thrusters with spears, five-and-twenty thousand in number, each of whom, whenas she mounteth her charger and donneth her battle-harness, is a match for a thousand stout horsemen. Moreover, he hath seven daughters, who equal and even excel their sisters[1] in valour and prowess, and the eldest of them, the damsel whom thou sawest,[2] he hath made queen over the country aforesaid. She is the wisest of her sisters and excels all the folk of her dominions in valour and horsemanship and craft and skill in magic. The damsels thou sawest with her are her guards and favourites and the grandees of her empire, and the feathered skins wherewith they fly are the handiwork of enchanters of the Jinn.

Now they resort to this place on the first day of each

[1] *i.e.* the five-and-twenty thousand Amazons aforesaid who, by the way, are stated in the Boulac edition (which omits the word "army") to have been also daughters of the king. I have adopted the less extravagant statement of the Calcutta and Breslau texts.

[2] This is a mistake on the part of Hassan's adopted sister. The damsel he saw and fell in love with was (as appears by the sequel, see post, p. 224) not the eldest, but the youngest daughter of the Supreme King.

month; so, if thou wouldst get possession of this princess and unique jewel and enjoy her beauty and grace, do thou pay heed to my words and keep them in thy memory. Thou must sit here and watch for them; and when thou seest them coming, do thou hide near the pavilion, whereas thou mayst see them, without being seen of them, and beware lest thou show thyself, or we shall all lose our lives. When they put off their clothes, note which is the feather-suit of the princess, her of whom thou art enamoured, and take it, and it only, for this it is that carries her to her country, and when thou hast it, thou hast her. And beware lest she beguile thee, saying, "O thou who hast stolen my dress, restore it to me, for I am here in thine hands and at thy mercy!" For, if thou give it her, she will kill thee and break down the palace over our heads and slay our father. Know then thy case and how thou shalt do. When her companions see that her feather-suit is stolen, they will leave her and fly away, and beware lest thou show thyself to them, but wait till they have flown away and she despaireth of them: whereupon do thou go in to her and seize her by the hair of her head and drag her to thee; which being done, she will be at thy mercy. Then carry her down to thy chamber and I rede thee discover not to her that thou hast taken the feather-suit, but keep it with care; for, so long as thou hast it, she is thy prisoner and in thy power, seeing that she cannot fly to her country save with it.'

When Hassan heard her words, trouble and affliction ceased from him and his heart became at ease; so he rose to his feet and kissing his sister's hand, went down with her into the palace, where they slept that night. He tended himself till the morning; and when the sun rose, he opened the staircase door and ascending to the terrace, sat there till nightfall, when his sister brought him meat and drink and a change of clothes and he slept; and thus

they did till the end of the month. When he saw the new moon, he rejoiced and began to watch for the birds, and by and by up they came, like lightning. As soon as he saw them, he hid himself where he could watch them, unseen of them, and they lighted down, near the place where he was hidden, and putting off their clothes, descended into the pool. Thereupon Hassan arose and crept, little by little, towards the dresses, and God covered him, so that he possessed himself of the feather-suit, and none of them saw him, for they were laughing and playing with each other.

When they had made an end of their diversion, they came forth of the pool and each of them donned her suit of feathers, except the princess, who sought her suit, that she might put it on, but found it not; whereupon she shrieked and buffeted her face and rent her clothes. Her companions came to her and enquired what ailed her, and she told them that her feather-suit was missing; wherefore they wept and cried out and buffeted their faces: and they were confounded, knowing not the cause of this, and knew not what to do. Presently the night overtook them and they feared to abide with her lest that which had befallen her should befall them also; so they took leave of her and flying away, left her alone. When they were out of sight, Hassan hearkened and heard her say, 'O thou who hast taken my dress and stripped me, I beseech thee to restore it to me and cover my nakedness, so may God not make thee taste my sorrow!'

Night decxc.

When Hassan heard her speak thus, with speech sweeter than syrup, his love for her redoubled, passion got the mastery of his reason and he could not endure from her. So he rushed upon her and laying hold of her by the hair, dragged her to him and carried her down to his own chamber, where he threw over her a coverlet of silk and left her weeping and biting her hands. Then he shut

the door on her and going to his sister, told her how he had made prize of the princess and carried her to his chamber, where she was now sitting, weeping and biting her hands. When she heard this, she rose forthright and betook herself to the chamber, where she found the captive princess weeping and mourning.

So she kissed the earth before her and saluted her, and the princess said to her, 'O king's daughter, do folk like you deal thus foully with kings' daughters? Thou knowest that my father is a mighty king and that all the kings of the Jinn stand in awe of him and fear his mischief; for that there are with him magicians and sages and diviners and devils and Marids, such as none may cope withal, and under his hand are folk whose tale none knoweth save God. How then doth it beseem you, O daughters of kings, to harbour mortals with you and discover to them our circumstance and yours? Else how should this man come at us?' 'O king's daughter,' answered the other, 'this man is perfect in nobleness and purposeth thee no lewdness; but he loves thee, and women were made for men. Did he not love thee, he had not fallen sick and well-nigh given up the ghost on thine account.' And she told her how Hassan had seen her bathing in the pool, with her attendants, and fallen in love with her, and none had pleased him but she, for the rest were all her handmaids.

When the princess heard this, she despaired of deliverance and Hassan's sister fetched her a sumptuous dress, in which she clad her. Then she set before her meat and drink and ate with her and comforted her heart and appeased her fears. And she ceased not to speak her fair and caress her, soothing her with soft and pleasant words and instances and saying, 'Have pity on him who saw thee once and became the victim of thy love:' but she wept till daybreak, when her trouble subsided and she

left weeping, knowing that she had fallen [into the snare] and that there was no escape for her. Then she said to Hassan's sister, 'O king's daughter, this my strangerhood and severance from my country and family was ordained of God [and written] upon my forehead, and it becomes me to support with patience what my Lord hath decreed.' Therewith the youngest princess assigned her a chamber, than which there was no goodlier in the palace, and ceased not to sit with her and cheer her and solace her heart, till she took comfort and her bosom dilated and she laughed and there ceased from her the trouble and oppression that possessed her, by reason of her separation from her people and family and country.

Then the youngest princess repaired to Hassan and said to him, 'Arise, go in to her in her chamber and kiss her hands and feet.' So he went in to her and did this and kissed her between the eyes, saying, 'O princess of fair ones and life of souls and delight of beholders, be easy of heart, for I took thee but that I might be thy slave till the Day of Resurrection, and this my sister will be thy handmaid. O my lady, I desire nought but to take thee to wife, after the law of God and His Apostle, and if thou wilt, I will journey with thee to my country and carry thee to the city of Baghdad and abide with thee there. Moreover, I will buy thee slaves, male and female, and I have a mother, of the best of women, who will be thine handmaid. There is no goodlier land than ours; everything there is better than elsewhere and its folk are pleasant and bright of face.'

As he bespoke her thus and strove to comfort her, what while she answered him not a syllable, there came a knocking at the palace-gate. So Hassan went out to see who was at the gate and found there the six princesses, who had returned from hunting, bringing with them great plenty of gazelles and wild oxen and

hares and lions and hyænas and other game, whereat he rejoiced and went to meet them and saluted them. They wished him health and safety and he wished them the like; after which they alighted and going each to her chamber, put off their soiled clothes and donned fair linen. Then they came forth and demanded the game: so they[1] brought out some thereof for slaughter, keeping the rest by them in the palace, and Hassan girt himself and fell to slaughtering for them, whilst they sported and made merry, mightily rejoiced to see him standing amongst them [restored to health and spirits].

When they had made an end of slaughtering, they addressed themselves to make ready somewhat for their morning meal, and Hassan, coming up to the eldest princess, kissed her head and on like wise did he with the rest, one after another. Whereupon said they to him, 'Indeed, O our brother, thou humblest thyself to us passing measure and we marvel at the excess of the affection thou showest us. But God forbid that thou shouldst do this thing, which it behoves us rather to do with thee, seeing thou art a man and insomuch worthier than we, who are of the Jinn.'[2] Thereupon his eyes ran over with tears and he wept sore; so they said to him, 'What ails thee to weep? Indeed, thou troublest our lives with

[1] *Quære* the servants.

[2] In the mythology of the Muslims, the Jinn are always subordinated to mankind, in the matter of abstract worthiness, although practically so much more powerful. See antè, p. 119. According to the Koran, when God made Adam, he commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to him, in token of worship, and they all did so, except Iblis, whose disobedience was punished by expulsion from heaven. "And when we said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Adam,' they prostrated themselves, save only Iblis, who refused and magnified himself and became of the misbelievers."—*Koran* ii. 32. Hence mankind are held to be worthier in God's sight even than the angels and (a fortiori) than the Jinn.

thy weeping this day. It would seem thou longest after thy mother and country. If so, we will equip thee and carry thee to thy home and thy friends.' 'By Allah,' answered he, 'I desire not to part from you!' 'Then which of us hath vexed thee,' asked they, 'that thou art thus troubled?' But he was ashamed to say, 'Nought troubleth me save love of the damsel,' lest they should disavow him: so he was silent and would tell them nought of his case.

Then his sister came forward and said to them, 'He hath caught a bird from the air and would have you help him tame her.' Whereupon they all turned to him and said, 'We are all at thy service and whatsoever thou seekest, we will do: but tell us thy story and conceal from us nought of thy case.' But he said to his sister, 'Do thou tell them, for I am ashamed to face them with these words.' So she said to them, 'O my sisters, when we went away and left this poor fellow alone, the palace was straitened upon him and he feared lest some one should come in to him, for ye know that the sons of Adam are light-witted. So, of his loneliness and trouble, he opened the door of the staircase leading to the roof and sat there, looking upon the valley and watching the gate, in his fear lest any should come thither. One day, as he sat thus, he saw ten birds making for the palace, and they lighted down on the brink of the pool in the pavilion. He watched them and saw, amongst them, one goodlier than the rest, which pecked the others and flouted them, whilst they dared not put out a claw to it.

Night DCCXCI.

Presently, they put their claws to their necks and rending their feathers, came forth therefrom and became damsels like the moon at its full, whereof one was fairer of face than the rest and goodlier of shape and more elegant of apparel. Then they put off their clothes and plunging into the water, fell to playing with one another,

whilst the chief damsel ducked the others, who dared not lay a finger on her. They ceased not to do thus till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when they came forth of the pool and donning their feather-dresses, flew away, leaving Hassan distracted, with a heart on fire for love of the chief damsel and repenting him that he had not stolen her feather-dress. Wherefore he fell sick and abode on the roof, expecting her return and abstaining from meat and drink and sleep, till the new moon, when they again made their appearance and putting off their clothes, went down into the pool. So he stole the chief damsel's feather-suit, knowing that she could not fly without it, and hid it, lest they should discover him and slay him. Then he waited till the rest had flown away, when he arose and seizing the damsel, carried her down into the castle.'

'Where is she?' asked her sisters; and she answered, 'She is with him in such a chamber.' Quoth they, 'Describe her to us, O our sister.' So she said, 'She is fairer than the moon on the night of its full and her face is brighter than the sun; the water of her mouth is sweeter than honey and her shape more slender than the cane. She hath black eyes and flower-white forehead; a bosom like a jewel, breasts like twin pomegranates and cheeks like apples, a belly covered with dimples, with a navel like a casket of ivory full of musk, and legs like columns of alabaster. She ravishes all hearts with liquid black eyes and the fineness of a slender waist and heavy buttocks and speech that heals the sick. She is goodly of shape and sweet of smile, as she were the full moon.' When the princesses heard this, they turned to Hassan and said to him, 'Show her to us.' So he arose, love-distraught, and carrying them to the chamber in which was the captive damsel, opened the door and entered, followed by the seven princesses.

When they saw her and noted her loveliness, they kissed

the earth before her, marvelling at the fairness of her favour and the elegance of her shape, and said to her, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, this is indeed a parlous thing: and hadst thou heard tell among women of this mortal, thou hadst marvelled at him all thy days. Indeed, he is passionately enamoured of thee; yet, O king's daughter, he seeketh not lewdness, but desireth thee only in the way of lawful marriage. But that we know maids cannot do without men, we had hindered him from his intent, albeit he sent thee no messenger, but came to thee himself; and he tells us he hath burnt the feather-dress; else had we taken it from him.' Then one of them agreed with the princess and becoming her deputy in the matter of the marriage contract, performed the marriage ceremony between them, whilst Hassan clapped hands with her, laying his hand in hers, and she wedded him to the damsel with the latter's consent; after which they celebrated her marriage-festival, as beseemeth kings' daughters, and brought Hassan in to his bride. So he rose and opened the door and did away the barrier and broke her seal, whereupon the love of her waxed in him and he redoubled in passion and affection for her. Then, since he had gotten that which he sought, he gave himself joy and repeated these verses:

Thy shape a tempter is, thine eyes, gazelle-like, black and white; Thy face with beauty's water drips, with every charm bedight.
Lo, in mine eyes most gloriously thou'rt pictured, jacinth half And jewels rare another third, thou seemest to my spright.
Yea, and a fifth of thee is musk, a sixth pure ambergris, And like unto the pearl thou art, indeed, but far more bright.
Ne'er gave our mother Eva birth unto the like of thee, Nor is there other like to thee in Heaven's realms of light.
An if my punishment thou will, 'tis of love's usances, And of thy favour, if thou choose to pardon my unright.
O thou adornment of the world, O end of all desire, Who may with patience brook the lack of thy fair face's sight?

Night dccxcii.

Now the princesses were standing at the door, and when they heard his verses, they said to her, 'O king's daughter, hearest thou what this mortal says? How canst thou blame us, seeing that he makes verses for love of thee?' When she heard this, she rejoiced and was glad, and Hassan abode with her forty days in all delight and solace and contentment and cheer, whilst the damsels made him new festivities every day and overwhelmed him with bounty and gifts and presents; and the princess became reconciled to her sojourn amongst them and forgot her people and friends. At the end of this time, Hassan saw in a dream, one night, his mother mourning for him and indeed her bones were wasted and her body emaciated and she was pale and wan, whilst he was in good case. When she saw him thus, she said to him, 'O my son Hassan, how is it that thou livest at thine ease and forgettest me? See my plight since thy loss. I do not forget thee, nor will my tongue leave to name thee till I die; and I have made thee a tomb in my house, that I may never forget thee. I wonder, O my son, if I shall live to see thee with me and if we shall ever again be united as we were.'

Hassan awoke from sleep, weeping and lamenting; the tears ran down his cheeks like rain and he became mournful and troubled; his tears ceased not nor did sleep visit him, but he had no rest, and no patience was left to him. When he arose, the princesses came in to him and gave him good-morrow and made merry with him, as of their wont; but he paid no heed to them. So they asked his wife what ailed him and she said,' I know not.' Quoth they, 'Ask him of his case.' So she went up to him and said, 'What ails thee, O my lord?' Whereupon he sighed and groaned and told her what he had seen in his dream. Then he repeated the following verses:

Afflicted sore am I, distraught with love and dole; Union I seek, yet know no way unto my goal.
The stresses of desire redouble upon me And even the light of love is heavy on my soul.

His wife repeated what he had said to the princesses, who, hearing the verses, took pity on him and said to him, 'In God's name, do as thou wilt, for we may not hinder thee from visiting thy mother, but will rather help thee thereto by all means in our power. But it behoves that thou desert us not, but visit us, though it be but once a year.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then they arose forthright and making him ready victual [for the journey], equipped the bride for him with clothes and ornaments and everything of price, such as beggar description. Moreover, they bestowed on him gifts and presents, such as the pen availeth not to set forth, amongst the rest five-and-twenty chests of gold and fifty of silver. Then they beat the drum and up came dromedaries from all sides. They chose of them such as availed to carry all the gear they had prepared and mounting Hassan and his bride on others, rode with them three days, wherein they accomplished three months' journey.

Then they bade them farewell and addressed themselves to return; whereupon the youngest threw herself on Hassan's neck and wept till she fainted. When she came to herself, she repeated the following verses:

Would God the day of parting ne'er might be! It leaves no sleep unto the eyes of me.
It hath dissolved our loves and broken down Our strength in soul and body utterly.

Then she bade him farewell, straitly charging him, whenas he should have come to his native land and foregathered with his mother and set his heart at ease, to fail not of paying her a visit once in every six months

and saying, 'If aught trouble thee or thou be in fear of any vexation, beat the Magian's drum, whereupon the dromedaries will come to thee; and do thou mount and return to us.' He swore to do her bidding and conjured them to return. So they returned to the palace, mourning for their separation from him, especially the youngest, to whom no rest was left nor would patience come at her call, but she wept night and day.

Meanwhile, Hassan and his wife fared on night and day, through noontide heats and early dawns, over plains and deserts and valleys and stony wastes; and God decreed them safety, so that they reached Bassora without hindrance and made their camels kneel at the door of his house. Hassan then dismissed the dromedaries and going up to the door, to open it, heard his mother weeping and reciting the following verses, in a faint voice, from a heart worn [with sorrow] and on fire with consuming affliction:

How shall she taste, forsooth, of sleep, who lacks of all repose, Who wakes anights, when every eye in slumber else doth close?
Honour and wealth and family he had and yet became A lonely exile from his home in lands that no man knows.
Groaning and longing on her press, the utmost that can be, And like a brazier, 'twixt her ribs the fire of yearning glows.
Passion the mastery o'er her hath got and ruleth her: For suffering she moans, yet still is constant 'neath her woes.
Her case for love proclaims that she afflicted is and sad: Yea, and her tears are witnesses to that she undergoes.

When Hassan heard his mother weeping and lamenting, he wept also and knocked loudly at the door. Quoth she, 'Who is at the door?' And he said, 'Open.' Whereupon she opened the door and knowing him, fell down in a swoon: but he tended her till she came to herself, when he embraced her and she embraced him and kissed him, whilst his wife looked on. Then he carried his goods and gear into the house, whilst his mother repeated the

following verses, for that her heart was comforted and God had reunited her with her son:

Fortune hath taken ruth on my case; Yea, she hath pitied my long despair,
Granting me that whereafter I longed And doing away from me dread and care.
So I will pardon her all the past And the sins that she sinned 'gainst me whilere;
Ev'n to the wrong wherewith she wrought To whiten the parting-place of my hair.

Night DCCCXIII. Then they sat talking and his mother said to him, 'O my son, how faredst thou with the Persian?' 'O my mother,' answered Hassan, 'he was no Persian, but a Magian, who worshipped the fire, not the All-powerful King.' Then he told her how he had dealt with him, in that he had journeyed with him [to the Mountain of Clouds] and sewed him in the camel's skin, and how the rocs had taken him up and set him down on the mountain-top and what he had seen there of dead folk, whom the Magian had deluded and left [to perish] on the mountain, after they had done his occasion. And he told her how he had cast himself from the mountain-top into the sea and God the Most High had preserved him and brought him to the palace of the [seven] damsels and how the youngest of them had taken him to brother and he had sojourned with them, till God brought the Magian to the place where he was and he slew him. Moreover, he told her of his passion for the damsel and how he had made prize of her and of his seeing her [his mother] in sleep and all else that had befallen him up to the time when God reunited them.

She marvelled at his story and praised God who had restored him to her in health and safety. Then she arose and examined the baggage and loads and questioned him of them. So he told her what was in them, whereat she

was mightily rejoiced. Then she went up to the princess, to talk with her and bear her company; but, when her eyes fell on her, she was confounded at her loveliness and rejoiced and marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry: and she sat down beside her, cheering her and comforting her heart. Next morning, early, she went down into the market and bought magnificent furniture and ten suits of the richest raiment in the city, and clad the princess and adorned her with every thing costly. Then said she to Hassan, 'O my son, we cannot abide in this city with all this wealth; for thou knowest that we are poor folk and the people will suspect us of practising alchemy. So come, let us depart to Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, where we may dwell in the Khalif's Sanctuary, and thou shalt sit in a shop to buy and sell, in the fear of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and He shall prosper thee with this wealth.'

Hassan fell in with her counsel and going forth straightway, sold the house and summoned the dromedaries, which he loaded with all his goods and gear, together with his mother and wife. Then he went down to the Tigris, where he hired a vessel to carry them to Baghdad and embarked therein with his mother and wife and all his possessions. They sailed up the river ten days, with a fair wind, till they came in sight of Baghdad, at which they rejoiced, and the ship landed them in the city, where Hassan hired a storehouse in one of the khans and transported his goods thither. He lodged in the khan that night and on the morrow, he changed his clothes and going down into the city, enquired for a broker. The folk directed him to one, and when the broker saw him, he asked him what he lacked. Quoth he, 'I want a house, a handsome and spacious one.' So the broker showed him the houses at his disposal and he chose one that belonged to one of the viziers and buying it of him for

a hundred thousand dinars, gave him the price. Then he returned to the khan and removed all his goods to the house; after which he went down to the market and bought all that was needed therefor of vessels and carpets and other household stuff, besides servants and a little black slave for the house.

He abode with his wife in all solace and delight of life three years, during which time he was vouchsafed by her two sons, one of whom he named Nasir and the other Mensour: but, at the end of this time, he bethought him of his sisters, the princesses, and called to mind all their goodness to him and how they had helped him to his desire. So he longed after them and going out to the markets of the city, bought trinkets and costly stuffs and confections, such as they had never seen nor known. His mother asked him why he bought these rarities and he answered, 'I purpose to visit my sisters, who entreated me with all kindness and to whose goodness and munificence I owe all that I at present enjoy: wherefore I will journey to them and return soon, so God please.' Quoth she, 'O my son, be not [long] absent from me.'

Then said he, 'Know, O my mother, how thou shalt do with my wife. Here is her feather-dress in a chest, buried in the earth in such a place; do thou watch over it, lest she light on it and take it, for she would fly away, she and her children, and I should never hear of them again and should die of grief; wherefore I warn thee, O my mother, that thou name this not to her. Thou must know that she is the daughter of a king of the Jinn, than whom there is not a greater among the kings of the Jinn nor a richer in troops and treasure, and she is mistress of her people and dearest to her father of all he hath. Moreover, she is exceeding high-spirited, so do thou serve her thyself and suffer her not to go forth the door neither look out of window nor over the wall, for I fear the air for her, when

it blows, and if aught befell her, I should slay myself for her sake.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'God forbid that I should gainsay thee! Am I mad that thou shouldst lay this injunction on me and I disobey thee therein? Depart, O my son, with a heart at ease, and God willing, thou shalt return in safety and see her and she shall tell thee how I have dealt with her: but tarry not beyond the time to come and go.'

Night dccxciv.

Now, as fate would have it, his wife heard what he said to his mother and they knew it not. Then Hassan went without the city and beat the drum, whereupon up came the dromedaries and he loaded twenty of them with rarities of Irak; after which he returned to his mother and repeated his injunctions to her and took leave of her and his wife and children, one of whom was a yearling babe and the other two years old. Then he mounted and fared on ten days, without stopping night or day, over hills and valleys and plains and wastes, till, on the eleventh day, he reached the palace and went in to his sisters, with the presents he had brought them. The princesses rejoiced at his sight and gave him joy of his safety, whilst the youngest decorated the palace within and without. Then they took the presents and lodging him in a chamber as of old, enquired at him of his wife and mother and he told them that his wife had borne him two sons. And the youngest princess, seeing him well and in good case, rejoiced with an exceeding joy and repeated the following verse:

For news of thee, whene'er it blew, the wind I have besought, And never any but thyself occurreth to my thought.

Then he abode with them, an honoured guest, three months, passing his time in hunting and merrymaking and joy and delight.

To return to his wife. She abode with his mother two

days after her husband's departure, and on the third day, she said to her, 'Glory be to God! Have I lived with him three years and shall I never go to the bath?' Then she wept and Hassan's mother took pity on her and said to her, 'O my daughter, we are strangers here and my husband is abroad. Were he at home, he would serve thee himself, but, as for me, I know no one. However, O my daughter, I will heat thee water and wash thy head in the bath that is in the house.' 'O my lady,' answered the princess, 'hadst thou spoken thus to one of the slave-girls, she had demanded to be sold in the open market and had not abode with thee. Men are excusable, for they are jealous and their reason tells them that, if a woman go forth the house, belike she will do lewdness. But, O my lady, women are not all alike and thou knowest that, if a woman have a mind to aught, whether it be the bath or what not else, none may avail against her, to guard her or keep her or debar her from her desire; and nought restraineth her but her reason and her religion.'

Then she wept and cursed and bemoaned herself and her strangerhood, till Hassan's mother was moved to pity for her case and knew that all she said was true and that there was nothing for it but to let her have her will. So she committed the affair to God (extolled and exalted be He!) and making ready all that they needed for the bath, took her and went with her thither. She carried her two little sons with her, and when they entered, they put off their clothes and all the women fell to gazing on the princess and glorifying God (to whom belong might and majesty) for that He had created so glorious a form. The report of her was noised abroad in Baghdad and the women of the city flocked to gaze upon her, till the bath was so crowded that there was no passing through it.

Now, as destiny would have it, there was present that day, with the rest of the women in the bath, one of the

slave-girls of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, by name Tuhfeh the Lutanist, and she, finding the bath crowded and no passing for the multitude of women and girls, asked what was to do; and they told her of the [strange] damsel. So she went up to her and considering her straitly, was amazed at her grace and beauty and glorified God (magnified be His majesty) for the fair forms He hath created. The sight of her diverted her from her bath, so that she went not [farther] in nor washed, but sat staring at the princess, till she had made an end of washing and coming forth [of the hot room], put on her clothes, whereupon beauty was added to her beauty. She sat down on the divan, whilst the women gazed upon her; then she looked at them and veiling herself, went out.

Tuhfeh went out with her and followed her, till she saw where she dwelt, when she left her and returned to the Khalif's palace. Then she went in to the lady Zubeideh and kissed the earth before her; and the princess said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, why hast thou tarried in the bath?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I have seen a marvel, never beheld I its like amongst men or women, and this it was that distracted me and confounded my wit and amazed me, so that I forgot to wash my head.' 'And what was that?' asked Zubeideh. 'O my lady,' replied Tuhfeh, 'I saw a damsel in the bath, having with her two little boys like moons, never saw any her like, before nor after her, nor is there the like of her form in the whole world. By thy munificence, O my lady, if thou toldest the Commander of the Faithful of her, he would slay her husband and take her from him, for she hath not her like among women. I asked of her husband and they told me that he is a merchant called Hassan of Bassora. Moreover, I followed her from the bath to her own house and found it to be that of the vizier, with the two gates, one giving on the river and the other on the street. Indeed, O my

lady, I fear lest the Khalif hear of her and break the law
Night and put her husband to death and take her to wife.'
Decreb. 'Out on thee, O Tuhfeh!' rejoined Zubeideh. 'Is this damsel endowed with such extraordinary grace and beauty that the Commander of the Faithful should, on her account, barter his soul's good for his worldly pleasure and transgress the law! By Allah, I must needs look on her, and if she be not as thou sayest, I will strike off thy head! O baggage, there are in the Khalif's harem three hundred and threescore slave-girls, after the number of the days of the year, yet is there none amongst them such as thou describest!' 'No, by Allah, O my lady!' answered Tuhfeh. 'Nor is there her like in all Baghdad; no, nor amongst the Arabs or the barbarians, nor hath God (to whom belong might and majesty) created the like of her!'

Therewith Zubeideh called for Mesrour, who came and kissed the earth before her, and she said to him, 'O Mesrour, go to the vizier's house, that with the two gates, one giving on the street and the other on the river, and bring me in haste the damsel who dwells there, with her two children and the old woman who is with her, and tarry not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Mesrour and repairing to Hassan's house, knocked at the door. Quoth the old woman, 'Who is at the door?' 'Mesrour,' answered he, 'the eunuch of the Commander of the Faithful.' So she opened the door and he entered and saluted her; whereupon she returned his salute and asked his errand. Quoth he, 'The lady Zubeideh, daughter of El Casim and wife of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, fifth of the sons of Abbas, uncle of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!), bids thee to her, thee and thy son's wife and her children; for the women have told her of her and her beauty.' 'O Mesrour,' answered the old woman, 'we are strangers and my son, the girl's husband, is abroad and hath straitly charged me not to

go forth nor let her go forth, in his absence, neither show her to any of the creatures of God the Most High; and I fear me, if aught befall her and he come back, he will slay himself; wherefore I beseech thee, of thy favour, O Mesrour, require us not of that whereto we are unable.' 'O my lady,' rejoined Mesrour, 'if I knew aught to be feared for you in this, I would not require you to go; the lady Zubeideh desireth but to see her and [then] she may return. So disobey not, or thou wilt repent; and like as I take you, I will bring you both back in safety, so it please God the Most High.'

The old woman could not gainsay him; so she went in and making the damsel ready, brought her and her children forth and followed Mesrour to the Khalif's palace, where he carried them in and set them before the lady Zubeideh. They kissed the earth before her and called down blessings upon her; and Zubeideh said to the damsel, who was veiled, 'Wilt thou not uncover thy face, that I may look on it?' So she kissed the ground before her and unveiling, discovered a face that put to shame the full moon in the height of heaven. Zubeideh fixed her eyes on her and let them travel over her, whilst the palace was illuminated by the light of her countenance.

The princess and all who were present were amazed at her beauty and all who looked on her became mad and could speak to none. As for Zubeideh, she rose and making the damsel stand up,[1] strained her to her bosom and seated her by herself on the couch. Moreover, she commanded to decorate the palace [in her honour] and calling for a suit of the richest raiment and a necklace of the most precious jewels, put them upon her. Then said she to her, 'O princess of fair ones, verily thou astoundest me and fillest mine eyes [with delight]. What arts

[1] It would seem she had been seated on her heels, in the proper attitude of a slave before her mistress.

knowest thou?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I have a dress of feathers, which if I put on before thee, thou wouldst see one of the fairest of fashions and marvel thereat, and all who saw it would talk of its goodliness, generation after generation.' 'And where is this dress of thine?' asked Zubeideh. 'It is with my husband's mother,' replied the damsel. 'Do thou seek it of her for me.'

So Zubeideh said to the old woman, 'My life on thee, O my mother, go and fetch us her feather-dress, that we may divert ourselves by looking on what she will do, and after take it again.' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'this damsel is a liar. Hast thou ever seen a woman with a dress of feathers? Indeed, this pertaineth but to birds.' But the damsel said to Zubeideh, 'As I live, O my lady, she hath a feather-dress of mine and it is in a chest, which is buried in such a store-closet in the house.' So Zubeideh took from her neck a necklace of jewels, worth all the treasures of Chosroës and Cæsar, and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'O my mother, I conjure thee by my life, take this necklace and go and fetch us this dress, that we may divert ourselves with the sight thereof, and after take it again!' But she swore to her that she had never seen the dress and knew not what the damsel meant by her speech.

Then Zubeideh cried out at her and taking the key from her, called Mesrour and said to him, 'Take this key and go to the house and enter such a store-closet there, amiddleward which thou wilt find a chest buried. Take it and break it open and bring me the feather-dress that is therein.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went forth, whereupon the old woman arose and followed him, weeping and repenting her of having given ear to the damsel and gone to the bath with her, for her desire to go thither was but a trick. So she went with him to the house and

Night dccxcvi.

opened the door of the closet, and he entered and brought out the chest. Then he took therefrom the feather-dress and wrapping it in a handkerchief, carried it to the princess Zubeideh, who took it and turned it about, marvelling at the beauty of its fashion; after which she gave it to the damsel, saying, 'Is this thy dress of feathers?' 'Yes, O my lady,' answered she, and took it joyfully. Then she examined it and rejoiced to find it whole as it was, not a feather missing. So she came down from beside the lady Zubeideh and taking her sons in her bosom, wrapped herself in the feather-dress and became a bird, by the ordinance of God (to whom belong might and majesty), whereat Zubeideh and all who were present marvelled. Then she walked with a proud and graceful gait and danced and sported and flapped her wings, whilst all eyes were fixed on her and all marvelled at what she did.

Then said she with fluent tongue, 'Is this goodly, O my ladies?' And they answered, 'Yes, O princess of the fair! All that thou dost is goodly.' 'And this,' said she, 'that I am about to do is goodlier yet.' Then she spread her wings and flying up with her children to the dome of the palace, perched on the cornice of the saloon, whilst they all looked at her, wide-eyed and said, 'By Allah, this is indeed a rare and goodly fashion! Never saw we its like.' Then, as she was about to take flight for her own land, she bethought her of Hassan and said, 'Hark ye, my mistresses!' and she recited the following verses:

Thou that hast left these lands and tow'rds the countries, where Thy loved ones[1] dwell, with swift and fleeting feet dost fare,
Think'st thou that I 'midst you abided in content And deem'st thou that my days by you untroubled were?
When in Love's snare I fell, Love's self my gaol he made And did unto the place of rendezvous repair.

[1] *i.e.* the seven princesses.

He hid my vest and deemed that love had mastered me And that I of the One to seek it would forbear.
He wronged me, for my vest he to his mother gave And in a closet charged her keep it with all care:
But I heard what they said and stored it in my mind And much therein rejoiced and hoped for fortune fair.
My going to the bath, indeed, was but a trick, That I to wonderment might move the people there.
The Khalif's bride no less did marvel at my charms, When she on every side had viewed my shape and air.
'O wife of Er Reshid,' then said I, 'thou must know, I have a feather-dress, right splendid, rich and rare.
Were it on me, thou shouldst see wonders such as blot Affliction from the spright and charm away despair.'
'Where is it?' deigned to ask the Khalif's wife, and I Made answer, 'In his house who caught me in his snare.'
So Mesrour went in haste and brought the dress to her, And lo, its lustre lit the palace everywhere.
I took it from his hand and opening, viewed it all, To see 'twas whole and fit to wing withal the air.
Then, with my babes, therein I entered and my wings Spreading, up to the roof I flew and perching there,
Said, 'Husband's mother mine, tell him, if he would meet With me again, he must to leave his home prepare.'

When she had made an end of her verses, the lady Zubeideh said to her, 'Wilt thou not come down to us, that we may take our fill of thy beauty, O fairest of the fair? Glory be to Him who hath given thee eloquence and beauty!' But she said, 'God forbid that what is past should return!' Then to the mother of the wretched Hassan, 'By Allah, O my lady,' said she, 'it irketh me to part from thee; but, when thy son cometh and the days of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the islands of Wac.' Then she took flight with her children and sought her own country, whilst the old woman wept and buffeted her face

and lamented till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she said to the lady Zubeideh, 'O my lady, what is this thou hast done?' And Zubeideh said to her, 'O my lady the pilgrim, I knew not that this would happen and hadst thou told me of the case and acquainted me with her condition, I had not gainsaid thee. Nor did I know that she was of the Flying Jinn; else had I not suffered her to don the dress nor take her children: but now words profit nothing; so do thou acquit me of offence against thee.' And the old woman could do no otherwise than answer, 'Thou art acquitted.'

Then she went forth the palace and returning to her own house, buffeted her face till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she wearied after her daughter-in-law and her children and for the sight of her son and repeated the following verses:

Your absence, on the day of parting, when you went From home, enforced me weep for grief and dreariment.
I cry out, for the smart of separation's pains, What while mine eyelids still with scalding tears are brent,
'Parting this is: shall aye returning be for us? Concealment's done away by your abandonment.'
Would God they would return and keep their troth! Ah, then, Time would belike restore the days of my content.

Then she dug three graves in the house and betook herself to them with weeping all tides of the day and watches of the night; and when her son's absence was long upon her and grief and longing and unquiet waxed upon her, she recited these verses:

Thine image 'twixt mine eyelids still harbours, when they close, As in my heart thy memory in throbbing and repose.
Yea, and thy love for ever runs in the bones of me, As in the fruited branches the sap in summer flows.
Indeed, my breast is straitened, the day I see thee not, And e'en my censors hold me excuséd for my woes.

O thou, for whom love-longing hath gotten hold of me, For love of whom distraction for ever on me grows,
Have mercy, as thou fearest the Merciful, on me: The love of thee hath made me to taste of death, God knows.

Night dccxcbii.

Meanwhile, when Hassan came to the princesses, they conjured him to tarry with them three months [and he consented and sojourned with them for that time], after which they gave him five loads of gold and the like of silver and one load of victual and accompanied him on his homeward way, till he conjured them to return, whereupon the youngest came up to him, to bid him farewell, and embracing him, wept till she fainted. Then she recited the following verses:

Ah, when shall parting's fire be quenched by thy return once more? When shall I have my wish of thee and we be as of yore?
Indeed, the day of severance affrights and troubles me, And languishment for love-taking on me is passing sore.

Then came forward the second princess and embraced him and recited these verses:

Like the parting from life is the parting from thee And thy loss as the loss of heaven's rains is to me.
Thy departure's a heart-searing fire, for, indeed, In thy presence the gardens of Paradise be.

Then came forward the third and embraced him and recited these verses:

We left not to take leave, upon our parting day, For weariness or aught of ill intention; nay,
My very soul thou art, and how unto my soul Should I, of my free will, I prithee, farewell say?

Then came forward the fourth and embraced him and recited these verses:

Nought made me weep, save only when he, in parting guise, Did me of his departure so cruelly apprise.
Behold this precious union I've hung upon mine ear: 'Twas of my tears I wrought it, fast dropping from mine eyes.

Then came forward the fifth and embraced him and recited these verses:

Depart thou not; for I've no strength without thee to endure Nor unto a departing one courage to say farewell;
Nor any patience, severance to encounter; no, nor tears To shed upon the ruined house wherein we twain did dwell.

Then came forward the sixth and embraced him and recited these verses:

I said, when the camels away with them fared And longing mine entrails did ravage, 'Ah me!
If there were but a king over whom I had power, I would seize, by main force, on each ship on the sea.'

Then came forward the seventh and embraced him and recited these verses:

Indeed, the severance from thee hath made my heart to ache: I have no bowels of the like of thee farewell to take.
God knows I did not leave to speak the parting word to thee, Save of the fear that in the act thy very heart would break.

Hassan also wept for parting from them, till he swooned, and repeated the following verses:

Indeed, upon the parting day, my eyes with pearls did rain Of dropping tears, whose necklaces I strung in many a skein.
The cameleer urged on his beasts with them, what while nor strength Nor fortitude I found, nor did my heart with me remain.
I took my leave of them and turned away in grief, and eke To quit the encampment and the place of meeting I was fain.
Yea, I turned back, unknowing of the road and comforting My soul but with the thought that I should meet thee yet again.
List, O my friend, unto the tale of love, and God forbid That I should speak and that thy heart to hearken should not deign!
Since thou hast lost them, O my soul, forswear the sweet of life Nor covet its continuance, for, wanting them, 'twere vain.

Then he bade them farewell and fared on diligently night and day, till he came to Baghdad, the Abode of Peace and Sanctuary of the Abbaside Khalifs, unknowing what had

passed in his absence. Here he dismissed the dromedaries and entering his house, went in to his mother, to salute her, but found her worn of body and wasted of bones, for much mourning and watching and weeping and lamentation, till she was grown like a skewer and could make him no answer. He asked her of his wife and children and she wept till she swooned away, whereupon he searched the house for them, but found no trace of them. So he went to the store-closet and finding it open and the chest broken and the feather-dress missing, knew that his wife had possessed herself thereof and flown away with her children. Then he returned with his mother and finding her recovered from her swoon, questioned her of his wife and children, whereupon she wept and said, 'O my son, may God amply requite thee their loss! These are their three tombs.'

When Hassan heard these words of his mother, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, in which he lay from the first of the day till noon; wherefore anguish was added to his mother's anguish and she despaired of his life. However, after a while, he came to himself and wept and buffeted his face and rent his clothes and went about the house in a state of distraction, reciting the following verses:

Folk have made moan of passion before me, of past years, And live and dead for absence have suffered pains and fears;
But that within my bosom I harbour, with mine eyes I've never seen the like of nor heard it with mine ears.

Then he drew his sword, and coming up to his mother, said to her, 'Except thou tell me the truth of the case, I will strike off thy head and [after] kill myself.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'put up thy sword and sit down, till I tell thee what hath passed.' So he sheathed his sword and sat by her side, whilst she recounted to him all that had passed in his absence, adding, 'O my son, but that I

saw her weep to go to the bath and feared that she would complain to thee, on thy return, and thou wouldst be wroth with me, I had not carried her thither; nor had I brought out the feather-dress, though I died for it, were it not that the princess Zubeideh was wroth with me and took the key from me by force: and thou knowest, O my son, that no hand may measure length with that of the Khalifate.[1] When they brought her the dress, she took it and turned it over, fearing lest somewhat might be lost thereof, but found it whole, wherefore she rejoiced and making her children fast to her middle, donned the feather-vest, after the lady Zubeideh had pulled off to her all that was upon her and clad her therein, in honour of her and because of her beauty. No sooner had she done this than she shook and becoming a bird, walked about the palace, whilst all who were present gazed at her and marvelled at her beauty and grace. Then she flew up to the roof and perching on the cornice, looked at me and said, "When thy son cometh and the nights of separation are long on him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him leave his native land and journey to the Islands of Wac." This, then, is her story and what befell in thine absence.' Night dccxcviii.

When she had made an end of her story, Hassan gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, from which he ceased not till nightfall, when he revived and fell to buffeting his face and writhing on the floor like a wounded snake. His mother sat by his head, weeping, till midnight, when he came to himself and wept sore and recited the following verses:

Pause and behold his sorry state whom ye have left to mourn, So haply you will pity him, after despite and scorn.
For, if ye look on him, 'fore God, the man you will deny, As 'twere you knew him not, so sick he is and passion-worn.

[1] *i.e.* none may contend against the power of the Khalifate.

Forslain of love-longing for you he is, and of the dead He'd reckoned be, but for the groans wherewith his breast is torn.
Think not that separation's light to him ; nay, grievous 'tis Unto the longing ; death itself were easier to be borne.

Then he rose and went round about the house, weeping and lamenting and bemoaning himself, five days, without tasting meat or drink. His mother came to him and conjured him, till he broke his fast, and besought him to leave weeping; but he hearkened not to her and continued to weep and lament, whilst she strove to comfort him and he heeded her not. Then he recited the following verses:

My soul for love a burden bears, so great, All strength that is would fail beneath its weight.
I'm all amazed and sore my languor is ; Alike are night and morn to this my strait.
Indeed, till now I went in fear of death, But death to-day a remedy I rate.

He abode thus till daybreak, when his eyes closed and he [fell asleep, for sheer weariness, and] saw [in a dream] his wife weeping and repentant for that which she had done. So he started up from sleep, crying out and reciting the following verses;

Their image is never absent a breathing-while from my breast: I have made it within my bosom the place of the honoured guest.
But that I hope for reunion, no instant more would I live, And but that I see them in slumber, I would not lie down to rest.

He abode thus a whole month, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, wakeful by night and eating little, till he bethought him to repair to his sisters and take counsel with them in the matter of his wife, so haply they might help him to regain her. So he summoned the dromedaries and loading fifty of them with rarities of Irak, committed the house to his mother's care and deposited all his goods in safe keeping, except some few he left with her. Then

he set out on his journey and stayed not till he reached the palace of the Mountain of Clouds, when he went in to the princesses and gave them the presents, in which they rejoiced. Then they gave him joy of his safety and said to him, 'O our brother, what ails thee to come [again so soon], seeing thou wast with us but two months since?' Whereupon he wept and repeated the following verses:

I see my soul all pined for loss of her it held so dear ; It hath no ease, in any wise, of life and all its cheer.
My malady is one of those whose remedy's unknown ; And shall a malady be cured, except its leach be here?
Thou that forbidd'st me the delight of sleep, thou hast me left The wind to question after thee, whenas its wafts draw near,
From my love's land but lately borne, my love who doth comprise Beauties that make mine eyes to rain with many a bloody tear.
O wind, that visitest her land, haply a waft of air The hearts with somewhat of her scent may quicken yet and cheer.

Then he gave a great cry and swooned away. The princesses sat round him, weeping over him, till he came to himself and repeated these verses:

It may be Fate at last shall turn its bridle-rein And bring me her I love, for Fortune changeth still ;
And things shall yet betide, despite the things fordone, To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

Then he wept, till he fainted again, and presently coming to himself, recited the following:

O term of all my pains and all my languishment, Art thou content? Indeed, in passion I'm content.
Dost thou forsake me thus, without or fault or cause? Turn back to me, I pray, from rigour and relent.

Then he wept till he swooned away once more and when he came to himself, he repeated these verses:

Sleep hath my lids departed, but wake is ever nigh And of the hoarded teardrops still lavish is mine eye.
It weepeth tears like rubies, for love, and evermore With growing distance waxeth the tide of tears more high.
Longing within my bosom, belovéd mine, hath lit A fire that rageth ever and will not cease or die.
No tear, when I recall thee, I shed, but still therein Is lightning, ay, and thunder of many a groan and sigh.

Then he wept till he fainted away a fourth time, and presently recovering, recited the following lines:

Do ye for passion and distress e'en suffer as we do? And is the love of us with you, like to our love for you?
May Allah love-liking confound! How bitter 'tis, indeed! What is it love would have of us? Ah, would to God I knew!
Your lovely faces, far and wide though distance 'twixt us stretch, Still in our eyes, where'er we are, are mirrored, clear and true.
With memories of your dwelling-place my heart is occupied And still the turtle, when she sings, my trouble doth renew.
O dove, that callest all the night upon thy mate, with me Thou mak'st grief company and add'st longing my longing to.
Thou leav'st my lids unsatisfied with weeping and lament For dear ones gone and far away, departed from our view.
Yea, every time and tide for them I yearn and am consumed With longing, when on me the night falls with its darkling hue.

When his sisters heard this and saw his condition, the transport of love and longing and the passion and distraction that possessed him were manifest to them and they questioned him of his case. He wept and told them what had befallen in his absence and how his wife had taken flight with her children, wherefore they grieved for him and asked him what she said at leave-taking. 'O my sisters,' answered he, 'she said to my mother, "Tell thy son, when he cometh and the nights of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him,

let him join me in the Islands of Wac."' When they heard this, they signed to one another with their eyes and shook their heads, and each looked at her sister, whilst Hassan looked at them. Then they bowed their heads and bethought themselves awhile; after which they raised their heads and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Put forth thy hand to heaven and if thou win thither, then shalt thou win to thy wife and children.' Night dccccix.

When he heard this, the tears ran down his cheeks like rain and wet his clothes, and he recited the following verses:

Red cheeks and eyes of melting black have charmed my wit away; And still, when cometh sleeplessness, patience farewell doth say.
The fair with inhumanity have worn my body sore; No breath of life abideth there that folk discover may.
Houris, as graceful in their gait as desert antelopes, Whose unveiled beauties if saints saw, they'd doat thereon straightway;
Faring as fares the garden breeze that blows before the dawn, Trouble and restlessness for love of these on me do prey;
I hung my hopes upon a maid of them, a loveling fair, For whom my heart is all consumed with fire that rageth aye;
A loveling soft of sides and proud and graceful in her gait, The darkness dwelleth in her hair, but in her face is day.
She troubleth me, and champions stout how many have the eyes And cheeks of lovely women stirred to trouble and dismay!

Then he wept, whilst the princesses wept for his weeping, and they were moved to compassion and jealousy for him. So they fell to comforting him and exhorting him to patience and offering up prayers for his reunion with his wife; whilst his sister [the youngest] said to him, 'O my brother, take heart and be of good courage and have patience; so shalt thou come to thy desire; for whoso is patient and waiteth, attaineth that he seeketh. Patience is the key of relief and indeed the poet saith:

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

So take heart and brace up thy resolution, for one who is to live ten years dieth not when he is but nine. Weeping and grief and mourning engender sickness and disease; wherefore do thou abide with us till thou be rested, and I will cast about how thou mayst win to thy wife and children, so it please God the Most High.' And he wept sore and recited these verses:

An if of its disease my body be made whole, I'm still unhealed of that which harbours in my soul.
Except a lover be united with his love, No cure for love's disease there is nor lovers' dole.

Then he sat down beside her and she proceeded to talk with him and comfort him and question him of the manner of his wife's departure. So he told her and she said, 'By Allah, O my brother, I had it in mind to bid thee burn the feather-dress, but Satan made me forget it.' She ceased not to talk with him and caress him and company with him other ten days, whilst sleep visited him not and he delighted not in food; and when the case was long upon him and unrest waxed in him, he recited the following verses:

A loved one owns my heart, with whom I companied of yore : There is no creature save herself I wish or weary for.
All that the Arabs boast of charms in her united are ; She's a gazelle, but on my heart she feedeth evermore.
Because my patience and resource do fail for love of her, I weep, though weeping profits not to salve my secret sore.
A fair one, seven [years of age] she hath and seven thereto, As she a moon of five nights were and five thereto and four.[1]

[1] A roundabout way, much in favour with Arab poets, of stating a girl's age, fourteen, and at the same time introducing the never-failing comparison to the full moon. See antè, Vol. IV. p. 327.

When the youngest princess saw him thus distracted for passion and love-longing and the fever of desire, she went in to her sisters, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and throwing herself upon them, kissed their feet, weeping, and besought them to devise some means of bringing Hassan to the Wac Islands and effecting his reunion with his wife and children. She ceased not to conjure them to further her brother in the accomplishment of his desire and to weep before them, till she made them weep and they said to her, 'Be of good cheer: we will do our endeavour to bring about his reunion with his family, if it be the will of God the Most High.' And he abode with them a whole year, during which his eyes ceased never from tears.

Now the princesses had an uncle, their father's brother-german, whose name was Abdulcuddous, and he loved the eldest with an exceeding love and was wont to visit her once a year and do her desires. They had told him of Hassan's adventure with the Magian and how he had availed to slay him; whereat he rejoiced and gave the eldest princess perfumes, saying, 'O daughter of my brother, if thou be in concern for aught or stand in any need or if aught irk thee, cast of these perfumes upon fire, naming me, and I will be with thee presently and will do thy desire.' This was said on the first day of the year that was now at an end; and the eldest princess said to her youngest sister, 'Lo, the year is wholly past and my uncle is not come. Rise, bring me somewhat of fire and the box of perfumes.' So the damsel arose, rejoicing, and fetching what she sought, laid it before her sister, who opened the box and taking thence a little of the perfume, cast it into the fire, naming her uncle; nor was it burnt out ere a cloud of dust appeared at the farther end of the valley and presently lifting, discovered an old man riding on an elephant, which trumpeted as it came.

As soon as he came within sight of the princesses, he fell to making signs to them with his hands and feet; nor was it long ere he reached the castle and alighting from the elephant, came in to them, whereupon they embraced him and kissed his hands and saluted him. Then he sat down, whilst the girls talked with him and questioned him of his absence. Quoth he, 'I was sitting but now with your aunt, when I smelt the perfumes and hastened to you on this elephant. What wouldst thou, O daughter of my brother?' 'O uncle,' answered she, 'indeed we longed for thee, for the year is past and it is not thy wont to be absent from us more than a year.' 'I was busy,' answered he, 'but I purposed to come to you to-morrow.' Wherefore they thanked him and blessed him and sat talking with him.

Night dccc.

Presently the eldest said to him, 'O my uncle, we told thee the story of Hassan of Bassora, whom Behram the Magian brought and how he slew the latter and after made prize of the Supreme King's daughter and took her to wife and journeyed with her to his native land?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'and what befell him after that?' 'He was blest with two sons by her,' said the princess; 'but she played him false; for she took them in his absence and fled with them to her own country, saying to his mother, "When thy son returneth and asketh for me and the nights of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the Islands of Wac."'

When Abdulcuddous heard this, he shook his head and bit his hands; then, bowing his head, he fell a-drumming on the earth with his fingers; after which he shook his head and looked right and left and shook his head again, whilst Hassan watched him from a place where he was hidden from him. Then said the princesses to their

uncle, 'Vouchsafe us an answer, for our hearts are rent in sunder.' But he shook his head at them, saying, 'O my daughters, this man hath wearied himself [in vain] and cast himself into grievous stress and sore peril; for he may not win to the Wac Islands.'

With this the princesses called Hassan, who came forth and kissed Abdulcuddous's hand and saluted him. The old man rejoiced in him and seated him by his side; whereupon quoth the damsels, 'O uncle, acquaint our brother Hassan with that which thou hast told us.' So he said to Hassan, 'O my son, put away from thee this sore torment; for thou canst never win to the Wac Islands, though the Flying Jinn and the wandering stars were with thee; for that betwixt thee and these islands are seven valleys and seven seas and seven mighty mountains. How then canst thou come at this place and who shall bring thee thither? Wherefore I conjure thee by Allah, O my son, do thou reckon them[1] as dead and turn back forthright and weary not thy soul! Indeed, I give thee good counsel, an thou wilt but accept it.' At these words Hassan wept till he fainted, and the princesses sat round him, weeping for his weeping, whilst the youngest rent her clothes and buffeted her face, till she swooned away.

When the old man saw them in this transport of grief and trouble and mourning, he was moved to pity for them and bidding them be silent, said to Hassan, 'O my son, be of good comfort and rejoice in the accomplishment of thy desire, if it be the will of God the Most High. Rise, O my son, take courage and follow me.' So Hassan arose and followed him, rejoicing in the fulfilment of his wish, after he had taken leave of the princesses. Then the old man called the elephant and mounting, took Hassan up behind him and fared on three days and nights, like the

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

blinding lightning, till he came to a vast blue mountain, whose stones were all blue and amiddleward which was a cavern, with a door of Chinese iron. Here he set Hassan down and alighting, dismissed the elephant. Then he went up to the door and knocked, whereupon it opened and there came out to him a black slave, hairless, as he were an Afrit, with a sword in his right hand and a target of steel in the other. When he saw Abdulcuddous, he threw his sword and buckler from his hand and coming up to him, kissed his hand.

Abdulcuddous took Hassan by the hand and entered with him, whilst the slave shut the door after them; whereupon Hassan found himself in a vast and spacious cavern, through which ran a vaulted passage, and they fared on therein a mile's space, till they came forth upon a great open space and made for an angle [of the mountain] wherein were two great doors of solid brass. The old man opened one of the doors and said to Hassan, 'Sit at the door, whilst I enter and return to thee in haste, and beware lest thou open it and enter.' Then he entered and shutting the door after him, was absent an hour, after which he returned, leading a horse saddled and bridled, which, when it ran, flew, and when it flew, the very dust overtook it not, and brought it to Hassan, saying, 'Mount.' So he mounted and Abdulcuddous opened the second door, beyond which appeared a vast desert.

They passed through the door into the desert and the old man said to him, 'O my son, take this letter and go whither this horse will carry thee. When thou seest him stop at the door of a cavern like this, dismount and throw the bridle over the saddle-bow and let him go. He will enter the cavern, which do thou not enter with him, but abide at the door five days, without losing patience. On the sixth day there will come forth to thee a black elder, clad all in black, with a long white beard, flowing

down to his navel. Kiss his hands and take his skirt and lay it on thy head and weep before him, till he take compassion on thee and ask thee what thou wouldst have. Then give him the letter, which he will take and go in and leave thee, without speaking. Wait at the door other five days, without wearying, and on the sixth day expect him; and if he come out to thee himself, know that thy need will be accomplished, but, if one of his servants come forth to thee, know that he who cometh forth to thee purposeth to kill thee; and peace be on thee! For know, O my son, that whoso imperilleth himself is his own undoer; wherefore, if thou fear for thy life, cast it not into [peril of] destruction; but, if thou fear not, up and do thy will, for I have expounded the case to thee. Yet, if thou be minded to return to thy friends, let me mount thee on the elephant; it will carry thee to the daughters of my brother, who will restore thee to thy country and thy home, and [belike] God will vouchsafe thee a better than this girl, of whom thou art enamoured.' Quoth Hassan, 'And how shall life be sweet to me, except I attain my desire? By Allah, I will never turn back, till I regain my beloved or my death overtake me!' And he wept and recited the following verses:

Night dccci.

For the loss of my belovéd and the passion that for e'er On me grows,
I stand proclaiming my abjection and despair.
Of my longing for my loved one, the encampment's dust I kiss, Though
it serve but to redouble my distraction and my care.
Allah watch o'er those who're absent, though their memory's in my
heart! Ever present are my sorrows and my joys are fled for e'er.
Quoth my censors to me, 'Patience!' But therewith they've fared
away: Lamentation but and burning have they left me to my share.
'Twas her taking leave affrayed me and her saying, 'When I'm gone,
Look my memory thou forget not and our loves in mind thou bear.'
Unto whom shall I for succour turn, in whom hope after them? For in
good and evil fortune still my hope and trust they were.

Ah, the anguish of returning, after having said farewell! How my rancorous foes exulted, when they saw me backward fare!
O ye flaming fires of passion, still redouble on my heart! This it is against whose danger, I, alas! had fain been ware.
If my loves are fled for ever, after them I will not live; Yet, if they return to glad me, ho for joy and fortune fair!
Never shall mine eyes, by Allah, stint from weeping for their loss! Stream on stream, my tears shall witness to the stress of my despair.

When Abdulcuddous heard this, he knew that he would not turn back from his desire nor would words have effect on him, and was certified that nothing would serve him but he must adventure himself, though it cost him his life. So he said to him, 'Know, O my son, that the Islands of Wac are seven islands, wherein are great plenty of troops, all virgin girls, and the inner isles are peopled by Satans and Marids and warlocks and tribesmen of the Jinn, whose land none ever entered and returned thence. So, God on thee, return presently to thy people; for know that she whom thou seekest is the king's daughter of all these islands; and how canst thou win to her? Hearken to me, O my son, and belike God will vouchsafe thee a better than she in her stead.' 'O my lord,' answered Hassan, 'though for the love of her I were torn limb from limb, yet should I but redouble in love and transport! Needs must I enter the Wac Islands and come to the sight of my wife and children; and God willing, I will not return save with her and them.' 'Then,' said the sheikh, 'nothing will serve thee but thou must make the journey?' 'Nothing,' answered Hassan: 'and I only ask of thee thy prayers for aid and furtherance; so haply God will presently reunite me with my wife and children.' Then he wept for stress of longing and recited these verses:

Ye are my wish, the fairest fair of any mortal wight; Indeed, I've lodged you in the stead of hearing and of sight.
Upon my heart you've gotten hold; it is your dwelling-place, And after you I am become in torment day and night.

Think not in anywise I've ceased from loving you; indeed, The love of you hath brought the wretch to sick and sorry plight.
Ye went away and with you went my gladness, and for me Serenity became the worst of trouble and despite.
Yea, ye have left me here alone, to watch the stars for pain And weep with tears that pour and pour, like rain from heaven's height.
O night, thou'rt long, indeed, on him who passes thee on wake, Watching the visage of the moon, a love-distracted wight.
Wind, if thou pass the camp where they have lighted down, to them My farewell greeting bear, for life is spent and ended quite;
And tell them somewhat of the pangs I suffer; for indeed They know not what's to do with me nor that which ails my spright.

Then he wept till he swooned away; and when he came to himself, Abdulcuddous said to him, 'O my son, thou hast a mother; make her not taste [the bitterness of] thy loss.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' replied he, 'I will never return except with my wife or my death overtake me.' And he wept and lamented and recited the following verses:

I swear by Love's virtue, my faith tow'rds thee hath not changed for a day For absence; I am not, indeed, of those that their troth-plight betray.
Such longing is in me that, if to the folk I discovered my case, 'Sure madness hath gotten a hold of the man,' without doubt they would say.
Love-longing and mourning and woe, the transport and pangs of desire, When this is the case of a wight, how fares it with him, wellaway?

With this the old man knew that he would not turn from his purpose, though it cost him his life: so he gave him the letter and prayed for him and enjoined him how he should do, saying, 'I have in this letter given a strait charge concerning thee to Abourruweish, son of Belkis, daughter of Muïn, for he is my master and teacher, and all, men and Jinn, humble themselves to him and stand in awe of him. Now go with the blessing of God.'

Hassan gave the horse the rein, and it flew off with him, swiftlier than lightning, and stayed not in its course ten days, when he saw before him a vast mountain, blacker than night, that walled the world from East to West. As he neared it, his horse neighed under him, whereupon there flocked to it horses in number as the drops of rain, none could tell their tale, and fell to rubbing themselves against it. Hassan was affrighted at them and rode on, surrounded by the horses, till he came to the cavern which Abdulcuddous had described to him. The steed stood still at the door and Hassan alighted and threw the rein over the saddle-bow; whereupon the horse entered the cavern, whilst he abode without, as the old man had charged him, pondering the issue of his case and knowing not what would befall him.

He abode thus, at the mouth of the cavern, five days and nights, sleepless, mournful, distracted and perplexed, pondering his severance from home and friends and family, with tearful eye and mournful heart. Then he bethought him of his mother and of what might yet happen to him and of his separation from his wife and children and all that he had suffered and recited the following verses:

The med'cine of my heart's with you: indeed, my heart doth fail And from my lids' hill-foot run tears, like rillets to the vale.
Yearning and dole and severance, desire and strangerhood, And distance from my native land against me do prevail.
Nought but a lover for her loss he loves distraught am I; Calamities have smitten me and made my spirit quail.
And if my love on me have brought affliction, where is he, The noble, whom vicissitudes afflict not nor assail?

Hardly had he made an end of his verses, when out came the Sheikh Abourruweish, black and clad in black raiment, and he knew him by the description that Abdul-

cuddous had given him. So he threw himself at his feet and rubbed his cheeks on them and taking his skirt, laid it on his head and wept before him. Quoth the old man, 'What wantest thou, O my son?' Whereupon he put out his hand to him with the letter, and he took it and re-entered the cavern, without making him any answer. Hassan remained in his place other five days, whilst fear and concern redoubled on him and restlessness clave fast to him, and he abode weeping and bemoaning himself for the anguish of estrangement and much watching. And he recited the following verses:

Glory to Him who rules the skies! The lover in affliction lies.
Who hath not tasted passion's food Knows not what misery can devise.
Rivers of blood, if I restrained My tears, would ripple from mine eyes.
How many a friend is hard of heart And us with sore affliction tries!
An she with me would but keep faith, I'd call a truce with tears and sighs.
I'm overthrown and ruin's eye Hath smitten me on woful wise.
Beasts weep to see my dreariment And everything in air that flies.

He ceased not to weep till dawn of the sixth day, when Abourruweish came forth to him, clad in white raiment, and beckoned to him to enter. So he went in, rejoicing and assured of the accomplishment of his desire, and the old man took him by the hand and leading him into the cavern, fared on with him half a day's journey, till they came to a vaulted gateway with a door of steel. Abourruweish opened the door and they entered a vestibule vaulted with onyx stones, inlaid with arabesques of gold, which led them to a great hall, wide and lined with marble. In its midst was a garden containing all manner trees and flowers and fruits, with birds warbling on the branches and singing the praises of God, the Almighty King; and there were four estrades, each facing other, and in each estrade a fountain, at whose corners stood lions of red gold, spouting water from their mouths into the basin.

On each estrade stood a chair, whereon sat an elder, with great store of books before him and censers of gold, containing fire and perfumes, and before each elder were students, who read the books to him.

When the two entered, the elders rose and did them honour; whereupon Abourruweish signed to them to dismiss their scholars and they did so. Then the four arose and seating themselves before Abourruweish, asked him of Hassan's case, and he said to the latter, 'Tell the company thy story and all that hath betided thee, first and last.' So Hassan wept sore and related to them his adventures [up to the time when Behram sewed him in the camel's skin and caused the rocs carry him up to the mountain-top]; whereupon all the sheikhs cried out and said, 'Is this indeed he whom the Magian caused ascend the Mountain of Clouds by means of the rocs, sewn up in the skin of a camel?' And he said, 'Yes.' So they turned to the Sheikh Abourruweish and said to him, 'O our sheikh, Behram contrived his ascent to the top of the mountain; but how did he descend thence and what wonders saw he there?' And Abourruweish said, 'O Hassan, tell them how thou camest down and what thou sawest of marvels.'

So he told them all that had befallen him, first and last, and how he had gotten the Magian into his power and slain him and delivered the youth from him and sent him back to his own country and how he had taken the king's daughter of the Jinn and married her and she had borne him two children, yet had played him false and taken them and flown away, and related to them all the perils and hardships he had undergone; whereat they all marvelled and said to Abourruweish, 'O elder of elders, by Allah, this youth is to be pitied! But belike thou wilt aid him to regain his wife and children.' 'O my brothers,' answered he, 'this is a grave and perilous matter; and never saw I any

Night dccciii.

loathe life but this youth. You know that the Wac Islands are hard of access and that none may come to them but at the peril of his life; and ye know also the strength of their people and their guards. Moreover, I have sworn an oath not to tread their soil nor transgress against them in aught: so how shall this man win to the daughter of the Great King and who can avail to bring him to her or help him in this matter?'

'O elder of elders,' replied the others, 'verily this man is consumed with desire and he hath adventured himself to bring thee thy brother Abdulcuddous' letter; wherefore it behoves thee to help him.' And Hassan arose and kissed Abourruweish's feet and raising his skirt, laid it on his head, weeping and saying, 'I beseech thee, by Allah, to reunite me with my wife and children, though it cost me my life and soul!' The four elders all wept for his weeping and said to Abourruweish, 'Deal kindly with this poor fellow for the sake of thy brother Abdulcuddous and profit by this occasion to earn the reward of [God for] him.' Quoth he, 'This unhappy youth knoweth not what he undertaketh; but we will help him after the measure of our power.' When Hassan heard the sheikh's words, he rejoiced and kissed the hands of the five elders, one after another, imploring their aid.

Then Abourruweish took inkhorn and paper and wrote a letter, which he sealed and gave to Hassan, together with a leathern pouch, containing perfumes and flint and steel, and said to him, 'Take care of this pouch, and when thou fallest into any strait, burn a little of the perfumes therein and name me, whereupon I will be with thee presently and deliver thee from thy stress.' Moreover, he bade one of those present fetch him an Afrit of the Flying Jinn; and he did so forthright; whereupon quoth Abourruweish to the genie, 'What is thy name?' 'Thy slave is [called] Dehnesh ben Fectesh,' replied the Afrit. And

the sheikh said, 'Draw near to me.' So Dehnesh drew near to him and he put his mouth to his ear and said somewhat to him, whereat the Afrit shook his head and answered, 'I accept, O sheikh of sheikhs.'

Then said Abourruweish to Hassan, 'Arise, O my son, mount the shoulders of this Afrit, Dehnesh the Flyer; but, when he soareth with thee to heaven and thou hearest the angels glorifying God in the air, have a care lest thou do the like; else wilt thou perish and he also.' 'I will not say a word,' replied he, and the old man continued: 'O Hassan, to-morrow at peep of day he will set thee down in a land of pure white, like unto camphor, whereupon do thou fare on ten days by thyself, till thou come to the gate of a city. Enter and enquire for the king of the city; and when thou comest to his presence, salute him and kiss his hand: then give him this letter and heed well that which he shall counsel thee.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Hassan and mounted the Afrit's shoulders, whilst the elders rose and offered up prayers for him and commended him to Dehnesh's care.

Then the Afrit soared with him to the very confines of the sky, till he heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, and flew on with him a day and a night, till he set him down, at dawn of the next day, in a land, white as camphor, and went his way, leaving him there. When Hassan found himself alone in the land aforesaid, he fared on day and night for ten days, till he came to the gate of the city in question and entering, enquired for the king. They directed him to him and told him that his name was Hessoun, King of the Land of Camphor, and that he had troops and soldiers, enough to fill the earth, in its length and breadth. So he sought an audience of him and being admitted to his presence, found him a mighty king and kissed the earth before him. Quoth the king, 'What is thine occasion?' Whereupon Hassan kissed the letter and

gave it to him. The king read it and shook his head, then said to one of his officers, 'Take this youth and lodge him in the guest-house.' So he took him and lodged him in the guest-house, where he abode three days, eating and drinking and seeing none but the servant who waited on him and who entertained him with discourse and cheered him with his company, questioning him of his case and how he came thither; whereupon he told him his whole story.

On the fourth day, his attendant carried him before the king, who said to him, 'O Hassan, the sheikh of sheikhs adviseth me that thou comest to me, seeking to enter the Wac Islands. O my son, I would send thee thither forthright, but that by the way are many perils and thirsty deserts, full of terrors; but have patience and all will be well, for needs must I make shift to bring thee to thy desire, so it please God the Most High. Know, O my son, that here is a great army, equipped with arms and horses and gear, who desire to enter the Wac Islands and cannot avail thereto. But, for the sake of the Sheikh Abourruweish, I may not send thee back to him unfulfilled of thy desire. There will presently come to us ships from the Wac Islands, and I will set thee on board the first that arrives and give thee in charge to the sailors, so they may take care of thee and carry thee to the Islands. If any question thee of thy case and condition, answer him, "I am kinsman to King Hessoun, lord of the Land of Camphor;" and when the ship makes fast to the shore of the Wac Islands and the master bids thee land, do thou land.

When thou comest ashore, thou wilt see a multitude of settles all about the beach, of which do thou choose one and crouch under it and stir not. As soon as it is dark night, thou wilt see an army of women appear and flock about the merchandise [landed from the ship], and one

of them will sit down on the settle, under which thou hast hidden thyself, whereupon do thou put forth thy hand to her and take hold of her and implore her protection. If she accord it thee, thou wilt accomplish thy desire and win to thy wife and children; but, if she refuse thee, make thy moan for thyself and give up all hope of life, for thou art a dead man. For know, O my son, that thou adventurest thy life and except the Lord of Heaven had succoured thee, thou hadst not won hither. This is all I can do for thee, and peace be on thee!' When Hassan heard the king's words, he wept till he swooned away, and when he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

Night Deceiv.

A term's decreed to me, which I must needs fulfil, And when its days are spent, I die, will I or nill.
Though lions in their woods beset me, whilst a breath Is left me, I shall get the better of them still.

Then he kissed the earth before the king and said to him, 'O mighty king, how many days remain till the coming of the ships?' 'In a month's time,' answered Hessoun, 'they will come and will tarry here other two months, to sell their cargo, after which they will return to their own country: so thou must not look to set out save after three whole months.' Then he bade him return to the guest-house and commanded to supply him with all that he needed of meat and drink and raiment fit for kings. Hassan abode there a month, at the end of which time the ships arrived and the king and the merchants went forth to them, taking Hassan with them. Amongst them he saw a ship, with much people therein, like the pebbles [of the beach] for number; none knew their tale save He who created them. She was anchored in mid-harbour and had small boats, which transported her lading to the shore.

Hassan abode till the crew had carried all the goods ashore and sold and bought and there wanted but three

days of the day of departure; whereupon the king sent for him and equipped him with all that he required and gave him great gifts: after which he summoned the captain of the great ship and said to him, 'Take this youth with thee in the ship, so none may know of him but thou, and carry him to the Wac Islands and leave him there; and tell none of him.' And the captain said, 'I hear and obey.' Then said the king to Hassan, 'Look thou tell none of those who are with thee in the ships thine errand nor discover to them aught of thy case; else thou art a lost man.' He answered, 'I hear and obey,' and took leave of the king, after he had wished him long life and victory over his enemies and enviers; wherefore the king thanked him and wished him safety and the accomplishment of his desire. Then he committed him to the captain, who laid him in a chest and taking boat therewith, carried him aboard, whilst the folk were busy transporting the goods and doubted not but the chest contained somewhat of merchandise.

After this, the ships set sail and fared on without ceasing ten days, and on the eleventh day they reached land. So the captain set Hassan ashore and there he saw settles without number, none knew their count save God, even as the king had told him. He went on, till he came to one that had no fellow and hid under it till nightfall, when there came up a great host of women on foot, as they were a swarm of locusts, armed cap-a-pie in hauberks and strait-knit coats of mail and bearing drawn swords in their hands, who, seeing the merchandise landed from the ships, busied themselves therewith.

Presently they sat down, to rest themselves, and one of them seated herself on the settle under which Hassan was hidden: whereupon he took hold of the hem of her skirt and laid it on his head and throwing himself before her, fell to kissing her hands and feet and weeping. 'Harkye,

sirrah!' said she. 'Arise and stand up, ere any see thee and slay thee.' So he came forth and standing up, kissed her hands and wept and said to her, 'O my lady, I cast myself on thy protection! Have ruth on one who is parted from his people and wife and children, one who hath haste to rejoin them and adventureth his life and soul [for their sake!]. Take pity on me and be assured that Paradise will be thy reward; or, if thou wilt not receive me, I beseech thee, by God the Great, the Concealer, to conceal my case!' The merchants, seeing him talking with her, stared at him; and she, seeing his humility and hearing his speech, was moved to compassion for him; her heart inclined to him and she knew that he had not ventured himself and come to that place, save for a grave matter. So she said to him, 'O my son, take heart and be of good courage and return to thy hiding-place till the coming night, and God shall do as He will.'

Then she took leave of him and he crept under the settle as before, whilst the troops lighted flambeaux compounded of aloes-wood and crude ambergris and passed the night in sport and delight till the morning. At daybreak, the boats returned to the shore and the merchants busied themselves with buying and selling and the transport of the goods and gear till nightfall, whilst Hassan abode hidden beneath the settle, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, knowing not what was decreed to him in the secret purpose of God. As he was thus, the woman with whom he had taken refuge came up to him and giving him a shirt of mail and a helmet and spear and sword and a gilded girdle, bade him don them and seat himself on the settle and let none know his case, after which she left him, for fear of the troops. So he arose and donned the coat of mail and helmet and clasped the girdle about his middle. Then he slung the sword over his shoulder and taking the spear in his hand, sat down on the settle,

whilst his tongue forgot not to name God the Most High and call on Him for protection.

Presently, there appeared cressets and flambeaux and lanterns and up came the army of women. So he arose and mingling with them, became as one of them. A little before daybreak, they set out, and Hassan with them, and fared on till they came to their encampment, where they dispersed, each to her tent, and Hassan followed his protectress into hers. When she entered, she threw down her arms and put off her hauberk and veil. So Hassan did the like and looking at her, saw her to be a grizzled old woman, blue-eyed[1] and big-nosed, a calamity of calamities. Indeed, she was the foulest of all created things, with pock-marked face and bald eyebrows, gap-toothed and chapfallen, with hoary hair, running nose and slavering mouth; even as saith of the like of her the poet:

Night dccccv.

Within the corners of her face afflictions nine do dwell; Each, when she lays her veil aside, discovers very hell.
A hideous face and favour foul, as a pig's snout it were; A voiding-place thou'dst deem it nor deem otherwise than well.

And indeed she was like a pied snake or a bald she-wolf. When she looked at Hassan, she marvelled and said, 'How won this man to these lands and in which of the ships was he and how came he hither in safety?' And she fell to questioning him of his case and wondering at his coming, whereupon he fell at her feet and rubbed his face on them and wept till he swooned away; and when he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

When will the days vouchsafe reunion to us twain And our long-severed loves reknit into one skein?
When shall I win of them the long-desired delight, Reproach that hath an end and love that doth remain?
If Nile ran like my tears, 'twould leave no barren place Unwatered in the world nor any desert plain;

[1] *i.e.* ailing-eyed.

Egypt and Syria all and Irak 'twould o'erflow and o'er the Hejaz pour
its fertilizing rain:
And this, my love, because of thine abandonment. Be kind, then, and
vouchsafe me union again.

Then he took the old woman's skirt and laid it on his head and fell to weeping and craving her protection. When she saw his passion and transport and anguish and distress, her heart inclined to him and she promised him her protection, saying, 'Have no fear.' Then she questioned him of his case and he told her the manner of his coming thither, whereat she wondered and said, 'This that hath betided thee, methinks, never betided any but thyself and except thou hadst been vouchsafed the [especial] protection of God the Most High, thou hadst not been saved: but now, O my son, take comfort and be of good courage; thou hast nothing more to fear, for indeed thou hast reached thy goal and attained thy desire, if it please God the Most High!'

Thereat Hassan rejoiced with an exceeding joy and she sent to summon the captains of the army to her presence, and it was the last day of the month. So they presented themselves and the old woman said to them, 'Go out and proclaim to the troops that they come forth, all, to-morrow at daybreak and let none tarry behind, on pain of death.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and going forth, made proclamation as she bade them, after which they returned and told her of this; wherefore Hassan knew that she was the commander of the army and the chief in authority over them; and she was called Shewahi, hight Mother of Calamities.[1] She ceased not to command and forbid and Hassan put not off his arms from his body that day.

[1] A common name for an ugly old woman. It will be remembered that the same name and nickname are attributed to the old woman in the story of King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan (see Vol. II.), a typical beldam of Arab legend.

When the day broke, all the troops came forth from their places, but the old woman came not forth with them, and as soon as they were gone and the camp was clear of them, she said to Hassan, 'Draw near unto me, O my son.' So he drew near unto her and stood before her. Quoth she, 'Why hast thou adventured thyself hither and how came thy soul to consent to its own destruction? Tell me the truth and fear not, for thou hast my plighted word and I am moved to compassion for thy case and pity thee and have taken thee under my protection. So, if thou tell me the truth, I will help thee to accomplish thy desire, though it involve the loss of souls and the destruction of bodies; and since thou hast won to me, no hurt shall betide thee from me, nor will I suffer any to come at thee with harm of all that be in the Wac Islands.' So he related to her his story from first to last, acquainting her with the matter of his wife and of the birds, how he had taken her from amongst the ten and married her and abode with her, till she had borne him two sons, and how she had taken her children and flown away with them, whenas she knew the way to the feather-dress: brief, he concealed from her no whit of his case.

When Shewahi heard his relation, she shook her head and said to him, 'Glory be to God who hath brought thee hither in safety and made thee to happen upon me! For, hadst thou lighted on any but me, thou hadst lost thy life, without attaining thy desire: but the truth of thine intent and thy love and the excess of thy longing for thy wife and children, these it was that have brought thee to the attainment of thy wish. Didst thou not love her to distraction, thou hadst not thus adventured thyself, and praised be God for thy safety! Wherefore it behoves us to further thy desire and help thee to thy quest, so thou mayst presently attain that thou seekest, if it be the will of God the Most High. But know, O my son, that thy

wife is not here, but in the seventh of the Wac Islands, and between us and it is seven months' journey, night and day. From here we go to an island called the Land of Birds, wherein, for the loud clamour of the birds and the flapping of their wings, one cannot hear other speak.

Night dccchi. Therein we journey, night and day, eleven days, after which we come to another land, called the Land of Wild Beasts, where, for the roaring of the lions and howling of wolves and the screaming of hyænas and other beasts of prey, we shall hear nothing; and therein we travel twenty days' journey. Then we come to a third country, called the Land of Jinn, where, for the greatness of the crying of the Jinn and the noise of their groaning and the flaming of fires and the flight of sparks and smoke from their mouths and their arrogance in blocking up the road before us, our ears will be deafened and our eyes blinded, so that we shall neither hear nor see, nor dare any look behind him, or he perishes: but there the horseman bows his head on his saddle-bow and raises it not for three days. After this, we come to a vast mountain and a running river, bordering on the Wac Islands, which are seven in number and the extent whereof is a whole year's journey for a diligent horseman. And thou must know, O my son, that the ruler over us is a woman of these islands and that these troops are all virgin girls.

On the bank of the river aforesaid is another mountain, called Wac, and it is thus named by reason of a tree [which grows there and] which bears fruits like human heads. When the sun rises on them, the heads cry out all, saying, "Wac! Wac! Glory be to the Creating King!" And when we hear their crying, we know that the sun is risen. In like manner, at sundown, the heads set up the same cry, and so we know that the sun hath set. No man may abide with us or win to us or tread our earth. Moreover, betwixt us and the abiding-place of the queen who

ruleth over us is a month's journey from this shore, all the people whereof are under her hand, as are also the tribes of the Jinn, Marids and Satans and warlocks, whose number none knoweth save He who created them. Wherefore, if thou be afraid, I will send with thee one who will bring thee to the coast and embark thee on board a ship that shall carry thee to thine own country. But if thou be content to abide with us, I will not forbid thee and thou shalt be with me [as thou wert] in mine eye, till thou accomplish thy desire, so it please God the Most High.'

'O my lady,' answered Hassan, 'I will never leave thee till I foregather with my wife or lose my life!' 'This is a light matter,' rejoined she; 'be of good heart, for thou shalt come to thy desire, God willing; and needs must I let the queen know of thee, that she may help thee to attain thine object.' Hassan blessed her and kissed her head and hands, thanking her for her exceeding kindness. Then he set out with her, pondering the issue of his case and the horrors of his strangerhood; wherefore he fell a-weeping and groaning and recited the following verses:

From out my loved one's land a zephyr blows; for stress Of love thou seest me dazed and passion's sheer excess.
The night of love-delight is as a brilliant moon And separation's day a sombre night no less.
The parting from the loved a heavy sorrow is And eke the taking leave of friends a sore distress.
There's not a faithful friend 'mongst men; I'll not complain To any but herself of her unrighteousness.
I cannot be consoled for you; no censor base To solace can enforce my heart itself address.
O thou unique in charms, my love's unique: O thou That fail'st of match, my heart fails also for duresse.
Whoso pretends to love of thee and feareth blame, Blameworthy sure is he and merits not success.

Then the old woman bade beat the drums for departure

and the army set out. Hassan accompanied her, drowned in the sea of solicitude and reciting verses, whilst she strove to comfort him and exhorted him to patience; but he awoke not [from his melancholy] and paid no heed to her exhortations. They fared on thus till they came to the Land of Birds, and when they entered it, it seemed to Hassan as if the world were overturned, for the exceeding clamour. His head ached and his mind was dazed, his eyes were blinded and his ears deaved, and he feared with an exceeding fear and looked for nothing but death, saying in himself, 'If this be the Land of Birds, how will the Land of Beasts be?' But, when Shewahi saw him in this plight, she laughed at him, saying, 'O my son, if this be thy case in the first island, how will it fare with thee, when thou comest to the others?'

So he humbled himself in prayer to God, beseeching Him to succour him against that wherewithal He had afflicted him and bring him to his wishes; and they ceased not going till they passed out of the Land of Birds and traversing the Land of Beasts, came to the Land of Jinn, which when Hassan saw, he was sore affrighted and repented him of having entered it with them. But he sought aid of God the Most High and fared on with them, till they were quit of the Land of Jinn and came to the river, on whose banks they halted and pitched their tents at the foot of a vast and lofty mountain. Then they rested and ate and drank and slept in security, for they were come to their own country.

On the morrow the old woman set Hassan a settle of alabaster, inlaid with pearls and jewels and nuggets of red gold, by the river-side, and he sat down thereon, having first bound his face with a chinband, that discovered nought of him but his eyes. Then she let proclaim among the troops that they should all assemble before her tent and put off their clothes and go down into the stream

and wash; and this she did to the intent that she might show him all the girls, so haply his wife should be amongst them and he know her. So the whole army assembled before her and putting off their clothes, went down into the stream, [company after company;] and Hassan watched them washing and frolicking and making merry, whilst they took no heed of him, deeming him to be of the daughters of the kings. When he beheld them stripped of their clothes, his yard rose on end, for that he saw what was between their thighs, and that of all kinds, soft and domed, plump and cushioned, large-lipped, perfect, redundant and ample,[1] and their faces were as moons and their hair as night upon day, for that they were of the daughters of the kings.

When they were clean, they came up out of the water, naked, as the moon on the night of her full, and the old woman questioned Hassan of them, company by company, if his wife were among them; but, as often as she asked him, he made answer, 'She is not among these, O my lady.' Last of all, there came up a damsel, attended by half a score slave-girls and thirty waiting-women, all high-bosomed maids. They all put off their clothes and went down into the river, where the damsel fell to carrying it with a high hand over her women, throwing them down and ducking them. Presently, she came up out of the water and sat down and they brought her napkins of silk, embroidered with gold, with which she dried herself. Then they brought her clothes and jewels and ornaments of the handiwork of the Jinn, and she donned them and rose and walked among the troops, she and her maids. When Hassan saw her, his heart fluttered and he said, 'Verily this girl is the likest of all folk to the bird I saw in the lake atop of the palace of my sisters the

Night dccclii.

[1] Perfect, redundant and ample, the names of three common Arabic metres.

princesses, and she lorded it over her attendants even as doth this one.' 'O Hassan,' said the old woman, 'is this thy wife?' 'No, by thy life, O my lady,' replied he, 'this is not my wife, nor ever in my life have I set eyes on her; neither among all the girls I have seen in these islands is there the like of my wife nor her match for beauty and grace and symmetry!'

Then said Shewahi, 'Describe her to me and acquaint me with all her attributes, that I may have her in my mind; for I know every girl in the islands, being commander of the army of maids and governor over them; wherefore, if thou describe her to me, I shall know her and will contrive for thee to take her.' Quoth he, 'My wife is of surpassing beauty, dulcet of speech and sweet of fashion, as she were a bending branch. She hath a fair face, a slender shape, smooth cheeks, high breasts, great liquid black eyes, white teeth and soft red lips like coral. On her right cheek is a mole and on her belly, under her navel, is a sign; her face shines as the round of the moon, her waist is slight, her buttocks heavy, and the water of her mouth healeth the sick, as it were Kauther or Selsebil.'[1] 'Give me some plainer account of her,' said the old woman, 'may God increase thee of passion for her!' Quoth he, 'My wife hath a lovely face, oval cheeks like twin roses, long neck and melting black eyes, mouth like a seal of cornelian and flashing teeth, that stand one in stead of cup and ewer. She is cast in the mould of pleasantness and between her thighs is the throne of the Khalifate, there is no such sanctuary among the holy places; as saith in its praise the poet:

The letters of that which hath made Me distraught are renowned among men:
They are four, multiplied into five, Thereafter and six into ten.'[2]

[1] Fountains of Paradise.

[2] The clue to this logogriph lies in the numerical value of the letters forming the key-word, *i.e.* 4×5=20=ك and 6×10=60=س, كس (cunnus).

Then wept Hassan and chanted the following couplet:

O heart, if the belovéd should play thee false in aught, Renounce her not, I rede thee, nor be thy love forgot.
Be patient; thou shalt bury thine enemies; God wot, He who makes use of patience, it disappoints him not.

And this also:

If all thy days thou wouldst be safe from trouble and dismay, Despair thou never neither be discouraged nor [too] gay.
Be patient and rejoice thou not nor mourn; but, if by day Thou art afflicted, "Have we not expanded . . . . . ?" look thou say.[1]

Thereupon the old woman bowed her head awhile, then, raising it, said, 'Glory be to God, the Mighty of Estate! Indeed I am afflicted with thee, O Hassan! Would I had never known thee! This woman, whom thou describest to me as thy very wife, I know by thy description to be none other than the eldest daughter of the Supreme King, she who ruleth over all the Wac Islands.[2] So open thine eyes and consider thine affair; and if thou be asleep, awake; for, if this woman be indeed thy wife, it is impossible for thee ever to win to her, and though thou wonnest to her, yet couldst thou not avail to her possession, since the distance between thee and her is as that between earth and heaven. Wherefore, O my son, return presently and cast not thyself into destruction and me with thee; for meseemeth thou hast no lot in her; so return whence thou camest, lest our lives be lost.' And she feared for herself and for him.

[1] *i.e.* repeat the chapter of the Koran commencing with these words, "Have we not expanded unto thee thy breast and eased thee of thy burden which galled thy back? . . . . . Verily, with difficulty is ease!" —*Koran* xciv. 1, etc.

[2] The old woman seems to have made the same mistake as Hassan's adopted sister (see supra, p. 154) in supposing his wife to have been the *eldest* daughter of the Supreme King, when, in fact, she was the *youngest* daughter, as appears by the sequel.

When he heard her words, he wept till he swooned away and she sprinkled water on his face, till he came to himself, when he continued to weep, so that he wet his clothes with his tears, for the much trouble and chagrin that betided him by reason of her words. And indeed he despaired of life and said to the old woman, 'O my lady, and how shall I turn back, after having won hither? Verily, I thought not thou wouldst forsake me nor fail of the accomplishment of my desire, especially as thou art the chief of the army of girls.' 'O my son,' answered Shewahi, 'I doubted not but thy wife was a maid of the maids, and had I known that she was the king's daughter, I had not suffered thee to come hither nor had I shown thee [the girls], for all the love I bear thee. But now, O my son, thou hast seen all the girls naked; so tell me which of them pleaseth thee and I will give her to thee, in lieu of thy wife, and do thou put it that thy wife and children are dead and take her and return to thine own country in safety, ere thou fall into the king's hand and I have no means of delivering thee. I conjure thee, by Allah, hearken to me. Choose thyself one of these damsels, in the stead of yonder woman, and return presently to thy country in safety and cause me not quaff the cup of thine anguish. For, by Allah, thou hast cast thyself into sore affliction and grievous peril, wherefrom none may avail to deliver thee!' But Hassan bowed his head and wept sore and recited these verses:

'Reproach me not,' to those who censured me I said; 'For sure my lids for tears and nought but tears were made.'
They fill my eyes and thence o'erflow my cheeks, for those I cherish have my love with cruelty repaid.
My body's wasted sore, yet I my madness love: Leave me to love and cease my passion to upbraid.
Belovéd mine, desire is sore on me for you: Will ye not pity one for love of you decayed?

Ye swore me constancy and truth, yet cruelly Forsook me and our love and friendship thus betrayed.
When on the parting day ye went, abjection's cup, For rigour and despite, unto my lips was laid.
Wherefore, my heart, dissolve with longing for their sight And, O mine eyes, rain tears, unsparing and unstayed!

Then he wept till he swooned away and the old woman sprinkled water on him till he revived, when she said to him, 'O my son, I have no shift left; for, if I carry thee to the city, thy life is lost and mine also; for, when the queen cometh to know of this, she will blame me for admitting thee into her islands, to which none of the sons of Adam hath access, and will slay me for bringing thee with me and for suffering thee to look upon these virgins, whom no male hath touched, neither hath husband come near them.' And Hassan swore that he had never looked on them with an evil eye. 'O my son,' continued she, 'hearken to me and return to thy country and I will give thee a girl of the best of them, beside wealth and treasures and things of price, such as shall suffice thee for all the women in the world. Give ear, then, to my words and return presently and imperil not thyself; indeed, I give thee good counsel.' But he wept and rubbed his cheeks against her feet, saying, 'O my lady and mistress and solace of mine eyes, how can I turn back without the sight of those I desire, now that I have made my way hither and come near to the abode of the beloved, hoping presently for meeting, so haply there may be for me a portion in reunion?' And he recited the following verses:

Be kind, O kings of grace, to one who's thrall to eyes And eyelids that have ta'en Chosroës' realm to prize.
Ye overpass the scent of musk in fragrancy And eke your beauty bright the full-blown rose outvies.

A zephyr of delight breathes round your camping-place And scattering perfume thence, abroad the East wind hies.
O censor, cease to blame and counsel me; indeed, Thou profferest advice on right unwelcome wise.
What ails thee to upbraid my passion, seeing thou No knowledge hast thereof nor whence it doth arise?
Eyes languorous and soft have captivated me And cast me into love, perforce and by surprise.
I pour forth tears galore what while I string my rhymes; Ye are the theme whereon I prose and poetise.
Red cheeks have all consumed my entrails, and my heart Burns, as on blazing coals, with fire that never dies.
If this my speech I leave, tell me, with what discourse Shall I my breast dilate and stay my tears and sighs?
I'm weary of my life for passion for the fair; But God belike shall bring relief, with Whom it lies.

Then the old woman was moved to pity for him and coming up to him, comforted him, saying, 'Be of good heart and cheerful eye and put away trouble from thy thought, for, by Allah, I will venture myself with thee, till thou attain thy desire or death overtake me!' With this, Hassan's heart was comforted and his bosom dilated and he sat talking with the old woman till the end of the day, when the girls dispersed, some entering their mansions in the city and others passing the night in the tents.

Then the old woman carried him into the city and lodged him in a place apart, lest any should come to know of him and tell the queen of him and she should kill him and her who had brought him thither. Moreover, she served him herself and strove to put him in fear of the mischief of the Supreme King, his wife's father; whilst he wept before her and said, 'O my lady, I choose death for myself and loathe the world, if I foregather not with my wife and children: I have set my life on the venture and will either attain my wish or die.' So the old woman fell to pondering the means of bringing him

and his wife together and casting about how to do in this poor wretch's case, who had cast himself into destruction and would not be diverted from his purpose by fear or aught else; for, indeed, he recked not of his life and the byword saith, 'A man in love hearkeneth not to the speech of him who is heart-free.'

Now the name of the queen of the island in which they were was Nour el Huda, eldest daughter of the Supreme King, ruler over the islands and all the lands of Wac, and she had six virgin sisters, abiding with their father, whose court was in the chief city of the land of Wac. The old woman had a claim on her for favour, for that she had reared all the king's daughters and had authority over them all and was high in honour and consideration with them and with the king. So, when she saw Hassan on fire with yearning after his wife and children, she betook herself to the palace and going in to the queen, kissed the earth before her; whereupon Nour el Huda rose to her and embracing her, seated her by her side and asked her of her journey. 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered she, 'it was a blessed journey and I have brought thee a present, which I will lay before thee. Moreover, O my daughter, O queen of the age and the time, I have an occasion to thee and I would fain discover it to thee, that thou mayst help me to accomplish it, and but for my confidence that thou wilt not gainsay me therein, I would not expose it to thee.' 'And what is thine occasion?' asked the queen. 'Expound it to me, and I will accomplish it to thee, for I and my kingdom and troops are all at thy commandment and disposition.'

Therewithal the old woman shook, as the reed shakes on a day of stormy wind, and saying in herself, 'O Protector, protect me from the queen's mischief!' fell down before her and acquainted her with Hassan's case, saying, 'O my lady, a man, who had hidden himself under

my settle on the sea-shore, besought me of protection; so I took him under my safeguard and carried him with me among the army of women, armed and accoutred so that none might know him, and brought him into the city; and indeed I have striven to fear him with thy mischief, giving him to know of thy prowess and power; but, as often as I threaten him, he weeps and recites verses and says, "Needs must I regain my wife and children or die, and I will not return to my country without them." And indeed he hath adventured himself and won to the Islands of Wac, and never in my life saw I mortal stouter of heart than he or doughtier of courage, save that passion hath gotten the mastery of him to the utmost.'

Night DCCCIX.

When Nour el-Huda heard this, she was exceeding wroth with her and bowed her head awhile. Then, raising it, she looked at Shewahi and said to her, 'O ill-omened old woman, art thou come to such a pass of lewdness that thou carriest males with thee into the Wac Islands and bringest them in to me, unfearing of my danger? Who hath foregone thee with this fashion, that thou shouldst do thus? By the head of the king, but for thy claim on me for fosterage and service, I would forthwith put both him and thee to the foulest of deaths, that travellers might take warning by thee, O accursed woman, lest any other do the like of this outrageous deed of thine, whereunto none hath dared hitherto! But go and bring him hither forthright, that I may see him; or I will strike off thy head, O accursed one.'

So the old woman went out from her, confounded, knowing not whither she went and saying, 'All this calamity hath God caused betide me from this queen because of Hassan!' and going in to the latter, said to him, 'Come, speak with the queen, O thou whose last hour is at hand!' So he rose and went with her, whilst his tongue ceased not to call upon God the Most High and say, 'O my God,

be gracious to me in Thy judgments and deliver me from [this] Thine affliction!' And Shewahi charged him by the way how he should speak with the queen. When he stood before Nour el Huda, he found her veiled with the chinband; so he kissed the earth before her and saluted her, reciting the following verses:

May God thy glory cause in gladness to endure And that which unto thee He gives to thee secure!
In glory and in power th' Almighty thee increase And with His aid against thine enemies ensure!

Then Nour el Huda bade the old woman question him before her, that she might hear his answers: so she said to him, 'The queen returns thy greeting and asks thee what is thy name and that of thy country, and what are the names of thy wife and children, on whose account thou art come hither?' 'O queen of the age and the day and peerless jewel of the epoch and the time,' answered he, (and indeed he had made firm his heart and providence aided him,) 'my name is Hassan, the fulfilled of sorrow, and my native city is Bassora. I know not the name of my wife, but my children's names are Mensour and Nasir.'

When the queen heard his reply, she bespoke him herself and said, 'And whence took she her children?' 'O queen,' answered he, 'she took them from the city of Baghdad and the palace of the Khalifate.' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'And did she say nought to thee, whenas she flew away?' And he replied, 'Yes; she said to my mother, "When thy son cometh and the days of separation are long upon him and he craveth meeting with me and reunion and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the Islands of Wac."' Whereupon the queen shook her head and said to him, 'Except she desired thee and yearned for reunion with thee, she had

not said this to thy mother, neither had she bidden thee to her country nor acquainted thee with her abiding-place.' 'O mistress of kings and asylum of rich and poor,' rejoined Hassan, 'I have told thee what happened and have concealed nought thereof, and I appeal to God and to thee for succour; wherefore oppress me not, but have compassion on me and earn recompense and requital for me [from God] by aiding me to regain my wife and children. Grant me my urgent need and solace mine eyes with my children and help me to the sight of them.' Then he wept and lamented and recited the following verses:

What while the turtle-dove complains, I'll praise thee with my might,
Albeit I should fail of that which is thy due and right.
For, lo, I wallowed not in joys of old, but now I find Thee to have been
the cause and spring of all my past delight.

The queen shook her head and bowed it in thought a great while; then, raising it, she said to Hassan (and indeed she was wroth), 'I have compassion on thee and am resolved to show thee all the girls in the city and in the provinces of my island; and if thou know thy wife, I will deliver her to thee; but, if thou know her not and know not her place, I will put thee to death and crucify thee over the old woman's door.' 'I accept this from thee, O queen of the age,' answered Hassan, 'and am content to submit to this thy condition. There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And he recited the following verses:

Ye've roused my heart to love and yet unmoved yourselves remain; Ye've
doomed my wounded lids to wake and sleep, whilst I complain.
Ye swore to me that ye would keep your plighted faith with me; But,
when my heart was yours, you broke the oath that you had ta'en.
I loved you as a child, indeed, unknowing what love was; Wherefore
'twere surely foul unright, if I of you be slain.
Fear ye not God and will ye slay a lover who anights Watches the stars,
whilst all but he are bound in slumber's chain?

When I am dead, I prithee write, 'fore Allah, on my tomb, 'A slave of
passion lieth here, who died of love in vain.'
It may be one, whom love like me hath smitten, passing by, Shall see
my tomb and to salute and pity me be fain.

Then Queen Nour el Huda commanded that all the girls in the city should come up to the palace and pass in review before Hassan and bade Shewahi go down and bring them up herself. So all the maidens in the city presented themselves before the queen, who caused them go in to Hassan, hundred by hundred, till there was no girl left in the place, but she had shown her to him; but he saw not his wife amongst them. Then said she to him, 'Seest thou her amongst these?' And he answered, saying, 'By thy life, O queen, she is not amongst them.'

With this she was sore enraged against him and said to the old woman, 'Go in and bring out all who are in the palace and show them to him.' So she showed him all the girls in the palace, but he saw not his wife among them and said to the queen, 'As thy head liveth, O queen, she is not among these.' Whereat the queen was wroth and cried out to those about her, saying, 'Take him and drag him along, face to ground, and cut off his head, lest any adventure himself after him and intrude upon us in our country and tread the soil of our islands and spy out our estate.' So they threw him down on his face and covering his eyes with his skirt, stood at his head with drawn swords, awaiting permission [to strike].

But Shewahi came forward and kissing the earth before the queen, took her skirt and laid it on her head, saying, 'O queen, by the claim I have on thee for fosterage, be not hasty with him, more by token of thy knowledge that this poor wretch is a stranger, who hath adventured himself and suffered perils and hardships, such as none ever suffered before him, and God preserved him from death, for that his life was ordained to be long. He

heard of thy justice and entered thy city and sanctuary; wherefore, if thou put him to death, the report will be noised abroad of thee, by means of the travellers, that thou hatest strangers and slayest them. In any case he is at thy mercy and the slain of thy sword, if his wife be not found in thy dominions; and whensoever thou desirest his presence, I can bring him back to thee. And indeed I took him not under my protection but of my confidence in thy generosity, through my claim on thee for fosterage, so that I engaged to him that thou wouldst bring him to his desire, of my knowledge of thy justice and kindness of heart. But for this, I had not brought him into thy kingdom; for I said to myself, "The queen will take pleasure in looking upon him and hearing his verses and his sweet and eloquent discourse, like strung pearls." Moreover, he hath entered our land and eaten of our
Night dccccx. victual; wherefore it behoveth us to give him his due, the more that I promised to bring him in company with thee; and thou knowest that parting is grievous and separation slaughter, especially separation from children. Now he hath seen all our women, save only thyself; so do thou show him thy face.'

The queen smiled and said, 'How can he be my husband and have had children by me, that I should show him my face?' Then she made them bring Hassan before her and unveiled her face, which when he saw, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. The old woman ceased not to tend him, till he came to himself and recited the following verses:

O zephyr from the land of Irak that dost stray And blowest to the land of those 'Wac! Wac!' that say,
Carry my loved ones news of me and say I die Of passion's bitter food, that's sour of savour aye.
O darlings of my love, show favour and relent! My heart for parting's pains is melted all away.

Then he rose and looking on the queen's face, cried out with a great cry, for stress whereof the palace was like to fall on those who were therein. Then he swooned away again and the old woman tended him till he revived, when she asked him what ailed him and he said, 'This queen is either my wife or else the likest of all folk to her.' Quoth Night
Nour el Huda to the old woman, 'Out on thee, O nurse! dccccxi.
This stranger is either mad or disordered in mind, for he stareth me in the face with wide eyes and saith I am his wife.' 'O queen,' answered Shewahi, 'indeed he is excusable; so blame him not, for the proverb says, "There is no remedy for the sick of love, and he and the madman are alike."' And Hassan wept sore and recited the following verses:

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

Then said he to the queen, 'By Allah, thou art not my wife, but thou art the likest of all folks to her!'

Nour el Huda laughed till she fell backward and turned over on her side. Then said she to him, 'O my friend, take thy time and observe me attentively: answer me at thy leisure what I shall ask thee and put away from thee madness and confusion and perplexity, for relief is at hand.' 'O mistress of kings and refuge of all, rich and poor,' answered Hassan, 'when I looked on thee, I was distracted, seeing thee to be either my wife or the likest of all folk to her; but now ask me what thou wilt.' Quoth she, 'What is it in thy wife that resembles me?' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'all that is in thee of beauty and elegance and amorous grace, such as the symmetry of thy shape and the sweetness of thy speech and the redness of thy cheeks and thy swelling breasts and so forth, resembleth her and

thou art her very self in thy speech and the fairness of thy favour and the brilliancy of thy forehead.'

When the queen heard this, she smiled and gloried in her beauty and grace and her cheeks reddened and her eyes wantoned; then she turned to Shewahi and said to her, 'O my mother, carry him back to the place where he was with thee and tend him thyself, till I examine into his affair; for, if he be indeed a man of worth and mindful of friendship and love and affection, it behoveth us to help him to his desire, more by token that he hath taken up his abode in our country and eaten of our victual, to say nought of the hardships of travel he hath suffered and the horrors and perils he hath undergone. But, when thou hast brought him to thy house, commend him to thy servants' care and return to me in all haste; and God willing, all shall be well.'

So Shewahi carried him back to her lodging and charged her servants and women wait upon him and bring him all he needed nor fail in that which was his due. Then she returned to Nour el Huda, who bade her don her arms and set out, taking with her a thousand stout horsemen, for the city of the Supreme King, her father, there to alight at the abode of her youngest sister, Menar es Sena, and say to her, 'Clothe thy two sons in the coats of mail that their aunt hath made them and send them to her; for she longeth for them.' Moreover the queen charged her keep Hassan's affair secret and say to Menar es Sena, 'Thy sister inviteth thee to visit her.'

'Then,' continued she, 'take the children and bring them to me in haste and let her follow at her leisure. Do thou come by a road other than hers and journey night and day and beware of discovering this matter to any. And I swear by all possible oaths that, if my sister prove to be his wife and it appear that her children are his, I will not hinder him from taking her and them and departing

with them to his own country, but will aid him thereto. If she be not his wife, I will slay him; but if the children resemble him, we will believe him. For, O my mother, if my thought tell me true, my sister Menar es Sena is his wife, seeing that these traits are her traits and the attributes of surpassing beauty and excelling grace, of which he spoke, are found in none except my sisters and especially the youngest; but God alone is All-Knowing!'

The old woman put faith in her words, knowing not what she purposed in herself; so she kissed her hand and returning to Hassan, told him what the queen had said, whereat he was transported for joy and coming up to her, kissed her head. 'O my son,' said she, 'kiss not my head, but my mouth, and be it by way of guerdon for thy salvation. Be of good heart and cheerful eye and grudge not to kiss my mouth, for I was the means of thy foregathering with her. So take comfort and be of good cheer nor be thy heart other than light, for, God willing, thy desire shall be accomplished at my hand.' So saying, she bade him farewell and departed, whilst he recited the following verses:

My witnesses unto the love of thee are four; Two witnesses each case requireth, and no more.
A fluttering heart they are and limbs for aye a-quake, Tongue knotted in its speech and body wasted sore.

And these also:

Two things there are, whereover if eyes wept tear on tear Of blood, till they for weeping were like to disappear,
They never could fulfil them the tithe of all their due, The prime of youth and sev'rance from friends and lovers dear.

Then the old woman armed herself and taking with her a thousand armed horsemen, set out and journeyed till she came to the island and the city where dwelt the princess Menar es Sena and between which and that of her sister

Nour el Huda was three days' journey. Now the king had seven daughters, all sisters-german by one mother and father except the youngest: the eldest was called Nour el Huda, the second Nejm es Sebah, the third Shems ez Zuha, the fourth Shejeret ed Durr, the fifth Cout el Culoub, the sixth Sheref el Benat and the youngest Menar es Sena, Hassan's wife, who was their sister by the father's side only. When Shewahi reached the city, she went in to the princess Menar es Sena and saluting her, gave her her sister's greeting and acquainted her with the latter's longing for her and her children and that she reproached her for not visiting her. Quoth Menar es Sena, 'Verily, I am beholden to my sister and have failed of my duty to her in not visiting her, but I will do so now.' Then she bade pitch her tents without the city and took with her a suitable present for her sister.

Presently, the king her father looked out of the window of his palace, and seeing the tents pitched by the road, enquired of them, and they said to him, 'The princess Menar es Sena hath pitched her tents there, being minded to visit her sister Queen Nour el Huda.' When the king heard this, he equipped troops to escort her to her sister and brought out to her from his treasuries meat and drink and treasure and jewels and rarities, that beggar description. Presently the old woman again presented herself and kissed the earth before the princess, who said to her, 'Hast thou any need, O my mother?' Quoth Shewahi, 'Thy sister, Queen Nour el Huda, biddeth thee clothe thy sons in the two coats of mail which she made for them and send them to her by me, and I will take them and forego thee with them and be the harbinger of thy coming to her.'

When the princess heard these her words, her colour changed and she bowed her head a long while, after which she shook it and looking up, said to the old

woman, 'O my mother, when thou namest my children, my mind is troubled and my heart fluttereth; for, from the time of their birth, none, neither genie nor man, male nor female, hath looked on their faces, and I am jealous for them of the soft-blowing zephyr.' 'What words are these, O my lady?' replied the old woman. 'Dost thou fear for them from thy sister? God keep thy reason! Thou mayst not cross the queen in this thing, for she would be wroth with thee. Indeed, O my lady, the children are young, and thou art excusable in fearing for them, for those that love are apt to deem evil: but, O my daughter, thou knowest my tenderness and solicitude over thee and thy children, for indeed I reared thee before them. I will take them and make my cheek their pillow and open my heart and set them within, nor is it needful to commend them to my care in the like of this case; so be of good heart and cheerful eye and send them to her, for, at the most, I shall but forego thee with them a day or two.' And she went on to urge her, till she gave way, fearing her sister's anger and knowing not what lurked for her in the future, and consented to send them with the old woman.

Night dccxiii.

So she called them and bathed them and equipped them and changed their apparel. Then she clad them in the two coats of mail and delivered them to Shewahi, who took them and sped on with them like a bird, by another road than that by which their mother should travel, even as the queen had charged her; nor did she cease to fare on with all diligence, being fearful for them, till she came in sight of their aunt's city, when she crossed the river and entering the town, carried them in to Nour el Huda. The queen rejoiced at their sight and embraced them and pressed them to her bosom; after which she seated them, one on each knee, and said to the old woman, 'Now fetch me Hassan, for I have granted him my safeguard and

have spared him from my sabre and he hath sought refuge in my house and taken up his abode in my courts, after having endured hardships and horrors and come through all manner of mortal perils, each more terrible than the other; yet hitherto is he not safe from drinking the cup of death and from the cutting off of his breath.' 'If I bring him to thee,' replied Shewahi, 'wilt thou reunite him with these his children? Or, if they prove not his, wilt thou pardon him and restore him to his own country?'

Night dccccxiv.

The queen was exceeding wroth at her words and said to her, 'Out on thee, O ill-omened old woman! How long wilt thou play us false in the matter of this stranger, who hath dared [to intrude] upon us and hath lifted our veil and pried into our conditions? Thinkest thou that he shall come to our land and look upon our faces and soil our honours and after return in safety to his own country and expose our affairs to his people, wherefore our report will be bruited abroad among all the kings of the quarters of the earth and the merchants will bear tidings of us in every direction, saying, "A mortal entered the Wac Islands and traversed the land of the Jinn and the lands of the Wild Beasts and the Birds and set foot in the country of the warlocks and the enchanters and returned in safety"? This shall never be; and I swear by Him who created the heavens and builded them, Him who spread out the earth and levelled it, who made all creatures and numbered them, that, if they be not his children, I will assuredly slay him and strike off his head with my own hand!'

Then she cried out at the old woman, who fell down for fear; and she said to the chamberlain, 'Take twenty slaves and go with this old woman and fetch me in haste the youth who is in her house.' So they dragged Shewahi along, pale and trembling in every nerve, till they came to her house, where she went in to Hassan, who rose to

her and kissed her hands and saluted her. She returned not his greeting, but said to him, 'Come; speak with the queen. Did I not forbid thee from all this, saying, "Return presently to thine own country and I will give thee that to which no mortal may avail"? But thou wouldst not obey me nor hearken to my words, but rejectedst my counsel and chosest to bring destruction on thyself and me. Up, then, and take that which thou hast chosen; for death is at hand. Arise: speak with yonder wicked tyrannical baggage.' So Hassan arose, broken-spirited, mournful-hearted and fearful, despairing of life and saying, 'O Preserver, preserve Thou me! O my God, be gracious to me in that which Thou hast decreed to me of Thine affliction and protect me, O Thou the most merciful of those that show mercy!' Then he followed the old woman and the chamberlain and the guards to the queen's presence, where he found his two sons Nasir and Mensour sitting in her lap, whilst she played and made merry with them. As soon as his eyes fell on them, he knew them and giving a great cry, fell down in a swoon for excess of joy at their sight. They also knew him and natural affection moved them, so that they freed themselves from the queen's lap and fell upon Hassan, and God (to whom belong might and majesty) made them speak and say to him, 'O our father!' Whereupon the old woman and all who were present wept for pity and tenderness over them and said, 'Praised be God, who hath reunited you with your father!' Presently, Hassan came to himself and embracing his children, wept till he fainted again, and when he revived, he recited the following verses:

Night dccccxv.

Now, by your life, my heart may not 'gainst severance endure, Though certain ruin union were and sure discomfiture!
'To-morrow,' quoth your wraith to me, 'reunion shall betide;' And who to-morrow, 'spite the foe, shall life to me ensure?

Nay, since your parting-day, my lords, I swear it by your life, No sweet of life delighteth me; all pleasance I abjure;
And if God order that I die for love of you, I die Chiefest of all the martyrs slain of love unblent and pure.
Within my heart a fawn hath made her grazing-stead, whose form, Like sleep, hath fled mine eyes and nought can back to me allure.
If she in lists of law deny the shedding of my blood, Lo, in her cheeks against herself it beareth witness sure.

When Nour el Huda was certified that the little ones were indeed Hassan's children and that her sister, the princess Menar es Sena, was his wife, of whom he was come in quest, she was beyond measure enraged against her and railed at Hassan and reviled him and kicked him in the breast, so that he fell on his back in a swoon. Then she cried out at him, saying, 'Arise, fly for thy life! But that I swore no evil should betide thee from me, if thy story proved true, I would slay thee with mine own hand forthright!' And she cried out at the old woman, who fell on her face for fear, and said to her, 'By Allah, but that I am loath to break the oath that I swore, I would put both thee and him to death after the foulest fashion!' [Then, turning to Hassan,] 'Arise,' [added she,] 'go out from before me in safety and return to thine own country, for I swear by my fortune, if ever mine eye behold thee or if any bring thee in to me after this, I will smite off thy head and that of whoso bringeth thee!' Then she cried out to her officers, saying, 'Put him out from before me!' So they put him out; and when he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

Night dccccxvi.

You're far away, yet to my thought you're nearest of all folk; You're absent, yet within my heart for evermore you dwell.
By Allah, ne'er have I inclined to other than to you! I've borne with patience the unright of fortune foul and fell.
My nights in love-longing for you for ever pass and end, And in my heart a flame there is and raging fires of hell.

Severance I ne'er could brook an hour; so how, now months have passed O'er me estranged from her I love, can I my sufferings tell?
Jealous of every lightest breeze that blew on thee was I, Exceeding jealous, yea, of aught the tender fair befell.

Then he once more fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he found himself without the palace, whither they had dragged him on his face. (Now this was grievous to Shewahi; but she dared not remonstrate with the queen by reason of the violence of her wrath.) So he rose, stumbling in his skirts and hardly crediting his escape from Nour el Huda, and went forth, distracted and knowing not whither to go. The world, for all its wideness, was straitened upon him and he found none to comfort him nor any to whom he might resort for counsel or refuge; wherefore he gave himself up for lost, for that he availed not to journey [to his own country] and knew none to travel with him, neither knew he the way [thither] nor might pass through the Valley of Jinn and the Land of Beasts and the Island of Birds. So he bewept himself, till he fainted, and when he revived, he bethought him of his children and his wife and of that which might befall her with her sister, repenting him of having come to those parts and hearkened to none, and recited the following verses:

Let mine eyes weep for loss of her I love, with tears like rain: Rare is my solace and my woes increase on me amain.
The cup of severance unmixt I've drunken to the dregs. Who shall avail the loss of friends and dear ones to sustain?
Ye spread the carpet of reproach 'twixt me and you; ah when, O carpet of reproach, wilt thou be folded up again?
I wake; ye sleep. If ye pretend that I've forgot your love, Lo, I've forgotten to forget, and solace all is vain.
Indeed, my heart is racked with love and longing for your sight And you the only leaches are can heal me of my pain.
See ye not what is fall'n on me through your abandonment? I am abased to high and low, because of your disdain.

Fain would I hide my love for you: longing discovers it, For burnt and seared with passion's fires are all my heart and brain.
Have ruth on me, compassionate my case, for still to keep Our plighted faith in secrecy and trust I have been fain.
Will fortune reunite me aye with you, my heart's desire, You unto whom my soul cleaves still, bound fast with many a chain?
My entrails ulcerated are with separation's pangs: Would God with tidings from your camp to favour us you'd deign!

Then he went on, till he came without the city, where he found the river and fared on along its bank, knowing not whither he went.

To return to his wife, Menar es Sena. As she was about to set out, on the second day after the departure of the old woman with her children, there came in to her one of the king her father's chamberlains and kissed the earth before her, saying, 'O princess, the king thy father salutes thee and bids thee to him.' So she rose and accompanied the chamberlain to her father, who made her sit by his side on the couch, and said to her, 'O my daughter, know that I have had a dream this night, which maketh me fear for thee and that long sorrow will betide thee from this thy journey.' 'How so, O my father,' asked she, 'and what didst thou see in thy dream?' Quoth he, 'I dreamt that I entered a hidden treasure, wherein was great store of jewels and jacinths and other riches; but meseemed nought pleased of all this me save seven beazels, which were the finest things there. I chose out one of the seven jewels, for it was the smallest and finest and most lustrous of them and its beauty pleased me; so I took it in my hand and went forth. When I came without the door of the treasure, I opened my hand and turned over the jewel, rejoicing, when, behold, there swooped down on me out of the sky a strange bird from a far land (for it was not of the birds of our country), and snatching it from my hand, returned with it whence it came. Whereupon grief

Night dccccxlii.

and concern and vexation overcame me and exceeding chagrin, which troubled me so that I awoke, mourning and lamenting for the loss of the jewel. So I summoned the interpreters and expounders of dreams and related to them my dream, and they said to me, "Thou hast seven daughters, the youngest of whom thou wilt lose, and she will be taken from thee perforce, without thy consent." Now thou art the youngest and dearest of my daughters and the most loving of them to me, and thou art about to journey to thy sister, and I know not what may befall thee from her; so go thou not, but return to thy palace.'

When the princess heard her father's words, her heart fluttered and she feared for her children and bent her head awhile. Then she raised it and said to him, 'O King, Queen Nour el Huda hath made ready for me an entertainment and looks for my coming to her, hour by hour. She hath not seen me these four years and if I delay to visit her, she will be wroth with me. The most of my stay with her will be a month and then I will return to thee. Besides, who is there can travel our land and make his way to the Wac Islands? Who can avail to reach the White Country and the Black Mountain and come to the Land of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal, and how shall he traverse the Island of Birds and the Land of Beasts and the Valley of Jinn and enter our islands? If any stranger came hither, he would be drowned in the seas of destruction: so be of good heart and cheerful eye concerning my journey; for none may avail to tread our earth.' And she ceased not to persuade him, till he gave her leave to go and bade a thousand horse escort her to the river and abide there, till she entered her sister's city and palace [and returned to them], when they should take her and carry her back to him. Moreover, he charged her sojourn with her sister two days [only] and return to him in haste; and

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she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then she went forth and he with her and bade her farewell.

Now his words had sunken deep into her heart and she feared for her children; but it availeth not to fortify oneself by caretaking against the assaults of destiny. So she set out and fared on diligently three days, till she came to the river and pitched her tents on its bank. Then she crossed the stream, with some of her officers and attendants, and going up to the city and the palace, went in to Queen Nour el Huda, with whom she found her children, and they were weeping and crying out, 'O our father!' At this, the tears ran from her eyes and she wept and strained them to her bosom, saying, 'What put you in mind of your father at this time? Would the hour had never been, in which I left him! If I knew him to be in the house of the world, I would carry you to him.' Then she bemoaned herself and her husband and her children's weeping and recited these verses:

Distance despite, belovéd mine, and inhumanity, I turn to you with yearning love, wherever you may be.
Mine eyes towards your country turn and all my heart bewails The days of union, when in love and peace foregathered we.
How many a night in mutual love, unstirred by doubt, we spent, What while caresses and fair faith delighted you and me!

When her sister saw her press her children to her bosom, saying, 'It is I who have wrought thus with myself and my children and have ruined my own house!' she saluted her not, but said to her, 'O harlot, whence hadst thou these children? Hast thou married without thy father's knowledge or hast thou committed fornication? If thou have played the whore, it behoves that thou be exemplarily punished; and if thou have married without our knowledge, why didst thou leave thy hushand and sever thy children from their father and bring them hither? Thou hast hidden thy children from us. Thinkest

Night dccccix.

thou we know not of this? God the Most High, He who knoweth the secret things, hath made known to us thy case and discovered thy shame.'

Then she bade her guards seize her and bind her hands behind her and shackle her with shackles of iron. So they did as she commanded and she beat her grievously, that her skin was torn, and crucified her by the hair; after which she cast her in prison and wrote the king her father a letter acquainting him with her case and saying, 'There hath appeared in our country a man, a mortal, by name Hassan, and our sister Menar es Sena avoucheth that she is lawfully married to him and hath by him two sons, whom she hath hidden from us and thee; nor did she discover aught of herself till there came to us this man and informed us that he married her and she abode with him a long while; after which she took her children and departed, without his knowledge, after bidding his mother tell her son, whenas longing betided him, to come to her in the Wac Islands. So we laid hands on the man and sent the old woman Shewahi to fetch her and her children, enjoining her to bring us the children in advance of her. And she did so, whilst Menar es Sena equipped herself and set out to visit me.

When the children were come, I sent for Hassan, and he knew them and they him; wherefore I was certified that they were indeed his children and that she was his wife and that his story was true and he was not to blame, but that the blame and disgrace rested with my sister. Now I feared the soiling of our honour before the people of our islands; so, when this lewd traitress came in to me, I was incensed against her and beat her grievously and crucified her by the hair and cast her into prison. Behold, I have acquainted thee with her case and it is thine to command, and that thou orderest us, we will do. Thou knowest that in this affair is dishonour and disgrace to us

and to thee, and belike the people of the islands will hear of it, and we shall become a byword amongst them; wherefore it befits that thou return us an answer with speed.'

Then she delivered the letter to a courier and he carried it to the king, who, when he read it, was exceeding wroth with his daughter Menar es Sena and wrote to Nour el Huda, saying, 'I commit her case to thee and give thee power over her life; so, if the thing be as thou sayest, put her to death, without consulting me.' When the queen received her father's letter, she sent for Menar es Sena and they brought her, drowned in her blood and pinioned with her hair, fettered with heavy shackles of iron and clad in hair-cloth; and she stood before her, abject and cast down. When she saw herself in this condition of humiliation and exceeding abasement, she called to mind her former high estate and wept sore and recited the following verses:

O Lord, my foes do cast about to slay me and conceive I cannot anywise escape from out the snares they weave.
But, lo, in Thee I put my trust, their works to bring to nought; For Thou the fearful's refuge art, the hope of those that grieve.

Then she wept, till she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, repeated the following verses:

Troubles familiar with my heart are grown and I with them, Erst shunning; for the generous are sociable still.
Not one mere kind alone of woe doth lieger with me lie; Praised be God! There are with me thousands of kinds of ill.

Night DCCCXX. And also these:

Full many a sorry chance doth light upon a man and fill His life with trouble; yet with God the issue bideth still.
His case is sore on him; but, when its meshes straitened are To utt'rest, they relax, although he deem they never will.

Then the queen sent for a ladder of wood and made the eunuchs bind her with cords thereto, on her back, with her arms spread out; after which she uncovered her head and wound her hair about the ladder; for pity for her was rooted out from her heart. When Menar es Sena saw herself in this state of abjection and humiliation, she cried out and wept; but none succoured her. Then said she to the queen, 'O my sister, how is thy heart hardened against me? Hast thou no mercy on me nor on these little children?' But her words only hardened her sister's heart and she reviled her, saying, 'O wanton! O harlot! May God have no mercy on whoso hath mercy on thee! How should I have pity on thee, O traitress?' 'I appeal to the Lord of the Heavens,' replied Menar es Sena, 'concerning that wherewith thou reproached me and whereof I am innocent! By Allah, I have done no whoredom, but am lawfully married to him, and my Lord knoweth if I speak truth or not! Indeed, my heart is wroth with thee, by reason of thine excessive hard-heartedness against me! How canst thou accuse me of harlotry, without knowledge? But my Lord will deliver me from thee and if that whereof thou accusest me be true, may He punish me for it!' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'How darest thou bespeak me thus?' and beat her till she swooned away; whereupon they sprinkled water on her till she revived; and indeed her charms were wasted for excess of beating and humiliation and the straitness of her bonds. Then she recited these verses:

If I've in aught offended against you Or anywise done that I should not do,
To you, repentant for what's past, I come And as a suppliant, for forgiveness sue.

When Nour el Huda heard this, her wrath redoubled and she said to her, 'O harlot, wilt thou speak before me

in verse and seek to excuse thyself for the heinous sins thou hast done? It was my desire that thou shouldst return to thy husband, that I might witness thy depravity and assurance; for thou gloriest in thy lewdness and profligacy and the heinousness of thy conduct.' Then she called for a palm-stick and tucking up her sleeves, beat her from head to foot; after which she called for a whip of plaited thongs, wherewith if one smote an elephant, he would start off at speed, and beat her on her back and stomach and every part of her body, till she swooned away.

When the old woman Shewahi saw this, she fled forth from the queen's presence, weeping and cursing her; but Nour el Huda cried out to her guards, saying, 'Fetch her to me!' So they ran after her and seizing her, brought her back to the queen, who caused throw her on the ground and bidding them lay hold of her, rose and took the whip, with which she beat her, till she fainted, when she said to her waiting-women, 'Drag this ill-omened old woman forth on her face and put her out.' And they did as she bade them.

Meanwhile, Hassan walked on beside the river, in the direction of the desert, distracted, troubled and despairing of life; and indeed he was dazed and knew not night from day, for stress of affliction. He fared on thus, till he came to a tree, to which he saw a scroll hanging: so he took it and found these verses written thereon:

I ordered thy case, without hindrance or let, Whilst thou in the womb of thy mother wast yet.
I made her heart yearn to thee, so she was fain To tend thee and thee to her bosom to set.
We will compensate thee and requite thee for all That hath wrought to afflict thee of trouble and fret;
So up and submit thee to Us, for indeed We will aid thee to that thou desirest to get.

When he read this, he made sure of deliverance from trouble and reunion with those he loved. Then he went on a few steps and found himself alone in a wild and perilous desert, in which there was none to company with him; whereupon his heart sank within him for fear and loneliness and he trembled in every nerve, for that frightful place, and recited the following verses:

O East wind, if thou passest by my loved ones' dwelling-place, Abundant greeting bear to them from me and full of grace,
And tell them I the hostage am of passion, verily, And that my longing for their sight all longing doth outpace.
Haply, for sympathy, a wind shall blow on me from them And the corruption of my bones relive thereto, percase.

Then he walked on a few steps farther beside the river, till he came upon two little boys of the sons of the magicians, beside whom lay a wand of brass, graven with talismans, and a skull-cap of leather, made in three pieces and wroughten in steel with names and figures. The boys were disputing and beating one another, till the blood ran down between them; whilst each said, 'None shall take the wand but I.' Hassan interposed and parted them, saying, 'What is the cause of this your contention?' 'O uncle,' answered they, 'be thou judge of our case, for God the Most High hath surely sent thee to do justice between us.' 'Tell me your case,' said Hassan; 'and I will judge between you.' So one of them said to him, 'We are brothers-german and our father was a mighty magician, who dwelt in a cavern in yonder mountain. He died and left us this cap and wand; and my brother says, "None shall have the wand but I," whilst I say the like; so be thou judge between us and deliver us from each other.' Quoth Hassan, 'What is the difference between the wand and the cap and what is their value? The wand appears to be worth six farthings and the cap three.'

Night DCCCXXI.

But they answered, 'Thou knowest not their properties.' 'And what are their properties?' asked Hassan. 'Each of them hath a wonderful secret virtue,' replied they, 'wherefore the wand is worth the revenue of all the Wac Islands and their provinces and dependencies, and the cap the like.' And Hassan said, 'By Allah, O my sons, discover to me their secret virtues.'

'O uncle,' answered they, 'they are extraordinary; for our father wrought at their contrivance a hundred and thirty and five years, till he brought them to perfection and informed them with secret properties and engraved them after the likeness of the revolving sphere, so that he made them serve him extraordinary services and by their aid he dissolved all enchantments; and when he had made an end of their fashion, death, which needs must all suffer, overtook him. Now the virtue of the cap is, that whoso sets it on his head is hidden from all folk's eyes, nor can any see him, whilst it abideth on his head; and that of the wand is, that whoso possesseth it hath command and authority over seven tribes of the Jinn, who all serve the wand; and whenever he smiteth therewith on the ground, their kings [appear before him and] do him homage, and all the Jinn are at his service.'

When Hassan heard this, he bowed his head and said in himself, 'By Allah, I have need of this wand and cap, and I am worthier of them than these boys. So I will go about to get them from them by craft, that I may use them to free myself and my wife and children from yonder tyrannical queen, and then will we depart from this dismal place, whence there is no deliverance nor flight for mortal man. Doubtless, God caused me not to fall in with these two boys, but that I might get the wand and cap from them.' Then he raised his head and said to the boys, 'If ye would have me decide the case, I will make trial of you and see what each of you deserveth. He who overcometh his

brother shall have the wand and he who faileth shall have the cap.' 'O uncle,' answered they, 'we depute thee to make trial of us and do thou decide between us as thou seest fit.' Quoth Hassan, 'Will ye hearken to me and have regard to my words?' And they said, 'Yes.' Then said he, 'I will take a stone and throw it and he who foregoeth his brother thereto and taketh it shall have the wand, and the other shall have the cap.' And they said, 'We consent to this.'

Then he took a stone and threw it with his might, that it disappeared from sight. The two boys ran after it and when they were at a distance, Hassan donned the cap and taking the wand in his hand, removed from his place, that he might prove the truth of that which the boys had said, with regard to their properties. The younger outran the elder and coming first to the stone, took it and returned with it to the place where they had left Hassan, but found no signs of him. So he called to his brother, saying, 'Where is the man who was to judge between us?' Quoth the other, 'I see him not nor know I whether he hath flown up to the height of heaven or sunk into the nether earth.' Then they sought for him, but saw him not, though all the while he was standing by them. So they reviled each other, saying, 'The wand and the cap are both gone; they are neither mine nor thine: and indeed our father warned us of this very thing; but we forgot what he said.' Then they retraced their steps and entered the city.

When Hassan was thus certified of the truth of their speech, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and returned to the city, with the cap on his head and the wand in his hand. None saw him and he entered the palace and went up into the lodging of Shewahi, who saw him not, because of the cap. Then he went up to a shelf over her head, on which were vessels of glass and chinaware, and shook it

with his hand, so that what was thereon fell to the ground. The old woman cried out and buffeted her face; then she rose and restored the fallen things to their places, saying in herself, 'By Allah, methinks Queen Nour el Huda hath sent a devil to torment me, and he hath played me this trick! I beg God the Most High to deliver me from her and ensure me against her wrath, for, O Lord, if she deal thus abominably with her sister, beating and crucifying her, dear as she is to her father, how will she do with a stranger like myself, against whom she is incensed?'

Night dccccxxii.

Then said she, 'I conjure thee, O devil, by the Most Merciful God, the Bountiful, the High of Estate, the Mighty of Dominion, Creator of men and Jinn, and by the writing upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), speak to me and answer me!' Quoth Hassan, 'I am no devil; I am Hassan, the afflicted, the distracted lover.' Then he took the cap from his head and appeared to the old woman, who knew him and taking him apart, said to him, 'What is come to thy wit, that thou returnest hither? Go and hide; for, if this wicked woman have tormented thy wife thus, and she her sister, how will she do, if she light on thee?'

Then she told him all that had befallen his wife and that wherein she was of duresse and misery and torment, adding, 'And indeed the queen repents her of having let thee go and hath sent one after thee, promising him a quintal of gold and my post in her service; and she hath sworn that, if he bring thee back, she will put thee and thy wife and children to death.' And she wept and discovered to Hassan what the queen had done with herself, whereat he wept and said, 'O my lady, how shall I do to deliver myself and my wife and children from this tyrannical queen and return with them in safety to my own country?' 'Out on thee!' replied the old woman. 'Save thyself.' Quoth he, 'Needs must I deliver

her and my children from the queen in her despite.' 'How canst thou rescue them from her?' said Shewahi. 'Go and hide thyself, O my son, till God the Most High permit.'

Then Hassan showed her the wand and the cap, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'Glory be to Him who quickeneth the bones, though they be rotten! By Allah, O my son, thou and thy wife were but lost folk, but now thou art saved, thou and thy wife and children! For I know the wand and I know its maker, who was my master in magic. He was a mighty magician and wrought a hundred and thirty and five years at this wand and cap, till he brought them to perfection, when death the inevitable overtook him. And I have heard him say to his two sons, "O my sons, these things are none of your lot, for there will come a stranger from a far country, who will take them from you perforce, and ye shall not know how he takes them." "O our father," said they, "tell us how he will win to take them." But he answered, "I know not." And how,' added she, 'availedst thou to take them, O my son?'

So he told her how he had taken them from the two boys, whereat she rejoiced and said, 'O my son, since thou hast gotten [the means of freeing] thy wife and children, give ear to what I shall say to thee. There is no abiding for me with this wicked woman, after the fashion in which she hath dared to use me; wherefore I am minded to depart from her to the caves of the Magicians and abide with them there till I die. But do thou, O my son, don the cap and take the wand in thy hand and enter the place where thy wife and children are. Loose her bonds and smite the earth with the wand, saying, "Be present, O servants of these names!" whereupon the servants of the wand will appear; and if there present himself one of the heads of the tribes, command him what thou wilt.'

So he bade her farewell and donning the cap, went forth and entered the place where his wife was. He found her bound to the ladder by her hair, well-nigh lifeless, weeping-eyed and mourning-hearted, in the sorriest of plights, knowing no way to deliver herself. Her children were playing under the ladder, whilst she looked at them and wept for them and herself; and he heard her repeat the following verses:

Nothing is left her but a fluttering spright, Ay, and an eye bereavéd of its light.
A longing one, her entrails are a-fire, Yet still she's silent in her woes' despite.
Her foes weep, pitying her; alas for those Who pity in the exultant foe excite!

When Hassan saw her in this state of torment and misery and abjection, he wept till he swooned away; and when he revived, he saw his children playing and their mother aswoon for excess of pain; so he took the cap from his head and the children saw him and cried out, saying, 'O our father!' Then he covered his head again and the princess came to herself, hearing their cry, but only saw her children weeping and crying out, 'O our father!' When she heard them name their father and weep, her heart was broken and her entrails rent in sunder and she said to them, 'What makes you in mind of your father at this time?' And she wept sore and cried out, from a bleeding heart and an aching bosom, 'Where are ye and where is your father?'

Then she recalled the days of her union with Hassan and what had befallen her since her desertion of him and wept till her face was drowned in tears and her cheeks were furrowed with much weeping. Her tears ran down and wet the ground and she had not a hand loose to wipe them from her cheeks, whilst the flies fed their fill on her skin, and she found no helper but weeping and

no solace but repeating verses. Then she recited the following:

I call to mind the parting-day that rent our loves in twain, When, as I turned away, the tears in very streams did rain.
The cameleer urged on his beasts with them, what while I found Nor strength nor fortitude, nor did my heart with me remain.
Yea, back I turned, unknowing of the road, nor might shake off The trance of grief and longing love that numbed my heart and brain;
And worst of all betided me, on my return, was one Who came to me, in lowly guise, to glory in my pain.
Since the belovéd's gone, O soul, forswear the sweet of life Nor covet its continuance, for, wanting him, 'twere vain.
List, O my friend, unto the tale of love, and God forbid That I should speak and that thy heart to hearken should not deign!
As 'twere El Asmaï himself, of passion I discourse With fancies rare and marvellous, linked in an endless chain.

Night dccccxxiii.

Then she turned right and left, seeking the cause of her children's crying out, 'O our father!' but saw no one and marvelled that they should name him at that time and call upon him. When Hassan heard her verses, he wept till he swooned away and the tears ran down upon his cheeks like rain. Then he drew near the children and uncovered his head to them, [unseen of his wife,] whereupon they saw him and knowing him, cried out, saying, 'O our father!' Their mother fell a-weeping again, when she heard them name their father and said, 'There is no resource against the ordinance of God the Most High! Strange! What makes them bethink them of their father at this time and call upon him, albeit it is not of their wont?' Then she wept and recited the following verses:

The land is empty of the moon that shone so bright whilere: Be lavish of your tears, mine eyes; I charge you, do not spare!
They have departed: how shall I be patient of their loss? Nor heart nor patience, after them, is left with me, I swear.

Lords, who are absent, but whose place is in the heart of me, Will you return to me again and be as once you were?
What were the harm if they returned and I their company Enjoyed and they had ruth upon my tears and my despair?
They made mine eyes rain wonder-fast upon the parting-day: There's nought may quench the raging fire that 'twixt my ribs doth flare.
I would have had them stay, but Fate was contrary to me And did with sev'rance disappoint my longing for the fair.
By Allah, O belovéd mine, return to me! Enough Of tears, indeed, I've shed to win ill-fortune to forbear.

With this, Hassan could no longer contain himself, but took the cap from his head; whereupon his wife saw him and recognizing him, gave a scream that startled all in the place. Then she said to him, 'How camest thou hither? Hast thou dropped from the sky or come up through the earth?' And her eyes filled with tears and Hassan also wept. 'O man,' quoth she, 'this is no time for tears or reproaches. Fate hath had its course and the sight was blinded and the pen hath run with what was ordained of God from all eternity: so, God on thee, whencesoever thou comest, go and hide, lest any see thee and tell my sister and she slaughter thee and me!' 'O my lady and lady of all queens,' answered he, 'I have ventured myself and come hither, and either I will die or I will deliver thee from this thy strait and return with thee and my children to my country, in despite of thy shrew of a sister.'

But she smiled and shook her head, saying, 'Far, O my life, far is it from the power of any save God the Most High to deliver me from this my stress! Save thyself by flight and cast not thyself into destruction; for she hath troops without number, that none may withstand. Grant that thou tookest me and wentest forth with me, how canst thou win to thy country and escape from these islands and the perils of these dreadful places? Verily, in thy way hither, thou hast seen the wonders and dangers

and terrors of the road, such as none may escape, not even one of the rebellious Jinn. Depart, therefore, forthright and add not anguish to my anguish and trouble to my trouble, neither do thou pretend to rescue me from this my plight; for who shall bring me to thy country, through all these valleys and thirsty deserts and fatal places?' 'By thy life, O light of mine eyes,' rejoined Hassan, 'I will not depart this place but with thee!' 'O man,' quoth she, 'thou knowest not what thou sayst! How canst thou avail unto this thing and what manner of man art thou? None can escape from these realms, even had he command over Jinn and Afrits and warlocks. So fly and leave me; peradventure God will bring about a change.' 'O lady of fair ones,' answered Hassan, 'I came but to deliver thee with this wand and cap.' And he told her what had befallen him with the two boys; but, whilst he was speaking, up came the queen and heard them talking.

When he was ware of her, he put on the cap and was hidden from sight, and she entered and said to the princess, 'O harlot, who is he with whom thou wast talking?' 'Who is with me that should talk with me,' answered Menar es Sena, 'except these little ones?' Then the queen took the whip and beat her, whilst Hassan stood by, nor did she leave beating her till she fainted; whereupon she bade remove her to another place. So they loosed her and carried her to another chamber, whilst Hassan followed [unseen]. There they cast her down, senseless, and stood looking upon her, till she revived and recited the following verses:

Long, long have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves, With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two, My lips should never speak of severance again,

And to the enviers, 'Die of sheer despite!' I'd say; 'By Allah, I have won my wishes to attain!'
Joy hath o'ercome me so, that, for the very stress Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O mine eyes, So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then the slave-girls went out from her and Hassan took off the cap; whereupon his wife said to him, 'See, O man, all this hath befallen me by reason of my having gainsaid thee and transgressed thy commandment and gone forth without thy leave. But, I conjure thee by Allah, reproach me not for mine offence and know that women know not a man's worth till they have lost him. Indeed, I have sinned and done evil; but I crave pardon of God the Great for that I did, and if He reunite us, I will never again disobey thee in aught.' Quoth Hassan (and indeed his heart ached for her), 'It was not thou that sinnedst, but I, for I departed and left thee with one who knew not thy rank nor thy worth. But know, O beloved of my heart and fruit of mine entrails and light of mine eyes, that God (blessed be He!) hath given me power to release thee; so wouldst thou have me carry thee to thy father, there to accomplish what God decreeth unto thee, or wilt thou presently depart with me to my country, now that relief is come to thee?' 'Who can deliver me save the Lord of the skies?' answered she. 'Go to thine own country and put away from thee false hope; for thou knowest not the perils of these parts: but, if thou obey me not, thou wilt see.' And she recited the following verses:

Night dccccxxiv.

What thou wouldst have is law to me and pleasing in my sight! What ails thee, then, to look on me with anger and despite?
Whate'er befell, now God forbid the love that was of old 'Twixt us should e'er forgotten be, forspent and ended quite!
For from our side the spy ceased not, estrangement till he saw Between us, when he cast about our loves to disunite.

Yea, I was constant in fair thought of thee, for all the spy Dealt ill and did with evil words to evil thoughts excite.
We'll keep the secret of our loves and guard it from the folk, Albeit with reproach the sword of blame be bared to smite.
My days in longing do I pass, so may a messenger With tidings of acceptance come from thee and heal my spright.

Then she wept and her children wept also and the slave-girls heard them: so they came in to them and found them weeping, but saw not Hassan with them; wherefore they wept for pity of them and cursed Queen Nour el Huda. Then Hassan took patience till it was night and her guards had gone to their sleeping-places, when he went up to her and loosing her, pressed her to his bosom and kissed her on the head and between the eyes, saying, 'How long have we wearied for our country and for reunion there! Is this our meeting in sleep, or on wake?' Then he took up the elder boy and she took up the younger and they went forth. God covered them with the veil of His protection, so that they came safe to the outer door of the palace, but found it locked from without, and Hassan said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! We are God's and to Him we return!' With this they despaired of escape and Hassan beat hand upon hand, saying, 'O Thou that dispellest troubles! Verily, I had bethought me of every thing and considered its issue but this; and now, when it is day, they will take us, and what resource have we in this case?' And he recited the following verses:

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

Then he wept and she wept for his weeping and for the abasement she had suffered and the cruelties of

fortune: and he turned to her and recited the following verses:

Fortune is vehement on me, as if I were its foe; Yea, day by day, she meeteth me with this or the other woe.
If aught of good I wish, Fate brings the contrary thereof, And if 'tis bright for me one day, the next it foul doth show.

And also these:

My fate doth irk and baffle me, unknowing that I am Most worthy and that Fortune's shifts are little worth, ywis.
It spends the night in showing me th' injustice of events And I in showing forth to it what very patience is.

Then she said to him, 'By Allah, there is no relief for us but to kill ourselves and be at rest from this great weariness; else we shall suffer grievous torment on the morrow.' At this moment, they heard a voice from without the door say, 'By Allah, O my lady Menar es Sena, I will not open to thee and thy husband Hassan, except ye obey me in what I shall say to you!' When they heard this, they were silent for excess of fear and would have returned whence they came; when behold, the voice spoke again, saying, 'What ails you to be silent and answer me not?' Therewith they knew the speaker for the old woman Shewahi and said to her, 'Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do; but first open the door to us, for this is no time for talk.' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'I will not open to you, except ye swear to me that you will take me with you and not leave me with yonder harlot: so, whatever befalls you shall befall me and if ye escape, I shall escape, and if ye perish, I shall perish: for yonder lewd minion entreats me with indignity and still torments me on your account; and thou, O my daughter, knowest my worth.'

So they trusted in her and swore to her such an oath as contented her, whereupon she opened the door to

them and they came out and found her riding on a Greek jar of red earthenware with a rope of palm fibres about its neck [by way of halter], which turned under her and ran faster than a Nejd colt, and she said to them, 'Follow me and fear nothing, for I know forty magical formulas, by the least of which I could make this city a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, and turn each damsel therein into a fish, and all before dawn. But I was not able to work aught of magic, for fear of the king her father and of regard for her sisters, for that they are redoubtable, by reason of their many guards and servants and tribesmen. However, I will yet show you wonders of my skill in magic; and now let us on, with God's help and blessing.'

Hassan and his wife rejoiced in this, making sure of escape, and they left the palace and went forth, till they came without the city, when he fortified his heart and smiting the earth with the wand, said, 'Ho, servants of these names, appear to me and discover to me your estates!' Thereupon the earth clove in sunder and out came seven Afrits, with their feet in the bowels of the earth and their heads in the clouds. They kissed the earth three times before Hassan and said with one voice, 'Here are we at thy service, O our lord and ruler over us! What dost thou bid us do? For we hear and obey thy commandment. An thou wilt, we will dry thee up seas and remove mountains from their places.' Hassan rejoiced in their words and at their speedy answer [to his summons], so he took courage and bracing up his resolution, said to them, 'Who are ye and what are your names and races? And to what tribes and companies do ye belong?' They kissed the earth once more and answered with one voice, saying, 'We are seven kings, each ruling over seven tribes of the Jinn of all conditions, Marids and devils, flyers and divers, dwellers in mountains

Night DCCCXXV.

and wastes and deserts and haunters of the seas: so command us what thou wilt; for we are thy servants and slaves, and whoso possesseth this wand hath dominion over all our necks and we owe him obedience.'

When Hassan heard this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his wife and the old woman, and he said to the Kings of the Jinn, 'I desire of you that ye show me your tribes and hosts and armies.' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'if we show thee our hosts, we fear for thee and these who are with thee, for they are many in number and various in form and fashion and favour. Some of us are heads without bodies and others bodies without heads, and others again are in the likeness of wild animals and beasts of prey. However, if this be thy will, needs must we first show thee those of us who are like unto wild beasts. But, O our lord, what wouldst thou of us at this present?' Quoth Hassan, 'I would have you carry me forthwith to the city of Baghdad, me and my wife and this good woman.'

But they hung down their heads and were silent, whereupon quoth Hassan, 'Why do ye not reply?' And they said with one voice, 'O our lord and ruler over us, we are of the covenant of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!) and he made us swear that we would carry none of the sons of Adam on our backs; since which time we have carried no mortal on our backs or shoulders: but we will straightway harness thee horses of the Jinn, that shall carry thee and thy company to thy country.' 'And how far are we from Baghdad?' asked Hassan. Quoth they, 'Seven years' journey for a diligent horseman.' Hassan marvelled at this and said to them, 'Then how came I hither in less than a year?' They answered, 'God inclined the hearts of His pious servants to thee, else hadst thou never won hither nor set eyes on these regions. For the Sheikh Abdulcuddous, who mounted

thee on the elephant and the enchanted horse, traversed with thee, in ten days, three years' journey for a diligent horseman, and the Afrit Dehnesh, to whom the Sheikh Abourruweish committed thee, carried thee a like distance in a day and a night; all which was of the blessing of God the Most High, for that the Sheikh Abourruweish is of the lineage of Asef ben Berkhiya[1] and knoweth the Most Great name of God.[2] Moreover, from Baghdad to the Palace of the Mountain of Clouds is a year's journey, and this makes the seven years.'

When Hassan heard this, he marvelled exceedingly and said, 'Glory be to God, who maketh the difficult easy and healeth the broken, who bringeth near the distant and humbleth every froward tyrant, who hath eased us of every stress and brought me hither and subjected these creatures to me and reunited me with my wife and children! I know not whether I sleep or wake or if I be sober or drunken!' Then he turned to the Jinn and said, 'In how many days will your horses bring us to Baghdad?' 'They will carry you thither in less than a year,' answered they, 'but not till after ye have endured terrible perils and hardships and traversed thirsty valleys and frightful wastes and terrors without number; and we cannot warrant thee, O our lord, from the people of these islands nor from the mischief of the Supreme King and his enchanters and warlocks. It may be they will force us and take you from us and we fall into affliction with them, and all to whom the news shall come after this will say to us, "Ye are evil-doers. How could ye affront the Supreme King and carry a mortal out of his dominions, and the king's daughter with him?" Wert thou alone with

Night dccccxxbi.

[1] Vizier of Solomon.

[2] *i.e.* the secret name of God, which is fabled by the Muslims to have been engraven on the seal-ring of Solomon and to confer on him who knows it dominion over all the powers of the earth and the air.

us,' continued they, 'the thing were easy; but He who brought thee hither is able to carry thee back to thy country and reunite thee presently with thy people. So take heart and put thy trust in God and fear not; for we are at thy service, to convey thee to thy country.'

Hassan thanked them and said, 'God requite you with good. But now make haste with the horses.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and struck the ground with their feet, whereupon it opened and they disappeared within it and were absent awhile, after which they reappeared with three horses, saddled and bridled, and on each saddle-bow a pair of saddle-bags, with a leathern bottle of water in one pocket and the other full of victual. Hassan mounted one horse and took a child before him, whilst his wife mounted a second and took the other child before her. Then the old woman alighted from the jar and mounted the third horse and they rode on, without ceasing, all night. At break of day, they turned aside from the road and made for the mountain, whilst their tongues ceased not to name God.

They fared on under the mountain all that day, till Hassan caught sight of a black object in the distance, as it were a tall column of smoke ascending to the sky; so he recited somewhat of the Koran and sought refuge with God from Satan the Stoned. The black thing grew plainer, as they approached, and when they drew near to it, they saw that it was an Afrit, with a head like a huge dome and tusks like grapnels and jaws like a street and nostrils like ewers and ears like leathern bucklers and mouth like a cavern and teeth like pillars of stone and hands like winnowing forks and legs like masts: his head was in the clouds and his feet in the bowels of the earth. When he saw Hassan, he bowed himself and kissed the earth before him, saying, 'O Hassan, have no fear of me; for I am the chief of the dwellers in this land, which is

the first of the Wac Islands, and I am a Muslim and a believer in the unity of God. I have heard of you and your coming and when I knew of your case, I desired to depart from the land of the magicians to another land, void of inhabitants, and far from men and Jinn, that I might dwell there alone and serve God till my end came upon me. Wherefore I wish to company with you and be your guide, till ye win forth of the Wac Islands. I will appear only at night: so comfort your hearts on my account; for I am a Muslim, even as ye are Muslims.'

When Hassan heard the Afrit's words, he was mightily rejoiced and made sure of deliverance; and he said to him, 'God amply requite thee! Go with us, with the blessing of Allah!' So the Afrit went before them and they followed, talking and making merry, for their hearts were at ease and their breasts relieved, and Hassan fell to telling his wife all that had befallen him and all the stresses he had undergone, whilst she excused herself to him and told him, in turn, all she had seen and suffered. The horses bore them on all night, like the blinding lightning, and when the day rose, they put their hands to the saddle-bags and took forth victual and water and ate and drank. **Night dccccxxbii.**

Then they sped on their way, preceded by the Afrit, who turned aside with them from the beaten track into another road, till then untrodden, along the sea-shore, and they fared on, without stopping, across valleys and deserts, a whole month, till on the one-and-thirtieth day there arose before them a cloud of dust, that walled the world and darkened the day, and they heard a frightful noise of crying and clamour. When Hassan saw and heard this, he was confused and turned pale; and the old woman said to him, 'O my son, this is the army of the Wac Islands, that hath overtaken us; and presently they will lay hands on us.' 'What shall I do,

O my mother?' asked he. And she answered, 'Strike the earth with the wand.' He did so and immediately the seven kings presented themselves and saluted him, kissing the ground before him and saying, 'Fear not neither grieve.' Hassan rejoiced at their words and answered them, saying, 'Well said, O princes of the Jinn and the Afrits! This is your time.' Quoth they, 'Get ye up to the mountain-top, thou and thy company, and leave us to deal with them, for we know that you are in the right and they in the wrong and God will aid us against them.' So Hassan and his wife and children and the old woman dismounted and dismissing the horses, ascended the flank of the mountain.

Night dccccxxviii.

Presently up came Queen Nour el Huda, with troops right and left, and the captains went round about among the troops and ranged them in battle array. Then the two hosts charged down upon one another and clashed together with a mighty shock, the brave pressed forward and the coward fled and the Jinn cast flames of fire from their mouths, whilst the smoke of them rose up to the confines of the sky and the two armies appeared and disappeared. The champions fought and heads flew from bodies and the blood ran in streams, nor did the sword leave to play and the blood to flow and the fire of the battle to rage, till the dark night came, when the two armies drew apart and alighting, kindled fires and rested upon the field.

Therewith the seven kings went up to Hassan and kissed the ground before him. He thanked them and prayed God to give them the victory and asked them how they had fared with the queen's troops. Quoth they, 'They will withstand us but three days, for we had the better of them to-day, taking two thousand of them prisoners and slaying of them much people, whose number may not be told. So take comfort and be of good cheer.'

Then they took leave of him and went down to their troops, to hearten them. They kept up the fires till the day rose with its light and shone, when the fighting-men mounted their stout horses and smote each other with the edge of the sword and thrust with the brown of the lance; nor did they cease from the battle that day. Moreover, they passed the night on horseback, clashing together like seas; the fires of war raged among them and they stinted not from battle and strife, till the army of Wac was defeated and their power broken and their courage quelled; their feet slipped and whithersoever they fled, defeat was before them; wherefore they turned their backs and betook themselves to flight: but the most part of them were slain and their queen and her chief officers and the grandees of her realm taken prisoners.

On the morrow, the seven kings set Hassan a throne of alabaster inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon. Moreover, they set thereby a throne of ivory, plated with glittering gold, for the princess Menar es Sena and another for the old woman Shewahi. Then they brought before them the captives and among the rest, Queen Nour el Huda bound and shackled, whom when Shewahi saw, she said to her, 'O harlot, O wicked wretch, thy recompense shall be that two bitches be starved and two horses stinted of water, till they be athirst: then shalt thou be bound, with the bitches after thee, to the horses' tails and the latter driven to the river, that the bitches may rend thy skin; and after, thy flesh shall be cut off and given them to eat. How couldst thou deal thus with thy sister, O vile woman, seeing that she was lawfully married, after the law of God and of His Apostle? For there is no monkery in Islam and marriage is of the ordinances of the Apostles (on whom be peace!) nor were women created but for men.'

Then Hassan commanded to put all the captives to

death and the old woman cried out, saying, 'Slay them all and spare none!' But, when Menar es Sena saw her sister in this plight, a prisoner and in fetters, she wept over her and said, 'O my sister, who is this hath conquered us and made us captives in our own land?' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'Verily, this is a grave matter. Indeed this man Hassan hath gotten the mastery over us and God hath given him dominion over us and over all our realm and he hath overcome us, us and the Kings of the Jinn.' And her sister answered her, saying, 'Indeed, God aided him not against you nor did he overcome you nor make you prisoners, save by means of this cap and wand.' So Nour el Huda was assured that he had conquered her by means thereof and humbled herself to her sister, till she was moved to pity for her and said to Hassan, 'What wilt thou do with my sister? Behold, she is in thy hands and she hath done thee no offence that thou shouldst punish her.' Quoth Hassan, 'Her torturing of thee was offence enough.' But she answered, saying, 'She hath excuse for all she did with me. As for thee, thou hast set my father's heart on fire for the loss of me, and how will it be with him, if he lose my sister also?' And he said to her, 'It is thine to decide; do what thou wilt.'

So she commanded to loose her sister and the rest of the captives, and they did her bidding. Then she went up to Queen Nour el Huda and embraced her, and they wept together awhile; after which quoth the queen, 'O my sister, bear me not malice for that I did with thee.' 'O my sister,' replied Menar es Sena, 'this was decreed to me.' Then they sat on the couch talking and Menar es Sena made peace between the old woman and her sister, after the goodliest fashion, and their hearts were set at ease. After this Hassan dismissed the servants of the wand, thanking them for the succour which they had afforded him against his enemies, and Menar es Sena

related to her sister all that had befallen her with Hassan and all he had suffered for her sake, saying, 'O my sister, it behoves us to fail not of what is due to him who hath done these deeds and is possessed of this might and whom God the Most High hath gifted with such exceeding prowess, that he hath won to our country and beaten thine army and taken thee prisoner and defied our father, the Supreme King, who hath dominion over all the princes of the Jinn.' 'By Allah, O my sister,' replied Nour el Huda, 'thou sayst sooth! What this man hath undergone is something marvellous and none may fail of respect to him, more by token of his generosity. But was all this on thine account?' 'Yes,' answered Menar es Sena, and they passed the night in converse till the morning. Night DCCCXXIX.

When the sun rose, they were minded to depart; so Hassan smote the earth with the wand and the Jinn appeared and saluted him, saying, 'Praised be God who hath set thy heart at ease! Command us what thou wilt, and we will do it for thee in less than the twinkling of an eye.' He thanked them and said to them, 'God requite you with good! Saddle me two horses of the best.' So they brought him forthwith two saddled horses, one of which he mounted, taking his elder son before him, and his wife mounted the other, taking the younger son before her. Then the queen and the old woman also took horse and they bade each other farewell and departed, Hassan and his wife taking the right and the queen and Shewahi the left hand road. The former fared on with their children, without stopping, for a whole month, till they came in sight of a city, compassed about with trees and streams, and alighted among the trees, thinking to rest there. As they sat talking, they saw many horsemen coming towards them, whereupon Hassan rose and going to meet them, found that it was King Hessoun, lord of

the Land of Camphor and Castle of Crystal, with his attendants.

So he went up to the king and kissed his hands and saluted him; and when the latter saw him, he returned his salute and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. Then he dismounted and seating himself with Hassan upon carpets under the trees, said to him, 'O Hassan, tell me all that hath befallen thee, first and last.' So he told him all that had passed and the king marvelled thereat and said to him, 'O my son, none ever won to the Wac Islands and returned thence but thou, and indeed thy case is wonderful; but praised be God for safety!' Then he mounted and carried Hassan and his wife and children into the city, where he lodged them in the guest-house of his palace; and they abode with him three days, feasting and making merry, after which Hassan sought his leave to depart to his own country and he granted it. So they took horse and the king rode with them ten days, after which he took leave of them and turned back, whilst Hassan and his wife and children fared on a whole month, till they came to a great cavern, whose floor was of brass. Quoth Hassan to his wife, 'Knowest thou yonder cavern?' And she answered, 'No.' Said he, 'Therein dwells a Sheikh named Abourruweish, to whom I am greatly beholden, for that he was the means of my knowing King Hessoun.'

Then he went on to tell her all that had passed between him and Abourruweish, and as he was thus engaged, behold, the Sheikh himself issued from the cavern. When Hassan saw him, he dismounted and kissed his hands, and the Sheikh saluted him and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him. Then he carried him into the cavern and sat down with him, whilst Hassan told him what had befallen him in the Wac Islands; whereat the Sheikh marvelled exceedingly and said, 'O

Hassan, how didst thou deliver thy wife and children?' So he told him the story of the cap and the wand, at which he marvelled and said, 'O Hassan, O my son, but for this wand and cap, thou hadst never delivered thy wife and children.' And he replied, 'Even so, O my lord.'

As they were talking, there came a knocking at the door and Abourruweish went out and found Abdulcuddous mounted on his elephant. So he saluted him and brought him into the cavern, where he embraced Hassan and gave him joy of his safety, rejoicing greatly in his return. Then said Abourruweish to Hassan, 'Tell the Sheikh Abdulcuddous all that hath befallen thee, O Hassan.' So he repeated to him all that had passed, till he came to the story of the wand and cap, whereupon quoth Abdulcuddous, 'O my son, thou hast delivered thy wife and thy children and hast no further need of the wand and the cap. Now we were the means of thy winning to the Wac Islands and I have done thee kindness for the sake of the daughters of my brother; wherefore I beg thee, of thy bounty and favour, to give me the wand and the Sheikh Abourruweish the cap.' Night DCCCXXX.

When Hassan heard this, he hung down his head, being ashamed to reply, 'I will not give them to you,' and said in himself, 'Indeed, these two elders have done me great kindness and but for them, I had never won to the Wac Islands and delivered my children, nor had I gotten me this wand and cap.' So he raised his head and answered, 'Yes, I will give them to you: but, O my lords, I fear lest the Supreme King, my wife's father, come upon me with his hosts and beset me in my own country, and I be unable to repel them, for want of the wand and the cap.' 'Fear not, O my son,' answered Abdulcuddous; 'we will succour thee and keep watch for thee in this place and fend off from thee whosoever shall come against thee

from thy wife's father or any other; wherefore be thou of good cheer and comfort and fear nothing, for no harm shall come to thee.' When Hassan heard this, he was abashed and gave the cap to Abourruweish, saying to Abdulcuddous, 'Bear me company to my own land and I will give thee the wand.' At this the two elders rejoiced exceedingly and made him ready riches and treasures past description.

He abode with them three days, at the end of which time he set out again and the Sheikh Abdulcuddous made ready to depart with him. So he and his wife mounted their beasts and Abdulcuddous whistled, whereupon a great elephant came running up from the heart of the desert and he mounted it. Then they took leave of Abourruweish and fared on across country, whilst Abdulcuddous guided them by a short and easy way, till they drew near the princesses' country; whereupon Hassan rejoiced and praised God for his safe return and reunion with his wife and children after so many hardships and perils and thanked Him for His favours and bounties, reciting the following verses:

Sure God will soon for us cause union to betide And in your arms locked fast, I shall to you confide
The wonders that have chanced to me and all I've felt Of anguish since the day that did our loves divide;
And I shall heal mine eyes with looking on your sight, For long my heart for you with yearning hath been wried.
I've hidden you a tale within my heart, that I Will tell you, when we meet: indeed, I shall you chide
For what you wrought of wrong aforetime; but reproach Shall end and pass away and only love abide.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses, when they came in sight of the green pavilion[1] and the pool and the

[1] Apparently that wherein he had alighted to rest on his journey with the Magian (see supra, p. 133), although the passage referred to makes no mention of the pool and palace.

green palace, and the Mountain of Clouds appeared to them afar off; whereupon quoth Abdulcuddous, 'Rejoice, O Hassan, in good news! For to-night shalt thou be the guest of my nieces.' At this he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his wife, and they alighted at the pavilion, where they ate and drank and rested; after which they took horse again and rode on till they came in sight of the palace.

As they drew near, the princesses came forth to meet them and saluted them; and their uncle said to them, 'O daughters of my brother, behold, I have accomplished your brother Hassan's occasion and have helped him to regain his wife and children.' So they embraced him and gave him joy of his return in health and safety and of his reunion with his wife and children, and it was a day of festival with them. Then came forward his sister, the youngest princess, and embraced him, weeping sore, whilst he also wept for his long estrangement: after which she complained to him of that which she had suffered for the pangs of separation and weariness of heart in his absence and recited these verses:

Mine eyes, since thou departedst hence, ne'er on a creature fell, But straight thine image mirrored rose before it, sooth to tell;
Nor have I ever closed my lids in slumber, but in dreams I saw thee, as it were 'twixt eye and eyelid thou didst dwell.

When she had made an end of her verses, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and Hassan said to her, 'O my sister, I have thee to thank in this matter, over all thy sisters, and may God the Most High vouchsafe thee aid and countenance!' Then he related to her all that had befallen him in his journey, first and last, and all that he had undergone, telling her what had betided him with his wife's sister and how he had delivered his wife and children and all that he had seen of marvels and grievous

perils, even to how Queen Nour el Huda would have slain him and his wife and children and none saved them from her but God the Most High. Moreover, he related to her the adventure of the cap and the wand and how Abdulcuddous and Abourruweish had sought them of him and he had not agreed to give them to them but for her sake; wherefore she thanked him and wished him long life; and he said, 'By Allah, I shall never forget all the kindness thou hast done me, first and last!'

Night dccccxxxi. Then she turned to his wife Menar es Sena and embraced her and pressed her children to her bosom, saying to her, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, was there no pity in thy heart, that thou partedst him and his children and set his heart on fire for them? Didst thou desire by this that he should die?' The princess laughed and answered, 'Thus was it ordained of God (blessed and exalted be He!) and whoso beguileth folk, may God beguile him!'[1] Then they set on meat and drink, and they all ate and drank and made merry. They abode thus ten days feasting and merry-making, at the end of which time Hassan prepared to continue his journey. So his sister rose and made him ready riches and rarities, such as beggar description. Then she strained him to her bosom, because of leave-taking, and embraced him, whilst he recited the following verses on her account:

Solace from those who love far distant is, heigho! And severance of friends is nought but grievous woe.
Estrangement and disdain a sore affliction are And he who's slain of love a martyr is, I trow.
How long is night on him who's parted from his love, A lover left forlorn, how weariful and slow!
His tears upon his cheeks course down, what while he saith, 'Ah woe is me for tears! Can more be yet to flow?'

[1] Apparently in allusion to the trick played her by Hassan in taking her feather-dress and so contriving to get her to wife.

With this he gave the wand to the Sheikh Abdulcuddous, who rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and thanking him, mounted and returned to his own place. Then Hassan took horse with his wife and children and departed from the palace of the princesses, who went forth with him, to bid him farewell. Then they turned back and Hassan fared on, over hill and dale, two months and ten days, till he came to the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, and repairing to his house by the private way that gave upon the open country, knocked at the door.

Now his mother, for long absence, had forsworn repose and given herself to mourning and weeping and lamentation, till she fell sick and ate not, neither took delight in sleep, but shed tears night and day. Her son's name was never from her mouth, albeit she despaired of his return; and as he stood at the door, he heard her weeping and reciting the following verses:

By Allah, med'cine, O my lords, one sick for love of you, Whose heart is broken and her frame all wasted and unsound!
Yet, of your bounty, if ye would but union her vouchsafe, Sure in her loved ones' favours, then, her sorrows would be drowned.
She doth not of your sight despair, for God almighty is And in the midmost stress of woe, the prosperous times come round.

When she had made an end of these verses, she heard her son's voice at the door, calling out and saying, 'O mother mine, fortune hath been kind and vouchsafeth [us] reunion!' She knew his voice and went to the door, between belief and doubt; but, when she opened it and saw him standing there and with him his wife and children, she cried out, for excess of joy, and fell to the earth in a swoon. Hassan tended her, till she revived and embraced him, weeping; after which she called his slaves and servants and bade them carry his baggage into the house. So they brought in all the loads, and his wife

and children entered also, whereupon Hassan's mother went up to the princess and kissed her head and feet, saying, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, if I have failed of thy due, behold, I crave pardon of God the Great.'

Then she turned to Hassan and said to him, 'O my son, what was the cause of this long absence?' So he related to her all his adventures from beginning to end; and when she heard tell of all that had befallen him, she gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. He tended her, till she came to herself and said to him, 'By Allah, O my son, thou hast erred in parting with the wand and the cap, for, hadst thou kept them, thou wert master of the whole earth, in its breadth and length; but praised be God for thy safety and that of thy wife and children!' They passed the night in all pleasance and happiness, and on the morrow Hassan changed his clothes and donning a suit of the richest apparel, went down into the bazaar and bought slaves and slave-girls and stuffs and ornaments and raiment and carpets and costly vessels and all manner other precious things, whose like is not found with kings. Moreover, he bought houses and gardens and lands and so forth and abode with his wife and children and mother, eating and drinking and taking their pleasure: nor did they cease from all delight and solace of life till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. And Glory be to Him who hath dominion over the Seen and the Unseen, the Living, the Eternal, who dieth not!

KHELIFEH THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, a fisherman called Khelifeh, a very poor man, who had never been married. It chanced, one day, that he took his net and went forth, according to his wont, to fish before the others came. When he reached the river, he girt himself and tucked up his skirts; then, stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it once and again, but brought up nothing. He ceased not to throw it, till he had made ten casts, and still nothing came up in it; wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said, 'I crave pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and I repent unto Him. There is no power and no virtue save in God, the Most High, the Supreme! What He wills, is, and what He wills not, is not! Upon God (to whom belong might and majesty) dependeth provision! When He giveth to a creature, none denieth him, and when He denieth a creature, none giveth to him.' And of the excess of his chagrin, he recited the following couplet:

If Fate with a calamity afflict thee, thou wert best Meet it with patience
and oppose thereto an open breast;
For God, the Lord of all that be, shall, of His power and grace, Cause
ease to follow after stress, and after travail, rest.

Then he sat awhile, with his head bowed down, pondering his case, and recited these verses also:

I rede thee, the sweet and the bitter of fortune with fortitude bear, And
know, whatsoever betideth, that God of His purpose fails ne'er.

A night often acts upon troubles, as whiles on an abscess it acts, Whereon, till it ripen, it worketh and doth it for bursting prepare.
And so with the shiftings of fortune, they pass o'er a man and then cease And after no longer they irk him nor come to his memory fore'er.

Then he said to himself, 'I will make this one more cast, trusting in God, so haply He may not disappoint my expectation.' So saying, he rose and casting the net as far as he could into the river, gathered the cords in his hands and waited awhile. Then he pulled at it and finding it heavy, handled it gently and drew it in, little by little, till he got it ashore, when he found in it a one-eyed, lame ape. Quoth Khelifeh, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! What miserable ill-luck and sorry fortune is this! What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the ordinance of God the Most High!' Then he bound the ape with a cord to a tree that grew on the river-bank, and taking a whip he had with him, raised it in the air, thinking to bring it down upon him, when God made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying, 'O Khelifeh, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in God, for He will give thee thy daily bread.'

Night DCCCXXII.

So he went down to the river and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before; so he tugged at it, till he brought it to land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart,[1] eyes pencilled with kohl and hands stained with henna; and he was laughing and wore a tattered waistcloth about his middle. Quoth Khelifeh, 'Praised be God who hath changed the fish of the river into apes!' Then, going up to the first ape, he said to him, 'See, O unlucky wretch, how foul was the counsel

[1] Esteemed a beauty by the Arabs.

thou gavest me! None but thou made me light on this second ape: and for that thou gavest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness,[1] I am become distressed and weary, without dirhem or dinar.' So saying, he took a stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to bring it down upon the lame ape, when it cried out for mercy and said to him, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, spare me for this my fellow's sake and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire!'

So he held his hand from him and throwing down the stick, went up to the second ape, who said to him, 'O Khelifeh, this [my] speech[2] will profit thee nothing, except thou hearken to what I say to thee; but, if thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the means of thine enrichment.' 'And what hast thou to say to me,' asked Khelifeh, 'that I may obey thee therein?' 'Go and cast thy net a third time,' replied the ape; 'and after I will tell thee what to do.' So he took his net and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in and finding it heavy, laboured at it till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape; but this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with henna and his eyes blackened with kohl.

When Khelifeh saw this, he exclaimed, 'Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! This is indeed a blessed day from first to last: its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of

[1] All semi-civilized nations, and particularly those of the East, attach great importance to omens of this kind, and few superstitions are more widely prevalent than the belief that the first object seen in the morning governs the fortunes of the day for good or evil. The Arabs consider it especially unlucky to meet a one-eyed person or cripple on such occasions.

[2] *i.e.* that which I am about to tell thee.

the first ape, and the book is known by its superscription! Verily, this is a day of apes: there is not a fish left in the river, and we are come out to-day but to catch apes!' Then he turned to the third ape and said, 'And what art thou for another unlucky wretch?' Quoth the ape, 'Dost thou not know me, O Khelifeh?' 'Not I,' answered the fisherman; and the ape said, 'I am the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew money-changer.' 'And what dost thou for him?' asked Khelifeh. Quoth the ape, 'I give him good-morrow every morning, and he gains five dinars; and again at the end of the day, I give him good-even and he gains other five dinars.' Whereupon Khelifeh turned to the first ape and said to him, 'See, O unlucky wretch, what fine apes other folk have! As for thee, thou givest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thine unlucky visnomy and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!'

So saying, he took the stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Aboussaadat's ape said to him, 'Hold thy hand from him, O Khelifeh, and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do.' So Khelifeh threw down the stick and said, 'And what hast thou to say to me, O prince of all apes?' 'Leave me and the other two apes here,' answered the ape, 'and take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever comes up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall pleasure thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the fisherman and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder, reciting the following verses:

Night DCCCXXXIII.

Whene'er my breast is straitened, for aid I supplicate A Maker who availeth to save from every strait;
For, ere the glance returneth, the captive is set free From bonds and healed the broken, by grace of God the Great.
All thine affairs to Him, then, commit; for every man Of understanding knoweth His bounties without date.

And also these:

Thou'rt He who dost the folk, indeed, cast into weariness And cares and woes, effect and cause, dispellest none the less.
Cause me not Thou to covet aught that is beyond my reach. How many a man hath failed to win his wish, for all his stress!

Then he went down to the river and casting his net, waited awhile; after which he drew it up and found therein a fine perch, with a big head, a tail like a ladle and eyes like dinars. When Khelifeh saw this fish, he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he took it, marvelling, and carried it to the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the whole world. Quoth the ape, 'O Khelifeh, what wilt thou do with this and with thine ape?' 'I will tell thee, O prince of apes,' answered the fisherman. 'First, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed one, my ape, and take thee in his stead and give thee every day to eat of what thou wilt.' 'Since thou hast made choice of me,' rejoined the ape, 'I will tell thee how thou shalt do, wherein, if it please God the Most High, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of the dyke and cast thy net into the Tigris. Then draw it up, after waiting awhile, and thou shalt find therein a fish, than which thou never sawest a finer in thy life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this.'

So he rose forthright and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great shad, the bigness of a lamb; never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him, 'Gather some green grass and put half of it in a basket; lay the fish on it and cover it with the other half. Then shoulder the basket and leave us here tied and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee

by the way, answer him not, but fare on till thou comest to the market of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master Aboussaadat the Jew, Sheikh of the money-changers, and wilt see him sitting on a divan amiddleward his slaves and servants, black and white, with a cushion behind him and two coffers, one for gold and one for silver, before him.

Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying, "O Aboussaadat, I went out to-day to fish and cast my net in thy name, and God the Most High sent me this fish." He will say, "Hast thou shown it to any but me?" And do thou answer, "No, by Allah!" Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars; but do thou return them also and take nothing from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold. Then will he say to thee, "Tell me what thou wouldst have." And do thou reply, "By Allah, I will not sell the fish save for two words!" He will ask, "What are they?" And do thou answer, "Stand up and say, 'Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give Khelifeh the fisherman my ape in exchange for his ape and that I barter my lot for his lot and my luck for his luck.' This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold." If he do this, I will every day give thee good-morrow and good-even, and thou shalt gain ten dinars a day; whilst this one-eyed, lame ape shall daily give the Jew good-morrow, and God shall afflict him every day with an exaction, which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath nought. Hearken then to my words; so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright.'

Quoth Khelifeh, 'I accept thy counsel, O king of all apes! But, as for this unlucky wretch, may God not bless him! I know not what to do with him.' 'Let him go into the water,' said the ape, 'and let me go also.' 'I

hear and obey,' answered Khelifeh and unbound the [three] apes, which went down into the river. Then he washed the shad and wrapping it in grass, laid it in the basket, and shouldering the latter, set out for Baghdad, chanting the following quatrain:

Commit thy case to God and thou shalt have security: Do kindness ever, so thou shalt be from repentance free.
Consort not with suspected folk, lest doubt should fall on thee, And guard thy tongue, reviling not, lest thou reviléd be.

When he came to the city, the people knew him and cried out to him, saying, 'What hast thou there, O Khelifeh?' But he paid no heed to them and went on till he came to the money-changers' bazaar and passing between the shops, found the Jew seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a king of the kings of Khorassan. So he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Aboussaadat raised his eyes and knowing him, said, 'Welcome, O Khelifeh! What wantest thou? If any have missaid thee or picked a quarrel with thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Master of Police, who shall do thee justice on him.' 'Nay, as thy head liveth, O chief of the Jews,' replied Khelifeh, 'none hath missaid me. But I went forth this morning and casting my net into the Tigris, in thy name, brought up this fish.' Night DCCCXXXIV.

Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Jew, who admired it and said, 'By the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments, I dreamt last night that the Virgin[1] came to me and said, "Know, O Aboussaadat, that I have sent thee a fine present!" And doubtless it

[1] A characteristic trait of ignorance in the story-teller, arising out of the sublime indifference and contempt with which the ordinary Muslim regards the religion, manners and customs of the "Barbarians," as (in common with the Chinese) he styles all peoples not of his own race.

is this fish.' Then he turned to Khelifeh and said to him, 'Tell me, on thy faith, hath any seen it but I?' 'No, by Allah and by Abou Bekr the Truth-teller,'[1] answered Khelifeh, 'none hath seen it but thou, O chief of the Jews!' Whereupon the Jew turned to one of his servants and said to him, 'Carry this fish to my house and bid Saadeh dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and come home.' And Khelifeh said, 'Go, boy; let the master's wife fry some of it and broil the rest.' 'I hear and obey, O my lord,' answered the boy, and taking the fish, went away with it to the house.

Then the Jew put out his hand and gave the fisherman a dinar, saying, 'Take this for thyself, O Khelifeh, and spend it on thy family.' When Khelifeh saw the dinar in his hand, he took it, saying, 'Glory to the Lord of Dominion!' as if he had never seen aught of gold in his life, and went away; but before he had gone far, he bethought him of the ape's injunction and turning back, threw the dinar to the Jew, saying, 'Take thy gold and give folk back their fish. Are folk a laughing-stock to thee?' The Jew thought he was jesting and offered him other two dinars, but he said, 'Without a joke, give me the fish. How knewst thou I would sell it at this price?' Whereupon the Jew gave him two more dinars and said, 'Take these five dinars for thy fish and leave covetise.' So Khelifeh took the five dinars and went away, rejoicing, looking and marvelling at the gold and saying, 'Glory be to God! There is not with the Khalif of Baghdad what is with me this day!'

Then he went on till he came to the end of the market, when he remembered the ape's words and returning to the Jew, threw him back the gold. Quoth he, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh? Dost thou want change for thy dinars

[1] The first Khalif, so called.

in dirhems?' 'I want nor dirhems nor dinars,' answered the fisherman. 'I only want thee to give me back folk's fish.' With this the Jew was enraged and cried out at him, saying, 'O fisherman, thou bringest me a fish, that is not worth a dinar, and I give thee five for it; yet art thou not content! Art thou mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it.' 'I will not sell it for silver nor gold,' answered Khelifeh, 'only for two words that thou shalt say to me.'

When the Jew heard this, he rolled his eyes and breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage[1] and said to him, 'O scum of the Muslims, wilt thou have me forswear my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and my belief that I inherited from my forefathers?' Then he cried out to his servants, saying, 'Out on you! Baste me this unlucky rogue's back and drub him soundly!' So they fell on him and beat him till he fell down beneath the shop, and the Jew said to them, 'Leave him and let him rise.' Whereupon Khelifeh sprang up, as if nothing ailed him, and the Jew said to him, 'Tell me what price thou askest for the fish and I will give it thee; for thou hast gotten but scurvy fare of us this day.' 'Have no fear for me, O master,' answered the fisherman, 'because of the beating; for I can eat ten asses' allowance of stick.'

The Jew laughed at his words and said, 'God on thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the virtue of my faith, I will give it thee!' Quoth the fisherman, 'I will take nothing of thee save the two words I spoke of.' And the

[1] Thinking that by "two words" Khelifeh meant that he should pronounce the double profession (commonly known as "The Two Words") of the Mohammedan Faith, *i.e.* "I testify that there is no god but God!" and "I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" and so become a Muslim.

Jew said, 'Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Muslim.' 'By Allah, O Jew,' replied Khelifeh, 'if thou become a Muslim, it will neither advantage the Muslims nor hurt the Jews; and in like manner, if thou hold to thy heresy, it will neither damage the Muslims nor profit the Jews. But what I desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say, "Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for that of Khelifeh the fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck."' 'If that be all thou desirest,' said the Jew, 'it is lightly done.' So he rose forthright and standing on his feet, repeated the required words; after which he turned to the fisherman and said to him, 'Hast thou aught else to ask of me?' 'No,' answered he, and the Jew said, 'Go in peace.'

Night dccccxxxb.

So Khelifeh took up his net and basket and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with difficulty, when he found it full of fish of all kinds. Presently, up came a woman with a dish, who gave him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it; and after her an eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and another and another, till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten a hundred dinars.

Now he dwelt in the Passage of the Merchants, and as he lay one night in his lodging, [drunken with hashish,] he said to himself, 'O Khelifeh, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten a hundred dinars. The Commander of the Faithful will assuredly hear of this from some one, and mayhap he will be in need of money and will send for thee and say to thee, "I have occasion for a sum of money and I have been told that thou hast a hundred dinars: so do thou lend them to me." "O Commander of the Faithful," shall I answer, "I

am a poor man, and whoever told thee that I had a hundred dinars lied against me; for I have nought of this." Thereupon he will commit me to the chief of the police, saying, "Strip him of his clothes and torment him with beating, till he confesses and gives up the hundred dinars in his possession." Wherefore meseems the best thing I can do, to provide against this predicament, is to rise forthright and baste myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating.' And the fumes of the hashish [he had eaten] said to him, 'Rise, put off thy clothes.'

So he arose and putting off his clothes, proceeded to belabour himself with a whip, laying every other blow upon a leathern pillow he had by him and roaring out the while, 'Alas! Alas! By Allah, O my lord, it is a false saying and they have lied against me; for I am a poor fisherman and have nought of the goods of the world!' The noise of the blows falling on the cushion and on his body resounded in the night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and said, 'What can ail yonder poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him? It would seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him.' So they all came forth of their lodgings, at the noise of the blows and the crying, and repaired to Khelifeh's door, but found it locked and said to each other, 'Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the [adjoining] saloon. It behoves us to climb over by the roofs.'

So they climbed over the roofs and coming down through the ventilator, saw him naked and flogging himself and said to him, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'Know, O folk,' answered he, 'that I have gotten some dinars and fear lest my case be reported to the Commander of the Faithful and he send for me and demand them of me; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that, if I deny, he will torture me: so I am torturing myself, by

way of using myself to what may come.' The merchants laughed at him and said, 'Leave this foolery, may God not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten! For thou hast disturbed us this night and troubled our hearts.'

So Khelifeh left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he arose and would have gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and said in himself, 'If I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt about my waist, belike some one will see me and lay in wait for me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money from me: but I have a device that should serve me right well.' So he made him a pocket in the collar of his gown and tying the hundred dinars up in a purse, laid them therein. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris, where he cast his net, but brought up nothing. So he removed to another place and cast again, but still the net came up empty; and he went on removing from place to place and casting the net without better success, till he had gone half a day's journey from the city. So he said in himself, 'By Allah, I will cast but this once more, whatever come of it!'

Night DCCCXXXVI.

Then he cast the net with all his force, of the excess of his vexation, and the purse flew out of his pocket and lighting in the middle of the stream, was carried away by the current; whereupon he threw down the net and pulling off his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, without chancing on it, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue. When he despaired of finding the purse, he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but his net and basket and staff and sought for his clothes, but could light on no trace of them: so he said to himself, 'O vilest of those whereon was made the byword, "The pilgrimage is not

perfected but by swiving the camel!"'[1] Then he wrapped the net about him and taking the staff in one hand and the basket in the other, went trotting about like a camel in heat, running right and left and backward and forward, dishevelled and covered with dust, as he were a refractory Afrit let loose from Solomon's prison.[2]

Now the Khalif Haroun er Reshid had a friend, a jeweller called Ibn el Kirnas, and all the merchants and brokers and middle-men and other the folk knew him for the Khalif's merchant, wherefore there was nought sold in Baghdad, by way of rarities and things of price or slaves, male or female, but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, there came up to him the chief of the brokers, with a slave-girl, whose like eyes never saw, for she was of the utmost beauty and grace and symmetry, and among her excellences was that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner of instruments of music. So he bought her for five thousand dinars and clothed her with other thousand; after which he carried her to the Khalif, with whom she lay the night and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all manner arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Cout el Culoub and she was even as saith the poet:

I gaze on her, when she unveils, again and yet again: In her refusal of herself to sight are woes and bane.
She doth the slender-necked gazelle resemble, when she turns; And to gazelles, 'tis said, doth grace of movements appertain.

[1] *i.e.* "O vilest of sinners!" meaning the thief. Pilgrimage wipes away all sins and the ignorant Muslim regards the completion of the rite and the consequent possession of a clean bill of moral health as an excuse for beginning again without delay. Hence the saying.

[2] *i.e.* from one of the vessels of brass wherein Solomon was fabled to have confined those of the Jinn who refused to obey him. See supra, Vol. I. The Fisherman and the Genie; also Vol. V. The City of Brass.

And what is this beside the saying of another?

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

On the morrow, the Khalif sent for Ibn el Kirnas and ordered him ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with her and he forsook the princess Zubeideh bint[1] el Casim, for all she was his father's brother's daughter,[2] and all his favourites and abode a whole month without stirring from Cout el Culoub's side, save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her in haste. This was grievous to the grandees of the realm and they made their complaint thereof to the Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide, who waited till the next Friday, when he entered the congregational mosque and foregathering with the Khalif, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories concerning love, with intent to draw out what was in his mind.' 'By Allah, O Jaafer,' said Haroun, 'this is not of my choice; but my heart is caught in the snare of love and I know not what is to be done!' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'this girl Cout el Culoub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which the hand possesseth the soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing and it is that the greatest glory of kings and princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, belike it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her.' 'Thou sayest well, O Jaafer,' rejoined the Khalif. 'Come; let us go a-hunting forthright.'

[1] *i.e.* daughter of.

[2] She was the daughter of Jaafer, son of El Mensour, second Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty. I do not know why she is called daughter of El Casim.

Accordingly, as soon as the Friday prayers were over, they left the mosque and mounting their mules, rode forth to the chase. They fared on into the open country, engaged in talk, and their attendants outwent them. Presently the heat became oppressive and the Khalif said to his vizier, 'O Jaafer, I am sore athirst.' Then he looked round and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, said to Jaafer, 'Seest thou what I see?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the vizier; 'I see a dim figure on a high mound; belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber-plot, and in either case, water will not be lacking in his neighbourhood. I will go to him and fetch thee some.' But Er Reshid said, 'My mule is swifter than thine; so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of him drink and return.'

So saying, he spurred his mule, which started off like fleeting wind or lapsing water and brought him, in the twinkling of an eye, to the mound, when he found the figure he had seen to be none other than Khelifeh the fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net; and indeed he was horrible to look upon, as he swayed to and fro, with eyes like flaming cressets for very redness and dishevelled hair, covered with dust, as he were an Afrit or a lion. The Khalif saluted him and he returned his salutation; and he was angry and fires might have been kindled at his breath. Quoth Er Reshid, 'O man, hast thou any water?' And Khelifeh answered, 'O fellow, art thou blind or mad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for it is behind this mound.'

So the Khalif turned the mound and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule: then he returned to Khelifeh and said to him, 'Harkye, sirrah, what ails thee to stand here, and what is thy calling?' Quoth the fisherman, 'This is a stranger question than that about

the water. Seest thou not the tools of my craft on my shoulder?' 'Belike thou art a fisherman?' said the Khalif, and he answered, 'Yes.' 'Where is thy gown?' asked Er Reshid. 'And where are thy waistcloth and girdle and [the rest of] thy clothes?' Now these were the very things that Khelifeh had lost, like for like; so, when he heard the Khalif name them, he took it into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the river-bank and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, 'Harkye, sirrah, give me back my things and leave jesting.' 'By Allah,' replied Er Reshid, 'I have not seen thy clothes, nor know I aught of them!'

Now the Khalif had large cheeks and a small mouth; so Khelifeh said to him, 'Belike, thou art a singer or a piper by trade? But give me back my clothes, without more ado, or I will belabour thee with this staff till thou bepiss thyself and foul thy hose.' When Er Reshid saw the staff in the fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said in himself, 'By Allah, I cannot brook half a blow of that staff from this mad beggar!' Now he had on a satin gown; so he pulled it off and gave it to Khelifeh, saying, 'Take this in place of thy clothes.' The fisherman took it and turned it about and said, 'My clothes are worth ten of this painted clout.' 'Put it on, till I bring thee thy clothes,' rejoined the Khalif. So Khelifeh donned the gown, but finding it too long for him, took a knife he had with him, tied to the handle of his basket, and cut off nigh a third of the skirt, so that it [but] fell beneath his knees.

Then he turned to Er Reshid and said to him, 'God on thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping.' 'My wage is ten dinars a month,' replied the Khalif. And Khelifeh

said, 'By Allah, my poor fellow, I am sorry for thee! Why, I make thy ten dinars every day! Hast thou a mind to take service with me and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee? So shalt thou earn five dinars a day and be my knave and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff.' 'I will well,' answered Er Reshid; and Khelifeh said, 'Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright.'

So the Khalif alighted and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khelifeh said to him, 'Harkye, piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thine arm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus.' Accordingly, Er Reshid took heart of grace and casting the net, as the fisherman showed him, pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khelifeh came to his aid and tugged at it with him; but the two together could not pull it up: whereupon, 'O piper of ill omen,' said the fisherman, 'I took thy gown in place of my clothes; but, if I find my net torn, I will have thine ass for it and will beat thee to boot, till thou bepiss and bemire thyself!' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Let us both pull at once.'

So they both pulled at once and succeeded with difficulty in dragging the net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colours; and Khelifeh said to Er Reshid, 'By Allah, O piper, thou art an ugly fellow; but, if thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a fine fisherman. But now thou wert better mount thine ass and go to the market and fetch me a pair of frails, and I will take care of the fish, till thou return, when we will load it on thine ass's back. I have scales and weights and all we require, and thou wilt have nothing to do but to hold the scales and take the money; for we have here twenty dinars' worth of fish. So be quick with the frails and loiter not.'

Night dccc xxxviii.

'I hear and obey,' answered the Khalif and mounting, left him with the fish.

Then he spurred his mule, in great good humour, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the fisherman, till he came up to Jaafer, who said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, belike, when thou wentest to drink, thou foundest a pleasant garden and enteredst and tookst thy pleasure therein alone?' At this Er Reshid fell a-laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, may God make joys to endure for thee and do away troubles from thee! What was the cause of thy tarrying and what hath befallen thee?' 'Verily,' answered the Khalif, 'a right rare and pleasant thing hath befallen me.' And he told them what had passed between himself and the fisherman, how he had accused him of stealing his clothes and he had given him his gown and how he had cut off a part of it, finding it too long for him. 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee: but now I will go straight to the fisherman and buy it of him.' 'By Allah,' answered the Khalif, 'he hath cut off a third part of the skirt and spoilt it! But, O Jaafer, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish, and my master Khelifeh is waiting with them on the river-bank for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a cleaver.[1] Then we are to go, he and I, to the market and sell the fish and share the price.'

'O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'I will bring you a purchaser for your fish.' And Er Reshid rejoined, 'O Jaafer, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khelifeh, who

[1] Apparently for the purpose of splitting and cleaning the fish and scraping off their scales.

taught me to fish, I will give him a gold dinar for it!' So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the Khalif, and they all arose and made for the river-side. So, while Khelifeh was awaiting for the Khalif's return with the two frails, the guards swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-embroidered handkerchiefs, beating one another in their eagerness. Whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'Doubtless these are of the fish of Paradise!' and taking two fish in each hand, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, 'O God, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me forthwith!'

At this moment up came the chief of the Khalif's black slaves, who had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to stale by the way, and finding all the fish gone, looked right and left, till he espied Khelifeh standing in the water, with the fish in his hands, and said to him, 'Come hither, O fisherman!' But Khelifeh answered, 'Begone and meddle not with what doth not concern thee!' So the eunuch went up to him and said, 'Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price.' 'Art thou little of wit?' replied the fisherman. 'I will not sell them.' Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khelifeh cried out, saying, 'Hold thy hand, wretch that thou art! Better largesse than the mace.'[1] So saying, he threw the fish to the eunuch, who took them and laid them in his handkerchief. Then he put his hand in his pocket, but found not a single dirhem and said to Khelifeh, 'O fisherman, verily, thou art out of luck; for, by Allah, I have not a rap about me! But come to-morrow to the palace of the Khalifate and ask

[1] *i.e.* better make thee a present of the fish than have my crown cracked with the mace.

for the eunuch Sendel; whereupon the slaves will direct thee to me and thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and go thy ways therewith.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Indeed, this is a blessed day and its blessedness was manifest from the first of it!'

Then he shouldered his net and returned to Baghdad; and as he passed through the streets, the people saw the Khalif's gown on him and stared at him; [but he paid no heed to them and fared on] till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the Khalif's tailor. When the latter saw him wearing a dress of the apparel of the Khalif, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, 'O Khelifeh, whence hadst thou that gown?' 'What ails thee to meddle?' replied the fisherman. '[An thou must know,] I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. Moreover, I forgave him the cutting-off of his hand,[1] for that he stole my clothes and gave me this clout in their place.' So the tailor knew that the Khalif had come upon him, as he was fishing, and jested with him and given him the gown; and Khelifeh went to his house.

Night DCCCXXXIX.

Meanwhile, when the lady Zubeideh heard of the Khalif's devotion to Cout el Culoub, there took hold upon her the jealousy proper to women, so that she refused meat and drink and forswore the delight of sleep and awaited the Khalif's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel in his absence. So, when she learnt that he was gone a-hunting, she caused her women furnish the palace and decorate it after the most magnificent manner and serve up viands and confections; and amongst the rest she made a china dish of the daintiest sweetmeats, in which she had put henbane.

[1] The punishment decreed by Muslim law against him who steals more than the value of a quarter dinar.

Then she bade one of her eunuchs go to the damsel and bid her to eat with her, saying, 'The Lady Zubeideh bint el Casim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine to-day and having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, is minded to divert herself with somewhat of thy fashion.' Cout el Culoub answered, 'Hearing and obedience [are due] to God and the lady Zubeideh,' and rose forthright, knowing not what was hidden for her in the secret purpose of God. Then she took with her what instruments she needed and accompanied the eunuch to the presence of the princess.

When she entered, she kissed the ground before her again and again, then rising to her feet, said, 'Peace be on the lady of the lofty curtain and the inaccessible majesty, the daughter of the house of Abbas and scion of the family of the Prophet! May God fulfil thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years!' Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and the lady Zubeideh looked at her and saw a damsel with smooth cheeks and breasts like pomegranates, moon-bright face, flower-white forehead and great black eyes. Languor sat on her eyelids and her face beamed with light. It seemed as if the sun rose from her forehead and the darkness of the night from her brow-locks. The fragrance of musk exhaled from her breath and flowers bloomed from her lovely face; the moon beamed from her forehead and the branches waved in her slender shape. She was like the full moon shining in the darkness of the night; her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were arched like a bow and her lips moulded of coral. Her beauty amazed all who saw her and her glances enspelled all who looked on her. Glory be to Him who created and fashioned her and wrought her to perfection! Brief, she was even as saith the poet of one who favoured her:

When she is wroth, I trow, thou seest folk slain and sped, And when she's pleased, their souls return unto their stead.
Eyes hath she, whence proceed bewitching looks, wherewith She slayeth whom she will and raiseth from the dead.
All creatures with her glance she captivates; it seems As if all folk to her were servants, born and bred.

'Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O Cout el Culoub!' said Zubeideh. 'Sit and divert us with thine accomplishments and the goodliness of thy fashion.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the damsel and putting out her hand, took the tambourine, whereof one of its praisers speaks in the following verses:

O thou o' the tabret, my heart for longing flies And whilst thou smitest, aloud for passion cries.
Blame not, my fairest, a wounded heart, a wight Who for thine answer to his petition sighs.
So say,—or weighty or light,—a word and sing Whate'er thou pleasest: thou charmest anywise.
Be kind; discover thy face, my love; arise And dance and gambol and please all ears and eyes.

Then she smote the tambourine briskly and sang thereto, that she arrested the birds in the air and the place danced with them; after which she laid down the tambourine and took the flageolet, whereof it is said:

Eyes hath she and the pupils thereunto that belong Are governed by the fingers to undiscordant song.

And as the poet also says:

When it bringeth with fluting the songs to the goal, The time, for sheer gladness, yields solace of soul.

Then she laid down the flageolet, after she had charmed therewith all who were present, and took up the lute, whereof saith the poet:

How many a tender branch a lute for singing-girl becomes, Whereto the hearts of erudite and generous are fain!
She sweeps it with her finger-tips, of her vivacity Tormenting it, what while she binds it fast with many a chain.

Then she turned its pegs and tuned its strings and laying it in her lap, bent over it as the mother bends over her child; and it seemed as it were of her and her lute that the poet spoke in the following verses:

Featly she discourseth on the Persian string, Sense in him, who senseless was, awakening.
Yea, she tells that passion deadly is and plays Havoc with the Muslims' wit and reasoning.
Lo, a maid, by Allah, in whose hand, in lieu Of a mouth-possessor, speaks a painted thing.
As a skilled physician stops the flux of blood, With the lute she staunches passion's running spring.

Then she preluded in fourteen different modes and sang an entire piece to the lute, so as to confound the lookers-on and delight her hearers. After which she recited this couplet:

Blest is the coming unto thee: New joys therein for ever be.
Delights sans cease to it pertain And never-ending jubilee.

Night dccexl.

Then she rose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner of pleasing arts, till the lady Zubeideh came near to fall in love with her and said in herself, 'Verily, my cousin Er Reshid is not to blame for loving her!' Then Cout el Culoub kissed the earth before Zubeideh and sat down, whereupon they set food before her. Then they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof; and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backward and she sank on the ground, asleep. With this, Zubeideh said to her women, 'Carry her up to one of the chambers, till I call for her.' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then she bade one of her eunuchs fashion her a chest and commanded to make the semblance of a tomb and to spread the report that Cout el Culoub had choked and died,

warning her attendants that she would strike off the head of whoever should say, 'She is alive.'

Presently, the Khalif returned from the chase, and his first enquiry was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom Zubeideh had charged to say she was dead, if the Khalif should ask for her, and kissing the ground before him, said, 'May thy head live, O my lord! Know that Cout el Culoub choked in eating and is dead.' Whereupon, 'May God never gladden thee with good news, O wicked slave!' cried Er Reshid, and entered the palace, where he heard of her death from every one and said, 'Where is her tomb?' So they brought him to the burial-place and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, 'This is it.' When he saw it, he cried out and wept and embraced it, reciting the following verses:

By Allah, O tomb, have her beauties ceased and disappeared from sight
And is the countenance changed and wan, that shone so wonder-bright?
O tomb, O tomb, thou art neither heaven nor garden, verily: How comes it then that swaying branch and moon in thee unite?

He abode awhile by the tomb, weeping sore for her, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress.

Meanwhile, Zubeideh, seeing that her plot had succeeded, sent for the damsel and locking her up in the chest, said to the eunuch, 'Make shift to sell this chest and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked; then give alms with the price.' So he took it and went forth, to do her bidding.

To return to Khelifeh the fisherman. When the morning arose and lighted [all things] with its radiance, he said to himself, 'I cannot do better to-day than visit the eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the palace of the Khalifate.' So he went forth

of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found eunuchs and slaves and servants, black and white, sitting and standing, and looking at them, saw, seated amongst them, the eunuch who had bought the fish of him, with the others waiting on him. Presently, one of the servants called out to him; whereupon the eunuch turned to see who he was and knew him for the fisherman.

When Khelifeh was ware that he saw him and recognized him, he said to him, 'I have not failed [of my appointment], O Rosy-cheeks![1] On this wise are men of their word.' 'By Allah, thou art right, O fisherman,' replied the eunuch, laughing, and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat; but at that moment there arose a great clamour. So he raised his head to see what was to do and finding that it was the Vizier Jaafar the Barmecide coming forth from the Khalif's presence, rose and went before him, and they walked about, conversing, a long while. Khelifeh waited awhile; then, growing weary of standing and finding that the eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, 'O my lord Rosy-cheeks, [give me my due and] let me go!'

The eunuch saw him, but was ashamed to answer him, because of the vizier's presence; so he went on talking with Jaafer and took no notice of the fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'O tardy paymaster! May God put to shame all curmudgeons and all who take people's goods and baffle them! I appeal to thee, O my lord

[1] An ironical nickname, bestowed by Khelifeh on the eunuch, in allusion to his black colour, much after the same fashion as in America and the West Indies, where it is common to call a particularly black negro "Snowball."

Paunch o' bran,[1] to give me my due and let me go!' The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Jaafer; and the latter saw the fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he said; so he said to Sendel, misliking his behaviour, 'O eunuch, what would yonder poor fellow with thee?' 'Dost thou not know him, O my lord the vizier?' asked Sendel; and Jaafer answered, 'By Allah, I know him not! How should I know a man I have never seen before?' 'O my lord,' rejoined the eunuch, 'this is the fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks of the Tigris. I came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Commander of the Faithful, empty-handed, when all the rest had some. Presently I espied the fisherman standing in mid-stream, calling on God, with four fish in his hands, and said to him, "Give me what thou hast there and take their price." So he gave me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, to give him somewhat, but found it empty and said, "Come to me in the palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to succour thy poverty." Accordingly, he came to me to-day and I was putting my hand to my pouch, to give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting; and this is how he comes to be standing here.'

Night dccxli. When the vizier heard this, he smiled and said, 'O

[1] It is not on record, as might be supposed from the speech of Khelifeh, that Jaafer was stout or (to borrow a Rabelaisian word) *ventripotent:* on the contrary, he appears to have been a man of unusual elegance and distinction, and it would seem, therefore, that the fisherman (who is represented as a blundering fool, without perception or knowledge to temper his ignorant assurance) bestowed on him the nickname of "Paunch o' bran" at random, after the manner of his class in every age and country.

eunuch, how is it that this fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou fulfillest not his desire? Dost thou not know him, O chief of the eunuchs?' 'No,' answered Sendel, and Jaafer said, 'This is the master and partner of the Commander of the Faithful, and our lord the Khalif hath arisen this morning, strait of breast and heavy of heart, nor is there aught will lighten his breast like this fisherman. So let him not go, till I take the Khalif's pleasure concerning him and bring him before him; peradventure God will relieve him of his oppression and distract him from the loss of Cout el Culoub, by means of the fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to better himself; and thou wilt be the cause of this.' 'O my lord,' replied Sendel, 'do as thou wilt, and may God the Most High long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow God perpetuate and prosper it, root and branch!'

Then the vizier went in to the Khalif and Sendel ordered the attendants not to leave the fisherman; whereupon, 'How goodly is thy bounty, O Rosy-cheeks!' cried Khelifeh. 'The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for arrears!' When Jaafer came in to the presence of the Khalif, he found him sitting with his head bowed down, sick at heart and absorbed in melancholy thought, chanting the verses of the poet:

My censors bid me be consoled for her: what power, I pray, Over my heart have I, if it my hest will not obey?
How from a tender maiden's love shall one endure? In me My love's estrangement to support I find no patience aye.
I can't forget her nor the time the cup 'twixt us went round And for her glances' wine, o'er me did drunkenness hold sway.

Quoth Jaafer, 'Peace be upon thee, O Commander of

the Faithful and Defender of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the prince of Apostles, God bless him and save him and all his family!' The Khalif raised his head and answered, 'And on thee be peace and the mercy of God and His blessings!' Quoth Jaafer; 'If it like the Commander of the Faithful, his servant will speak without restraint.' 'And when was restraint put upon thee in speech,' asked the Khalif, 'and thou the Prince of Viziers? Say what thou wilt.' 'O my lord,' answered Jaafer, 'when I went out from before thee, intending for my house, I saw thy master and teacher and partner, Khelifeh the fisherman, standing at the door, and he was aggrieved at thee and complaining of thee and saying, "Glory be to God! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but returned not: and this is not the way a partner should use his partner nor an apprentice his master." So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good; and if not, tell him, that he may take another to partner.'

When the Khalif heard this, he smiled and his heart was lightened and he said, 'My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the fisherman standeth at the door?' 'By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafar, 'he standeth at the door.' Quoth the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, by Allah, I will do my best to give him his due! If God send him, at my hands, misery, he shall have it; and if fortune, he shall have it." Then he took a piece of paper and cutting it in pieces, said to the Vizier, 'O Jaafer, write down twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least employ to the Khalifate, also twenty kinds of punishment from the lightest beating to death.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer and did as he was bidden.

Then said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, I mean to summon the fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I; and I swear, by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hemzeh[1] and Akil,[2] that whatsoever is written in the paper he shall choose, I will give it to him; though it be the Khalifate, I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him; and on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me.' When Jaafer heard this, he said in himself, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction, and I shall be the cause. But the Khalif hath sworn; so there is nothing for it but to bring him in, and nought will happen save what God willeth.' So he went out to Khelifeh and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the Khalif, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself, 'What a fool I was to come after yonder ill-omened slave, Rosy-cheeks, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!'

Jaafer fared on with him, with guards before and behind him, whilst he said, 'Doth not arrest suffice, but these fellows must go before and behind me, to prevent my making off?' till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the vizier said to him, 'Harkye, fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!' Then he raised the great curtain and Khelifeh's eyes fell on the Khalif, who was seated on his couch, with the grandees of the realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said, 'Welcome to thee, O

[1] Uncle of the Prophet. [2] First cousin of the Prophet.

piper! It was not well done of thee to make thyself a fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting guarding the fish, and never return! For, before I was aware, there came up slaves, on beasts of all manner colours, and snatched away the fish from me; and this was all of thy fault; for, hadst thou returned presently with the frails, we had sold a hundred dinars' worth of fish. And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?'

The Khalif smiled and raising a corner of the curtain, said to the fisherman, 'Come hither and take one of these papers.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and now I find thee an astrologer: but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he is.' But Jaafer said, 'Do as the Commander of the Faithful bids thee and take the paper at once, without prating.' So he came forward, saying, 'God forbid that this piper should ever again be my journeyman and fish with me!' Then he put out his hand and taking a paper, handed it to the Khalif, saying, 'O piper, what hath come up for me therein. Hide nought thereof.' Er Reshid gave the paper to Jaafer and said to him, 'Read what is therein.' So he looked at it and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' '[God grant thou hast] good news, O Jaafer!' said the Khalif. 'What seest thou therein?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the vizier, 'there appeareth on the paper, "Let the fisherman receive a hundred blows with a stick."'

Night dccclii.

So the Khalif commanded to beat the fisherman and they gave him a hundred blows with a stick; after which he rose, saying, 'Confound this play, O Bran-belly! Are imprisonment and beating part of the game?' Then said Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, this poor wretch is come to the river, and how shall he go away

thirsting? We hope of the charity of the Commander of the Faithful that he may have leave to take another paper, so haply he may happen upon somewhat wherewithal he may succour his poverty.' 'By Allah, O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'if he take another paper and "death" be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the cause.' 'If he die,' answered Jaafer, 'he will be at rest.' But Khelifeh said to him, 'May God never gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that you seek to kill me?' Quoth Jaafer, 'Take a paper and crave the blessing of God the Most High!'

So he put out his hand and taking a paper, gave it to Jaafer, who read it and was silent. 'Why art thou silent, O son of Yehya?' asked the Khalif. And he answered, 'O Commander of the Faithful, there is written on this paper, "The fisherman shall not be given aught."' Then said the Khalif, 'Bid him depart our presence, for there is no good fortune appointed to him from us.' 'By thy pious forefathers,' quoth Jaafer, 'let him take a third paper; it may be it will bring him good fortune.' 'Let him take one, then, and no more,' replied the Khalif. So he put out his hand and took a third paper, and behold, therein was written, 'Let the fisherman receive one dinar.' Quoth Jaafer to him, 'I sought good fortune for thee, but God willed to thee nought but this dinar.' And Khelifeh answered, 'Verily, a dinar for every hundred stripes were rare good luck, may God not send thy body health!'

The Khalif laughed at him and Jaafer took him by the hand and led him out. When he reached the door, Sendel the eunuch saw him and said to him, 'Hither, O fisherman! Give us largesse of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee, whilst jesting with thee.' 'By Allah, O Rosy-cheeks,' replied

Khelifeh, 'thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, blackskin? Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of a hundred blows and gotten one dinar, and thou art welcome to it.' So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears running down his cheeks. When the eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken truth and called to the attendants to fetch him back: so they brought him back and Sendel, putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied a hundred dinars into the fisherman's hand, saying, 'Take this in payment of thy fish and go thy ways.'

So Khelifeh took the hundred dinars and the Khalif's one dinar and went his way, rejoicing, and forgot the beating. Now, as God willed it for the accomplishment of that which He had decreed, he passed by the slave-girls' market and seeing there a great crowd of people assembled in a ring, said to himself, 'What is this crowd?' So he elbowed his way through the merchants and others, who said, 'Make way for Captain Cullion!' and let him pass. Then he looked and saw a chest, with an eunuch seated thereon, and behind it an old man standing up and crying, 'O merchants, O men of wealth, who will venture his money for this chest [of] unknown [content,] from the palace of the Lady Zubeideh bint el Casim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? What shall I say for you, may God bless you?'

'By Allah,' quoth one of the merchants, 'this is a risk! But I will say one word and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars.' Quoth another, 'Fifty,' and they went on bidding, one against the other, till the price reached a hundred dinars. Then said the crier, 'O merchants, will any of you bid more?' And Khelifeh said, 'Be it mine for a hundred dinars and one.' The merchants thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, 'O

eunuch, sell it to Khelifeh for a hundred and one dinars!' Quoth the eunuch, 'By Allah, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O fisherman, God bless thee in it, and hand over the money.' So Khelifeh pulled out the money and gave it to the eunuch, who delivered him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot; after which he returned to the palace and told Zubeideh what he had done, whereat she rejoiced.

Meanwhile the fisherman shouldered the chest, but could not carry it [so,] of the excess of its weight; so he lifted it on to his head and carried it thus to the place where he lived. Here he set it down and being weary, sat awhile, considering what had befallen him and saying in himself, 'Would I knew what is in this chest!' Then he opened the door of his lodging and tugged at the chest, till he got it into his chamber; after which he strove to open it, but without success. Quoth he, 'What possessed me to buy this chest? There is nothing for it but to break it open and see what is therein.' So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said in himself, 'I will leave it till to-morrow.'

Then he would have lain down to sleep, but could find no room; for the chest filled the whole chamber. So he climbed up on to it and lay down to sleep; but, when he had lain awhile, he felt something stir in the chest, whereat he was affrighted and sleep forsook him and his reason fled. So he arose and said, 'Meseems there are Jinn in the chest. Praised be God who hindered me from opening it! For, had I done so, they had come upon me in the dark and made an end of me, and no good would have betided me from them.' Then he lay down again, when, behold, the chest moved a second time, more than before; whereupon he sprang up and said, 'There it is again: but this is terrible!' And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not find it and

Night dccccxliii.

had no money to buy another. So he went forth and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!'

Now the most part of the folk were asleep; but they awoke at his crying and said, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'Bring me a lamp,' answered he; 'for the Jinn are upon me.' They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, with which he returned to his chamber. Then he beat upon the lock of the chest with a stone and broke it and opening it, saw a damsel like a houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with henbane, but at that moment she threw up the henbane and awoke. Then she opened her eyes and feeling herself cramped, moved: whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'By Allah, O my lady, whence art thou?' Quoth she, 'Bring me Jessamine and Narcissus.'[1] And Khelifeh answered, 'There is nought here but henna-flowers.' Thereupon she came to herself and looking at Khelifeh, said to him, 'What art thou and where am I?' He answered, 'Thou art in my lodging.' Quoth she, 'Am I not in the palace of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid?' 'O madwoman,' replied he, 'what manner of thing is Er Reshid? Thou art nought but my slave-girl: I bought thee this very day for a hundred dinars and one and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this chest.'

When she heard this, she said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Khelifeh,' answered he. 'How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know it to have been otherwise?' She laughed and said, 'Spare me this talk. Hast thou anything to eat?' 'No, by Allah,' answered he, 'nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days and am now in want of a morsel.' 'Hast thou no money?' asked she; and he said, 'God keep this chest that hath beggared me! I gave all I had for it and

[1] Names of her slave-girls.

am become bankrupt.' She laughed at him and said, 'Go and seek of thy neighbours somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry.' So he went forth and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!'

Now they were asleep; but they awoke and said, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'O my neighbours,' answered he, 'I am hungry and have nothing to eat.' So one came down to him with a cake of bread and another with broken meats and a third with a piece of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber, and so on till his lap was full and he returned to his chamber and laid the whole before her, saying, 'Eat.' But she laughed at him, saying, 'How can I eat of this, when I have not a drop of water to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die.' Quoth he, 'I will fill thee this pitcher.' So he took the pitcher and going forth, stood in the midst of the street and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!' Quoth they, 'What a pest thou art to-night, O Khelifeh!' And he said, 'Ye gave me food and I ate; but now I am athirst; so give me to drink.'

So one came down to him with a jug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet; and he filled his pitcher and carrying it back to the damsel, said to her, 'O my lady, thou lackest nothing now.' 'True,' answered she; 'I want nothing more at present.' Quoth he, 'Speak to me and tell me thy story.' And she said, 'Harkye! If thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Cout el Culoub, the Khalif's slave-girl, and the lady Zubeideh was jealous of me; so she drugged me and put me in this chest. Praised be God for that the matter hath come to no worse issue! But this befell me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the Khalif Er Reshid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Is not the Khalif he in whose palace I was imprisoned?' 'Yes,' answered

she; and he said, 'By Allah, I never saw a stingier than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me a hundred blows with a stick yesterday and one poor dinar, for all I taught him to fish and made him my partner; but he played me false.' 'Leave this unseemly talk,' replied she, 'and open thine eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully, whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt attain thy desire.'

When he heard her words, it was as if he had been asleep and awoke; and God removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck, and he answered, 'On my head and eyes!' Then said he to her, 'Sleep, in the name of God.' So she lay down and fell asleep, and he slept at a distance from her, till the morning, when she sought of him inkhorn and paper and wrote to Ibn el Kirnas, acquainting him with her case and how she was with Khelifeh the fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the letter, saying, 'Go to the jewel-market and enquire for the shop of Ibn el Kirnas the jeweller and give him this letter and speak not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khelifeh and going to the market, enquired for the shop of Ibn el Kirnas. They directed him thither and he saluted the merchant, who returned his greeting with an air of disdain and said to him, 'What dost thou want?'

So he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the fisherman a beggar, who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his servants, 'Give him half a dirhem.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'I want no alms; read the letter.' So Ibn el Kirnas read the letter and no sooner knew its import than he rose and kissing it, laid it on his head and said to Khelifeh, 'O my brother, where is thy house?' 'What wantest thou with my house?' asked Khalifeh. 'Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave-girl?' 'Not so,' answered Ibn el Kirnas; 'on the contrary, I

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will buy somewhat whereof you may eat, thou and she.' So he said, 'My house is in such a quarter.' And the merchant rejoined, 'Thou hast done well. May God not give thee health, O unlucky one!'[1]

Then he called two of his slaves and said to them, 'Carry this man to the shop of Muhsin the money-changer and bid him give him a thousand dinars and bring him back to me in haste.' So they carried him to the money-changer, who gave him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dapple mule, with slaves and servants about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweller to Khelifeh, 'In the name of God, mount this mule.' 'Nay,' replied he; 'I fear lest she throw me.' 'By Allah,' said Ibn el Kirnas, 'but thou must mount!' So he came up and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out; whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him: but he rose and said, 'Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great ass?' Ibn el Kirnas left him in the market and repairing to the Khalif, told him of the damsel; after which he returned and removed her to his own house.

Meanwhile, Khelifeh went home to look after the damsel and found the people of the quarter assembled together, saying, 'Verily, Khelifeh is to-day altogether undone! Where can he have gotten this damsel?' Quoth one of them, 'He is a mad pimp: belike he found her by the way, drunk, and carried her to his own house, and his absence shows that he knows his crime.' As they were talking, up came Khelifeh, and they said to him, 'What a plight is thine, O unhappy wretch! Knowest thou not what is come to thee?' 'No, by Allah!' answered he. And they said, 'But now there came slaves and took

[1] Ironical.

away thy slave-girl, whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not.' 'And how came they to take my slave-girl?' asked Khelifeh. And one said, 'Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him.' But he paid no heed to them and returned, running, to the shop of Ibn el Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him, 'By Allah, it was a scurvy trick of thee to amuse me and send thy servants meanwhile to take my slave-girl!' 'O madman,' replied the jeweller, 'hold thy peace and come with me.'

So he took him and carried him into a handsome house, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave-girls like moons round her. Ibn el Kirnas kissed the ground before her and she said, 'What hast thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he had?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I gave him a thousand dinars,' and related to her Khelifeh's history from first to last, at which she laughed and said, 'Blame him not; for he is but a common man. These other thousand dinars are a present from me to him and God willing, he shall get of the Khalif what shall enrich him.'

As they were talking, there came an eunuch from the Khalif, in quest of Cout el Culoub, for, when he knew that she was in Ibn el Kirnas's house, he could not restrain his impatience, but sent forthwith to fetch her. So she repaired to the palace, taking Khelifeh with her, and going in to the presence, kissed the ground before the Khalif, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her. 'He is a man named Khelifeh the fisherman,' answered she, 'and standeth presently at the door. He tells me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the Khalif in fishing.'

'Is he at the door?' asked Er Reshid; and she answered, 'Yes.'

So the Khalif sent for him and he kissed the ground before him and wished him continuance of glory and prosperity. The Khalif marvelled at him and laughed at him and said to him, 'O fisherman, wast thou in very earnest my partner yesterday?'[1] Khelifeh took his meaning and summoning courage, replied, 'By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thine uncle's son,[2] I know her not in anywise and have had no commerce with her save by way of looking and talking!' Then he told him all that had befallen him, since he last saw him, whereat the Khalif laughed and his breast dilated and he said to Khelifeh, 'Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou that bringest folk their own!' But he was silent; so the Khalif ordered him fifty thousand dinars and a sumptuous dress of honour from the royal wardrobe and a mule, and gave him black slaves to wait on him, so that he became as he were one of the kings of the time.

The Khalif was rejoiced at the recovery of his favourite and knew that this was of the doing of his wife Zubeideh, wherefore he was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great while, visiting her not neither relenting to her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his anger and her face paled, that was wont to be rosy, till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful, making her excuses to him and confessing her offences, and ending with these verses: Night DCCCXLV.

I long once more thy sometime love and favour to regain, That therewithal I may assuage my sorrow and my pain.
Pity the transport of my love and passion, O my lords! Sure I have suffered at your hands enough of dole and bane.

[1] *i.e.* in Cout el Culoub. [2] *i.e.* Mohammed.

My patience all, belovéd mine, for your estrangement's spent: You've troubled all my life serene with rigour and disdain.
'Tis life to me, if you fulfil the vows you swore to me, And very death, if you to me fulfilment will not deign.
Grant that I've sinned, be bountiful; forgive me, for, by God, How sweet the loved one is, when he forgives and takes again!

When the Khalif read her letter and saw that she acknowledged her offence and sent to make her excuses to him therefor, he said, 'Verily, God pardoneth all offences; for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'[1] And he returned her an answer, containing [assurance of] satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly.

As for Khelifeh, the Khalif assigned him a monthly allowance of fifty dinars, by way of recompense, and took him into his especial favour. Then he kissed the earth before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the eunuch Sendel saw him and knowing him, said to him, 'O fisherman, how camest thou by all this?' So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sendel rejoiced, in that he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, 'Wilt thou not give me largesse of this wealth that is become thine?' So Khelifeh put his hand to his pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the eunuch, who said, 'Keep thy money and God bless thee in it!' and marvelled at his generosity and at the liberality of his soul, for all his [late] poverty.

Then he mounted his mule and rode, with the slaves' hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging, whilst the folk stared at him and marvelled at that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted,

[1] *Koran* xxxix. 54.

they accosted him and enquired the cause of his change of fortune, and he told them all that had happened to him, from first to last. Then he bought a fine house and laid out much money thereon, till it was perfect in all respects. And he took up his abode therein and was wont to recite the following verses thereon:

Behold a house that's like the Dwelling of Delight![1] Its aspect heals the sick and banishes despite.
Its sojourn for the great and wise appointed is, And fortune fair therein abideth day and night.

As soon as he was settled in his house, he sought in marriage a handsome girl, daughter of one of the chief men of the city, and went in to her and led a life of all delight and happiness and prosperity. So, when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to God (blessed and glorified be He!) for the abounding wealth He had bestowed on him and for His continual favours, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful and chanting the words of the poet:

To Thee the praise, O Thou whose grace doth no remission know, Whose bounties all-embracing are and all things overflow!
To Thee be praise from me! Accept my homage, for indeed, I'm mindful of thy bounties all and all to Thee I owe.
Thou hast indeed with benefits and favours and largesse O'erwhelmed me; so I turn to Thee, my gratitude to show.
Out of the ocean of Thy grace and goodness all men drink And Thou dost succour them in time of trouble and of woe.
O Thou that pardonest my sins, Thou, O my Lord, on us Heap'st favours, crowning aye with new those that did them forego,
Still for the sake of him who came, in mercy to mankind, A prophet, noble, true of speech and clean and pure as snow;

[1] Name of one of the seven stages of the Muslim heaven.

God's blessing and His peace, so long as men his tomb do seek, On him and on his helpers be and lineage, high and low!
And eke on his companions all, th' illustrious, the wise, The noble, whilst within the brake the bird doth singing go!

He continued to pay frequent visits to the Khalif, with whom he found acceptance and who ceased not to overwhelm him with favours and bounty: and he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honour and happiness and prosperity and of all the delights and comforts of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence, the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die!

APPENDIX.

NOTE.

The Breslau version of the story of Khelifeh differs so widely from the foregoing, in which I have, as usual, followed Sir William Macnaghten's Edition of the Arabic Text, that I have thought it well to translate it *en bloc* by way of supplement, instead of contenting myself, as in cases where the Breslau Edition presents but occasional variations from my standard text, with amending and correcting the latter by its light.

KHELIF THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD.

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, a fisherman, by name Khelif, a man of many words and little luck. One day, as he sat in his lodging, he bethought himself and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is my offence in the sight of my Lord and [the cause of] the blackness of my fortune and my little luck among the fishermen, albeit I dare say there is not in the city of Baghdad a fisherman like myself.' Now he lodged in a ruined place called a khan, to wit, an inn, without a door, and when he went forth to fish, he would shoulder the net, without basket or knife,[1] and the folk would look at him and say to him, 'O Khelif, why dost thou not take with thee a basket, to hold the fish thou catchest?' Quoth he, 'Even as it went forth empty, so would it come back, for I never take aught.'

One night he arose, in the darkness before dawn, and taking his net on his shoulder, raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God, O Thou who subjectedst the sea to Moses son of Amran, provide Thou me, for Thou art the best of providers!' Then he [went down to the Tigris and] spreading his net, cast it into the river and waited till it had settled down, when he pulled it in and drawing it ashore, found in it a dead dog. So he freed the net from the carcase and threw it away, saying, 'O morning of

[1] For scraping and cleaning the fish.

ill luck! What a sorry handsel is this dead dog, after I had rejoiced in its weight!'[1] Then he mended the rents in the net, saying, 'Needs must there be fish in plenty, after this carrion, attracted by the smell,' and made a second cast.

After awhile, he drew up and found in the net a dead camel, that had caught in the meshes and rent them right and left. When he saw his net in this plight, he wept and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is my offence and [the reason of] the blackness of my fortune and the scantiness of my luck, of all folk, so that I catch neither carplet nor barbel, that I may broil in the sand and eat, for all I dare say there is not a fisherman like me in the city of Baghdad.'

Then he pronounced the name of God and casting his net a third time, drew it ashore and found in it a scurvy, one-eyed, mangy, lame ape, with a rod of ivory in his hand. When he saw this, he said, 'This is indeed a blessed handsel! What art thou, O ape?' 'Dost thou not know me?' answered the ape, and Khelif said, 'No, by Allah, I have no knowledge of thee!' Quoth the ape, 'I am thine ape;' and Khelif said, 'What use is there in thee, O my ape?' 'Every day,' replied the ape, 'I give thee good-morrow, so God the Most High may not vouchsafe thee provision.'

Quoth Khelif, 'Thou failest not [of this], O one-eye of ill-omen! May God not bless thee! Needs must I put out thy sound eye and break thy sound leg, so thou mayst become a blind cripple and I be quit of thee. But what is the use of that rod thou hast in thy hand?' 'O Khelif,' answered the ape, 'I scare the fish therewith, so they may not enter thy net.' 'Is it so?' rejoined Khelif. 'Then

[1] Which led him to suppose that the net was full of fish.

this very day will I appoint to thee a grievous punishment and devise thee all manner torments and strip thy flesh from thy bones and be at rest from thee, sorry bargain that thou art!'

So saying, he unwound from his middle a piece of rope and binding him to a tree by his side, said to him, 'Harkye, O dog of an ape! I mean to cast the net again and if aught come up therein, well and good; but, if it come up empty, I will make an end of thee, by dint of beating, and be quit of thee.' So he cast the net and drawing it ashore, found in it another ape and said, 'Glory be to God! I was wont to pull nought but fish out of this Tigris, but now it yields nothing but apes.'

Then he looked at the second ape and saw him round-faced and fair of fashion, with pendants of gold in his ears and a blue waistcloth about his middle, and he was like unto a lighted flambeau. So he said to him, 'What art thou, thou also, O ape?' And he answered, saying, 'O Khelif, I am the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew, the Khalif's money-changer. Every day, I give him good-morrow, and he makes a profit of ten dinars.' 'By Allah,' cried the fisherman, 'thou art a fine ape, not like this unlucky wretch of mine!'

So saying, he took a stick and came down upon the one-eyed ape's flanks, till he broke his ribs and he jumped up and down. And the other ape answered him, saying, 'O Khelif, what will it profit thee to beat him, though thou belabour him till he die?' Quoth Khelif, 'How shall I do? Shall I let him go, that he may scare me the fish with his hang-dog favour and give me good-morrow and good-even every day, so God may not provide me? Nay, I will kill him and be quit of him and thou shalt give me good-morrow [in his stead]; so shall I gain ten dinars a day.'

'I will tell thee a better way than that,' answered the

second ape, 'and if thou hearken to me, thou shalt be at rest and I will become thine ape in his stead.' 'And what dost thou counsel me?' asked the fisherman; and the ape said, 'Cast thy net and thou shalt bring up a noble fish, never saw any its like, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with it.' 'Harkye, thou also!' replied Khelif. 'If I throw my net and there come up therein a third ape, I will cut the three of you into six pieces.' And the second ape answered, 'So be it, O Khelif. I agree to this condition.'

Then Khelif took the net and cast it and drew it up, when behold in it a fine young carp, with a round head, as it were a milking-pail, which when he saw, his reason fled for joy and he said, 'Glory be to God! What is this noble creature? Were yonder apes in the river, I had not brought up this fish.' Quoth the second ape, 'Harkye, Khelif! If thou give ear to my rede, it will bring thee good fortune.' 'May God curse him who would gainsay thee henceforth!' replied the fisherman, and the ape said, 'O Khelif, take some grass and lay the fish thereon in the basket and cover it with more grass and take somewhat of basil from the greengrocer's and set it in the fish's mouth. Cover it with a napkin and get thee to the bazaar of Baghdad. Whoever bespeaks thee of selling it, sell it not [but fare on] till thou come to the market of the jewellers and money-changers.

Count five shops on the right-hand side and the sixth shop is that of Aboussaadat the Jew, the Khalif's money-changer. When thou standest before him, he will say to thee, "What seekest thou?" And do thou answer, "I am a fisherman. I cast my net in thy name and took this noble carp, which I have brought thee as a present." If he give thee aught of money, take it not, be it little or much, for it will put to nought that which thou wouldst do, but say to him, "I want of thee but one word, that

thou say to me, 'I sell thee my ape for thine ape and my luck for thy luck.'" If he say this, give him the fish and I shall become thine ape and this mangy, one-eyed cripple will be his ape.'

'Good, O ape,' replied Khelif, [and shouldering his basket, made for Baghdad], nor did he cease going and observing that which the ape had said to him, till he came to the Jew's shop and saw him seated, with slaves and servants about him, commanding and forbidding and giving and taking. So he said to him, 'O Sultan of the Jews, I am a fisherman and went forth to-day to the Tigris and cast my net in thy name, saying, "This is for the luck of Aboussaadat;" and there came up to me this carp, which I have brought thee by way of present.'

So saying, he lifted the grass and discovered the fish to the Jew, who marvelled at its fashion and said, 'Extolled be the perfection of the Most Excellent Creator!' Then he gave the fisherman a dinar, but he refused it and he gave him two. This also he refused and the Jew went on adding to his offer, till he made it ten dinars; but he still refused and Aboussaadat said to him, 'By Allah, thou art covetous, O Muslim! Tell me what thou wouldst have.' Quoth Khelif, 'I want of thee but a single word.'

When the Jew heard this, he changed colour and said, 'Wouldst thou have me forsake my faith? Go thy ways.' But Khelif said to him, 'By Allah, O Jew, it is nought to me if thou become a Muslim or a Christian!' 'Then what wouldst thou have me say?' asked the Jew, and the fisherman answered, 'Say, "I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck."' The Jew laughed, deeming him little of wit, and said by way of jest, 'I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck. Bear

[1] Thinking that by requiring of him "a single word," he meant him to say, "I testify that there is no god, etc.," and so become a Muslim.

witness against him, [O merchants!] By Allah, O unhappy wretch, thou art debarred [from making any further claim on me]!'

So Khelif turned back, blaming himself and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Alas, that I had taken the gold!' and fared on till he came to the Tigris, but found not the two apes, whereupon he wept and buffeted his face and strewed dust on his head, saying, 'But that the second ape deluded me and put a cheat on me, the one-eyed ape had not made his escape.' And he gave not over weeping and crying out, till heat and hunger grew sore on him, when he took the net, saying, 'Come, let us make a cast, trusting in the blessing of God; belike I may catch a barbel or a carplet, that I may broil and eat.'

So he cast the net [and waiting] till it had settled down, drew it ashore and found it full of fish, whereat he rejoiced and busied himself with killing the fish and casting them on the earth. Presently, up came a woman seeking fish and crying out and saying, 'There is no fish in the town.' She caught sight of Khelif and said to him, 'Wilt thou sell this fish, master?' 'I am going to turn it into clothes,' answered Khelif; 'it is all for sale, even to my beard. Take what thou wilt.' So she gave him a dinar and he filled her a basket.

Then she went away and up came another servant, seeking a dinar's worth of fish; nor did the folk leave coming till it was the hour of afternoon prayer and Khelif had sold ten dinars' worth of fish. Then, being faint with hunger, he shouldered his net and repairing to the market, bought himself a woollen gown, a skull-cup with a plaited border and a yellow turban for a dinar, receiving two dirhems change, with which he bought fried cheese and a fat sheep's tail and honey and setting them in the oilman's platter, ate till he was full.

Then he betook himself to his lodging, clad in the gown and the yellow turban and with the nine dinars in his mouth, rejoicing in what he had never in his life seen. He entered and lay down, but could not sleep for the trouble of his spirits and abode playing with the money half the night. Then said he in himself, 'Belike, the Khalif may hear that I have gold and say to Jaafer, "Go to Khelif the fisherman and borrow us some money of him." If I give it him, it will be no light matter to me, and if I give it not, he will torment me; but torture is easier to me than the giving up of the cash. However, I will arise and make trial of myself, if I have a skin proof against beating or not.'

So he put off his clothes and taking a sailor's plaited whip, of a hundred and sixty strands, fell a-beating himself, till his sides and body were all bloody, crying out at every stroke he dealt himself and saying, '[Help,] O Muslims! I am a poor man! O Muslims, I am a poor man! O Muslims, whence should I have gold, whence should I have money?' till the neighbours, who dwelt with him in that place, hearing him [roaring out thus and] saying, 'Go to men of wealth and take of them,' doubted not but that thieves were torturing him, to get money from him, and that he was crying out for succour.

So they flocked to him, arms in hand, and finding the door of his lodging locked and hearing him roaring out for help, thought that the thieves had come down upon him from the roof; so they fell upon the door and burst it open. Then they entered and found him naked and bare-headed, with body dripping blood, and altogether in a piteous plight; so they said to him, 'What is this case in which we find thee? Hast thou taken leave of thy wits and hath madness betided thee this night?' And he answered them, saying, 'Nay; but I have gold with me and I feared lest the Khalif send to borrow of me and it

were grievous to me to give him aught; yet, if I gave not to him, he would assuredly put me to the torture; wherefore I arose to see if my skin were beating-proof or not.'

When they heard this, they said to him, 'May God not assain thy body, unlucky madman that thou art! Of a surety thou art fallen mad to-night! Lie down [and go to sleep], may God not bless thee! How many thousand dinars hast thou, that the Khalif should come and borrow of thee?' Quoth he, 'By Allah, I have nought but nine dinars.' And they all said, 'By Allah, he is indeed rich.'

Then they left him, marvelling at his lack of wit, and he took his money and wrapped it in a rag, saying in himself, 'Where shall I hide this gold? If I bury it, they will take it, and if I put it out on deposit, they will deny [having received] it, and if I carry it on my head,[1] they will snatch it, and if I tie it to my sleeve, they will cut it away.' Presently, he espied a little pocket in the breast [of the gown] and said, 'By Allah, this is fine! It is under my gullet and hard by my mouth; so, if any put out his hand to take it, I can come down on it with my mouth and hide it in my throttle.' So he put the rag containing the gold in the pocket [and lay down], but slept not that night for inquietude and care and restlessness.

On the morrow, he went forth of his lodging, on fishing intent, and betaking himself to the river, went down into the water, up to his knees. Then he cast the net and shook it mightily; whereupon the purse [flew out of his pocket] and fell into the stream. So he tore off gown and turban and plunged in after it, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Nor did he give over diving, till the day was half spent, but found not the purse.

Now one saw him diving and plunging and his gown

[1] *i.e.* in the folds of his turban, a common substitute for a purse with the lower classes in the East.

and turban lying in the sun at a distance from him, with no one by them; so he watched him, till he dived again, when he pounced down upon the clothes and made off with them. Presently, Khelif came ashore and missing his gown and turban, was mightily chagrined for their loss and ascended a high mound, to look for some passer-by, of whom he might enquire [concerning them], but found none.

Now the Khalif [Haroun er Reshid] had gone a-hunting that day and returning at the season of the [noontide] heat, was oppressed thereby and thirsted; so he looked from afar off [seeking water] and seeing a naked man standing on the mound aforesaid, said to Jaafer, 'Seest thou what I see?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the Vizier; 'I see a man standing on a knoll.' 'What is he?' asked Er Reshid, and Jaafer said, 'Belike he is the guardian of a cucumber-plot.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Belike he is a pious man;[1] I would fain go to him, alone, and desire him of his prayers; and abide ye in your stead.' So he went up to Khelif and saluting him, said to him, 'What art thou, O man?' Quoth the fisherman, 'Dost thou not know me? I am Khelif the fisherman.' And the Khalif said, '[What?] The fisherman with the woollen gown and the [yellow] turban?'[2]

When Khelif heard him name the clothes he had lost, he said in himself, 'This is he who took my gear: belike he did but jest with me.' So he came down from the knoll and said, 'Can I not take a noonday nap but thou must play me this trick? I saw thee take my clothes and knew that thou wast jesting with me.' At this, laughter got the better of the Khalif and he said, 'What clothes hast thou lost? I know nothing of that whereof thou speakest, O Khelif.'

[1] *i.e.* a naked dervish.

[2] Khelif seems to have been a well-known figure in Baghdad, being probably rendered conspicuous by his eccentricities.

'By God the Great,' cried Khelif, 'except thou bring me back the gear, I will break thy ribs with this staff!' For he still carried a quarterstaff. Quoth the Khalif, 'By Allah, I have not seen the things whereof thou speakest!' But Khelif said, 'I will go with thee and take note of thy dwelling-place and complain of thee to the chief of the police, so thou mayst not play me this trick again. By Allah, none took my gown and turban but thou, and except thou give them back to me forthright, I will throw thee off the back of that she-ass of thine and come down on thy pate with this staff, till thou canst not stir!'

So saying, he tugged at the mule's bridle, so that she reared up on her [hind] legs and the Khalif said in himself, 'What predicament is this I have fallen into with this madman?' Then he pulled off a gown he had on, worth a hundred dinars, and said to Khelif, 'Take this gown in lieu of thine own.' He took it and donning it, judged it too long; so he cut it short at the knees and winding the cut-off piece about his head, turban-wise, said to the Khalif, 'What art thou and what is thy craft? But [there needs no asking]: thou art none other than a trumpeter.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'What discovered to thee that I was a trumpeter by trade?' And Khelif answered, 'Thy big nostrils and small mouth.' 'Well done!' cried the Khalif. 'Yes, I am a trumpeter.'

Then said Khelif, 'If thou wilt hearken to me, I will teach thee the art of fishing: it will be better for thee than trumpeting and thou wilt eat lawfully [earned bread].' 'Teach it me,' replied Er Reshid, 'so I may see whether it will suit me or no.' And Khelif said, 'Come with me, O trumpeter.' So the Khalif followed him down to the river and took the net from him, whilst he taught him how to cast it. So he cast it [and drew it up], when, behold, it was heavy, and the fisherman said, 'O trumpeter, if the net be caught on one of the rocks, beware lest thou

tug hard at it, or it will break and by Allah, I will take thy she-ass in payment of it!'

The Khalif laughed at his words and drew up the net, little by little, till he brought it ashore and found it full of fish; which when Khelif saw, his reason fled for joy and he said, 'By Allah, O trumpeter, thy luck is good in fishing! Never in my life will I part with thee! But now I mean to send thee to the fish market, where do thou enquire for the shop of Ahmed the fisherman and say to him, "My master Khelif salutes thee and bids thee send him a pair of frails and a knife, so he may bring thee fish more than yesterday." Run and return to me in haste.'

'On my head, O master!' replied Er Reshid, laughing, and mounting his mule, rode back to Jaafer, who said to him, 'Tell me what hath befallen thee.' So the Khalif told him all that had passed between the fisherman and himself, from first to last, and added, 'I left him awaiting my return to him with the baskets and I am resolved that he shall teach me how to scale fish and clean them.' 'And I,' said Jaafer, 'will go with thee, to sweep up the scales and clean out the shop.' And the affair abode thus.

Then said Er Reshid to his vizier, 'O Jaafer, I desire of thee that thou despatch the young slaves, saying to them, "Whoso bringeth me a fish from before yonder fisherman, I will give him a dinar;" for I love to eat of my own catching.' Accordingly Jaafer repeated to the slaves what the Khalif had said and directed them where to find the fisherman. So they came down upon Khelif and snatched the fish from him; and when he saw them and noted their goodliness, he doubted not but that they were of the black-eyed boys of Paradise; so he caught up a couple of fish and plunging into the river, said, 'O my God, by the secret [virtue] of these fish, forgive me!'

Presently, up came the chief eunuch, in quest of fish,

but found none and seeing Khelif ducking and rising in the water, with the two fish in his hands, called out to him, saying, 'Harkye, Khelif, what hast thou there?' 'Two fish,' answered the fisherman, and the eunuch said, 'Give them to me and take a hundred dinars for them. When Khelif heard speak of a hundred dinars, he came up out of the water and said, 'Hand over the hundred dinars.' Quoth the eunuch, 'Follow me to the house of Er Reshid and take the money, O Khelif,' and taking the fish, made off to the Khalif's palace.

Meanwhile Khelif betook himself to Baghdad, clad as he was in the Khalif's gown, which barely reached to his knees, turbaned with the piece which he had cut off therefrom and girt about his middle with a rope, and passed through the midst of the city. The folk fell a-laughing and marvelling at him and saying, 'Whence hadst thou that gown?' And he went on, saying, 'Where is the house of Er *Reshad*?' Quoth they, 'Say, "The house of Er *Reshid*;"' and he answered, 'It is all one,' and fared on, till he came to the palace of the Khalifate.

Now the tailor, who had made the gown, was standing at the door, and when he saw it upon the fisherman, he said to him, 'How many years hast thou had [admission to the palace]?' 'Ever since I was a boy,' answered Khelif, and the tailor said, 'Whence hadst thou that gown, that thou hast ruined thus?' Quoth Khelif, 'I had it of my apprentice the trumpeter.' Then he went up to the door, where he found the chief eunuch sitting and seeing him exceeding black of hue, said to him, 'Wilt thou not bring the hundred dinars, O uncle Rosy-cheeks?'[1] Quoth he, 'On my head, O Khelif;' when, behold, out came Jaafer from the presence of the Khalif and seeing the fisherman talking with the eunuch and saying to him,

[1] See supra, note, p. 289.

'This is the reward of goodness, O Rosy-cheeks,' went in to Er Reshid and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, thy master the fisherman is with the chief eunuch, dunning him for a hundred dinars.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bring him to me, O Jaafer.' And the vizier answered, 'I hear and obey.'

So he went out to the fisherman and said to him, 'O Khelif, thine apprentice the trumpeter bids thee to him.' So he followed Jaafer into the presence-chamber, where he saw the Khalif seated, with a canopy over his head. When he entered, Er Reshid wrote three scrolls and laid them before him, and the fisherman said to him, '[It would seem] thou hast given up the trumpeting trade and turned astrologer.' Quoth the Khalif to him, 'Take a scroll.'

Now in one he had written, 'Let him be given a dinar,' and in another, 'A hundred dinars,' and in the third, 'Let him be given a hundred blows with a whip.' So Khelif put out his hand and as fate would have it, it lighted on the scroll wherein was written, 'Let him receive a hundred lashes,' and kings, whenas they ordain aught, go not back therefrom. So they threw him down and gave him a hundred lashes, whilst he roared for succour, but none succoured him, and said, 'By Allah, this is a fine thing, O trumpeter! I teach thee fishing and thou turnest astrologer and drawest me an unlucky lot!'

When the Khalif heard his speech, he swooned away for laughter and said, 'O Khelif, no harm shall betide thee: fear not. Give him a hundred dinars.' So they gave him a hundred dinars, and he went out and fared on, till he came to the trunk-market, where he found the folk assembled in a ring about a broker, who was crying out and saying, 'At a hundred dinars, less one! A locked chest!'

So Khelif pushed through the crowd and said to the broker, 'Mine for a hundred dinars.' The broker ad-

judged him the chest and took the money of him, whereupon there was left him neither little nor much. The porters disputed [awhile] about [who should carry] the chest and [presently] said all, 'By Allah, none shall carry this chest but Zureic!' And the folk said, 'Zureic hath the best right to it.'

So he shouldered the chest, after the goodliest fashion, and followed Khelif. As they went along, the fisherman said [in himself], 'I have nothing left to give the porter; how shall I rid myself of him? I will traverse the streets with him and lead him about, till he is weary and [sets the chest down and] leaves it, when I will take it up and carry it to my lodging.' Accordingly, he went round about [Baghdad] with the porter from noontide to sundown, till the man began to grumble and said, 'O my lord, where is thy house?' Quoth Khelif, 'Yesterday I knew it, but to-day I have forgotten it.' And the porter said, 'Give me my hire and take thy chest.' But Khelif said, 'Go on at thy leisure, till I bethink me where my house is. I have no money with me. It is all in my house and I have forgotten where it is.'

As they were talking, there passed by them one who knew the fisherman and said to him, 'O Khelif, what brings thee hither?' Quoth the porter, 'O uncle, where is Khelif's house?' And he answered, 'It is in the ruined khan in the Rewasin.'[1] Then said Zureic [to Khelif], 'Go to; wouldst thou had never lived nor been!' And the fisherman went on, followed by the porter, till they came to the place and Zureic said, 'O thou whose worldly provision God cut off, we have passed this place a score of times! Hadst thou said to me, "It is in such a place," thou hadst spared me this great toil; but now give me my hire and let me go my way.' Quoth Khelif, 'Thou shalt

[1] A quarter of Baghdad.

have silver, if not gold. Stay here, till I bring thee the money.' So he entered his lodging and taking a maul he had there, set with forty nails,—wherewith if he smote a camel, he made an end of him,—made for the porter and raised his hand to strike him therewith; but Zureic cried out at him, saying, 'Hold thy hand! I have no claim on thee,' [and made off].

Then Khelif carried the chest into the khan, whereupon the neighbours flocked about him, saying, 'O Khelif, whence hadst thou this gown and chest?' Quoth he, 'My apprentice Er Reshid gave them to me,' and they said, 'The knave is mad! Er Reshid will surely hear of his talk and hang him over the door of his lodging and hang all in the khan on his account. This is a [fine] farce!' Then they helped him to carry the chest into his lodging and it filled the whole chamber.[1]

So much for Khelif and now for the history of the chest. The Khalif had a Turkish slave-girl, by name Cout el Culoub, whom he loved with an exceeding love, and the Lady Zubeideh came to know of this and was exceeding jealous of her and plotted mischief against her. So, whilst the Commander of the Faithful was absent a-hunting, she sent for Cout el Culoub and inviting her [to eat with her], set before her meat and wine, and she ate and drank. Now the wine was drugged with henbane; so she slept and Zubeideh sent for her chief eunuch and putting her in a chest, locked it and gave it to him, saying, 'Take this chest and cast it into the river.'

So he took it up before him on a mule and set out with it for the sea, but found it uneath to carry; so, seeing the sheikh of the brokers, as he passed by the trunk-market, he said to him, 'Wilt thou sell me this chest, O uncle?' 'Yes,' answered the broker, [and the

[1] The chamber is described as a *hasil*, *i.e.* a small storehouse or cell in a khan for the storage of goods.

eunuch said], 'But look thou sell it not except locked.' 'It is well,' replied the other; 'we will do that.' So he set down the chest, and they cried it for sale, saying, 'Who will buy this chest for a hundred dinars?' At this moment, up came Khelif and bought the chest and there passed between him and the porter that which hath been before set out.

To return to Khelif. He lay down on the chest, to sleep, and presently Cout el Culoub awoke from the effects of the drug and finding herself in the chest, cried out and said, 'Alas!' Whereupon Khelif sprang off the chest and cried out and said, 'Ho, Muslims! Come to my help! There are Afrits in the chest.' So the neighbours awoke from sleep and said to him, 'What ails thee, O madman?' Quoth he, 'The chest is full of Afrits.' And they said, 'Go to sleep; thou hast troubled our rest this night, may Allah not bless thee! Go in and sleep, without madness.' 'I cannot sleep,' answered he; but they railed at him and he went in [and lay down again].

Presently, Cout el Culoub spoke and said, 'Where am I?' whereupon Khelif fled forth the chamber and said, 'O neighbours of the inn, come to me!' Quoth they, 'What hath befallen thee? Thou troublest the neighbours' rest.' And he said, 'O folk, there are Afrits in the chest, moving and speaking.' 'Thou liest,' answered they. 'What do they say?' And he, 'They say, "Where am I?"' 'Would thou wert in hell!' rejoined they. 'Thou disturbest the neighbours and hinderest them of sleep. Go to sleep, would thou hadst never lived nor been!' So Khelif went in, fearful [and knowing not what to do], for he had no place wherein to sleep save on the top of the chest, when, behold, as he stood, with ears listening for speech, Cout el Culoub spoke again and said, 'I am hungry.'

So he fled forth in affright and cried out, saying, 'Ho, neighbours, ho, dwellers in the khan, come to me!' Said

they, 'What is to do with thee now?' And he answered, 'The Afrits in the chest say, "We are hungry."' Quoth the neighbours to each other, 'It would seem Khelif is hungry; let us feed him and give him of what is left from the evening meal; else he will not let us sleep to-night.' So they brought him bread and meat and dates and radishes and gave him a basket full of all kinds of things, saying, 'Eat thy fill and go to sleep and talk not, else will we break thy ribs and beat thee to death.' So he took the basket and entering his lodging, sat down on the chest and fell to eating of the food with both hands.

Now it was a moonlight night and the moon shone full upon the chest and lit up the chamber. Presently Cout el Culoub spoke again and said, 'Have pity on me, O Muslims, and open to me!' So Khelif arose and taking a stone he had with him, broke open the chest and beheld therein a young lady as she were the shining sun, with flower-white forehead, moon-bright face, red cheeks and speech sweeter than sugar, clad in a dress worth a thousand dinars and more. At this sight he was transported for joy and said, 'By Allah, thou art of the fair!' Quoth she, 'What art thou, O fellow?' and he answered, 'I am Khelif the fisherman.' 'Who brought me hither?' asked she, and he said, 'I bought thee, and thou art my slave-girl.' Quoth she, 'I see on thee a gown of the raiment of the Khalif. [Whence hadst thou it?]'

So he told her all that had betided him, from first to last, and how he had bought the chest; wherefore she knew that the Lady Zubeideh had played her false; and she ceased not to talk with him till the morning, when she said to him, 'O Khelif, look [thou get] me from some one inkhorn and pen and paper and bring them to me.' So he found what she sought with one of the neighbours and brought it to her, whereupon she wrote a letter and folded it and gave it to him, saying, 'O Khelif, take this

letter and carry it to the jewel-market, where do thou enquire for the shop of Aboulhusn the jeweller and give it to him.' 'O my lady,' answered the fisherman, 'this name is difficult to me; I cannot remember it.' And she said, 'Then ask for the shop of Ibn el Ucab.'[1] 'O my lady,' asked he, 'what is an *ucab?*' And she said, 'It is a bird that folk carry on their fists, with its eyes hooded.' Quoth he, 'O my lady, I know it.'

Then he went forth from her and fared on, repeating the name, lest it pass his memory; but, by the time he reached the jewel-market, he had forgotten it. So he accosted one of the merchants and said to him, 'Is there any here named after a bird?' 'Yes,' answered the merchant; 'thou meanest Ibn el Ucab.' Quoth Khelif, 'That's the man I want,' and making his way to him, gave him the letter, which when he read and knew the purport thereof, he fell to kissing it and laying it on his head; for it is said that Aboulhusn was the agent of the Lady Cout el Culoub and her intendant over all her property in lands and houses.

Now she had written to him, saying, 'From Her Highness the Lady Cout el Culoub to Master Aboulhusn the jeweller. As soon as this letter reacheth thee, set apart for us a saloon completely equipped with furniture and vessels and slaves and slave-girls and what not else is needful and seemly, and take the bearer hereof and carry him to the bath. Then clothe him in costly apparel and do with him thus and thus.'

So he said, 'I hear and obey,' and locking up his shop, took the fisherman and carried him to the bath, where he committed him to one of the bathmen, that he might serve him, as of wont. Then he went forth to carry out

[1] *i.e.* Son of the falcon. The common meaning of *ucab* is "eagle." The name should probably be read Abou-l-Ucab, he (*lit.* father) of the falcon, *i.e.* he who carries or owns a falcon.

the Lady Cout el Culoub's orders. As for Khelif, he concluded, of his lack of wit, that the bath was a prison and said to the bathmen, 'What have I done, that ye should imprison me?' They laughed at him and made him sit on the edge of the tank, whilst the bathman took hold of his legs, that he might rub them. Khelif thought he meant to wrestle with him and said in himself, 'This is a wrestling-place and I knew not of it.' Then he arose and seizing the bathman's legs, lifted him up and threw him on the ground and broke his ribs. The man cried out for help, whereupon the other bathmen fell upon Khelif and overcoming him by dint of numbers, delivered their comrade from his clutches [and tended him], till he came to himself.

Then they knew that the fisherman was a simpleton and served him, till Aboulhusn came back with a dress of rich stuff and clad him therein; after which he brought him a handsome mule, ready saddled, and taking him by the hand, carried him forth of the bath and bade him mount. Quoth he, 'How shall I mount? I fear lest she throw me and break my ribs in my body.' Nor did he mount the mule, save after much pressure and trouble, and they fared on, till they came to the place which Aboulhusn had set apart for the Lady Cout el Culoub.

Khelif entered and found her sitting, with slaves and servants about her and the porter at the door, staff in hand. When the latter saw the fisherman, he sprang up and kissing his hand, went before him, till he brought him within the saloon, where he saw what amazed his wit, and his eyes were dazzled by that which he beheld of riches past count and slaves and servants, who kissed his hand and said, '[God grant thee] solace of the bath!'

When he entered the saloon and drew near unto Cout el Culoub, she sprang up to him and taking him by the hand, seated him on a high divan. Then she brought him

a vase of sherbet of sugar, mingled with rose-water, and he took it and drank it off and left not a single drop. Moreover, he passed his finger round the inside of the vessel and would have licked it, but she forbade him, saying, 'That is ill.' Quoth he, 'Hold thy peace: this is nought but good honey;' and she laughed at him and set before him a tray of meats, whereof he ate his fill. Then they brought an ewer and basin of gold, and he washed his hands and abode in all delight of life and worship.

Meanwhile, when the Commander of the Faithful came back from his journey and found not Cout el Culoub, he questioned the Lady Zubeideh of her and she said, 'She is dead, may thy head live, O Commander of the Faithful!' Now she had let dig a grave amiddleward the palace and built over it a mock tomb, of her knowledge of the love the Khalif bore to Cout el Culoub. So she said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I made her a tomb amiddleward the palace and buried her there.' Then she donned black, leasing-wise, and feigned mourning a great while.

Now Cout el Culoub knew that the Khalif was come back from his journey; so she turned to Khelif and said to him, 'Arise; go to the bath and come back.' So he arose and went to the bath, and when he returned, she clad him in a dress worth a thousand dinars and taught him manners and the rules of good breeding. Then said she to him, 'Go hence to the Khalif and say to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, it is my desire that thou be my guest this night."'

So Khelif arose and mounting his mule, rode, with slaves and servants before him, till he came to the palace of the Khalifate. Quoth the wise, 'Clothe a stick with generosity [and it will become generous].'[1] And indeed

[1] The meaning of this proverb will appear more clearly by comparison with the cognate saying, "Clothe the reed and it will become a bride." Cf. also the common English proverb, "Fine feathers make fine birds."

his comeliness was manifest and the goodliness of his fashion, and the folk marvelled at this. Presently, the eunuch saw him, who had given him the hundred dinars, that had been the cause of his good fortune; so he went in to the Khalif and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, Khelif the fisherman is become a king, and on him is a dress worth a thousand dinars.' The Khalif bade admit him; so he entered and said, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Worlds and Protector of the people of the Faith! May God the Most High prolong thy days and advance thy dominion and exalt thy station to the loftiest!'

The Khalif looked at him and marvelled at him and how fortune had come to him at unawares; then he said to him, 'O Khelif, whence hadst thou that dress that is upon thee?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'it comes from my house.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Hast thou then a house?' 'Yes,' replied Khelif, 'and thou, O Commander of the Faithful, art my guest this day.' And Er Reshid said, 'I alone, O Khelif, or I and those who are with me?' And he answered, saying, 'Thou and whom thou wilt.' So Jaafer turned to him and said, 'We will be thy guests this night;' whereupon he kissed the earth again and withdrawing, mounted his mule and rode off, attended by his servants, leaving the Khalif marvelling at this and saying to Jaafer, 'Sawst thou Khelif, with his mule and dress and servants, and his dignity? But yesterday I knew him for a buffoon and a laughing-stock.' And they marvelled at this.

[Then they mounted and rode, till they drew] near Khelif's house, when the latter alighted and taking a parcel from one of his attendants, opened it and pulled out therefrom a piece of tabby silk and spread it under the hoofs of the Khalif's mule; then he brought out a piece of velvet and another of cloth of gold and a third of

fine satin and did with them likewise; and thus he spread nigh a score pieces of rich stuffs, till they reached the house; when he came forward and said, '[Enter,] in the name of God, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Er Reshid to Jaafer, 'I wonder to whom this house belongs,' and he said, 'It belongs to a man hight Ibn el Ucab, Syndic of the Jewellers.'

So the Khalif alighted and entering, with his company, saw a high-builded saloon and a spacious, with couches raised [on daises] and carpets and divans laid. So he went up to the couch that was set for him on four pillars of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with seven carpets. This pleased him and behold, up came Khelif, with servants and little slaves, bearing all manner sherbets, compounded with sugar and lemon and perfumed with rose and willowflower-water and odoriferous musk.

The fisherman advanced and drank and gave the Khalif to drink, and the cupbearers came forward and served the rest of the company. Then Khelif brought a table spread with meats of various colours and geese and fowls and other birds, saying, 'In the name of God!' So they ate their fill; after which he let remove the tables and kissing the earth three times before the Khalif, craved his leave to bring wine and music. He gave him leave for this and turning to Jaafer, said to him, 'As my head liveth, the house and that which is therein is Khelif's; for that he is ruler over it and I am wondered at him, whence there came to him this great good fortune and exceeding affluence! However, this is no great matter to Him who saith to a thing, "Be!" and it is; what I [most] wonder at is his understanding, how it hath increased, and whence he hath gotten this lordliness and dignity; but, when God willeth good unto a man, He amendeth his wit before his fortune.'

As they were talking, up came Khelif, followed by cup-

bearers like moons, girt with zones of gold, who spread a cloth of siglaton[1] and set thereon flagons of chinaware and tall flasks of glass and cups of crystal and bottles and hanaps of all colours; and the flagons they filled with pure clear old wine, whose scent was as the fragrance of virgin musk and it was even as saith the poet:

Ply me and ply this mate of mine With cups of the first-pressed Grecian wine.
Daughter of nobles,[2] they her display[3] In raiment of goblets clear and fine.
They girdle her round with gems,[4] and pearls Of finest water therewith entwine;
So by these tokens in her, I trow, "The bride"[5] they style the juice of the vine.

And round about these vessels were sweetmeats and flowers, such as may not be surpassed. When Er Reshid saw this from Khelif, he showed favour to him and smiled upon him and invested him [with an office]; whereupon Khelif wished him long life and abiding glory and said, 'Will the Commander of the Faithful give me leave to bring him a singing-girl, a lutanist, never was heard her like among mortals?' Quoth the Khalif, 'So be it.'

So he kissed the earth before him and going to a closet, called Cout el Culoub, who came, shuffling in her robes and trinkets, after she had veiled herself from head to foot, and kissed the earth before the Commander of the Faithful. Then she sat down and tuning the lute, swept

[1] A rich kind of brocade.

[2] A play is here intended upon the words *kiram*, nobles, and *kurum*, vines, which are derived from the same root.

[3] *i.e.* as a bride is displayed on her wedding-night.

[4] Syn. berries (*hubub*).

[5] *El Arous*, one of the innumerable tropical names given to wine by the Arabs. Cf. Grangeret de la Grange, Anthologie Arabe, p. 190.

its strings and played upon it, till all present were transported for excess of delight; after which she improvised and sang the following verses:

I wonder, will our time with those we love come back again? Will fate reunion and its sweets, I wonder, aye ordain
To one who yearns for those that dwelt once in the ruined steads? Shall we find peace and will time's shifts no longer work us bane?
How bitter life is since their loss and ah, how dearly sweet The nights of union, when our loves one dwelling did contain!
Draw near to me, beloved mine, vouchsafe to me the grace Of meeting; else my life, indeed, is frustrate all and vain.

When the Khalif heard this, he could not contain himself, but rent his clothes and fell down in a swoon; whereupon all who were present hastened to pull off their apparel and throw it over him, whilst Cout el Culoub beckoned to Khelif and said to him, 'Go to yonder chest and bring what is therein;' for she had made ready therein a suit of the Khalif's apparel against the like of this time. So Khelif brought it to her and she threw it over the Commander of the Faithful, who came to himself and knowing her for Cout el Culoub, said, 'Is this the Day of Resurrection and hath God called up those who are in the tombs; or am I asleep and is this an illusion of dreams?' Quoth Cout el Culoub, 'We are awake, not asleep, and I am alive, nor have I tasted the cup of death.'

Then she told him all that had befallen her, and indeed, since he lost her, life had not been easy to him nor sleep sweet, and he abode now wondering, now weeping and anon afire for longing. When she had made an end of her story, the Khalif rose and took her by the hand, intending for her palace, after he had kissed her lips and strained her to his bosom; whereupon Khelif rose and said, 'By Allah, it is good, O Commander of the Faithful! Thou hast already wronged me once, and now thou

wrongest me again.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Indeed, thou sayst sooth, O Khelif,' and bade the Vizier Jaafer give him what should content him. So he straightway gave him all he desired and assigned him a village, the yearly revenue whereof was twenty thousand dinars.

Moreover, Cout el Culoub made gift to him of the house and all that was therein of furniture and hangings and slaves and servants and slave-girls, great and small. So Khelif became possessed of this great affluence and exceeding wealth and took him a wife, and good fortune taught him gravity and dignity and prosperity overwhelmed him. The Khalif enrolled him among his boon-companions and he abode in all delight and solace of life, till he was admitted to the mercy of God.

END OF VOL. VII.