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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 NINTH.

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TO

CAPTAIN RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON,

IN TOKEN OF

ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE

FOR

MUCH KINDNESS.

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.

THE MERCHANT OF OMAN.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was one night exceeding wakeful; so he called Mesrour and said to him, 'Fetch me Jaafer in haste.' Accordingly, he went out and returned with the vizier, to whom said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, wakefulness hath gotten hold of me this night and forbiddeth sleep from me, nor know I what shall do it away from me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'the wise say, "Looking on a mirror, entering the bath and hearkening unto song do away care and chagrin."' 'O Jaafer,' rejoined Haroun, 'I have done all this, but it hath brought me no whit of relief, and I swear by my pious forefathers, except thou contrive that which shall do away this [restlessness] from me, I will strike off thy head.'

Quoth Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou do that which I shall counsel thee?' 'And what is that?' asked the Khalif. 'It is,' replied the vizier, 'that thou take boat with us and drop down the Tigris with the tide to a place called Kern es Serat, so haply we may hear or see some new thing, for it is said, "The solace of care is in one of three things; to wit, that a man see what he never before saw or hear what he never yet heard or tread an earth he hath never yet trodden." It may be this shall be the means of doing away thy restlessness, O Commander of the Faithful, if it be the will of God the Most High.

There, on both sides of the stream, are windows and balconies facing one another, and it may be we shall hear or see from one of these somewhat wherewith our hearts may be lightened.'

Jaafer's counsel pleased the Khalif, so he rose from his place and taking with him the vizier and his brother El Fezl and Isaac[1] the boon-companion and Abou Nuwas and Abou Delef[2] and Mesrour the headsman, entered the wardrobe, where they all donned merchants' habits. Then they went down to the Tigris and embarking in a gilded boat, dropped down with the stream, till they came to the place they sought, where they heard the voice of a damsel singing to the lute and chanting the following verses:

Night dccccxlviii.

I say to my love, whilst the wine-cup is here And the thousand-voiced bird in the coppice sings clear,
'How long this delaying from gladness? Awake; For life's but a loan for a day or a year.
So take thou the cup from a loveling's white hands, Whose languishing lids are as those of a deer.'
I sowed a fresh rose in his cheek, but amidst His locks a pomegranate for fruit did appear.
Indeed, very fire wouldst thou deem his fair cheek And the place of the scratching[3] dead ashes and sere.
Quoth my censor, 'Forget him;' but where's my excuse, When the down sprouts and creeps on the face of my dear?

When the Khalif heard this, he said, 'O Jaafer, how goodly is that voice!' 'O our lord,' answered the vizier, 'never smote my hearing aught sweeter or goodlier than this singing! But hearing from behind a wall is only half

[1] *i.e.* Isaac of Mosul.

[2] Abou Delef el Ijli, a well-known soldier of the time, renowned for his liberality and culture. His introduction here is probably an anachronism, as he does not appear to have served under Haroun er Reshid, but under his sons El Mâmoun and El Mutessim Billah.

[3] *i.e.* the part thereof which he had scratched or buffeted, in Oriental fashion, for separation or other chagrin.

hearing; how would it be, if we heard it from behind a curtain?' 'Come, O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'let us go up and intrude upon the master of the house; it may be we shall look upon the songstress, face to face.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. So they landed and sought admittance; whereupon there came out to them a young man, fair of favour, sweet of speech and eloquent of tongue, who said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome, O lords that favour me [with your presence!] Enter in all ease and liberty.'

They followed him into a saloon, four-square, whose roof was decorated with gold and its walls adorned with ultramarine.[1] At its upper end was an estrade, whereon stood a goodly settle[2] and thereon sat a hundred damsels like moons. The young man cried out to them and they came down from their seats. Then he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'O my lord, I know not the worshipful of you from the more worshipful, but, in God's name, let him that is highest in rank among you favour me by taking the highest room, and let his brethren sit each in his several station.' So they sat down, each according to his rank, whilst Mesrour abode standing to do them service; and the host said to them, 'O my guests, with your leave, shall I set food before you?' 'Yes,' answered they. So he called for food, whereupon four damsels with girded waists set before them a table, whereon were rare meats of that which flies and walks the earth and swims the seas, sand-grouse and quails and chickens and pigeons [and what not else], and written on the marges of the tray were verses such as sorted with the entertainment.

They ate till they had enough and washed their hands,

[1] *Syn.* lapis lazuli (*lazoured*).

[2] Or divan extending round all three sides of the recess. Var. "A couch of ivory and ebony, whereon was that which befitted it of mattresses and cushions, and on it *five* damsels."—*Breslau.*

after which said the young man, 'O my lords, if you have any want, let us know it, that we may have the honour of satisfying it.' 'It is well,' answered they. 'We came not to thy dwelling but because of a voice we heard from behind the wall of thy house, and we would fain hear it [again] and know her to whom it belongs. So, if thou deem well to vouchsafe us this favour, it will be of the munificence of thy nature, and we will after return whence we came.' 'Ye are welcome,' answered the host and turning to a black slave-girl, said to her, 'Fetch me thy mistress such an one.' So she went away and returning with a chair of chinaware, cushioned with brocade, set it down; then withdrew again and presently returned with a damsel, as she were the moon on the night of its full, who sat down on the chair. Then the black girl gave her a bag of satin, from which she brought out a lute, inlaid with jacinths and jewels and furnished with pegs of gold, and tuned its strings, even as saith the poet of her and her lute:

Night dccccxlviii.

When in her lap she sets it, the soul in it she sets, Its pegs [and strings] its organs by which its thought hath speech;
Nor doth her right hand outrage its beauties,[1] but her left On equal wise and measure amendeth still the breach.[2]

Then she strained it to her bosom, bending over it as the mother bends over her child, and swept the strings, which complained as the child complains to its mother; after which she played upon it and sang the following verses:

Vouchsafe me Fortune the return of him I love, and I Will chide him, saying, 'Pass about thy cups, O friend; fill high
And drink of wine that mingleth not with heart of man but he Still barters care for cheer and calls a truce with tear and sigh.

[1] By striking the strings, while tuning.
[2] *i.e.* by screwing the strings up to the proper pitch, by means of the pegs.

Unto its bearing in its cup the zephyr[1] doth suffice: Didst e'er a full moon[2] in its hand a star[3] that bore espy?
How many a night with its full moon I've held converse of yore, Whilst, o'er the Tigris shed, its light lit up the darkling sky!
As to the westward she inclined, it was as if she drew A gilded sword that stretched athwart the water far and nigh.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept sore and all who were in the place cried out with weeping, till they were well-nigh dead; nor was there one of them but took leave of his senses and rent his clothes and buffeted his face, for the goodliness of her singing. Then said Er Reshid, 'This damsel's song denoteth that she is one parted from her beloved.' Quoth her master, 'She hath lost her father and mother.' But the Khalif said, 'This is not the weeping of one who hath lost her father and mother, but the affliction of one who hath lost her beloved.' And he was delighted with her singing and said to Isaac, 'By Allah, I never saw her like!' 'O my lord,' answered Isaac, 'indeed I marvel at her to the utterest and am beside myself for delight.'

Now with all this Er Reshid stinted not to look upon their host and observe his charms and the elegance of his fashion; but he saw on his face a pallor as he would die; so he turned to him and said, 'Harkye!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' answered he. 'Knowest thou who we are?' asked the Khalif; and he said 'No.' Quoth Jaafer, 'Wilt thou that I tell thee the names of each of us?' 'Yes,' answered the young man; and the vizier said, 'This is the Commander of the Faithful, descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles,' and told him the names of the others of the company; after which quoth Er Reshid,

[1] *i.e.* a slim-shaped cupbearer. The Arabs constantly compare the waftings of the zephyr to the swaying movements of slender and graceful girls.
[2] *i.e.* a fair-faced cupbearer. [3] The sparkling wine-cup.

'I desire that thou tell me the cause of the paleness of thy face, whether it be acquired or natural from thy birth.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'my case is rare and my affair extraordinary; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as an admonition to him who will be admonished.' 'Tell it me,' said the Khalif. 'Peradventure, thy healing may be at my hand.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said the young man, 'lend me thine ears and give me thy whole mind.' 'Come,' said the Khalif; 'tell it me, for thou makest me long to hear it.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the young man, 'that I am a merchant of the merchants of the sea and come from the city of Oman, where my father was a rich merchant, having thirty ships trading upon the sea, whose yearly hire was thirty thousand dinars; and he had partners trading with his money and journeying on the sea. He was a man of worth and generosity and taught me writing and all whereof a man hath need. When his last hour drew near, he called me to him and gave me the customary injunctions; then God the Most High admitted him to His mercy and may He continue the Commander of the Faithful [on life!]

One day, as I sat in my house with a company of merchants, one of my servants came in to me and said, "O my lord, there is a man at the door, who craves admittance to thee." So I gave leave and he came in, bearing on his head a covered box. He set it down and uncovered it, and behold, therein were fruits out of season and [vegetables] conserved in salt and fresh, such as are not found in our country. I thanked him and gave him a hundred dinars, and he went away, grateful. Then I divided these things amongst my guests and asked them whence they came. Quoth they, "They come from Bassora," and praised them and went on to expatiate upon

the beauties of Bassora and were all of accord that there was nothing in the world goodlier than Baghdad and its people. Then they fell to describing Baghdad and the excellence of its air and the beauty of its ordinance and the goodly manners of its people, till my soul longed for it and all my hopes clave to the sight of it.

So I arose and selling my ships and houses and lands and slaves, male and female, got together a thousand thousand dinars, besides jewels and precious stones, with which I freighted a ship and setting out therein, sailed nights and days till I came to Bassora, where I abode awhile. Then I hired a bark and embarking therein with all my goods, sailed up the river some days till I arrived at Baghdad. I enquired where the merchants abode and what part thereof was pleasantest of sojourn and was answered, "The Kerkh quarter." So I went thither and hiring a house in a street called the Street of Saffron, transported my goods to it and took up my lodging therein.

Here I abode some days, till, one Friday, I sallied forth apleasuring, taking with me somewhat of money. I went first to a mosque, called the Mosque of Mensour, where the Friday service was held, and when we had made an end of prayers, I went out with the folk to a place called Kern es Serat, where I saw a tall and goodly house, with a balcony overlooking the river-bank, wherein was a lattice-window. So I betook myself thither with a company of folk and saw there an old man sitting, handsomely clad and exhaling a sweet scent. His beard flowed down upon his breast, where it divided into two waves like silver-wire, and about him were four damsels and five pages in attendance upon him. So I said to one of the folk, "What is the name of yonder old man and what is his business?" "His name is Tahir ibn el Alaa," answered he, "and he is a keeper of girls: all who go in to him eat and drink and look upon fair ones." "By Allah," quoth I, "this

long while have I gone about in quest of the like of this!"

Night DCCCCXLIX. So I went up to the old man and saluting him, said to him, "O my lord, I desire to be thy guest to-night." And he said, "With all my heart; but, O my son, with me are many damsels, some whose night is ten dinars, some forty and others more. Choose which thou wilt have." Quoth I, "I choose her whose night is ten dinars." And I counted out to him three hundred dinars, being the price of a month; whereupon he committed me to a page, who carried me to a bath within the house and tended me on goodly wise. When I came out of the bath, he brought me to the door of a chamber and knocked, whereupon out came a damsel, to whom said he, "Take thy guest." She received me with welcome and courtesy, laughing and rejoicing, and brought me into a rare apartment, decorated with gold. I looked at her and saw her like the moon on the night of its full, having in attendance on her two damsels like stars. She made me sit and seating herself by my side, signed to her maids, who set before us a table covered with dishes of various kinds of meats, fowls and quails and sandgrouse and pigeons. So we ate till we were satisfied, and never in my life saw I aught more delicious than this food. When we had eaten, she caused remove the table [of meats] and set on the table of wine and flowers and fruits and sweetmeats; and I abode with her a month on this wise.

At the end of the month, I repaired to the bath; then, going to the old man, I said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is twenty dinars." "Pay down the money," said he. So I fetched money and counted out to him six hundred dinars for a month's hire, whereupon he called a boy and said to him, "Take thy lord here." So he carried me to the bath and thence to the door of a chamber, at which he knocked and there came out a

damsel, to whom quoth he, "Take thy guest." She received me on the goodliest wise and I found in attendance on her four slave-girls, whom she commanded to bring food. So they brought a table spread with all kinds of meats, and I ate. When I had made an end of eating and the table had been removed, she took the lute and sang the following verses:

O windwafts of musk, from the land of Babel to us-ward that fare, In the name of my passion and heat, I charge you my messages bear;
For lo, in those regions of yours are dwellings of yore that I knew, The homes of our loved ones, to wit, the noblest of all that are there;
And in them abideth the maid, for whom many a lover doth pine, Distraught with the pangs of desire, but getteth no grace of the fair.

I abode with her a month, after which I returned to the old man and said to him, "I want her of the forty dinars [a night]." "Pay the money," said he. So I counted out to him twelve hundred dinars and abode with her a month, as it were one day, for what I saw of the beauty of her person and the goodliness of her converse. After this I went to the old man one evening and heard a great clamour and loud voices. So I said to him, "What is to do?" And he answered, saying, "This is the night of our greatest holiday, whereon all the townsfolk embark on the river and divert themselves by gazing upon one another. Hast thou a mind to go up to the roof and amuse thyself by looking upon the folk?" "Yes," answered I, and went up to the roof, whence I [looked down upon the river and] saw [a great multitude of] folk with flambeaux and cressets, and great mirth and merriment toward.

Then I went up to the end of the roof and saw there a little chamber railed off by a goodly curtain, and in its midst a couch of juniper-wood, plated with gold and covered with a handsome carpet. On this sat a lovely young lady, confounding all beholders with her beauty

and grace and symmetry, and by her side a youth, whose hand was on her neck; and he was kissing her and she him. When I saw them, O Commander of the Faithful, I could not contain myself nor knew I where I was, so dazzled was I by her beauty: but, when I came down, I questioned the damsel with whom I was and described the young lady to her. "What wilt thou with her?" asked she; and I said, "She hath taken my wit." She smiled and said, "O Aboulhusn, hast thou a mind to her?" "Ay, by Allah!" answered I; "for she hath captived my heart and soul." Quoth she, "This is the daughter of Tahir ibn el Alaa; she is our mistress and we are all her handmaids; but knowest thou, O Aboulhusn, what is the price of her night and day?" And I said, "No." "Five hundred dinars," answered she; "for she is one for whom kings might sigh in vain."[1]

"By Allah," quoth I, "I will spend all I have on this damsel!" And I lay, heartsore for desire, till the morning, when I donned a suit of the richest royal raiment and betaking myself to Ibn el Alaa, said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is five hundred dinars." Quoth he, "Pay the money." So I counted out to him fifteen thousand dinars for a month's hire and he took them and said to the page, "Carry him to thy mistress such an one." So he took me and carried me to a saloon, than which my eyes never saw a goodlier on the face of the earth, and there I found the young lady seated. When I saw her, O Commander of the Faithful, my reason was dazed with her beauty, for she was like the full moon on its fourteenth night, full of grace and symmetry and loveliness. Her speech put to shame the tones of the lute, and it was as it were she to whom the poet referred in the following verses:

Night dccccl.

[1] Lit. she is a regret in the hearts of kings.

Quoth she (and verily desire ran riot in her side, What while the dusky night let down the darkness like a tide),
"Night, in thy blackness is there none to company with me? Is there no swiver for this kaze of all men, far and wide?"
Then with her palm she smote thereon and said, what while she sighed The sighing of the sorrowful, the sad, the weeping-eyed,
"As by the toothstick's use appears the beauty of the teeth, So, like a toothstick is the yard unto the kaze applied.
O, Muslims, stand your yards not up on end and is there none 'Mongst you will succour her who doth to you complain?" she cried.
Therewith my yard thrust out, erect, from underneath my clothes, And said to her, "Here, here's for thee!" And I the while untied
The laces of her drawers. She made a show of fear and said, "Who'rt thou?" And I, "A youth thy cry that answereth," replied
And straightway fell to routing her with what was like her wrist, A lusty routing, that full sore the buttocks mortified;
Till when, three courses run, I rose, "Fair fall thee of the swive!" Quoth she, and I, "May solacement thyself therefrom betide!"

And how excellent is the saying of another!

A fair one, to idolaters if she her face should show, They'd leave their idols and her face for only Lord would know.
If in the Eastward she appeared unto a monk, for sure, He'd cease from turning to the West and to the East bend low;[1]
And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit, Assuredly the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

And that of another:

I looked one look upon her and dazed was all my thought, For all the rare perfections wherewith the maid was fraught.
Suspicion that I loved her discovered unto her, And straight the supposition her cheeks to redden wrought.

I saluted her and she said to me, "Welcome and fair welcome!" and taking me by the hand, made me sit down beside her; whereupon, of the excess of my passion,

[1] See Vol. VIII. p. 78, note 1.

I fell aweeping for fear of parting and poured forth the tears of the eye, reciting the following verses:

The nights of estrangement I love; yet not that in them I delight, But fate peradventure shall cause reunion ensue their despite;
And eke, on like wise, I abhor the days of enjoyment, because I see that all things in this world still issue in ceasing outright.

She strove to solace me with soft speech, but I was drowned in the sea of passion, fearing, even in the midst of union, the anguish of separation, for excess of longing and desire; and I bethought me of the misery of absence and estrangement and repeated these verses:

Even in her arms I me bethought of severance from her And from mine eyes the tears ran down, a ruddy-coloured flood,
Like tragacanth, and straight I wiped mine eyes upon her neck, For of the use of camphor[1] 'tis to stay the flow of blood.

Then she called for food and there came four damsels, high-bosomed maids, who set before us meats and fruits and sweetmeats and flowers and wine, such as befit none but kings. So we ate and sat at the wine, compassed about with flowers and herbs of sweet savour, in a chamber fit only for kings. Presently, one of her maids brought her a bag of silk, which she opened and taking thereout a lute, laid it in her lap and touched its strings, whereupon it complained, as the child complains to its mother, and she sang the following verses:

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

On this wise, O Commander of the Faithful, I abode with her, month after month, till all my money was spent;

[1] Camphor is with the Arabs a favourite object of comparison for anything white, especially a white skin.

wherefore, as I sat with her [one day], I bethought me of [coming] separation from her and my tears streamed down upon my cheeks like rivers, and I became not knowing night from day. Quoth she, "Why dost thou weep?" And I answered, "O light of mine eyes, I weep because of our [coming] parting." "And what," asked she, "shall part thee and me, O my lord?" "O my lady," said I, "from the time I came to thee, thy father hath taken of me, for every night, five hundred dinars, and now I have nothing left. Indeed the poet speaks sooth when he says:

Exile at home, I trow, is lack of good, And wealth is home in very strangerhood."

"Know," rejoined she, "that it is my father's wont, whenas a merchant abideth with him and hath spent all his money, to give him hospitality three days; then doth he put him out and he may never return to us. But keep thou thy secret and conceal thy case and I will contrive so that thou shalt abide with me till such time as God will; for, indeed, there is a great love for thee in my heart. Thou must know that all my father's wealth is under my hand and he knows not the tale thereof; so, every day, I will give thee a purse of five hundred dinars, which do thou give him, saying, 'Henceforth, I will pay thee only day by day.' He will hand the purse to me, and I will give it to thee again, and we will abide thus till such time as God pleases."

I thanked her and kissed her hand; and on this wise I abode with her a whole year, till it chanced one day that she beat one of her handmaids grievously and the latter said, "By Allah, I will torture thy heart, even as thou hast tortured me!" So she went to the girl's father and discovered to him all our practice, whereupon he arose forthright and coming in to me, as I sat with his daughter, said to me, "Harkye, such an one!" "At thy

service," replied I. Quoth he, "It is our wont, when a merchant grows poor with us, to give him hospitality three days; but thou hast had a year with us, eating and drinking and doing what thou wouldst." Then he turned to his servants and said to them, "Pull off his clothes." They did as he bade them and gave me ten dirhems and an old suit worth other five; after which he said to me, "Go forth; I will not beat thee nor revile thee; but go thy ways and if thou abide in this town, thy blood be on thine own head."

So I went forth, in my own despite, knowing not whither to go, for all the trouble in the world was fallen on my heart and I was occupied with melancholy thought. Then I bethought me of the wealth which I had brought from Oman and said in myself, "I came hither with a million dinars and have made away with it all in the house of yonder ill-omened old man, and now I go forth from him, naked and broken-hearted! But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

I abode three days in Baghdad, without tasting meat or drink, and on the fourth day I saw a ship bound for Bassora; so I hired a passage in her and when we reached Bassora, I landed and went to the market, being sore anhungred. Presently, a man saw me, a grocer, whom I had known aforetime, and coming up to me, embraced me,—for he had been my friend and my father's friend before me,—and questioned me of my case, for that he saw me clad in those tattered clothes. So I told him all that had befallen me, and he said, "By Allah, this is not the fashion of a reasonable man! But what dost thou purpose to do, after this that hath befallen thee?" Quoth I, "I know not what I shall do," and he said, "Wilt thou abide with me and write my goings-out and comings-in, and thou shalt have two dirhems a day, over and above thy meat and drink?" I agreed to this and abode with

him a whole year, buying and selling, till I had gotten a hundred dinars; when I hired an upper chamber by the river-side, so haply a ship should come up with merchandise, that I might buy goods with the dinars and go with them to Baghdad.

One day, there came ships with merchandise, and all the merchants resorted to them to buy, and I with them. [We boarded one of the ships,] and behold, there came two men out of the hold and setting themselves chairs on the deck, sat down thereon. The merchants accosted them, with intent to buy, and they said to one of the crew, "Bring the carpet." So he brought the carpet and spread it, and another came with a pair of saddle-bags, from which he took a budget and emptied it on the carpet; and our sights were dazzled with that which issued thence of pearls and corals and jacinths and cornelians and other jewels of all sorts and colours. Then said one of the men on the chairs, "O merchants, we will sell but this to-day, by way of spending-money, for that we are weary." So the merchants fell to bidding for the jewels and bid, one against the other, till the price reached four hundred dinars. Night dccccli.

Now the owner of the bag was an old acquaintance of mine, and when he saw me, he came down to me and saluting me, said, "Why dost thou not speak and bid like the rest of the merchants?" "O my lord," answered I, "the shifts of fortune have run against me and I have lost my wealth and have but a hundred dinars left in the world." Quoth he, "O Omani, after this vast wealth, do but a hundred dinars remain to thee?" And I was abashed before him and my eyes filled with tears; whereupon he looked at me and indeed my case was grievous to him. So he said to the merchants, "Bear witness against me that I sell all that is in this bag of various kinds of jewels and precious stones to this man for a hundred

dinars, albeit I know them to be worth so many thousand dinars, and I make him a present of them." So saying, he gave me the bag and the carpet, with all the jewels thereon, for which I thanked him, and all the merchants present praised him. Then I carried all this to the jewel-market and sat there to sell and buy. Among the jewels was a round amulet of the handiwork of the masters,[1] weighing half a pound. It was of bright red cornelian and on both sides of it were graven characters and talismans, like unto the tracks of ants; but I knew not its use.

I bought and sold a whole year, at the end of which time I took the amulet and said to myself, "This hath been with me a great while, and I know not what it is nor what is its use." So I gave it to the broker, who went round with it and returned, saying, "None of the merchants will give more than ten dirhems for it." Quoth I, "I will not sell it at that price." And he threw it in my face and went away. Another day I again offered it for sale and its price reached fifteen dirhems; so I took it from the broker in a pet and threw it back into the tray. Presently, as I sat in my shop, there came up to me a man, who bore the traces of travel, and saluting me, said, "By thy leave, I will turn over thy wares." "It is well," answered I, and indeed I was still wroth by reason of the lack of demand for the amulet.

So he fell to turning over my wares, but took nought thereof save the amulet, which when he saw, he said, "Praised be God!" and kissed his hand. Then said he to me, "O my lord, wilt thou sell this?" And I said, "Yes," being still angry. Quoth he, "What is its price?" And I, "How much wilt thou give?" "Twenty dinars," answered he. I thought he was making mock of me and said, "Go thy ways." Quoth he, "I will give thee fifty

[1] *i.e.* of those learned in occult arts.

dinars for it." I made him no answer, and he said, "A thousand dinars." But I was silent, whilst he laughed at my silence and said, "Why dost thou not return me an answer?" "Go thy ways," repeated I and was like to quarrel with him. But he bid thousand after thousand, and I still made him no reply, till he said, "Wilt thou sell it for twenty thousand dinars?"

I still thought he was making mock of me; but the people gathered about me and all of them said to me, "Sell to him, and if he buy not, we will all fall upon him and beat him and put him out of the city." So I said to him, "Wilt thou buy or dost thou jest?" Quoth he, "Wilt thou sell or dost thou jest?" And I said, "I will sell if thou wilt buy." Then said he, "I will buy it for thirty thousand dinars: take them and strike the bargain." And I said to the bystanders, "Bear witness against him." [Then to him, "I sell to thee,] but on condition that thou acquaint me with the use and virtues of the amulet, for which thou payest all this money." "Close the bargain," answered he, "and I will tell thee this." Quoth I, "I sell to thee." And he said, "God be witness of that which thou sayst!"

Then he brought out the money and giving it to me, put the amulet in his bosom; after which he said to me, "Art thou content?" "Yes," answered I, and he said to the people, "Bear witness against him that he hath closed the bargain and touched the price, thirty thousand dinars." Then he turned to me and said, "Harkye, good man, hadst thou held back from selling, by Allah, I would have bidden thee up to a hundred thousand dinars, nay, even to a thousand thousand!" When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, the blood fled from my face, and from that day there overcame it this paleness that thou seest.

Then said I to him, "Tell me the reason of this and

what is the use of this amulet." And he answered, saying, "Know that the King of Hind hath a daughter, never was seen a fairer than she, and she is possessed with a demon.[1] So the king summoned the scribes and men of science and diviners, but none of them could ease her of this. Now I was present in the assembly; so I said to him, 'O king, I know a man called Saadullah the Babylonian, than whom there is not on the face of the earth one more versed in these matters, and if thou see fit to send me to him, do so.' Quoth he, 'Go to him.' And I said, 'Bring me a piece of cornelian.' So he gave me a great piece of cornelian and a hundred thousand dinars and a present, with which I betook myself to the land of Babel and seeking out Saadullah, delivered him the money and the present, which he accepted and sending for a lapidary, caused him fashion the cornelian into this amulet. Then he abode seven months in observation of the stars, till he chose out an auspicious time for engraving it, when he graved upon it these talismanic characters that thou seest, and I took it and returned with it to the king.

Night dccccliii.

Now the princess was bound with four chains, and every night a damsel lay with her and was found in the morning slain. The King took the amulet and laid it upon his daughter, whereupon she was straightway made whole. At this he rejoiced greatly and invested me with a dress of honour and gave alms of much money; and he caused set the amulet in the princess's necklace. It chanced, one day, that she embarked with her damsels in a ship and went apleasuring on the sea. Presently, one of her maids put out her hand to her, to sport with her, and the necklace broke asunder and fell into the sea. From that hour

[1] *i.e.* is afflicted with epilepsy. See note, Vol. VIII. p. 179. The Boulac and Macnaghten Editions give the princess's malady, in error, as *daa es sudaa* (meagrims), instead of *daa es sera* (epilepsy), as in the Breslau Text.

the princess's malady[1] returned to her, wherefore great grief betided the king and he gave me much money, saying, 'Go thou to Saadullah and let him make her another amulet, in the stead of that which is lost.' So I journeyed to Babel, but found the Sheikh dead; whereupon I returned and told the king, who sent me and ten others to go round about in all countries, so haply we might find a remedy for her: and now God hath caused me happen on it with thee." So saying, he took the amulet and departed.

As for me, I repaired to Baghdad, carrying all my wealth with me, and took up my abode in the house which I had occupied aforetime. On the morrow, as soon as it was light, I donned my clothes and betook myself to the house of Tahir ibn el Alaa, so haply I might see her whom I loved, for the love of her had never ceased to increase upon my heart. When I came to the house, I saw the balcony broken down and the lattice stopped up; so I stood awhile, pondering my case and the shifts of time, till there came up a serving-man and I questioned him, saying, "What hath God done with Tahir ibn el Alaa?" He answered, "O my brother, he hath repented to God the Most High [and renounced his unlawful trade]." Quoth I, "What was the cause of his repentance?" And he said, "O my brother, in such a year there came to him a merchant, by name Aboulhusn the Omani, who abode with his daughter awhile, till his money was all spent, when the old man turned him out, broken-hearted. Now the girl loved him with an exceeding love, and when she was parted from him, she sickened of a sore sickness and came nigh upon death. When her father knew how it was with her, he sought for Aboulhusn high and low, promising whoso should bring

[1] Lit. the possessor, *i.e.* the demon by whom she was supposed to be possessed.

him to him a hundred thousand dinars; but none could find him nor come on any trace of him; and she is now at death's door." "And how is it with her father?" asked I. Quoth the servant, "He hath sold all his girls, for stress of that which hath befallen him, and repented to God the Most High."

Then said I, "What wouldst thou say to him who should direct thee to Aboulhusn the Omani?" And he answered, saying, "I conjure thee by Allah, O my brother, that thou do this and quicken my poverty!"[1] "Go to her father," rejoined I, "and say to him, 'Thou owest me the reward for good news, for that Aboulhusn the Omani standeth at the door.'" With this he set off running, as he were a mule loosed from the mill, and presently came back, accompanied by Tahir himself, who no sooner saw me than he returned to his house and gave the man a hundred thousand dinars, with which he went away, calling down blessings on me. Then the old man came up to me and embraced me and wept, saying, "O my lord, where hast thou been absent all this while? Indeed, my daughter is perished by reason of her separation from thee; but come with me into the house." So we entered and he prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High, saying, "Praised be God who hath reunited us with thee!"

Then he went in to his daughter and said to her, "God healeth thee of this sickness." "O my father," answered she, "I shall never be whole of my sickness, except I look upon the face of Aboulhusn." Quoth he, "If thou wilt eat a morsel and go to the bath, I will bring thee in company with him." "Is it true that thou sayest?" asked she; and he replied, "By the Great God, it is true!" "By Allah," rejoined she, "if I look upon his face, I shall have no need of eating!" Then said he to his

[1] Likening poverty to death, in true Oriental fashion.

servant, "Bring in thy lord." So I entered, and when she saw me, she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, recited the following verse:

Lo, God hath deigned to reunite the separated twain, For all in very sooth they deemed they ne'er should meet again.

Then she sat up and said, "By Allah, O my lord, I had not thought to see thy face again, but if it were in sleep!" And she embraced me and wept. Then said she, "O father mine, now will I eat and drink." The old man rejoiced in this and brought her meat and drink and we ate and drank. After this, I abode with them awhile, till she was restored to her former beauty, when her father sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and let draw up the contract of marriage between her and me and made a great bride-feast; and she is my wife to this day and this is my son by her.' So saying, he went away and returned with a boy of marvellous beauty and symmetry, to whom said he, 'Kiss the earth before the Commander of the Faithful.' So he kissed the earth before the Khalif, who marvelled at his beauty and glorified his Creator; after which he departed with his company, saying to the vizier, 'O Jaafer, verily this is none other than a marvellous thing, never heard I of aught more extraordinary.'

When he was seated in the palace of the Khalifate, he said to Mesrour, 'Bring the year's tribute of Bassora and Baghdad and Khorassan and lay it in this recess.' So he laid the three tributes together and they were a vast sum of money, whose tale none might tell save God. Then the Khalif bade draw a curtain before the recess and said to Jaafer, 'Fetch me Aboulhusn.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer and going forth, returned presently with the Omani, who kissed the ground before the Khalif, fearing lest he had sent for him, because of some fault

that he had committed, whenas he was with him in his house. Then said Er Reshid, 'Harkye, O Omani!' and he replied, 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful! May God still bestow his favours upon thee!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Draw back yonder curtain.' So Aboulhusn drew back the curtain from the recess and was confounded at the mass of money he saw there. 'O Aboulhusn,' said Er Reshid, 'whether is the more, this money or that thou didst lose by the amulet[1]?' And he answered, 'This is many times the greater, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bear witness, all ye who are present, that I give this money to this young man.' Aboulhusn kissed the earth and was abashed and wept before the Khalif for excess of joy.

Now, when he wept, the tears ran down upon his cheeks and the blood returned to its place and his face became as it were the moon on the night of its full. Whereupon quoth the Khalif, 'There is no god but God! Glory be to Him who decreeth change upon change and is Himself the Everlasting One, that changeth not!' So saying, he fetched a mirror and showed Aboulhusn his face therein, which when he saw, he prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High. Then the Khalif bade transport the money to Aboulhusn's house and charged the latter absent not himself from him, so he might enjoy his company. Accordingly he paid him frequent visits, till Er Reshid was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High; and glory be to Him who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the Seen and the Unseen!

[1] *i.e.* by selling it for thirty thousand dinars, when, by holding back, he might have got a million for it.

IBRAHIM AND JEMILEH.

El Khesib, lord of Egypt, had a son named Ibrahim, there was none goodlier than he, and of his fear for him, he suffered him not to go forth, save to the Friday prayers. One day, as he was returning from the mosque, he happened upon an old man, with whom were many books; so he lighted down from his horse and seating himself beside him, fell to turning over the books and examining them. In [one of] them he saw the portrait of a woman, that all but spoke, never was seen on the earth's face a fairer than she; and this captivated his reason and confounded his wit. So he said to the old man, 'O elder, sell me this picture.' And the bookseller kissed the earth before him and said, 'O my lord, [it is thine,] without price.'[1] Ibrahim gave him a hundred dinars and taking the book in which was the picture, fell to gazing upon it and weeping night and day, abstaining from meat and drink and sleep.

Then said he in himself, 'If I ask the bookseller of the painter of the picture, belike he will tell me; and if the original be on life, I will cast about to win to her; but, if it be an imaginary portrait, I will leave doting upon it and torment myself no more for a thing that hath no reality.' So, on the following Friday, he betook himself to the bookseller, who rose to receive him, and said to him, 'O uncle, tell me who painted this picture.' And he answered, saying, 'O my lord, a man of the people of Baghdad painted it, by name Aboulcasim es Sendelani; [he dwells] in a quarter called El Kerkh; but I know not of whom it is the portrait.' So Ibrahim left him and

Night dccccliii.

[1] The customary formula of reply of the Oriental seller to a purchaser of superior rank, meaning, "I leave the price to thy generosity."

returned to the palace, after praying the Friday prayers, without acquainting any of his household with his case.

Then he took a bag and filling it with gold and jewels, to the value of thirty thousand dinars, waited till the morning, when he went out, without telling any, and presently overtook a caravan. Here he saw a Bedouin and said to him, 'O uncle, how far am I from Baghdad?' 'O my son,' replied the other, 'what hast thou to do with Baghdad? Verily, between thee and it is two months' journey.' Quoth Ibrahim, 'O uncle, an thou wilt bring me to Baghdad, I will give thee a hundred dinars and this mare under me, that is worth other thousand.' ['Agreed!'] answered the Bedouin. 'And God be witness of what we say! Thou shalt not lodge this night but with me.'

Ibrahim agreed to this and passed the night with him. At break of day, the Bedouin took him and fared on with him in haste by a near road, in his eagerness for the promised reward; nor did they leave journeying till they came to the walls of Baghdad, when he said, 'Praised be God for safety! O my lord, this is Baghdad.' Whereat Ibrahim rejoiced with an exceeding joy and alighting from the mare, gave her to the Bedouin, together with the hundred dinars. Then he took the bag and [entering the city], walked on, enquiring for the Kerkh quarter and the abiding-place of the merchants, till destiny led him to a by-street, wherein were ten houses, five facing five, and at the farther end was a [gateway with a] two-leaved door and a ring of silver. In the porch stood two benches of marble, spread with the finest carpets, and on one of them sat a man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in sumptuous apparel and attended by five white slaves, like moons.

When Ibrahim saw the street, he knew it by the description the bookseller had given him; so he saluted the man, who returned his greeting and bidding him welcome,

made him sit down and asked him of his case. Quoth Ibrahim, 'I am a stranger and desire of thy favour that thou look me out a house in this street where I may take up my abode.' With this the other cried out, saying, 'Ho, Ghezaleh!' And there came forth to him a slave-girl, who said, 'At thy service, O my lord!' 'Take some servants,' said her master, 'and go to such a house and clean it and furnish it with all that is needful for this well-favoured youth.'

So she went forth and did as he bade her; whilst the old man took the youth and showed him the house; and he said, 'O my lord, what is the rent of this house?' 'O bright of face,' answered the other, 'I will take no rent of thee, what while thou abidest there.' Ibrahim thanked him for this and the old man called another slave-girl, whereupon there came forth to him a damsel like the sun, to whom said he, 'Bring chess.' So she brought it and one of the servants set the board; whereupon said his host to Ibrahim, 'Wilt thou play with me?' And he answered, 'Yes.' So they played several games and Ibrahim beat him. 'Well done, O youth!' exclaimed the other. 'Thou art indeed perfect in qualities. By Allah, there is not one in Baghdad can beat me, and yet thou hast beaten me!'

When they had made ready the house and furnished it with all that was needful, the old man delivered the keys to Ibrahim and said to him, 'O my lord, wilt thou not enter my house and honour me by eating of my bread?' He assented and entering with him, found it a handsome and goodly house, decorated with gold and full of all manner pictures and furniture and other things, such as the tongue availeth not to set out. The old man welcomed him and called for food, whereupon they brought a table of the make of Senaa of Yemen and spread it with all manner rare meats, than which there

was nought costlier nor more delicious. So Ibrahim ate till he was satisfied, after which he washed his hands and proceeded to look at the house and furniture. Presently, he turned to look for the leather bag, but found it not and said, [in himself,] 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I have eaten a morsel worth a dirhem or two and have lost a bag wherein is thirty thousand dinars' worth: but I seek aid of God.' And he was silent and could not speak, for the greatness of his trouble.

Night dccccliv.

Presently his host brought the chess and said to him, 'Wilt thou play with me?' And he said, 'Yes.' So they played and the old man beat him. 'Well done!' said Ibrahim and left playing and rose: whereupon said his host, 'What ails thee, O youth?' And he answered, 'I want the bag.' So the old man rose and brought it out to him, saying, 'Here it is, O my lord. Wilt thou now return to playing with me?' 'Yes,' replied Ibrahim. So they played and the young man beat him. Quoth the other, 'When thy thought was occupied with the bag, I beat thee: but, now I have brought it back to thee, thou beatest me. But, tell me, O my son, what countryman art thou.' 'I am from Egypt,' answered Ibrahim. 'And what is the cause of thy coming to Baghdad?' asked the other; whereupon Ibrahim brought out the portrait and said to him, 'Know, O uncle, that I am the son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt, and I saw with a bookseller this picture, which ravished my wit. I asked him who painted it and he said, "He who wrought it is a man, Aboulcasim es Sendelani by name, who dwells in a street called the Street of Saffron in the Kerkh quarter of Baghdad." So I took with me somewhat of money and came hither alone, none knowing of my case; and I desire of the fulness of thy bounty that thou direct me to Aboulcasim, so I may ask him of the manner of his painting this

picture and whose portrait it is. And whatsoever he desireth of me, that will I give him.'

'By Allah, O my son,' said his host, 'I am Aboulcasim es Sendelani, and this is an extraordinary thing how fate hath thus led thee to me!' When Ibrahim heard this, he rose to him, and embraced him and kissed his head and hands, saying, 'God on thee, tell me whose portrait it is.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the other and rising, opened a closet and brought out a number of books, in which he had painted the same picture. Then said he, 'Know, O my son, that the original of this portrait is the daughter of my father's brother, whose name is Aboulleith. She dwells in Bassora, of which city her father is governor, and her name is Jemileh. There is not a fairer than she on the face of the earth; but she is averse from men and cannot hear speak of them in her company. Now I once repaired to my uncle, to the intent that he should marry her to me, and was lavish of wealth to him; but he would not consent; and when his daughter knew of my offer, she was enraged and sent to me to say, amongst other things, "If thou have wit, tarry not in this city; else wilt thou perish and thy blood will be on thine own head." For she is a virago of viragoes. So I left Bassora, broken-hearted, and limned this portrait of her in books and scattered them abroad in various countries, so haply they might fall into the hands of a comely youth like thyself and he contrive to win to her and peradventure she might fall in love with him, purposing to take a promise of him that, when he should have gotten possession of her, he would show her to me, though but for a moment from afar off.'

When Ibrahim heard this, he bowed his head awhile in thought and Es Sendelani said to him, 'O my son, I have not seen in Baghdad a comelier than thou, and meseems that, when she sees thee, she will love thee. Art thou

willing, therefore, in case thou foregather with her and get possession of her, to show her to me, if but for a moment from afar?' 'Yes,' answered Ibrahim, and the painter rejoined, 'This being so, abide with me till thou set out.' 'I cannot tarry longer,' replied the youth; 'for my heart is all afire with love of her.' 'Have patience three days,' said Es Sendelani, 'till I fit thee out a ship, wherein thou mayst go to Bassora.' So he waited whilst the painter equipped him a ship and stored it with all that he needed of meat and drink and so forth.

When the three days were past, he said to Ibrahim, 'Make ready for the voyage; for I have equipped thee a ship and furnished it with all thou requirest. The ship is my property and the sailors are of my servants. In the vessel is what will suffice thee till thy return, and I have charged the crew to serve thee till thou come back in safety.' So Ibrahim took leave of his host and embarking, sailed down the river till he came to Bassora, where he took out a hundred dinars and offered them to the sailors; but they said, 'We have gotten our hire of our master.' 'Take this by way of largesse,' answered he; 'and I will not acquaint him therewith.' So they took it and blessed him.

Then he landed and entering the town, enquired for the merchants' lodging and was directed to a khan called the Khan of Hemdan. So he betook himself to the market where stood the khan in question, and all eyes were attracted to him by reason of his exceeding beauty and grace. He entered the khan, with one of the sailors in his company, and enquiring for the porter, was directed to an old man of reverend aspect. He saluted him and the porter returned his greeting; after which Ibrahim said to him, 'O uncle, hast thou a decent chamber?' 'Yes,' answered he and taking him and the sailor, opened to them an elegant chamber, decorated with gold, and said,

'O youth, this chamber befitteth thee.' Ibrahim pulled out two dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'Take these as key-money.'[1] And the porter took them and blessed him.

Then Ibrahim sent the sailor back to the ship and entered the chamber, where the porter abode with him and served him, saying, 'O my lord, thy coming hath brought us joy.' Ibrahim gave him a dinar, saying, 'Buy us bread and meat and wine and sweetmeats with this.' So the porter went to the market and buying ten dirhems' worth of victual, brought it back to Ibrahim and gave him the other ten dirhems. But he said to him, 'Spend them on thyself;' whereat the porter rejoiced mightily. Then he ate a cake of bread, with a little seasoning,[2] and gave the rest to the porter, saying, 'Carry this to the people of thy household.' So the porter carried it to his family and said to them, 'Methinketh there is not on the face of the earth a more generous than the young man who is come to lodge with us this day, nor yet a pleasanter than he. If he abide with us, we shall grow rich.'

Then he returned to Ibrahim and found him weeping; so he sat down and began to rub[3] his feet and kiss them, saying, 'O my lord, why weepest thou? May God not make thee weep!' 'O uncle,' said Ibrahim, 'I have a mind to drink with thee this night.' And the porter answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he gave him ten dinars, saying, 'Buy us fruit and wine and dessert[4] and flowers

[1] A gratuity given to the porter, on taking possession of a room or house. Cf. the French *denier à Dieu*, given to the *concierge* on like occasions.

[2] The Arabs apply the word *udm* (here translated "seasoning"), in the same sense as the Scotch word "kitchen," to anything savoury eaten with bread or rice.

[3] Lit. to knead or shampoo (*hebes*).

[4] *i.e.* dried fruits (as opposed to fresh) and confections.

and five fat fowls and bring me a lute.' The porter went out and buying what he had ordered, said to his wife, 'Strain this wine and cook us this food and look thou dress it daintily, for this young man overwhelms us with his bounties.' So she did as he bade her, to the utmost of desire; and he took the victuals and carried them to Ibrahim. Then they ate and drank and made merry; and Ibrahim wept and repeated the following verses:

Night DCCCCLV.

O friend, though I should barter life for travail all in vain, And all my wealth and all the world and that it doth contain
And all the meads of Paradise, to boot, against one hour Of union, my heart to buy at such a price were fain.

Then he gave a great sob and fell down in a swoon. The porter sighed, and when he came to himself, he said to him, 'O my lord, what is it makes thee weep and who is she to whom thou alludest in these verses? Indeed, she cannot be but as dust to thy feet.' Ibrahim made him no answer, but, rising, brought out a parcel of the richest women's clothes and said to him, 'Take this to thy harem.' So he carried it to his wife and she returned with him to the young man's lodging and found him weeping, whereupon quoth the porter to him, 'Verily, thou breakest our hearts! Tell us what fair one thou desirest, and she shall be thy handmaid.' 'O uncle,' answered he, 'know that I am the son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt, and I am enamoured of Jemileh, daughter of the lord Aboulleith.' 'Allah! Allah!' exclaimed the porter's wife. 'O my brother, leave this talk, lest any hear of us and we perish. For there is not on the face of the earth a more masterful than she nor may any name to her the name of a man, for she is averse from men. Wherefore, O my son, turn from her to other than her.'

When Ibrahim heard this, he wept sore, and the porter

said to him, 'I have nothing save my life; but that I will venture for thy love and contrive thee a means of bringing thee to thy desire.' Then they went out from him and on the morrow, he betook himself to the bath and donned a suit of royal raiment, after which he returned to his lodging. Presently the porter and his wife came in to him and said, 'Know, O my lord, that there is a hump-backed tailor here who sews for the lady Jemileh. Go thou to him and acquaint him with thy case; peradventure he will put thee in the way of attaining thy desire.'

So Ibrahim arose and betaking himself to the shop of the humpbacked tailor, went in to him and found with him ten white slaves, as they were moons. He saluted them and they returned his greeting and made him sit down; and indeed they rejoiced in him and were amazed at his beauty and grace. Now he had torn his pocket with intent and he said to the hunchback, 'I desire that thou sew me up my pocket.' So the tailor took a needle-ful of silk and sewed up his pocket; whereupon Ibrahim gave him five dinars and returned to his lodging. Quoth the tailor, 'What have I done for this youth, that he should give me five dinars?' And he passed the night, pondering his beauty and generosity.

On the morrow Ibrahim returned to the shop and saluted the tailor, who returned his greeting and welcomed him and made much of him. Then he sat down and said to the hunchback, 'O uncle, sew up my pocket, for I have torn it again.' 'On my head and eyes, O my son,' answered the tailor and sewed it up; whereupon Ibrahim gave him ten dinars and he took them, amazed at his beauty and generosity. Then said he, 'By Allah, O youth, needs must there be a reason for this conduct of thine, for this is no matter of sewing up a pocket. Tell me the truth of thy case. If thou be enamoured of one of these boys, by Allah, there is not among them a

comelier than thou, for they are all as the dust of thy feet; and behold, they are all thy slaves and at thy disposal. Or if it be other than this, tell me.' 'O uncle,' replied Ibrahim, 'this is no place for talk, for my case is strange and my affair extraordinary.' 'If it be so,' rejoined the tailor, 'come with me to a privy place.' So saying, he took the youth by the hand and carrying him into a chamber behind the shop, said, 'Now tell me.'

So Ibrahim related his whole story to the tailor, who was amazed at his speech and said, 'O my son, fear God [and have mercy] on thyself, for she of whom thou speakest is a virago and averse from men. Wherefore, O my brother, do thou guard thy tongue, or thou wilt destroy thyself.' When Ibrahim heard the hunchback's words, he wept sore and clinging to the tailor's skirts, said, 'Help me, O my lord, or I am a dead man; for I have left my kingdom and the kingdom of my father and grandfather and am become a stranger and lonely in the lands; nor can I endure without her.' When the tailor saw how it was with him, he had compassion on him and said, 'O my son, I have but my life and that I will venture for thy love, for thou makest my heart ache. [Come again] to-morrow [and meanwhile] I will contrive thee somewhat whereby thy heart shall be solaced.' Ibrahim called down blessings on him and returning to the khan, told the porter what the tailor had said, and he answered, 'Indeed, he hath dealt kindly with thee.'

Next morning, the youth donned his richest clothes and taking a purse of money, repaired to the tailor and saluted him. Then he sat down and said, 'O uncle, fulfil thy promise to me.' Quoth the hunchback, 'Arise forthright and take three fat fowls and three ounces of sugar-candy and two small jugs of wine and a cup. Lay all these in a bag and to-morrow, after the morning-prayers, take boat with them, bidding the boatman row thee down

the river below Bassora. If he say to thee, "I cannot go farther than a parasang [from the city]," do thou answer, "As thou wilt;" but, when he shall have come so far, tempt him with money to carry thee farther; and the first garden thou wilt see after this will be that of the lady Jemileh. Go up to the gate and there thou wilt see two high steps, carpeted with brocade, and seated thereon a hunchback like unto me. Do thou complain to him of thy case and solicit his favour: it may be he will have compassion on thee and bring thee to the sight of her, though but for a moment from afar. This is all I can do for thee; and except he be moved to pity for thee, we are dead men, thou and I. This then is my counsel, and the matter rests with God the Most High.' Quoth Ibrahim, 'I seek aid of God; what He wills, is; and there is no power and no virtue save in Him!' Then he returned to his lodging and taking the things the tailor had named, laid them in a small bag.

On the morrow, as soon as it was day, he went down to the bank of the Tigris, where he found a boatman asleep; so he awoke him and giving him ten dinars, bade him row him down the river below Bassora. 'O my lord,' answered the man, '[it must be] on condition that I go no farther than a parasang; for if I overpass that distance by a span, I am a lost man, and thou too.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' said Ibrahim. So he took him and dropped down the river with him till he drew near the garden, when he said to him, 'O my son, I can go no farther; for, if I overpass this limit, we are both dead men.' Whereupon Ibrahim pulled out other ten dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'Take this spending-money and better thy case therewithal.' The boatman was ashamed to refuse him and fared on with him, saying, 'I commit the affair to God the Most High!' When they came to the garden, the youth arose, in his joy, whilst the boat was yet a spear's cast

Night dcccclvi.

from the land, and springing ashore, cast himself down, whilst the boatman turned and fled.

Then Ibrahim went up to the garden-gate, which stood open, and saw in the porch a couch of ivory, whereon sat a humpbacked man of pleasant favour, clad in gold-laced clothes and bearing in his hand a mace of silver, plated with gold. So he hastened up to him and seizing his hand, kissed it; whereupon quoth the hunchback, 'O my son, who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' And indeed, when he saw the youth, he was amazed at his beauty. 'O uncle,' answered Ibrahim, 'I am an ignorant boy and a stranger;' and he wept. The hunchback took pity on him and taking him up on the couch, wiped away his tears and said to him, 'No harm shall come to thee. If thou be in debt, may God quit thy debt; and if thou be in fear, may He appease thy fear!' 'O uncle,' replied Ibrahim, 'I am neither in fear nor in debt, but have wealth in plenty, thanks to God.' 'Then, O my son,' rejoined the other, 'what is thine occasion, that thou venturest thyself and thy beauty to a place, wherein is destruction?'

So he told him his story and discovered to him his case, whereupon he bowed his head awhile, then said to him, 'Was it the humpbacked tailor who directed thee to me?' 'Yes,' answered Ibrahim, and the keeper said, 'This is my brother, and he is a blessed man. But, O my son, had not the love of thee gotten hold upon my heart and had I not taken compassion on thee, verily thou wert lost, thou and my brother and the porter of the khan and his wife. For know that this garden hath not its like on the face of the earth and that it is called the Garden of the Pearl, nor hath any entered it in all my life, except the Sultan and myself and its mistress Jemileh; and I have dwelt here twenty years and never yet saw any else come hither. Every forty days the lady Jemileh comes hither in

a bark and lands in the midst of her women, under a canopy of satin, whose skirts ten damsels hold up with hooks of gold, whilst she enters, and I see nothing of her. Nevertheless, I have but my life and I will venture it for thy sake.'

Ibrahim kissed his hands and the keeper said to him, 'Abide with me, till I contrive somewhat for thee.' Then he took him by the hand and carried him into the garden, which when he saw, he deemed it Paradise, for therein were trees intertwining and tall palms and waters welling and birds carolling with various voices. Presently, the keeper brought him to a pavilion and said to him, 'This is where the lady Jemileh sitteth.' So he examined it and found it of the rarest of pleasure-places, full of all manner paintings in gold and ultramarine. It had four doors, to which one mounted by five steps, and in its midst was a basin of water, to which led down steps of gold, set with precious stones. Midmost the pool was a fountain of gold, with figures, large and small, and water pouring from their mouths; and when, by reason of the issuing forth of the water, they piped and whistled in various tones, it seemed to the hearer as though he were in Paradise. Round the pavilion ran a channel[1] of water, with conduits[2] of silver, and it was covered with brocade. To the left of the pavilion was a lattice of silver, giving upon a green park, wherein were all manner wild cattle and gazelles and hares, and on the right hand was another lattice, overlooking a meadow full of birds of all sorts,

[1] Syn. water-wheel (*sakiyeh*).

[2] Syn. water-pots (*catwadis*) belonging to a water-wheel. The whole of this description of the pavilion and its environs is very confused and (probably) corrupt. The story of Ibrahim and Jemileh is omitted from the Breslau Text of the work, and I cannot therefore avail myself of this latter for the purpose of collation and correction, as in innumerable other instances.

warbling in various voices and bewildering the hearers with delight.

The youth was ravished at all he saw and sat down in the doorway by the gardener, who said to him, 'How deemest thou of my garden?' Quoth Ibrahim, 'It is the Paradise of the world.' Whereat the gardener laughed and rising, was absent awhile and presently returned with a tray, full of fowls and quails and sweetmeats of sugar and other dainties, which he set before Ibrahim, saying, 'Eat thy fill.' So he ate till he had enough, whereat the keeper rejoiced and said, 'By Allah, this is the fashion of kings and kings' sons!' Then said he, 'O Ibrahim, what hast thou in yonder bag?' So he opened it before him and the keeper said, 'Take it with thee; it will serve thee when the lady Jemileh cometh; for, when once she is come, I shall not be able to bring thee food.'

Then he rose and taking the youth by the hand, brought him to a place over against the pavilion, where he made him a bower among the trees and said to him, 'Get thee up here, and when she comes, thou wilt see her and she will not see thee. When she sings, drink thou to her singing, and when she departs, God willing, thou shalt return in safety whence thou camest. This is the best I can do for thee and on God be our dependence!' Ibrahim thanked him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade him. Then he laid the bag in the bower and the keeper said to him, 'O Ibrahim, walk about and take thy pleasure in the garden and eat of its fruits, for thy mistress's coming is appointed for to-morrow.' So he took his pleasure in the garden and ate of its fruits; after which he passed the night with the keeper.

When the morning arose and gave forth its light and shone, he prayed the morning-prayer and presently the keeper came to him with a pale face, and said to him, 'Rise, O my son, and go up into the bower; for the slave-

girls are come, to set the place in order, and she cometh after them; and beware lest thou spit or sneeze or blow thy nose; else we are dead men, thou and I.' So Ibrahim rose and went up into the bower, whilst the keeper went away, saying, 'God grant thee safety, O my son!'

Night dcccclviii.

Presently up came four slave-girls, whose like none ever saw, and entering the pavilion, put off their clothes and washed it. Then they sprinkled it with rose-water and incensed it with ambergris and aloes-wood and spread it with brocade. After these came other fifty damsels, with instruments of music, and amongst them Jemileh, within a canopy of red brocade, the skirts whereof the slave-girls bore up with hooks of gold, till she had entered the pavilion, so that Ibrahim saw nought of her nor of her dress. So he said in himself, 'By Allah, all my labour is lost! But needs must I wait to see how the case will be.' Then the damsels brought meat and drink and they ate and drank and washed their hands, after which they set her a stool and she sat down. Then they all played on instruments of music and sang with ravishing voices, without compare.

Presently, out came an old woman, a duenna, and clapped her hands and danced, whilst the girls pulled her hither and thither, till the curtain was lifted and out came Jemileh, laughing. She was clad in [costly] robes and ornaments, and on her head was a crown set with pearls and jewels. About her neck she wore a necklace of pearls and her waist was clasped with a girdle of chrysolite bugles, with tassels[1] of rubies and pearls. The damsels kissed the earth before her, and when Ibrahim saw her, he took leave of his senses and his wit was dazed and his thought confounded for amazement at the sight of loveliness whose like is not on the face of the earth. He fell into a swoon and coming to himself, weeping-eyed, recited the following verses:

[1] Lit. cords.

I see thee nor mine eyes I shut, lest for a space My lids should veil from me the vision of thy face;
For, though with every glance I gazed on thee for e'er, Mine eyes might not suffice thy beauties to embrace.

Then said the old woman to the girls, 'Let ten of you arise and dance and sing.' And Ibrahim said in himself, 'I wish the lady Jemileh would dance.' When the damsels had made an end of their dance, they came round the princess and said to her, 'O my lady, we would have thee dance amongst us, so the measure of our joy may be filled, for never saw we a more delightful day than this.' Quoth Ibrahim to himself, 'Doubtless the gates of heaven are open and God hath granted my prayer.'[1]

Then the damsels kissed her feet and said to her, 'By Allah, we never saw thee light of heart as to-day!' Nor did they cease to importune her, till she put off her [outer] clothes and abode in a shift of cloth of gold, broidered with various jewels, discovering breasts that stood out like pomegranates and unveiling a face as it were the moon on the night of its full. Then she began to dance, and Ibrahim beheld motions whose like he had never in his life seen, for she showed such rare skill and wonderful invention, that she made men forget the dancing of the bubbles in the wine-cups and called to mind the inclining of the turbans from the heads; even as saith of her the poet:

As she would, she was created, after such a wise that lo, She in beauty's mould was fashioned, perfect, neither less nor mo'.
'Tis as if she had been moulded out of water of pure pearls; In each member of her beauty is a very moon, I trow.

[1] According to Muslim tradition, when the gates of heaven are opened (as on the Night of Power), all prayers are granted. See note, Vol. V. p. 314, where, by the way, the 26th night of Ramazan is (by a clerical error, not discovered in time for correction) omitted from the list of nights one of which is supposed to be the Night of Power.

And as saith another:

A dancer, like a willow-wand her shape; her movements sweet When I behold, for ravishment my soul is like to fleet.
Nor this nor t'other foot of her rests aye, when she doth dance; 'Tis as the fire within my heart were underneath her feet.

As he gazed upon her, she chanced to look up and saw him, whereupon her face changed and she said to her women, 'Sing ye till I come back to you.' Then, taking up a knife half a cubit long, she made towards him, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

When Ibrahim saw this, he [well-nigh] lost his wits; but, when she drew near him and her eyes fell upon his face, the knife dropped from her hand, and she exclaimed, 'Glory to Him who turneth hearts!' Then said she to him, 'O youth, be of good cheer, for thou art safe from that thou fearest!' Whereupon Ibrahim fell to weeping and she to wiping away his tears with her hand and saying, 'O youth, tell me who thou art, and what brought thee hither.' He kissed the earth before her and clung to her skirt; and she said, 'No harm shall come to thee; for, by Allah, no male hath ever filled mine eyes[1] but thyself! Tell me, then, who thou art.'

So he told her his story from first to last, whereat she marvelled and said to him, 'O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, tell me if thou be Ibrahim ben el Khesib?' 'I am,' answered he, and she threw herself upon him, saying, 'O my lord, it was thou madest me averse from men; for, when I heard that there was in the land of Egypt a youth than whom there was no goodlier on the face of the earth, I fell in love with thee by report and my heart became enamoured of thee, for that which was told me of thy

[1] *i.e.* none hath ever pleased me.

surpassing comeliness, so that I was, in respect of thee, even as saith the poet:

My ear my eye prevented in loving him, trow I; For whiles the ear, it chances, doth love before the eye.

So praised be God who hath shown me thy face! But, by Allah, had it been other than thou, I had crucified the keeper of the garden and the porter of the khan and the tailor and him who had recourse to them! But how shall I contrive for somewhat thou mayst eat, without the knowledge of my women?' Quoth Ibrahim, 'I have here what we may eat and drink.' And he opened the bag before her. She took a fowl and began to feed him and he to feed her; which when he saw, it seemed to him that this was a dream. Then he brought out wine and they drank, what while the damsels sang on; nor did they leave to do thus from morn to noon, when she rose and said, 'Go now and get thee a boat and await me in such a place, till I come to thee; for I have no patience left to brook separation from thee.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I have with me a ship of my own, whose crew are in my hire, and they await me.' 'This is as we would have it,' rejoined she and returning to her women, said to them, 'Come, let us go back to our palace.' 'Why should we return now,' asked they, 'seeing that we use to abide here three days?' Quoth she, 'I feel an exceeding oppression in myself, as I were sick, and I fear lest this increase upon me.'

Night DCCCLVIII.

So they answered, 'We hear and obey,' and donning their clothes, went down to the river-bank and embarked; whereupon the keeper of the garden came up to Ibrahim and said to him, knowing not what had happened, 'O Ibrahim, thou hast not had the luck to enjoy the sight of her, and I fear lest she have seen thee, for it is her custom to abide here three days.' 'She saw me not, nor I her,' replied Ibrahim; 'for she came not forth of the

pavilion.' 'True, O my son,' rejoined the keeper; 'for, had she seen thee, we were both dead men: but tarry with me till she come again next week, and thou shalt see her and take thy fill of looking on her.' 'O my lord,' replied the prince, 'I have with me good and fear for it. Moreover, I left men behind me and I fear lest they take advantage of my absence.' 'O my son,' said the keeper, 'it is grievous to me to part with thee;' and he embraced him and bade him farewell.

Then Ibrahim returned to the khan where he lodged, and foregathering with the doorkeeper, took of him his good [that he had left with him]. Quoth the latter, 'Good news, if it be the will of God!'[1] But Ibrahim said, 'I found no way to my desire, and now I am minded to return to my people.' Whereupon the porter wept; then taking up his goods, he carried them to the ship and bade him farewell. Ibrahim repaired to the place which Jemileh had appointed him and awaited her there till it grew dark, when she came up, disguised as a swashbuckler, with a round beard and her waist bound with a girdle. In one hand she held a bow and arrows and in the other a drawn sword, and she said to him, 'Art thou Ibrahim, son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt?' 'I am he,' answered the prince; and she said, 'What good-for-nought art thou, that comest to debauch kings' daughters? Come: speak with the Sultan.'[2]

Therewith he fell down in a swoon and the sailors well-nigh died in their skins for fear; but, when she saw what had betided her lover, she pulled off her beard and throwing down her sword, unbound the girdle from her waist, whereupon he knew her for the lady Jemileh and said to her, 'By Allah, thou hast rent my heart in sunder!' Then said he to the boatmen, 'Hasten the vessel's course.'

[1] A question, *i.e.* I trust thou hast good news?

[2] Ordinary formula of summons before a king or magistrate.

So they spread the sail and putting off, fared on with all diligence; nor was it many days before they reached Baghdad, where they saw a ship lying by the river-bank. When the sailors saw them, they cried out to the crew, saying, 'Ho, such an one and such an one, we give you joy of your safety!' Then they drove their ship against Ibrahim's and he looked and beheld Aboulcasim es Sendelani in the other boat.

When the latter saw them, he exclaimed, 'This is what I sought,' and he said to Ibrahim, 'Praised be God for safety! Hast thou accomplished thine errand?' 'Yes,' answered the young man. Now Aboulcasim had a flambeau before him; so he brought it near unto Ibrahim's boat,[1] and when Jemileh saw him, she was troubled and her colour changed: but, when he saw her, he said, 'Go ye in God's safe keeping. I am bound to Bassora, on an errand to the Sultan; but the gift is for him who is present.'[2] Then he brought out a box of sweetmeats, wherein was henbane, and threw it into the boat: whereupon quoth Ibrahim to Jemileh, 'O solace of mine eyes, eat of this.' But she wept and said, 'O Ibrahim, knowest thou who that is?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'it is such an one.' Quoth she, 'He is my father's brother's son and sought me aforetime in marriage of my father; but I would not accept of him. And now he is gone to Bassora and most like he will tell my father of us.' 'O my lady,' rejoined Ibrahim, 'he will not reach Bassora, till we are at Mosul.' But they knew not what lurked for them in the secret purpose of God.

Then he ate of the sweetmeat, but hardly had it reached his stomach when he smote the ground with his head. [He lay insensible till] near dawn, when he sneezed and the henbane issued from his nostrils. With this, he opened his eyes and found himself naked and cast out

[1] That he might see Jemileh.

[2] A popular saying.

among ruins; so he buffeted his face and said, 'Doubtless this is a trick that Es Sendelani hath played me.' And he knew not whither he should go, for he had upon him nothing but his trousers. However, he rose and walked on a little, till he espied the prefect of police coming towards him, with a company of men with swords and staves; whereat he took fright and seeing a ruined bath, hid himself there. Presently, his foot stumbled at something; so he put his hand on it, and it became befouled with blood. He wiped his hand upon his trousers, unknowing what had befouled it, and put it out a second time, when, behold, it fell upon a dead body, and the head came up in his hand. He threw it down, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High!' and took refuge in one of the cabinets of the bath.

Presently, the prefect stopped at the door of the bath and said, 'Enter this place and search.' So ten of them entered with cressets, and Ibrahim of his fear retired behind a wall and looking upon the dead body, saw it to be that of a young lady with a face like the full moon. She was clad in costly raiment and her head lay on one side and her body on the other; and when he saw this, terror got hold upon his heart. Then the prefect of police entered and said, 'Search the corners of the bath.' So they entered the place where Ibrahim was, and one of them, seeing him, came up to him with a knife, half a cubit long, in his hand. When he drew near him, he said, 'Glory be to God, the Creator of this fair face! O youth, whence art thou?' Then he took him by the hand and said, 'O youth, why slewest thou this woman?' 'By Allah,' replied Ibrahim, 'I slew her not, nor know I who slew her, and I entered not this place but in fear of you!' And he told him his case, saying, 'God on thee, do me no wrong, for I am in concern for myself!' Then he took him and carried him to the prefect, who, seeing the marks

Night dcccclix. of blood on his hands, said, 'This needs no proof: strike off his head.' When Ibrahim heard this, he wept sore and recited the following verses, with the tears streaming from his eyes:

We tread the steps to us of destiny forewrit, For he to whom a way's decreed must needs submit
To walk therein, and he whose death is fore-ordained To be in such a land shall die in none but it.

Then he gave a sob and fell down in a swoon; and the headsman's heart was moved to pity for him and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is no murderer's face!' But the prefect said, 'Strike off his head.' So they seated him on the carpet of blood and bound his eyes; after which the headsman drew his sword and asking leave of the prefect, was about to strike off his head, whilst he cried out, saying, 'Alas, my strangerhood!' when he heard a noise of horse coming up and one cried out, saying, 'Leave him! Stay thy hand, O headsman!'

Now there was for this a rare reason and an extraordinary cause; and it was thus. El Khesib, lord of Egypt, had sent his chamberlain to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid with presents and a letter, saying, 'My son hath been missing this year past, and I hear that he is in Baghdad; wherefore I crave of the bounty of the Vicar of God that he make search for tidings of him and do his endeavour to find him and send him back to me by the chamberlain.' When the Khalif read the letter, he commanded the chief of the police to search out the truth of the matter, and he accordingly proceeded to enquire after Ibrahim, till it was told him that he was at Bassora, whereupon he informed the Khalif, who wrote a letter [to the viceroy] and giving it to the Chamberlain of Egypt, bade him repair to Bassora and take with him a company of the vizier's followers. So, of his solicitude for the son of his lord, the chamberlain set out forthright and

happened [by the way] upon Ibrahim, as he sat upon the carpet of blood.

When the prefect saw the chamberlain, he alighted to him, and the latter said, 'What young man is that and what is his case?' The prefect told him how the matter stood and the chamberlain said (and indeed he knew him not for the son of the Sultan, for that his charms were wasted [and his favour changed] by reason of the much terror and affliction he had suffered), 'Verily this young man hath no murderer's face.' And he bade loose him and bring him to him. So they loosed him and brought him to the chamberlain, who said to him, 'O youth, tell me thy case and how comes this slain woman with thee.' Ibrahim looked at him and knowing him, said to him, 'Out on thee! Dost thou not know me? Am I not Ibrahim, son of thy lord? Belike thou art come in quest of me.'

With this the chamberlain considered him straitly and knowing him right well, threw himself at his feet; which when the prefect saw, his colour changed; and the chamberlain said to him, 'Out on thee, O tyrant! Was it thine intent to kill the son of my master El Khesib, lord of Egypt?' The prefect kissed his skirt, saying, 'O my lord, how should I know him? We found him in this plight and saw the damsel lying slain by his side.' 'Out on thee!' rejoined the chamberlain. 'Thou art not fit for the prefectship. This is a lad of fifteen and he hath not killed a sparrow; so how should he be a murderer? Why didst thou not have patience with him and question him of his case?'

Then the chamberlain and the prefect commanded to make search for the young lady's murderer. So they re-entered the bath and finding him, brought him to the prefect, who carried him to the Khalif and acquainted him with that which had happened. Er Reshid bade put

the murderer to death and sending for Ibrahim, smiled in his face and said to him, 'Tell me thy story and that which hath betided thee.' So he told him his story from first to last, and it was grievous to the Khalif, who called Mesrour, his swordbearer, and said to him, 'Go straightway and fall upon the house of Aboulcasim es Sendelani and bring me him and the young lady.' So he went forth at once and breaking into the house, found Jemileh bound with her hair and nigh upon death. So he loosed her and taking the painter, carried them both to the Khalif, who marvelled at Jemileh's beauty. Then he turned to Es Sendelani and said, 'Take him and cut off his hands, wherewith he beat this young lady; then crucify him and deliver his goods and possessions to Ibrahim.'

They did his bidding, and as they were thus, in came Aboulleith, governor of Bassora, the lady Jemileh's father, seeking aid of the Khalif against Ibrahim ben el Khesib and complaining to him that the latter had taken his daughter. Quoth Er Reshid, 'He hath been the means of delivering her from torture and death.' Then he sent for Ibrahim, and when he came, he said to Aboulleith, 'Wilt thou not accept of this young man, son of the Sultan of Egypt, as husband to thy daughter?' 'Hearkening and obedience [are due] to God and to thee, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aboulleith; whereupon the Khalif summoned the Cadi and the witnesses and married the young lady to Ibrahim. Moreover, he gave him all Es Sendelani's good and equipped him for his return to his own country, where he abode with Jemileh in the utmost of delight and the most perfect of contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to the [Ever-]Living One who dieth not!

ABOULHUSN OF KHORASSAN.

The Khalif El Mutezid Billah[1] was a high-spirited and noble-minded prince; he had in Baghdad six hundred viziers and no whit of the affairs of the folk was hidden from him. He went forth one day, he and Ibn Hemdoun,[2] to divert himself with observing his subjects and hearing the latest news of the folk, and being overtaken with the heats of noonday, they turned aside from the main thoroughfare into a little by-street, at the upper end whereof they saw a handsome and high-builded house, discoursing of its owner with the tongue of praise. They sat down at the gate to rest, and presently out came two servants, as they were moons on their fourteenth night. Quoth one of them to his fellow, 'Would some guest would seek admission! My master will not eat but with guests and we are come to this hour and I have seen no one.'

The Khalif marvelled at their speech and said, 'This is a proof of the hospitality of the master of the house; needs must we go in to him and note his generosity, and this shall be a means of favour betiding him from us.' So he said to the servant, 'Ask leave of thy master for the admission of a company[3] of strangers.' For it was the Khalif's wont, whenas he was minded to observe his subjects, to disguise himself in a merchant's habit. The

[1] Aboulabbas el Mutezid Billah, sixteenth Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, A.D. 892-902.

[2] Hemdan ibn Hemdoun, a well-known noble and warrior of the time, founder of the great house of the Benou Hemdan, the chiefs of which attained to such power and eminence under El Mutezid's successors, as Princes of Mosul, Aleppo, etc.

[3] The Khalif was apparently accompanied by other attendants, besides Ibn Hemdoun.

servant went in and told his master, who rejoiced and rising, came out to them in person. He was a comely and well-favoured man, clad in a tunic of Nishapour [silk] and a gold-laced mantle; and he dripped with scented waters and wore a ring of rubies on his hand. When he saw them, he said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome to the lords who do us the utmost of favour by their coming!' So they entered the house and found it such as would make a man forget home and family, for it was as it were a piece of Paradise. Within it was a garden, full of all kinds of trees, confounding the beholder, and its dwelling-places were furnished with costly furniture. They sat down and the Khalif sat looking at the house and the furniture.

Night dcccclx.

(Quoth Ibn Hemdoun), I looked at the Khalif and saw his countenance change, and being wont to know from his face whether he was pleased or angry, said to myself, 'I wonder what has vexed him.' Then they brought a golden basin and we washed our hands, after which they spread a silken cloth and set thereon a table of bamboo. When the covers were taken off the dishes, we saw therein meats [costly] as the flowers of Spring in the season of their utmost scarcity, in pairs and singly, and the host said, '[Eat,] O my lords, in the name of God! By Allah, hunger pricks me; so favour me by eating of this food, as is the fashion of the noble.'

Then he fell to tearing fowls apart and laying them before us, laughing the while and repeating verses and telling stories and talking gaily with quaint and pleasant sayings such as sorted with the entertainment. We ate and drank, then removed to another room, which confounded the beholder with its beauty and which reeked with exquisite perfumes. Here they brought us a tray of freshly-gathered fruits and delicious sweetmeats, whereat our joys redoubled and our cares ceased. But withal the

Khalif ceased not to wear a frowning face and smiled not at that which gladdened the soul, albeit it was his wont to love mirth and merriment and the putting away of cares, and I knew that he was free from envy and no oppressor. So I said to myself, 'I wonder what is the cause of his moroseness and ill-humour.'

Presently they brought the wine-tray, the uniter of friends, and clarified wine in flagons of gold and crystal and silver, and the host smote with a wand of bamboo on the door of an inner chamber, whereupon it opened and out came three damsels, high-bosomed maids, with faces like the sun at the fourth [hour] of the day, one a lute-player, another a harpist and the third a dancer. Then he set before us fruits and confections and drew between us and the damsels a curtain of brocade, with tassels of silk and rings of gold. The Khalif paid no heed to all this, but said to the host, who knew not who was in his company, 'Art thou noble?' 'No, my lord,' answered he; 'I am but a man of the sons of the merchants and am known among the folk as Aboulhusn Ali, son of Ahmed of Khorassan.'

Quoth the Khalif, 'Dost thou know me, O man?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered he, 'I have no knowledge of either of your worships!' Then said I to him, 'O man, this is the Commander of the Faithful El Mutezid Billah, grandson of El Mutawekkil ala Allah.' Whereupon he rose and kissed the ground before the Khalif, trembling for fear of him. Then said he, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I conjure thee by the virtue of thy pious ancestors, if thou have seen in me any shortcoming or lack of good manners in thy presence, do thou forgive me!' 'As for that which thou hast done with us of hospitality,' replied the Khalif, 'nothing could have exceeded it; and as for that wherewith I have to reproach thee here, if thou tell me the truth respecting it and it

commend itself to my reason, thou shalt be saved from me; but, if thou tell me not the truth, I will take thee with manifest proof and punish thee as I have never yet punished any.'

'God forbid that I should tell thee a lie!' answered the host. 'But what is it that thou reproachest to me, O Commander of the Faithful?' Quoth the Khalif, 'Since I entered thy house and looked upon its goodliness, I have noted the furniture and vessels therein, nay, even to thy clothes, and behold, on all of them is the name of my grandfather, El Mutawekkil ala Allah.'[1] 'Yes,' answered Aboulhusn. 'O Commander of the Faithful (may God protect thee), truth is thine inner and sincerity thine outer garment and none may speak other than truly in thy presence.' The Khalif bade him be seated and said, 'Tell us.' So he sat down and said, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, whom God stablish with His aid and encompass with His bounties, that there is not a richer in Baghdad than am I nor than was my father: but do thou grant me thine ears and eyes and understanding, whilst I expound to thee the cause of that which thou reproachest to me.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Say thy say.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Aboulhusn, 'that my father belonged to the markets of the money-changers and druggists and linendrapers and had in each a shop and an agent and all kinds of goods. Moreover, behind the money-changer's shop he had an apartment, where he might be private, appointing the shop for buying and selling. His wealth was beyond count and limit, but he had no child other than myself, and he loved me and was tenderly solicitous over me. When his last hour was at hand, he called me to him and commended my mother to my care and charged me to fear God the Most High. Then he died, may God have mercy

[1] Tenth Khalif of the house of Abbas, A.D. 849-861.

upon him and continue the Commander of the Faithful [on life!] And I gave myself up to pleasure and eating and drinking and took to myself friends and comrades and boon-companions. My mother used to forbid me from this and to blame me for it, but I would not hear a word from her, till my money was all gone, when I sold my lands and houses and nought was left me save the house in which I now dwell, and it is a goodly house, O Commander of the Faithful.

So I said to my mother, "I wish to sell the house." "O my son," answered she, "if thou sell it, thou wilt be dishonoured and wilt have no place wherein to take shelter." Quoth I, "It is worth five thousand dinars, and with one thousand thereof I will buy me another house and trade with the rest." "Wilt thou sell it to me at that price?" asked she; and I replied, "Yes." Whereupon she went to a coffer and opening it, took out a porcelain vessel, wherein were five thousand dinars. When I saw this, meseemed the house was all gold and she said to me, "O my son, think not that this is of thy father's good. By Allah, it was of my own father's money and I have treasured it up against a time of need; for, in thy father's time, I had no need of it."

I took the money from her and fell again to feasting and merry-making with my friends, without heeding my mother's words and admonitions, till the five thousand dinars came to an end, when I said to her, "I wish to sell the house." "O my son," answered she, "I forbade thee from selling it before, of my knowledge that thou hadst need of it; so how wilt thou sell it a second time?" Quoth I, "Do not multiply words upon me, for I must and will sell it." "Then sell it to me for fifteen thousand dinars," said she, "on condition that I take charge of thine affairs." So I sold her the house at that price and gave up my affairs into her charge, whereupon she sought out

my father's factors and gave each of them a thousand dinars, keeping the rest in her own hands and ordering the outgoings and the incomings. Moreover she gave me money to trade withal and said to me, "Sit thou in thy father's shop." So I took up my abode in the chamber behind the shop in the market of the money-changers, and my friends came and bought of me and I sold to them; whereby I profited well and my wealth increased. When my mother saw me in this fair way, she discovered to me that which she had treasured up of jewels and pearls and gold, and I bought back my houses and lands that I had wasted and my wealth became great as before. I abode thus for some time, and the factors of my father came to me and I gave them goods, and I built me a second chamber behind the shop.

One day, as I sat in my shop, according to my wont, there came up to me a damsel, never saw eyes a fairer than she of favour, and said, "Is this the shop of Aboulhusn Ali ibn Ahmed el Khurasani?" "Yes," answered I. "Where is he?" asked she. "I am he," said I, and indeed my wit was dazed at the excess of her loveliness. She sat down and said to me, "Bid thy servant count me out three hundred dinars." So I bade him give her that sum and he counted it out to her and she took it and went away, leaving me stupefied. Quoth my clerk to me, "Dost thou know her?" And I answered, "No, by Allah!" "Then why," asked he, "didst thou bid me give her the money?" "By Allah," replied I, "I knew not what I said, of my amazement at her beauty and grace!" Then he rose and followed her, without my knowledge, but presently returned, weeping and with the mark of a blow on his face. I asked him what ailed him, and he said, "I followed the damsel, to see whither she went; but, when she was aware of me, she turned and dealt me this blow and all but put out my eye."

After this, a month passed, without my seeing her, and I abode bewildered for love of her; but, at the end of this time, she came again and saluted me, whereat I was like to fly for joy. She asked me how I did and said to me, "Belike thou saidst to thyself, 'What manner of trickstress is this, who hath taken my money and made off'?" "By Allah, O my lady," answered I, "my money and my life are all at thy service!" With this she unveiled herself and sat down to rest, with the jewels and ornaments playing over her face and bosom. Presently, she said to me, "Give me three hundred dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and counted out to her the money. She took it and went away and I said to my servant, "Follow her." So he followed her, but returned mumchance, and some time passed without my seeing her. But, as I was sitting one day, she came up to me and after talking awhile, said to me, "Give me five hundred dinars, for I have occasion for them." I would have said to her, "Why should I give thee my money?" But excess of passion hindered me from speaking; for, whenever I saw her, I trembled in every limb and my colour paled and I forgot what I would have said and became even as saith the poet:

I may not chance to look on her on unexpected wise, But so amazed am I, I scarce can answer, for surprise.

So I counted her out the five hundred dinars and she took them and went away; whereupon I arose and followed her myself, till she came to the jewel-market, where she stopped at a man's shop and took of him a necklace. Then she turned and seeing me, said, "Pay [him] five hundred dinars for me." When the jeweller saw me, he rose to me and made much of me, and I said to him, "Give her the necklace and be the price at my charge." "I hear and obey," replied he, and she took it and went away. I followed her, till she came to the Tigris and

took boat there, whereupon I signed to the ground, as who should say, "I kiss it before thee." She went off, laughing, and I stood, watching her, till I saw her land and enter a palace, which when I considered, I knew it for the palace of the Khalif El Mutawekkil. So I turned back, with all the trouble in the world fallen on my heart, for she had had of me three thousand dinars, and I said in myself, "She hath taken my money and ravished my wit, and belike I shall lose my life for love of her."

Then I returned home and told my mother all that had befallen me, and she said, "O my son, beware how thou have to do with her after this, or thou art a lost man." When I went to my shop, my factor in the drug-market, who was a very old man, came to me and said, "O my lord, how is it that I see thee in ill case and with marks of chagrin upon thee? Tell me what ails thee." So I told him all that had befallen me with her and he said, "O my son, this is one of the women of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and indeed she is the Khalif's favourite: so do thou reckon the money [expended] for the sake of God the Most High[1] and occupy thyself no more with her. If she come again, beware lest she have to do with thee and tell me of this, that I may contrive thee somewhat, lest perdition betide thee." Then he went away and left me with a flame of fire in my heart.

At the end of the month she came again and I rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy. Quoth she, "What ailed thee to follow me?" And I said, "Excess of passion that is in my heart urged me to this," and I wept before her. She wept out of pity for me and said, "By Allah, there is not in thy heart aught of passion, but in mine is more! But how shall I do? By Allah, I have no resource but to see thee thus once a month." Then she gave me a bill, saying, "Carry this to such an one, who is my factor, and

[1] *i.e.* for nothing.

take of him what is named therein." But I replied, "I have no need of money; be my money and my life thy sacrifice!" Quoth she, "I will assuredly contrive thee a means of access to me, whatever trouble it cost me." Then she took leave of me and went away; whilst I repaired to the old druggist and told him what had passed. He went with me to the Khalif's palace, which I knew for that which the lady had entered; and he was at a loss for a device.

Presently he espied a tailor sitting with his journeymen at work in his shop, opposite the lattice giving upon the river bank, and said to me, "Yonder is one by whom thou shalt come to thy desire; but first tear thy pocket and go to him and bid him sew it up. When he hath done this, give him ten dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and taking two pieces of Greek brocade, went to the tailor and bade him make of them four suits, two with surcoats and two without. When he had made an end of cutting them out and sewing them, I gave him to his hire much more than of wont, and he put out his hand to me with the clothes; but I said, "Take them for thyself and those who are with thee." And I fell to sitting with him and sitting long. Moreover, I bespoke of him other clothes and bade him hang them out in front of his shop, that the folk might see them and buy them. He did as I bade him, and whoso came forth of the palace and aught of the clothes pleased him, I made him a present thereof, even to the doorkeeper.

One day, the tailor said to me, "O my son, I would have thee tell me the truth of thy case; for thou hast bespoken of me a hundred costly suits, each worth much money, and hast given the most of them to the folk. This is no merchant's fashion, for a merchant calleth an account for [every] dirhem, and what can be the sum of thy capital and what thy gain every year, that thou givest these gifts?

Tell me then the truth of thy case, that I may further thee to thy desire." Then, "I conjure thee by God," added he, "[tell me,] art thou not in love?" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "With whom?" Quoth I, "With one of the women of the Khalif's palace." And he exclaimed, "May God put them to shame! How long shall they seduce the folk? Knowest thou her name?" "No," answered I; and he said, "Describe her to me." So I described her to him and he said, "Out on it! This is the favourite lutanist of the Khalif El Mutawekkil. But she hath a servant, and do thou clap up a friendship with him; it may be he shall be the means of thy having access to her."

As we were talking, out came the servant in question from the palace, as he were the moon on its fourteenth night. Now I had before me the clothes that the tailor had made me, and they were of brocade of all colours. He began to look at them and examine them; then he came up to me and I rose and saluted him. "Who art thou?" asked he; and I answered, "I am a man of the merchants." Quoth he, "Wilt thou sell these clothes?" "Yes," replied I. So he chose out five of them and said to me, "How much these five?" Quoth I, "They are a present from me to thee, in earnest of friendship between us." At this he rejoiced and I went home and fetching a suit embroidered with jewels and jacinths, worth three thousand dinars, gave it to him.

He accepted it and carrying me into a room within the palace, said to me, 'What is thy name among the merchants?' Quoth I, "I am a man of them."[1] "Verily," rejoined he, "I misdoubt me of thine affair." "Why so?" asked I. "Because," answered he, "thou hast bestowed on me a great matter[2] and won my heart therewith, and

[1] *i.e.* never mind my name.

[2] *i.e.* thou hast made me a magnificent present.

I doubt not but thou art Aboulhusn of Khorassan the money-changer." With this I fell aweeping and he said to me, "Why dost thou weep? By Allah, she for whom thou weepest is yet more passionately in love with thee than thou with her! And indeed her case with thee is notorious among all the women of the palace. But what wouldst thou have?" Quoth I, "I would have thee succour me in my affliction." So he appointed me for the morrow and I returned home.

Next morning, I betook myself to him and waited in his chamber till he came, when he said to me, "Know that, when she returned to her apartment yesternight, after having made an end of her service about the Khalif's person, I related to her all that passed between me and thee and she is minded to foregather with thee. So abide thou with me till the end of the day." Accordingly I abode with him till dark, when he brought me a shirt of gold-inwoven stuff and a suit of the Khalif's apparel and clothing me therein, incensed me[1] and I became most like the Khalif. Then he brought me to a gallery with rows of doors on each side and said to me, "These are the lodgings of the chief of the slave-girls; and when thou passest along the gallery, do thou lay a bean at each door,—for it is the Khalif's wont to do this every night,—till thou come to the second passage on thy right hand, when thou wilt see a door with a threshold of alabaster. Touch it with thy hand; or, if thou wilt, count the doors, so many, and enter the one whose marks are thus and thus. There thy mistress will see thee and take thee in with her. As for thy coming forth, God will make it easy to me, though I carry thee out in a chest."

Night dcccclxii.

Then he left me and returned, whilst I went on, counting the doors and laying at each a bean. When I had

[1] *i.e.* scented him with the fragrant smoke of burning aloes-wood or ambergris.

reached the middle of the gallery, I heard a great noise and saw the light of flambeaux coming towards me. As the light drew near me, I looked at it and behold the Khalif himself, surrounded by the slave-girls carrying flambeaux, and I heard one of the women [by whose door I had passed] say to another, "O my sister, have we two Khalifs? Verily, the Khalif hath already passed by my chamber and laid the bean at my door, as is his wont, and I smelt the perfumes and essences on him, and now I see the light of his flambeaux, and here he comes with them." "Indeed this is a strange thing," replied the other; "for none would dare disguise himself in the Khalif's habit.'

Then the light drew near me, whilst I trembled in every limb; and up came an eunuch, crying out to the women and saying, "Hither!" Whereupon they turned aside to one of the chambers and entered. Then they came out again and went on till they came to the chamber of my mistress and I heard the Khalif say, "Whose chamber is this?" They answered, "This is the chamber of Shejeret ed Durr." And he said, "Call her." So they called her and she came out and kissed the feet of the Khalif, who said to her, "Wilt thou drink to-night?" Quoth she, "But for thy presence and the looking on thy face, I would not drink, for I have no mind to wine this night." Then said the Khalif to the eunuch, "Bid the treasurer give her such a necklace." And he commanded to enter her chamber. So the torches entered before him and he followed them into the apartment.

At the same moment, there came up to me a damsel, the lustre of whose face outshone that of the flambeau in her hand, and said, "Who is this?" Then she laid hold of me and carrying me into one of the chambers, said to me, "Who art thou?" I kissed the earth before her, saying, "I implore thee by Allah, O my lady, spare my blood and have pity on me and commend thyself unto

God by saving my life!" And I wept for fear of death. Quoth she, "Doubtless, thou art a thief." "No, by Allah," answered I, "I am no thief. Seest thou on me the signs of thieves?" "Tell me the truth of thy case," said she, "and I will put thee in safety." So I said, "I am a silly, ignorant lover, whom passion and my ignorance have moved to do as thou seest, so that I am fallen into this peril." Quoth she, "Abide here till I come back to thee."

Then she went out and presently returning with some of her maids' clothes, clad me therein and bade me follow her. So I followed her till she came to her apartment and bade me enter. I went in and she brought me to a couch, whereon was a splendid carpet, and said, "Sit down here: no harm shall befall thee. Art thou not Aboulhusn el Khurasani, the money-changer?" And I answered, "Yes." "May God spare thy blood," rejoined she, "an thou speak truth! If thou be a thief, thou art a lost man, more by token that thou art dressed in the Khalif's habit and perfumed with his scents. But, if thou be indeed Aboulhusn, thou art safe and no hurt shall come to thee, for that thou art the lover of Shejeret ed Durr, who is my sister and stinteth never to name thee and tell us how she took of thee money, yet wast thou not chagrined, and how thou didst follow her to the river bank and madest as thou wouldst kiss the ground in her honour; and her heart is yet more aflame for thee than thine for her. But how camest thou hither? Was it by her order or without it? [If she hath bidden thee unto this,] she hath imperilled thy life. But what seekest thou in foregathering with her?"

"By Allah, O my lady," replied I, "it is I who have ventured my own life, and my desire in foregathering with her is but to look on her and hear her speech." And she said, "Thou hast spoken well." "O my lady," added I, "God is my witness that my soul prompteth me to no

transgression against her honour." Quoth she, "In this intent may God deliver thee! Indeed compassion for thee hath taken hold upon my heart." Then she called her maid and said to her, "Go to Shejeret ed Durr and say to her, 'Thy sister salutes thee and bids thee to her; so favour her by coming to her this night, according to thy wont, for her breast is straitened.'" So the maid went out and presently returning, told her mistress that Shejeret ed Durr said, "May God bless me with thy long life and make me thy ransom! By Allah, hadst thou bidden me to other than this, I had not hesitated; but the Khalif's meagrims constrain me and thou knowest my rank with him."[1] But the other said to her maid, "Return to her and say, 'Nothing will serve but thou must come to my mistress, upon a privy matter between her and thee.'"

So the maid went out again and presently returned with the lady, whose face shone like the full moon. Her sister met her and embraced her; then said she, "Ho, Aboulhusn, come forth to her and kiss her hands." Now I was in a closet within the apartment; so I came out; and when my mistress saw me, she threw herself upon me and strained me to her bosom, saying, "How camest thou in the Khalif's clothes and his ornaments and perfumes? Tell me what hath befallen thee." So I related to her all that had befallen me and what I had suffered for fright and so forth; and she said, "What thou hast endured for my sake is grievous to me, and praised be God who hath appointed the issue to be safety, and the fulfilment of safety is in thy entering my lodging and that of my sister." Then she carried me to her own apartment, saying to her sister, "I have made a covenant with him that I will not foregather with him unlawfully; but, as he hath ventured himself and incurred this great peril, I will be even as

[1] *i.e.* the Khalif hath a headache and I cannot leave him, and thou knowest the rank I hold in his favour.

earth for his treading and as dust to his shoes." "In this intent may God deliver him!" replied her sister. "Thou shalt see," added my mistress, "how I will do, so I may foregather with him in the way of law, and needs must I lavish my heart's blood to contrive this." Night dcccclxiii.

As we were in talk, we heard a great noise and turning, saw the Khalif making for her lodging, of the greatness of the store he set by her; whereupon she hid me in an underground chamber and shut down the trap-door upon me. Then she went out to meet the Khalif, who entered and sat down, whilst she stood before him, to serve him, and commanded to bring wine. Now the Khalif loved a damsel by name Benjeh, who was the mother of El Mutezz Billah;[1] but they had fallen out and in the pride of her beauty and grace, she would not [offer to] make peace with him, nor, for the dignity of the Khalifate and the Kingship, would he [offer to] make peace with her nor humble himself to her, albeit his heart was aflame with passion for her, but sought to divert his mind from her with her mates among the slave-girls and with going in to them in their chambers. Now he loved Shejeret ed Durr's singing: so he bade her sing. Accordingly she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

I marvel at the ruthless stress of fate against us two And how it stinted, having wrought our union to undo.
I held aloof from thee, till, "Love he knoweth not," 'twas said And did thee visit, till 'twas said, "He lacks of patience due."
Add to my transport, love of her, each night, and solacement Of loves, the Resurrection be thy day of rendezvous!
She hath a skin like very silk and a soft speech and sweet: Gracious to all, her words are nor too many nor too few.
Two eyes she hath, quoth God Most High, "Be," and forthright they were: Even with the reason as doth wine, so with the hearts they do.

[1] Son and third successor of El Mutawekkil and thirteenth Khalif of the house of Abbas, A.D. 866-9.

When the Khalif heard these verses, he was moved to exceeding delight, and I also was moved to delight in my hiding-place, and but for the bounty of God the Most High, I had cried out and we had been discovered. Then she sang these also:

I clip him close and still my soul doth yearn for him full fain: Can aught of straiter union be than clips for lovers twain?
I kiss his mouth, to do away my heat; but every kiss, Alack! doth only aggravate the transport of my pain;
As 'twere, indeed, until my heart our souls commingled saw, Nought could it of its thirst for him on anywise assain.

The Khalif was delighted and said, "O Shejeret ed Durr, ask a boon of me." "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "I ask of thee my freedom, for the sake of the reward that is therein."[1] "Thou art free for the love of God," said he; whereupon she kissed the earth before him. Quoth he, "Take the lute and sing me somewhat on the subject of my slave-girl, of whom I am enamoured: the folk seek my approof and I seek hers." So she took the lute and sang as follows:

Lady of beauty, that hast done away my piety,[2] I cannot brook, what-e'er betide, to live withouten thee;
So, or with humbleness, that best befitteth love, I'll gain Thy favours, or with might, that best befitteth kings like me.

The Khalif was charmed with these verses and said, "Now sing me somewhat setting out my case with three damsels, who hold the reins of my heart and hinder my repose; and they are thyself and this froward one and another I will not name, who hath not her like.[3] So she

[1] *i.e.* for the sake of earning a reward from God for thy good deed.
[2] *i.e.* my abstention from women on religious grounds.
[3] *Munatsireh.* This clause may also perhaps be rendered, "about whom there is no dispute" (*munatsereh*), *i.e.* who is not at present in question.

took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

There are three lovely maidens, the reins of me that sway: Within my heart's high places they lord it night and day.
There's none in all creation can bow me to his will; Yet I obey these maidens and they my will gainsay.
This is of Love's dominion, whereby they overcome A prouder than my empire and force it still obey.

The Khalif marvelled exceedingly at the aptness of these verses to his case and the delight [to which they moved him] inclined him to reconciliation with the refractory damsel. So he went forth and made for her lodging, whither a slave-girl forewent him and acquainted her with the Khalif's coming. She came to meet him and kissed the earth before him; then she kissed his feet and he was reconciled to her and she to him.

Meanwhile Shejeret ed Durr came to me, rejoicing, and said, "I am become free by thy blessed coming! Surely God will help me in that which I shall contrive, so I may foregather with thee in the way of law." And I said, "Praised be God!" As we were talking, in came her servant, to whom we related that which had passed, and he said, "Praised be God who hath made the affair to end well, and we implore Him to crown His favours with thy safe going-out hence!" Presently, in came my mistress's sister, whose name was Fatir, and Shejeret ed Durr said to her, "O my sister, how shall we do to bring him out of the palace in safety? For God hath vouchsafed me emancipation and by the blessing of his coming, I am become a free woman." Quoth Fatir, "I see nothing for it but to dress him in a woman's habit." So she brought me a suit of women's clothes and clad me therein; and I went out forthwith; but, when I came to the midst of the palace, I found the Khalif seated there, with the eunuchs in attendance upon him.

When he saw me, he misdoubted of me exceedingly and said to his attendants, "Hasten and bring me yonder damsel." So they brought me back to him and raised the veil from my face, which when he saw, he knew me and questioned me of my case. I told him the whole truth, hiding nought, and when he heard my story, he bethought himself awhile, then rose and going into Shejeret ed Durr's chamber, said to her, "How couldst thou prefer one of the sons of the merchants before me?" She kissed the earth before him and told him her story from first to last, in accordance with the truth; wherewith he had compassion upon her and his heart relented to her and he excused her by reason of love and its conditions. Then he went away and her servant came in to her and said, "Be of good cheer; for, when thy lover came before the Khalif, he questioned him and he told him that which thou toldest him, word by word."

Presently the Khalif returned and calling me before him, said to me, "What made thee dare to violate the palace of the Khalifate?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered I, "it was my ignorance and passion and my confidence in thy clemency and generosity that led me to this." And I wept and kissed the earth before him. Then said he, "I pardon you both," and bade me be seated. So I sat down and he sent for the Cadi Ahmed ibn Abi Dawud[1] and married me to her. Then he commanded to make over to me all that was hers and they brought her to me in bridal procession[2] in her lodging. After three days, I went forth and transported all her goods and gear to my own house; so all that thou hast seen, O Commander

[1] Ahmed ibn Abi *Duwad* (*Dawud* is an error of the text), a well-known man of letters and jurist of the time. He was Cadi of the Cadis (*i.e.* Chancellor) under El Mutawekkil and his two immediate predecessors El Mutesim and El Wathic Billah (Vathek).

[2] *i.e.* they celebrated our wedding.

of the Faithful, in my house and whereof thou misdoubtest is of her marriage-equipage.

After this, she said to me, one day, "Know that El Mutawekkil is a generous man and I fear lest he bethink him of us, or that some one of the envious remind him of us; wherefore I have it in mind to do somewhat that may ensure us against this." "And what is that?" asked I. Quoth she, "I mean to ask his leave to go the pilgrimage and renounce[1] singing." "This is well thought," answered I; but, as we were talking, in came a messenger from the Khalif to seek her, for that El Mutawekkil loved her singing. So she went with the officer and did her service to the Khalif, who said to her, "Sever not thyself from us."[2] And she answered, "I hear and obey."

One day, after this, she went to him, he having sent for her, according to his wont; but, before I knew, she came back, with her clothes torn and her eyes full of tears. At this I was alarmed, misdoubting me that he had commanded to seize upon us, and said, "We are God's and to Him we return! Is El Mutawekkil wroth with us?" "Where is El Mutawekkil?" answered she. "Verily, El Mutawekkil's rule is ended and his trace is blotted out!" Quoth I, "Tell me what hath happened." And she said, "He was seated behind the curtain, drinking, with El Feth ben Khacan[3] and Sedekeh ben Sedekeh, when his son El Muntesir fell upon him, with a company of the Turks,[4] and slew him; and mirth was turned to misery

[1] Lit. repent of. The practice of music, vocal and instrumental, is deprecated by the strict Muslim, in accordance with a tradition in which the Prophet is said to have expressed disapproval of these arts.

[2] *i.e.* do not absent thyself from us. The Arabic idiom is almost exactly equivalent to our colloquial phrase, "to *cut* any one."

[3] See note, Vol. IV. p. 289.

[4] *i.e.* of the Turkish body-guard, first enrolled by El Mutesim, El Mutawekkil's father and predecessor, a corps of mercenaries to whose disorderly and overbearing behaviour may be attributed a great part of the troubles and dissensions which led to the ultimate fall of the Khalifate.

and fair fortune to weeping and lamentation. So I fled, I and the maid, and God saved us." When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I arose forthright and went down to Bassora, where the news reached me of the falling out of war between El Muntesir and El Mustain;[1] wherefore I was affrighted and transported my wife and all my good to Bassora. This, then, is my story, O Commander of the Faithful, nor have I added to nor diminished the truth by a syllable. So all that thou seest in my house, bearing the name of thy grandfather El Mutawekkil, is of his bounty to us, and the source of our fortune is from thy noble ancestors; for indeed ye are people of munificence and a mine of generosity.'

The Khalif marvelled at his story and rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy: and Aboulhusn brought forth to him the lady and the children she had borne him, and they kissed the earth before the Khalif, who marvelled at their beauty. Then he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote Aboulhusn a patent of exemption from taxes on his lands and houses for twenty years. Moreover, he rejoiced in him and made him his boon-companion, till time sundered them and they took up their abode in the tombs, after having dwelt in palaces; and glory be to God, the Most Merciful King!

[1] Brother of El Muntesir (who died of remorse a few months after his father's murder), and twelfth Khalif of the house of Abbas, A.D. 862-6.

KEMEREZZEMAN AND THE JEWELLER'S WIFE.

There was once, of old time, a merchant called Abdurrehman, whom God had blessed with a son and daughter, and for their much beauty and grace, he named the girl Kaukeb es Sebah[1] and the boy Kemerezzeman.[2] When he saw what God had vouchsafed them of beauty and grace and brightness and symmetry, he feared for them from the eyes of the beholders[3] and the tongues of the envious and the craft of the crafty and the wiles of the profligate and shut them up from the folk in a house for the space of fourteen years, during which time none saw them save their parents and a slave-girl who waited on them. Now their father recited the Koran,[4] even as God sent it down, as also did their mother, wherefore she taught her daughter to read and recite it and he his son, till they had both gotten it by heart. Moreover, they both learned from their parents writing and reckoning and all manner of knowledge and accomplishment and needed no master.

When Kemerezzeman came to years of manhood, his mother said to her husband, 'How long wilt thou keep thy son Kemerezzeman sequestered from the eyes of the folk? Is he a boy or a girl?' And he answered, 'A boy.' 'If he be a boy,' rejoined she, 'why dost thou not carry him to the bazaar and seat him in thy shop, that he may know the folk and they him, to the intent that it may become notorious among them that he is thy son, and do thou teach him to buy and sell. Belike somewhat may betide thee; so shall the folk know him for thy son and he shall lay his hand on thy leavings. But, if thou die,

[1] Star of the morning.
[2] Moon of the time.
[3] *i.e.* the evil eye.
[4] *i.e.* knew it by heart.

as the case now is, and he say to the folk, "I am the son of the merchant Abdurrehman," they will not believe him, but will say, "We have never seen thee and knew not that he had a son;" wherefore the magistrates will take thy goods and thy son will be despoiled. In like manner, I mean to make my daughter known among the folk, so haply some one of her own condition may demand her in marriage and we will marry her to him and rejoice in her.' Quoth he, '[I did thus] of my fear for them of the eyes of the folk and because I love them and love is exceeding jealous, and well saith he who made the following verses:

Night dcccclxiv.

I'm jealous of myself and of my sight for thee And of thy self and place and time and Fate's decree.
Though in mine eye for aye I set thee, ne'er, I trow, Of union strait and close should I aweary be.
Ay, if with me thou wert united every hour Until the Judgment Day, 'twould scarce suffice to me.'

'Put thy trust in God,' said his wife, 'for no harm betideth him whom He protecteth, and carry him with thee this very day to the shop.'

Then she clad the boy in the richest of clothes and he became a ravishment to all who looked on him and an affliction to the hearts of lovers. His father took him and carried him to the market, whilst all who saw him were ravished with him and accosted him, kissing his hand and saluting him. Quoth one, 'The sun hath risen in such a place and shineth in the market,' and another, 'The place of rising of the full moon is in such a quarter;' and a third, 'The new moon of the Festival [of the breaking of the fast of Ramazan] hath appeared to the creatures of God.' And they went on to allude to the boy in talk and call down blessings upon him.

Abdurrehman rated the folk for following the boy, to gaze upon him, for they crowded upon him, behind

and before; and he was abashed at their talk, but could not hinder them from talking; so he fell to reviling the boy's mother and cursing her for that she had been the cause of his bringing him out. Then he walked on till he reached his shop and opening it, sat down and seated his son before him: after which he looked out and saw the thoroughfare blocked with people, for all the passers-by, going and coming, stopped before the shop, to gaze on that fair-faced one, and could not leave him and all the men and women crowded about him, applying to themselves the words of him who saith:

Thou didst beauty create a temptation to us And saidst, 'O my servants, fear [Me and abstain].'
Behold, Thou art lovely and loveliness lov'st: How, then, shall Thy creatures from loving refrain?

When Abdurrehman saw the folk thus crowding about him and standing in rows, men and women, to gaze upon his son, he was sore abashed and confounded and knew not what to do; but presently there came up from the end of the bazaar a man of the wandering dervishes, clad in haircloth garments, [the apparel] of the pious servants of God and seeing Kemerezzeman sitting there as he were a willow wand springing from a mound of saffron, wept copiously and recited the following verses:

I saw a sapling on a sand-hill grow, As 'twere a moon at full and all aglow.
'Thy name?' I questioned, and he said, 'A pearl.' Quoth I, 'Mine! Mine!' but he replied, 'No! No!'[1]

Then he fell to walking, now drawing near and now moving away, and wiping his gray hairs with his right hand, whilst the heart of the crowd was cloven asunder

[1] This line in the original contains one of the word-jingles of which Orientals are so fond, i.e. *lou-lou* (pearl), *Li! Li!* (Mine! Mine!) and *La! La!* (No! No!).

for reverence of him. When he looked upon the boy, his eyes were dazzled and his wit confounded, and the saying of the poet was exemplified in him:

What while yon fair-faced loveling was in a certain place And the new moon of Shawwal[1] shone glittering from his face,
There came a reverend elder, who walked with leisure pace: His steps a staff supported and in his looks the trace
Of abstinent devoutness was plain unto the sight.
The days he had made proof of and eke the nights essayed: In lawful and unlawful he had not spared to wade.
He had been love-distracted for minion and for maid And to a skewer's likeness worn down was he and frayed;
But wasted bones were left him, with parchment skin bedight.
A Moor[2] in this same fashion the sheikh himself did show, For by his side a youngling was ever seen to go:
He in the love of women an Udhri[3] was, I trow; In either mode[4] seductive and throughly versed, for lo,
Zeid[5] was to him as Zeyneb,[6] to wit, and wench as wight.
Distraught he was with passion for this and th' other fair; He mourned the camp, bewailing the ruins bleak and bare:[7]
Of his excess of longing, thou'dst deem him, as it were, A sapling that the zephyr still bendeth here and there.
Cold-heartedness pertaineth to stones alone aright.

[1] Specially bright in the eyes of the Muslim, as by its appearance putting an end to the long fast of Ramazan.

[2] *Var.* "Persian" (Macnaghten). The inhabitants of Northern Africa have always had the reputation of being debauched.

[3] *i.e.* a member of the tribe of the Benou Udhreh, see note, Vol. II. p. 227.

[4] *i.e.* in the love of girls and boys.

[5] Generic name for men. [6] Ditto for women.

[7] *i.e.* he was a reciter of erotic verses, always constructed by the Arabs after certain well-known patterns, handed down from the præ-Islamite poets, of which the commonest and most celebrated was that which introduces the lover halting by the ruins of the camp where his beloved dwelt aforetime and bewailing its desertion. The invention of this form of opening or (so to speak) poetic "gambit" is attributed to the greatest of the poets of the Time of Ignorance, *i.e.* the princely bard Imrulcais.

Yea, in the way of passion experienced was he, Sharp-witted in Love's matters and quick indeed to see.
He'd proved Love's hard and easy, its valley and its sea, And buck and doe delighted to clip indiff'rently;
He burnt alike when beardless and when his beard was white.[1]

Then he came up to the boy and gave him a sprig[2] of sweet basil, whereupon his father put his hand to his pouch and gave him some small matter of money, saying, 'Take thy portion, O dervish, and go thy ways.' He took the money, but sat down on the bench before the shop, opposite the lad, and fell to gazing upon him and heaving sigh upon sigh, whilst his tears flowed like springs welling forth. The folk began to look at him and remark upon him, some saying, 'All dervishes are lewd fellows,' and other some, 'Verily, this dervish's heart is set on fire for love of this youth.'

When Abdurrehman saw this, he said to the boy, 'Come, O my son, let us shut the shop and go home, for it boots not to buy and sell this day; and may God requite thy mother that which she hath done with us, for it is she who hath brought all this about!' Then said he to the dervish, 'Rise, that I may shut my shop.' So the dervish rose and Abdurrehman shut his shop and taking his son, went away. The dervish and the folk followed them, till they reached their dwelling, when Kemerezzeman went in and his father, turning to the dervish, said to him, 'What wouldst thou, O dervish, and why do I see thee weep?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'I would fain be thy guest this night, for the guest is the guest of God.' Quoth the merchant, 'Welcome to the guest of God! Enter,

[1] The foregoing Cinquains are rendered more than usually obscure by the excessive use, in the original, of the figure of enallage, so embarrassingly common in Arabic verse. Owing to this feature, it cannot with certainty be made out whether certain passages refer to the old man or the boy spoken of. [2] Or root (*irc*).

Night dcccclxb. O dervish!' But he said in himself, 'If he be enamoured of the boy and require him of lewdness, needs must I slay him this night and bury him secretly. But, if there be no lewdness in him, the guest shall eat his portion.'

Then he brought him into a saloon, where he left him with Kemerezzeman, after he had said privily to the latter, 'O my son, when I am gone out, sit thou beside the dervish and sport with him and provoke him to dalliance. I will watch you from the window overlooking the saloon, and if he seek of thee lewdness, I will come down to him and slay him.' So, as soon as Kemerezzeman was alone with the dervish, he sat down by him, and the latter began to look upon him and sigh and weep. Whenever the lad spoke to him, he answered him kindly, trembling the while and groaning and sobbing, and thus he did till the evening meal was brought in, when he fell to eating, with his eyes on Kemerezzeman, but stinted not from weeping. When a fourth part of the night was past and talk was ended and the time of sleep come, Abdurrehman said to the lad, 'O my son, apply thyself to the service of thine uncle the dervish and gainsay him not:' and would have gone out; but the dervish said to him, 'O my lord, carry thy son with thee or sleep with us.' 'Nay,' answered the merchant; 'my son shall lie with thee: peradventure thy soul may desire somewhat, and he will do thine occasion and wait upon thee.' Then he went out and sat down in an adjoining room, wherein was a window giving upon the saloon.

As soon as he had left them, the lad came up to the dervish and began to provoke him and make advances to him, whereupon he waxed wroth and said, 'What talk is this, O my son? I take refuge with God from Satan the Stoned! O my God, indeed this is an iniquity that pleaseth Thee not! Hold off from me, O my son!' So saying, he arose and sat down at a distance; but the boy

followed him and threw himself upon him, saying, 'O dervish, why wilt thou deny thyself the delight of my possession, seeing that my heart loveth thee?' With this the dervish's anger redoubled and he said, 'An thou refrain not from me, I will call thy father and tell him of thee.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'My father knows my mind to thee and it may not be that he will hinder me: so heal thou my heart. Why dost thou hold off from me? Do I not please thee?' 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the dervish, 'I will not do this, though I be hewn in pieces with sharp swords!' And he repeated the saying of the poet:

My heart the fair desireth, both wench and wight; I sigh For all I see: yet passion leads not my wit awry.
Nay, though I still behold them morning and eventide, Nor sodomite, believe me, nor whoremonger am I.

Then he wept and said, 'Arise, open the door, that I may go my way, for I will lie no longer in this place.' Therewith he rose to his feet; but the boy caught hold of him, saying, 'Look at the brightness of my face and the redness of my cheeks and the softness of my sides and the daintiness of my lips.' Moreover he discovered to him a leg that would put to shame wine and cupbearer[1] and gazed on him with looks that would baffle enchantment and enchanter; for he was surpassing of loveliness and full of tender blandishment, even as saith of him the poet:

I never can forget him, since of intent the fair A leg to me discovered, as flashing pearl it were.
So marvel not if on me the flesh should rise; for lo, The Day of Resurrection's a day of shanks laid bare.[2]

[1] A play upon the words *saki* (oblique case of *sac*, leg) and *saki*, cupbearer.

[2] The *Koran* (lxviii. 42) calls the Judgment Day "a day [when] shanks shall be uncovered," *i.e.* a day of preparation for great stress or travail, such as a battle or other emergency, to meet which men roll up their long wide trousers and tuck their skirts within their girdles. The meaning of the double-entendre in the text is sufficiently obvious.

Then he displayed to him his bosom, saying, 'Look at my breasts. They are goodlier than girls' breasts and my spittle is sweeter than sugar-candy. So leave scruple and abstinence and cast off piety and devoutness and take thy delight of my possession and enjoy my beauty. Fear nothing, for thou art safe from hurt, and leave this dullness, for it is an ill habit.' And he went on to discover to him his hidden charms, striving to turn the reins of his reason with his [graceful] bendings, whilst the dervish averted his face and said, 'I seek refuge with God! Shame upon thee, O my son! This is a forbidden thing, and I will not do it, no, not even in sleep.' The boy pressed upon him, but the dervish escaped from him and turning towards Mecca, addressed himself to prayer.

When Kemerezzeman saw him praying, he left him till he had prayed a two-bow prayer and saluted,[1] when he would have accosted him again; but the dervish again repeated the intent[2] and prayed a second two-bow prayer, and thus he did a third and a fourth and a fifth time. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'What prayers are these? Art thou minded to take flight upon the clouds? Thou lettest slip our delight, whilst thou passest the whole night in the prayer-niche.' So saying, he threw himself upon the dervish and kissed him between the eyes: and he said, 'O my son, put away from thee the devil and betake thee to the obedience of the Compassionate One.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'An thou do not with me that which I wish, I will call my father and say to him, "The dervish is minded to do lewdness with me." Whereupon he will come in to thee and beat thee, till thy bones be broken upon thy flesh.'

All this while Abdurrehman was watching with his eyes

[1] *i.e.* said, "Peace be on us and on all the righteous servants of God!" terminal formula of prayer.

[2] *En niyeh; i.e.* "I purpose to pray such and such prayers."

and hearkening with his ears, and he was certified that there was no lewdness in the dervish and said in himself, 'An he were a lewd fellow, he had not stood out against all this importunity.' The boy continued to beguile the dervish and every time he addressed himself to prayer, he interrupted him, till at last he waxed exceeding wroth with him and was rough with him and beat him. Kemerezzeman wept and his father came in and wiped away his tears and comforted him. Then said he to the dervish, 'O my brother, since thou art on this wise, why didst thou weep and sigh, when thou sawest my son? Is there a reason for this?' 'Yes,' answered the dervish; and Abdurrehman continued, 'When I saw thee weep at sight of my son, I deemed evil of thee and bade the boy do with thee thus, that I might try thee, purposing in myself, if I saw thee require him of lewdness, to come in upon thee and slay thee. But, when I saw thy carriage towards him, I knew thee for one of those who are virtuous to the utmost. But, God on thee, tell me the cause of thy weeping!'

The dervish sighed and said, 'O my lord, fret not a closed[1] wound.' But the merchant said, 'Nothing will serve but thou must tell me.' 'Know, then,' began the other, 'that I am a dervish who wander in the lands and the countries, admonishing myself by the traces[2] of the Creator of Night and Day. It chanced that one Friday I entered the city of Bassora in the forenoon of the day and saw the shops open and full of all manner wares and goods and meat and drink; but they were deserted and there was in them neither man nor woman nor girl nor boy: nor in the markets and the streets was there dog nor cat nor yet voice heard nor creature seen. I marvelled at this and said to myself, "I wonder whither the people of the city are gone with their dogs and cats and what

Night dcccclxvi.

[1] Lit. quiescent (*sakin*). [2] Or works.

hath God done with them?" Now I was anhungred, so I took hot bread from a baker's oven and going into an oilman's shop, spread the bread with butter and honey and ate. Then I entered the shop of a sherbet-seller and drank what I would; after which, seeing a coffee-shop open, I went in and saw the pots on the fire, full of coffee; but there was no one there. So I drank my fill and said, "Verily, this is a strange thing! It seems as if death had stricken the people of this city and they had all died forthright, or as if they had taken fright at something that hath befallen them and fled, without having time to close their shops."

As I pondered this matter, I heard a sound of drums beating; whereat I was afraid and hid myself: then, looking out through a crevice, I saw fourscore damsels, like moons, come walking through the market, two by two, with uncovered heads and faces displayed; and in their midst a young lady, riding on a horse that could hardly move its feet for that which was upon it of trappings and housings. Her face was unveiled, and she was adorned with the costliest ornaments and clad in the richest of raiment and covered with gold and silver and jewels. About her neck she wore a collar of gold and on her bosom were necklaces of the same metal; her wrists were clasped with bracelets, that shone like stars, and her ankles with bangles of gold set with precious stones. The slave-girls walked before her and behind and on her right and left and before her was a damsel girt with a great sword, with hilts of emerald and hangers of gold, set with jewels.

When the young lady came to where I lay hid, she checked her horse and said, "O damsels, I hear a noise of somewhat within yonder shop: so do ye search it, lest there be one hidden there, with intent to look upon us, whilst we have our faces unveiled." So they searched the

shop opposite that in which I lay hid, whilst I abode in terror; and presently I saw them come forth with a man and heard them say to her, "O our lady, we found a man there and here he is before thee." Quoth she to the damsel with the sword, "Strike off his head." So she went up to him and smote off his head and they passed on, leaving the dead man lying on the ground. When I saw this, I was affrighted; but my heart was taken with love of the young lady.

After awhile, the people reappeared and every one who had a shop entered it; whilst the folk began to come and go in the markets and gathered about the slain man, staring at him. Then I came forth from my hiding-place by stealth, and none took note of me; but love of the lady had gotten possession of my heart, and I began to enquire of her privily; but none gave me news of her. So I left Bassora, with a heart torn with love of her; and when I came upon this thy son, I saw him to be the likest of all creatures to the young lady; wherefore he minded me of her and his sight revived the fire of passion in me and kindled anew in my heart the flames of love-longing and distraction.' Then he wept passing sore and said, 'O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, open the door to me, so I may go my way!' So Abdurrehman opened the door and he went forth.

As for Kemerezzeman, when he heard the dervish's story, his heart was taken with love of the lady and passion got the mastery of him and longing and distraction raged in him; so, on the morrow, he said to his father, 'All the sons of the merchants travel in the lands, to attain their desire, nor is there one of them but his father provideth him with merchandise, wherewith he may travel and traffic for gain. Why, then, O my father, dost thou not provide me with merchandise, so I may travel with it and try my luck?' 'O my son,' answered

Abdurrehman, 'the merchants [of whom thou speakest] lack of money; so they send their sons abroad for the sake of profit and gain and the getting of the goods of the world. But I have wealth in plenty nor do I covet [more]: so why should I exile thee [from thy native land?] Indeed, I cannot brook to be parted from thee an hour, more by token that thou art unique in beauty and grace and perfection and I fear for thee.' But Kemerezzeman said, 'O my father, nothing will serve but thou must furnish me with merchandise wherewithal to travel; else will I take thee at unawares and flee, though without goods or money. So, if thou wish to pleasure my heart, make ready for me merchandise, that I may travel and divert myself by viewing foreign countries.'

Abdurrehman, seeing his son enamoured of travel, acquainted his wife with this, saying, 'Thy son would have me provide him with merchandise, so he may travel therewith in strange countries, albeit travel is travail.' 'What is there should mislike thee in this?' answered she. 'This is the wont of the sons of the merchants and they all vie with one another in glorying in travel and gain.' Quoth he, 'Most of the merchants are poor and seek increase of good; but I have wealth galore.' 'More of a good thing hurteth not,' replied she; 'and if thou comply not with his wish, I will furnish him of my own monies.' Quoth Abdurrehman, 'I fear strangerhood for him, for it is rife in trouble.' But she said, 'There is no harm in strangerhood, when it leads to gain; and [if we do not according to his wish], our son will go away and we shall seek him and find him not and be dishonoured among the folk.' The merchant accepted his wife's counsel and provided his son with merchandise, to the value of fourscore and ten thousand dinars, whilst his mother gave him a purse containing forty jewels of price, the least of the value of one of which was five hundred

dinars, saying, 'O my son, be careful of these jewels, for they will be of service to thee.'

Kemerezzeman took the jewels and laid them in a belt, which he buckled about his waist; then he set out for Bassora with his goods and stayed not till there remained but a day's journey between that city and himself; when the [wild] Arabs came out upon him and stripped him and slew his men and servants; but he himself lay down among the slain and smeared himself with blood, so that the Bedouins took him for dead and left him and made off with their booty. When they had gone their ways, he arose, having nought left but the jewels in his girdle, and fared on till he came to Bassora. It chanced that his entry was on a Friday and the town was empty of folk, even as the dervish had told him. He found the streets deserted and the shops open and full of goods; so he ate and drank and looked about him. Presently, he heard drums beating and hid himself in a shop, till the slave-girls came up, when he looked at them and seeing the young lady riding amongst them, love and longing took him and passion and distraction overcame him, so that he could hardly stand. After awhile, the people reappeared and the markets became full. Whereupon he went to the bazaar and sold one of his jewels to a jeweller there for a thousand dinars, with which he returned to his place and passed the night there.

Night dcccclxvii.

Next morning he changed his clothes and going to the bath, came forth as he were the full moon. Then he sold other four stones for four thousand dinars and sauntered about the streets of Bassora, clad in the costliest of raiment, till he came to a market, where he saw a barber's shop. So he went in to the barber, who shaved his head, and clapping up an acquaintance with him, said to him, 'O my father, I am a stranger in these parts and yesterday I entered this city and found it void of inhabitants, nor

was there in it any living soul, man nor genie. Then I saw a company of slave-girls and amongst them a young lady riding in state.' And he went on to tell him all he had seen. 'O my son,' said the barber, 'hast thou told any but me of this?' And he answered, 'No.' 'Then, O my son,' rejoined the barber, 'beware of mentioning this before any but me; for all cannot keep a secret and thou art but a lad and I fear lest the talk travel from folk to folk, till it reach those whom it concerns and they kill thee. For know, O my son, that this thou hast seen, none ever heard nor knew in other than this city. As for the people of Bassora, they are dying of this vexation; for every Friday forenoon they shut up the dogs and cats, to hinder them from going about the streets, and all the people of the city enter the mosques, where they lock the doors on them, and not one of them can pass about the market nor even look out of window; nor knoweth any the cause of this calamity. But to-night I will question my wife of it, for she is a midwife and enters the houses of the notables and knows all the news of the city. And if it please God the Most High, do thou come to me to-morrow and I will tell thee what she shall have told me.'

With this Kemerezzeman pulled out a handful of gold and said to him, 'O my father, take this gold and give it to thy wife, for she is become my mother.' Then he gave him a second handful, saying 'Take this for thyself.' Whereupon quoth the barber, 'O my son, sit thou in thy place, till I go to my wife and ask her and bring thee news of the true state of the case.' So saying, he left him in the shop and going home, acquainted his wife with the young man's case, saying, 'I would have thee tell me the truth of this affair, so I may tell it to this young merchant, for he hath set his heart on knowing the reason why men and beasts are forbidden the streets every Friday forenoon; and methinks he is in love, for he is open-handed and

generous, and if we tell him [what he would know], we shall get great good of him.' Quoth she, 'Go back and say to him, "Come and speak with thy mother my wife, for she salutes thee and says to thee, 'The thing is done.'"'

So he returned to the shop, where he found Kemerezzeman sitting awaiting him and gave him his wife's message. Then he carried him in to her and she gave him welcome and bade him sit down; whereupon he pulled out a hundred dinars and gave them to her, saying, 'O my mother, tell me who this young lady is.' 'Know, O my son,' answered she, 'that there came a jewel to the Sultan of Bassora from the King of Hind, and he was minded to have it pierced. So he called all the jewellers together and said to them, "I wish you to pierce me this jewel. Whoso pierces it, I will give him whatsoever he shall ask; but if he break it, I will cut off his head." At this they were afraid and said, "O king of the age, a jewel is soon spoilt and there are few who can pierce them without injury, for most of them have a flaw. So do not thou impose upon us a task to which we are unable; for we cannot avail to pierce this jewel. However, the syndic of our guild is more experienced than we." "And who is your syndic?" asked the king. "Master Ubeid," answered they. "He is more versed than we in this art and hath wealth galore and exceeding skill. So do thou send for him and bid him pierce thee this jewel." Accordingly, the king sent for Ubeid and bade him pierce the jewel, imposing on him the condition aforesaid. He took it and pierced it to the liking of the king, who said to him, "Ask a boon of me, O master!" "O king of the age," answered he, "have patience with me till to-morrow."

Now the reason of this was that he wished to take counsel with his wife, who is the young lady thou sawest riding in state; for he loveth her with an exceeding love,

and of the greatness of his love for her, he doth nought without consulting her; wherefore he put off asking till the morrow. When he went home, he said to her, "I have pierced the king a jewel and he hath granted me a boon; but I put off asking till to-morrow, that I might consult thee. So what dost thou wish, that I may ask it?" Quoth she, "We have riches such as fires may not consume; but, if thou love me, ask of the king that he let make proclamation in the streets of Bassora that all the townsfolk shall every Friday enter the mosques, two hours before the hour of prayer, so none, great or small, may abide in the town, except they be in the mosques or in the houses and the doors be locked upon them, and that all the shops of the town be left open. Then will I ride with my women through the city and none shall look on me from window or lattice; and every one, whom I find abroad, I will kill."

Night dcccclxviii. So he went in to the king and sought of him this boon, which he granted him; but, when he caused proclamation to be made to the effect aforesaid, the people objected that they feared for their goods from the dogs and cats; wherefore he commanded to shut the latter up till the folk should come forth from the Friday prayers. So the jeweller's wife fell to sallying forth every Friday, two hours before the time of prayer, and riding in state through the city with her women; during which time none dares pass through the market nor look out of window or lattice. This, then, is what thou wouldst know and I have told thee who she is; but, O my son, was it thy desire [only] to have news of her or hast thou a mind to foregather with her?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'it is my wish to foregather with her.' Quoth she, 'Tell me what valuables thou hast with thee.' And he replied, 'O my mother, I have with me precious stones of four kinds, the first worth five hundred dinars each, the second seven hundred, the third eight hundred and the fourth a

thousand.' 'Art thou willing to spend four of these?' asked she; and he said, 'I am ready to spend them all.'

'Then,' rejoined she, 'arise, O my son, and go straight to thy lodging and take a jewel of those worth five hundred dinars, with which do thou repair to the jewel market and ask for the shop of Master Ubeid, the Syndic of the Jewellers. Thou wilt find him seated in his shop, clad in rich clothes, with workmen under his hand. Salute him and sit down by him; then pull out the jewel and give it him, saying, "O master, take this stone and fashion it into a ring for me with gold. Make it not large, a mithcal[1] in weight and no more; but let the fashion of it be excellent." Then give him twenty dinars and give each of his journeymen a dinar. Sit with him awhile and talk with him and if a beggar accost thee, give him a dinar, to the intent that he may take thee into affection. After this, leave him and return to thy lodging. Pass the night there and next morning, take a hundred dinars and bring them and give them to thy father [the barber], for he is poor.'

'Be it so,' answered Kemerezzeman and returning to his hostelry, took a jewel worth five hundred dinars and went with it to the jewel-bazaar. There he enquired for the shop of Master Ubeid, Syndic of the Jewellers, and they directed him thereto. So he went thither and saw the syndic, a man of reverend aspect and clad in sumptuous apparel, [sitting in his shop,] with four journeymen under his hand. He saluted him and the jeweller returned his greeting and welcoming him, made him sit down. Then he brought out the jewel and said to Ubeid, 'O master, I wish thee to make me this jewel into a ring with gold. Let it be the weight of a mithcal and no more, but fashion it curiously.' Then he pulled out twenty dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'This is for the chasing, over and above the price of the ring.' And he gave each of the

[1] About three pennyweights.

journeymen a dinar, wherefore they loved him, and so did the syndic. Then he sat talking with the jeweller and whenever a beggar came up to him, he gave him a dinar and they all marvelled at his generosity.

Now Ubeid had tools at home, like those he had in the shop, and whenever he was minded to do any extraordinary piece of work, it was his wont to carry it home and do it there, that his journeymen might not learn the secrets of his curious workmanship. His wife used to sit before him, and when she was sitting thus and he looking upon her, he would fashion all manner of curiously wrought trinkets, such as were fit for none but kings. So he took Kemerezzeman's jewel home and sat down to fashion the ring with rare workmanship. When his wife saw him thus engaged, she said to him, 'What wilt thou do with this jewel?' And he answered, 'I mean to make it into a ring with gold, for it is worth five hundred dinars.' 'For whom wilt thou set it?' asked she. 'For a young merchant,' replied he, 'who is fair of face, with eyes that wound and cheeks that strike fire and mouth like Solomon's seal and cheeks like blood-red anemones and lips red as coral and neck like that of a gazelle. His complexion is white blent with red and he is well-bred, pleasant and generous and doth thus and thus.' And he went on to describe to her his beauty and grace and bounty and perfection and ceased not to vaunt his charms and the generosity of his fashion, till he had made her in love with him; for there is no sillier cuckold than he who vaunts another man's good looks and liberality to his wife.

So, when desire rose high in her, she said to him, 'Is aught of my charms found in him?' 'He hath all thy beauties,' answered her husband; 'and he is thy counterpart in favour. Meseemeth his age is even as thine and but that I fear to vex thee, I would say that he is a thousand times handsomer than thou.' She was silent, and the

jeweller ceased not to talk with her and set out Kemerezzeman's charms to her, till he had made an end of chasing the ring; when he gave it to her and she put it on her finger, which it fitted exactly. 'O my lord,' said she, 'my heart loveth this ring and I long for it to be mine and will not take it from my finger.' 'Have patience,' answered her husband. 'The owner of it is generous and I will seek to buy it of him, and if he will sell it to me, I will bring it to thee. Or if he have another jewel, I will buy it of him for thee and fashion it for thee into a ring like this.'

Night dcccclxix.

Meanwhile, Kemerezzeman passed the night in his lodging and on the morrow he took a hundred dinars and carried them to the old woman, the barber's wife, who said to him, 'Give them to thy father.' So he gave them to the barber, and she said, 'Hast thou done as I told thee?' 'Yes,' answered he, and she said, 'Go now to the jeweller and if he give thee the ring, put it on the top of thy finger and pull it off in haste and say to him, "O master, thou hast made a mistake; the ring is too strait." He will say, "O merchant, shall I break it and make it again larger?" And do thou reply, "It boots not to break it and fashion it anew. Take it and give it to one of thy women." Then pull out another stone worth seven hundred dinars and say to him, "Take this stone and set it for me, for it is handsomer than the other." Give him thirty dinars and give each of the journeymen two, saying, "This is for the chasing, over and above the price of the ring." Then return to thy lodging for the night and on the morrow bring me two hundred dinars, and I will complete thee the rest of the device.'

So Kemerezzeman went to the jeweller, who welcomed him and made him sit down; and he said to him, 'Hast thou done my occasion?' 'Yes,' answered Ubeid and brought out to him the ring; whereupon he set it on the

top of his finger and pulling it off in haste, said, 'Thou hast made a mistake, O master.' And threw it to him, saying, 'It is too strait for my finger.' 'O merchant,' asked the jeweller, 'shall I make it larger?' 'Not so,' replied Kemerezzeman; 'take it as a gift and give it to one of thy women. Its worth is trifling, some five hundred dinars; so it boots not to fashion it over again.' Then he brought out to him another stone worth seven hundred dinars and said to him, 'Set this.' Moreover, he gave him thirty dinars and gave each of his journeymen two. Quoth Ubeid, 'O my lord, we will take the price of the ring, when we have made it.' But Kemerezzeman said, 'This is for the chasing, and the price of the ring remains over.' So saying, he went away, leaving the jeweller and his men amazed at the excess of his generosity.

Presently the jeweller returned home and said to his wife, 'O Helimeh,' [for that was her name,] 'never did I set eyes on a more generous than this young man, and as for thee, thy luck is good, for he hath given me the ring without price, saying, "Give it to one of thy women."' And he told her what had passed between himself and Kemerezzeman, adding, 'Methinks this youth is none of the sons of the merchants, but that he is of the sons of the kings and sultans.' The more he praised him, the more she waxed in passion and longing and love-distraction for him. So she took the ring and put it on her finger, whilst the jeweller made another for Kemerezzeman, a little larger than the first. When he had finished it, she put it on her finger, under the first, and said, 'Look, O my lord, how well the two rings show on my finger! I wish they were both mine.' 'Patience,' answered he. 'It may be I shall buy thee this second one.' Then he lay that night and on the morrow he took the ring and went to his shop.

As for Kemerezzeman, as soon as it was day, he betook himself to the barber's wife and gave her two hundred

dinars. Quoth she, 'Go to the jeweller and when he gives thee the ring, put it on thy finger and pull it off again in haste, saying, "Thou hast made a mistake, O master! This ring is too large. It behoveth a master like thee, when the like of me cometh to him with a piece of work, to take his measure; and if thou hadst taken the measure of my finger, thou hadst not erred." Then pull out another stone worth a thousand dinars and say to him, "Take this and set it, and give this ring to one of thy women." Give him forty dinars and each of his men three, saying, "This is for the chasing, and for the cost of the ring, that stands over." And see what he will say. Then bring three hundred dinars and give them to thy father the barber, that he may mend his fortune withal, for he is a poor man.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Kemerezzeman and betook himself to the jeweller, who welcomed him and making him sit down, gave him the ring.

He took it and put it on his finger; then pulled it off in haste and said, 'It behoveth a master like thee, when the like of me brings him a piece of work, to take his measure. Hadst thou taken the measure of my finger, thou hadst not erred; but take it and give it to one of thy women.' Then he brought out to him a stone worth a thousand dinars and said to him, 'Take this and set it for me after the measure of my finger.' 'Good,' answered Ubeid. 'Thou art in the right;' and took his measure, whereupon he pulled out forty dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'This is for the chasing and the price of the ring shall remain.' 'O my lord,' said the jeweller, 'how much hire have we taken of thee! Verily, thy bounty to us is great!' 'No harm,' answered Kemerezzeman and sat talking with him awhile and giving a dinar to every beggar who passed.

Then he left him and went away, whilst the jeweller returned home and said to his wife, 'How generous is

this young merchant! Never did I set eyes on a more open-handed or a comelier than he, no, nor a sweeter of speech.' And he went on to recount to her his charms and liberality and was loud in his praise. 'Lack-courtesy[1] that thou art!' said she. 'Since thou notest these attributes in him, and indeed he hath given thee two rings of price, it behoveth thee to invite him and make him an entertainment and entreat him friendly. When he seeth that thou tenderest him and cometh to our house, we shall surely get great good of him; and if thou grudge him this, do thou bid him and I will entertain him of my monies.' Quoth he, 'Dost thou know me to be niggardly, that thou sayest this?' 'Thou art no niggard,' rejoined she; 'but thou lackest of breeding.[2] Invite him this night and come not without him. If he refuse, conjure him by the oath of divorce and be instant with him.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered he and wrought at the ring till he had finished it, after which he passed the night and went forth on the morrow to his shop and sat there.

Meanwhile, Kemerezzeman took three hundred dinars and carrying them to the barber's wife, gave them to her for her husband. Quoth she, 'Most like he will invite thee to his house this night; and if he do this and thou lie with him, tell me in the morning what happens to thee and bring with thee four hundred dinars and give them to thy father [the barber].' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and as often as he ran out of money, he would sell some of his jewels. So he repaired to the jeweller, who received him with open arms and clapped up a friendship with him. Then he gave him the ring, and he found it

[1] *Adim edh dhauc*, lit. lacking in taste. The French *savoir-vivre* (which can only be rendered in English, and that but imperfectly, by some such periphrasis as "knowledge of the world") exactly expresses the meaning of the word *dhauc*, as here used.

[2] *Dhauc*. See last note.

after the measure of his finger and said to the jeweller, 'God bless thee, O prince of craftsmen! The setting is conformable [to my wishes], but the stone is not to my liking. I have a handsomer than it: so take the ring and give it to one of thy women.' Then he gave him a fourth stone and a hundred dinars, saying, 'Take thy hire and pardon me the trouble I have given thee.' 'O merchant,' answered Ubeid, 'all the trouble thou hast given us thou hast requited us and hast overwhelmed us with thy bounties: and indeed my heart is taken with love of thee and I cannot brook parting from thee. So, God on thee, be thou my guest this night and heal my heart.' 'So be it,' replied Kemerezzeman; 'but needs must I go to my khan, that I may give a charge to my servants and tell them that I shall sleep abroad to-night, so they may not expect me.' 'Where dost thou lodge?' asked the jeweller; and he answered, 'In such a khan.' Quoth Ubeid, 'I will come for thee there.' And Kemerezzeman said, 'Good.'

So the jeweller repaired to the khan before sundown, fearing lest his wife should be wroth with him, if he returned home without Kemerezzeman, and carrying him to his house, seated him in a saloon that had not its match. Helimeh saw him, as he entered, and was ravished with him. They talked till the evening-meal came, when they ate and drank; after which came coffee and sherbets, and the jeweller ceased not to entertain him with talk till evensong, when they prayed the ordained prayers. Then in came a handmaid with two cups of [diet-]drink, which when they had drunk, drowsiness overcame them and they slept. Presently in came the jeweller's wife and seeing them asleep, looked upon Kemerezzeman's face and was confounded at his beauty. 'How can he sleep who loves the fair?' said she, and turning him over on his back, bestrode his breast. Then, in the rage of her passion for

him, she rained down kisses on his cheeks, till she left a mark upon them and they became exceeding red and his cheekbones shone. Moreover, she sucked his lips, till the blood ran out into her mouth; but with all this, her heat was not quenched nor her thirst assuaged.

She ceased not to kiss and clip him and twine leg with leg, till the forehead of the day grew white and the dawn broke forth and shone; when she put in his pocket four huckle-bones and went away. Then she sent her maid with something like snuff, which she applied to their nostrils and they sneezed and awoke. 'O my lords,' said the girl, 'prayer is a duty; so rise and pray the morning prayer.' And she brought them basin and ewer.[1] Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'O master, we have overslept ourselves.' 'O my friend,' answered the jeweller, 'verily the air of this room is heavy; for, whenever I sleep in it, this happens to me.' 'It is well,' rejoined Kemerezzeman and proceeded to make the ablution; but, when he put the water to his face, his cheeks and lips burned him. 'This is a strange thing!' said he. 'If the air of the room be heavy and we have been drowned in sleep, what ails my cheeks and lips that they burn me?' And he said to the jeweller, 'O master, my cheeks and lips burn me.' 'Doubtless this comes of the mosquito-bites,' answered the other. 'Strange!' said Kemerezzeman. 'Hath this thing happened to thee?' 'No,' replied Ubeid. 'But, whenever I have a guest like thee, he complains in the morning of the mosquito-bites, and this only happens when he is like thee, beardless. If he be bearded, the mosquitoes trouble him not, and nought hinders them from me but my beard. It seems they love not bearded men.' 'True,' rejoined Kemerezzeman. Then the maid brought them breakfast and they broke their fast and went out.

[1] For the preliminary ablution.

Kemerezzeman betook himself to the old woman, who exclaimed, when she saw him, 'I see the marks of dalliance on thy face: tell me what thou hast seen.' Quoth he, 'I have seen nothing. Only I supped with the master of the house in a saloon and prayed the evening prayer, after which we fell asleep and woke not till the morning.' She laughed and said, 'What are those marks on thy cheeks and lips?' 'It was the mosquitoes of the saloon that did this with me,' answered he. 'It is well,' rejoined she. 'But did the same thing betide the master of the house?' 'Nay,' replied he; 'on the contrary, he told me that the mosquitoes of that saloon molest not bearded men, but bite those only who have no hair on their faces, and that, whenever he hath to guest one who is beardless, the latter awakes, complaining of the mosquito-bites; but, if he have a beard, there befalls him nothing of this.' 'Good,' said she. 'Sawst thou aught but this?' and he answered, 'I found four huckle-bones in my pocket.' Quoth she, 'Show them to me.'

So he gave them to her and she laughed and said, 'Thy mistress laid these in thy pocket.' 'How so?' asked he; and she replied, 'It is as if she said to thee, in the language of signs, "An thou wert in love, thou wouldst not sleep, for a lover sleeps not: but thou art yet a child and fit for nothing but to play with these huckle-bones. So what ails thee to fall in love with the fair?" Now she came to thee by night and finding thee asleep, devoured thy cheeks with kisses and left thee this sign. But this will not suffice her of thee and she will certainly send her husband to invite thee again to-night; so, when thou goest home with him, hasten not to fall asleep, and on the morrow bring me five hundred dinars and acquaint me with what hath passed, and I will tell thee what more thou shalt do.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went back to the khan.

Meanwhile, the jeweller's wife said to her husband, 'Is the guest gone?' 'Yes,' answered he: 'but, O Helimeh, the mosquitoes plagued him last night and scarified his cheeks and lips, and indeed I was abashed before him.' 'This is the wont of the mosquitoes of our saloon,' rejoined she; 'for they love none but the beardless. But do thou invite him again to-night.' So he repaired to Kemerezzeman's lodging and bidding him, carried him to his house, where they ate and drank and prayed the evening prayer in the saloon, after which the maid came in and gave each of them a cup of drink, and they drank and fell asleep. Presently, in came Helimeh and said, 'O good-for-nought, how canst thou sleep and call thyself a lover? A lover sleepeth not.' Then she mounted on his breast and ceased not to ply him with kisses and caresses, biting and sucking his lips and so forth, till the morning, when she put a knife in his pocket and sent her maid to arouse them.

Night dcccclxxi.

When Kemerezzeman awoke, his cheeks were on fire, for excess of redness, and his lips like coral, for dint of sucking and kissing. Quoth the jeweller, 'Did the mosquitoes plague thee last night?' 'No,' answered the young man; for, since he knew the word of the enigma, he left complaining. Then he felt the knife in his pocket and was silent. When he had broken his fast and drunk coffee, he left the jeweller and going to the khan, took five hundred dinars and carried them to the old woman, to whom he related what had passed, saying, 'I slept in my own despite, and when I woke I found nothing but a knife in my pocket.' 'May God protect thee from her this next night!' exclaimed the old woman. 'For she saith to thee [by this sign,] "An thou sleep again, I will cut thy throat." Thou wilt once more be bidden to the jeweller's house to-night, and if thou sleep, she will slay thee.'

'What is to be done?' asked he; and she said, 'Tell

me what thou atest and drankest before sleeping.' Quoth he, 'We supped as usual and prayed the evening prayer, after which there came in to us a maid, who gave each of us a cup of [diet-]drink, which when I had drunk, I fell asleep and awoke not till the morning.' 'The mischief is in the cup of drink,' said the old woman. 'So, when the maid gives it thee, take it from her, but drink not and wait till the master of the house have drunken and fallen asleep; then say to her, "Give me a draught of water," and she will go to fetch thee the gugglet. Whilst she is gone, empty the cup behind the pillow and lie down and feign sleep. So when she comes back with the gugglet, she will deem that thou hast fallen asleep, after having drunk off the cup, and will go away; and the case will appear to thee anon; but beware of disobeying my bidding.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and returned to the khan.

Meanwhile the jeweller's wife said to her husband, 'A guest's due is three nights' entertainment: so do thou invite him a third time.' Accordingly the jeweller betook himself to Kemerezzeman and inviting him, carried him home and sat down with him in the saloon. When they had supped and prayed the evening prayer, in came the maid and gave each of them a cup. The jeweller drank and fell asleep; but Kemerezzeman forbore to drink, whereupon quoth the maid, 'Wilt thou not drink, O my lord?' 'I am athirst,' answered he. 'Bring me the gugglet.' So she went to fetch it, and in the meantime he emptied the cup behind the cushion and lay down. When the girl returned, she saw him lying down and told her mistress that he had drunk off the cup and fallen asleep; whereupon quoth Helimeh to herself, 'Verily, his death is better than his life.' Then, taking a sharp knife, she went in to him, saying, 'Three times, and thou notedst not the sign, O fool! So now I will slit thy weasand.'

When he saw her making for him, with the knife in her hand, he opened his eyes and rose, laughing; whereupon, 'It was not of thine own wit,' said she, 'that thou camest at the meaning of the token, but by the help of some wily cheat; so tell me whence hadst thou this knowledge.' 'From an old woman,' answered he and told her all that had passed between himself and the barber's wife. 'To-morrow,' said she, 'go thou to her and say, "Hast thou any further device in store?" And if she say, "Yes," do thou rejoin, "Then do thine endeavour to bring me to enjoy her publicly." But, if she say, "I have no means of doing that, and this is the last of my contrivance," put her away from thy thought, and to-morrow night my husband will come to thee and invite thee. Do thou come with him and tell me and I will consider what remains to be done.' 'Good,' answered he.

Then he spent the rest of the night with her in kissing and clipping, plying the particle of copulation in concert and according the conjunctive with the conjoined,[1] whilst her husband was as a cast-out nunation of construction,[2]

[1] Double-entendre founded upon the rules of Arabic grammar. The meaning is sufficiently obvious.

[2] *Tenwin el idsafeh.* The nunation (*tenwin*) is the affixed *n* (*nun*), the sign of the indefinite noun in Arabic grammar, e.g. *et taj*, *the* crown, *tajun*, *a* crown. (The penultimate *u* is the distinctive termination of the nominative case and is dropped in ordinary talk and in prose, but retained in poetry and in reading the Koran, in which *et taj* would be pronounced *et taju*.) It is a rule of Arabic grammar that the first of two nouns in construction or regimen (*e.g.* "the crown of the king") loses both the prefixed article (*el*, the) and the nunation. Thus in Arabic *et taj* (the crown) and *el melik* (the king) would in construction become (not *et taj ul melik* or *tajun el melik*, but) *taj ul melik*, (the crown of the king), thus dropping or casting out the nunation. This explanation will show what is meant by the comparison of the sleeping and unconscious husband to the cast-out (or dropped) nunation of construction. N.B. *el* before *t* becomes *et* and in construction, after the nominative, *ul*.

till the morning, when she said to him, 'It is not a night of thee that will content me, nor a day, no, nor yet a month nor a year; but it is my intent to abide with thee the rest of my life. Wait till I play my husband a trick that would baffle the keenest-witted and whereby we shall come to our desires. I will cause doubt to enter into him, so that he shall put me away, whereupon I will marry thee and go with thee to thine own country. Moreover, I will transport all his wealth and treasures to thy lodging and will contrive thee the ruin of his dwelling-place and the blotting-out of his traces. But do thou hearken to my speech and obey me in that I shall say to thee and cross me not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Kemerezzeman; 'there is no opposition in me.'

Then said she, 'Go to the khan and when my husband comes to thee and invites thee, say to him, "O my brother, a man is apt to be burdensome, and when his visits grow [over]frequent, both generous and niggard loathe him. How then shall I go with thee every night and lie with thee in the saloon? If thou be not chagrined with me, thy harem will bear me a grudge, for that I hinder thee from them. If, therefore, thou hast a mind to my company, take me a house beside thine own and we will abide thus, now I sitting with thee till the time of sleep, and now thou with me. Then will I go to my lodging and thou to thy harem, and this will be better-advised than that I hinder thee from thy harem every night." Then will he come to me and take counsel with me, and I will advise him to turn out our neighbour, for that the house in which he lives is ours and he rents it of us; and once thou art in the house, God will make the rest of our scheme easy to us. Go now and do as I bid thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; whereupon she left him and went away, whilst he lay down and feigned sleep.

Presently, the maid came and aroused them; and when the jeweller awoke, he said to Kemerezzeman, 'O merchant, have the mosquitoes troubled thee?' 'No,' answered he, and Ubeid said, 'Belike thou art grown used to them.' Then they broke their fast and drank coffee, after which they went out to their affairs, and Kemerezzeman betook himself to the old woman, to whom he related what had passed, saying, 'Hast thou any farther device to bring me to foregather with her publicly?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'my contrivance hath gone thus far, and now I am at the end of my devices.' So he left her and returned to the khan, where towards eventide the jeweller came to him and invited him. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'I cannot go with thee.' 'Why so?' asked the merchant. 'I love thee and cannot brook separation from thee. I conjure thee by Allah to come with me!' 'If it be thy wish,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'to continue our intercourse and keep up the friendship betwixt thee and me, take me a house beside thine own, and if thou wilt, thou shalt pass the evening with me and I with thee; but, when the time of sleep cometh, each of us shall go to his own house and lie there.' Quoth Ubeid, 'I have a house adjoining mine, which is my own property: so go thou with me to-night and to-morrow I will have the house voided for thee.'

Night dcccclxxii.

So he went with him and they supped and prayed the evening-prayer, after which the jeweller drank the cup of drugged liquor and fell asleep: but in Kemerezzeman's cup there was no drug; so he drank it and slept not. Then came the jeweller's wife and passed the night with him, whilst her husband lay like a dead man. When he awoke in the morning, he sent for the tenant of the adjoining house and said to him, 'O man, void me the house, for I have need of it.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered the man and voided the house to him, whereupon Kemerezzeman took up his abode therein and transported

all his goods thither. The jeweller passed that evening with him, then went to his own house.

On the morrow, his wife sent for a cunning builder and wrought on him with money to make her an underground [way] from her chamber to Kemerezzeman's house, ending in a trap-door under the earth. So, before Kemerezzeman was ware, she came in to him with two bags of money and he said to her, 'Whence comest thou?' She showed him the underground way and said to him, 'Take these two bags of his money.' Then she abode with him, toying and dallying with him, till the morning, when she said, 'Wait for me, till I go to him and wake him, so he may go to his shop, and return to thee.' So saying, she went away and awoke her husband, who made the ablution and prayed and went to his shop. As soon as he was gone, she took four bags of money and carrying them to Kemerezzeman, sat with him awhile, after which she returned to her house and he betook himself to the bazaar.

When he returned at sundown, he found in his house ten purses and jewels and what not else. Presently the jeweller came to him and carried him to his own house, where they passed the evening in the saloon, till the maid brought them to drink. The jeweller drank and fell asleep, whilst nought betided Kemerezzeman [and he abode awake], for that his cup was pure and there was no drug therein. Then came Helimeh and fell to toying with him, whilst the maid transported the jeweller's goods to Kemerezzeman's house by the secret passage. Thus they did till morning, when the maid awoke her master and gave them to drink of coffee, after which they went each his own way.

On the third day she brought out to him a knife of her husband's, that he had chased and wrought with his own hand. He priced it at five hundred dinars and because of

the eagerness with which the folk sought it of him, he had laid it up in a chest and could not bring himself to sell it to any. Quoth she, 'Take this knife and stick it in thy girdle and go to my husband and sit with him. Then pull out the knife and say to him, "Look at this knife I bought to-day and tell me if I made a good bargain or not." He will know it, but will be ashamed to say to thee, "This is my knife." So he will ask thee, "Whence didst thou buy it and for how much?" And do thou answer, "I saw two Levantines disputing and one said to the other, 'Where hast thou been?' Quoth his companion, 'I have been with my mistress, and whenever I foregather with her, she gives me money; but to-day she said to me, "I have no money to give thee to-day, but take this knife of my husband's." So I took it and mean to sell it.' The knife pleased me and I said to him, 'Wilt thou sell it to me?' 'Buy,' answered he. So I got it of him for three hundred dinars and I wonder whether it was cheap or dear." And note what he will say to thee. Then talk with him awhile and rise and come back to me in haste. Thou wilt find me awaiting thee at the mouth of the underground way, and do thou give me the knife.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Kemerezzeman and taking the knife, stuck it in his girdle.

Then he went to the shop of the jeweller, who saluted him and welcomed him and made him sit down. He spied the knife in his girdle, at which he wondered and said in himself, 'That is my knife: who can have given it to this merchant?' And he fell a-musing and saying in himself, 'I wonder if it is my knife or one like it!' Presently, Kemerezzeman pulled it out of his girdle and said to him, 'Harkye, master; take this knife and look at it.' Ubeid took it and knew it right well, but was ashamed to say, 'This is my knife;' so he said, 'Where didst thou buy it?' Kemerezzeman replied as Helimeh had charged him, and the jeweller said, 'The knife was cheap at that

Night dcccclxxiii.

price, for it is worth five hundred dinars.' But fire flamed in his heart and his hands were tied from working at his craft.

Kemerezzeman continued to talk with him, whilst he was drowned in the sea of solicitudes, and for fifty words wherewith the youth bespoke him, he answered him but one; for his heart was in torment and his body racked and his mind troubled and he was even as saith the poet:

I cannot speak, what time to talk with me folk have a mind, And if they speak to me, my thought they absent from me find.
Drowned in the sea of care, that hath no bottom, 'twixt the folk I can't distinguish, no, nor man can tell from womankind.

When Kemerezzeman saw him thus discomfited, he said to him, 'Belike thou art busy at this present,' and leaving him, returned to his own house, where he found Helimeh standing at the door of the underground passage, awaiting him. Quoth she, 'Hast thou done as I bade thee?' And he said, 'Yes.' 'What said he to thee?' asked she, and he answered, 'He told me that the knife was cheap at that price, for that it was worth five hundred dinars: but I could see that he was troubled; so I left him and know not what befell him after that.' 'Give me the knife,' said she, 'and reck thou not of him.' Then she took the knife and restoring it to its place, sat down.

Meanwhile, fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and disquietude was sore upon him and he said in himself, 'Needs must I go and look for the knife and do away doubt with certainty.' So he repaired to his house and went in to his wife, snorting like a dragon; and she said to him, 'What ails thee, O my lord?' 'Where is my knife?' asked he. 'In the chest,' answered she and smote upon her breast, saying, 'Woe is me! Belike thou hast fallen out with some one and art come to fetch the knife to smite him withal.' 'Give me the knife,' said he. 'Let

me see it.' But she replied, '[I will not give it thee] till thou swear to me that thou wilt not smite any one with it.' So he swore this to her and she opened the chest and brought out to him the knife and he fell to turning it over, saying, 'Verily, this is a strange thing!'

Then said he to her, 'Take it and lay it back in its place.' Quoth she, 'Tell me the meaning of all this.' And he answered, 'I saw a knife like this with our friend [the merchant],' and told her all that had passed between himself and Kemerezzeman, adding, 'But, when I saw it in the chest, there was an end of my doubts.' 'Belike,' said she, 'thou misdoubtedst of me and deemedst that I was the Levantine's mistress and had given him the knife.' 'Yes,' replied he; 'I had my doubts of this; but, when I saw the knife, suspicion was lifted from my heart.' 'O man,' rejoined she, 'there is no good in thee!' And he fell to excusing himself to her, till he appeased her; after which he returned to his shop.

Next day, she gave Kemerezzeman her husband's watch, which he had wrought with his own hand and whereof none had the like, saying, 'Go to his shop and sit with him and say to him, "I saw again to-day him whom I saw yesterday. He had a watch in his hand and said to me, 'Wilt thou buy this watch?' Quoth I, 'Whence hadst thou it?' And he answered, saying, 'I was with my mistress and she gave me this watch.' So I bought it of him for eight-and-fifty dinars. Look at it: is it cheap at that price or dear?" Note what he says to thee; then return to me in haste and give me the watch.' So Kemerezzeman repaired to the jeweller and did with him as his mistress had charged him. When Ubeid saw the watch, he said, 'This is worth seven hundred dinars;' and suspicion entered into him. Then Kemerezzeman left him and returning to Helimeh, gave her back the watch.

Presently, in came her husband, snorting, and said to her, 'Where is my watch?' 'Here it is,' answered she. And he said, 'Give it me.' So she brought it to him and he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' 'O man,' said she, 'there is something the matter with thee. Tell me what it is.' 'What shall I say?' answered he. 'Verily, I am bewildered by these [strange] chances!' And he recited the following verses:

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed about my case; for lo! Troubles and griefs beset me sore, I know not whence they grow.
Patient I'll be, so aloes'[1] self, that I against a thing Bitt'rer than ever aloes was endured have, may know.
Aloes itself less bitter than my patience is; I've borne With patience what is hotter far than coals with fire aglow.
Will o'er my case hath no command; but unto patience fair I'm bidd'n of Him who orders all that is for weal or woe.[2]

Then he said to his wife, 'O woman, I saw, in the hands of the merchant our friend, first my knife, which I knew, for that its fashion was of my own invention, nor doth its like exist; and he told me of it a story that troubled the heart: so I came [home] and found it [here]. Again to-day I see him with the watch, whose fashion also is of my own invention, nor is there the fellow of it in Bassora, and of this also he told me a story that troubled my heart. Wherefore I am bewildered in my wit and know not what is come to me.' Quoth she, 'The gist of thy speech is that thou suspectedst me of being the merchant's mistress and giving him thy goods; so thou camest to question me and make proof of my perfidy; and but that I showed thee the knife and the watch, thou hadst been certified of my faithlessness. But, O man,

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

[2] This line contains a play on the double meaning ("commandment" and "case" or "thing") of the word *amr*.

since thou deemest thus of me, henceforth I will never again break bread with thee nor drink water, for I loathe thee with the loathing of prohibition.'[1]

Night dcccclxxiv. So he spoke her fair and excused himself to her till he appeased her and returned, repenting him of having bespoken her thus, to his shop, where he sat, in sore disquiet and exceeding anxiety, between belief and disbelief, till eventide. Then he went home, but brought not Kemerezzeman with him; whereupon quoth his wife, 'Where is the merchant?' And he said, 'In his house.' 'Is the friendship between thee and him grown cold?' asked she. 'By Allah,' replied he, 'I have taken an aversion to him, because of that which hath betided me from him.' Quoth she, 'Go and fetch him, to please me.' So he arose and went in to Kemerezzeman in his house, where he saw his own goods strewn about and knew them. At this sight, fire was kindled in his heart and he fell asighing. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'How is it that I see thee melancholy?' Ubeid was ashamed to say, 'Here are my goods in thy house: who brought them hither?' So he answered only, 'A vexation hath betided me; but come thou with me to my house, that we may divert ourselves there.' 'Let me be in my place,' said Kemerezzeman. 'I will not go with thee.' But the jeweller conjured him [to come] and taking him, [carried him to his house,] where they supped and passed the evening together, Kemerezzeman talking with the jeweller, who was drowned in the sea of solicitude and answered him but one word for a hundred wherewith he bespoke him.

Presently, the maid brought them two cups of drink, as usual, and they drank; whereupon Ubeid fell asleep, but Kemerezzeman abode on wake, for that his cup was not drugged. Then came Helimeh and said to her lover,

[1] *i.e.* as one loathes that which is prohibited or tabooed.

'How deemest thou of yonder cuckold, who is drunken in his heedlessness and knoweth not the wiles of women? Needs must I cozen him into putting me away. To-morrow, I will disguise myself as a slave-girl and follow thee to his shop, where do thou say to him, "O master, I went to-day into the khan of El Yesirjiyeh, where I saw this damsel and bought her for a thousand dinars. Look at her and tell me whether she was cheap or dear at that price." Then uncover to him my face and breasts and show me to him; after which do thou carry me back to thy house, whence I will go to my chamber by the secret passage, so I may see the issue of our affair with him.'

Then they passed the night in mirth and converse and pleasance and good cheer and dalliance and delight till the morning, when she returned to her own place and sent the maid to arouse the two men. So they arose and prayed the morning-prayer and broke their fast and drank coffee, after which Ubeid repaired to his shop and Kemerezzeman betook himself to his own house. Presently, in came Helimeh to him by the underground passage, in the disguise of a slave-girl, and indeed she was a slave-girl by birth.[1] Then he went out and she followed him, till he came to the jeweller's shop and saluting him, sat down and said, 'O master, I went into the khan of El Yesirjiyeh to-day, to look about me, and saw this damsel in the broker's hands. She pleased me; so I bought her for a thousand dinars and I would have thee look upon her and see if she be cheap at that price or no.' So saying, he uncovered her face and the jeweller saw her to be his own wife, dressed in her richest clothes and tricked out in her finest ornaments and adorned with kohl and henna, even as she was wont to adorn herself before him in the house.

He knew her but too well by her face and clothes and

[1] Hence, according to Muslim theory, her wicked behaviour.

trinkets, for that he had wrought the latter with his own hand, and he saw on her fingers the rings he had newly made for Kemerezzeman, whereby he was certified that she was indeed his wife. So he said to her, 'What is thy name, O slave-girl?' And she answered, 'Helimeh,' naming to him her own name; whereat he was amazed and said to Kemerezzeman, 'For how much didst thou buy her?' 'For a thousand dinars,' answered he. 'Then,' rejoined the jeweller, 'thou hast gotten her for nothing; for her rings and clothes and trinkets are worth more than that.' 'May God rejoice thee with good news!' said Kemerezzeman. 'Since she pleases thee, I will carry her to my house.' And Ubeid answered, 'Do thy will.' So he carried her to his house, whence she passed through the secret passage to her own apartment and sat there.

Meanwhile, fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and he said to himself, 'I will go see my wife. If she be at home, this slave-girl must be her counterpart, and glory be to Him who [only] hath no counterpart! But, if she be not at home, it is she herself without a doubt.' Then he set off, running, and coming to his house, found his wife sitting in the same clothes and ornaments he had seen upon her in the shop; whereupon he beat hand upon hand, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' 'O man,' said she, 'art thou mad or what aileth thee?' It is not thy wont to do thus, and it must be that something hath befallen thee.' 'If thou wilt have me tell thee,' answered he, 'be not vexed.' 'Say on,' quoth she. So he said, 'Our friend the merchant hath bought a slave-girl, whose shape is as thy shape and her height as thy height; moreover, her name is even as thine and her apparel is the like of thine apparel. Brief, she resembles thee in all her attributes, and on her fingers are rings like thy rings and her trinkets are like unto thy trinkets. So, when he showed her to

me, methought it was thyself and I was perplexed about my case. Would we had never seen this merchant nor companied with him and would he had never left his own country and we had not known him, for he hath troubled my life, that before was serene, causing unkindness to succeed good faith and making doubt to enter into my heart!' 'Look in my face,' said she. 'Belike I am she who was with him and he is my lover and I disguised myself as a slave-girl and agreed with him that he should show me to thee, so he might lay a snare for thee.' 'What words are these?' answered he. 'Indeed, I never thought that thou wouldst do the like of this thing.'

Now this jeweller was unversed in women's wiles and knew not how they do with men, nor had he heard the saying of the poet:

A heart that is eath of moving hath carried thee off in chase Of the fair, when youth hath left thee and hoariness comes apace.
Leila to me is costly and her enjoyment remote And many a foe and peril 'twixt her and me have place.
If thou wouldst ask of women and question of their concerns, Lo, I am versed in their fashions, a leach well skilled in their case.
When a man's head grows grizzled or for the nonce his wealth Fails from his hand, believe me, he hath no part in their grace.

Nor that of another:

Gainsay women; he obeyeth Allah best, who saith them nay And he prospers not who giveth them his bridle-rein to sway;
For they'll hinder him from winning to perfection in his gifts, Though a thousand years he study, seeking after wisdom's way.

And a third:

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death: Refuge I seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.
Prime source are they of all the ills that overtake mankind, Both in the fortunes of this world and matters of the faith.

'Here am I sitting in my chamber,' said she. 'So go

thou to him forthright and knock at the door and make shift to go in to him quickly. If thou see the damsel with him, it is a slave-girl of his who resembles me, and glory be to Him who hath no like! But, if thou see no slave-girl with him, then am I myself she whom thou sawest with him in the shop, and thine ill thought of me will be confirmed.' 'True,' answered Ubeid and went out, whereupon she passed through the hidden way and seating herself by Kemerezzeman, told him what had passed, saying, 'Open the door quickly and show me to him.'

As they were talking, there came a knocking at the door. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'Who is at the door?' 'I, thy friend,' answered the jeweller; 'thou showedst me thy slave-girl in the bazaar, and I rejoiced in her for thee: but my joy in her was not completed; so open the door and let me look at her again.' 'So be it,' rejoined Kemerezzeman and opened the door to him, whereupon he saw his wife sitting by him. She rose and kissed their hands; and he looked at her. Moreover, she talked with him awhile and he saw her not to be distinguished from his wife in aught and said, 'God createth what He will.' Then he went away, more perplexed than ever, and returned to his own house, where he found his wife sitting in her chamber, for she had foregone him thither by the secret passage. Quoth she, 'What hast thou seen?' 'I found her with her master,' answered he; 'and she resembleth thee.' Then said she, 'Go to thy shop and let this suffice thee of suspicion and never again deem ill of me.' 'So be it,' replied he; 'bear me not malice for what is past.' 'God pardon thee!' said she; whereupon he kissed her right and left and went back to his shop.

Night dcccclxxb.

No sooner was he gone than she again betook herself to Kemerezzeman through the underground passage, with four bags of money, and said to him, 'Equip thyself for present departure and be ready to carry off the treasure

without delay, against I put in action for thee the device I have in mind.' So he went out forthright and bought mules and loaded them and made ready a travelling litter. Moreover he bought slaves and servants and sending the whole without the city, returned to Helimeh and said to her, 'I have made an end of my affairs.' Quoth she, 'And I too am ready; for I have transported to thy house all the rest of his money and treasures and have left him nothing, little or much, whereof he may avail himself. All this is of my love for thee, O darling of my heart, for I would sacrifice to thee a thousand husbands. But now thou must go to him and take leave of him, saying, "I purpose to depart after three days and am come to bid thee farewell. So do thou reckon what I owe thee for the rent of the house, that I may send it to thee and acquit my conscience." Note his reply and return to me and tell me; for I can no more. I have done my utmost, by cozening him, to anger him with me and cause him divorce me, but find him still infatuated with me. So nothing will serve us but to depart to thine own country.' 'O rare!' replied he. 'If but the dreams prove true!'[1]

Then he went to the jeweller's shop and sitting down by him, said to him, 'O master, I set out for home in three days' time, and am come to take leave of thee. So I would have thee reckon what I owe thee for the hire of the house, that I may give it to thee and acquit my conscience.' 'What talk is this?' answered Ubeid. 'Verily, it is I who am indebted to thee. By Allah, I will take nothing from thee for the rent of the house, for thou hast brought down blessings upon us! But thou desolatest me by thy departure, and but that it is forbidden to me, I would certainly oppose thee and hinder thee from returning to thy country and family.' Then he took leave

[1] A proverbial saying.

of him, whilst they both wept exceeding sore, and the jeweller shut his shop, saying in himself, 'Needs must I bring my friend on his way.'

So, as often as he went on an occasion, the jeweller went with him, and when they entered Kemerezzeman's house, they found Helimeh there, and she stood before them and served them; but, when Ubeid entered his own house, he found her sitting there; nor did he cease to see her thus in each house in turn, for the space of three days, at the end of which time she said to Kemerezzeman, 'Now have I transported to thee all that he hath of treasures and carpets and things of price, and there remains with him but the slave-girl, who used to come in to you with the night-drink: but I cannot part with her, for that she is my kinswoman and confidant and she is dear to me. So I will [feign to] beat her and be wroth with her and when my husband comes home, I will say to him, "I will no longer put up with this slave-girl nor abide in the house with her; take her and sell her." So he will sell her and do thou buy her, that we may carry her with us.' 'Good,' answered he. So she beat the girl and when the jeweller came in, he found her weeping and asked her why she wept. Quoth she, 'My mistress hath beaten me.' So he went in to his wife and said to her, 'What hath that accursed girl done, that thou hast beaten her?' 'O man,' answered she, 'I have but one word to say to thee, and it is that I can no longer brook the sight of this girl; so take her and sell her, or else divorce me.' Quoth he, 'I will sell her, for I may not cross thee in aught.' So, when he went out to go to the shop, he took her and passed with her by Kemerezzeman.

No sooner had he gone out than his wife slipped through the underground passage to Kemerezzeman, who placed her in the litter, before her husband reached him. When he came up and Kemerezzeman saw the slave-girl with

him, he said to him, 'What girl is this?' 'It is my slave-girl,' answered Ubeid, 'who used to serve us with wine; she hath disobeyed her mistress, who is wroth with her and hath bidden me sell her.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'If her mistress have taken an aversion to her, there is no abiding for her with her; but sell her to me, that I may smell your scent in her, and I will make her handmaid to my slave Helimeh.' 'Good,' answered Ubeid. 'Take her.' 'What is her price?' asked Kemerezzeman. But the jeweller said, 'I will take nothing from thee, for thou hast been bountiful to us.'

So he accepted her from him and said to Helimeh, 'Kiss thy lord's hand.' Accordingly, she came out from the litter and kissing Ubeid's hand, remounted, whilst he looked at her. Then said Kemerezzeman, 'I commend thee to God, O Master Ubeid! Acquit me of responsibility.'[1] 'God acquit thee!' answered the jeweller, 'and bring thee in safety to thy family!' Then he bade him farewell and went to his shop, weeping, and indeed it was grievous to him to part from Kemerezzeman, for that he had been his friend and friendship hath its claims; yet he rejoiced in the dispelling of the doubts that had betided him concerning his wife, since the young man was now gone and his suspicions had not been confirmed.

Meanwhile Helimeh said to her lover, 'If thou wish for safety, travel by other than the accustomed road.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and taking a road other than that commonly used, fared on, without ceasing, till he reached the confines of Egypt and sent his father a letter by a runner. Now Abdurrehman was sitting in the market among the merchants, with a heart on fire for separation from his son, for that no news of the latter had reached

Night dcccclxxvi.

[1] A common formula of leave-taking between two persons who have had business or other transactions with each other, meaning, "Hold me quit of any claims thou mayst have on me."

him, since the day of his departure, when the runner came up and said, 'O my lords, which of you is called the merchant Abdurrehman?' 'What wouldst thou with him?' asked they; and he said, 'I have a letter for him from his son Kemerezzeman, whom I left at El Arish.'[1]

At this Abdurrehman rejoiced and his heart was lightened and the merchants rejoiced for him and gave him joy of [his son's] safety. Then he opened the letter and read as follows: 'From Kemerezzeman to the merchant Abdurrehman. Peace be upon thee and upon all the merchants! If ye ask concerning us, to God be the praise and the thanks! Indeed we have sold and bought and profited and are come back in health and wealth and safety.' Whereupon Abdurrehman opened the chapter of rejoicing and made banquets and gave feasts and entertainments galore, sending for instruments of music and addressing himself to hold high festival after the rarest fashion. When Kemerezzeman came to Es Salehiyeh,[2] his father and all the merchants went forth to meet him, and Abdurrehman embraced him and strained him to his bosom and wept till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he said, 'O my son, [this is] a blessed day, since the Omnipotent Protector hath reunited us with thee!' And he repeated the following verses:

The loved one's return is the crowning of glee And the joy-cup between us once more circles free.
So welcome, fair welcome and full to the light Of the time, the full moon of full moons, still say we.

Then, for excess of joy, the tears flowed from his eyes and he recited these verses also:

[1] A town and fortress on the Mediterranean, close to the frontier of Palestine, besieged and captured by Napoleon in 1799.

[2] A town about 60 miles N.N.E. of Cairo.

The moon o' the time,[1] unveiling, in splendour doth appear, Whenas, his travels ended, to us he draweth near.
Even as the night of his absence his hair in colour is, But yet the sun's uprising is from his collars'[2] sphere.

Then the merchants came up to Kemerezzeman and saluting him, saw with him many loads and servants and a travelling litter enclosed in a spacious canopy. So they took him and carried him home; and when Helimeh came forth from the litter, his father saw her a ravishment to all who beheld her. So they opened her an upper chamber, as it were a treasure from which the talismans had been loosed;[3] and when his mother saw her, she was ravished with her and deemed her a queen of the wives of the kings. So she rejoiced in her and questioned her; and she answered, saying, 'I am thy son's wife.' 'Since he is married to thee,' rejoined the other, 'we must make thee a splendid bride-feast, that we may rejoice in thee and in my son.'

When the folk had dispersed and each had gone his way, Abdurrehman foregathered with his son and said to him, 'O my son, what is this slave-girl thou hast brought with thee and for how much didst thou buy her?' 'O my father,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'she is no slave-girl; but it is she who was the cause of my going abroad.' 'How so?' asked his father, and he said, 'It is she whom the dervish described to us the night he lay with us; for indeed my hopes clove to her from that hour and I sought not to travel but on her account. The wild Arabs came out upon me by the way and stripped me and took my

[1] i.e. *Kemerezzeman.*

[2] Comparing his bright face, rising from his collars, to the sun issuing from the sphere of the darkness.

[3] *i.e.* so richly decorated that it seemed like the chamber of an enchanted treasure, whose binding spells had been done away, so that it was become open to sight.

goods, so that I entered Bassora alone and there befell me there such and such things;' and he went on to relate to him all that had befallen him from beginning to end.

When he had made an end of his story, his father said to him, 'O my son, and after all this didst thou marry her?' 'No,' answered Kemerezzeman; 'but I have promised her marriage.' 'Is it thine intent to marry her?' asked Abdurrehman; and he replied, 'If thou bid me marry her, I will do so; otherwise, I will not marry her.' Quoth his father, 'If thou marry her, I am quit of thee in this world and the next, and I shall be sore incensed against thee. How canst thou marry her, seeing that she hath dealt thus with her husband? For, even as she did with him for thy sake, so will she do the like with thee for another's sake, because she is a traitress and there is no trusting in a traitor. Wherefore, if thou disobey me, I shall be wroth with thee; but, if thou give ear to my word, I will seek thee out a girl handsomer than she, who shall be pure and virtuous, and marry thee to her, though I spend all my wealth upon her. Moreover, I will make thee a wedding without equal and will glory in thee and in her; for it is better that folk should say, "Such an one hath married such an one's daughter," than that they should say, "He hath taken to wife a slave-girl without birth or worth."' And he went on to persuade his son to give up marrying her, supporting his arguments by citing saws and proofs and stories and examples and verses and moral instances, till Kemerezzeman said, 'Since the case is thus, it boots not that I marry her.' Whereupon his father kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'Thou art my true son, and as I live, O my son, I will assuredly marry thee to a girl who hath not her equal!'

Then he set the jeweller's wife and her maid in an upper chamber, appointing a black slave-girl to carry them their meat and drink. Moreover, he said to Helimeh, 'Ye

shall abide imprisoned in this chamber, thou and thy maid, till I find one who will buy you, when I will sell you to him. And if ye resist, I will kill you both, for thou art a traitress, and there is no good in thee.' 'Do thy will,' answered she. 'I deserve all thou canst do with me.' Then he locked the door on them and gave his women a charge respecting them, saying, 'Let none go up to them nor speak with them, save the black slave-girl, who shall give them their meat and drink through the chamber-window.' So she abode with her maid, weeping and repenting her of that which she had done with her husband.

Meanwhile Abdurrehman sent out the marriage-brokers, to look out a wife of rank and worth for his son, and they ceased not to make search, and as often as they saw one girl, they heard of a fairer than she, till they came to the house of the Sheikh el Islam and saw his daughter. Now she had no equal in Cairo for beauty and grace and symmetry, and she was a thousand times handsomer than the jeweller's wife. So they told Abdurrehman and he and the notables repaired to her father and sought her in marriage of him. Then they drew up the contract and made her a splendid wedding. Moreover, Abdurrehman gave bride-feasts and held open house forty days.

On the first day, he invited the doctors of the law and they held a splendid nativity.[1] On the morrow, he invited all the merchants, and so on during the rest of the forty days, making a banquet every day to one or other class of folk, till he had bidden all the men of learning and amirs and beys and magistrates, whilst the drums beat and the flutes sounded and the merchant sat to receive the guests,

[1] *Maulid*, a religious ceremony or "function," so called because of its resemblance to the festivals celebrated in honour of the birth of Mohammed and the principal saints of Islam. It consists mainly of recitations of the Koran and the litanies of the names of God, etc.

with his son by his side, that he might divert himself by gazing on the folk, as they ate from the tables. Every night Abdurrehman illuminated the street and the quarter with lamps and there came all the mimes and jugglers and mountebanks and played all manner sports; and indeed it was a peerless wedding. On the last day he invited the poor and needy, far and near, and they came in troops and ate, whilst the merchant sat, with his son by his side.

Presently, behold, Ubeid the jeweller entered, with a company of poor folk, and he was naked and weary and bore on his face the marks of travel. When Kemerezzeman saw him, he knew him and said to his father, 'Look, O my father, at yonder poor man that is but now come in.' So he looked and saw him clad in worn clothes and on him a patched gown worth two dirhems: his face was pale and he was covered with dust and was as he were an offcast of the pilgrimage.[1] He was groaning as groans the sick man and the needy, walking with a tottering gait and swaying right and left, and indeed there was realized in him the saying of the poet:

Lack-gold abaseth man and doth his worth away, Even as the setting sun that pales with ended day.
He passeth 'mongst the folk and fain would hide his head; And when alone, he weeps with tears that never stay.
Absent, none taketh heed to him or his concerns; Present, he hath no part in life or pleasance aye.
By Allah, whenas men with poverty are cursed, But strangers midst their kin and countrymen are they!

And that of another:

All to the poor man's contrary, a hindrance and a woe; The whole world shuts its doors on him, wherever he doth go.
Thou seest him in abhorrence held, though he no culprit be; He sees hostility, the cause whereof he may not know.

[1] *i.e.* one who from weariness or illness has broken down midway on the pilgrimage and has been left behind by the caravan.

Even the dogs, when they behold a man of fortune, straight Do follow him and fawn on him and wag their tails, I trow;
But if, one day, they see a poor and miserable wight, They bark at him incontinent and eke their teeth they show.

And yet another:

So but a man be blessed with luck and power and sway, Calamities and woes still turn from him away.
The loved one to him comes without a rendezvous, Unsought, and eke the spy the pimp for him doth play.
The folk as singing rate the rumbling of his guts And when he letteth wind, "He smelleth sweet," they say.

'O my son,' said the merchant, 'who is this?' And Kemerezzeman replied, 'This is Master Ubeid the jeweller, husband of the woman who is imprisoned with us.' Quoth Abdurrehman, 'Is this he of whom thou toldest me?' 'Yes,' answered his son; 'and indeed I know him well.' Night dcccc lxxbii.

Now the manner of Ubeid's coming thither was on this wise. When he had taken leave of Kemerezzeman, he went to his shop, where there came to him a job of work and he wrought at it all day. At eventide he locked up his shop and going home, laid his hand on the door, whereupon it opened and he entered and found neither his wife nor the slave-girl, but saw the house in the sorriest of plights, realizing the saying of the poet:

Once was it as a beehive stocked and full of bees galore; But, when they left it, it became devoid of all its store.[1]
It seems to-day as if it ne'er had been inhabited Or as if Death had taken those who dwelt therein of yore.

When he saw the house empty, he turned right and left and went round about the place, like a madman, but found no one. Then he opened the door of his treasure-closet, but found therein nought of his money nor his treasures;

[1] See note, Vol. VI. p. 37.

whereupon he awoke from his delusion and shook off his infatuation and knew that it was his wife herself who had given him the change and outwitted him with her wiles. He wept for that which had betided, but kept his affair secret, so none of his enemies might exult over him nor any of his friends be troubled, knowing that, if he discovered his secret, it would bring him nought but affront and blame from the folk; wherefore he said to himself, 'O Ubeid, conceal that which hath befallen thee of trouble and affliction; it behoveth thee to do in accordance with the saying of the poet:

If a man's breast be straitened with a secret he doth hide, Yet straiter's his who to the folk his secret doth confide.'

Then he locked up his house and gave his shop in charge of one of his journeymen, to whom said he, 'My friend the young merchant hath invited me and my wife to accompany him to Cairo, that we may divert ourselves with the sight of the city, and swears that he will not depart except he carry us with him. So, O my son, I make thee my steward in the shop, and if the king ask for me, say thou to him, "He is gone with his wife to the Holy House of God [at Mecca]."' Then he sold some of his effects and bought mules and camels and slaves. Moreover, he bought a slave-girl and placing her in a litter, set out from Bassora after ten days. His friends took leave of him and none doubted but that he had taken his wife and gone on the pilgrimage, and the folk rejoiced in this, for that God had delivered them from being shut up in the mosques and houses every Friday. Quoth some of them, 'God grant he may never return to Bassora, so we may no more be shut up in the mosques and houses every Friday!' For that this usage had caused the people of Bassora exceeding vexation. Quoth another, 'Methinks he will not return, by reason of the praying of the people

of Bassora against him.' And yet another, 'If he return, it will not be but in reversed case.'

So the folk rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the jeweller's departure, after they had been in sore chagrin, and even their cats and dogs were eased. When Friday came round, however, the crier proclaimed as usual that the people should repair to the mosques two hours before the time of prayer or else shut themselves up in their houses, together with their cats and dogs; whereat their breasts were straitened and they all assembled and betaking themselves to the king's divan, stood before him and said, 'O king of the age, the jeweller hath taken his wife and departed on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God: so the cause of our restraint hath ceased to be, and why therefore are we now shut up?' Quoth the king, 'How came this traitor to depart without telling me? But, when he comes back from his journey, all will be well: so go ye to your shops and sell and buy, for this [restriction] is removed from you.'

Meanwhile the jeweller fared on ten days' journey, and as he drew near Baghdad, there befell him that which had befallen Kemerezzeman, before his entry into Bassora; for the wild Arabs came out upon him and stripped him and took all he had and he only escaped by feigning himself dead. As soon as they were gone, he rose and fared on, naked as he was, till he came to a village, where God inclined to him the hearts of certain charitable folk, who covered his nakedness with some old clothes, and he begged his way from town to town, till he reached the city of Cairo the [God-]guarded. Being racked with hunger, he went about begging in the markets, till one of the townsfolk said to him, 'O poor man, get thee to the house of the wedding-festival and eat and drink; for to-day they hold open house for poor folk and strangers.' Quoth he, 'I know not the way thither;' and the other said, 'Follow

me and I will show it to thee.' So he followed him, till he brought him to Abdurrehman's house and said to him, 'This is the house of the wedding; enter and fear not, for there is no doorkeeper at the door of the festival.'

So he entered and Kemerezzeman knew him and told his father, who said, 'O my son, leave him awhile: belike he is hungry; so let him eat his fill and recover himself, and after we will look to him.' So they waited till Ubeid had eaten his fill and washed his hands and drunk coffee and sherbets of sugar flavoured with musk and ambergris and was about to go out, when Abdurrehman sent one after him, who said to him, 'Come, O stranger, and speak with the merchant Abdurrehman.' 'Who is he?' asked Ubeid; and the man said, 'He is the master of the feast.' So the jeweller turned back, thinking that he meant to give him largesse, and coming up to Abdurrehman, saw his friend Kemerezzeman and was like to lose his senses for shame before him. But Kemerezzeman rose to him and embracing him, saluted him and they both wept sore. Then he seated him by his side and Abdurrehman said to his son, 'Lack-courtesy that thou art, this is no way to receive friends! Send him first to the bath and send after him a suit of clothes that shall befit him; and after sit with him and talk with him.' So he called some of his men and bade them carry the jeweller to the bath and sent him a suit of clothes of the choicest, worth a thousand dinars. Accordingly they carried him to the bath, where they washed his body and clad him in a suit, and he became as he were Provost of the Merchants.

Meanwhile, the bystanders questioned Kemerezzeman of him, saying, 'Who is this and whence knowest thou him?' Quoth he, 'This is my friend, who lodged me in his house and to whom I am indebted for favours without number, for that he entreated me with exceeding kindness. He is a man of fortune and condition and by trade a

jeweller, in which craft he hath no equal. The king of Bassora loves him greatly and holds him in high esteem and his word is law with him.' And he went on to enlarge to them on his praises, saying, 'He did with me thus and thus and I have shame of him and know not how to requite him his generous dealing with me.' Nor did he leave to vaunt him, till his worth was magnified to the bystanders and he became venerable in their eyes. So they said, 'We will all do him homage and honour him for thy sake. But we would fain know why he hath departed his native land and come hither and what God hath done with him, that he is come to this plight.' 'O folk,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'marvel not: for a son of Adam is still subject to Fate and destiny, and what while he abideth in this world, he is not safe from calamities. Indeed, he speaks truly who says:

Time still devours mankind and lies in wait on them to prey: So be not thou of those whom rank and honours lead astray;
Nay, but beware of slips and faults and sorrow still forswear And know the attributes of time are ruin and decay.
How many a fortune by the least adverseness is undone! All in itself hath that shall cause it change and pass away.

Know that I entered Bassora in yet sorrier plight and worse distress than this man, for that he entered Cairo with his nakedness covered with rags; but I came into his town, with my nakedness uncovered, one hand before and another behind; and none availed me but God and this excellent man. Now the reason of this was that the Bedouins stripped me and took my camels and mules and baggage and slew my men; but I lay down among the slain, and they thought that I was dead and went away and left me. Then I arose and walked on, naked, till I came to Bassora, where this man met me and clothed me and lodged me in his house. Moreover, he furnished

me with money, and all I have brought back with me I owe to God's goodness and his. When I departed, he gave me great store of wealth and I returned home, with a heart at ease. I left him in luck and lordship, and belike there hath befallen him some calamity of the calamities of fortune, that hath enforced him leave his folk and country, and there hath happened to him by the way the like of what happened to me. There is nothing extraordinary in this; but now it behoveth me to requite him his generous dealing with me and do according to the saying of him who saith:

Thou that of Fortune deemest hopefully, Dost thou then know what she will do with thee?
Whate'er thou dost, do good; for to a man, Even as he meteth, shall it meted be.'

As they were talking, up came Ubeid, as he were Provost of the Merchants; whereupon they all rose to salute him and seated him in the place of honour. Then said Kemerezzeman to him, 'O my friend, verily, thy day[1] is blessed and fortunate! There is no need to relate to me a thing that befell me before thee. If the Bedouins have stripped thee and robbed thee of thy wealth, verily our money is the ransom of our lives; so let not thy soul be troubled; for I entered thy city naked and thou clothedst me and entreatedst me generously, and I owe thee many a kindness. But I will requite thee and do with thee even as thou didst with me, nay, more: so be of good heart and cheerful eye.' And he went on to soothe him and hinder him from speech, lest he should name his wife and what she had done with him; nor did he cease to ply him with saws and moral instances and verses and conceits and stories and anecdotes and console him, till he took the hint and kept silence concerning the

Night dccc lxxviii.

[1] *i.e.* the day of thy coming.

past, diverting himself with the stories and witticisms he heard and repeating [in himself] the following lines:

On Fortune's forehead is a script, which if on careful wise Thou ponder, very tears of blood 'twill draw from out thine eyes.
Fortune, indeed, with its right hand saluteth none that be, But with the cup of dole and teen its left hand still him plies.

Then Kemerezzeman and his father took Ubeid and carrying him into the saloon of the harem, shut themselves up with him; and Abdurrehman said to him, 'We did but hinder thee from speaking before the folk, for fear of dishonour to thee and to us: but now we are private; so tell me all that hath passed between thee and thy wife and my son.' So he told him all, from beginning to end, and when he had made an end of his story, Abdurrehman said to him, 'Was the fault with my son or with thy wife?' 'By Allah,' answered Ubeid, 'thy son was not to blame, for men [naturally] lust after women, and it behoveth women to defend themselves from men. So the fault lies with my wife, who played me false and did with me these things.'

Then Abdurrehman arose and taking his son aside, said to him, 'O my son, we have proved his wife and know her to be a traitress; and now I mean to prove him and see if he be a man of worth and honour or a wittol.' 'How so?' asked Kemerezzeman; and Abdurrehman said, 'I mean to urge him to make peace with his wife, and if he consent and forgive her, I will smite him with a sword and kill him and kill her after, her and her maid, for there is no good in the life of a whore and a wittol; but, if he turn from her with aversion, I will marry him to thy sister and give him more than that thou tookest from him of wealth.'

Then he went back to Ubeid and said to him, 'O master, verily, the commerce of women calls for patience

and he who loves them hath need of longanimity, for that they order themselves ill towards men and maltreat them, by reason of their superiority over them in beauty and grace, wherefore they magnify themselves and belittle men. Especially is this the case when their husbands show them affection; for then they requite them with pride and coquetry and foul dealing of all kinds. But, if a man be wroth whenever he seeth in his wife aught that misliketh him, there can be no fellowship between them, nor can any hit it off with them who is not magnanimous and long-suffering; and except a man bear with his wife and requite her ill-doing with forgiveness, he shall get no good of her society. Indeed, it hath been said of women, "Were they in the sky, the necks of men would incline to them;" and he who hath the power and spareth, his reward is with God.

Now this woman is thy wife and thy companion and she hath long companied with thee; wherefore it behoveth that there be in thee indulgence for her, for that indulgence in fellowship is of the essentials of success. Moreover, women lack wit and religion, and if she have done ill, she repenteth and God willing, she will not again return to that which she did aforetime. So it is my counsel that thou make peace with her and I will restore thee more than thy good [that thou hast lost]; and if it please thee to abide with me, thou art welcome, thou and she, and ye shall know nought but what shall rejoice you both; but, if thou seek to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall content thee, and yonder is the litter ready; so mount thy wife and her maid therein and journey to thine own land. For that which falls out between a man and his wife is manifold, and it behoves thee to be indulgent and not take the road of rigour.'

'O my lord,' said the jeweller, 'and where is my wife?'

'She is in yonder upper chamber,' answered Abdurrehman. 'Go up to her and be easy with her, for my sake, and trouble her not; for, when my son brought her hither, he would have married her, but I forbade him from her and shut her up in yonder chamber, saying in myself, "Peradventure her husband will come and I will deliver her to him; for she is fair of favour, and when a woman is like unto this one, it may not be that her husband will let her go." What I counted on is come about and praised be God the Most High for thy reunion with thy wife! As for my son, I have sought him another woman in marriage and married him to her. These feasts and rejoicings are for his wedding, and to-night I bring him in to his wife. So here is the key of the chamber where thy wife is. Take it and open the door and go in to her and her maid and make merry with her. There shall be brought you meat and drink and thou shalt not come down from her till thou have had thy fill of her.' 'May God requite thee for me with all good, O my lord!' exclaimed Ubeid and taking the key, went up, rejoicing.

The merchant thought his words had pleased him and that he assented thereto; so he took the sword and following him, unseen, stood to see what should happen between him and his wife. When the jeweller came to the chamber-door, he heard his wife weeping sore for that Kemerezzeman had married another than her, and the maid saying to her, 'O my lady, how often have I warned thee and said to thee, "Thou wilt get no good of this youth: so do thou leave his company." But thou heededst not my words and spoiledst thy husband of all his goods and gavest them to him. Then thou forsookest thy place, of thine infatuation for him, and camest with him to this country. And now he hath cast thee out from his thought and married another and hath made the issue of thine infatuation for him to be imprisonment.' 'Be

silent, O accursed wench!' answered Helimeh. 'Though he be married to another, yet needs must I occur to his thought some day. I cannot forget [the nights I have spent in] his company and in any case I console myself with the saying of the poet:

O lords, doth it betide you to give a thought to one Unto whose thought none other occurs save you alone?
Now God forbid that mindless you of his case should be Whom thought of your condition distracteth from his own!

It cannot be but he will bethink him of our loves and ask of me; wherefore I will not turn from loving him nor change from passion for him, though I die in prison, for he is my love and my physician,[1] and my hope is in him that he will yet return to me and deal graciously with me.'

When the jeweller heard his wife's words, he went in to her and said to her, 'O traitress, thy hope in him is as the hope of Iblis in Paradise. All these vices were in thee and I knew not thereof; for, had I been ware of one of them, I had not kept thee with me an hour. But now I am certified of this in thee, it behoveth me to kill thee, though they put me to death for thee, O traitress!' And he seized her with both hands and repeated the following verses:

O fair ones, ye fordid my love so warm and true With sin nor had regard for what was right and due.
How long to you, indeed, with doting love I clave! But, after this my woe, I loathe the love of you.

Then he pressed upon her windpipe and broke her neck, whereupon her maid cried out, saying, 'Alas, my mistress!' 'O harlot,' said he, 'it is thou who art to blame for all this, for that thou knewest this vice to be in her and toldest me not.' Then he seized upon her and strangled her.

[1] *Hebibi wa tebibi*, a common jingling phrase.

When he had done this, apprehensions flocked upon him and he feared the issue of his affair and said in himself, 'When the merchant knows that I have killed them in his house, he will surely slay me; but I beseech God that He appoint the taking of my life to be according to the Law.' And he abode bewildered about his case and knew not what to do; but, as he was thus, in came Abdurrehman, who had stood all this while, sword in hand, without the door, looking with his eyes and hearkening with his ears, and said to him, '[Fear not:] no harm shall befall thee, for indeed thou deservest safety. See this sword in my hand. I had it in mind to slay thee, hadst thou made peace with her and taken her back into favour, and I would have slain [her and] the maid, to boot. But, since thou hast done this thing, welcome to thee and again welcome! And thy reward shall be that I will marry thee to my daughter, Kemerezzeman's sister.' Then he carried him down and sent for the woman whose office it was to wash the dead: whereupon it was noised abroad that Kemerezzeman had brought with him two slave-girls from Bassora and that they were both dead. So the people began to condole with him, saying, 'May thy head live!' and, 'May God compensate thee!' And they washed and shrouded them and buried them, and none knew the truth of the matter.

Then Abdurrehman sent for the Sheikh el Islam and all the notables and said to the former, 'Draw up the contract of marriage between my daughter Kaukeb es Sebah and Master Ubeid the jeweller and [set down that] her dowry hath been paid me in full.' So he drew up the contract and Abdurrehman gave the company to drink of sherbets, and they made one wedding festival for the two brides and paraded them in one litter on one and the same night; after which they carried Kemerezzeman and Ubeid in procession together and brought them in to their brides.

When the jeweller went in to Abdurrehman's daughter, he found her handsomer than Helimeh and lovelier a thousandfold. So he did away her maidenhead and on the morrow, he went to the bath with Kemerezzeman.

Then he abode with them in pleasance and delight awhile, till he began to yearn after his native land: so he went in to Abdurrehman and said to him, 'O uncle, I long for my own country, for I have there estates and effects, which I left in charge of one of my journeymen; and I have it in mind to journey thither, that I may sell my possessions and return to thee. So wilt thou give me leave to go to my country to that end?' 'O my son,' answered the merchant, 'I give thee leave to do this, and no blame to thee for these words, for that love of country is a part of religion; and he who hath not good in his own land hath none in other folks' land. But, peradventure, if thou depart without thy wife, when thou art once come to thy native place, it may seem good to thee to abide there, and thou wilt be divided between returning to thy wife and sojourning in thine own country; so it were the better counsel that thou carry thy wife with thee; and after, if thou be minded to return to us, return and welcome to you both; for we are folk who know not divorce and no woman of us marries twice, nor do we lightly discard a man.' Quoth Ubeid, 'O uncle, I fear me thy daughter will not consent to depart with me to my own country.' 'O my son,' replied Abdurrehman, 'we have no women amongst us who gainsay their husbands nor know we a wife who is wroth with her husband.'

'May God bless you and your women!' exclaimed the jeweller and going in to his wife, said to her, 'I am minded to go to my country: what sayst thou?' Quoth she, 'My father still had the governance of me, whilst I was a maid, and when I married, the governance all passed into my husband's hand, nor will I gainsay him.'

'May God bless thee and thy father,' rejoined Ubeid, 'and have mercy on the womb that bore thee and the loins that begat thee!' Then he cut his thongs[1] and betook himself to making ready for his journey. His father-in-law gave him much substance and they took leave of one another, after which Ubeid and his wife journeyed on without ceasing, till they reached Bassora, where his friends and kinsmen came out to meet him, doubting not but that he had been in the Hejaz. Some rejoiced at his return, whilst other some were vexed, and the folk said one to another, 'Now will he straiten us again every Friday, as before, and we shall be shut up in the mosques and houses, even to our cats and dogs.'

When the King of Bassora heard of his return, he was wroth with him and sending for him, chid him and said to him, 'Why didst thou depart, without letting me know? Was I unable to give thee somewhat wherewith thou mightest have succoured thyself in thy pilgrimage to the Holy House of God?' 'Pardon, O my lord!' replied the jeweller. 'By Allah, I went not on the pilgrimage! But there have befallen me such and such things.' And he told him all that had befallen him with his wife and with the merchant Abdurrehman of Cairo and how the latter had given him his daughter to wife and he had brought her to Bassora. 'By Allah,' said the king, 'did I not fear God the Most High, I would slay thee and marry this noble lady after thy death, though I spent treasuries of money on her, for that she befitteth none but kings. But God hath appointed her of thy portion and may He bless thee in her! So look thou use her well.' Then he bestowed largesse on the jeweller, who went out from before him and abode with his wife five years, after which he was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High.

[1] *i.e.* those of his waterskins for the journey.

The king sought his widow in marriage; but she refused, saying, 'O king, never was woman among my kindred who married again after her husband's death; wherefore I will never take another husband, nor will I marry thee, no, though thou kill me.' Then he sent to say to her, 'Dost thou seek to go to thy native land?' And she answered, 'If thou do good, thou shalt be requited therewith.' So he collected for her all the jeweller's possessions and added unto her of his own, after the measure of his rank. Moreover he sent with her one of his viziers, a man renowned for goodness and piety, and an escort of five hundred horse, who journeyed with her, till they brought her to her father, with whom she abode, without marrying again, till she died and they died all. So, if this woman would not consent to replace her dead husband with a Sultan, how shall she be evened with one who replaced her husband, whilst he was yet alive, with a youth of unknown extraction and condition, more by token that this was in lewdness and not by way of lawful marriage? So he who deemeth all women to be alike, there is no remedy for the disease of his madness. And glory be to Him to whom belongeth the empire of the Seen and the Unseen, the [Ever-]Living One, who dieth not!

ABDALLAH BEN FAZIL AND HIS BROTHERS.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was one day examining the tributes of the various provinces of his empire, when he observed that the tributes of all the countries and regions had come into the treasury, except that of Bassora, which had not arrived that year. So he held a Divan because of this and sending for the Vizier Jaafer, said to him, 'The tributes of all the provinces have come into the treasury, save that of Bassora, no part whereof hath arrived.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'belike there hath befallen the governor of Bassora somewhat that hath diverted him from sending the tribute.' Quoth the Khalif, 'The time of the coming of the tribute was twenty days [ago]; what, then, can be his excuse for that, in this time, he hath neither sent it nor sent to show cause for not doing so?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'if it please thee, we will send him a messenger.' 'Send him Abou Ishac el Mausili,[1] the boon-companion,' rejoined the Khalif, and Jaafer said, 'Hearkening and obedience to God and to thee, O Commander of the Faithful!'

Then he returned to his house and summoning Abou Ishac, wrote him a royal letter and said to him, 'Go to Abdallah ben Fazil, Viceroy of Bassora, and see what hath diverted him from sending the tribute. If it be ready, do thou receive it from him in full and bring it to me in haste, for the Khalif hath examined the tributes of the provinces and finds that they are all come in, except that of Bassora: but if thou find it not ready and he make an excuse to thee, bring him back with thee, that he may with his own tongue acquaint the Khalif with his excuse.'

[1] *i.e.* Ibrahim of Mosul, the celebrated musician. See antè, passim.

'I hear and obey,' answered Abou Ishac and taking with him five thousand horse, set out for Bassora.

When Abdallah heard of his approach, he went out to meet him with his troops and carried him to his palace, whilst the escort encamped without the city, where he furnished them with all of which they stood in need. Abou Ishac entered the audience-chamber and sitting down on the throne, seated the governor beside himself, whilst the notables sat round him, according to their several ranks. After the salutation,[1] Abdallah said to him, 'O my lord, is there any cause for thy coming to us?' 'Yes,' answered Abou Ishac, 'I come to seek the tribute; for the Khalif enquireth of it and the time of its coming is past.' 'O my lord,' rejoined Abdallah, 'would thou hadst not wearied thyself nor taken upon thyself the fatigue of the journey! For the tribute is ready in full and I had purposed to despatch it to-morrow. But, since thou art come, I will deliver it to thee, after I have entertained thee three days; and on the fourth day I will bring the tribute before thee. But now it behoveth us to offer thee a present in part requital of thy kindness and that of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'There is no harm in that,' said Abou Ishac.

So Abdallah dismissed the Divan and carrying him into a saloon, that had not its match, set a table of food before him and his companions. They ate and drank and made merry, after which the table was removed and there came coffee and sherbets. They sat conversing till a third part of the night was past, when they spread Abou Ishac a bed on a couch of ivory, inlaid with glittering gold. So he lay down and the viceroy lay down beside him on another couch; but wakefulness possessed Abou Ishac and he fell to meditating on the metres of verse and composing poetry, for that he was one of the chief of the Khalif's

[1] *i.e.* the usual compliments.

boon-companions and was eminently skilled[1] in composing verses and pleasant stories; nor did he leave to lie awake and make verses till half the night was past. Presently, Abdallah arose, thinking Abou Ishac asleep, and girding his middle, opened a cupboard, whence he brought out a whip; then, taking a lighted candle, he went forth by the door of the saloon. When Abou Ishac saw this, he marvelled and said, 'Whither goeth Abdallah ben Fazil with that whip? Belike he is minded to punish some one. But needs must I follow him and see what he will do this night.' So he arose and went out softly after him, so that he saw him not, and presently saw him open a closet and take thence a tray containing four dishes of meat and bread and a gugglet of water. Then he went on, carrying the tray and followed by Abou Ishac, till he came to another saloon and entered, whilst Abou Ishac stood behind the door and looking through the chink, saw a spacious saloon, richly furnished and having in its midst a couch of ivory plated with glittering gold, to which two dogs were made fast with chains of gold.

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Abdallah set down the tray in a corner and tucking up his sleeves, loosed the first dog, which began to struggle in his hands and put its muzzle to the ground, as it would kiss the ground before him, whining the while in a low, weak voice. Abdallah tied its paws behind its back and throwing it on the ground, drew forth the whip and beat it without mercy. The dog struggled, but could not get free, and Abdallah ceased not to beat it till it left groaning and lay without motion. Then he took it and tied it up in its place, and unbinding the second dog, did with him as he had done with the first; after which he pulled out a handkerchief and fell to wiping away their tears and comforting them, saying, 'Bear me not malice; for, by Allah, this is not of my will, nor is it easy to me!

[1] Lit. he had a fine fore-arm.

But it may be God will grant you relief and issue from your affliction.' And he prayed for them, what while Abou Ishac stood hearkening with his ears and watching with his eyes, and indeed he marvelled at this case.

Then Abdallah brought the dogs the tray of food and fell to feeding them with his own hand, till they had enough, when he wiped their mouths and lifting up the gugglet, gave them to drink; after which he took up the tray and gugglet and candle and made for the door. But Abou Ishac forewent him and making his way back to his couch, lay down; so that he saw him not neither knew that he had followed him and watched him. Then the governor replaced the tray and the gugglet in the closet and returning to the saloon, opened the cupboard and laid the whip in its place; after which he put off his clothes and lay down. But Abou Ishac passed the rest of the night pondering this affair nor did sleep visit him, for excess of wonder, and he ceased not to say in himself, 'I wonder what can be the meaning of this!' Nor did he leave wondering till the morning, when they arose and prayed the morning prayer. Then they set breakfast before them and they ate and drank coffee, after which they went out to the divan. Abou Ishac's thought was occupied with this enigma all day, but he concealed the matter and questioned not Abdallah thereof. Next night, he again followed the governor and saw him do with the two dogs as on the previous night, first beating them and then making his peace with them and giving them to eat and to drink; and on like wise he did the third night.

On the fourth day he brought the tribute to Abou Ishac, who took it and departed, without opening the matter to him. He fared on, without ceasing, till he came to Baghdad, where he delivered the tribute to the Khalif, who questioned him of the cause of the delay. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied he, 'I found that the

governor of Bassora had made ready the tribute and was about to despatch it; and had I delayed a day, it had met me on the road. But, O Commander of the Faithful, I had a rare adventure with Abdallah ben Fazil; never in my life saw I its like.' 'And what was it, O Abou Ishac?' asked the Khalif. So he acquainted him with that which he had seen the governor do with the two dogs, adding, 'On this wise I saw him do three nights following, first beating the dogs, then making his peace with them and comforting them and giving them to eat and drink, what while I watched him, whereas he saw me not.' 'Didst thou question him of the cause of this?' asked the Khalif. 'No, as thy head liveth, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Ishac.

Then said Er Reshid, 'O Abou Ishac, I command thee to return to Bassora and bring me Abdallah ben Fazil and the two dogs.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied he, 'excuse me from this; for indeed Abdallah entreated me with the utmost hospitality and I chanced upon this thing without design and acquainted thee therewith. So how can I go back to him and bring him to thee? Verily, if I return to him, I shall find no countenance for shame of him; wherefore it were meet that thou send him another than myself, with a letter under thine own hand, and he shall bring him to thee, him and the two dogs.' Quoth the Khalif, 'If I send him other than thyself, most like he will deny the whole affair and say, "I have no dogs." But, if I send thee and thou say to him, "I saw them with mine own eyes," he will not be able to deny it. Wherefore nothing will serve but that thou go and fetch him and the two dogs; else will I put thee to death.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Ishac. 'God is our sufficiency and good is He in whom we trust. He spoke sooth who said, "The calamity of man is from the tongue," and it is

Night dcccclxxx.

I who sinned against myself in telling thee. But write me a royal letter[1] and I will go to him and bring him back to thee.' So the Khalif wrote him a royal letter and he took it and repaired to Bassora. When he came in to the governor, the latter said, 'God keep us from the mischief of thy return, O Abou Ishac! How comes it that I see thee return in haste? Belike the tribute is deficient and the Khalif will not accept it?' 'O Amir Abdallah,' answered Abou Ishac, 'my return is not on account of the deficiency of the tribute, for it is full measure and the Khalif accepts it; but I hope that thou wilt excuse me, for that I have sinned against thee, and indeed this that I have done was decreed of God the Most High.' 'And what hast thou done, O Abou Ishac?' asked Abdallah. 'Tell me; for thou art my friend and I will not reproach thee.' 'Know then,' answered Abou Ishac, 'that, when I was with thee, I followed thee three nights in succession and saw thee rise at midnight and beat the dogs and return; whereat I marvelled, but thought shame to question thee thereof. When I came back to Baghdad, I told the Khalif of thine affair, casually and without design, whereupon he charged me return to thee, and here is a letter under his hand. Had I known that the affair would lead to this, I had not told him, but this was fore-ordained to happen.' And he went on to excuse himself to him.

Quoth Abdallah, 'Since thou hast told him this, I will bear thee out with him, lest he deem thee a liar, for thou art my friend. Were it other than thou, I had denied the affair and given him the lie. But now I will go with thee and carry the two dogs with me, though in this be my own ruin and the ending of my term of life.' 'God will protect[2] thee,' rejoined Abou Ishac, 'even as thou hast

[1] Lit. a *noble* letter *(khett sherif*, Turkish *hatt-i-sherif)*, i.e. a warrant under the seal of the Khalifate.

[2] Syn. veil *(yestur)*.

veiled[1] my face with the Khalif!' Then Abdallah took a present beseeming the Khalif and mounting the dogs with him, each on a camel, bound with chains of gold, journeyed with Abou Ishac to Baghdad, where he went in to the Khalif and kissed the earth before him. He bade him sit; so he sat down and brought the two dogs before Er Reshid, who said to him, 'What are these dogs, O Amir Abdallah?' Whereupon they fell to kissing the ground before him and wagging their tails and weeping, as if complaining to him.

The Khalif marvelled at this and said to the governor, 'Tell me the history of these two dogs and the reason of thy beating them and after entreating them with honour.' 'O Vicar of God,' replied Abdallah, 'these are no dogs, but two handsome young men, endowed with grace and shapeliness and symmetry, and they are my brothers and the sons of my father and my mother.' 'How is it,' asked the Khalif, 'that they were men and are become dogs?' Quoth Abdallah, 'If thou give me leave, O Commander of the Faithful, I will acquaint thee with the truth of the case.' 'Tell me,' said the Khalif, 'and beware of leasing, for it is of the fashion of the hypocrites, and look thou tell truth, for that it is the ark of safety and the characteristic of the virtuous.' 'O Vicar of God,' rejoined Abdallah, 'when I tell thee the story of these dogs, they will both bear witness against me.' Quoth the Khalif, 'These are dogs; they cannot speak nor answer; so how can they testify for thee or against thee?' So Abdallah said to them, 'O my brothers, if I speak an untrue word, do ye lift your heads and stare with your eyes; but, if I speak truth, hang down your heads and lower your eyes.'

Then said he to the Khalif, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that we are three brothers by one father and mother. Our father's name was Fazil and he was thus

[1] Syn. protected (*seterta*).

named for that his mother bore two sons at one birth, one of whom died forthright and the other remained [alive], wherefore they named him Fazil.[1] His father brought him up and reared him well, till he grew up, when he married him to our mother and died. Our mother conceived a first time and bore this my first brother, whom my father named Mensour; then she conceived again and bore this my second brother, whom he named Nasir; after which she conceived a third time and bore me, whom he named Abdallah. My father reared us all three till we came to man's estate, when he died, leaving us a house and a shop full of coloured stuffs of all kinds, Indian and Greek and Khurasani[2] and what not, besides three-score thousand dinars. We washed him and buried him to the mercy of his Lord, after which we builded him a splendid monument and let pray for him prayers for the deliverance of his soul from the fire and held recitations of the Koran and gave alms on his behalf, till the forty days[3] were past; at the end of which time I called together the merchants and nobles of the folk and made them a sumptuous entertainment.

When they had eaten, I said to them, "O merchants, verily this world is fleeting, but the world to come is eternal, and extolled be the perfection of Him who endureth after His creatures have passed away! Know ye why I have called you together this blessed day?" And they answered, "Extolled be the perfection of God, who [alone] knoweth the hidden things."[4] Quoth I, "My father died, leaving much good, and I fear lest any have a claim against him for a debt or a pledge [left in his hands] or what not else, and I desire to discharge my father's obligations towards the folk. So whoso hath any

[1] *i.e.* remaining over. [2] *i.e.* of Khorassan.
[3] The usual period of Muslim mourning.
[4] A common roundabout way of avouching ignorance.

claim on him, let him say, 'He oweth me so and so,' and I will satisfy it to him, that I may acquit my father's responsibility."[1]

"O Abdallah," replied the merchants, "verily the goods of this world stand not in stead of those of the world to come, and we are no fraudful folk, but all of us know the lawful from the unlawful and fear God the Most High and abstain from devouring the substance of the orphan. We know that thy father (may God have mercy on him!) still let his good lie with the folk,[2] nor did he suffer any one's claim on him to go unquitted, and we have often heard him say, 'I am fearful of the people's substance.' He used always to say, when he prayed, 'O my God, Thou art my stay and my hope! Let me not die in debt.' And it was of his wont that, if he owed any one aught, he would pay it to him, without asking, and if any owed him aught, he would not dun him, but would say to him, 'At thy leisure.' If his debtor were poor, he would forgive him the debt and acquit him of responsibility; and if he were not poor and died [without paying], he would say, 'God forgive him what he owed me!' And we all testify that he owed no one aught."

"May God bless you!" said I. Then I turned to these my brothers and said to them, "O my brothers, our father owed no man aught and hath left us much money and stuffs, besides the house and shop. Now we are three brothers and each of us is entitled to one third part.

[1] It is incumbent on a Muslim to discharge the debts of his dead father, if it be in his power, and so save the dead from punishment on account thereof. Quoth Mohammed, "God covers all faults except debt; that is to say, there will be punishment therefor." Also, "A martyr shall be pardoned every fault but debt." If a dead man were brought to him and he knew that he had died insolvent and leaving undischarged debts, he was wont to refuse to pray for him.
[2] *i.e.* he did not press his debtors for payment.

So shall we agree to forego division and abide copartners in our property and eat together and drink together, or shall we divide the money and the stuffs and take each his part?" Said they, "We will divide them and take each his share."' Then Abdallah turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'Did it happen thus, O my brothers?' And they bowed their heads and lowered their eyes, as who should say, 'Yes.' 'So,' continued Abdallah, 'I called in a departitor from the Cadi's court and he divided amongst us the money and the stuffs and all our father's effects, allotting the house and shop to me in exchange for a part of the money and stuffs to which I was entitled. We were content with this; so the house and shop fell to my share, whilst my brothers took theirs in money and stuffs. I opened the shop and stocking it with [my part of] the stuffs, bought others with the money allotted to me, over and above the house and the shop, till the latter was full, and I sat selling and buying. As for my brothers, they bought stuffs and chartering a ship, set out on a voyage to foreign parts. Quoth I, "God aid them! As for me, my livelihood is ready to my hand and peace is priceless."

I abode thus a whole year, during which time God prospered me and I made great profits, till I became possessed of the like of that which our father had left us. One day, as I sat in my shop, with two fur pelisses on me, one of sable and the other of miniver, for it was the winter season and the time of the great cold, there came up to me my two brothers, each clad in nothing but a ragged shirt, and their lips were white with cold and they were shivering. When I saw them in this plight, it was grievous to me and I mourned for them and my reason fled from my head. So I rose and embraced them and wept over their condition. Then I put on one of them the pelisse of sable and on the other that of miniver and

Night dcccclxxxi.

carrying them to the bath, sent them thither each a suit of apparel such as befitted a merchant worth a thousand purses.[1] When they had washed and donned each his suit, I carried them to my house, where, seeing them to be sore anhungred, I set a tray of food before them and ate with them, caressing them and comforting them.' Then he turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'Was this so, O my brothers?' And they bent their heads and lowered their eyes.

'Then, O Vicar of God,' continued Abdallah, 'I said to them, "What hath befallen you and where are your goods?" Quoth they, "We fared up the river,[2] till we came to a city called Cufa, where we sold for ten dinars the piece of stuff that had cost us half a dinar and that which cost us a dinar for twenty. So we profited greatly and bought Persian[3] stuffs at the rate of ten dinars the piece of silk worth forty in Bassora. Thence we removed to a city called El Kerkh,[4] where we sold and bought and made great profit and amassed store of wealth." And they went on to set forth to me the places [they had visited] and the profits [they had made]. So I said to them, "Since ye had such good luck, how comes it that I see you return naked?" They sighed and answered, "O our brother, some one must have belooked us with the evil eye and there is no security in travel. When we had gotten together these riches and goods, we freighted a ship therewith and set sail, intending for Bassora. We fared on three days and on the fourth day we saw the water rise and fall and roar and foam and swell and rage, whilst the waves clashed together, striking out sparks like fire. The winds blew contrary for us and our ship struck upon the point of a rock, where it broke up and plunged us into the river, and all we had with us was lost in the

[1] *i.e.* £5000. [2] Euphrates.
[3] *Syn.* foreign. [4] *Quære* the quarter of Baghdad so called.

water. We abode struggling on the surface a day and a night, till God sent us another ship, whose crew picked us up and we begged our way from town to town, suffering sore hardships and selling our clothes piecemeal, to buy us food, till we drew near Bassora; nor did we win thither till we had endured a thousand miseries. But, had we come off in safety with that which was with us, we had brought back riches that might vie with those of the king: but this was ordained of God to us."

"O my brothers," said I, "let not your hearts be troubled, for wealth is the ransom of bodies and safety is [to be accounted] gain. Since God hath written you of the saved, this is the end of desire, for poverty and riches are but as it were illusions of dreams, and gifted of God is he who saith:

So but a man may win to save his soul alive from death, But as the paring of his nail his wealth he reckoneth.

O my brothers," continued I, "we will put it that our father died to-day and left us all this money that is with me, for I am willing to share it with you equally." So I fetched a departitor from the Cadi's court and brought out to him all my money, which he divided into three equal parts, and we each took one. Then said I to them, "O my brothers, God blesseth a man in his livelihood, if he be in his own country: so let each of you open a shop and sit therein to get his living; and he to whom aught is ordained in the secret purpose of God,[1] needs must he get it." Accordingly, I helped each of them to open a shop and stocked it for him with goods, saying to them, "Sell and buy and keep your monies and spend nought thereof, for I will furnish you with all ye need of meat and drink and so forth."

I continued to entreat them generously, and they fell to

[1] *Syn.* the future (*el ghaib*).

selling and buying by day and lay the night in my house; nor would I suffer them to spend aught of their own monies. But, whenever I sat talking with them, they would praise travel and vaunt its charms and set out the gains they had made therein; and they ceased not to urge and tempt me and importune me thus till, to please them, I agreed to travel with them.' Then he said to the dogs, 'Was this so, O my brothers?' And they confirmed his speech by bowing their heads and lowering their eyes. 'Then, O Vicar of God,' continued Abdallah, 'I entered into a contract of partnership with them and we chartered a ship and packing up all manner of precious stuffs and merchandise of all kinds, freighted it therewith; after which we embarked therein all that we needed [of victual and what not else for the voyage] and setting sail from Bassora, launched out into the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, into which whoso entereth is lost and from which whoso cometh forth is as a new-born child.

We sailed on till we came to a city of the cities, where we sold and bought and made great profit. Thence we went on to another city, and we ceased not to pass from land to land and city to city, selling and buying and profiting, till we had gotten us great wealth and much gain. Presently, we came to a mountain,[1] where the captain cast anchor and said to us, "O passengers, go ye ashore; ye shall be saved from this day,[2] and make search; it may be ye shall find water." So we all landed and dispersed about the island in search of water.

As for me, I climbed to the top of the mountain, and as I went along, I saw a white snake fleeing and a black dragon, foul of favour and frightful to look upon, pursuing her. Presently he overtook her and pressing straitly upon her, seized her by the head and wound his tail about hers,

[1] *i.e.* a mountainous island.

[2] *i.e.* ye shall be spared this day's discomfort.

whereupon she cried out and I knew that he purposed to ravish her. So I was moved to pity for her and taking up a flint-stone, five pounds or more in weight, threw it at the dragon. It smote him on the head and crushed it, and before I knew, the snake changed and became a handsome young woman, full of grace and brightness and symmetry, as she were the shining full moon, who came up to me and kissing my hands, said to me, "May God veil thee with two veils, one [to protect thee] from reproach in this world and the other from the fire in the world to come on the day of the great upstanding, the day when wealth shall not avail neither children, [nor aught] but that one come to God with a whole heart![1] O mortal," continued she, "thou hast saved my honour and I am beholden to thee for kindness, wherefore it behoveth me to requite thee."

So saying, she signed with her hand to the earth, which opened and she descended into it. Then it closed up again over her and by this I knew that she was of the Jinn. As for the dragon, fire was kindled in him and consumed him and he became a heap of ashes. I marvelled at this and returned to my comrades, whom I acquainted with that which I had seen, and we passed the night [in the island]. On the morrow the captain weighed anchor and spread the sails and coiled the ropes and we sailed till we lost sight of land. We fared on twenty days, without seeing land or bird, till our water came to an end and the captain said to us, "O folk, our fresh water is spent." Quoth we, "Let us make for land; peradventure we shall

[1] *Koran* xxvi. 88. Children (at least, male children) are to the Arab as much prized an object of possession as riches, since without them wealth is of no value to him. Mohammed, therefore, couples wealth and children as the two things wherewith one wards off the ills of this world, though they are powerless against those of the world to come.

find water." "By Allah," answered he, "I have lost my way and I know not what course will bring me to the land!"

When we heard this, there betided us sore chagrin and we wept and besought God the Most High to guide us into the right course. We passed that night in the sorriest case: but gifted of God is he who saith:

How many a night have I passed in dismay And in grief that might well-nigh cause sucklings grow gray,
But no sooner broke morn than came succour from God; Ay, and help near at hand was vouchsafed me with day.

On the morrow, when the day arose and gave forth its light and shone, we caught sight of a high mountain and rejoiced therein. When we came [to the island wherein] it [was], the captain said to us, "O folk, go ashore and seek for water." So we all landed and sought for water, but found none, whereat we were sore afflicted. As for me, I climbed up to the hill-top and on the other side thereof I saw a spacious enclosure,[1] an hour's journey or more in breadth. So I called my companions and said to them, "Look at yonder enclosure, behind this mountain; for I see therein a lofty and strong-built city, [girt about] with walls and towers and hills and meadows, and doubtless it wants not for water and good things. So let us go thither and fetch water therefrom and buy what we need of meat and fruit and [other] victual and return." But they said, "We fear lest the inhabitants of the city be unbelievers, ascribing partners to God, and enemies of the faith and lay hands on us and take us captive or else slay us; so were we the means of the loss of our own lives, having cast ourselves into destruction and evil emprise. Indeed, the presumptuous man is never praiseworthy, for that he goeth

[1] Apparently a round hill-encompassed plain (*dairah*).

still in danger of calamities, even as saith of him one of the poets:

Whilst earth is earth and sky is sky, the rash presumptuous wight, No commendation meriteth, although he 'scape outright.

Wherefore we will not expose ourselves to peril." "O folk," answered I, "I have no authority over you; so I will take my brothers and go to the city." But my brothers said to me, "We also fear this thing and will not go with thee." Quoth I, "I am resolved to go thither; and I put my trust in God and accept whatsoever He shall decree to me. Do ye therefore await me, whilst I go thither and return to you."

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Then I left them and walked on till I came to the gate of the place and saw it a city rare of building and magnificent of proportion, with lofty walls and strong-builded towers and palaces soaring high into the air. Its gates were of Chinese iron, curiously gilded and graven on such wise as confounded the wit. I entered the gateway and saw there a stone bench, whereon sat a man, with a chain of brass on his arm, to which hung fourteen keys; wherefore I knew him to be the porter of the city and that it had fourteen gates. So I drew near him and said to him, "Peace be on thee!" But he returned not my greeting and I saluted him a second and a third time; but he made me no reply. So I laid my hand on his shoulder and said to him, "O man, why dost thou not return my greeting? Art thou asleep or deaf or other than a Muslim, that thou refusest to return the salutation?" But he answered me not neither stirred; so I considered him and saw that he was stone. Quoth I, "Strange! This is a stone wroughten in the likeness of a man and wanting nothing but speech!"

Then I left him and entering the city, saw a man standing in the road. I went up to him and examined him and found him stone. Presently, I met an old woman

with a bundle of clothes on her head, ready for washing; so I went up to her and examining her, saw that she was stone, and the bundle of clothes on her head was stone also. Then I came to the market, where I saw a chandler, with his scales set up and various kinds of wares before him, such as cheese and so forth, all of stone. Moreover, I saw all manner of tradesmen seated in their shops and men and women and children, some standing and some sitting; but they were all stone. Then I entered the merchants' bazaar, where I saw each merchant seated in his shop and the shops full of various kinds of merchandise, all stone; but the stuffs were like spiders' webs. I amused myself with looking upon them, and as often as I laid hold upon a piece of stuff, it fell to dust in my hands.

Presently, I saw some chests and opening one of them, found it full of gold in bags; so I laid hold upon the bags, but they crumbled away in my grasp, whilst the gold abode unchanged. I took of it what I could carry and said to myself, "Were my brothers here, they might take their fill of this gold and possess themselves of these treasures that have no owner." Then I entered another shop and found therein more than this, but could carry no more than I had: so I left this market and went on to another and thence to another and another, diverting myself with the sight of all manner creatures of various kinds, all stone, even to the cats and the dogs, till I came to the goldsmiths' bazaar, where I saw men sitting in their shops, with their wares about them, some in their hands and others in trays of wicker-work. When I saw this, I threw down the money and loaded myself with goldsmiths' ware, as much as I could carry. Then I went on to the jewel market and saw there the jewellers, every one of them stone, seated in their shops, each with a tray before him, full of all manner precious stones, jacinths and

diamonds and emeralds and balass rubies and so forth; whereupon I threw away the goldsmiths' ware and took as many jewels as I could carry, regretting that my brothers were not with me, so they might take what they would thereof.

Then I left the jewel market and went on till I came to a great door, gilded and decorated after the fairest fashion, within which were benches and in the porch sat eunuchs and guards and horsemen and footmen and officers of police, all clad in the richest of raiment; but they were all stones. I touched one of them and his clothes crumbled away from his body like cobwebs. Then I entered and saw a palace without equal for its building and the goodliness of its ordinance and of the curious works that were therein. Here I found an audience-chamber, full of grandees and viziers and officers and amirs, seated upon chairs and every one of them stone. Moreover, I saw a throne of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and seated thereon a man arrayed in the most sumptuous raiment and bearing on his head an imperial[1] crown, set with precious stones, that shed a light like the light of the day; but, when I came up to him, I found him stone.

Then I went on to the gate of the harem and entering, found myself in the queen's presence-chamber, wherein I saw a throne of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and the queen seated thereon. On her head she wore a crown diademed with precious jewels, and round about her were women like moons, seated upon chairs and clad in the most sumptuous raiment of all colours. There also stood eunuchs, with their hands upon their breasts, in the attitude of service, and indeed this hall confounded the beholder's wits with what was therein of

[1] *Lit.* a Chosroän crown, *i.e.* one such as that worn by the Chosroës or ancient kings of Persia.

gilding and rare painting and carving and magnificent furniture. There hung the most brilliant pendants[1] of limpid crystal, and in every hollow[2] of the crystal was an unique jewel, to whose price money might not avail. So I threw down that which was with me and fell to taking of these jewels what I could carry, bewildered as to what I should take and what I should leave, for indeed I saw the place as it were a treasure of the treasures of the cities.

Presently, I espied a little door open and within it stairs: so I entered and mounting forty stairs, heard a human voice reciting the Koran in a low voice. I followed the sound till I came to a silken curtain, laced with wires of gold, whereon were strung pearls and coral and rubies and emeralds, that gave forth a light like the light of the stars. The voice came from behind the curtain: so I raised it and discovered a gilded door, whose beauty amazed the mind. I opened the door and found myself in a saloon, as it were an enchanted treasure-house upon the surface of the earth,[3] and therein a girl as she were the shining sun amiddleward the cloudless sky. She was clad in the costliest of raiment and decked with the most precious jewels, and withal she was of surpassing beauty and grace, full of symmetry and elegance and peffection, with slender waist and heavy buttocks and spittle such as heals the sick and languorous eyelids, as it were she of whom the poet would speak, when he saith:

My salutation to the shape that through the wede doth show And to the roses in the cheeks' full-flowering meads that blow!
It is as if the Pleiades upon her forehead hung And all night's other stars did deck her breast, like pearls arow.

[1] Or lustres. [2] Or interval.
[3] Enchanted treasures are generally hidden under the earth.

An if a wede of purest rose she donned, the leaves for sure Would from her body's fresh-plucked fruits enforce the blood to flow;[1]
And if into the salt sea's flood one day she chanced to spit, Sweeter than honey to the taste its briny tides would grow.
If to a graybeard, leant upon a staff, she deigned her grace To grant, a lion-tamer straight he would become, I trow.

[1] Oriental writers, Indian and Persian, as well as Arab, lay great stress upon the extreme delicacy of the skin of the fair ones celebrated in their works, constantly attributing to their heroines bodies so sensitive as to brook with difficulty the contact of the finest shift. Several instances of this will be found in the present collection and we may fairly assume that the skin of an Eastern beauty, under the influence of constant seclusion and the unremitting use of cosmetics and the bath, would in time attain a pitch of delicacy and sensitiveness such as would in some measure justify the seemingly extravagant statements of their poetical admirers, of which the following anecdote (quoted by Ibn Khellikan from the historian Et Teberi) is a fair specimen. Ardeshir ibn Babek (Artaxerxes I.), the first Sassanian King of Persia (A.D. 226-242), having long unsuccessfully besieged El Hedr, a strong city of Mesopotamia belonging to the petty King Es Satiroun, at last obtained possession of it by the treachery of the owner's daughter Nezireh and married the latter, this having been the price stipulated by her for the betrayal to him of the place. "It happened afterwards that, one night, as she was unable to sleep and turned from side to side in the bed, Ardeshir asked her what prevented her from sleeping. She replied, 'I never yet slept on a rougher bed than this; I feel something irk me.' He ordered the bed to be changed, but she was still unable to sleep. Next morning, she complained of her side, and on examination, a myrtle-leaf was found adhering to a fold of the skin, from which it had drawn blood. Astonished at this circumstance, Ardeshir asked her if it was this that had kept her awake and she replied in the affirmative. 'How then,' asked he, 'did your father bring you up?' She answered, 'He spread me a bed of satin and clad me in silk and fed me with marrow and cream and the honey of virgin bees and gave me pure wine to drink.' Quoth Ardeshir, 'The same return which you made your father for his kindness would be made much more readily to me;' and bade bind her by the hair to the tail of a horse, which galloped off with her and killed her." It will be remembered that the true princess, in the well-known German popular tale, is discovered by a similar incident to that of the myrtle-leaf.

When I saw her, I fell passionately in love with her and going straight up to her, found her seated on a high couch, reciting from memory the Book of God, to whom belong might and majesty. Her voice was like the sound of the gates of Paradise, when Rizwan opens them, and the words fell from her lips like a shower of jewels; whilst her face was of surpassing beauty, bright and blossom-white, even as saith the poet of the like of her:

O thou whose speech and fashions charm with their seductive grace, Longing and wistfulness for thee increase on me apace.
Two things in thee the votaries of passion still consume, David his tones melodious and Joseph's lovely face.

When I heard her melodious voice reciting the sublime Koran, my heart recited from her assassinating glances, "Peace, a word from a compassionate Lord;"[1] but I hesitated in my speech and could not say the salutation aright, for my mind and sight were confounded and I was become as saith the poet:

Love-longing moved me not to err in speech nor entered I The camp but that the shedding of my blood I might aby;
Nor do I hearken to a word spoken by our censurers, But unto her whom I adore in words I testify.

Then I braced myself against the stress of passion and said to her, "Peace be upon thee, O noble lady and treasured jewel! May God cause the foundations of thy fair fortune to endure and uplift the pillars of thy glory!" "And on thee from me be peace and salutation and honour, O Abdallah, O son of Fazil!" answered she.

[1] "Indeed, those [who are destined to be the inhabitants] of Paradise shall that day (*i.e.* the Judgment Day) rejoice in occupations, they and their wives, in shade, leant upon thrones: therein shall they have fruits and what they desire. 'Peace!' a word from a compassionate Lord." —*Koran* xxxvi. 55-8.

"Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O my beloved and solace of my eyes!" "O my lady," rejoined I, "whence knowest thou my name and who art thou and what aileth the people of this city, that they are become stones? I would have thee tell me the truth of the case, for indeed I am wondered at this city and its folk and that I have found none [alive] therein but thee. So, God on thee, tell me the cause of all this, according to the truth!" Quoth she, "Sit, O Abdallah, and God willing, I will talk with thee and acquaint thee in full with the truth of my case and that of this city and its people; and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

So I sat down by her side and she said to me, "Know, O Abdallah, (may God have mercy on thee!) that I am the daughter of the king of this city and that it is my father whom thou sawest seated on the high throne in the divan, and those who are about him were the grandees of his realm and the officers of his household. He was a king of exceeding prowess and had under his hand a thousand thousand and six-score thousand troopers. The number of the amirs of his realm was four-and-twenty thousand, all of them governors and dignitaries. He ruled over a thousand cities, besides towns and hamlets and fortresses and citadels and villages, and the amirs of the [wild] Arabs under his hand were a thousand in number, each ruling over twenty thousand horse. Moreover, he had riches and treasures and precious stones and jewels and things of price, such as eye never saw nor ear heard of. He used to conquer kings and do to death champions and warriors in battle and in the listed field, so that the mighty feared him and the Chosroës[1] humbled themselves to him. For all this, he was a misbeliever,

Night dcccc lxxxiii.

[1] *i.e.* the ancient Kings of Persia. The word is here (as elsewhere) used to denote powerful monarchs in general.

ascribing partners to God and worshipping idols, instead of his Lord, and his troops were all idolaters like himself.

One day, as he sat on the throne of his kingship, compassed about with the grandees of his realm, there came in to him a man, whose face lighted up the whole divan with its brightness. My father looked at him and saw him clad in a green habit, tall of stature and with hands that reached below his knees. He was of reverend and majestic aspect and light shone from his face. Quoth he to my father, 'O rebel, O idolater, how long wilt thou be deluded to worship idols and leave the service of the All-knowing King? Say, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle," and embrace Islam, thou and thy people, and put away from you the worship of idols, for they neither advantage nor intercede. None is worshipworth save God alone, who raised up the heavens without pillars and spread out the earths, in mercy to His creatures.'

'Who art thou,' asked my father, 'O man that rejectest the worship of idols, that thou sayst thus? Fearest thou not that they will be wroth with thee?' 'The idols are stones,' answered the stranger; 'their wrath cannot hurt me nor their favour profit me. So do thou send for thine idol which thou worshippest and bid all thy people bring each his idol: and when they are all present, do ye pray them to be wroth with me and I will pray my Lord to be wroth with them, and ye shall see the difference between the anger of the creature and that of the Creator. For your idols, ye fashioned them yourselves and the devils clad themselves therewith as with a garment, and they it is who speak to you from within the bellies of the idols, for your idols are made and my God is the maker, to whom nought is impossible. If the True appear to you, do ye follow it, and if the False, do ye leave it.' Quoth they, 'Give us a proof of thy god, that we may see it.'

And he answered, 'Give me proof of your gods.' So the king bade every one who had an idol bring it, and all the troops brought their idols to the divan.

Now I was sitting behind a curtain, whence I could look upon my father's divan, and I had an idol of emerald, the bigness of a man. My father demanded it, so I sent it to the divan, where they set it up beside that of my father, which was of jacinth, whilst the vizier's idol was of diamond. As for those of the grandees and notables, some were of ruby and some of cornelian, others of coral or Comorin aloes-wood and yet others of ebony or silver or gold; and each had his own idol, after the measure of that which he could afford; whilst the idols of the common soldiers and of the people were some of granite, some of wood, some of pottery and some of mud; and they were all of various colours, yellow and red and green and black and white. Then said the stranger to my father, 'Pray your idol and these idols to be wroth with me.'

So they ranged the idols in a divan,[1] setting my father's idol on a chair of gold at the upper end, with mine by its side, and ranking the others each according to the condition of him who owned it and worshipped it. Then my father arose and prostrating himself to his own idol, said to it, 'O my god, thou art the Bountiful Lord, nor is there among the idols a greater than thou. Thou knowest that this man cometh to me, attacking thy divinity and making mock of thee; yea, he avoucheth that he hath a god stronger than thou and biddeth us leave worshipping thee and worship his god. So be thou wrath with him, O my god!' And he went on to supplicate the idol; but it returned him no answer neither bespoke him with aught; whereupon quoth he, 'O my god, this is not of thy wont,

[1] *i.e.* after the fashion of a king, with his courtiers and grandees ranged about him in their several stations, as in a divan or court of state.

for thou usest to answer me, when I speak to thee. How cometh it that I find thee silent and speaking not? Art thou unheeding or asleep? Awake; succour me and speak to me!' And he shook it with his hand; but it spoke not neither stirred from its stead.

Quoth the stranger, 'What aileth thine idol that it speaketh not?' And the king replied, 'Methinks he is unheeding or asleep.' 'O enemy of God,' exclaimed the other, 'how canst thou worship a god that speaketh not nor availeth unto aught and not worship my God, who is a speedy answerer of prayer and who is ever present and never absent, never unheeding nor sleeping, whom conjecture may not apprehend, who seeth and is not seen and who is able unto all things? Thy god is powerless and cannot ward off hurt from itself; and indeed an accursed devil had clothed himself therewith as with a garment, that he might lead thee astray and delude thee. But now hath its devil departed; so do thou worship God and testify that there is no god but He and that none is worshipful nor worshipworth save He, nor is there any good but His good. As for thy god, he cannot ward off hurt from himself; so how shall he ward it from thee? See with thine own eyes his impotence.'

So saying, he went up to the idol and dealt him a buffet on the neck, that he fell to the ground; whereupon the king waxed wroth and said to the bystanders, 'This heretic hath smitten my god. Slay him!' So they would have arisen to smite him, but none of them could avail to stir from his place. Then he propounded Islam to them; but they refused to become Muslims and he said, 'I will show you the wrath of my Lord.' Quoth they, 'Let us see it.' So he spread out his hands and said, 'O my God and my Lord, Thou art my stay and my hope; answer Thou my prayer against these froward folk, who eat of Thy bounty and worship other than Thee. O Thou the Truth, O Almighty One, O Creator of Night and Day,

I beseech Thee to turn these people into stones, for Thou art omnipotent, nor is aught impossible to Thee, and Thou art able unto all things!' And God transformed the people of this city into stones; but, as for me, when I saw the manifest proof of His deity, I submitted myself to Him and was saved from that which befell the rest.

Then the stranger drew near unto me and said to me, 'Felicity[1] was fore-ordained to thee of God and He had a purpose in this.' And he went on to instruct me and I took unto him the oath and covenant.[2] I was then seven years of age and am now thirty years old. Then said I to him, 'O my lord, all that is in the city and all its folk are become stones, by thine effectual prayer, and I am saved, for that I embraced Islam at thy hands. Wherefore thou art become my sheikh;[3] so do thou tell me thy name and extend to me thy succour and provide me with that whereon I may subsist.' Quoth he, 'My name is Aboulabbas el Khizr;'[4] and he planted me a pomegranate-tree, which grew up forthright and putting out leaf, flowered and fruited and bore one pomegranate; whereupon quoth he, 'Eat of that wherewith God the Most High provideth thee and worship Him with the worship that is His due.'

Then he taught me the tenets of Islam and the canons of prayer and the way of worship, together with the recital of the Koran, and I have now worshipped God in this place three-and-twenty years. Each day the tree yields me a pomegranate and I eat it and am sustained thereby from day to day. Moreover, every Friday, El Khizr (on whom be peace!) comes to me and it is he who acquainted me with thy name and gave me the glad

[1] Or salvation.

[2] *i.e.* the oath of initiation taken by a novice on his admission into a religious sect, such as one of the orders of dervishes, etc.

[3] *i.e.* master or teacher. [4] See note, Vol. V. p. 135.

tidings of thy coming hither, saying to me, 'When he cometh, entreat him with honour and give ear unto his commandment and gainsay him not; but be thou his wife and he shall be thy husband, and go with him whither he will.' So, when I saw thee, I knew thee, and this is the story of this city and of its people, and peace be on thee!" Then she showed me the pomegranate-tree, whereon was one pomegranate, which she took and eating one-half thereof herself, gave me the other to eat, and never did I taste aught sweeter or more delicious than this pomegranate or more satisfying.

After this, I said to her, "Art thou content, as the Sheikh El Khizr charged thee, to be my wife and go with me to my own country and abide with me in the city of Bassora?" "Yes," answered she, "if it please God the Most High. I hearken to thy word and obey thy commandment, without gainsaying." Then I made a binding covenant with her and she carried me into her father's treasury, whence we took what we could carry and going forth the city, fared on till we came to my brothers, whom I found searching for me. "Where hast thou been?" asked they. "Indeed thou hast tarried long from us, and our hearts were troubled for thee." And the captain of the ship said to me, "O merchant Abdallah, the wind has been fair for us this great while, and thou hast hindered us from setting sail." "There is no harm in that," answered I. "Assuredly delay[1] is good and my absence hath wrought us nothing but profit; for indeed, there hath betided me therein the attainment of [our] hopes and gifted of God is he who saith:

When to a land I fare in quest of good, perdie, I know not of the twain, which fortune mine shall be;
Whether 'twill prove the good whereafter I do seek Or else the evil hap that seeketh after me."

[1] Or acting with deliberation, *lit.* postponement (*takhir*).

Then said I to them, "See what hath fallen to me in my absence." And I showed them that which was with me of things of price and told them what I had seen in the City of Stone, adding, "If ye had hearkened to me and gone with me, ye had gotten great good thereby." But they said, "By Allah, had we gone, we had not dared to go in to the king of the city!"

Night dccc lxxxiv.

Then I said to my brothers, "No harm shall befall you; for that which I have will suffice us all and I will share it with you."[1] So saying, I divided my booty into four parts and gave one to each of my brothers and to the captain, taking the fourth for myself, [after setting aside] somewhat [which] I gave to the servants and sailors, who rejoiced and blessed me: and all were content with what I gave them, save my brothers, who changed countenance and rolled their eyes. I perceived that covetise had gotten possession of them; so I said to them, "O my brothers, methinketh what I have given you doth not content you; but we are brothers and there is no difference between us. My good and yours are one [and the same] thing, and if I die, none will inherit of me but you." And I went on to soothe them.

Then I carried the lady on board the ship and lodged her in the cabin, where I sent her somewhat to eat and we sat talking, I and my brothers. "O our brother," said they, "what wilt thou do with yonder damsel of surpassing beauty?" And I answered, "I mean to marry her, as soon as I reach Bassora, and make a splendid wedding and go in to her there." "O my brother," said one of them, "verily, this young lady excelleth in beauty and grace and the love of her is fallen on my heart; wherefore I desire that thou give her to me and I will marry her." "I too desire this," said the other. "Give her to me, that I may marry her." "O my brothers," answered I,

[1] *Lit.* this is our portion.

"she took of me an oath and a covenant that I would marry her myself; so, if I give her to one of you, I shall be false to my oath and to the covenant between her and me, and belike she will be broken-hearted, for she came not with me but on condition that I should marry her. So how can I give her to wife to other than myself? As for your loving her, I love her more than you, for she is my treasure-trove, and as for my giving her to one of you, that is a thing that may not be. But, if we reach Bassora in safety, I will look you out two girls of the best of the damsels of Bassora and demand them for you in marriage and pay the dower of my own monies and make one wedding and we will all three go in to our brides on one [and the same] night. But leave this damsel, for she is of my portion."

They held their peace and I thought they were content with that which I had said. Then we fared on towards Bassora, and every day I sent meat and drink to the lady, who came not forth of the cabin, whilst I lay with my brothers on the deck. We sailed thus forty days, till we sighted the city of Bassora and rejoiced in that we were come near thereunto. Now I trusted in my brothers and was at my ease with them, for none knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High; so I lay down to sleep that night; but as I abode drowned in slumber, I found myself caught up by my brothers, one seizing me by the legs and the other by the arms, for they had taken counsel together to drown me in the sea, because of the damsel. When I saw myself in this case, I said to them, "O my brothers, why do ye this with me?" And they answered, saying, "Lack-courtesy that thou art, wilt thou barter our approof for a girl? We mean to cast thee into the sea, because of this." So saying, they threw me overboard.'

Here Abdallah turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'O my brothers, is this that I have said true or not?'

And they bowed their heads and fell a-whining, as if confirming his speech; whereat the Khalif wondered. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' continued Abdallah, 'I sank to the bottom of the sea; but the water bore me up again to the surface, and before I could think, a great bird, the bigness of a man, swooped down upon me and snatching me up, flew up with me into the height of the air. [I swooned away and] when I opened my eyes, I found myself in a strong and high-builded palace, adorned with magnificent paintings and pendants of jewels of all shapes and colours. Therein were damsels standing with their hands on their breasts and in their midst was a lady seated on a throne of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, and clad in apparel whereon no mortal might open his eyes, for the lustre of the jewels with which they were decked. About her waist she wore a girdle of jewels beyond price, and on her head a triple crown, amazing thought and wit and dazzling heart and sight.

Then the bird that had carried me thither shook and became a young lady, as she were the shining sun. I fixed my eyes on her and behold, it was she whom I had seen on the mountain in the guise of a snake and had rescued from the dragon. Then said to her the lady who sat upon the throne, "Why hast thou brought this mortal hither?" "O my mother," answered she, "this is he who was the means of veiling my honour[1] among the maidens of the Jinn." Then said she to me, "Knowest thou who I am?" And I answered, "No." Quoth she, "I am she who was on such a mountain, where the black dragon strove with me and would have forced my honour, but thou slewest him." And I said, "I saw but a white snake with the dragon." "It is I who was the white snake," answered she; "but I am the Red King's daughter of the Jinn and

[1] *i.e.* of saving me from shame.

my name is Saïdeh. She who sits there is my mother and her name is Mubarekeh, wife of the Red King. The black dragon who would have done away my honour was the Black King's Vizier, Derfil by name, and he was foul of favour. It chanced that he saw me and fell in love with me; so he sought me in marriage of my father, who sent to him to say, 'Who art thou, O scum of viziers, that thou shouldst wed with kings' daughters?' Whereupon he was wroth and swore an oath that he would assuredly do away my honour, to spite my father.

Then he fell to tracking my steps and following me whithersoever I went, designing to ravish me; wherefore there befell between him and my father fierce wars and sore troubles, but my father could not prevail against him, for that he was a mighty man of war and a crafty cheat, and as often as my father pressed hard upon him, he would escape from him, till my father was at his wits' end. Every day I was forced to take some new shape; for, as often as I assumed a shape, he would assume its contrary, and to whatsoever land I fled, he would snuff my scent and pursue me thither, so that I suffered sore affliction of him. At last I took the form of a snake and betook myself to the mountain where thou sawest me; whereupon he took the shape of a dragon and pursued me, till I fell into his hands, when he strove with me and I with him, till he wearied me and overrode me, meaning to do his will of me: but thou camest and smotest him with the stone and slewest him. Then I returned to my own shape and showed myself to thee, saying, 'I am beholden to thee for a service such as is not lost save with the base-born.' So, when I saw thy brothers do with thee this treachery and cast thee into the sea, I hastened to thee and saved thee from destruction, and now it behoveth my father and mother to do thee honour."

Then she said to the Queen, "O my mother, do thou

honour him as he deserveth who saved my honour." So the queen said to me, "Welcome, O mortal! Indeed thou hast done us a service that meriteth honour." Then she ordered me a treasure-suit,[1] worth much money, and store of jewels and precious stones, and said, "Take him and carry him in to the king." So they carried me in to the king in his divan, where I found him seated on his throne, with his Marids and guards before him; and when I saw him, my eyes were dazzled for that which was upon him of jewels; but when he saw me, he rose to his feet and all his officers rose also, to do him worship. Then he saluted me and bade me welcome, entreating me with the utmost honour, and gave me of that which was with him of good things; after which he said to some of his followers, "Take him and carry him back to my daughter, that she may restore him to the place whence she brought him." So they carried me back to the princess Saïdeh, who took me up and flew away with me and my treasures.

Meanwhile, the captain of the galleon, being aroused by the splash [of my fall], when my brothers threw me into the sea, said, "What is that which hath fallen overboard?" Whereupon my brothers fell to weeping and beating their breasts and answered, "Alas, for our brother's loss! He thought to do an occasion in the ship's side and fell into the water!" Then they laid their hands on my good, but there befell strife between them because of the lady, each saying, "None shall have her but I." And they abode disputing with one another and remembered not their brother nor his drowning and their mourning for him ceased. As they were thus, behold, Saïdeh alighted
Night with me in the midst of the galleon; and when my
dcccc brothers saw me, they embraced me and rejoiced in me,
lxxxv. saying, "O our brother, how hast thou fared in that which

[1] *i.e.* such a suit as is fabled to be laid up in the enchanted treasures called *kunouz*.

befell thee? Indeed our hearts have been occupied with thee." Quoth Saïdeh, "Had ye any bowels for him or had ye loved him, ye had not cast him into the sea; but choose now what death ye will die."

Then she seized on them and would have slain them; but they cried out, saying, ["We throw ourselves] on thy mercy, O our brother!" And I said to her, "I beseech thee, kill not my brothers." Quoth she, "Needs must I slay them, for they are traitors." But I ceased not to speak her fair and intercede with her, till she said, "To content thee, I will not kill them, but I will enchant them." So saying, she brought out a cup and filling it with sea-water, pronounced over it words that might not be understood; then she sprinkled them with the water, saying, "Quit this human shape for that of a dog;" and immediately they became dogs, as thou seest them, O Vicar of God.' Then he turned to the dogs and said to them, 'Have I spoken the truth, O my brothers?' And they bowed their heads, as who should say, 'Thou hast spoken truly.'

'Then,' continued he, 'she said to those who were in the galleon, "Know ye that Abdallah ben Fazil here present is become my brother and I shall visit him once or twice every day: so, whoso of you thwarteth him or gainsayeth his commandment or doth him hurt with hand or tongue, I will do with him like as I have done with these two traitors and turn him into a dog, and he shall end his days in that shape, nor shall he find deliverance." And they all said to her, "O our lady, we are all his slaves and his servants and will not gainsay him in aught." Moreover, she said to me, "When thou comest to Bassora, examine all thy property and if there lack aught thereof, tell me and I will bring it thee, in whose hands and wheresoever it may be, and will change him who took it into a dog. When thou hast laid up thy goods, clap a collar

of iron on the neck of each of these two traitors and tie them to the leg of a couch and shut them up by themselves. Moreover, every night, at midnight, do thou go down to them and beat each of them till he swoon away; and if thou suffer a single night to pass, without beating them, I will come to thee and swinge thee soundly, after which I will beat them." And I answered, "I hear and obey." Then said she, "Tie them up with ropes till thou come into Bassora." So I tied a rope about each dog's neck and bound them to the mast, and she went her way.

On the morrow we entered Bassora and the merchants came out to meet me and saluted me, and none enquired of my brothers. But they looked at the dogs and said to me, "What wilt thou do with these two dogs thou hast brought with thee?" Quoth I, "I reared them on the voyage and have brought them home with me." And they laughed at them, knowing not that they were my brothers. When I reached my house, I put the dogs in a closet and busied myself with the unpacking and disposition of the bales of stuffs and jewels I had with me. Moreover, the merchants were with me, because of salutation; wherefore I was occupied with them and forgot to beat the dogs or chain them up. Then I lay down to sleep, but hardly had I done so, when there came to me the Red King's daughter Saïdeh and said to me, "Did I not bid thee clap chains on their necks and give each of them a beating?" So saying, she seized me and pulling out a whip, beat me till I swooned away, after which she went to the place where my brothers were and beat them till they came nigh upon death.

Then said she to me, "Beat each of them thus every night, and if thou let a night pass without doing this, I will beat thee;" and I answered, "O my lady, to-morrow I will put chains on their necks, and next night I will beat them nor will I leave them one night unbeaten." And

she charged me straitly to beat them [and disappeared]. When the day came, it being grievous to me to put fetters of iron on their necks, I went to a goldsmith and bade him make them collars and chains of gold. He did this and I put the collars on their necks and chained them up, as she bade me; and next night I beat them in mine own despite. This befell in the Khalifate of El Mehdi,[1] third of the sons of Abbas, and I ingratiated myself with him by sending him presents, wherefore he invested me with the government and made me viceroy of Bassora.

On this wise I abode some time and after awhile, I said in myself, "It may be her wrath is grown cool;" and left them a night unbeaten, whereupon she came to me and gave me a beating the pain whereof I shall never forget so long as I live. So, from that time to this, I have never left them a single night unbeaten; and when El Mehdi died and thou camest to the throne, thou sentest to me, confirming me in the government of Bassora. These twelve years past have I beaten them every night, against my will, and after I have beaten them, I excuse myself to them and comfort them and give them to eat and drink; and they have remained shut up, nor did any of the creatures of God know of them, till thou sentest Abou Ishac the boon-companion to me, on account of the tribute, and he discovered my secret and returning to thee, acquainted thee therewith. Then thou sentest him back to fetch me and them; so I answered with "hearkening and obedience" and brought them before thee, whereupon thou questionedst me and I told thee the truth of the case; and this is my history.'

The Khalif marvelled at the case of the two dogs and said to Abdallah, 'Hast thou now forgiven thy two brothers the wrong they did thee, ay or no?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'may God forgive them and acquit them

[1] Father of Haroun er Reshid (A.D. 775-785).

of guilt in this world and the next! Indeed, it is I who stand in need of their forgiveness, for that these twelve years past I have beaten them grievously every night!' 'O Abdallah,' rejoined the Khalif, 'God willing, I will endeavour for their release and that they may become men again, as they were before, and I will make peace between thee and them; so shall you live the rest of your lives as loving brothers; and like as thou hast forgiven them, so shall they forgive thee. But now take them and go down with them to thy lodging and this night beat them not, and to-morrow all shall be well.' 'O my lord,' answered Abdallah, 'as thy head liveth, if I leave them one night unbeaten, Saïdeh will come to me and beat me, and I have no body to brook beating.' 'Fear not,' quoth the Khalif; 'for I will give thee a writing under my hand. If she come to thee, do thou give her the scroll and if, when she has read it, she spare thee, the favour will be hers; but, if she obey not my commandment, commit thine affair to God and let her beat thee and suppose that thou hast forgotten to beat them for one night and that she beats thee because of that: and if it fall out thus and she gainsay me, as sure as I am Commander of the Faithful, I will be even with her.'

Then he wrote her a letter on a piece of paper, two fingers broad, and sealing it, gave it to Abdallah, saying, 'O Abdallah, if she come, say to her, "The Khalif, King of mankind, hath commanded me to leave beating them and hath written me this letter for thee; and he saluteth thee." Then give her the warrant and fear no hurt.' And he took of him a solemn pledge that he would not beat them. So he took the dogs and carried them to his lodging, saying in himself, 'I wonder what the Khalif will do with the King's daughter of the Jinn, if she disobey him and beat me to-night! But I will run the risk of a beating for once and leave my brothers in peace this night,

though I suffer torture for their sake.' Then he bethought himself awhile, and his reason said to him, 'Did not the Khalif rely on some great support, he had not forbidden me from beating them.' So he entered his lodging and did off the collars from the dogs' necks, saying, 'I put my trust in God,' and fell to comforting them and saying, 'No harm shall befall you; for the Khalif, fifth of the sons of Abbas, hath undertaken for your deliverance and I have forgiven you. If it please God the Most High, the time is come and ye shall be delivered this blessed night; so rejoice ye in the prospect of peace and happiness.'

When they heard his words, they fell awhining, after the fashion of dogs, and rubbed their jowls against his feet, as if praying for him and humbling themselves before him. He mourned over them and fell to stroking their backs till supper time; and when they set on the evening meal, he bade the dogs sit. So they sat down and ate from the tray, whilst his officers stood gaping and marvelling at his eating with dogs and saying, 'Is he mad or are his wits deranged? How can the Viceroy of Bassora, he who is greater than a vizier, eat with dogs? Knoweth he not that the dog is unclean?' And they stared at the dogs, as they ate with him on decorous wise, knowing not that they were his brothers; nor did they leave staring at them, till they had made an end of eating, when Abdallah washed his hands and the dogs also put out their paws and washed; whereupon all who were present fell alaughing at them and saying, one to another, 'Never in our lives saw we dogs eat and after wash their paws!'

Night DCCCC LXXXVI.

Then the dogs sat down on the divans beside Abdallah, nor dared any question him of this; and thus the case abode till midnight, when he dismissed the attendants and lay down to sleep and the dogs with him, each on a couch; whereupon the servants said to each other, 'Verily, he hath lain down to sleep and the dogs with

him.' Quoth another, 'Since he hath eaten with the dogs from the [same] tray, there is no harm in their sleeping with him; and this is nought but the fashion of madmen.' Moreover, they ate not anydele of the food that remained in the tray, saying, 'How shall we eat of dogs' leavings?' And they took the tray, with what was therein, and threw it away, saying, 'It is unclean.'

As for Abdallah, ere he could think, the earth clove in sunder and out came Saïdeh, who said to him, 'O Abdallah, why hast thou not beaten them this night and why hast thou done off the collars from their necks? Hast thou done this to thwart me and in mockery of my commandment? But now I will beat thee and change thee into a dog like unto them.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I conjure thee by the graving upon the ring of Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), have patience with me till I tell thee the reason [of this] and after do with me what thou wilt.' 'Say on,' quoth she; and he said, 'The king of mankind, the Commander of the Faithful, the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, commanded me not to beat them this night and took of me oaths and covenants to that effect; and he saluteth thee and hath committed to me a mandate under his own hand, which he bade me give thee. So I obeyed his commandment, for it is obligatory to obey the Commander of the Faithful; and here is the mandate. Take it and read it and after do thy will.'

So he gave her the letter and she opened it and read as follows, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! From the king of mankind, Haroun er Reshid, to Saïdeh, daughter of the Red King!' Then, after the usual salutations, 'Verily, this man hath forgiven his brothers and hath let drop his claim against them, and we have enjoined them to reconciliation. Now, when reconciliation cometh about, punishment is remitted, and

if you [of the Jinn] thwart us in our commandments, we will thwart you in yours and traverse your ordinances; but, if ye obey our bidding and execute our commandments, we will do the like with yours. Wherefore I bid thee do them no hurt, and if thou believe in God and in His Apostle, it behoveth thee to obey him to whom the commandment is committed. So, if thou spare them, I will requite thee with that whereunto my Lord shall enable me; and the token of obedience is that thou remove thine enchantment from these two men, so they may come before me to-morrow, free. But, if thou release them not, I will release them in thy despite, by the aid of God the Most High.'

When she had read the letter, she said, 'O Abdallah, I will do nought till I go to my father and show him the mandate of the king of mankind and return to thee in haste.' So saying, she signed to the earth, which opened, and she disappeared therein, whilst Abdallah's heart was transported for joy and he said, 'God advance the Commander of the Faithful!' As for Saïdeh, she went in to her father and acquainting him with that which had passed, gave him the Khalif's letter, which he kissed and laid on his head. Then he read it and said, 'O my daughter, verily, the ordinance of the king of mankind hath course with us and his commandments are executory amongst us, nor can we gainsay him: so go thou and release the two men forthwith and say to them, "Ye are [free] by the intercession of the king of mankind." For, should he be wroth with us, he would destroy us to the last of us; so do not thou impose on us that whereto we are unable.'

'O my father,' said she, 'if the king of mankind were wroth with us, what could he do with us?' Quoth he, 'He hath power over us for several reasons. In the first place, he is a man and hath thus pre-eminence over

us;[1] secondly, he is the Vicar of God; and thirdly, he is constant in praying the two-bow prayer of the foredawn; wherefore, if all the tribes of the Jinn assembled together against him from the seven worlds, they could do him no hurt. But he, should he be wroth with us, he would pray the two-bow prayer of the foredawn and cry out upon us one cry, whereupon we should all present ourselves before him obediently and be before him as sheep before the butcher. If he would, he could command us to depart our abiding-places to a desert country wherein we might not sojourn; and if he desired to destroy us, he would bid us destroy ourselves, whereupon we should destroy one another. Wherefore we may not disobey his commandment, for, if we did this, he would consume us, nor could we flee from before him. Thus is it with every true believer who is diligent in praying the two-bow prayer of the foredawn; his commandment is effectual over us: so be not thou the means of our destruction, because of two mortals, but go forthright and release them, ere the anger of the Commander of the Faithful fall upon us.'

So she returned to Abdallah and acquainted him with her father's words, saying, 'Kiss me the hands of the Commander of the Faithful and seek his approof for us.' Then she brought out the cup and filling it with water, conjured over it and spoke words that might not be understood; after which she sprinkled the dogs with the water, saying, 'Quit the form of dogs and return to that of men!' Whereupon they became men as before and the spell of the enchantment was dissolved from them. Quoth they, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' And fell on their brother's feet and hands, kissing them and beseeching his forgiveness: but he said, 'Do ye forgive me.' Then they both repented with a sincere repentance, saying, 'Verily, Satan the

[1] See notes, Vol. VII. pp. 119, 159.

Accursed tempted us and covetise deluded us: but our Lord hath requited us after our deserts, and forgiveness is of the fashion of the generous.' And they went on to supplicate their brother and weep and profess repentance for that which they had done.

Then said he to them, 'What did ye with my wife whom I brought from the City of Stone?' Quoth they, 'When Satan tempted us and we cast thee into the sea, there befell strife between us, each saying, "I will have her to wife." Which when she heard, she came up from the cabin and said to us, "Contend not because of me, for I will not belong to either of you. My husband is gone into the sea and I will follow him." So saying, she cast herself overboard and died.' 'Verily,' exclaimed Abdallah, 'she died a martyr![1] But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he wept sore for her and said to his brothers, 'It was not well of you to do this thing and bereave me of my wife!' And they answered, 'Indeed, we have sinned, but our Lord hath requited us our deed and this was a thing that God decreed unto us, ere He created us.' And he accepted their excuse; but Saïdeh said to him, 'Have they done all these things to thee and wilt thou forgive them?' 'O my sister,' answered he, 'whoso hath power[2] and spareth, his reward is with God.' Then said she, 'Be on thy guard against them, for they are traitors.' And she took leave of him and went away.

Night dccccxxxvii.

Abdallah and his brothers passed the rest of the night in eating and drinking and merriment and good cheer, and on the morrow, he sent them to the bath and clad

[1] A person who dies by drowning, according to Muslim theology, becomes one of "the noble army of martyrs," whose souls dwell, till the Judgment Day, in the crops of green birds that feed upon the fruits of Paradise.

[2] *i.e.* is able to avenge himself.

each of them, on his coming forth, in a suit worth much money. Then he called for the tray of food and they set it before him and he ate, he and his brothers. When his attendants saw the latter and knew them for his brothers, they saluted them and said to him, 'O our lord, may God give thee joy of thy reunion with thy dear brothers! Where have they been this while?' Quoth he, 'It was they whom ye saw in the guise of dogs; praised be God who hath delivered them from prison and grievous torment!'

Then he carried them to the Khalif's Divan and kissing the earth before the prince, wished him continuance of honour and fortune and cease of evil and enmity. 'Welcome, O Amir Abdallah!' said the Khalif. 'Tell me what hath befallen thee.' 'O Commander of the Faithful (whose power God increase!),' replied he, 'when I carried my brothers home to my lodging, my heart was at rest concerning them, for that thou hadst pledged thyself to their release and I said in myself, "Kings fail not of aught for which they endeavour, for the divine favour aideth them." So I did off the collars from their necks, putting my trust in God, and ate with them from the [same] tray, which when my attendants saw, they made light of my wit and said to each other, "He is surely mad! How can the governor of Bassora, who is greater than the vizier, eat with dogs?" Then they threw away what was in the tray, saying, "We will not eat the dogs' leavings." And they went on to impeach my reason, whilst I heard what they said, but made them no answer, because of their ignorance that the dogs were my brothers. When the hour of sleep came, I sent them away and addressed myself to sleep; but, ere I could think, the earth clave in sunder and out came Saïdeh, the Red King's daughter, enraged against me, with eyes like fire.' And he went on to relate to the Khalif what had

passed between him and her and her father and how she had restored his brothers to human form, adding, 'And here they are before thee, O Commander of the Faithful!'

The Khalif looked at them and seeing two young men like moons, said, 'God requite thee for me with good, O Abdallah, for that thou hast acquainted me with an advantage[1] whereof I knew not! Henceforth, God willing, I will never leave to pray these two inclinations before the breaking of the dawn, what while I abide on life.' Then he reproved Abdallah's brothers for that wherein they had sinned against him of time past and they excused themselves before the Khalif, who said, 'Join hands[2] and forgive one another and God pardon what is past!' After which he turned to Abdallah and said to him, 'O Abdallah, make thy brothers thine assistants and be careful of them.' Then he charged them to be obedient to their brother and bade them return to Bassora, after he had bestowed on them abundant largesse. So they went down from the divan, whilst the Khalif rejoiced in this advantage that he had gotten by the fashion aforesaid, to wit, his assiduity in praying two inclinations before dawn, and said, 'He spoke truth who said, "The misfortunes of some folk profit others."'[3]

Abdallah and his brothers departed from Baghdad in all honour and worship and increase of dignity, and fared on till they drew near Bassora, when the notables and chief men of the place came out to meet them and brought them into the city in state that had not its match. Moreover, they adorned the city in their honour and all the

[1] *i.e.* the power acquired by the regular praying of the foredawn prayer.

[2] "The Arab fashion (*musafiheh*) of shaking hands. They apply the palms of the right hands close to one another, without squeezing the fingers, and then raise the hand to the forehead."—*Burton's Pilgrimage.*

[3] *i.e.* it is an ill wind that blows nobody good.

folk shouted out blessings on Abdallah, whilst he scattered gold and silver amongst them. But none took heed to his brothers; wherefore jealousy and envy entered their hearts, for all he tendered them as one tenders an ailing eye; but the more he cherished them, the more they redoubled in hatred and envy of him: and indeed it is said on the subject:

I seek to win me the good will of all folk, small and great, But hardly him who envieth me I may conciliate.
How shall a man conciliate him who envieth him a good, Since but the ceasing of that good will satisfy his hate?

Then he gave each of them a concubine, that had not her like, and slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, forty of each kind. Moreover, he gave each of them fifty thoroughbred horses and they got them guards and followers. And he assigned to them revenues and appointed them stipends and allowances and made them his assistants, saying to them, 'O my brothers, you and I are equal and there is no distinction between us, and after God and the Khalif, the commandment is mine and yours. So rule you in Bassora in my absence and in my presence, and your commandments shall be executory; but look that ye fear God in your ordinances and beware of oppression, for oppression, if it endure, ruineth [a country]; and apply yourselves unto justice, for justice, if it endure, maketh [a country] to flourish. Oppress not the believers, or they will curse you and your report will come to the ears of the Khalif, wherefore dishonour will betide both you and me. Go not therefore about to oppress any, but whatsoever ye covet of the goods of the folk, take it from my goods, over and above that whereof ye have need; for it is not unknown to you what is handed down of unequivocal verses [of the Koran] on the subject of oppression, and gifted of God is he who saith:

Night dccccxxxviii.

Oppression in man's soul doth latent sit And nought but lack of power concealeth it.
A man of sense no business undertakes, Until he sees the time therefor is fit.
The wise man's tongue is in his heart, but in His mouth the heart of him who lacketh wit.
He who's not greater than his wit is slain Of the least stress that unto him is writ.
Men may their lineage hide, but it appears Still in the things they do and they omit.
Whoso in origin is aught but good, No word of good his lips shall e'er emit.
He is his peer in folly, to a fool Who doth the ordering of his deeds commit;
And who reveals his secret to the folk His enemies awakens unto it.
With his own business be a man content Nor mell with what concerneth him no whit.

And he went on to admonish his brothers and enjoin them to justice and forbid them from oppression, doubting not but they would love him the better for his lavishment of good counsel upon them, and he trusted in them and entreated them with the utmost honour; but, for all his generosity to them, they only waxed in hatred and envy of him, till, one day, the two being together [alone], Nasir said to Mensour, 'O my brother, how long shall we be subject to our brother Abdallah, and he in this estate of lordship and commandment? After being a merchant, he is become an Amir, and from being little, he is grown great: but we, we grow not great nor is there aught of rank or worth left us; for, behold, he laugheth at us and maketh us his assistants! What is the meaning of this? Is it not that we are his servants and under his commandment? But, what while he abideth on life, our rank will never be raised nor shall we be of any account; wherefore we shall not attain to our wish, except we slay him and take his good, nor will it be possible to take his good, save

after his death. So, when we have killed him, we shall become lords and will take all that is in his treasuries of jewels and [other] things of price and divide them between us. Then will we send the Khalif a present and demand of him the government of Cufa, and thou shalt be governor of Bassora and I of Cufa, or thou shalt be governor of Cufa and I of Bassora. On this wise each of us shall have a rank and a condition, but we shall never compass this, except we do away with him.'

'Thou sayest sooth,' answered Mensour; 'but how shall we do to kill him?' Quoth Nasir, 'We will make an entertainment in the house of one of us and bid him thereto and serve him with the utmost assiduity. Then will we watch the night with him in converse and tell him stories and jests and anecdotes, till his heart is dissolved with watching, when we will spread him a bed, that he may lie down to sleep. When he is asleep, we will kneel upon him and strangle him and cast him into the river; and on the morrow, we will say, "His sister the Jinniyeh came to him, as he sat talking with us, and said to him, 'O scum of mankind, who art thou that thou shouldst complain of me to the Commander of the Faithful? Deemest thou that we are afraid of him? If he be a king, we too are kings, and if he mend not his manners with us, we will kill him by the foulest of deaths. But meantime I will kill thee, that we may see what the Commander of the Faithful can do.' So saying, she caught him up and the earth opened and she disappeared with him; which when we saw, we swooned away. Then we came to ourselves and we know not what is become of him." Then will we send to the Khalif and tell him of this and he will invest us with the government in his room. After awhile, we will send him a rich present and seek of him the government of Cufa, and one of us shall abide in Bassora and the other in Cufa. So shall the

land be pleasant to us and we will subdue the people and attain our desire.' 'Thou counsellest well, O my brother,' answered Mensour and they agreed upon this thing.

So Nasir made an entertainment and said to Abdallah, 'O my brother, verily I am thy brother, and I would have thee and my brother Mensour heal my heart and eat of my guest-meal in my house, so I may glory in thee and that it may be said, "The Amir Abdallah hath eaten of his brother Nasir's guest-meal;" whereby my heart will be solaced.' 'So be it, O my brother,' answered Abdallah. 'There is no distinction between me and thee, and my house is thy house; but since thou biddest me, none refuseth hospitality save the churl.' Then he turned to Mensour and said to him, 'Wilt thou go with me to thy brother Nasir's house and eat of his guest-meal and ease his heart?' 'As thy head liveth, O my brother,' replied Mensour, 'I will not go with thee, except thou swear to me that, after thou comest forth of my brother Nasir's house, thou wilt enter my house and eat of my banquet! Is Nasir thy brother and am not I thy brother? So, even as thou healest his heart, do thou heal mine.' 'With all my heart,' answered Abdallah. 'When I come out from Nasir's house, I will enter thine, for thou art my brother even as he.' So Nasir kissed his hand and going forth of the divan, made ready his banquet.

On the morrow, Abdallah took horse and repaired, with his brother Mensour and a company of his officers, to Nasir's house, where they sat down, he and Mensour and his company. Then Nasir set the table of food before them and bade them welcome; so they ate and drank; after which the tray and the platters were removed and they washed their hands. They passed the day in eating and drinking and merry-making and good cheer till night-fall, when they supped and prayed the prayers of sundown

and evensong. Then they sat carousing, and Nasir and Mensour fell to telling stories, first one and then the other, whilst Abdallah hearkened. Now they three were alone in a pavilion, the rest of the company being in another place, and they ceased not to tell tales and jests and pleasant traits and anecdotes, till Abdallah's heart was dissolved within him for watching and sleep overcame him. So they spread him a bed and he put off his clothes and lay down.

Night dccccxxxix.

They lay down beside him on another couch and waited till they saw that he was drowned in sleep, when they arose and knelt upon him: whereupon he awoke and seeing them kneeling on his breast, said to them, 'What is this, O my brothers?' 'We are no brothers of thine,' answered they, 'nor do we know thee, lack-courtesy that thou art! Thy death is become better than thy life.' Then they gripped him by the throat and throttled him, till he lost his senses and abode without motion, so that they deemed him dead. Now the pavilion in which they were overlooked the river; so they cast him therein; but, when he fell, God sent to his aid a dolphin, which was wont to come under the pavilion, for that the kitchen had a window that gave upon the water, and as often as they killed any beast there, it was their wont to throw the offal into the river and the dolphin came and picked it up from the surface of the water; wherefore it still resorted to the place. That day they had cast out much offal, by reason of the banquet; so the dolphin ate more than of wont and gained strength. When it heard the splash of Abdallah's fall, it hastened to the spot, where it saw a man, and God guided it, so that it took him on its back and crossing the river, made with him for the other bank, where it cast him ashore.

Now the place where the dolphin cast him up was a beaten way, and presently up came a caravan and finding

him lying on the river-bank, said, 'Here is a drowned man, whom the river hath cast up.' Now the chief of the caravan was a man of worth and sound judgment, skilled in all sciences and versed in the art of medicine: so he said to them, 'O folk, what is to do?' And they answered, saying, 'Here is a drowned man.' Whereupon he went up to Abdallah and examining him, said to them, 'O folk, there is yet life in this young man, who is a person of condition and a nursling of honour and fortune, and God willing, there is still hope in him.' Then he took him and clothing him in warm apparel, nursed him and tended him three days' journey, till he revived; but he was exceeding weak, by reason of the shock, and the chief of the caravan proceeded to medicine him with such simples as he knew, what while they fared on, without ceasing, till they had travelled thirty days' journey from Bassora and came to a city in the land of the Persians, by name Auj. Here they alighted at a khan and spread Abdallah a bed, where he lay groaning all night and disturbing the folk with his groans.

On the morrow the porter of the khan came to the chief of the caravan and said to him. 'What is this sick man thou hast with thee? Verily, he disturbeth us.' Quoth the chief, 'I found him by the way, shipwrecked and cast up by the river, and have tended him, but to no effect, for he recovereth not.' 'Show him to the Sheikheh[1] Rajiheh,' said the porter. 'Who is she?' asked the chief of the caravan, and the porter answered, saying, 'There is with us a holy woman, a comely and clean maid, called Rajiheh, to whom they carry whoso hath any ailment; and he lies the night in her house and awakes on the morrow, whole and ailing nothing.' Quoth the chief, 'Direct me to her;' and the porter said, 'Take up thy sick man.' So he took up Abdallah and the porter forewent him, till

[1] Fem. of Sheikh, *i.e.* a holy woman.

he came to a hermitage, where he saw folk entering with votive offerings and other folk coming forth, rejoicing. The porter went in, till he came to the curtain,[1] and said, 'Permission, O Sheikheh Rajiheh! Take this sick man.' Quoth she, 'Bring him within the curtain.' And the porter said to Abdallah, 'Enter.'

So he entered and looking upon the holy woman, saw her to be his very wife whom he had brought from the City of Stone. She also knew him and saluted him and he her. Then said he, 'Who brought thee hither?' And she answered, 'When I saw that thy brothers had cast thee overboard and were contending concerning me, I threw myself into the sea; but my sheikh El Khizr took me up and brought me to this hermitage, where he gave me leave to heal the sick and made proclamation in the city, saying, "Whoso hath any ailment, let him repair to the Sheikheh Rajiheh." Moreover he said to me, "Abide in this hermitage till the time be accomplished, and thy husband shall come to thee here." So all the sick used to come to me and I rubbed them and kneaded them and they awoke on the morrow, whole and well. On this wise the report of me became noised abroad among the folk, and they brought me votive gifts, so that I have with me good galore. Moreover, I live here in all honour and worship, and all the people of these parts seek my prayers.'

Then she rubbed him and by the ordinance of God the Most High he became whole. Now El Khizr used to come to her every Friday night, and it chanced that the day of Abdallah's coming was a Friday. So, when the night darkened, they made the evening meal of the richest meats, he and she, and sat awaiting the coming of El Khizr, who made his appearance anon and carrying them forth of the hermitage, set them down in Abdallah's

[1] The hermitage probably consisted of but one room, divided in two by means of a curtain.

palace at Bassora, where he left them and went his way. As soon as it was day, Abdallah examined the palace and knew it for his own; then, hearing the folk in clamour [without], he looked forth of the window and saw his brothers crucified, each on his own cross.

Now the reason of this was as follows. When they had thrown him into the Tigris, they arose on the morrow, weeping and saying, 'The Jinniyeh hath carried off our brother!' Then they made ready a present and sent it to the Khalif, acquainting him with these tidings and seeking of him the government of Bassora. He sent for them and questioned them and they told him the story aforesaid,[1] whereupon he was exceeding wroth [with Saïdeh]. So that night he prayed a two-bow prayer before daybreak, as of his wont, and called upon the tribes of the Jinn, who came before him obediently, and he questioned them of Abdallah; but they swore to him that none of them had done him aught of hurt and said, 'We know not what is come of him.' Then came Saïdeh, daughter of the Red King, and acquainted the Khalif with the truth of Abdallah's case, and he dismissed the Jinn.

On the morrow, he caused beat Nasir and Mensour, till they confessed, one against the other: whereupon the Khalif was enraged with them and bade carry them to Bassora and crucify them there before Abdallah's palace. As for the latter, when he saw his brothers crucified, he commanded to bury them, then took horse and repairing to Baghdad, acquainted the Khalif with that which his brothers had done with him, from first to last [and told him how he had recovered his wife]; whereat Er Reshid marvelled and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, let draw up the contract of marriage between Abdallah and the damsel whom he had brought from the City of Stone.

[1] *i.e.* that which they had concerted.

So he went in to her and abode with her at Bassora, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of the [Ever-]Living One, who dieth not!

MAROUF THE COBBLER AND HIS WIFE FATIMEH.

There dwelt once in the city of Cairo the [God-]guarded a cobbler, [who lived by] mending old shoes.[1] His name was Marouf and he had a wife called Fatimeh, whom the folk had nicknamed 'The Shrew,'[2] for that she was a worthless, ill-conditioned wretch, little of shame and a sore mischief-maker. She ruled her husband and used to revile him and curse him a thousand times a day; and he feared her malice and dreaded her mischief; for that he was a man of sense and careful of his repute, but poor of estate. When he earnt much, he spent it on her, and when he earnt little, she revenged herself on his body that night, leaving him no peace and making his night like her book;[3] for she was even as saith the poet of [the like of] her:

How many a night have I spent with my wife In the sorriest of plights for contention and strife!
Would God I had given her poison the night Of our wedding and so made an end of her life!

One day she said to him, 'O Marouf, I wish thee to

[1] *Zerabin* (pl. of *zerboun*); *lit.* slaves' shoes or sandals (as Vol. III. p. 211, l. 21); but the word is here evidently used in its modern sense of stout shoes or boots.

[2] *Lit.* dung (*urreh*). The meaning "shrew" is modern and tropical.

[3] *i.e.* black, like the book in which her actions were recorded and which would be presented to her on the Day of Judgment. See antè, Vol. VIII. p. 94, note 2.

bring me this night vermicelli dressed with bees' honey.' 'So God the Most High vouchsafe[1] me its price,' answered he, 'I will bring it thee. By Allah, I have no money to-day, but our Lord will provide.'[1] 'I have nothing to do with that,' rejoined she. 'Whether He provide[1] or not, look thou come not to me save with the vermicelli and bees' honey thereon; else will I make thy night like unto thy fortune[2] whenas thou marriedst me and fellest into my hand.' Quoth he, 'God is bountiful!' and went out, full of trouble.[3] He prayed the morning prayer and opened his shop, saying, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me the price of the vermicelli and save me from the mischief of yonder wicked woman this night!'

Night DCCCCXC.

He sat in the shop till midday, but no work came to him and his fear of his wife redoubled. So he arose and shutting his shop, went out, knowing not how he should do in the matter of the vermicelli, for that he had not [even] wherewithal to buy bread. Presently he came to the shop of the vermicelli-seller and stood before it, perplexed, whilst his eyes filled with tears. The cook glanced at him and said, 'O Master Marouf, why dost thou weep? Tell me what ails thee.' So he acquainted him with his case, saying, 'My wife is a curst shrew and would have me bring her vermicelli; but I have sat in my shop half the day and have gotten nought, not even the price of bread; wherefore I am in fear of her.' The cook laughed and said, 'No harm shall come to thee. How many pounds wilt thou have?' 'Five pounds,' answered Marouf. So the cook weighed him out five pounds of vermicelli and said to him, 'I have butter, but no bees' honey. Here is drip-honey,[4]

[1] *Lit.* make easy. [2] *i.e.* black.

[3] *Lit.* with trouble scattering itself abroad from his body.

[4] *i.e.* the sweet yellow syrup which exudes from ripe dates, when hung up. This is the ordinary meaning of "drip-honey"; but in the present case it appears to mean treacle, as it is afterwards spoken of as "cane-honey."

however, which is better than bees' honey; and where will be the harm, if it be with drip-honey?'

Marouf was ashamed to object, because the cook was to have patience with him for the price, and said, 'Give it me with drip-honey.' So he fried it for him with butter and drenched it with drip-honey, till it was fit to present to kings. Then he said to him, 'Dost thou want bread and cheese?' And Marouf answered, 'Yes.' So he gave him four paras' worth of bread and one of cheese, and the vermicelli was ten paras. Then said he, 'Know, O Marouf, that thou owest me fifteen paras, so go to thy wife and make merry and take this para for the bath; and thou shalt have credit for a day or two or three till God provide thee. And straiten not thy wife, for I will have patience with thee till such time as thou shalt have money to spare.' So Marouf took the vermicelli and bread and cheese and went away, with a heart at ease, blessing the cook and saying, 'Extolled be Thy perfection, O my Lord! How bountiful art Thou!'

When he came home, his wife said to him, 'Hast thou brought the vermicelli?' 'Yes,' answered he and set it before her. She looked at it and seeing that it was dressed with cane-honey,[1] said to him, 'Did I not bid thee bring it with bees' honey? Wilt thou do contrary to my wish and have it dressed with cane-honey?' He excused himself to her, saying, 'I bought it not save on credit;' but she answered, 'This talk is idle; I will not eat it, save with bees' honey.' And she was wroth with it and threw it in his face, saying, 'Begone, thou cuckold, and bring me other than this!' Then she dealt him a buffet on the chops and knocked out one of his teeth. The blood ran down upon his breast and for stress of anger he smote her one slight blow on the head; whereupon she clutched his

[1] See foregoing note.

beard and fell to crying out and saying, '[Help,] O Muslims!'

So the neighbours came in and freed his beard from her clutch and beset her with blame and reproved her, saying, 'We are all content to eat vermicelli with cane-honey. Why, then, wilt thou oppress this poor man thus? Verily, this is disgraceful in thee!' And they went on to soothe her till they made peace between him and her. But, when the folk were gone, she swore that she would not eat of the vermicelli, and Marouf, being consumed with hunger, said in himself, 'She swears that she will not eat; so I will eat.' Then he ate, and when she saw him eating, she said, 'If it be the will of God, may the eating of it be poison to destroy some one's[1] body!' Quoth he, 'It shall not be as thou sayest,' and went on eating, laughing and saying, 'Thou swearest that thou wilt not eat of this; but God is bountiful, and to-morrow night, if it be His will, I will bring thee vermicelli dressed with bees' honey, and thou shalt eat it alone.' And he addressed himself to appease her, whilst she called down curses upon him; and she ceased not to rail at him and revile him till the morning, when she bared her arm to beat him. Quoth he, 'Give me time and I will bring thee other vermicelli.'

Then he went out to the mosque and prayed; after which he betook himself to his shop and opening it, sat down; but hardly had he done this when up came two officers from the Cadi's court and said to him, 'Come,

[1] The Arabs consider it a breach of manners, in telling a story, textually to repeat an imprecation, lest some person present apply it to himself, and therefore commonly substitute "the remote one" (*el baïd*) for the pronoun or name of the person cursed, an expression equivalent to our vulgar "present company excepted." I have substituted the similar English expression "some one," which sufficiently renders the Arabic idiom.

speak with the Cadi, for thy wife hath complained of thee to him and her favour is thus and thus.' He knew her [by their description] and saying, 'May God the Most High torment her!' accompanied them to the Cadi's presence, where he found Fatimeh standing, weeping and wiping away her tears, with her arm bound up and her face-veil besmeared with blood. 'Harkye, sirrah,' said the Cadi, 'hast thou no fear of God the Most High? Why hast thou beaten this good woman and broken her arm and knocked out her tooth and entreated her thus?' 'If I beat her or put out her tooth,' answered Marouf, 'sentence me to what thou wilt; but in truth the case was thus and thus and the neighbours made peace between me and her.' And he told him the story from first to last.

Now this Cadi was a benevolent man; so he brought out to him a quarter dinar, saying, 'O man, take this and get her vermicelli with bees' honey and do ye make peace, thou and she.' Quoth Marouf, 'Give it to her.' So she took it and the Cadi made peace between them, saying, 'O wife, obey thy husband, and thou, O man, deal kindly with her.' Then they left the court, reconciled at the Cadi's hands, and she went one way, whilst her husband returned by another way to his shop and sat there, when, behold, the [two] serjeants came up to him and said, 'Give us our fee.' Quoth he, 'The Cadi took not of me aught: on the contrary, he gave me a quarter dinar.' But they answered, saying, 'It is none of our concern whether the Cadi took of thee or gave to thee, and if thou give us not our fee, we will take it in despite of thee.' And they fell to dragging him about the market. So he sold his tools and gave them half a dinar, whereupon they let him go and went away, whilst he put his hand to his cheek and sat sorrowful, for that he had no tools to work withal.

Presently, up came two ill-looking fellows and said to him, 'Come, O man, and speak with the Cadi; for thy

wife hath complained of thee to him.' Quoth he, 'He made peace between us [but now].' But they answered, 'We come from another Cadi, and thy wife hath complained of thee to our Cadi.' So he arose and went with them to the [second] Cadi, calling on God for succour against her; and when he saw her, he said to her, 'Did we not make peace, good woman?' But she said, 'There abideth no peace between thee and me.' So he came forward and told the Cadi his story, adding, 'And indeed the Cadi such an one made peace between us but now.' Whereupon the Cadi said to her, 'O strumpet, since ye have made peace with each other, why comest thou to me complaining?' Quoth she, 'He beat me after that.' But the Cadi said, 'Make peace with one another, and thou, [O man,] beat her not again, and she will cross thee no more.' So they made peace and the Cadi said to Marouf, 'Give the serjeants their fee.' So he gave them their fee and going back to his shop, opened it and sat down, as he were a drunken man for excess of chagrin.

Presently, a man came up to him and said, 'O Marouf, hide thyself, for thy wife hath complained of thee to the High Court and the men of violence[1] are after thee.' So he shut his shop and fled towards the Gate of Victory.[2] He had five paras left of the price of the lasts and gear; so he bought four paras worth of bread and one of cheese, as he fled from her. Now it was the winter season and the hour of afternoon prayer; so, when he came out among the rubbish-heaps, the rain descended upon him, as [from] the mouth of water-skins, and his clothes were drenched. So he entered the Aadiliyeh,[3] where he saw a ruined place and therein a deserted cell, without a door,

[1] *i.e.* the police: see note, Vol. VI. p. 2.
[2] Bab en Nesr, eastern gate of Cairo.
[3] A mosque so called, situate without the Bab en Nesr.

and took shelter there from the rain. The tears streamed from his eyes and he fell to complaining of what had befallen him and saying, 'Whither shall I flee from this vile woman? I beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me one who shall bring me to a far country, where she shall not know the way to me!'

As he sat weeping, behold, the wall opened and there came forth to him therefrom one of tall stature, whose aspect caused the flesh to creep, and said to him, 'O man, what aileth thee that thou disturbest me this night? These two hundred years have I dwelt here and have never seen any enter this place and do as thou dost. Tell me what thou wishest and I will accomplish thy need, for compassion for thee hath gotten hold upon my heart.' Quoth Marouf, 'Who and what art thou?' And he answered, 'I am the haunter of this place.' So Marouf told him all that had befallen him with his wife and he said, 'Wilt thou have me carry thee to a country, where thy wife shall know no way to thee?' 'Yes,' answered Marouf; and the genie said, 'Then mount my back.' So he mounted on his back and he flew with him from nightfall till daybreak, when he set him down on the top of a high mountain and said to him, 'O mortal, descend this mountain and thou wilt see the gate of a city. Enter it, for thy wife cannot come at thee there.' So saying, he left him and went his way, whilst Marouf abode in amazement and perplexity till the sun rose, when he said in himself, 'I will arise and go down into the city, for there is no profit in my abiding here.'

Night dccccxci.

So he descended to the mountain-foot and saw a high-walled city, full of lofty palaces and richly-decorated buildings, a delight to those who looked upon it. He entered in at the gate and found it a city such as lightened the grieving heart; but, as he walked through the streets, the townsfolk stared at him and gathered about him, mar-

velling at his dress, for it was unlike theirs. Presently, one of them said to him, 'O man, art thou a stranger?' And he answered, 'Yes.' 'What countryman art thou?' asked the other; and Marouf said, 'I am from the city of Cairo the Happy.' Quoth the townsman, 'And when didst thou leave Cairo?' 'I left it yesterday,' answered Marouf, 'at the hour of afternoon-prayer.' Whereupon the man laughed at him and cried out, saying, 'Come hither, O folk, and look at this man and hear what he says!' Quoth they, 'What does he say?' 'He pretends,' replied the other, 'that he comes from Cairo and left it yesterday at the hour of afternoon-prayer!' At this they all laughed and gathering round Marouf, said to him, 'O man, art thou mad to talk thus? How canst thou pretend that thou leftest Cairo at mid-afternoon yesterday and foundest thyself this morning here, seeing that between our city and Cairo is a full year's journey?' Quoth he, 'None is mad but you. As for me, I speak sooth, for here is bread that I brought with me from Cairo, and see, it is yet fresh.' Then he showed them the bread and they stared at it and marvelled at it, for it was unlike their country bread.

The crowd increased about him and they said to each other, 'This is Cairo bread: look at it.' So he became a gazing stock in the city and some believed him, whilst others gave him the lie and made mock of him. Presently, up came a merchant, riding on a mule and followed by two black slaves, and pressed through the people, saying, 'O folk, are ye not ashamed to mob this foreigner and make mock of him and laugh at him?' And he went on to rate them, till he drove them away from Marouf, and none could make him any answer. Then he said to Marouf, 'Come, O my brother. No harm shall betide thee from these folk. Verily they have no shame.' So he took him and carrying him to a spacious and richly-

decorated house, seated him in a guest-chamber fit for a king, whilst he gave an order to his slaves, who opened a chest and brought out to him a dress such as might be worn by a merchant worth a thousand purses. He clad him therein and Marouf, being a well-favoured man, became as he were provost of the merchants.

Then his host called for food and they set before them a tray of all manner rich meats. They ate and drank and the merchant said to Marouf, 'O my brother, what is thy name?' 'My name is Marouf,' answered he, 'and I am a cobbler by trade and mend old shoes.' 'What countryman art thou?' asked the merchant, and the cobbler said, 'I am from Cairo.' 'What quarter?' asked the other. Quoth Marouf, 'Dost thou know Cairo?' And the merchant replied, 'I am of its children.'[1] So Marouf said, 'I come from the Red Street.' 'And whom dost thou know in the Red Street?' asked his host. 'I know such an one and such an one,' answered Marouf and named several people to him. Quoth the other, 'Knowest thou Gaffer Ahmed the druggist?' 'He was my next neighbour, wall for wall,' replied the cobbler. 'Is he well?' asked the merchant and Marouf said, 'Yes.' 'How many sons hath he?' asked the merchant. 'Three,' replied Marouf, 'Mustafa, Mohammed and Ali.' Quoth the other, 'And what hath God done with them?' 'As for Mustafa,' answered Marouf, 'he is well and he is a learned man, a professor.[2] Mohammed is a druggist and opened him a shop beside that of his father, after he had married, and his wife hath borne him a son named Hassan.' 'God gladden thee with good news!'[3] said the merchant.

'As for Ali,' continued Marouf, 'he was my friend, when we were boys, and I still played with him. We

[1] *i.e.* I am a Cairene.
[2] *i.e.* in a collegiate mosque.
[3] *i.e.* like as thou hast gladdened me therewith.

used to go in the guise of the children of the Nazarenes and enter the church and steal the books of the Nazarenes and sell them and buy food with the price. It chanced once that the Christians caught us with a book; whereupon they complained of us to our folk and said to Ali's father, "An thou hinder not thy son from troubling us, we will complain of thee to the king." So he appeased them and gave Ali a drubbing; wherefore he ran away none knew whither and he hath now been absent twenty years and none hath brought news of him.' Quoth the host, 'I am that very Ali, son of Gaffer Ahmed the druggist, and thou art my playmate Marouf.' So they saluted each other and Ali said, 'Tell me why thou camest from Cairo to this city.'

So Marouf told him all that had befallen him with his wife Fatimeh the Shrew and said, 'So, when her mischief waxed on me, I fled from her towards the Gate of Victory [and went forth the city]. Presently, the rain descended on me; so I entered a ruined cell in the Aadiliyeh and sat there, weeping; whereupon there came forth to me the haunter of the place, to wit, an Afrit of the Jinn, and questioned me. I acquainted him with my case and he took me on his back and flew with me all night between heaven and earth, till he set me down on yonder mountain and gave me to know of the [neighbourhood of this] city. So I came down from the mountain and entered the city, whereupon the people crowded about me and questioned me. I told them that I had left Cairo yesterday, but they believed me not, and presently thou camest up and driving the folk away from me, carriedst me to this house. This, then, is how I came to leave Cairo; and thou, how camest thou hither?'

Quoth Ali, 'Restlessness[1] got hold upon me, when I was seven years old, from which time I wandered from

[1] Or giddiness (*taish*).

land to land and city to city, till I came to this city, the name whereof is Ikhtiyan el Khuten.[1] I found its people kindly and hospitable folk, trusting in the poor man and giving him credit and believing all that he said. So I said to them, "I am a merchant and have foregone my baggage and I need a place wherein to bestow it." And they believed me and assigned me a lodging. Then I said to them, "Is there any of you will lend me a thousand dinars, till my baggage arrives, when I will repay it to him? For I am in want of certain things, ere my goods come." They gave me what I asked and I went to the merchants' bazaar, where, seeing goods, I bought them and sold them next day at a profit of fifty dinars and bought others. Moreover, I consorted with the folk and entreated them liberally, so that they loved me, and I continued to buy and sell, till I grew rich. And know, O my brother, that the proverb says, "The world is made up of ostentation and trickery: and the land where none knoweth thee, there do whatsoever thou wilt." If thou say to all who ask thee, "I am a poor man, a cobbler by trade, and fled from my wife and left Cairo yesterday," they will not believe thee and thou wilt be a laughing-stock among them as long as thou abidest in the city; whilst, if thou say, "An Afrit brought me hither," they will take fright at thee and none will come near thee; for they will say, "This man is possessed of an Afrit and harm will betide whoso approacheth him." And this report will be dishonouring both to thee and to me, for that they know I come from Cairo.'

'How then shall I do?' asked Marouf. 'I will tell thee how thou shalt do,' answered Ali, 'so it please God the Most High. To-morrow I will give thee a thousand dinars and a mule to ride and a black slave, who shall go before thee and bring thee to the gate of the merchants' bazaar;

[1] Name of a district in Tartary.

and do thou go in to them. I will be there sitting amongst them, and when I see thee, I will rise to thee and salute thee and kiss thy hand and make much of thee. Whenever I ask thee of any kind of stuff, saying, "Hast thou brought with thee aught of such a kind?" do thou answer, "Abundance." And if they question me of thee, I will praise thee and magnify thee in their eyes and say to them, "Get him a store-house and a shop." Moreover, I will give thee out for a man of great wealth and generosity; and if a beggar come to thee, give him what thou mayst; so will they put faith in what I say and believe in thy greatness and generosity and love thee. Then will I bid thee to an entertainment and bid all the merchants on thine account and bring thee and them together, so they may all know thee and thou them and thou shalt buy and sell and give and take with them; nor will it be long ere thou become a man of wealth.' Night dccccxcii.

So on the morrow he gave him a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a black slave and mounting him on a mule, said to him, 'God give thee quittance of all this:[1] for thou art my friend and it behoves me to deal generously with thee. Have no care; but put away from thee the thought of thy wife and name her not to any.' 'May God requite thee with good!' answered Marouf and rode on, preceded by the black slave, till the latter brought him to the gate of the merchants' bazaar, where they were all seated, and Ali amongst them. When the latter saw him, he rose and threw himself upon him, saying, ['This is indeed] a blessed day, O merchant Marouf, O man of good works and kindness!'[2] And he kissed his hand before the merchants and said to them, 'O my brothers, I commend to you the merchant Marouf.' So they saluted him, and Ali signed to them to make much of him, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes.

[1] *i.e.* I make thee gift of all this. [2] *Marouf.*

Then Ali helped him to dismount and saluted him; after which he took the merchants apart, one after another, and vaunted Marouf to them. 'Is this man a merchant?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered he; 'and indeed he is the chiefest of merchants, there lives not a wealthier than he; for his wealth and that of his father and forefathers are notorious among the merchants of Cairo. He hath partners in Hind and Sind and Yemen and is high in repute for generosity. So know ye his rank and make much of him and do him service, and know also that his coming hither is not for the sake of traffic, but to divert himself with the sight of foreign countries; for he hath no need to travel for the sake of gain and profit, having wealth that fires cannot consume, and I am one of his servants.' And he went on to extol him, till they set him above their heads and began to tell one another of his qualities.

Then they came round about him and offered him pastry[1] and sherbets, and even the Provost of the Merchants came to him and saluted him; whilst Ali proceeded to say to him, in the presence of the merchants, 'O my lord, belike thou hast brought with thee somewhat of such and such a stuff?' And Marouf answered, 'Abundance.' Now Ali had that day shown him various kinds of costly stuffs and had taught him the names of the different stuffs, cheap and dear. Then said one of the merchants, 'O my lord, hast thou brought with thee yellow cloth?' And Marouf said, 'Abundance.' 'And gazelles' blood red?' asked the other. 'Abundance,' replied the cobbler; and as often as he asked him of aught, he made him the same answer. So the other said, 'O merchant Ali, [methinks]

[1] *Fetourat*, lit. a sort of fritters or (Fr.) *gâteaux feuilletés*, commonly used by the inhabitants of Cairo and other Oriental cities for the slight meal called *fetour* or breakfast, here probably meaning pastry in general.

if thy countryman had a mind to transport a thousand loads of costly stuffs, he could do so.' 'He would take them from one of his store-houses,' answered Ali, 'and miss nought thereof.'

Presently, up came a beggar and went the round of the merchants. One gave him a para and another a doit, but most of them gave him nothing, till he came to Marouf, who pulled out a handful of gold and gave it to him, whereupon he blessed him and went away. The merchants marvelled at this and said, 'Verily, this is a king's giving, for he gave the beggar gold without count; and except he were a man of vast wealth, he had not given a beggar a handful of gold.' After awhile, there came to him a poor woman and he gave her a handful of gold; whereupon she went away, blessing him, and told the other beggars, who came to him, one after another, and he gave them each a handful of gold, till he had made an end of the thousand dinars.

Then he smote hand upon hand and said, 'God is our sufficiency and excellent is He in whom we trust!' Quoth the provost, 'What ails thee, O merchant Marouf?' And he answered, 'It seems that the most part of the people of this city are poor and miserable: had I known this, I would have brought with me a large sum of money in my saddle-bags and given alms thereof to the poor. I fear me I may be long abroad[1] and it is not in my nature to refuse a beggar; and I have no money left: so, if a poor man come to me, what shall I say to him?' 'Say, "God provide thee!"'[2] said the Provost; but Marouf replied, 'That is not of my wont and I am vexed because of this. Would I had other thousand dinars, wherewith

[1] There seems some mistake here in the text. The story-teller probably meant to say, "I fear lest my baggage be long in coming."

[2] Formula of refusal, equivalent to the Spanish "Perdonéme usted por amor de Dios, hermano!"

to give alms till my baggage arrive!' 'Have no care for that,' said the Provost and sending one of his men for a thousand dinars, gave them to Marouf, who went on giving them to every beggar who passed till the call to midday prayer.

Then they entered the mosque and prayed the noonday prayers, and what was left him of the thousand dinars he scattered on the heads of the worshippers. This drew the people's attention to him and they called down blessings upon him, whilst the merchants marvelled at the abundance of his generosity and openhandedness. Then he turned to another merchant and borrowing of him other thousand dinars, gave these also away, whilst Ali looked on at what he did, but could not speak. He ceased not to do thus till the call to afternoon prayer, when he entered the mosque and prayed and distributed the rest of the money. On this wise, by the time they shut the gate of the bazaar, he had borrowed five thousand dinars and given them away, saying to every one of whom he took aught, 'Wait till my baggage arrives, when, if thou desire gold, I will give thee gold, and if thou desire stuffs, thou shalt have stuffs; for I have great plenty.'

At eventide Ali invited Marouf and the rest of the merchants to an entertainment and seated him in the place of honour, where he talked of nothing but stuffs and jewels, and whenever they made mention to him of aught, he said, 'I have abundance of it.' Next day, he again repaired to the bazaar, where he improved his acquaintance with the merchants and borrowed of them more money, which he gave to the poor: nor did he leave to do thus twenty days, till he had borrowed threescore thousand dinars, and still there came no baggage, no, nor a burning plague [to rid the people of him].[1] At last the folk began to clamour for their money and say, 'The

[1] A proverbial expression.

merchant Marouf's baggage cometh not. How long will he take people's monies and give them to the poor?' And one of them said, 'Methinks we should do well to speak to his countryman Ali.' So they went to the latter and said to him, 'O Ali, the merchant Marouf's baggage cometh not.' 'Have patience,' answered he; 'it cannot fail to come soon.'

Then he took Marouf aside and said to him, 'O Marouf, what fashion is this? Did I bid thee toast the bread or burn it?[1] The merchants clamour for their money and tell me that thou owest them threescore thousand dinars, which thou hast borrowed and given away to the poor. How wilt thou satisfy the folk, seeing that thou neither buyest nor sellest?' 'What matters it?' answered Marouf. 'And what are threescore thousand dinars? When my baggage comes, I will pay them in stuffs or in gold and silver, as they will.' 'God is most great!' replied Ali. 'Hast thou then any baggage?' And he said, 'Abundance.' 'God and the saints requite thee thine impudence!' cried Ali. 'Did I teach thee this saying, that thou shouldst repeat it to me? But I will acquaint the folk with thee.' 'Begone and prate not,' answered Marouf. 'Am I a poor man? I have abundance in my baggage and as soon as it comes, they shall have their money's worth, two for one; I have no need of them.'

At this Ali waxed wroth and said, 'Unmannerly churl that thou art, I will teach thee to lie to me and be not ashamed!' 'Do thy worst,' rejoined Marouf. 'They must wait till my baggage comes, when they shall have their due and more.' So Ali left him and went away, saying in himself, 'I praised him before and if I blame him now, I make myself out a liar and become of those of whom it is said, "He who praises and [then] blames lies twice.[1]"' And he knew not what to do. Presently,

[1] A proverbial expression.

the merchants came to him and said, 'O Ali, hast thou spoken to him?' 'O folk,' answered he, 'I am ashamed to speak to him, though he owes me a thousand dinars. Ye consulted me not, when ye lent him your money; so ye have no claim on me. Dun him yourselves, and if he pay you not, complain of him to the king of the city, saying, "He is an impostor, who hath imposed upon us." And he will quit you of him.'

So they repaired to the king and told him what had passed, saying, 'O king of the age, we are perplexed concerning this merchant, whose generosity is excessive; for he doth thus and thus, and all he borrows, he gives away to the poor by handsful. Were he a man of nought, his heart would not suffer him to lavish gold thus; and were he a man of wealth, his good faith had been made manifest to us by the coming of his baggage; but we see none of his baggage, albeit he avoucheth that he hath a baggage-train and hath foregone it; and whenever we name this or that kind of stuff to him, he answereth, "I have great plenty of it." Now some time hath past, but there appeareth no sign of his baggage-train, and he oweth us threescore thousand dinars, all of which he hath given away in alms.' And they went on to praise him and extol his generosity.

Now this king was a very covetous man, more covetous than Ashab;[1] and when he heard tell of Marouf's generosity and openhandedness, covetise got the better of him and he said to his vizier, 'Were not this merchant a man of immense wealth, he had not shown all this munificence. His baggage-train will assuredly come, whereupon these merchants will flock to him and he will lavish unto them wealth galore. Now I have more right to this than they; wherefore I have a mind to make friends with him and

[1] Proverbial saying. Ashab was an Arab of the Time of Ignorance, whose covetousness became a byword.

profess love for him, so that, when his baggage comes, I shall get of him what the merchants would have had; and I will give him my daughter to wife and join his wealth to mine.' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'methinks he is nought but an impostor, and it is the impostor who ruins the house of the covetous.' 'O vizier,' rejoined the king, 'I will prove him and know if he be an impostor or a man of good faith and whether he be a nursling of fortune or not.' 'And how wilt thou prove him?' asked the vizier. Quoth the king, 'I will send for him and make much of him and give him a jewel which I have. If he know it and know its price, he is a man of worth and fortune; but, if he know it not, he is an impostor and an upstart and I will slay him after the foulest fashion.'

Night DCCCCXCIII.

So he sent for Marouf, who came and saluted him. The king returned his salutation and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'Art thou the merchant Marouf?' 'Yes,' answered he. Quoth the king, 'The merchants pretend that thou owest them threescore thousand dinars. Is this true?' And Marouf said, 'Yes.' 'Then why dost thou not give them their money?' asked the king. 'Let them wait till my baggage comes,' replied Marouf, 'and I will repay them two for one. If they wish for gold, they shall have gold; and if they wish for silver, they shall have silver; or if they prefer merchandise, I will give them merchandise. Moreover, him to whom I owe a thousand I will give two thousand in requital of that wherewith he hath veiled my face before the poor: for I have abundance.'

Then said the king, 'O merchant, take this and look what is its kind and value.' And he gave him a jewel the bigness of a hazel-nut, by which he set great store, for that he had bought it for a thousand dinars and had not another. Marouf took it and pressing it between his

forefinger and thumb, broke it, for it was brittle and would not brook [pressure]. Quoth the king, 'Why hast thou broken the jewel?' And Marouf laughed and said, 'O king of the age, this is no jewel. This is but a piece of stone worth a thousand dinars; why dost thou style it a jewel? A jewel, save the mark, is such as is worth threescore and ten thousand dinars, and this is called but a piece of stone. A jewel that is not of the bigness of a walnut hath no value in my eyes and I take no account thereof. How comes it, then, that thou, who art a king, stylest this a jewel, when it is but a piece of stone worth a thousand dinars? But ye are excusable, for that ye are poor and have not in your possession things of price.' 'O merchant,' said the king, 'hast thou jewels such as those whereof thou speakest?' And he answered, 'Abundance.' Whereupon covetise overcame the king and he said, 'Wilt thou give me real jewels?' 'When my baggage-train comes,' replied Marouf, 'I will give thee jewels galore; and all that thou canst desire I have in plenty and will give thee, without price.'

At this the king rejoiced and said to the merchants, 'Go your ways and have patience with him, till his baggage arrives, when do ye come to me and receive your monies from me.' So they went away and the king turned to his vizier and said to him, 'Caress the merchant Marouf and give and take with him in talk and bespeak him of my daughter, that he may marry her and so we gain these riches of his.' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'this man's fashion liketh me not and methinks he is an impostor and a liar: so do thou leave this whereof thou speakest, lest thou lose thy daughter for nought.'

Now this vizier had urged the king aforetime to give him his daughter to wife and he was willing to do so, but she consented not to marry him. So the king said to him, 'O traitor, thou desirest no good for me, for that

aforetime thou soughtest my daughter in marriage, but she would none of thee; so now thou wouldst stop the way of her marriage and wouldst have her lie fallow, that thou mayst take her; but hear from me this word, once for all. Thou hast no concern with this matter. How can he be an impostor and a liar, seeing that he knew the price of the jewel, even that for which I bought it, and broke it, for that it pleased him not? He hath jewels galore, and when he goes in to my daughter and sees her to be fair, she will captivate his reason and he will love her and give her jewels and things of price: but, as for thee, thou wouldst forbid my daughter and myself these good things.'

The vizier was silent, for fear of the king's anger, and said to himself, 'Set the dogs on the oxen!'[1] Then he betook himself to Marouf and said to him, 'His highness the king loveth thee and hath a daughter, a fair and lovesome lady, to whom he is minded to marry thee. What sayst thou?' 'I will well,' answered Marouf; 'but let him wait till my baggage comes, for the dowry of kings' daughters is large and their rank demandeth that they be not endowed save with a dowry befitting their station. At present I have no money with me till the coming of my baggage, for I have wealth galore and needs must I make her marriage-portion five thousand purses. Then I shall need a thousand purses to distribute amongst the poor and needy, on my wedding-night, and other thousand to give to those who walk in the bridal procession and yet other thousand wherewith to provide victual for the troops and others. Moreover, I shall want a hundred jewels to give to the princess on the wedding morning[2] and other hundred to distribute among the

[1] *i.e.* show a covetous man money—and hold him back, if you can.

[2] *i.e.* the morning *after* the wedding. The Arab day is the evening and the morning, not (as with us) the morning and the evening.

slave-girls and eunuchs, for I must give each of them a jewel in honour of the bride; besides wherewithal to clothe a thousand naked poor folk, and alms too must be given. All this cannot be done till my baggage comes; but I have abundance, and once it is here, I shall make no account of all this expense.'

The vizier returned to the king and told him what Marouf said, whereupon quoth he, 'Since this is his wish, how canst thou style him an impostor and a liar?' 'And I cease not to say this,' replied the vizier. But the king chid him angrily and berated him, saying, 'As my head liveth, if thou leave not this talk, I will slay thee! Go back to him and fetch him to me and I will settle with him myself.' So the vizier returned to Marouf and said to him, 'Come and speak with the king.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Marouf and went in to the king, who said to him, 'Thou shalt not put me off with these excuses, for my treasury is full; so take the keys and spend all thou needest and give what thou wilt and clothe the poor and do thy desire and have no care for the girl and the waiting-women. When thy baggage comes, do what thou wilt with thy wife, by way of generosity, and we will have patience with thee for the marriage-portion till then, for there is no manner of difference betwixt me and thee.'

Then he sent for the Sheikh el Islam and bade him draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and the merchant Marouf, and he did so; after which the king gave the signal for the commencement of the wedding festivities and commanded to decorate the city. The drums beat and the tables were spread with meats of all kinds and there came mimes and mountebanks and players. Marouf sat upon a throne in a gallery and the mimes and mountebanks and jugglers and dancing-men and posture-makers and acrobats came before him, whilst he called out to the treasurer and said to him, 'Bring gold

and silver.' So he brought gold and silver and Marouf went round among the merrymakers and gave to each performer by the handful. Moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and clad the naked and it was a clamorous festival. The treasurer could not bring money fast enough from the treasury, and the vizier's heart was like to burst for rage; but he dared not say a word, whilst Ali marvelled at this waste of wealth and said to Marouf, 'God and the saints [visit this] upon thy head! Doth it not suffice thee to squander the merchants' money, but thou must squander that of the king to boot?' 'It is none of thy concern,' replied Marouf; 'when my baggage comes, I will requite the king manifold.' And he went on lavishing money and saying in himself, 'A burning plague! What will happen will happen and there is no escape from that which is decreed.'

The festivities ceased not for the space of forty days, and on the one-and-fortieth day, they made the bride's procession and all the amirs and troops walked before her. When they brought her in before Marouf, he fell to scattering gold on the people's heads, and they made her a magnificent procession, whilst Marouf expended in her honour vast sums of money. Then they brought him in to her and he sat down on the high divan; after which they let fall the curtains and shut the doors and withdrew, leaving him alone with his bride; whereupon he smote hand upon hand and sat awhile sorrowful and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Till the princess said to him, 'O my lord, God preserve thee! What ails thee, that thou art troubled?' Quoth he, 'And how should I be other than troubled, seeing that thy father hath embarrassed me and done with me that which is like the burning of green corn?' 'And what hath my father done with thee?' asked she. 'Tell me.' And he answered, 'He hath

brought me in to thee before the coming of my baggage, and I wanted at least a hundred jewels to distribute among thy women, to each a jewel, so she might rejoice therein and say, "My lord gave me a jewel on the night of his going in to my lady." This would I have done in honour of thy station and for the increase of thy dignity; and I have no need to stint myself in lavishing jewels, for I have great plenty of them.' 'Be not concerned for that,' rejoined she. 'Trouble not thyself about me, for I will have patience with thee till thy baggage comes, and as for my women, have no care for them. Rise, put off thy clothes and take thine ease; and when the baggage comes, we shall get the jewels and the rest.'

So he arose and putting off his clothes, sat down on the bed and sought dalliance and they fell to toying with each other. He laid his hand on her knee and she sat down in his lap and thrust her lip into his mouth, and that hour was such as maketh man forget father and mother. So he took her in his arms and strained her fast to his breast and sucked her lip, till the honey ran out into his mouth; and he laid his hand under her left armpit, whereupon his bowels and hers yearned unto coition. Then he clapped her between the breasts and his hand slid down between her thighs and she girdled [him] with her legs, whereupon he made proof of the two members and crying out, 'O father of the chin-veils!' applied the priming and kindling the linstock, set it to the touch-hole and gave fire and breached the citadel of the four buttresses; so there befell the event concerning which there is no asking and she cried the cry that needs must be cried.

Night dccccxciv.

So he did away her maidenhead and that night was one not to be reckoned among lives for that which it comprised of the enjoyment of the fair, clipping and dallying and sucking [of lips] and clicketing till the morning, when he arose and entered the bath, whence, after donning a suit

of royal apparel, he betook himself to the king's Divan. All who were there rose to him and received him with honour and worship, giving him joy and calling down blessings upon him; and he sat down by the king's side and said, 'Where is the treasurer?' 'Here he is, before thee,' answered they, and he said to him, 'Bring dresses of honour for all the viziers and amirs and dignitaries and clothe them therewith.' The treasurer brought him all he sought and he sat giving to all who came to him and handselling every man, according to his station.

On this wise he abode twenty days, whilst no baggage appeared for him nor aught else, till the treasurer was straitened by him to utterance[1] and going in to the king, as he sat alone with the vizier in Marouf's absence, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O king of the age, needs must I tell thee somewhat, lest thou blame me for that I acquainted thee not therewith. Know that the treasury is [well-nigh] exhausted; there is but a little money left in it and in ten days more we shall shut it upon emptiness.' Quoth the king to the vizier, 'O vizier, verily my son-in-law's baggage-train tarrieth long and there appeareth no news thereof.' The vizier laughed and said, 'God be gracious to thee, O king of the age! Verily, thou hast dealt but heedlessly with respect to this lying impostor. As thy head liveth, there is no baggage for him, no, nor a plague to rid us of him! Nay, he hath but imposed on thee without cease, so that he hath wasted thy treasures and married thy daughter for nought. How long therefore wilt thou be heedless of this liar?'[2]

Then said the king, 'O vizier, how shall we do to learn the truth of his case?' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'none may come at a man's secret but his wife; so send for thy daughter and let her come behind the

[1] *i.e.* found the utmost difficulty in satisfying his demands.
[2] *i.e.* how long wilt thou be blind to his real character?

curtain, that I may question her of the truth of his estate, to the intent that she may make proof of him and acquaint us with his case.' Quoth the king, 'There is no harm in that; and as my head liveth, if it appear that he is a liar and an impostor, I will slay him by the foulest of deaths!' Then he carried the vizier into the sitting-chamber and sent for his daughter, who came behind the curtain, her husband being absent, and said, 'What wouldst thou, O my father?' Quoth he, 'Speak with the vizier.'

So she said, 'What is thy will, O vizier?' 'O my lady,' said he, 'thou must know that thy husband hath squandered thy father's substance and married thee without a dower; and he ceases not to promise us and fail of the fulfilment of his promises, nor comes there any tidings of his baggage; wherefore we would have thee inform us concerning him.'[1] 'Indeed,' answered she, 'his words are many, and he still comes and promises me jewels and things of price and costly stuffs; but I see nothing.' 'O my lady,' said the vizier, 'canst thou this night give and take with him in talk and say to him, "Tell me the truth and fear nothing from me, for thou art become my husband and I will not transgress against thee. So acquaint me with the truth of the matter and I will contrive thee a device whereby thou shalt be set at rest." And do thou play fast and loose with him and profess love to him and win him to confess and after tell us the true state of his case.' And she answered, 'O father mine, I know how I will make proof of him.'

Then she went away and after nightfall, her husband came in to her, according to his wont, whereupon she rose to him and took him under the armpit and wheedled him full featly, for women are never at a loss for wiles, whenas they would aught of men. She ceased not to caress him and beguile him with speech sweeter than

[1] *i.e.* tell us what thou knowest of him.

honey till she stole his reason; and when she saw that he altogether inclined to her, she said to him, 'O my beloved, O solace of my eyes and fruit of my entrails, may God not bereave [me] of thee nor Time sunder us twain! Indeed, the love of thee hath taken up its abode in my entrails and my heart is consumed with the fire of passion; never will I forsake thee nor transgress against thee: but I would have thee tell me the truth, for that the devices of falsehood profit not, nor do they gain credit at all seasons. How long wilt thou impose upon my father and lie to him? Indeed, I fear lest thine affair be discovered to him, ere we can contrive a device thereunto, and he lay violent hands upon thee. So tell me the truth of the case and fear not aught of harm, for nought shall betide thee save that which shall rejoice thee. How much longer wilt thou pretend that thou art a merchant and a man of wealth and hast a baggage-train? This long while past thou sayest, "My baggage! my baggage!" but there appeareth no sign of thy baggage, and anxiety on this account is visible in thy face. So, if there be no truth in thy words, tell me and I will devise thee a means whereby, God willing, thou shalt come off safe.'

'O my lady,' answered he, 'I will tell thee the truth, and do thou whatever thou wilt.' 'Speak,' rejoined she, 'and look thou speak truly; for truth is the ark of safety, and beware of falsehood, for it dishonoureth him who speaketh it, and gifted of God is he who saith:

Truth-speaking on thee is incumbent, although It bring thee to burn on the brazier of woe.
Seek God's favour: who angers the Lord and contents The slave is the silliest of mortals, I trow.'

'Know, then, O my lady,' said he, 'that I am no merchant and have no baggage, no, nor a burning plague; nay, I was but a cobbler in my own country and had a wife called Fatimeh the Shrew, with whom there befell

me this and that.' And he told her his story from beginning to end; whereat she laughed and said, 'Verily, thou art skilled in the practice of lying and imposture!' And he answered, saying, 'O my lady, may God the Most High preserve thee to veil faults and dispel troubles!'

'Know,' rejoined she, 'that thou imposedst upon my father and deceivedst him by thy much boasting and ostentation, so that of his covetousness he married me to thee. Then thou squanderedst his wealth and the vizier bears thee a grudge for this. How many a time hath he spoken against thee to my father, saying, "Indeed he is an impostor and a liar!" But my father hearkened not to his speech, for that he sought me aforetime in marriage and I consented not to be his wife. However, the time grew long upon my father and he became straitened[1] and said to me, "Make him confess." So I have made thee confess and that which was covered is discovered. Now my father purposes thee mischief, because of this; but thou art become my husband and I will never abandon thee nor transgress against thee. If I told my father what I have learnt from thee, he would be certified of thy falsehood and imposture and that thou imposest upon kings' daughters and squanderest their wealth: so would thine offence find no pardon with him and he would slay thee without recourse: wherefore it would be noised among the folk that I had married a man who was a liar and an impostor and this would dishonour me. Moreover, if he kill thee, most like he will require to marry me to another, and to that I will never consent, no, not though I die.

So rise now and don a slave's habit and take these fifty thousand dinars of my monies, and mount a swift charger and get thee to a land over which my father hath no dominion. Then do thou set up for a merchant and send me a letter by a courier, who shall bring it me privily, that

[1] In purse or breast or both.

I may know where thou art, so I may send thee all I can lay my hand on. Thus shall thy wealth wax great and if my father die, I will send for thee, and thou shalt return in honour and worship; and if we die, thou or I [and depart] to the mercy of God the Most High, the Resurrection will unite us. This, then, is the right counsel: and what while we both abide [alive and] well, I will not leave to send thee letters and monies. Arise, ere the day break upon thee and thou be confounded and perdition encompass thee.'

'O my lady,' said he, 'I beseech thee of thy favour to bid me farewell with thine embracement.' And she answered, 'I will well.' So he swived her and made the [complete] ablution; then, donning a slave's habit, he bade the grooms saddle him a thoroughbred horse. So they saddled him a courser and he mounted and taking leave of his wife, rode forth the city at the last of the night, whilst all who saw him deemed him one of the Sultan's slaves going abroad on an errand.

Next morning, the king and his vizier repaired to the sitting-chamber and sent for the princess, who came behind the curtain; and her father said to her, 'O my daughter, what sayst thou?' Quoth she, 'I say, may God blacken thy vizier's face, for that he would have blackened my face in my husband's eyes!' 'How so?' asked the king; and she said, 'He came in to me yesterday; but, before I could name the matter to him, in came Ferej the eunuch, with a letter in his hand, and said, "Ten white slaves stand under the window and have given me this letter, saying, 'Kiss for us the hands of our lord the merchant Marouf and give him this letter, for we are of his servants with the baggage, and it is told us that he hath married the king's daughter, wherefore we are come to acquaint him with that which befell us by the way.'" So I took the letter and read as follows: "From the five

hundred slaves to his highness our lord the merchant Marouf. To proceed. We give thee to know that, after thou quittedst us, the Arabs came out upon us and attacked us. They were two thousand horse and we five hundred servants and there befell a sore battle between us and them. They took from us of the baggage two hundred loads of stuffs and slew of us fifty men. Moreover, they hindered us from the road thirty days and this is the cause of our tarrying from thee."

Night DCCCCXCV.

When my husband heard this, "God disappoint them!" quoth he. "What ailed them to wage war with the Arabs for the sake of two hundred loads of merchandise? What are two hundred loads? It behoved them not to tarry on that account, for the value of the two hundred loads is but some seven thousand dinars. But needs must I go to them and hasten them. As for that which the Arabs have taken, it will not be missed from the baggage, nor doth it concern me a jot, for I reckon it as if I had given them an alms thereof." Then he went down from me, laughing and taking no concern for the loss of his goods nor the slaughter of his slaves. As soon as he was gone, I looked out from the lattice and saw the ten slaves who had brought him the letter, as they were moons, each clad in a suit worth two thousand dinars, there is not with my father a slave to match one of them. He went forth with them to bring up his baggage and praised be God who hindered me from saying to him aught of that thou badest me, for he would have made mock of me and thee, and belike he would have looked on me with the eye of disparagement and hated me. But the fault is all with thy vizier, who speaketh against my husband words that beseem him not.' 'O my daughter,' replied the king, 'thy husband's wealth is indeed immense and he recks not of it; for, from the day he entered our city, he hath done nought but give alms to the poor. God willing, he will

speedily return with the baggage, and great good shall betide us from him.' And he went on to appease her and chide the vizier, being duped by her device.

Meanwhile Marouf fared on into the open country, perplexed and knowing not to what land he should betake himself; and for the anguish of parting and the pangs of passion and love-longing, he lamented and recited the following verses:

Fortune hath played our union false and rent our loves in twain; My heart's dissolved and all on fire for separation's pain.
Mine eyes with many a tear-drop rain for my beloved's loss; This, then, is severance; ah, when shall meeting be again?
O shining full-moon face, I'm he whose entrails for thy love Thou leftest torn with waste desire, a love-distracted swain.
Would I had never met with thee, since, after the delight Of thy possession, needs the cup of misery I must drain!
Marouf will never cease to be for Dunya's[1] love distraught: Still may she live, though he should die, of very passion slain!
O thou whose visage radiant is as the resplendent sun, Succour his heart that's all consumed with love-longing in vain.
Will Fate, I wonder, e'er reknit our separated loves And shall we ever of the days union and gladness gain?
Shall my love's mansion reunite us two in joy and I The sapling of the sands[2] once more in my embraces strain?
Bright visage of the moon at full, ne'er may thy countenance, The sun of me thy lover, leave with charms to shine amain!
With passion and its cares content am I, since happiness In love's the butt whereat ill-fate to shoot its shafts is fain.

Then he wept sore, for indeed the ways were blocked up in his sight and death seemed to him better than life,

[1] Apparently the name of the princess. *Dunya* (the world, or the fortune of the world) is not an infrequent name for an Arab beauty. See antè, passim.

[2] A common similitude for a slender and graceful youth of either sex. The allusion is to the slenderness of the upper part of the body, springing (as it were) from the heavy buttocks, as a sapling springs from a mound of sand.

and he fared on, like a drunken man for excess of perplexity, and stayed not till noontide, when he came to a little town and saw a husbandman hard by, ploughing with a yoke of bulls. Now hunger was sore upon him; so he went up to the ploughman and said to him, 'Peace be on thee!' The peasant returned his salutation and said to him, 'Welcome, O my lord! Art thou one of the Sultan's officers?' 'Yes,' answered Marouf; and the other said, 'Alight with me, that I may entertain thee.' Whereupon Marouf knew him to be a liberal man and said to him, 'O my brother, I see with thee nought wherewith thou mayst feed me: how is it, then, that thou invitest me?' 'O my lord,' answered the peasant, 'good is at hand. Alight here: the town is near at hand and I will go [thither] and fetch thee the noon-meal and fodder for thy horse.' 'Since the town is near at hand,' rejoined Marouf, 'I can go thither as quickly as thou and buy me what I have a mind to in the market and eat.' 'O my lord,' answered the peasant, 'the place is but a little village and there is no market there, neither selling nor buying. So, I conjure thee by Allah, alight here with me and heal my heart, and I will go thither and return to thee in haste.'

So he alighted and the peasant left him and went off to the village, to fetch him the noonday meal, whilst Marouf abode awaiting him. Presently he said to himself, 'I have diverted this poor man from his work; but I will arise and plough in his stead, till he come back, to make up for having hindered him from his work.' So he took the plough and starting the bulls, ploughed a little, till the share struck against something and the beasts stopped. He urged them on, but they could not move the plough; so he looked at the share and finding it caught in a ring of gold, cleared away the soil therefrom and saw that it was set amiddleward an alabaster flag, the bigness of the

nether millstone. He strove at the stone till he pulled it from its place, when there appeared beneath it an underground stair. So he descended the stair and came to a place like a bath, with four raised recesses, the first full of gold, from floor to roof, the second full of emeralds and pearls and coral, the third of jacinths and rubies and turquoises and the fourth of diamonds and all manner other precious stones. At the upper end of the place stood a coffer of pure crystal, full of unique jewels, each the size of a walnut, and thereon lay a casket of gold, the bigness of a lemon.

When he saw this, he marvelled and rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said in himself, 'I wonder what is in this casket?' So he opened it and found therein a seal-ring of gold, whereon were graven names and talismans, as they were ant-tracks. He rubbed the ring and immediately a voice said, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given unto thee. Wilt thou build a town or lay waste a city or kill a king or dig a river or aught of the kind? Whatsoever thou seekest, it shall come to pass, by leave of the Omnipotent King, Creator of night and day.' 'O creature of my Lord,' asked Marouf, 'who and what art thou?' Quoth the other, 'I am the servant of the ring, abiding in the service of him who possesseth it. Whatsoever he seeketh, that accomplish I unto him, and I have no excuse in that he biddeth me do; for that I am Sultan over two-and-seventy tribes of the Jinn, each two-and-seventy thousand in number, every one of whom ruleth over a thousand Marids, each Marid over a thousand Afrits, each Afrit over a thousand Satans and each Satan over a thousand Jinn: and they are all under my commandment and may not gainsay me. As for me, I am enspelled to this seal-ring and may not gainsay him who possesseth it. Now, behold, thou hast gotten possession of it and I am become thy

servant; so ask what thou wilt, for I hearken to thy word and obey thy commandment; and if thou have need of me at any time, by land or by sea, rub the ring and thou wilt find me with thee. But beware of rubbing it twice in succession, or thou wilt consume me with the fire of the names [graven thereon]; so wouldst thou lose me and after regret me. Now have I acquainted thee with my case and peace be on thee!'

Night dccccxcvi. 'What is thy name?' asked Marouf, and the genie answered, 'Aboussaadat.' 'O Aboussaadat,' said Marouf, 'what is this place and who enchanted thee in this casket?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'this is a treasure called the Treasure of Sheddad son of Aad, him who builded Irem of the Columns, the like whereof was not made in the lands.[1] I was his servant in his lifetime and this is his seal-ring, which he laid up in his treasure; but it is thy lot.' Quoth Marouf, 'Canst thou transport that which is in the treasure to the surface of the earth?' 'Yes,' answered the genie. 'Nothing easier.' 'Then,' said Marouf, 'bring it forth and leave nothing.' So the genie signed with his hand to the ground, which clove asunder, and he descended and was absent a little while. Presently, there came forth young and graceful boys, with fair faces, bearing golden baskets full of gold, which they emptied out and going away, returned with more: nor did they cease to transport the gold and jewels, till, in a little, they said, 'There is nought left in the treasure.' Whereupon out came Aboussaadat and said to Marouf, 'O my lord, thou seest that we have brought forth all that was in the treasure.'

'Who are these beautiful boys?' asked Marouf, and the genie answered, 'They are my sons. This affair merited not that I should call together the Marids for it, wherefore my sons have done thine occasion and are honoured by

[1] *Koran* lxxxix. 6, 7.

serving thee. So ask what thou wilt beside this.' Quoth Marouf, 'Canst thou bring me mules and chests and fill the chests with the treasure and load them on the mules?' 'Nothing easier,' answered Aboussaadat and gave a great cry; whereupon his sons presented themselves before him, to the number of eight hundred, and he said to them, 'Let some of you take the form of mules and others of muleteers and servants and handsome white slaves, the like of the least of whom is not found with any of the kings.' So seven hundred of them changed themselves into pack mules and other hundred took the form of servants. Then Aboussaadat called upon his Marids, who presented themselves before him, and he commanded some of them to assume the semblance of horses saddled with saddles of gold set with jewels. [They did as he bade them], which when Marouf saw, he said, 'Where are the chests?' They brought them before him and he said, 'Pack the gold and the jewels, each kind by itself.' So they packed them and loaded three hundred mules with them.

Then said Marouf, 'O Aboussaadat, canst thou bring me some loads of costly stuffs?' Quoth the genie, 'Wilt thou have Egyptian stuffs or Syrian or Persian or Indian or Greek?' 'Bring me a hundred loads of each kind,' answered Marouf, 'on five hundred mules.' 'O my lord,' said Aboussaadat, 'grant me time that I may dispose my Marids for this and send a company of them to each country to fetch a hundred loads of its stuffs and then take the form of mules and return, carrying the stuffs.' 'What time dost thou want?' asked Marouf. 'The time of the blackness of the night,' answered Aboussaadat, 'and day shall not dawn ere thou have all thou seekest.' 'I grant thee this time,' said Marouf and bade them pitch him a tent. So they pitched him a tent and he sat down therein and they brought him a table of food. Then said Aboussaadat to him, 'O my lord, abide thou in this tent

and these my sons shall guard thee: so fear thou nothing; for I go to assemble my Marids and send them to do thy desire.' So saying, he departed, leaving Marouf seated in the tent, with the table before him and the genie's sons in attendance upon him, in the guise of slaves and servants.

Presently up came the husbandman, with a great platter of lentils and a nose-bag full of barley, and seeing the tent pitched and the slaves standing, with their hands upon their breasts, thought that the Sultan was come and had halted there. So he stood confounded and said in himself, 'Would I had killed a pair of chickens and fried them with butter for the Sultan!' And he would have turned back to kill the chickens, to regale the Sultan withal; but Marouf saw him and cried out to him and said to the slaves, 'Bring him hither.' So they brought him and his load before Marouf, who said to him, 'What is this?' 'This is thy noon-meal and thy horse's fodder,' replied the peasant. 'Excuse me, for I thought not that the Sultan would come hither; and had I known this, I would have killed a pair of chickens and entertained him handsomely.' Quoth Marouf, 'The Sultan is not come. I am his son-in-law and I was vexed with him. However, he hath sent his officers to make his peace with me, and now I am minded to return to the city. But thou hast made me this guest-meal, without knowing me, and I accept it from thee, lentils though it be, and will not eat save of thy cheer.'

So he bade him set the platter midmost the table and ate of it till he had enough, whilst the husbandman filled his belly with those rich meats. Then Marouf washed his hands and gave the servants leave to eat. So they fell upon the remains of the meal and ate: and when the platter was empty, he filled it with gold and gave it to the peasant, saying, 'Carry this to thy dwelling and come

to me in the city, and I will entreat thee with honour.' So he took the platter full of gold and returned to the village, driving the bulls before him and deeming himself kin to the king. Meanwhile, they brought Marouf girls of the brides of the treasure,[1] who smote on instruments of music and danced before him, and he passed the night in joyance and delight, a night not to be reckoned among lives.

Hardly had the day dawned when there arose a great cloud of dust, which, presently lifting, discovered seven hundred mules laden with stuffs and attended by muleteers and baggage-tenders and linkmen. With them came Aboussaadat, riding on a mule, in the guise of a caravan-leader, and before him was a travelling-litter, with four volutes of glittering red gold, set with jewels. When Aboussaadat came up to the tent, he dismounted and kissing the earth, said to Marouf, 'O my lord, thine occasion hath been accomplished in full, and in the litter is a treasure-suit that hath not its match among kings' raiment: so do thou don it and mount the litter and command us what thou wilt.' 'O Aboussaadat,' said Marouf, 'I wish thee to go to the city of Ikhtiyan el Khuten and carry a letter, which I will write thee, to my father-in-law the king; and go thou not in to him but in the guise of a mortal courier.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.'

So Marouf wrote the letter and sealed it and Aboussaadat took it and set out to deliver it to the king. When he arrived, he found the king saying, 'O vizier, indeed my heart is concerned for my son-in-law and I fear lest the Arabs slay him. Would he had told me whither he was bound, that I might have followed him with the troops!' 'May God have mercy on this thy heedlessness!' answered the vizier. 'As thy head liveth, the fellow saw that we

[1] See note, Vol. VI. p. 237.

were awake to him and feared exposure and fled, for he is nothing but a lying impostor!' At this moment in came the courier and kissing the earth before the king, wished him abiding glory and prosperity and length of life. Quoth the king, 'Who art thou and what is thy business?' 'I am a courier,' answered the genie, 'whom thy son-in-law sendeth to thee with a letter, and he is come with the baggage.' So he took the letter and read therein these words, 'Peace to the utterest upon our father-in-law the glorious king! Know that I am at hand with the baggage-train: so come thou forth to meet me with the troops.'

Quoth the king, 'God blacken thy face, O vizier! How often wilt thou asperse my son-in-law's honour and call him a liar and an impostor? Behold, he is come with the baggage-train and thou art but a traitor.' The vizier hung his head in shame and confusion and said, 'O king of the age, I said this but because of the long delay of the baggage and because I feared the loss of the wealth he hath spent.' 'O traitor,' answered the king, 'what matter my riches, now that his baggage is come? For he will give me great plenty in their stead.' Then he bade decorate the city and going in to his daughter, said to her, 'Good news for thee! Thy husband will be here anon with his baggage; for he hath sent me a letter to that effect and I am now going forth to meet him.' The princess marvelled at this and said to herself, 'This is a strange thing! Was he laughing at me and making mock of me, or had he a mind to try me, when he told me that he was a poor man? But praised be God for that I failed not of my duty to him!'

Meanwhile, Ali the Cairene saw the decoration of the city and asked the cause thereof, when they said to him, 'The baggage-train of the merchant Marouf, the king's son-in-law, is come.' 'God is most great!' cried he.

'What a calamity is this man![1] He came to me, fleeing from his wife, and he was a poor man. Whence then should he get a baggage-train? But belike this is a device that the king's daughter hath contrived him, for fear of disgrace, and kings can do anything. May God the Most High screen him and not expose him!' And all the merchants rejoiced and were glad for that they would get their money. Then the king assembled his troops and rode forth, whilst Aboussaadat returned to Marouf and acquainted him with the accomplishment of his errand. Quoth Marouf, 'Bind on the loads.' So they bound them on and he mounted the litter and donning the treasure-suit, became a thousand times greater and more majestic than the king.

Night dccccxcviii.

Then he set forward; but, when he had gone half-way, the king met him with the troops, and seeing him riding in the litter and clad in the dress aforesaid, threw himself upon him and saluted him and greeted him with the greeting of peace. Moreover, all the grandees of the realm saluted him and it was made manifest that he had spoken the truth and that there was no falsehood in him. Then he entered the city in such state as would have caused the gall-bladder of the lion to burst[2] and the merchants pressed up to him and kissed his hands, whilst Ali said to him, 'Thou hast played off this trick and it has prospered to thy hand, O Sheikh of Impostors! But thou deservest it, and may God the Most High increase thee of His bounty!'

Marouf laughed and entering the palace, sat down on the throne and said, 'Carry the loads of gold into the treasury of my uncle the king and bring me the bales of stuffs.' So they brought him the bales and opened them

[1] *i.e.* what a clever fellow is this, what a calamity to his enemies!

[2] For awe. I think it very probable that, by a clerical or typographical error, the word *asad* (lion) has been substituted for *hasid* (envious).

before him, bale after bale, till they had opened the seven hundred loads; whereupon he chose out the best and said, 'Carry these to the princess, that she may distribute them among her women; and carry her also this coffer of jewels, that she may distribute them among her women and eunuchs.' Then he proceeded to give the merchants to whom he was indebted stuffs in payment for their debts, giving him, whose due was a thousand, stuffs worth two thousand or more; after which he fell to distributing to the poor and needy, whilst the king looked on and could not hinder him; nor did he leave giving till he had made an end of the seven hundred loads, when he turned to the troops and proceeded to distribute amongst them emeralds and rubies and pearls and coral and other jewels by handsful, without count, till the king said to him, 'Enough of this giving, O my son! There is but little left of the baggage.' Quoth Marouf, 'I have abundance;' and indeed, his good faith was become manifest and none could belie him more; and he had come to reck not of giving, for that the servant of the ring brought him whatsoever he sought.

Presently, the treasurer came in to the king and said, 'O king of the age, the treasury is full and will not hold the rest of the loads. Where shall we lay that which is left of the gold and jewels?' And he assigned to him another place. As for the princess, when she saw this, her joy redoubled and she marvelled and said in herself, 'How came he by all this wealth?' In like manner the merchants rejoiced in that which he had given them and blessed him; whilst Ali wondered and said in himself, 'How hath he lied and swindled, that he hath gotten him all these treasures? But how excellent is the saying of him who saith:

Whenas the King of Kings presents, Forbear to question why or whence.
God gives to whom He will; so keep Within the bounds of reverence.'

The king also marvelled passing measure at that which he saw of Marouf's generosity and openhandedness in the lavishment of wealth. Then he went in to his wife, who met him, smiling and joyful, and kissed his hand, saying, 'Didst thou mock me or hadst thou a mind to try me with thy saying, "I am a poor man and a fugitive from my wife"? Praised be God for that I failed not of my duty to thee! For thou art my beloved and there is none dearer to me than thou, whether thou be rich or poor. But I would have thee tell me what thou soughtest by these words.' 'I wished to try thee,' answered Marouf, 'and see whether thy love were sincere or for the sake of wealth and the lust of worldly good. But now it is become manifest to me that thy love is sincere, so welcome to thee! I know thy worth.'

Then he went apart into a place by himself and rubbed the ring, whereupon Aboussaadat presented himself and said to him, 'Here am I, at thy service! Ask what thou wilt.' Quoth Marouf, 'I want a treasure-suit and treasure-trinkets for my wife, including a necklace of forty unique jewels.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the genie and brought him what he sought, whereupon Marouf dismissed him and carrying the dress and ornaments in to his wife, laid them before her and said, 'Take these and put them on and welcome!' When she saw this, her reason fled for joy, and she found among the ornaments a pair of anklets of gold, set with jewels, of the handiwork of the magicians, and bracelets and earrings and a girdle such as no money could buy. So she donned the dress and ornaments and said to Marouf, 'O my lord, I will treasure these up for state occasions and festivals.' But he answered, 'Wear them always, for I have others in plenty.' And when she put them on and her women beheld her, they rejoiced and kissed his hands.

Then he left them and going apart by himself, rubbed

the ring, whereupon the genie appeared and he said to him, 'Bring me a hundred suits of apparel, with their ornaments of gold.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Abous-saadat and brought him the hundred suits, each with its ornaments within it. Marouf took them and called the slave-girls, who came to him, and he gave them each a suit. They donned them and became like unto the black-eyed girls of Paradise, whilst the princess shone amongst them as the moon among the stars. One of them told the king of this and he came in to his daughter and saw her and her women [thus splendidly arrayed and] dazzling all who beheld them; whereat he wondered exceedingly.

Then he went out and calling his vizier, said to him, 'O vizier, such and such things have happened; what sayst thou [now] of this affair?' 'O king of the age,' answered he, 'this is no merchant's fashion; for a merchant keepeth a piece of linen by him for years and selleth it not but at a profit. How should a merchant have such generosity as this and whence should he get the like of these riches and jewels, whereof but a small matter is found with kings? So how should loads thereof be found with merchants? Needs must there be a cause for this; but, if thou wilt hearken to me, I will make the truth of the case manifest to thee.' 'O vizier,' answered the king, 'I will do thy bidding.' 'Then,' rejoined the vizier, 'do thou foregather with thy son-in-law and make a show of love to him and talk with him and say, "O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, thou and I and the vizier, no more, to a garden, that we may take our pleasure there." When we come to the garden, we will set on the table of wine, and I will ply him therewith and make him drink, will he, nill he; for, when he shall have drunken, he will lose his reason and his judgment will forsake him. Then will we question him of the truth of his case and he

will discover to us his secrets, for wine is a traitor and gifted of God is he who saith:

When we had drunken of the wine awhile and it crept near The stead of secrets, "Hold," quoth I thereunto, of my fear
Lest its disordering influence should overcome my wit And to my boon-companions so my secrets should appear.

When he hath told us the truth, we shall know his case and may do with him as we will; for I fear for thee the issues of this his now fashion, for it may be he will covet the kingship and win over the troops by generosity and the lavishment of money and so depose thee and take the kingdom from thee.' 'True,' answered the king, and they passed the night on this agreement. Night dccccxcviii.

On the morrow the king went forth and sat in the guest-chamber,[1] when behold the grooms and serving-men came in to him in dismay. Quoth he, 'What hath befallen you?' And they answered, 'O king of the age, the grooms curried the horses and foddered them and the mules that brought the baggage; but, when we arose in the morning, we found that [thy son-in-law's] servants had stolen the horses and mules [and made off with them]. We searched the stables, but found neither horse nor mule; so we entered the servants' lodging and saw none therein, nor know we how they fled.' The king marvelled at this, knowing not that the mules and horses and servants were all Afrits, the subjects of the servant of the spell, and said to the grooms, 'O accursed ones, how could a thousand beasts and five hundred slaves and servants, to boot, flee, without your knowledge?' 'We know not how it happened,' answered they; and he said, 'Go, and when your lord comes forth of the harem, tell him the case.'

So they went out from before the king and abode bewildered, till Marouf came out and seeing them troubled,

[1] *Mecad*; see note, Vol. III. p. 299.

said to them, 'What is to do?' They told him what had happened and he said, 'What is their worth that ye should be concerned for them? Go your ways.' And he sat laughing and was neither angry nor troubled concerning the matter; whereupon the king looked in the vizier's face and said to him, 'What manner of man is this, with whom wealth is of no account? Needs must there be a reason for this.' Then they talked with him awhile and the king said to him, 'O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, thou and I and the vizier, to a garden, where we may divert ourselves.' 'I will well,' said Marouf. So they went forth to a garden, wherein were two kinds of every sort of fruit, and it was full of running waters and tall trees and carolling birds. There they entered a pavilion, whose sight did away sorrow from the heart, and sat talking, whilst the vizier entertained them with rare stories and merry jests and mirth-provoking sayings and Marouf listened, till the time of the noon-meal came, when they set on a tray of meats and a pitcher of wine.

When they had eaten and washed their hands, the vizier filled the cup and gave it to the king, who drank it off; then he filled a second and gave it to Marouf, saying, 'Take the cup of the drink to which the reason bows its neck in reverence.' 'What is this, O vizier?' asked Marouf. Quoth he, 'This is the hoary[1] virgin and the old maid long kept in the house,[2] the giver of joy to hearts, whereof saith the poet:

The feet of the sturdy renegades[3] went trampling it of yore, And so of the Arabs' heads its wreak it taketh evermore.
Let one of the sons of the infidels, a moon o' the dark, whose looks To disobedience still invite, the grape-juice to thee pour.

[1] *Semble* an allusion to the froth of the wine, when first poured out, or, perhaps, simply to its age.
[2] *i.e.* old wine long kept in cask or bottle.
[3] *Aalaj*, pl. of *ilj*, lit. a sturdy foreign unbeliever. The true believer may not assist in the making of wine, Mohammed having cursed its presser, its drinker, its carrier, its seller and its buyer.

And gifted of God is he who saith:

'Tis as if wine and he, indeed, who doth the goblet bear, When to the boon-companions all he doth display it,[1] were
The dancing morning sun, whose face the full moon of the dark Had handselled[2] with the Gemini,[3] that shining starry pair.
So clear and eke so subtle is its essence that, as 'twere The life itself, through every vein and member it doth fare.

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:

The moon of the full of beauty lay the night in my embrace And the sun in the sphere of the cups was not eclipsed a moment's space;
And still I gazed on the fire, whereto the Magians them prostrate, As from the flagon it did prostrate itself before my face.

And that of another:

Through all the joints it runneth, as in one, Who hath been sick, the tides of healing run.

And yet another:

I marvel at those who first pressed it and tried, How they left us the water of life and yet died!

And yet goodlier is the saying of Abou Nuwas:

Have done and leave to blame me, for blame but angers me, And give me that, for med'cine, that caused my malady;
A yellow one,[4] whose precincts nor grief nor sorrow haunt, And if a stone but touch her, 'tis straightway moved to glee.
She cometh in her flagon, midmost the darksome night, And by her light the dwelling illumined straight we see.
From a kaze-owner take it,[5] attired as if she had A yard;[6] two lovers, wencher and sodomite, hath she;—

[1] As if it were a bride. See Vol. VII. p. 333, notes 3 and 5.
[2] See notes, Vol. VIII. pp. 65, 74.
[3] *i.e.* the cupbearer's eyes.
[4] *i.e.* light-coloured wine.
[5] *i.e.* the cup.
[6] It was common with debauchees of the type of Abou Nuwas to employ girls dressed as boys (and known from that circumstance as *ghulamiyeh* or she-boys) as cupbearers at their carouses.

She goeth round midst younglings, to whom Fate bows, submiss, And none with aught betideth, save that he hath in gree;
And say to who pretendeth to excellence in love, "One thing thou'st learnt, but many are still concealed from thee."

But best of all is the saying of Ibn El Mutezz:[1]

God water the tree-shaded island[2] and the convent Abdoun[3] that hight With a constant dropping of rain-clouds, that cease not, day or night!
How oft for the draught of the morning awakened me there of yore, In the forefront of dawn, when the swallow had not yet taken to flight,
The voice of the monks of the convent, indeed, and the sound of their chant, As they crooned o'er their prayers in the gloaming, with their tunics of black bedight!
How many a loveling among them, eye-painted with languor,[4] abode, Whose eyelids on eyes shut that glittered with lustrous black and white,

[1] Abdallah ibn el Mutezz, a prince of the house of Abbas, son of El Mutezz Billah, the 13th Khalif of that dynasty, and great-great-grandson of Haroun er Reshid. He was one of the most renowned poets of the third century of the Hegira and died A.D. 908, being strangled by the partisans of his youthful nephew El Muctedi Billah, 18th Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, against whose authority he had revolted, at the instigation of the powerful and turbulent house of the Benou Hemdan (see antè, note, p. 47). As the nominee of the latter, he was proclaimed Khalif, under the title of El Murteza Billah, but only enjoyed the dignity for twenty-four hours, at the end of which time El Muctedi was reinstated by his supporters.

[2] Jeziret ibn Omar, an island and town on the Tigris, about a hundred and fifty miles north of Mosul. Some versions of the poem, from which these verses are quoted, substitute El Mutireh, a village near Samara (a town on the Tigris, 60 miles north of Baghdad), for El Jezireh, *i.e.* Jeziret ibn Omar.

[3] The convent of Abdoun (long since disappeared) was situate on the east bank of the Tigris, whose waters alone separated it from the island. It was so called from a celebrated statesman of the same name, who caused it to be erected and whose favourite place of recreation it was.

[4] Lit. koholed with languor or voluptuous grace (*ghunj*), *i.e.* naturally possessing that liquid, languorous softness, which it is the aim of the use of kohl to simulate.

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

And gifted of God is he who saith:

The richest of mortals am I; In gladness rejoiceth my soul.
Liquid gold[1] without stint I possess, And I measure it out by the bowl.

And how goodly is the saying of the poet:

By Allah, there's no alchemy, except in this it be, And all is false that they avouch of other alchemy!
Upon a hundredweight of woe a carat[2] pour of wine And straight it is transformed and changed to gladness and to glee.

And that of another:

The glasses, when we're empty, are heavy; but forthright When with pure wine we fill them, unblent, they grow as light
As air and eke for transport they're like to fly away; And bodies in like manner are lightened by the spright.

And yet another:

Wine and the cup to worship have claims more than can be said, Nor is it right in us to leave their claims unhonouréd.
Whenas I die, beside a vine I prithee bury me, So of its veins I still may drink, e'en after I am dead;
Yea, in the desert waterless, I charge you, lay me not, For sore after my death to taste no more of wine I dread.'

And he ceased not to incite him to drink, naming to

[1] *i.e.* gold-coloured wine. [2] *i.e.* three grains.

him such of the virtues of wine as he thought well and repeating to him what occurred to him of verses and pleasant anecdotes on the subject, till Marouf addressed himself to sucking the lips of the cup and cared no longer for aught else. The vizier ceased not to fill for him and he to drink and enjoy himself and make merry, till he lost his reason and could not distinguish right from wrong. When the vizier saw that drunkenness had attained in him to utterance and overpassed the limit, he said to him, 'By Allah, O merchant Marouf, it wonders me whence thou gottest these jewels whose like the kings of the Chosroës possess not! In all our lives never saw we a merchant possessed of riches like unto thine or more generous than thou, for thy fashion is the fashion of kings and not the fashion of merchants. So, God on thee, do thou acquaint me with this, that I may know thy rank and condition.' And he went on to ply him with questions and cajole him, till Marouf, being bereft of reason, said to him, 'I am neither merchant nor king,' and told him his whole story from first to last.

Then said the vizier, 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord Marouf, show us the ring, that we may see its fashion.' So, in his drunkenness, he pulled off the ring and said, 'Take it and look upon it.' The vizier took it and turning it over, said, 'If I rub it, will the genie appear?' 'Yes,' replied Marouf. 'Rub it and he will appear to thee, and do thou divert thyself with the sight of him.' So the vizier rubbed the ring and immediately the genie appeared and said, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given to thee. Wilt thou lay waste a town or build a city or slay a king? Whatsoever thou seekest, I will do for thee, without fail.' The vizier pointed to Marouf and said, 'Take up yonder knave and cast him down in the most desolate of desert lands, where he shall find nothing to eat nor drink, so he

may die of hunger and perish miserably, and none know of him.'

So the genie snatched him up and flew up with him betwixt heaven and earth, which when Marouf saw, he gave himself up for lost and wept and said, 'O Aboussaadat, whither goest thou with me?' 'Dolt that thou art,' replied the genie, 'I go to cast thee down in the desert quarter of the world. Shall one have the like of this talisman and give it to the folk to look upon? Verily, thou deservest that which hath befallen thee; and but that I fear God, I would let thee fall from a height of a thousand fathoms, nor shouldst thou reach the earth, till the winds had torn thee in pieces.' Marouf was silent and did not again bespeak him till he reached the desert quarter of the world and casting him down there, went away and left him in that horrible place.

Night DCCCCXCIX.

Meanwhile, the vizier said to the king, 'How deemest thou now? Did I not tell thee that this fellow was a liar and an impostor, but thou wouldst not credit me?' 'Thou wast in the right, O my vizier,' replied the king. 'God grant thee health! But give me the ring, that I may look upon it.' The vizier looked at him angrily and spat in his face, saying, 'O dullard, how shall I give it to thee and abide thy servant, after I am become thy master? But I will spare thee no more.' Then he rubbed the ring and said to the genie, 'Take up this churl and cast him down by his son-in-law the impostor.' So the genie took him up and flew off with him, whereupon quoth the king to him, 'O creature of my Lord, what is my crime?' 'I know not,' answered Aboussaadat; 'but my lord hath commanded me unto this and I cannot disobey him who possesseth the enchanted ring.' Then he flew on with him, till he came to the desert quarter and casting him down whereas he had cast Marouf, returned and left him. The King, hearing Marouf weeping, went up to him and

acquainted him with his case; and they sat weeping over that which had befallen them and found neither meat nor drink.

As for the vizier, he went forth from the garden and summoning all the troops, held a court and told them what he had done with the king and Marouf and acquainted them with the affair of the ring, adding, 'Except ye make me Sultan over you, I will bid the servant of the ring take you all up and cast you down in the desert quarter of the world, where you shall die of hunger and thirst.' 'Do us no hurt,' answered they; 'for we accept thee to Sultan over us and will not anywise gainsay thy commandment.' So they agreed, in their own despite, to his being Sultan over them, and he bestowed on them robes of honour, seeking all he had a mind to of Aboussaadat, who brought it to him forthright. Then he sat down on the throne and the troops made submission to him; and he sent to the king's daughter, saying, 'Make thee ready, for I mean to come in to thee this night, because I long for thee.'

When she heard this, she wept, for [the loss of] her husband and father was grievous to her, and sent to him, saying, 'Have patience with me till my days of widowhood[1] are accomplished: then draw up thy contract of marriage with me and go in to me according to law.' But he sent back to say to her, 'I know neither days of widowhood nor delay, and I need not a contract nor know I lawful from unlawful; but needs must I go in to thee this night.' So she answered him, saying, 'So be it, then, and welcome to thee!' But this was a trick on her part. When the answer reached the vizier, he rejoiced and his heart was gladdened, for that he was passionately enamoured of her. So he bade set food before all the folk, saying, 'Eat; this is my bride-feast; for I purpose

[1] *i.e.* the four months that must elapse before she could legally marry again.

to go in to the princess this night.' Quoth the Sheikh el Islam, 'It is not lawful for thee to go in to her till her days of widowhood be accomplished and thou have drawn up thy contract of marriage with her.' But he answered, 'I know neither days of widowhood nor delay; so multiply not words on me.' So the Sheikh was silent, fearing his mischief, and said to the troops, 'Verily, this man is an infidel and hath neither faith nor religion.'

As soon as it was night, he went in to her and found her clad in her richest raiment and decked with her goodliest ornaments. When she saw him, she came to meet him, laughing, and said, '[This is] a blessed night! But, hadst thou slain my father and my husband, it had been better to my mind.' And he said, 'Needs must I slay them.' Then she made him sit down and began to jest with him and make a show of love to him, caressing him and smiling in his face, whereupon his reason fled; but she did but cajole him on this wise that she might get possession of the ring and change his joy into calamity on his head; nor did she deal thus with him but after the counsel of him who saith:

Indeed, I have won by my sleight What swords had not compassed nor might,
And with spoil I return, whose plucked fruits Are sweet to the taste and the sight.

When he saw her caress him and smile upon him, desire stirred in him and he besought her of dalliance; but, when he drew near her, she started back from him, saying, 'O my lord, seest thou not the man looking at us? I conjure thee by Allah, screen me from his eyes! How canst thou have to do with me what while he looketh on us?' When he heard this, he was angry and said, 'Where is the man?' 'There he is, in the beazel of the ring,' answered she, 'putting out his head and looking at us.' He thought that the genie was looking at them and said,

laughing, 'Fear not; this is the servant of the ring, and he is at my commandment.' Quoth she, 'I am afraid of Afrits; pull it off and throw it afar from me.' So he pulled it off and laying it on the cushion, drew near to her, but she dealt him a kick in the stomach and he fell over on his back, senseless: whereupon she cried out to her attendants, who came to her in haste, and said to them, 'Lay hold on him.'

So forty slave-girls seized him, whilst she snatched up the ring from the cushion and rubbed it; whereupon Aboussaadat presented himself, saying, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my mistress.' 'Take up yonder infidel,' said she, 'and clap him in prison and shackle him heavily.' So he took him and laying him in strait prison,[1] returned and told her. Quoth she, 'Whither wentest thou with my father and my husband?' And he answered, 'I cast them down in the desert quarter of the world.' Then said she, 'I command thee to fetch them to me forthwith.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and taking flight at once, stayed not till he reached the desert quarter, where he lighted down upon them and found them sitting weeping and complaining to each other. Quoth he, 'Fear not, for relief is come to you.' And he told them what the vizier had done, adding, 'Indeed I imprisoned him with my own hand, in obedience to her commandment, and she hath bidden me carry you back.' And they rejoiced in his news. Then he took them up and flew back with them; nor was it more than an hour before he brought them in to the princess, who rose and saluted them. Then she made them sit down and brought them food and sweetmeats, and they passed the rest of the night [with her].

On the morrow, she clad them in rich apparel and said to the king, 'O my father, sit thou on thy throne and be king as before and make my husband thy Vizier of the

[1] Lit. in the prison of anger.

Right and acquaint thy troops with that which hath happened. Then send for the vizier out of prison and slay him and after burn him, for that he is an infidel and would have gone in to me in the way of lewdness, without marriage-rites, and he hath testified against himself that he is an infidel and believeth in no religion. And do thou tender thy son-in-law, whom thou makest thy Vizier of the Right.' 'I hear and obey, O my daughter,' answered he. 'But give me the ring or give it to thy husband.' Quoth she, 'It behoveth not that either thou or he have it. I will keep it myself, and belike I shall be more careful of it than you. Whatsoever ye want, seek it of me and I will demand it for you of the servant of the ring. So fear no harm so long as I live, and after my death, do as ye will with the ring.' 'This is well seen, O my daughter,' rejoined the king and taking Marouf, went forth to the divan.

Now the troops had passed the night in sore concern for the princess and that which the vizier had done with her, in going in to her after the way of lewdness, without rite of marriage, and for his ill-usage of the king and Marouf, and they feared lest the law of Islam be dishonoured, because it was manifest to them that he was an infidel. So they assembled in the divan and fell to reproaching the Sheikh el Islam, saying, 'Why didst thou not forbid him from going in to the princess in the way of lewdness?' 'O folk,' answered he, 'the man is an infidel and hath gotten possession of the ring and you and I can avail nothing against him. But God the Most High will requite him his deed, and be ye silent, lest he slay you.' As they were thus engaged, in came the king and Marouf, and when the troops saw the former, they rejoiced in his return and rising to their feet, kissed the earth before him. He sat down on his throne and told them what had passed, whereupon their chagrin ceased from them. Night M.

Then he commanded to decorate the city and sent to fetch the vizier from the prison. [So they brought him], and as he passed by the troops, they cursed him and reviled him and upbraided him, till he came to the king, who commanded to put him to the vilest of deaths. So they slew him and after burned his body, and he went to Hell, after the sorriest of fashions; and right well quoth one of him:

God to the tomb wherein his bones are laid no mercy show And Munker and Nekîr therein be present evermo'!

The king made Marouf his Vizier of the Right and the times were pleasant to them and their joys untroubled. They abode thus five years, till, in the sixth year, the king died and the princess made Marouf Sultan in her father's stead, but gave him not the ring. During this time she had conceived by him and borne him a boy of surpassing loveliness, excelling in beauty and perfection, who was reared in the laps of the nurses till he reached the age of five, when his mother fell ill of a mortal sickness and calling her husband to her, said to him, 'I am ill.' Quoth he, 'May God preserve thee, O beloved of my heart!' 'Belike,' said she, 'I shall die and thou needest not that I commend thy son to thy care: wherefore I charge thee but be careful of the ring, for thine own and the boy's sake.' And he answered, 'No harm shall befall him whom God preserveth!' Then she pulled off the ring and gave it to him, and on the morrow she was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High, whilst Marouf abode in possession of the kingship and applied himself to the governance.

One day, he shook the handkerchief and [dismissed the divan, whereupon] the troops withdrew to their places and he betook himself to the sitting-chamber, where he sat till the day departed and the night came with the

darkness. Then came in to him his boon-companions of the notables [of the kingdom], according to their wont, and sat with him, by way of solace and diversion, till midnight, when they craved leave to withdraw. He gave them leave and they retired to their houses; after which there came in to him a slave-girl affected to the service of his bed, who spread him the mattress and doing off his apparel, clad him in his sleeping-gown. Then he lay down and she kneaded his feet, till he fell asleep; whereupon she withdrew to her own chamber and slept.

Presently, he felt something beside him in the bed and starting up in alarm, said, 'I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned!' Then he opened his eyes and seeing by his side a woman foul of favour, said to her, 'Who art thou?' 'Fear not,' answered she. 'I am thy wife Fatimeh.' Whereupon he looked in her face and knew her by her misshapen form and the length of her dog-teeth: so he said to her, 'Whence camest thou in to me and who brought thee to this country?' Quoth she, 'In what country art thou at this present?' And he said, 'In the city of Ikhtiyan el Khuten. But thou, when didst thou leave Cairo?' 'But now,' answered she. 'How can that be?' asked he. 'Know,' said she, 'that, when I fell out with thee and Satan prompted me to do thee a mischief, so that I complained of thee to the magistrates, they sought for thee and the Cadis enquired of thee, but found thee not. When two days were past, repentance gat hold upon me and I knew that the fault was with me; but repentance availed me not, and I abode awhile weeping for thy loss, till what was in my hand failed and needs must I beg my bread. So I fell to begging of all, rich and poor, and since thou leftest me, I have eaten of the humiliation of beggary and have been in the sorriest of plights. Every night I sat weeping for thy loss and for

that which I suffered, since thy departure, of contempt and humiliation and abjection and misery.'

And she went on to tell him what had befallen her, whilst he stared at her in amazement, till she said, 'Yesterday, I went about all day, begging, but none gave me aught; and as often as I accosted any one and begged of him a morsel of bread, he reviled me and gave me nought. When night came, I went to bed supperless, and hunger consumed me and sore on me was that which I suffered, and I sat weeping. Presently, one appeared to me and said, "O woman, why weepest thou?" Quoth I, "I had a husband who used to provide for me and fulfil my wishes; but he is lost to me and I know not whither he is gone and have been in sore straits since he left me." "What is thy husband's name?" asked he, and I answered, "His name is Marouf." "I know him," said he. "Know that thy husband is now Sultan in a certain city, and if thou wilt, I will carry thee to him." Quoth I, "I conjure thee of thy bounty to bring me to him!" So he took me up and flew with me between heaven and earth, till he brought me to this pavilion and said to me, "Enter yonder chamber, and thou wilt see thy husband asleep on the couch." So I entered and found thee in this estate of lordship. Indeed, I thought not that thou wouldst forsake me, who am thy mate, and praised be God who hath united me with thee!'

Quoth Marouf, 'Did I forsake thee or thou me? Thou complainedst of me from Cadi to Cadi and endedst by denouncing me to the Supreme Court and bringing down on me the men of violence from the citadel: so I fled in my own despite.' And he went on to tell her all that had befallen him and how he was become Sultan and had married the king's daughter and how the latter had died, leaving him a son, who was then seven years old. Quoth she, 'That which happened was fore-ordained of God the

Most High; but I repent me and cast myself on thy generosity, beseeching thee not to forsake me, but suffer me eat bread with thee by way of alms.'

And she ceased not to humble herself to him and supplicate him till his heart relented towards her and he said to her, 'Repent from mischief and abide with me, and nought shall betide thee save what shall pleasure thee: but, if thou do any wickedness, I will slay thee and fear no one. And think not that thou canst complain of me to the Supreme Court and that the men of violence will come down on me from the Citadel; for I am become Sultan and the folk fear me: but I fear none save God the Most High, for that I have an enchanted ring, which when I rub, the servant of the ring appeareth to me. His name is Aboussaadat, and whatsoever I demand of him he bringeth to me. So, if thou desire to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall suffice thee all thy life and will send thee thither speedily; but, if thou desire to abide with me, I will assign thee a palace and furnish it with the choicest of silks and appoint thee twenty slave-girls to serve thee and provide thee with dainty food and sumptuous apparel, and thou shalt be a queen and live in all delight, till thou or I die. What sayst thou of this?' 'I wish to abide with thee,' answered she and kissed his hand and made profession of repentance from wickedness. So he assigned her a palace for her sole use and gave her slave-girls and eunuchs, and she became a queen.

The young prince used to visit her, even as he visited his father; but she hated him for that he was not her son; and when the boy saw that she looked on him with the eye of despite and hatred, he shunned her and took an aversion to her. As for Marouf, he occupied himself with the love of fair slave-girls and bethought him not of his wife Fatimeh, for that she was grown a grizzled old woman, foul of favour and bald-headed, loathlier than the

speckled snake, the more that she had beyond measure evil entreated him aforetime; and as saith the adage, 'Ill-usage rooteth up desire and soweth hatred in the soil of hearts;' and gifted of God is he who saith:

Be careful not to hurt men's hearts nor work them aught of dole, For hard it is to bring again a once estrangéd soul;
And hearts, the love whereof hath ta'en alarm and fled away, Are like a broken glass, whose breach may never be made whole.

And indeed he had not given her shelter by reason of any praiseworthy quality in her, but he dealt with her thus generously only of desire for the approval of God the Most High; wherefore he occupied not himself with her by way of marriage. When she saw that he held aloof from her bed and occupied himself with others, she hated him and jealousy gat the mastery of her and Satan prompted her to take the ring from him and kill him and make herself queen in his stead. So she went forth one night from her pavilion, intending for that in which was her husband the king; and it chanced, by the ordinance of fate and written destiny, that Marouf lay that night with one of his favourites, a damsel endowed with beauty and grace and symmetry.

Night Mi.

Now it was his wont, of the excellence of his piety, that, when he was minded to have to do with a woman, he would put off the enchanted ring from his finger, in reverence to the holy names engraved thereon, and lay it on the pillow, nor would he don it again till he had purified himself [according to the law]. Moreover, when he had lain with a woman, he was used to bid her go forth from him [before daybreak], of his fear for the ring; and when he went forth to the bath, he locked the door of the pavilion till his return, when he put on the ring, and after this, all were free to enter as of wont. Fatimeh knew of all this and went not forth from her

place till she had certified herself that the case was as we have said. So she sallied out, purposing to go in to him, whilst he was drowned in sleep, and steal the ring, unseen of him.

Now it chanced at this time that the king's son had gone out, without light, to the draught-house, to do an occasion, and sat down on the jakes in the dark, leaving the door open. Presently, he saw Fatimeh come forth of her pavilion and make stealthily for that of his father and said in himself, 'What ails this witch to leave her lodging in the dead of the night and make for my father's pavilion? Needs must there be some reason for this.' So he went out after her and followed in her steps unseen of her. Now he had a short sword of watered steel, which he held dear, so that he went not to his father's divan, except he were girt therewith; and his father used to laugh at him and say, 'What God will![1] This is a fine sword of thine, O my son! But thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head therewith.' Whereupon the boy would reply, 'I will not fail to cut off with it some head worth[2] the cutting.' And Marouf would laugh at his words.

So he drew the sword from its sheath and followed her till she came to his father's pavilion and entered, whilst he stood and watched her from the door. He saw her searching about and heard her say [to herself], 'Where hath he laid the ring?' Whereby he knew that she was looking for the ring and waited till she found it and said, 'Here it is.' Then she picked it up and turned to go out; but he hid behind the door. As she came forth, she looked at the ring and turning it about in her hand, was

[1] *Mashallah!* The old English exclamation "Cock's 'ill!" (*i.e.* God's will, thus corrupted for the purpose of evading the statute of 3 Jac. I. against profane swearing) exactly corresponds to the Arabic.

[2] Or deserving.

about to rub it, when he raised his hand with the sword and smote her on the neck; and she gave one cry and fell down dead.

With this Marouf awoke and seeing his wife lying on the ground, with her blood flowing, and his son standing with the drawn sword in his hand, said to him, 'What is this, O my son?' 'O my father,' answered the prince, 'how often hast thou said to me, "Thou hast a fine sword; but thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head." And I have answered thee, saying, "I will not fail to cut off with it a head worth the cutting." And now, behold, I have cut off for thee therewith a head worth the cutting!' And he told him what had passed. Marouf sought for the ring, but found it not; so he searched the dead woman's body till he saw her hand closed upon it; whereupon he took it from her hand and said to the boy, 'Thou art indeed my very son, without doubt; may God ease thee in this world and the next, even as thou hast eased me of this vile woman! Her endeavour led but to her own destruction, and gifted of God is he who saith:

When God His aid unto a man vouchsafes, good hap is his And still his wish of everything he doth fulfil, ywis;
But, if the Almighty's countenance to any be denied, The first to sin against the wight his own endeavour is.'

Then he called to some of his attendants, who came in haste, and he told them what his wife Fatimeh had done and bade them take her and lay her in a place till the morning. They did as he bade them and [on the morrow] he gave her in charge to a number of eunuchs, who washed her and shrouded her and made her a tomb and buried her. Thus her coming from Cairo was but to her grave, and gifted of God is he who saith:

We tread the steps to us of destiny forewrit; For he to whom a way's decreed must needs submit
To walk therein, and he whose death is fore-ordained To be in such a land shall die in none but it.

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:

When to a land I fare in quest of good, perdie, I know not, of the twain, which fortune mine shall be;
Whether the good 'twill prove, whereafter I do seek, Or else the evil hap that seeketh after me.

After this, he sent for the husbandman, whose guest he had been, when he was a fugitive, and made him his Vizier of the Right and his chief counsellor. Then, learning that he had a daughter of surpassing beauty and grace, of noble parts and high of worth and birth, he took her to wife; and in due time he married his son. So they abode awhile in all delight and solace of life and their days were serene and their joys untroubled, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies, he who layeth waste flourishing houses and orphaneth sons and daughters. And glory be to the [Ever-]Living One who dieth not and in whose hand are the keys of the Seen and the Unseen!"

Now, during this time, Shehrzad had borne the King three male children: so, when she had made an end of the story of Marouf, she rose to her feet and kissing the earth before him, said, "O king of the age and unique pearl of the time and the day, I am thine handmaid and these thousand nights and one have I entertained thee with stories of foregone peoples and admonitory instances of the ancients. May I then make bold to crave a boon of Thy Majesty?" "Ask, O Shehrzad," answered he, "and

it shall be given unto thee." Whereupon she cried out to the nurses and the eunuchs, saying, "Bring me my children." So they brought them to her in haste, and they were three male children, one walking, one crawling and one sucking [at the breast]. She took them and setting them before the King, kissed the ground and said, "O king of the age, these are thy children and I crave that thou release me from the doom of death, for the sake of these infants; for, if thou slay me, they will become motherless and will find none among women to rear them aright."

When the King heard this, he wept and straining the children to his bosom, said, "By Allah, O Shehrzad, I pardoned thee before the coming of these children, for that I found thee chaste, pure, noble and pious! May God bless thee and thy father and thy mother and thy root and thy branch! I take God to witness against me that I exempt thee from aught that can harm thee.' So she kissed his hands and feet and rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "May God make thy life long and increase thee in reverence and majesty!" Therewith joy spread throughout the palace of the King and the good news was bruited abroad in the city; it was a night not to be counted among lives and its colour was whiter than the face of day.

On the morrow, the King arose, full of joy and contentment, and summoning all his troops, bestowed on his vizier, Shehrzad's father, a rich and splendid robe of honour and said to him, "God protect thee, for that thou gavest me to wife thy noble daughter, who hath been the means of my repentance from slaying the daughters of the people. Indeed, I have found her noble, pure, chaste and virtuous, and God hath vouchsafed me three male children by her; wherefore praised be He for this exceeding bounty!" Then he bestowed dresses of honour

upon all his viziers and amirs and the grandees of his realm and bade decorate the city thirty days; nor did he put one of the townsfolk to aught of charge on account thereof, but the whole of the expenditure was from the King's treasury. So they decorated the city in splendid fashion, never before was seen the like thereof, and the drums beat and the pipes sounded, whilst all the mimes and mountebanks and players plied their various arts and the King lavished on them gifts and largesse. Moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and extended his bounty to all his subjects and the people of his realm. And he and they abode in pleasance and delight and happiness and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies. So glory be to Him whom the vicissitudes of time waste not away nor doth aught of change betide Him, whom one case diverteth not from other and who is unique in the attributes of perfection! And blessing and peace upon the High Priest of His Majesty and His Elect among His creatures, our lord Mohammed, the chief of mankind, through whom we beseech Him for a goodly end!

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THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT: ITS HISTORY AND CHARACTER.

THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT: ITS HISTORY AND CHARACTER.

I.

It is now a hundred and eighty years since M. Antoine Galland first introduced to the notice of European readers the most popular collection of narrative fiction in existence, by his translation, published in the year 1704, of an Arabic manuscript alleged to have been procured by him from Syria, which contained something less than a quarter of the tales that compose the work known as "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night." M. Galland was aware of the imperfection of the MS. used by him, and (unable to obtain a more perfect copy) he seems to have endeavoured to supply the place of the missing portions by incorporating in his translation a number of Persian, Turkish and Arabic tales, which had no connection with his original and for which it is generally supposed that he probably had recourse to various Oriental MSS. (as yet unidentified) contained in the Royal Libraries of Paris. These interpolated tales occupy more than a third part of the entire work known as the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" and comprise some of the most popular portions of the work, as will be seen from the following list of them.

1. The History of Prince Zeyn Alasnam and the King of the Genii.
2. The History of Codadad and the Princess of Deryabar.
3. The Story of the Sleeper Awakened.
4. Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp.
5. The Story of the Blind Man Baba Abdalla.
6. The Story of Sidi Nouman.
7. The Story of Cogia Hassan Alhabbal.
8. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.
9. Ali Cogia, the Merchant of Baghdad.
10. Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari-Banou.
11. The Sisters who envied their younger Sister.

Of these, the Story of the Sleeper Awakened is the only one which has been traced to an Arabic original, existing either separately or in connection with the Thousand Nights and One Night, and is found in the Breslau edition of the complete work, printed by Dr. Habicht from a manuscript of Tunisian origin, apparently of much later date than the other known copies. It also occurs in a MS. copy in the British Museum and will be found translated among the stories from printed texts of the Thousand Nights and One Night (not contained in my standard text or in the Boulac edition) which it is proposed to issue as a supplement to the present work. Galland himself cautions us that the stories of Zeyn Alasnam and Codadad do not belong to the Thousand and One Nights and were published (how he does not explain) without his authority; and the concluding portion of his MS., presumably containing the larger half of Camaralzaman, the whole of Ganem and the Enchanted Horse, as well as all the intercalated tales (that is to say, nearly

one-half of the French translation),[1] being unfortunately lost, it appears impossible to ascertain the precise source from which he drew the latter. Opinions differ upon this point, some Orientalists holding (with De Sacy) that the originals of the added tales were found by Galland in the public libraries of Paris (whence, however, no researches have as yet availed to unearth them), and others (with the late Mr. Chenery) that he procured them from the recitation of story-tellers in the bazaars of Smyrna and other towns in the Levant, during his travels there.[2] It was

[1] Galland's MS. consisted (as he himself tells us in his dedication) of four volumes, three only of which are extant, bringing down the work to the 282nd Night, towards the middle of the story of Camaralzaman. Taking the lost volume as equal in size to the three others (which contain about 140 pages each), the remainder of Camaralzaman and the stories of Ganem and the Enchanted Horse, together with one-fifth part of the added tales, would account for the whole of its contents, leaving four-fifths of the interpolations or three-tenths of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" unaccounted for, allowance made for the Voyages of Sindbad, which do not belong to the original work and Galland's copy of which is extant in a separate form, divided into voyages only, the French translator being responsible for the arbitrary division into (twenty-one) nights. It may be observed that, in the Breslau edition, which corresponds more nearly with the MS. used by Galland than any other of the printed texts, the story of the Enchanted Horse immediately succeeds that of Camaralzaman (Kemerezzeman and Budour) and is itself followed, after an interval of some fifty nights, by the story of Ganem.

[2] Galland may be presumed to have come by the MS. of Sindbad during his long residence in Asia Minor, but that of the Thousand and One Nights he himself tells us, in his dedicatory epistle to the Marquise d'O, he did not procure from the East ("il a fallu le faire venir de Syrie") till after his return to France, when he first became aware of the existence of the work.

stated by the late Professor Palmer that he found the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves current, in a slightly different form, among the Bedouins of Sinai; but, although the names of the personages of the story (Ali, Abdallah, Mustafa, Morgiana (*Merjaneh*), Cassim, Hussein) are purely Arabic, the use of the Persian titles *Baba* and *Cogia* (see post) seems to point to a Turkish or Persian origin, and it will be noted that the scene is laid in "a city of Persia" and that the story differs widely in style and character from any known to belong to the genuine text. Mr. Palmer also expressed a doubt whether the most popular story of the old book, Aladdin, was an Eastern story at all; but the only evidence we possess upon the subject, that of the tale itself, does not appear to offer any reasonable confirmation of his scepticism. The names (Mustafa, Alaeddin, Bedrulbudour, Fatimeh, etc.) are without exception Arab, and the story follows the familiar lines of Arabic fiction, of which, in particular, the introduction of the African (or Persian) magician, the finding of the enchanted treasure and ring, the marriage of the finder with the King's daughter, the magical building of the palace, the discovery of the unknown by geomancy, the loss of the talisman through the heedlessness of a third party and its recovery by stratagem, the disgrace of the hero at the instance of the envious vizier, the drugging of the magician and the assumption of the disguise of a devotee for the vilest purposes, are all familiar incidents and find their counterparts in many genuine stories of the Thousand and One Nights, whilst

the manners and customs described, allowing for the extreme licence and looseness of Galland's version, do not seem essentially to differ from those pourtrayed in tales of unquestioned authenticity, such as Camaralzaman or Beder. It may also be observed that there is a considerable resemblance between the plan and details of the story, as given by Galland, and those of Jouder and his brothers (Vol. VI.) and Marouf (in the present volume) and that Scott's meagre abstract (published in 1811) of a few of the unknown tales contained in the Wortley Montague MS. of the Thousand Nights and One Night includes the skeleton of a story ("The Fisherman's Son"), which bears some resemblance to Aladdin and a still greater one to the well-known German Mährchen of the White Stone; but, in my opinion, this story is a modern fabrication and has no connection with the original work. The Wortley Montague MS., indeed, appears to be, as a whole, of doubtful authenticity, if we may judge from Scott's translations from it and the detailed account given (in Ouseley's Oriental Collections) of its contents by the translator himself, who states that it bears at end a note to the effect that it was written (or transcribed) in the year 1178 of the Hegira (A.D. 1766[1]) by Omar es Sufti (Sufta). Sufta (popularly *Softa*) signifies, in Turkish, a divinity student, and this, together with the evidently modern style of the copy, the incoherent jumble of adventure of which the stories (as rendered by Scott) appear to consist and which is much more characteristic of modern Turkish

[1] A.D. 1764?

fiction than of the more artistic kind peculiar to the Arabs, and the frequent correspondence of the incidents with German and other popular stories, (a correspondence which, only in the most rudimentary form, is found in the genuine work), appear to stamp this MS. as being, at least as far as the latter portion (which differs greatly from any other copy known to myself) is concerned, as a modern Turkish rifacimento.

Of the remaining six interpolations, the tenth and eleventh (Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari-Banou[1] and The Three Sisters) are evidently Persian and comparatively modern (as a Yankee would say) "at that." The use of the Persian prefix, "Cogia" (*Khwajeh*, master or lord, Arabic equivalent *ustadh* or *muallim*), improperly applied to a ropemaker and a merchant of Baghdad, would also point to a Persian or Turkish origin of Nos. 7 and 9 (Cogia Hassan Alhabbal and Ali Cogia), as also the title "Baba" (Gaffer, Daddy, Arabic equivalent *Sheikh*) given to the blind man Abdalla[h] in No. 5, and the general tone of these three stories, as well as that of Sidi Nouman (No. 6), testifies to the probability of their having been composed, at a comparatively recent period, by a person not an inhabitant of Baghdad, in imitation of the legends of Haroun er Reshid and other well-known tales of the original work. It is possible that an exhaustive examination of the various MS. copies of the Thousand and One Nights known to exist in the public libraries of Europe might yet cast some light

[1] The tautological rendering of this latter name is another instance of Galland's carelessness: *Peri-banou* means "fairy lady" or "she-fairy."

upon the question of the origin of the interpolated tales; but, in view of the strong presumption afforded by internal evidence that they are of modern composition and form no part of the authentic text, it can hardly be expected, where the result and the value of that result are alike so doubtful, that any competent person will be found to undertake so heavy a task, except as incidental to some more general enquiry. The only one of the eleven, which seems to me to bear any trace of possible connection with the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, is Aladdin, and it may be that an examination of the MS. copies of the original work within my reach will yet enable me to trace the origin of this favourite story.

Having at his command the earlier portion only of the collection, Galland was in some measure compelled to invent a denouement, in which he represents the Sultan as pardoning Sheherazade, in consideration of the pleasure her story-telling talents had afforded him. If we turn to the authentic text, we find a totally different version. It appears that Sheherazade had (somewhat irreconcileably) during the progress of the story-telling (extending over nearly three years) borne the Sultan three male children; and in concluding the story of the thousand and first night, she presents these latter to him, begging him to spare her life and not leave her infants motherless. To this he consents in the most gracious fashion, telling her that he had, before their birth, resolved to spare her, in consideration of the great qualities of virtue, wisdom and nobility of mind he had discovered

in her (an assertion, by the way, completely borne out by the record of Night cxlviii,[1] in which he is represented as informing Sheherazade that she has by her wise saws and moral instances put him out of conceit with his kingdom and made him repent of having killed so many women and girls), and concludes by bestowing high honours on her father the Vizier, for having given him a wife of such worth and intelligence, and ordering the city to be decorated and general rejoicings to be celebrated. A rather amusing trait in this conclusion is the emphasis with which the author insists upon the gratifying fact that the whole cost of the rejoicings was defrayed from the royal treasury, and that not a penny came out of the pockets of the Sultan's subjects; no doubt a sufficiently remarkable exception to the practice of Oriental despots like his hero Haroun er Reshid, who was generally careful to make some unfortunate or other provide the money which he lavished upon his favourites or flung away on the caprices, sometimes laudable, but more often extravagant and senseless, that have won him his most ill-deserved reputation.

It is much to be regretted that the French translator, in accordance with the literary licence of an age in which the principles of the art of translation were perhaps less generally understood than at any known literary epoch, should have thought himself entitled to deal with the original text in a manner which in the present day, more strict upon the question of fidelity and local colouring, would certainly have been visited with the severest repro-

[1] See Vol. III. p. 16.

bation. Both in abridgment and amplification of the original, his sins of omission and commission are innumerable; and he permits himself not unfrequently the most inexplicable and apparently wilful perversions, as in the story of the Merchant and the Genie, where he makes the former throw away the *shell*, instead of the stone, of the date (which of course has no shell), and in that of Bedreddin Hassan, where he substitutes a cream-tart for the true corpus delicti, a mess of pomegranate-seed (a dish repeatedly mentioned in the Nights), and represents the hero as going to bed in his trousers, going out of his way solemnly to assure us, in a special footnote, that the Eastern nations invariably sleep in those garments, although it is distinctly stated in the text that Bedreddin, before getting into bed, took off his trousers, wrapped up in them the purse of a thousand dinars he had received of the Jew and placed them under the pillow of the couch, retaining only one garment, a shirt of fine silk. These are a fair specimen of the many inexcusable alterations he permits himself, and in addition to this he did not scruple to correct and adorn what doubtless seemed to him the frequently repulsive artlessness and crude simplicity of the original, expanding, abridging, amplifying and substituting in the most wholesale and uncompromising manner. To give only one example, where I might cite many, of the liberties he allowed himself in this kind, there is perhaps no passage in the old version more generally admired than the description of Egypt contained in the story of the Jewish Physician. I quote the passage as it stands in

the old translation of Galland's version, edited[1] by Scott:

"My father joined in opinion with those of his brothers who had spoken in favour of Egypt; which filled me with joy. Say what you will, said he, the man that has not seen Egypt has not seen the greatest rarity in the world. All the land there is golden; I mean, it is so fertile, that it enriches its inhabitants. All the women of that country charm you by their beauty and their agreeable carriage. If you speak of the Nile, where is there a more wonderful river? What water was ever lighter or more delicious? The very slime it carries along, in its overflowing, fattens the fields, which produce a thousand times more than other countries that are cultivated with the greatest labour. Observe what a poet said of the Egyptians, when he was obliged to depart from Egypt: 'Your Nile loads you with blessings every day; it is for you only that it runs from such a distance. Alas! in removing from you, my tears will flow as abundantly as its waters; you are to continue in the enjoyment of its sweetness, while I am condemned to deprive myself of them against my will.' If you look, added my father, towards the island that is formed by the two greatest branches of the Nile, what variety of verdure! What enamel of all sorts of flowers! What a prodigious number of cities, villages, canals, and

[1] Scott claimed to have revised and corrected Galland's version; but I cannot find that he has done so in any one instance, and Forster's translation from the French is equally faulty, although this translator also (if I remember aright) professes to have revised the work.

a thousand other agreeable objects! If you turn your eyes on the other side, up towards Ethiopia, how many other subjects of admiration! I cannot compare the verdure of so many plains, watered by the different canals of the island, better than to brilliant emeralds set in silver. Is not Grand Cairo the largest, the most populous, and the richest city in the world? What a number of magnificent edifices, both public and private! If you view the pyramids, you will be filled with astonishment at the sight of the masses of stone of an enormous thickness, which rear their heads to the skies! You will be obliged to confess, that the Pharaohs, who employed such riches, and so many men in building them, must have surpassed in magnificence and invention all the monarchs who have appeared since, not only in Egypt, but in all the world, for having left monuments so worthy of their memory: monuments so ancient, that the learned cannot agree upon the date of their erection; yet such as will last to the end of time. I pass over in silence the maritime cities of the kingdom of Egypt, such as Damietta, Rosetta, and Alexandria, where nations come for various sorts of grain, cloth, and an infinite number of commodities calculated for accommodation and delight. I speak of what I know; for I spent some years there in my youth, which I shall always reckon the most agreeable part of my life."

The reader, who is not acquainted with the original Arabic, will doubtless be surprised to hear that this eloquent passage is almost entirely due to the fluent pen of the French translator. Here is the plain and un-

adorned foundation upon which he reared so extensive an edifice of imaginative description. I translate from the Breslau text, which appears, due allowance being made for errors of transcription, etc., to be almost identical with that of Galland's MS. and in which I have corrected several mistakes, clerical or typographical. The version of the Macnaghten and Boulac Editions is (as will be seen by reference to Vol. I. pp. 260–1) yet more concise and to my mind more effective.

"Quoth my father, 'Who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world: its dust is gold and its women puppets;[1] its Nile is a wonder, its waters light and sweet and its mud a commodity and a medicine, as saith of it one in verse, "The waxing of your Nile profiteth you to-day, And to you alone it cometh with profit.[2] The Nile is nought but my tears after [separation from] you: Yours is fair fortune and none is forlorn but I." And if your eyes saw its earth and the adornment thereof with flowers and the embroidery of it with all manner blossoms and the island[s] of the Nile and how much is therein of wide[3] prospect, and if ye turned the sight to the Birket el Hebesh,[4] your eyes would not revert free from astonishment nor would ye see [a match] for that goodly prospect, and indeed the arms of the Nile

[1] *i.e.* perfectly made and handsome, or, as we should say, "pictures."

[2] Or benefit.

[3] Or goodly.

[4] *i.e.* The Lake of Abyssinia or the Abyssinian, a piece of water on the southern side of Cairo. Galland has here made an absurd mistake in supposing that Abyssinia itself is meant.

encompass[1] its verdure, as it were chrysolites set in filagrees of silver.[2] And what is there to compare with the Observatory[3] and its beauties, whereof saith the beholder, whenas he draweth near and looketh, "Verily this comprehendeth all manner goodliness!" And if thou speak of the Night of the Waxing [of the Nile],[4] give the bow, take it[5] and distribute the water to its channels; and if thou sawest the Garden[6] in the evenings and the shadow sloping over it, thou wouldst behold a marvel and wouldst be cheered by the like thereof, and wert thou by the river-side of Cairo,[7] when the sun is going down and the river dons hauberk and coat of mail[8] to its vestments, its gentle breeze would quicken thee and its bland and copious shade.'"

Again, it cannot be denied that, either out of a mistaken deference to the literary tastes and prejudices of his age or from a want of sufficient acquaintance with Oriental

[1] As the white encompasses the black of the eye.

[2] I omit a rather long piece of verse about a day spent on the Birket el Hebesh, Galland having taken no notice of it.

[3] *Er Resd.*

[4] *i.e.* the night on which the Nile rises to the statute-height of sixteen cubits.

[5] This appears to refer to the ceremony of cutting the dam of the canal.

[6] *i.e.* Er Rauzeh, the well-known island so called.

[7] Galland has here mistaken the meaning of *sahil Misr*, the river-side of Cairo (to which town the whole description is confined) and supposing it to mean the sea-coast of Egypt, has introduced a digression about Damietta, Rosetta and other sea-side towns.

[8] This metaphor, based upon the appearance produced by the level rays of the setting sun, is a favourite one with Arab writers.

manners and literature (a somewhat improbable defect in the case of one who was a well-known scholar and had made three voyages to the Levant), M. Galland to a certain extent failed in producing a fair transcript of the original, so far as the exact detail of the manners and customs of the people whose life it describes is concerned, as will be evident (to give one instance out of many) from the way in which he makes the Jewish physician, in the story above quoted, express surprise at the presentation to him by the young man of Mosul of his left hand, not for the true reason, as stated in the original, *i.e.* the want of good breeding evinced in offering the *left* hand (which, being used for certain ablutions, is considered among Mohammedans unclean or unworthy), but because "This, thinks I, is a gross piece of ignorance that he does not know that people present their right hand and not their left to a physician."

Nevertheless, in spite of the defects I have cited and numerous others of various kinds, it cannot but be evident to the impartial reader, who does not look at Oriental literature solely from the narrow scholastic point of view, that in M. Galland's translation, fragmentary as it is, he is in presence of a monumental literary work and one that is destined to live from its intrinsic artistic value, whatever the future may bring forth in the way of more perfect and more conscientious reproduction of the original it professed to represent. Numerous as are the mistakes and inaccuracies, wilful and involuntary, that deface it, there lives in it, if not the letter, emphatically the true spirit of Oriental romance, as seen by

European observers through the intervening media of distance and difference; and the translator's charming style, the fine flower of the literary manner of the eighteenth century, partaking at once of Voltaire and Diderot, of Manon Lescaut and Les Bijoux Indiscrets, uniting in itself simplicity and boldness, strength and grace, equally capable of expressing naïveté without vulgarity and of rising to the pathetic and the majestic without undue emphasis, atones for many an error and covers, with the seduction of its bright and perfect movement, many an omission and many an audacious distortion of fact and intention. Indeed, it seems to me that this first effort, imperfect as it was, to transplant into European gardens the magic flowers of Oriental imagination, can never entirely be superseded and that other workers in the same field can only hope to supplement and not to efface it. The value of Galland's achievement was at once recognised by the public, notwithstanding the obbligato sneers of his brother savants and the doubts cast by critics and men of letters upon the authenticity of the work, and his book was almost immediately translated into most European languages. Nine years after the first publication of the French version, we find the fourth English edition already reached; and since then its popularity has continued to increase, until it has become one of the few standard works dear to all, young and old, and whose editions, becoming year by year more numerous, can only be numbered by hundreds, if not by thousands.

Considering the immense vogue thus obtained by this

first imperfect version and the interest it has naturally excited in the original work, it is a curious and somewhat inexplicable fact that, during the lapse of nearly two centuries, so little should have been discovered concerning the origin and history of the collection whose outlines are so well known to all. It has never yet even been ascertained who was its author or compiler, nor has the date to which its composition may be referred been fixed with any degree of certitude. The origin of the work has, indeed, been the subject of much surmise and research, although to no great result; and the first half of the present century witnessed an animated and somewhat acrimonious discussion upon the subject between the two greatest Orientalists of France and Germany. From the first it had been a favourite theory, founded chiefly on the prevalence of Persian names among the personages of the Introduction, that the Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night was merely a translation into Arabic of a work supposed to have been originally written in ancient Persian or Pehlevi, and this theory Baron von Hammer-Purgstall adopted and improved, bringing forward in support arguments of considerable weight and plausibility, founded upon passages in the works of Arabic and Persian authors of repute, such as the magnum opus of the celebrated Baghdadi geographer and historian, Ali Aboulhusn el Mesoudi, the *Murouj edh dheheb* or Golden Meadows, published at Bassora in the middle of the tenth century, and the great Arabic compendium, the *Fihrist* of Aboulferej Abou Ishac en Nedim, about forty years later. In the

work above mentioned, Mesoudi states, in a passage that is a mainstay of Von Hammer's theory, that there existed in his time a book of Persian stories, called *Hezar Efsan* or The Thousand Romances, being the history of an Indian King, his Vizier, the Vizier's daughter Shirzad and her nurse or duenna Dunyazad, and adds that the book in question had been translated into Arabic and was called in that language The Thousand Tales or (more commonly) The Thousand Nights. He also mentions, as similar Persian or Indian collections, the story of Jelkand (Jelyaad) and Shimas, or the Indian King and his Ten Viziers, and Sindibad, and allows us to suppose that the Hezar Efsan was translated into Arabic by order of El Mensour (grandfather of Er Reshid and second Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty), who reigned from A.D. 754 to A.D. 775. It would appear also, from a preface to the great epic poem of Persia, the Shah nameh of Firdausi, and from other sources, that the original authorship of the Hezar Efsan was attributed to a Persian litterateur in the service of one of the early sovereigns of Persia, for whom he composed it, a semi-mythical personage by name Queen Humai, daughter of Ardeshir Behman (Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 465–425) and mother of Darab (Darius) II. (B.C. 423) and that the prose original was in the eleventh century versified (or perhaps only rearranged) by a certain Rasti, court poet to the Ghaznevide Sultan Mehmoud of Persia. The passage from the Fihrist which Von Hammer afterwards brought forward, in confirmation of his citation from Mesoudi, is (briefly) to the following effect. "The

first who composed tales and made books of them were the ancient Persians. The Arabs translated them and the learned took them and embellished them and *composed others like them.*[1] The first book of the kind made was that called Hezar Efsan (or Efsaneh), and the manner thereof was on this wise. One of the kings of the Persians was wont, whenas he took a woman to wife and had lain one night with her, to put her to death on the morrow. Now he married a girl endowed with wit and knowledge, by name Shehrzad,[2] and she fell to telling him tales and used to join the story, at the end of the night, with what should induce the king to spare her alive and question her next night of the ending thereof, till a thousand nights had passed over her. Meanwhile he lay with her, till he was vouchsafed a child by her, when she discovered to him the device she had practised upon him. Her wit pleased him and he inclined to her and spared her life. And the king had a duenna named Dinarzad (or Dunyazad) who was of accord with her concerning this. The book comprises a thousand nights, but less than two hundred stories, for a story is often told in a number of nights."

These passages suffice to establish, beyond reasonable doubt, the fact that the first idea of the work was taken from the Hezar Efsan, to which it owes the scheme of the introduction and external thread of story and the

[1] The italics are my own.

[2] Surname of Queen Humai. It is probable, as suggested by Mr. Lane, that this identity of name was the cause of the composition of the Hezar Efsan being attributed to her instance.

system of nights which serves as a frame for the various stories told by Shehrzad, and it will be noted that the names of the personages of the introduction and the general skeleton of the story appear to have been preserved almost without alteration, standing out in sharp contrast to the rest of the work. Even the number of the stories contained in the Thousand and One Nights in some measure corresponds with Aboulferej's account of the Hezar Efsan, being (if we leave out of the question the numerous incidental tales) less than two hundred in all, and had Hammer-Purgstall contented himself with stating the legitimate consequences of the evidence he adduced, his position would have been unassailable; but, as is not unusual with German scholars, he went to an extravagant length in the deductions he drew from the passages above cited, insisting that the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, in its original form, was identical with the Thousand Tales or Nights mentioned by Mesoudi, *i.e.* was a mere translation from the Persian, and that its foundation was no other than the wild and fascinating Persian tales which appear to have been popular in Arabia proper, at the time of Mohammed, and to have, by the seduction of their brilliant and picturesque imagery, become so serious a stumbling-block in the Prophet's way that, not content with having evidently assimilated part of them for his own purposes, he thought it necessary to caution his followers against their dangerous attractions and to exhort them to be satisfied with the delightful tales that God had told them in the Koran. To this original nucleus or foundation

afforded by the old Arabic version of the Hezar Efsan, Von Hammer was of opinion that the Arabs added the anecdotes of the Ommiade and Abbaside Khalifs, of such frequent occurrence in the collection, as well as certain tales of evidently later origin, and that the work grew by addition after addition till it assumed its present dimensions; that it was finally rearranged and (so to speak) edited by a native of Egypt and that its definitive production in its present form cannot be referred to an earlier period than the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, since one of the tales mentions the Egyptian Khalif Hakim bi-amrillah, A.D. 1261.[1] Unfortunately both prose and rhymed versions of the Hezar Efsan appear to be irrecoverably lost and we have no traces of them save what may exist in the Thousand and One Nights, wherein it is at least a singular fact that not a single reference to the ancient romantic heroes of Persia (Sam Neriman, Feridoun, Rustem, Zal Zer, Isfendiyar, etc.) nor to such fabulous monsters of Iranian romance as the Simurgh (griffin), Anca (phœnix), etc., occurs, as would certainly not have

[1] In this latter part of his theory, Von Hammer was right in the conclusion to which he came, but mistaken in the premisses on which he based it. The Hakim bi-amrillah, who is twice mentioned in the 1001 Nights (see Vol. IV. pp. 140 and 226), is, as is manifest from internal evidence, not the fainéant Abbaside who held the spiritual headship or Imamate (the only relic of the once proud empire of the Khalifs left him), from A.D. 1261 to A.D. 1301, but the celebrated Fatimite of the same name (A.D. 995-1021), the founder of the Druse religion. No reference of any kind to any of the Abbaside Khalifs of Egypt is to be found in the work.

been the case, were Von Hammer's theory true. Had the book "Sindibad," mentioned by Mesoudi in the passage cited above, been the well-known Voyages of Sindbad (as erroneously assumed by Von Hammer), its existence in Persian would have been a powerful argument in support of his theory. But this is not the case. The book is mentioned by Mesoudi as "Sindibad" only, and is stated to be similar to the story of the Indian King and his Ten Viziers, to which nothing can be more unlike than the Voyages of Sindbad, a work purely Arab in form, although doubtless containing many incidents derived from Greek, Indian, Persian and perhaps even European sources, and it has now been definitively shown that the work referred to was one which is known in perhaps more numerous versions than any other popular fiction, *i.e.* "The Story of a King, his Seven Viziers, his Son and his Favourite," written by one Sindibad,[1] said to have been chief of the Brahmans under Korech, third King of Northern India after Porus, the celebrated adversary of Alexander the Great.

Von Hammer's theory, as soon as advanced, was disputed by the still greater French Orientalist, Silvestre de Sacy, who (whilst allowing the possibility and even probability of the original Arabic compiler having used a slight thread of connecting narrative adapted from the external scheme of the Hezar Efsan, on which to string

[1] See Vol. V. p. 260, where it will be seen that Es Sindibad is given as the name of the sage who plays a principal part in the external fable of "The Malice of Women," the Arabic version of the aforesaid "Story of a King, his Seven Viziers, his Son and his Favourite."

the immense succession of fictions provided by himself and his successors) definitively establishes the fact that no trace whatever exists of any considerable body of præ-Mohammedan or non-Arabic fiction in the extant texts of the Thousand and One Nights. He points out that the language of the collection is in no respect classical, containing many words in common and modern (as opposed to literary) use, that it is generally of a character to be referred to the decadence of Arabic literature and that all the tales, even when dealing with events supposed to have occurred and persons to have dwelt in Persia, India and other non-Arabic countries and in præ-Mohammedan epochs, invariably, with the naïvest anachronism, confine themselves to depicting the inhabitants, manners and customs of such cities as Baghdad and Cairo and are throughout impregnated with the strongest and most zealous spirit of Mohammedanism, and especially that the men and manners described are almost exclusively those of the epoch of the Abbaside Khalifs. Galland himself, in his preface, attributes the work to an unknown Arabic author; and the Sheikh Ahmed Shirwani, editor of the unfinished Calcutta edition of 1814–18, states in his introduction his belief that the author was a Syrian Arab, who wrote in a simple conversational style, which was not of the purest. Von Hammer himself allows that the first complete version could not have been finished till the beginning of the eleventh century, and it therefore could not have been known either to Mesoudi or the author of the Fihrist. Relying upon these and other arguments of equal weight, M. de Sacy concludes that the book was

originally written in Syria, about five centuries ago, in the vulgar Arabic tongue; that it was left unfinished by the author or (more probably) authors, who had possibly adopted the framework of exterior or connecting narrative suggested by the Hezar Efsan, in the same manner as the scheme of the old Indian work of "Sindibad," already mentioned, was adopted by the authors of "The Seven Wise Masters," "Dolopathos," "Syntipas," etc., etc., as an excuse for the composition of works to all practical intent completely original; that the work was finished by other hands, probably copyists, who completed it by adding stories of foreign origin, such as Jelyaad and Shimas and The Malice of Women; that several persons undertook the task in company, each supplying tales of his own composition or transcription; and finally, in view of the general resemblance of the style to the modern Egyptian dialect and to the prevalence throughout of descriptions of modern Egyptian manners, that the work received its final revision at the hands of some Egyptian or Egyptians of the fifteenth century, the absence of any mention of firearms, tobacco and coffee forbidding to ascribe it to any more recent period.[1] M. de Sacy's opinion has now, I believe, been generally adopted by the Oriental scholars of Europe. The late eminent English

[1] This is a mistake of De Sacy's; tobacco is mentioned once and coffee and firearms several times. Some scholars hold that the passages in which this occurs have been interpolated by copyists; but it appears to me that this supposition is negatived (except in one instance) by the general character of the stories in question, which bear manifest signs of a comparatively modern origin.

Orientalist, Mr. Lane, whose death has been so grievous a loss to Arabic lexicography, at first seemed inclined to side with Von Hammer, but afterwards with certain reservations adopted De Sacy's views and declared that the Thousand and One Nights can only be said to be borrowed from the Hezar Efsan, in the same sense as that in which the Æneid is said to be borrowed from the Odyssey, suggesting (with great probability) that the actual name, "The Thousand and One Nights," was deliberately adopted, partly for the purpose of differentiating the work from the Arabic translation of the Hezar Efsan, which, as we learn from Mesoudi, was known as 'The Thousand Tales or Nights,' and partly to avoid the use of even numbers, always considered unlucky by the Arabs, or perhaps to constitute a specially auspicious title by the addition of the primary number one to the cabalistic number 1000.

The principal points upon which Mr. Lane differed from De Sacy were (1) the question whether the original work was the composition of one or of several persons, (2) the date and (3) the locale of the composition itself and of the definitive compilation or redaction to which it is generally agreed that it owes its present form. Mr. Lane was of opinion that the whole work was the composition of one person, who had re-written the old tales comprised in the collection and completed it by the addition of new stories composed or arranged by himself for the purpose. I believe I am correct in stating that Mr. Lane stood alone in holding this opinion and for my own part, I cannot understand how any one can

peruse the Arabic text of the work and fail to come to the conclusion that we are in presence, not of the homogeneous work of a single writer, but of a collection of separate stories, written in widely differing styles and bearing manifest signs of having been composed by many different authors at various times and under various circumstances. The difference of the language employed in the various parts of the collection, some tales or sets of tales, for instance, abounding in Persian, Turkish and other foreign or provincial words, whilst others are comparatively free from them, and the variety of the formulas and style, apparent to the observant reader, would alone, it seems to me, suffice to negative Mr. Lane's theory, to say nothing of the almost equally material fact that the various extant copies, both MS. and printed, of the work differ widely both in the outline and the detail of their contents. Again, Mr. Lane held that the composition of the work, in its earliest complete form, must be referred to a much later date than that attributed to it by De Sacy, to wit, the middle of the sixteenth century, and upon this point much is to be said. De Sacy abstained from setting out in detail his reasons for believing the work to have been composed in the fourteenth century, contenting himself with adducing, as his principal argument, the nature of the language or dialect in which it appears to be mainly written and certain peculiarities of diction which characterize the general style; but, as this (though possibly sufficient evidence in the case of a limited and thoroughly sifted subject such as Greek or Roman literature) can hardly be held to suffice, in

the absence of corroborative proof, when the question in dispute ranges over so wide an area as the boundless and comparatively unexplored fields of Oriental philology, it may be well, by way of endeavouring, in some measure, to ascertain the reasons unparticularized or but lightly hinted at by the great French scholar and without assuming definitively to pronounce upon the matter, to touch upon the principal points for and against his theory which have been raised by modern scholars or have occurred to myself in the course of my labours upon the foregoing translation.

As a first step towards any enquiry into the age and land of origin of the Thousand and One Nights, it is evident that we must endeavour to ascertain of what the original nucleus or primitive body of tales, upon which the complete work was built by aggregation and which, for the sake of convenience, I shall hereafter call "the original work," consisted; and to this end, our manifest course is to enquire which of the tales comprised in the complete collection are common to every copy known. Proceeding thus, we find that the following exist (with such unimportant differences only of general style and detail as warrant us in treating them as copies from one common original, owing their variations to the differing ages and nationalities of their respective transcribers), in the four printed editions, *i.e.* the two of Calcutta (1814–18 and 1839–42), that of Boulac and that of Breslau and (according to Caussin de Perceval, Gauttier, Habicht, Scott, Hammer-Purgstall, De Sacy and other scholars) in at least a dozen MS. copies, complete or fragmentary,

of the work, including that used by Galland. (In these copies, both printed and MS., the other portions of the collection differ widely, both in the number and nature of the tales contained in each and in the detail of the stories common to all, as will appear from a comparison of (*e.g.*) the Boulac Edition with that of Breslau and the Wortley-Montague MS. now in the Bodleian Library.)

1. Introduction (Story of King Shehriyar and his brother) and the incidental story (The Ox and the Ass).
2. The Merchant and the Genie and the three incidental stories.
3. The Fisherman and the Genie and the four incidental stories.
4. The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad and the six incidental stories.
5. The Three Apples.
6. Bedreddin Hassan.
7. The Hunchback and the eleven incidental stories.
8. Noureddin and Enis el Jelis.
9. Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar.

These form about an eighth part of the whole collection, and if we add the stories of Ghanim ben Eyoub, Kemerezzeman and Budour, The Enchanted Horse and Julnar, which occur, in substantially identical form, in all the editions and MSS. mentioned above, except the unfinished Calcutta edition of 1814–18 (from which, however, we see no reason to suppose that they would have been excluded, had the publication been completed), and we get what is evidently the nucleus or original of the work, comprising (roughly) a fifth part of the whole. The stories contained in this

portion, though bearing evident traces of the work of different authors, offer such general similarity in style and diction as to warrant us in supposing them to have been composed or arranged and adapted to the framework of the external fable by several persons of the same nationality acting in concert and at one and the same time. It is practically useless to enquire what portion of this original is a survival of the Hezar Efsan, as it is at once evident that such features of the old Pehlevi work as might possibly have been borrowed by the authors of the Thousand and One Nights must have been so disfeatured by the radical process of adaptation and remodelment to which they appear to have subjected all foreign material employed by them, as to defy identification: even in the Introduction, which is certainly (with the exception, perhaps, of the Enchanted Horse[1]) the oldest portion of the original, the remains of the old Persian cadre are evidently confined to the names of the principal personages (Shehriyar, Shahzeman, Shehrzad or Shirzad, Dunyazad or Dinarzad), the period (the reign

[1] The Enchanted Horse is probably the oldest story in the collection that cannot be traced to a separate origin: it appears to be of Persian extraction and may perhaps be a survival from the Hezar Efsan, in which connection it is worth while to note that, to the best of my knowledge, it is the only story in the whole work in which (except in the case of "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" and "I crave help from God the Supreme!" which occur once each only and which are probably interpolations) the common Muslim formulas, such as "There is no god but God," "We are God's and to Him we return," "I take refuge with God," etc., etc., which so abound in Arabic fiction proper, are conspicuous by their absence.

of a king of the Benou Sasan or Sassanians[1]), the localities (the islands, *i.e.* peninsulas, of India and China and the kingdom of Samarcand) and of the merest thread of incident whereon to string a fable wholly Muslim in colour and circumstance. The same remarks apply to the first story, that of the Merchant and the Genie, which is probably contemporary (or nearly so) with the Introduction, but contains no trace of præ-Mohammedan colour.

In enquiring into the age of this nucleus or original of the work, we are at once confronted by two dates, between which we must fix the period of its composition. In the Tailor's Story,[2] a speech of the meddlesome barber identifies the day of his adventure with the unfortunate young man of Baghdad as the 10th of the month Sefer, A.H. 653 (*i.e.* the 25th March, A.D. 1255), that is to say, in the 14th year of the reign of El Mustazim Billah, the last Khalif of the house of Abbas, and only three years before the storm of Baghdad by Hulagou and the extinction of the Khalifate. This date is that given by three texts, *i.e.* those of Calcutta (1839–42) and Breslau and Galland's MS., which agree in making the barber, by way of confirmation, date his own story[3] in the reign of the penultimate Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, El Mustensir Billah (father of El Mustazim), A.H. 623–640

[1] Queen Humai belonged to the earlier dynasty of the Kayanians; but her father (and husband) Behman was known as Abou Sasan or father of Sasan, he having a son of that name. Hence perhaps the confusion of dynastic names.

[2] Vol. I. p. 273.

[3] Vol. I. p. 285.

(A.D. 1225–1242), and state that, after his expulsion from Baghdad by the latter, he did not return till he heard he was dead and another Khalif (*i.e.* El Mustazim) come to the throne. The Calcutta Edition of 1814–18 is silent as to both date and reign, whilst the Boulac Edition gives the former as A.H. 763 (A.D. 1362), a time when both Baghdad and Bassora, the two cities in which the scene of the tale is laid, were in possession of the successors of Genghiz Khan, and makes the latter the (six months') reign of the parricide El Muntesir Billah, A.H. 247–8 (A.D. 861–2). The first is an evident error, as the barber is described in the sequel of the Tailor's story as an old man past his ninetieth year and he speaks of himself in his own story as already an old man at the time of his adventure with the Khalif in question; so that, even if we suppose him to have been then sixty years old, this would only bring us back (after making some necessary allowance for the space which must have elapsed between the flight of the lame youth from Baghdad and his encounter with his persecutor at Bassora[1]) to (say) the year of the Hegira 743 (A.D. 1343), at earliest, or nearly a hundred years after the fall of the Khalifate. The second date is also a manifest error, as, putting aside the fact that the time covered by the story of the barber must be estimated at (at least)

[1] The barber says (Vol. I. p. 316), "I left Baghdad on his account and wandered in many countries till I came to this city and happened on him with you." It may be well to mention here that the city in question is called "Bassora" in the Calcutta (unfinished) Edition and that of Breslau, but by Galland's MS. and the Boulac and Macnaghten Editions either a city of China or of Kashghar.

some years, the Khalif who banished the barber is described by the latter as a prince "who loved the poor and needy and companied with the learned and the pious," a description which, though exactly tallying with the character of the good and wise El Mustensir, as given by Arab historians, is in no way applicable to the melancholy madman El Muntesir.[1] It may, therefore, be safely assumed that the date (A.D. 1255) given by Galland's MS. and by the Breslau and Macnaghten Editions is the correct one. For the reasons above stated, the Hunchback's adventure can hardly be dated earlier than ten years later, *i.e.* A.D. 1265, or seven years after the fall of Baghdad,[2] and in view of the fact (inexplicable, if we suppose the story to have been written at or soon after this date) of the absence of any reference to the terrible event of the sack of the capital by the Tartars and of the occupation, in immediate succession, of Bassora and the other towns of Irak Arabi and Mesopotamia, events which must for a time, at least, have agitated the whole Muslim world, we may fairly suppose some half century or more to have intervened before the composition of the story. This brings us to the second decade of the fourteenth century as the earliest period at which the

[1] The mistake probably arose from the similarity of the two names, which in the Arabic character might easily be read or written, one for the other, by a careless copyist.

[2] The words (which the Breslau edition and Galland's MS. put into the mouth of the barber), "the Khalif was *then* in Baghdad," would seem to imply that the story was written after the fall of the Khalifate; but this is the only vestige of an allusion to the fact.

Hunchback's story, and therefore the rest of the original part of the work, (of which it may be taken as a fair specimen,) could have existed in its present form, and Galland's MS., which is stated by a note appended thereto to have been read by a Christian scribe of Tripoli or Syria (who wishes long life to its possessor),[1] in the year 1548, supplies us with the second date above mentioned, *i.e.* that of the latest period at which it could have been written or rearranged. I have said that I consider the story of the Hunchback fairly representative of the original work, so far as age is concerned, and it would not be difficult approximately to prove, from internal evidence, that the other stories are practically contemporary with it. For instance, the introduction, in the Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, of the three Calenders (*Carendeliyeh*), an order of religious mendicants, so called after their founder, the Sheikh Carendel,[2] not instituted (or at least not known under that name) until the early part of the thirteenth century, and the absence of any explanation of the name (such as would probably have been volunteered by the story-teller, had the order been, at the date of writing, of recent institution), assign the composition of this story to the same date at earliest as that of the Hunchback, as does also the mention in the same tale of Sultani peaches, *i.e.* peaches from Sultaniyeh in Persian Irak, a town not founded till the middle of the thirteenth century; and in

[1] Not its *author*, as erroneously stated by Caussin de Perceval, who draws from this misreading the inference that the work was composed in the early half of the 16th century. [2] A corruption of Khalender?

Bedreddin Hassan the mention of a cannon[1] (*midfaa*), by way of metaphor, warrants us in drawing a like conclusion as to the age of this latter story. On the other hand, the absence from the stories of the original work of all mention of coffee (which, according to Abdulcadir el Ansari, was first drunk in Arabia early in the fifteenth century and the use of which spread all over the East within the next hundred years[2]) would prove that it must have been composed before A.D. 1500, at latest. Again (except in the story of Bedreddin Hassan, where, as before mentioned, the passage in question is not improbably apocryphal), firearms are nowhere named or alluded to in the original work, although cannon are several times referred to in the later stories of the collection. Cannon were first used in Europe at the battle of Crecy in 1346, but the researches of modern scholars have proved that their use was known to the Arabs nearly a century and a half earlier and was perhaps learnt from them by the Crusaders.[3] Gunpowder is believed to have

[1] This mention of cannon does not, however, occur in three out of the five texts upon which my remarks are founded, and may, therefore, very possibly be the interpolation of a later copyist, but the general style of the story of Bedreddin prohibits us from ascribing to it an earlier origin than that of the rest of the original work. See post as to the date of introduction of firearms into the East.

[2] According to a Turkish writer (the author of the *Jihan Numa* or World-demonstrator) coffee was discovered in A.H. 656 (A.D. 1258) by a holy man of Mocha and used as a remedy for the itch.

[3] Edward III. is said to have adopted the use of cannon on the report of the Earls of Derby and Salisbury, who were present at the siege of Algesiras in 1342, when the Arabs repelled the beleaguering army of Alfonso XI. by means of cannon, which wrought immense havoc among the besiegers.

been known to the Chinese (and probably also to the Indians) from time immemorial, though they did not employ it for warlike purposes, except by way of mines and war-rockets or fusees, which latter the Arabs (who under the early Khalifs were in constant communication with both China and India[1]) appear to have early adopted from them and (in all probability) used at the destructive sieges of Mecca in the years A.D. 683 and 691–2.[2] The Greek fire, mentioned by Joinville and other Christian historians of the Crusades and described as exploding in mid-air with a terrible noise, may be reasonably supposed to have been rather some war-rocket of this kind than the (incendiary) composition of naphtha, etc., known by the name. According to Arab chroniclers, bombards or wooden cannon were used at the siege of a town in Africa as early as A.D. 1205, and Ibn Khaldoun and other historians testify that the use of firearms became general among the Moors of Northern Africa and Spain by

[1] Sind and Chinese Tartary formed part of the empire of the Ommiade Khalifs and after the conquest, in the first century of the Hegira, of Turkestan, regular commercial communication was established with China by the overland caravan route from Aleppo through Samarcand. Diplomatic relations, also, were early established between the successors of Mohammed and the sovereigns of Cathay, and the Khalif El Mensour (second of the Abbaside dynasty) was on such terms of alliance with the Emperor Sou-Tsong (a prince of the great Thang dynasty, whose reign was glorified by the most famous of Chinese poets, Li-tai-pé, the Hafiz of the Flowery Land) as to despatch to his aid against a rebel a succour of four thousand Arab troops, who afterwards settled in China, where their descendants are, it is said, still to be traced.

[2] See note, Vol. III. p. 194.

the end of the 13th century. The "perfervidum ingenium" of the subtle and keen-witted Arab, quickened into abnormal productivity by the religious and political system of Islam, so well suited to the character of the race, carried him, as regarded the arts and sciences, far in advance of his European contemporaries, and if the inhabitants of the metropolitan provinces[1] of the Khalifate did not perhaps altogether keep pace, in re militari, at least, with their more adventurous Spanish and African brethren, there can be little doubt that they became acquainted with the use of firearms long before it was known in Europe; but, even if we suppose the introduction of the new weapons to have been simultaneous in the two continents, the absence of all authentic mention of them would limit the most recent date to which it is possible to ascribe the definitive composition of the original work to the middle of the fourteenth century.

Among other arguments that have been put forward in support of the theory referring the composition of the original to a later date, it has been conjectured that the colours of the fish in the story of the Enchanted Youth were suggested by the yellow, blue and red turbans worn by the Jews, Christians and Samaritans of Egypt, in obedience to an edict, issued early in the fourteenth century, of the Memlouk Sultan Mohammed ibn Kelaoun and that the story-teller appropriated the colour red to the fish into which the Magian inhabitants of the City of the Black Islands had been transformed, because the Samaritan religion (as described by an Arab writer) was

[1] *i.e.* Irak Arabi, Irak Farsi, Mesopotamia, Syria, etc.

a mixture of Judaism and Magism; but the theorist forgot that the enforced wearing of distinctive colours by the non-Muslim subjects of the Mohammedan empire dates from the taking of Jerusalem in A.D. 636 by the Khalif Omar ben el Khettab, whose ordinance nearly two centuries later Haroun er Reshid revived, commanding the Jews to wear a yellow, the Christians a blue and the Magians a black galloon on their surcoats, and the red colour given by the story-teller to the fishy representatives of the latter sect was probably suggested by that of the fire worshipped by them, the colour white being that of the Ommiade dynasty and having been from time immemorial appropriated to the true-believer. It has also been argued that the occurrence in Bedreddin Hassan of the word *sahib* (lit. friend or comrade, but colloquially equivalent to our "Sir"), as applied to the Vizier Shemseddin, and the use of the word *midfaa* (cannon), said not to have been employed in that sense in Egypt until the year 1383, prove this tale to have been composed after the end of the fourteenth century, at which time the aforesaid title is asserted to have been first applied to viziers; but both these objections are also founded upon error, as it appears from the historians Mirkhond and Ibn el Athir that the title *Sahib* was given to Ismail ibn Ebbad, the great and good Vizier of the Buyide Prince Fekhreddauleh, who died A.D. 995, and the word *midfaa*, used in the contested sense, is found in a recipe for the preparation of gunpowder given by an Arabic MS. of the thirteenth century (discovered by M. Reinaud in the Royal Library of St. Petersburg), in which the text is

explained and confirmed by an illustration showing the gunner firing a ball from the *midfaa* or hand-cannon, by means of a flame applied to the touch-hole. Another objection is founded upon the anachronism alleged to be committed in most of the stories of the original in the application of the title of Sultan, which is stated not to have come into use as applied to sovereign princes until after the twelfth century; but this argument in its turn appears to be groundless, as the title was first assumed[1] by the Ghaznevide prince Mehmoud ben Sebektigin (as also by a Buyide prince) early in the eleventh century, and repeated instances of this use of the word Sultan occur in the ancient Arab historians, *e.g.* Et Teberi, who lived in the ninth century and who not unfrequently applies the title (which properly belongs to a viceroy or sovereign prince invested with the *temporal* power only, to the exclusion of the spiritual) to the various Khalifs, as also does another ancient writer, cited by Ibn Khellikan. Yet another argument, put forward as tending to prove that the collection dates from the end of the fifteenth century at earliest, is the fact that the women figuring in the stories, even those of high rank and repute, are frequently represented as uncovering their faces before strange men and otherwise behaving with more licence and immodesty than is recorded of Muslim females of an earlier age and that Es Suyouti, a writer who flourished at the period above named, expressly complains of the loose and immodest carriage of the (Egyptian) women of his time. Complaints of this

[1] According to the historian Khundemir.

kind, however, are found in earlier historians than Es Suyouti, *e.g.* Ibn el Athir before quoted, who flourished at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, and who mentions the (to the Muslim Puritan) shameful custom of going abroad with unveiled faces, that prevailed among the women of Northern Africa (even to those belonging to the royal household), under the rule of the Almoravides, in the early part of the eleventh century. The above are the more cogent of the arguments that have been advanced in support of the theory of the late date of composition of the original work: others are founded mainly upon doubtful particularities of manners and customs and discrepancies of reckoning and description (almost certainly attributable to the carelessness or ignorance of transcribers or of the persons from whose dictation they wrote), and seem to me to carry little weight, especially when allowance is made for the close similarity (conceded by the advocates of the theory in question) of the manners and customs of the metropolitan countries of the Muslim empire (and particularly of Irak Arabi, under the Khalifs of Baghdad), to those of Cairo, under the fainéant princes of the second Abbaside dynasty, and the well-known tendency of successive copyists gradually to corrupt a work handed down in MS. by the introduction, conscious or unconscious, of names and details belonging to the language, manners and customs of their own time;[1] suffice

[1] A comparison of the Boulac and Macnaghten Editions with that of Breslau (admittedly, with the exception of the Wortley Montague MS., the latest of the known texts of the complete work), will show how far this gradual invasion of corruption and alteration can extend.

it to say that it seems to me, in the highest degree, improbable that the stories should (as is contended) have been composed by an Egyptian of the sixteenth century, (*i.e.* after the Turkish conquest in 1517), and that yet no mention, direct or indirect, should be found in them of any of the Memlouk Sultans or fainéant Khalifs or indeed of any sovereign of Egypt (Khalif or Sultan) later than the Eyoubite Saladin at the end of the twelfth century.

As for the contrary theory of the remote origin of the work, it is, I think, now pretty generally allowed that De Sacy satisfactorily disposed of Von Hammer's arguments; but, since the date of the controversy, fresh evidence has been adduced in its support. This consists of a passage from the great work of the Arab historian of Spain, Aboulabbas Ahmed ben Mohammed el Meccari, entitled "Windwafts of Perfume from the branches of Andalusia (Spain) the Blooming" (A.D. 1628–9), to the following effect. I translate directly from the Arabic text as edited by the greatest (since De Sacy) of modern Arabic scholars, the late M. Dozy.

"Ibn Saïd (may God have mercy on him!) sets forth in his book El Muhella bi-s-shaar,[1] quoting from El Curtubi, the story of the building of the Houdej[2] in the Garden[3] of Cairo, the which was of the magnificent pleasaunces of the Fatimite Khalifs, the rare of ordinance and surpassing,

[1] This title is wrongly cited by El Meccari or perhaps disfigured by some copyist. See post.

[2] *Houdej* means "camel-litter," and this name was probably given to the palace in question in compliment to the Bedouin favourite for whom it was built.

[3] *i.e.* the island Er Rauzeh.

to wit, that the Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkham-illah let build it for a Bedouin woman, the love of whom had gotten the mastery of him, in the neighbourhood of the Chosen Garden[1] and used to resort often thereto and was slain, as he went thither; and it ceased not to be a pleasuring-place for the Khalifs after him. The folk abound in stories of the Bedouin maid and Ibn Meyyah of the sons of her uncle[2] and what hangs thereby of the mention of El Aamir, so that the tales told of them on this account became like unto the story of El Bettal[3] and the Thousand Nights and One Night and what resembleth them."

Aboulhusn Ali Ibn Saïd ben Mousa el Ghernati,[4] a celebrated Spanish historian, poet and (especially) topographer, was born at Ghernateh (Granada) A.D. 1218 and died at Tunis A.D. 1286. He had travelled in Egypt and lived at Cairo in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the above passage, which occurs in a description of the latter city, is quoted by El Meccari from a work of his which is not now extant,[5] so that it is impossible to verify the citation. The surname El Curtubi[6] was common to several Spanish-Arabic authors, but the one from whom Ibn Saïd in his turn quotes is apparently Abou Jaafer ibn Abdulhecc el Khezraji,[7] author of a history of the Khalifs. He flourished in the middle of the twelfth century, but no work of his is, to the best of my knowledge, extant

[1] Apparently a royal pleasure-garden situate on the island.
[2] *i.e.* her kinsmen.
[3] See Vol. VIII. p. 137, note 1.
[4] The Granadan.
[5] Hajji Khelfeh makes no mention of it.
[6] The Cordovan.
[7] As to whom and whose works Hajji Khelfeh is silent.

for reference. On the strength of this passage, it is argued that the collection existed, as a well-known work, in the middle of the twelfth century, and this argument is supported by the statement that the same quotation (from Ibn Saïd) occurs in the Khitet of El Mecrizi, the Egyptian historian and topographer, who died A.D. 1444; but the evidence adduced is deprived of much (if not all) of its value by the fact that the passage in the Khitet relates (as I find by reference to a MS. copy of that work in the British Museum) to the Thousand Nights, *not* the Thousand and One Nights. The following is a translation of the passage in question:

"The Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah set apart, in the neighbourhood of the Chosen Garden of the island Er Rauzeh, a place for his beloved the Bedouin maid [Aaliyeh[1]], which he named El Houdej. Quoth Ibn Saïd, in the book El Muhella bi-l-ashar,[2] from the History of El Curtubi, concerning the traditions of the folk of the story of the Bedouin maid and Ibn Menah [Meyyah[1]] of the sons of her uncle and what hangs thereby of the mention of the Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah, so that their traditions [or tales] upon the garden became like unto El Bettal and the *Thousand Nights* and what resembleth them."

El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah (A.D. 1101–29) was the seventh Fatimite Khalif of Egypt, and had El Mecrizi mentioned the Thousand Nights and One Night, as he mentions the Thousand Nights, this would have been pretty conclusive proof of the existence of the former collection in the

[1] So called in a later passage.
[2] *i.e.* The adorned with verses.

thirteenth, if not in the twelfth century; but, as the passage stands, the work referred to appears to be the lost Arabic version of the lost Hezar Efsan. El Mecrizi, who lived but a hundred and fifty years after Ibn Saïd, is much less likely than El Meccari, whom more than twice that time separated from the age of the Granadan historian, to have erred in citing from the latter's work, and the reasons before stated in support of the theory that the Thousand and One Nights were originally composed in the fourteenth century appear to me to preclude the possibility that the discrepancy in the two passages quoted is owing to an error on the part of the author or copyist of the Khitet and that the work referred to in the latter as the Thousand Nights could have been the extant collection. The fact that Hajji Khelfeh, in his great Bibliographical Dictionary, composed at the end of the seventeenth century, names (and only names) the Thousand Nights and makes no mention of the Thousand and One, which has been adduced as an argument in favour of the probability of the identity of the two works, seems to me rather to tell against the theory, as it is evident, from the note appended to Galland's MS. and from El Meccari's History, that the collection known as the Thousand and One Nights bore that name long before Hajji Khelfeh's time, whilst the latter, with the proverbial contempt of the Oriental (and too often, indeed of the European) savant for romantic literature, would have been almost certain to discard the comparatively modern Thousand and One Nights as a mere collection of "silly stories" (to quote the words of the author of the Fihrist

apropos of the Hezar Efsan), whilst conceding to the sheer antiquity of the Thousand Nights the barren honour of a bare mention in his learned pages.

The third question, to wit, the nationality of the person or persons to whom the original work is due, appears to me to have been generally confounded by the opponents of De Sacy's theory with that of the supposed reviser or editor of the completed collection, who is pretty generally allowed to have been an Egyptian, as suggested by the great French Orientalist, and no considerable objection appears to have been raised to the latter's conclusion that the original work was written in Syria; but from internal evidence it seems probable that one or more of its authors belonged to Irak Arabi or Mesopotamia and especially to Mosul, of the peculiar dialect of which place (as well as of Aleppo) the composition, in the opinion of competent judges, bears considerable trace, and the very objections raised, as before stated, to De Sacy's theory of the age of the original, on the ground that it is characterized by the employment of names and titles which were not in use in Egypt until a later period than that assigned by internal evidence to the work, but which appear to have been early employed in the disputed sense in the metropolitan or home provinces of the Khalifate, seem to me to tell strongly in favour of this latter hypothesis.

After its original composition, which (as I have said) I believe De Sacy to have been justified in assigning to the 14th century, the work appears to have been gradually swollen to its present bulk by the addition,

at various times and by various hands, of tales and anecdotes of all kinds and drawn from a variety of sources, some having been expressly composed or re-written for the purpose, whilst others are in whole or in part borrowed or adapted from independent works. Some of these additions, such as The Malice of Women (almost the only survival in which story of the old Book of Sindibad appears to be the framework, the short stories for the introduction of which it serves as an excuse being, with occasional exceptions, purely Arabic in character and bearing signs of a comparatively modern redaction, subject, of course, to the limitation implied in the absence of any mention of firearms or coffee), Jelyaad and Shimas (apparently an old Indian story which has undergone comparatively little alteration) and Seif el Mulouk are proved to have existed in an independent form before the middle of the eleventh century. The Queen of the Serpents is also, in all probability, a very old story of Persian origin, largely altered (especially in the two incidental tales, the Adventures of Beloukiya[1] and the Story of Janshah) by the Arab author or authors in the process of adaptation to Muslim manners and customs, and the History of Gherib and his brother Agib is, to all appearance, a rearrangement of some old Bedouin romance,[2] notwithstanding the mention[3] therein

[1] Taken, so far at least as the main incidents extend, bodily from the Annals of Et Teberi.

[2] The frequent occurrence of Persian names (e.g. *Kundemir*, King of Cufa, *Merdas*, Chief of the Benou Kehtan, the Arabs *par excellence*, *Jawamerd* and *Courejan*, vizier and son of *Julned* ben *Kerker*, King of Yemen, etc.) may perhaps be taken to indicate a Persian Muslim as the composer or arranger of the story.

[3] Vol. VI. pp. 150–1.

of arquebuses, by which word, in deference to lexicographic authority, I have rendered the modern Arabic *bundukiyat*, although it is not improbable that it was inserted by some modern copyist in the place of *benadic* or *kisiy el benadic*, pellet-bows, as opposed to quarrel-bows (*khetatif*).[1] The word *bundukiyeh* (sing. of *bundukiyat*) means literally an implement for throwing pellets (*bunduc*) of clay or lead, and (although I cannot find any example of its use in any sense other than that of "gun") was doubtless originally synonymous with *caus el bunduc* (sing. of *kisiy el benadic*), a stone or pellet bow, as was the earlier name of the hand-gun, *bunduc*, so used metonymically for *caus el bunduc*. The names of the old *armes de jet* were, on the introduction of firearms, transferred to the new weapons, e.g. *midfaa*, a cannon, lit. a pushing implement, hence a spring and (by metonymy) the tube in which the spring worked, a spring-gun, even as the word *arquebuse* itself appears to have been originally applied to the *arbalest* or pellet-bow, *arcubalista*, from which latter word or the Italian arcibugio (bow-hole or tube) it is much more probable that it had its derivation than from the German *haken-büchse* or the Dutch *hacklus*.[2] The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor, though forming part of almost all known copies of the complete

[1] The word *khetatif* usually means "hooks"; but the context shows that it is here applied, by a common figure of synecdoche, to the quarrel or hook-bow.

[2] A curious confirmation of this reading is found in De Sacy's Chrestomathie Arabe, where, in quoting from a poem composed in honour of the Buyide prince Seifeddauleh by the great Cufan poet El Mutenebbi (A.D. 915–965), he renders the words *kisiy el benadic*

collection, are, as I have before observed, an independent work and are so treated by the Editor of the (unfinished) Calcutta edition of 1814–18, who inserts them at the end of his two hundredth (and last) night, dividing them, not into nights, but into seven tales or voyages, as in Galland's MS. Some Oriental scholars are of opinion that this tale is of Persian extraction and describes the voyages (attributed, as is often the case in popular tales, to a single person) of a colony of Persians, who are known to have of old settled on the East Coast of Africa, to Ceylon, Sumatra and other islands of the Indian Sea; but, whatever may have been the primitive derivation of the incidents described in the work known to us as the Voyages of Sindbad, it appears almost certain that it was suggested by and mainly composed of extracts and adaptations from the writings of well-known Arab geographers and cosmographers, such as El Edrisi, El Cazwini and Ibn el Werdi, who flourished respectively in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, and it may, therefore, in all likelihood, be attributed to an Arab author of (at earliest) the beginning of the fifteenth century. The History of King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan, with the exception of the interpolated story of Taj el Mulouk and that (probably Egyptian) of Aziz and Azizeh, may probably be attributed

(pellet-bows) "arquebuses," thus showing that he considered the two meanings synonymous. The verse in which the words occur runs thus (the poet is speaking of the military skill of his hero), "The great mangonels in his hand attain minute objects (*i.e.* marks) such as baffle the pellet-bows."

to a native of Syria, where the memories of the Ommiade Khalifs (with anecdotes of whom, to the exclusion of their rivals and successors of the house of Abbas, the story abounds), long tenaciously survived, and appears to have been written before the introduction of firearms, although the gross anachronisms[1] with which it swarms would seem to point to a later date. Uns el Wujoud affords internal evidence of Egyptian and comparatively modern origin and is one of the stories that are known to exist in an independent form. The same may be said of The Rogueries of Delileh and the Adventures of Quicksilver Ali (practically one and the same tale), in which the constant employment of Egyptian words, such as *kaak* (gimblet-cakes), *khelbous* (buffoon), *mehremeh* (for *mendil*, handkerchief), etc., etc., is especially notable. The mention of the firing of cannon, as a signal or salute, by the Genoese Corsair-captain[2] in Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat brings the date of this story down to the fifteenth century, whilst the anachronisms (*e.g.* the making the tomb of the dervish-saint Abdulcadir el Jilani, who died in the latter part of the twelfth century, exist at Baghdad in the time of Haroun er Reshid), which characterize it, point to its having been composed at a comparatively recent period, when the memories of the time of which it treats had become confused, and the author would appear, from internal evidence, to have been a foreigner to Baghdad, probably an inhabitant of

[1] *e.g.* the mention, as a well-known text-book, of the Simples of Ibn Beitar, who died A.D. 1243.

[2] Vol. III. p. 306.

Cairo. Ardeshir and Heyat en Nufous, as well as its apparent prototype Taj el Mulouk, would seem to be a story of Persian origin, composed or remodelled shortly after the date of the original work by an Arab of the metropolitan provinces, and the same remark applies to Hassan of Bassora, which is apparently (in part at least) an adaptation of Janshah. Ali Shar and Zumurrud may perhaps also be referred to a like date and origin, but Taweddud is probably the work of some Egyptian savant of the Shafiy school, who used a conventional cadre of story, with the obbligato laying of scene in the court and time of Er Reshid, to exhibit his learning, the comparatively advanced views of anatomy, medicine, astronomy and other sciences pointing to a modern origin and the extracts (inter alia) from Coptic almanacks[1] demonstrating, beyond reasonable doubt, the Egyptian nationality of the author. The City of Brass is in part a transcript or adaptation from Et Teberi and other Arabic historians and topographers, and the gross anachronisms which occur in it, (such, for instance, as the making the præ-Islamitic poet En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani a contemporary of the Ommiade Khalif Abdulmelik ben Merwan (A.D. 685–705) and attributing to the same time the discovery of an *ancient* tablet[2] deploring the fate of "him who dwelt in Tenjeh (Tangiers) whilere," *i.e.* the last Edriside sovereign of Northern Africa, who was, early in the tenth century, dethroned and put to death, with all the members of his family,

[1] Vol. IV. pp. 364-6. [2] Vol. V. p. 243.

by the soi-disant Mehdi, Ubeidallah, founder of the Fatimite dynasty), point to its having been composed by a foreigner, probably a native of Spain or Northern Africa, at a comparatively late period. The mention, in Jouder and his Brothers, Kemerezzeman and the Jeweller's Wife and Marouf, of the Sheikh el Islam, an office said to have been first instituted by Mohammed II. in the fifteenth century, after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, brings the date of the composition of these stories down to the early part of the sixteenth century, after the establishment of the Turkish power in Egypt, and the second (Kemerezzeman and the Jeweller's Wife) is probably the latest of the three, coffee being mentioned in it with a frequency which shows that it had, at the time of the composition of the tale, been long in common use. In this latter story also occurs[1] the only mention in the Nights of a watch and this may perhaps be taken as corroborative evidence of the comparative modernity of the tale, although the inference by no means follows as a matter of course. According to Beckmann,[2] the first known mention of a watch occurs in a sonnet of the Italian poet Visconti in the last decade of the fifteenth century, but, as the Arabs early brought the clepsydra or water-clock[3] to perfection (*teste* that said to have been presented by Er Reshid to Charlemagne and others yet more elaborate mentioned in Oriental works), and are known to have used weight-clocks striking the

[1] Vol. IX. p. 180. [2] History of Inventions.

[3] Of which, by the way, it is remarkable that no mention is made in the Nights.

hours, at least as early as the twelfth century,[1] whereas such clocks were, as far as can be ascertained, not introduced into Europe till nearly two centuries later,[2] to say nothing of the probability (supported by no despicable arguments) of their having been the first to apply the principle of the pendulum to horology,[3] it seems only reasonable to suppose that they invented watches (or portable clocks) at a proportionately early period, say at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. Abdallah ben Fazil and his Brothers (apparently a modern and greatly improved version or adaptation of the Eldest Lady's Story in Vol. I.) is also a story of non-Chaldæan authorship, as is manifest from mistakes such as the supposing El Kerkh (the well-known principal quarter of Baghdad) to be a city on the Euphrates, and the use of Egyptian words (such as *derfil* for *dukhes*, dolphin) stamps it as of Egyptian origin, whilst the mention of coffee establishes its comparative modernity. The same remarks apply to Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's daughter and the Haunted House in Baghdad, in both of which

[1] By the early part of the thirteenth century they had brought weight-clocks to great perfection, as is evident from (inter alia) the account given by Trithemius of the elaborate astronomical "horologe" presented by the Eyoubite Sultan El Melik el Kamil of Egypt to the Emperor Frederick II. in the year 1232, and which not only struck the hours and told the day, month and year, but (like the Strasburg machine) showed the phases of the sun and moon and the revolutions of the other planets.

[2] It seems doubtful whether the statement that a clock was in 1288 erected at Westminster can be received as authentic.

[3] This invention is generally ascribed to Richard Harris, A.D. 1641.

coffee[1] is introduced, whilst the mention[2] of tobacco (which was introduced into Europe by Jean Nicot in 1560 and the use of which did not probably become common in the East until (at earliest) the next century), stamps the (Egyptian) story of Aboukir and Abousir as the most modern of the whole collection. Zein el Mewasif is also an undoubtedly Egyptian and modern story, as well as the story of the Two Abdallahs, though the former appears to be somewhat less recent than the latter in date, whilst the Merchant of Oman, Ibrahim and Jemileh[3] and Aboulhusn of Khorassan, all three of which are free from the gross anachronisms and historical and topographical errors that characterize so many of the stories whose scene is laid in Baghdad in the reign of Er Reshid and his immediate successors, may therefore, in the absence of any distinctive sign of foreign origin, be supposed to have been written by a native of one of the metropolitan provinces of the Khalifate, soon after the composition of the original work.

Many of the short stories and anecdotes of historical places and persons, Khalifs, Sultans, princes, princesses

[1] I may as well mention here that the word *cahweh* (coffee) occurs in several other places in the Nights, of which I have taken no notice, as it is evident, from the context, that the word is either a copyist's interpolation or is to be taken in the old Arabic sense of "wine." The word (*cahweh*) appears to have been one of the most ancient of the Arabic names of wine and is found, in that sense, in many early poets, such as Abou Nuwas and others; taken literally, it means "an excitant" or "appetizer," and in this sense the name was, on the introduction of coffee, transferred from wine to the new stimulant.

[2] The only one in the Nights.

[3] These first two stories appear to be the composition of the same author.

and men of letters and poets, appear to have been transcribed or adapted from the works of well-known historians and geographers and from such famous collections as the Helbeit el Kumeit and the Kitab el Aghani. For instance, the story of Yehya ben Khalid and the Forger (Vol. IV.) is found (in almost exactly the same terms) in Fekhreddin Razi, the anecdote of Omar ben el Khettab and the poor woman (Vol. II. pp. 88 and 89) as well as the story of the Muslim Champion (Vol. V.) and others in Et Teberi, The City of Irem (Vol. III.) in El Mesoudi, The City of Lebtait (Vol. III.) in a Spanish-Arabic historian, The Khalif El Mamoun and the Pyramids (Vol. IV.) and The Justice of Providence (Vol. V.) as well as certain parts of the Voyages of Sindbad and Seif el Mulouk, in El Cazwini, Younus the Scribe (Vol. VI.), Musab ben ez Zubeir (Vol. IV.) and The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh (Vol. VI. p. 208) in the Kitab el Aghani, Ibrahim of Mosul and the Devil (Vol. VI.) in the Helbeit el Kumeit, The Devout Prince (Vol. IV.) in Ibn el Jauzi, Ibrahim ben el Mehdi and the Barber Surgeon (Vol. III.) in the Spanish historian Ibrahim el Andalousi, The Imam Abou Yousuf with Er Reshid and Jaafer (Vol. IV.) in the Mirat el Jenan, Abdurrehman the Moor's Story of the Roc (Vol. IV.) in Ibn el Werdi, etc., etc. To conclude this cursory sketch, I have but to mention that the fables and apologues, which form another considerable feature of the work, have apparently been added to the collection from time to time and appear to be mostly derived from Greek, Persian and Indian sources, such as the Hitopadesa, the Fables of Æsop and Kelileh wa Dimneh.

II.

I have already cited Mr. Lane's opinion that the Thousand and One Nights can only be said to be borrowed from the Hezar Efsan in the sense in which the Æneid is said to be borrowed from the Odyssey; but even this comparison does not seem to me to do justice to the originality of the Arabic work, as there is certainly no trace in it of an influence exerted by any Persian writer in a similar manner to that exercised by Homer over Virgil; and putting aside the purely Arabic element, the foreign portion of the work appears to have been taken quite as freely from other sources, such as Greek, Indian and (perhaps) even Chinese and Japanese, as from Persian. Of this, well-known instances exist in the evident affinity of the incident of the cannibal giant in the Third Voyage of Sindbad and in Seif el Mulouk with the story of Ulysses and Polyphemus, and of the Arabian traveller's escape from the underground burial-place with the similar passage in Pausanias, relating the deliverance of the Messenian leader Aristomenes; in the stories of the Barber's Fifth Brother, the Prince and the Afrit's Mistress, the Merchant's Wife and the Parrot, the Fakir and the Pot of Butter, etc., which have been traced back to the Hitopadesa, Panchatantra, Kathasaritsagara, etc., in the apologue of the Hedgehog and the Pigeons, which has its apparent prototype in stories common to the Sanscrit, Chinese and Japanese languages, in the version of the legend of Susannah and the Elders, evidently borrowed from the Apocryphal Book of Daniel, in the fables of

the Sparrow and the Eagle, the Cat and the Crow, the Falcon and the Birds, etc., apparently derived from Æsop (with whom, by the way, the celebrated Oriental fabulist Lucman or Lokman, quoted in the Koran, is supposed to be identical, though by some Arabic authors he is stated to have been a black slave, living in the time of David, and by others an Arab of the time of Job and a kinsman of that patriarch), and in numerous other fables, parables and legends of saints and hermits, evidently referable to Christian, Jewish, Brahman or Buddhist sources.

Nevertheless, numerous as are the instances in which the authors of the Thousand and One Nights have drawn upon foreign sources, the general tone of the work is distinctly and almost exclusively Arabic, and Arabic of Syria, Egypt and Chaldæa (or Irak-Arabi); whether the scene is laid in Persia, India, Anatolia, Armenia, Arabia, Greece, France, Genoa, Ceylon, Tartary, China or any other actually existing country or in such fantastic and imaginary portions of the ideal world as Jinnistan, the Mountain Caf, the White, Blue, Black or Green Countries, the Camphor, the Ebony, the Khalidan or the Wac-Wac Islands, and whether the persons who figure in the stories are men or Jinn, Afrits or Angels, Indians or Chinese, Christians or Jews, Magians or Idolaters, the scenery and manners described, the persons, things and way of thought and action are distinctly those of such cities as Baghdad, Bassora, Mosul and Cairo. Even in tales like the Queen of the Serpents, whose Persian origin is unmistakable and whose scene is laid in a remote præ-Mohammedan age, the Arab author has apparently most

carefully everywhere substituted, for the traces of Zendic or Sabæan formulas and doctrines that may be supposed to have existed in the original, the distinctive legends and catchwords of the Muslim faith and cosmogony, whilst avoiding a too obvious exposure to the charge of anachronism by such expedients as the substitution of Solomon and Abraham for the greater prophet whose name is so constantly in the mouth of the personages of Arab fiction. And this adaptation of the scenes and persons of foreign countries to the illustration and glorification of Arab thought and Arab personality is still more accentuated by the fact that the men and manners represented are for the most part limited to those of the period of the early Baghdadi Khalifs of the house of Abbas, commencing with the second of that dynasty, Abou Jaafer el Mensour (A.D. 754) and practically ending with the sixteenth, his great-grandson's great-grandson Aboulabbas el Mutezid Billah, A.D. 892–922.[1] Of this period far the most brilliant portion is that comprised between the years 786 and 809 and wholly occupied by the reign of the fifth Khalif of the house of Abbas, the celebrated Haroun er Reshid Billah, Aaron the Orthodox (or Well-advised[2])

[1] The only later Khalifs mentioned in the Nights are the thirty-sixth (of the house of Abbas) El Mustensir (A.D. 1225–1242) and (by implication) the thirty-seventh and last, El Mustesim Billah (A.D. 1242–1258), in whose reigns the scene of the Barber's Story and that of the Tailor (see Vol. I.) is laid, the intervening three centuries and a quarter being wholly unrepresented in the work, so far as the Khalifate of Baghdad is concerned.

[2] Lit. He who follows in the right way.

in or by God, *not* the Just, as in most versions. (The first four successors of Mohammed, Aboubekr, Omar, Othman and Ali, are known as *el Khulfaa er rashidoun*,[1] *i.e.* "the orthodox Khalifs.") This title was not, as is commonly supposed, adjudged to Haroun by his subjects in recognition of his qualities, as in the case of Louis XIII. of France, dubbed (wildly enough), "le Juste," but was conferred on him by his father El Mehdi, four years before his coming to the throne, on the occasion of his formal nomination as heir-presumptive (his brother El Hadi being heir-apparent) to the Khalifate, in conformity with the habit of the Khalifs, the ecclesiastical nature of whose dignity is peculiarly apparent in the hieratic titles assumed by them and answering to the *agnomina* bestowed (with the title of *Cæsar*) by the Roman Emperors upon their successors-elect. Haroun, at all events, justified his title, for, if anything but *just*, he certainly was *orthodox*,[2] at least in outward appearance, being a strict observer (in public at least) of the burdensome ritual of Muslim prayer and visiting offences against orthodoxy with the utmost rigour. He made eight or more pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina (all of which he is said to have performed *on foot*), attended by a splendid suite, and defrayed, on a princely scale, the expenses of some hundreds of pilgrims of the flower of the learned and orthodox of his time, in the years

[1] Pl. of *rashid*, dialectic variant of *reshid*.

[2] The other reading "well-advised" is equally applicable, for his advisers and ministers were the greatest and wisest that ever governed an Eastern empire.

when he himself refrained from accomplishing the rite. He lavished money and gifts upon the inhabitants of the Holy Cities and expended infinite pains and wealth in assuring the pilgrim-track against the Bedouins. (His wife Zubeideh also was prodigal in her expenditure upon pilgrimages and the improvement and embellishment of Mecca and Medina, the great aqueduct that supplies the former with water having been built by her at an enormous cost.) In private, Er Reshid was a voluptuary, whom the prohibitions of religion availed not to restrain from the indulgence of his every passion: his physicians attributed his last illness and premature death to immoderate sexual commerce and there seems no doubt that he was an habitual wine-bibber, that is to say, a drinker to intoxication (after the manner of the Easterns, who conceive no other aim in the consumption of intoxicants than intoxication and have therefore always preferred spirits of various kinds, such as *seker* or date-brandy, etc., to wine) of strong drinks, and not, as pretended by his apologists, of the harmless *nebiz*, a very slightly fermented infusion of raisins, whose use is sanctioned by the example of Mohammed. The historian Shemseddin Yousuf Ibn el Jauzi (author of the great Chronicle, *Mirat ez Zeman*, the Mirror of Time) naïvely pleads, by way of excuse for Haroun's offending in this respect, that he never got drunk except behind a curtain, a trait which, if true, is sufficiently characteristic of the hypocritical nature of the Khalif.

This prince is undoubtedly the hero of "The Thousand and One Nights"; no other name occurs with a quarter of the same frequency and upon no other character is

bestowed such wholesale laudation; indeed, we may well suspect, from the prominence that is given to him and the frequency with which anecdotes of his reign recur, that a portion of the collection was taken bodily from notes or compilations prepared at his especial instance, by the celebrated poets and musicians (for the two offices were frequently combined) who illustrated his court. Never was reputation so ill-deserved as that of the "good" Haroun er Reshid, who seems to have been a happy compound of the worst characteristics of such despots as Philip II. of Spain, Francis I. and Henry VIII., combining, with the superstitious bigotry of the first, the insatiable rapacity of the second and the ferocious sensuality of the third, a bloodthirsty savagery, peculiarly his own and only to be equalled by a king of Dahomey, and the almost hysterical sensitiveness to music, poetry and wit that distinguishes the Arab and has so often been found to exist side by side with the most complete lack of moral consciousness and the most refined excesses of unrelenting barbarity. This artistic sensibility he appears to have shared with the majority of his subjects (for there is no point in which there is such general consent in Arabic literature as the seemingly universal facility with which prince and peasant, merchant and Bedouin, courtier and water-carrier, alike appear to have at their command the resources of music and poetry, the poorest fisherman spontaneously reciting or composing the most elegant verses in moments of emotion or emergency and showing as exquisite a sensitiveness to the exercise of the two arts

in others as the best educated and most refined noble) and to have carried to such an excess that the apposite repetition of a witty story or of a harmonious piece of verse, either remembered or extempore, frequently sufficed to secure for the astute reciter the highest honours at the Khalif's disposal or to save the greatest criminal or the most hated enemy from the consequences of the furious outbursts of passionate frenzy to which the monarch was subject. This characteristic it was which led him to encourage the arts and to select as his intimate companions the best-known poets and musicians of the time, (of whom two or three were always in attendance upon him at all hours of the day and night,) upon whom he lavished, with reckless prodigality, the immense sums[1] he wrung from his subjects and from whose venal praises later historians drew the false data on which they moulded the imaginary character of the great and good Khalif of the "golden prime" of Islam, a character as fabulous as that of the Cid, whom modern research has proved to have been a sort of Schinderhannes-Dalgetty, a brutal and venal swashbuckler, "fighting for his own hand," under Arab or Spaniard, king or condottiere, as it paid him best, and solacing his leisures with the innocent pastimes of Jew-roasting and captive-baiting.[2] Like

[1] His gifts were, however, always liable to be resumed with interest at the donor's caprice.

[2] He is said to have been in the habit of roasting his Jewish prisoners over a slow fire, to make them disgorge, and to have, on more than one occasion, caused his captives, old men, women and children, to be torn to pieces by his dogs.

Louis XIV., one of the most contemptible princes that ever sat on the throne of France, his memory is glorified by the borrowed lustre of the many men of genius and distinction who flourished in his reign. Quoth a MS. history cited by Dr. Weil, "Grave and pleasant people gathered to Er Reshid as to none other; the Barmecides, the noblest men of the world, were his viziers; Abou Yousuf was his Cadi; Merwan Ibn Abi Hefseh, who in his century stood as high as earlier Jerir,[1] was his poet; Ibrahim el Mausili, unique in his time, his singer; Zulzul and Bersoum his musicians."

Haroun's reign was indeed rich in great men; in addition to those named above and to the distinguished statesmen, generals and men of learning who surrounded him, the poets En Nemri, Er Recashi, Dibil el Khuzaï, Salih ben Tarif, El Asmaï, Abou Nuwas, El Ettabi, Muslim ibn el Welid, Aboulatahiyeh, Abou Ubeideh and many others and the famous musicians Isaac of Mosul, Ibn Jami and Mukharik adorned his court, and Baghdad swarmed with jurisconsults and legists of the highest distinction, who officiated as judges and to whose wise and impartial administration of the laws he owed his reputation for justice. He was the last Khalif who held, undiminished (with the exception of Spain, which was conquered A.D. 756 by the Ommiade[2] Abdurrehman, who there founded

[1] See note, Vol. II. p. 284.

[2] The vast empire held by the Ommiade Khalifs comprised (in Asia) Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Irak Arabi, Palestine, parts of Anatolia, Karamania and Armenia, Persia, Turkestan, Beloochistan, Afghanistan and Sind, (in Africa) Egypt, Fez, Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco, and (in Europe) Spain and nearly half of France, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Malta and other Mediterranean islands and certain districts of Italy, that is to say, the greater part of the then known world.

the independent Khalifate of Cordova), the empire won by the early successors of Mohammed and the Benou Umeyyeh; even in his reign, the dominions of the Khalifate were curtailed by the defection of his governor of Africa, Ibrahim ibn Aghleb, and the revolt of the Alide Edris and the consequent foundation of independent kingdoms in Sicily and Northern Africa; under his successors province after province fell away, till the dominion of the last Abbaside Khalifs was practically limited to the city of Baghdad; hence his reign is not unnaturally chosen by the Muslim historian to represent the golden age of the Khalifate. Again, he was lavish in the decoration and enrichment of Baghdad (which under him attained its highest point of glory and prosperity), at the expense of the provinces, which were disaffected to him and continually in revolt against him; and these reasons, combined with the acts and character of the able ministers by whom the empire was ruled during the greater part of his reign and the fact that, like many other cruel and unscrupulous despots, he affected especially to cherish and be accessible to his humbler subjects, amply suffice to account for the most unmerited halo that has so long clung about his name.

As an instance of the enormous sums which Er Reshid lavished upon his favourites, during the heyday of their prosperity, a historian states that, in the accounts of the royal expenditure *for one year alone*, the sum of

thirty millions of dirhems[1] is entered as the aggregate amount bestowed, in money and goods, on Jaafer the Barmecide, and Fekhreddin Razi mentions (on the authority of the historian El Amrani), as occurring in a similar list, shortly before Jaafer's death, the almost incredible item, "Four hundred thousand dinars[2] for a dress of honour[3] for the Vizier Jaafer ben Yehya," to be shortly followed by the entry, tragic in its terrible contrast, "Ten carats[4] for naphtha and reeds for burning the body of Jaafer the Barmecide." Again, at the instance of his great vizier, he gave Abdulmelik es Salih a sum of four millions of dirhems;[5] nor was he less lavish in his gifts to the poets, musicians and literati who tickled his intellectual palate with apropos recitals, songs, stories and pleasantries, as well as to the men of learning and chicane who extricated him by their ready wit from some dilemma of conscience or by a legal quibble enabled him to conciliate orthodoxy with the enjoyment of some prohibited pleasure. His wife Zubeideh was equally prodigal, especially in matters religious, having (according to Ibn el Jauzi) spent three millions of dinars,[6] in the course of a single pilgrimage, in expenses, gifts to the learned men of Mecca and Medina and public works.

[1] About £750,000. [2] About £200,000.

[3] A *khilaah* or dress of honour (lit. that which one takes off from one's own person to bestow upon a messenger of good tidings or any one else whom it is desired specially to honour) included, however, a horse, a sword, a girdle and other articles, according to the rank of the recipient and might more aptly be termed a complete equipment of honour.

[4] About five shillings. [5] About £100,000. [6] About £1,500,000.

Notwithstanding his apparent liberality, Er Reshid was greedy and rapacious and procured the money for his prodigalities by a system of the most unscrupulous robbery and extortion. The legitimate income of the Khalifate is said to have been about twenty-six million dinars,[1] yet so far did the treasures he accumulated, by fair means or foul, under the mask of extravagant liberality, exceed the wealth he flung away upon his caprices that he is said to have left nearly a thousand millions of dinars,[2] besides a fabulous quantity of precious stones and other effects (among the rest, thirty thousand beasts of burden, a hundred camel-loads of jewels and twenty thousand male slaves) representing, in all probability, a much larger sum; and these enormous riches it is evident from the accounts of Arabian chroniclers that he amassed by the vilest and most oppressive means. "He overwhelmed the people," says a modern historian, "with taxes and imposts and not unfrequently despoiled his generals and governors of the wealth they had gained in his service." Abdulmelik es Salih, mentioned above, whom, at Jaafer's prompting, he had appointed governor of Egypt and married to his daughter, he shortly afterward, on pretence of his intention to aspire to the Khalifate, stripped of all his property and cast into prison, where he remained till the death of the tyrant, when the latter's successor, El Amin, released him and made him governor of Syria, thus manifesting the utter groundlessness of the accusation. Mohammed ben

[1] About £13,000,000.

[2] About half a milliard sterling or £500,000,000.

Suleiman ben Ali, a distant cousin of the Khalif, died leaving property worth sixty millions of dirhems,[1] apparently inherited from his father, and Haroun seized upon the whole estate, though near relatives came forward to claim it, justifying his high-handed dealing with the futile pretext that he had proof of the deceased's intention to revolt against his authority and was therefore entitled to confiscate his property. Again, the Viceroy of Khorassan, Ali ben Isa el Mahani, had, by oppression and extortion, wrung immense sums from his subjects, which coming to the ears of the Khalif, he summoned the offending governor before himself, but, instead of compelling him to make restitution, he compounded with him for the payment of a heavy bribe and continued him in his government. This criminal transaction he several times renewed, till, at last, finding probably that Ibn Mahan became more and more difficult to squeeze, he seized on his person by treachery and made himself master of his wealth (said to have amounted to eighty millions of dirhems[2] in gold and plate alone, besides fifteen hundred camel-loads of precious stuffs), all of which, instead of restoring to its lawful owners, he applied to his own uses. These are a few instances only of the greed and rapacity with which his left hand still took back all and more than his right had given and of the criminal meanness by which he too often filled his treasuries, and so notorious, indeed, were the extortion and tyranny to which he owed his riches, that

[1] About £1,500,000. [2] About £2,000,000.

the celebrated ascetic Fuzail ibn Iyaz refused, though at the risk of his head, to accept a gift that the Khalif wished to bestow on him, alleging, as the ground of his refusal, that the giver's wealth had not been honestly come by.

The instances of his cruelty and treachery, that confront us in Muslim records, are no less numerous and flagrant; and the words of Sismondi, in his unsparing condemnation of the monster Alexander Borgia, we are warranted by historical evidence in applying to Er Reshid, who seems indeed to have been "a man whom no good faith bound in his engagements, no sentiment of justice checked in his policy, no compassion moderated in his vengeance." Every means was good to him to destroy his enemies, whether personal or political, and he thought nothing of violating the most solemn oaths, when he desired to rid himself of a hated or suspected person, hated and suspected often upon grounds that owed their existence to his own jaundiced imagination. He began his reign by putting to death the Amir Abou Isma, one of his brother's counsellors, nominally because he was one of those who had persuaded El Hadi to proclaim his own son Jaafer heir-apparent to the Khalifate, to the exclusion of himself and in contravention of the will of their father El Mehdi, but really from one of the pettiest motives of personal spite, because the unlucky Abou Isma had, on one occasion, given Jaafer the precedence over Haroun, when the two princes were about to pass over a bridge. There can be little doubt that he was an accessory to the murder of his brother El Hadi,

by the contrivance of their mother Kheizuran; but this latter crime may be said to have been committed in self-defence and therefore to some extent excusable, as El Hadi had resolved upon the assassination of Haroun, to remove him from his son's path. Another of the earliest acts by which he signalized his accession was to procure the poisoning of the Alide Edris ben Abdallah, who, after the failure of his kinsman Hussein ben Ali's attempt to seize the Khalifate at Medina and the death of the latter at the battle of Fakh (A.D. 786), fled to North-western Africa and there founded the Edriside kingdom of *Mughreb* or Morocco; and not content with the success of his murderous plot, he caused put to death an Egyptian postmaster, Wezih by name, who had sheltered the fugitive and furthered his escape to Morocco, rewarding the poisoner, Shemmekh, with the latter's post. The Alide Mousa ben Jaafer, one of the most venerated elders of the Shiah sect, he cast into prison and caused to be secretly murdered, because, on a certain occasion, when both were visiting the Prophet's tomb at Medina, after Er Reshid had greeted Mohammed with "Peace be on thee, O cousin!"[1] Mousa followed suit with "Peace be on thee, O father!" as was indeed his right,[2] and his treatment of Yehya ben Abdallah, another descendant of Ali, was yet more dastardly and barbarous. Yehya, who was the uncle of Hussein ben

[1] Mohammed was the nephew of Abbas, the founder of the family of that name, and Haroun was therefore his cousin, many times removed.

[2] As a lineal descendant of Ali and Fatimeh, the Prophet's daughter, he was the son, *i.e.* grandson, many times removed, of Mohammed.

Ali above mentioned and fought by his side at the disastrous battle of Fakh, fled, after the loss of that day, to Media, where he established himself so strongly and became so formidable that Er Reshid despatched against him El Fezl the Barmecide, who, with his usual politic mansuetude, succeeded in inducing the rebel to renounce his pretensions in favour of the regnant prince, on promise of fair treatment by the latter. A formal treaty, embodying the terms of compromise, being entered into and solemnly ratified by Er Reshid, Yehya proceeded to Baghdad and surrendered himself to the Khalif, who received him with all the external signs of distinguished honour, but shortly after, on pretext of some formal flaw in the contract, discovered by the crown lawyers (from whom the declaration is said to have been extorted by main force), cast the unlucky Alide into prison, committing him to the custody of Jaafer. The generous Barmecide, revolted at his master's signal ill faith, took pity on the prisoner and connived at his escape; but Er Reshid afterwards recaptured him and again cast him into prison, where he caused him to be secretly murdered. He put to death Abou Hureireh, Viceroy of Mesopotamia, because he had suffered defeat at the hands of the Kharijites, and caused the Khuramiyeh heretics, followers of the Persian socialist Mezdek, on the suppression of their revolt in Azerbijan by Abdallah ibn Malik, to be put to the sword and their women and children sold as slaves; nor was it without extreme difficulty that the sanguinary monarch was prevented from exterminating the inhabitants of Mosul and razing that great city to the ground,

after the putting down of a popular rising led by Ettaf ben Sufyan. During his last illness, having captured Beshr ibn Leith, brother of the rebel Refia ben Leith, who had established himself in Transoxania, he caused him to be dissected alive by a butcher, whom he summoned for that purpose, and bidding his attendants lay before him the fourteen pieces into which the unfortunate prisoner had been divided, gloated over them till he fell into a swoon. This was the last public act of the "good" Haroun er Reshid, who expired three days later, after having, almost with his latest breath, ordered the execution, upon some trifling occasion of offence, of his physician the Christian Jebril (Gabriel) ibn Bekhtiyeshou. Jebril was however saved from his threatened doom by the death of his ferocious master in the night.

These are some of the enormities committed by the "good" Khalif, and these, although they sink into insignificance compared with the fiendish barbarity and ingratitude of his treatment of the Barmecides (an account of which I reserve for another page), suffice to show that he can lay no claim to the attributes of goodness, generosity and justice with which popular tradition has so persistently credited him, and I confess that, for my own part, I cannot discover any reason why he should be gratified with the name of "Great," except upon the principle in accordance with which that title is awarded to the contemptible Louis XIV., whose only claim to greatness lay in the fact that great men lived and worked (and often starved) whilst he ate and drank and dallied

with his titled harlots.[1] In reality, he appears to have been a morose and fantastic despot, pursued, like Philip II. of Spain, by the spectres of his own crimes, tormented at once by superstitious remorse and jealous suspicion, which, while oppressing his waking hours and troubling his natural rest with the tortures of gloomy and foreboding thought, again and again impelled him to commit anew the misdeeds whose recollection embittered his existence and to deprive himself, at their malignant instance, of the only men about him on whom he could reckon for fidelity and ability combined. His fits of gloomy depression and his chronic restlessness by night and day are constantly referred to in "The Thousand and One Nights," and it was in endeavouring to shake off these haunting miseries that he seems to have met with the many adventures that are recorded of him and of which a considerable portion may fairly be supposed to have been invented and arranged for him by the distinguished poets who were his constant associates.

[1] Er Reshid's apologists claim for him that he was generous and a patron of art (claims of which my readers are qualified to judge, without further remark on my part) and that his (alleged) intercourse with Charlemagne proves him to have been superior in enlightenment to his contemporaries of the Muslim world. The legend of the diplomatic rapprochement between the two monarchs is of exceedingly doubtful authenticity; but, supposing it to be in every respect founded upon fact, it is evident to a student of Muslim history that Haroun's overtures to the Western Emperor were dictated by no motives of policy more enlightened than the desire to embarrass his hated enemy Nicephorus, Emperor of Constantinople, against whom he seems to have cherished a peculiar spite.

One of the latter, Abou Nuwas ibn Hani, is a curious figure in the history of literature. A debauchee of the most debased and sensual order, he, nevertheless, in addition to his undoubtedly high poetical genius, too often prostituted to the vilest purposes, seems to have been remarkably free from the servility that generally distinguishes the courtly poet and to have cherished a rude but real love of independence and a sense of the beauties of freedom which led him to prefer the rough licence of the wine-shop and the pleasure-garden to all the luxurious allurements of the Court; and we find the Khalif, who set on his society a value equivalent to the difficulty he found in procuring it, often reduced to all sorts of expedients to drag him from his favourite haunts. Like the great anacreontic poet of early mediæval China, Li-tai-pé (with whom he was nearly contemporary),[1] the messengers of his royal master were frequently compelled to force him from the taverns, where he revelled with his low associates, for the purpose of amusing the Khalif in his fits of depression or of advising him upon state and general matters; and long before Walter de Mapes or Hafiz, he declared his intention of ending his days in the exclusive worship of the divinities of wine and pleasure, rhyming in Arabian verse his version of "Mihi est propositum in tabernâ mori." Nor in this avowed devotion to the forbidden delights of conviviality was he alone among the denizens of the court of the Khalifs. Baghdad, in the reign of Er Reshid, seems to have been preeminently

[1] He was born in A.D. 753, ten years before Li-tai-pé's death. Some accounts, however, date his birth nine years later.

a city of pleasure. Thither flocked from all parts of the Oriental world the most noted and capable poets, musicians and artificers of the time; and the first thought of the Arabian or Persian craftsman who had completed some specially curious or attractive specimen of his art was to repair to the capital of the Muslim world, to submit it to the Commander of the Faithful, from whom he rarely failed to receive a rich reward for his labours. Surrounded by pleasure-gardens and groves of orange, tamarisk and myrtle, refreshed by an unfailing luxuriance of running streams, supplied either by art or nature, the great city on the Tigris is the theme of many an admiring ode or laudatory ghazel; and the poets of the time all agree in describing it as being, under the rule of the great Khalif, a sort of terrestrial paradise of idlesse and luxury, where, to use their own expressions, the ground was irrigated with rose-water and the dust of the roads was musk, where flowers and verdure overhung the ways and the air was perpetually sweet with the many-voiced song of birds, and where the chirp of lutes, the dulcet warble of flutes and the silver sound of singing houris rose and fell in harmonious cadence from every corner of the streets of palaces that stood in vast succession in the midst of their gardens and orchards,[1] gifted with perpetual verdure by

[1] The garden of an Eastern mansion is usually situate within the interior court of the building; but the palaces of Baghdad, in the time of the Khalifs, appear (so far, at least, as concerned those in the suburbs, such as Rusafeh on the eastern bank of the Tigris, which consisted almost entirely of the pleasure-houses of the nobility) to have been surrounded by pleasaunces and plantations, in addition to those they enclosed.

the silver abundance of the Tigris, as it sped its arrowy flight through the thrice-blest town.

Baghdad, indeed, was in many respects emphatically a "città cortigiana," a sort of Vienna or Bucharest of the olden time, carried to the higher evolution correspondent with the more sensuous influences of the luxuriant East; and the state of public morality there was naturally of the laxest. Especially was this the case with the higher classes. Drunkenness and debauchery of the most uncompromising kind prevailed amongst them in despite of the precepts of the Koran; and men and women seemed to vie with each other in refinements of luxury and dissipation.[1] As was the case in a period that offers no small analogy to that of which I speak, the epoch of the Roman decadence, the women of the upper classes, to whom was apparently allowed an amount of liberty, or rather licence, curiously at variance with our Western ideas of Eastern domestic polity, appear to have been especially corrupt; and many are the tales of their licentious habits and adventures found in the Thousand and One Nights, reminding us of the Memoirs of Casanova, although almost always redeemed by touches of pathos, poetry or romance, which are wanting to the latter's dry and unattractive records of common-place galanterie. The Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, that of the Barber's Second Brother

[1] It is curious to note that (according to modern travellers) the introduction of coffee and tobacco seems to have resulted in the extinction of drunkenness, even in Egypt, always the most debauched part of the Muslim world, thus insensibly effecting a reform which no rigour of prohibition, no severity of punishment, had availed to bring about.

and several others contained in the old version, give some idea of the licence of the time, and examples are still more abundant and circumstantial in the tales that compose the comparatively unknown portion of the collection.

As may well be supposed, under these circumstances, the upper classes of the time were not characterised by any especial fervour of religious devotion. Notwithstanding the fanatical orthodoxy of the Khalif and of his chief wife and cousin, Zubeideh, a woman as superstitious, as cruel and as cultivated as himself,[1] the general religious sentiment of the Court of Baghdad appears to have been a sort of refined atheism, borrowed from Persia and having in all probability some affinity with Soufi quietism, which, whilst conforming in outward matters to Muslim observances, was yet, in the spirit of the Persian usage expressed by the word *kelman* (concealment), perfectly well understood and recognised. This tendency had apparently its origin with the illustrious Barmecide (properly Bermeki) family; and their opinions, whilst not interfering with a professed conformity to the tenets of Islam, appear to have been shared by most of the great officers and nobles of the kingdom, in the same manner as the religious doctrine known as Bâbism is said at the present day to underlie the higher ranks of modern Persian society. Nevertheless, the lower

[1] She is reported to have owned a hundred slave-girls, each of whom knew the Koran by heart and had the task of repeating a tenth part thereof daily, so that her palace resounded with a perpetual humming, like that of bees. It is said that the report of this princess's piety and munificence still lingers among the Bedouins, by whom her name is even now held in reverence as that of a saint.

and middle classes of the people were still profoundly and fanatically attached to the Faith of the Unity of God; nor were examples of Mohammedan fervour and zealotry wanting that would not have misbeseemed the strictest epochs of religious enthusiasm. Er Reshid himself was completely under ecclesiastical control, especially that of the Chief Imam of his reign, the Sheikh Abou Yousuf, who seems to have been more of a courtier than a priest and to have ingratiated himself with the Khalif by his audacious adroitness (of which at least one instance finds mention in The Thousand and One Nights) in twisting the interminable subtleties of Mohammedan ritual and dogma to suit the monarch's varying caprices and inclinations; and one of the most salient examples of ascetic devotion that mark the history of Islam is recorded in the person of the Khalif's own son, who, no doubt impelled by disgust at his father's cruelty and rapacity, as well as at the licence of his luxurious court, became a hermit, saint or "friend of God" (as the Muslims have it), under the circumstances detailed in the story of The Devout Prince.

Under Haroun er Reshid, Baghdad was undoubtedly the metropolis of Muslim civilisation.[1] It is said to have been as populous as modern Paris,[2] and the rapid

[1] Cordova and Grenada, which the brilliant culture of the Khalifs of Spain afterwards raised to the first place, were as yet in their infancy.

[2] According to some historians, the Tartar conqueror Hulagou slew no less than eighteen hundred thousand of the inhabitants on the capture of the city in 1258. This number is possibly exaggerated, but no chronicler puts the number of the victims at less than eight hundred thousand.

growth of its manufactures and the immense trade attracted from all parts of the world by the presence of a brilliant and prodigal court, early resulted in making the great body of its population well-to-do and contented. It was one of the most orderly and well-governed cities in the world of its day, and such was the comparative quiet and security for life and property that reigned within its walls, (thanks to the astute administration of the Barmecide Viziers, who anticipated Fourier's doctrine of the "passionel" treatment of criminal inclinations, carrying out the theory of "set a thief to catch a thief" with the greatest success and effectually keeping under roguery and crime by employing certain selected rascals of high capacity, such as Ahmed ed Denef, Hassan Shouman and Ali Zibec, mentioned in the Thousand and One Nights, as subordinate prefects of police to coerce and checkmate their former comrades,) that the city was generally known by the sobriquet of *Dar es Selam*[1] or Abode of Peace.

It was, indeed, to the great statesmen of the house of Bermek that the reigns of the early Abbaside Khalifs owed almost the whole of the prosperity and brilliancy that distinguished them. Of an ancient and noble

[1] Opinion, however, differs as to the origin of this name, which is said by some authorities to refer to the sacred character of the city, as the seat of the Imam or spiritual head of the Faith, and by others to have been given to the capital as a sort of talisman in memory of one of the seven "gardens" of the Muslim Paradise. It may also have been a mystic or hieratic name, as *Valeria* was that of ancient Rome.

Persian family,[1] Khalid ben Bermek, the first of the house that appears upon the scene of Arabian history, became Vizier and Minister of Finance to the founder of the Abbaside dynasty, Aboulabbas the Blood-shedder, and after serving his successor El Mensour in a like capacity, was appointed to the government of Mosul and Azerbijan, which post he held till his death. Aboulabbas was the first to institute the office of Vizier and Khalid was the earliest of the great ministers who ruled the immense dominions of the Khalifs with almost regal power. During his long tenure of office he practically governed the empire, the Khalifs of the house of Abbas taking little personal part in the burdensome task of administration. He appears to have shown the highest talents for government and was particularly successful in consolidating and setting in order the finances. It was under his direction that the city of Baghdad was built in the reign of El Mensour, when that prince elected to abandon the former capital of the Khalifs,

[1] Bermek, the father of Khalid, was a Magian of Khorassan and the officiating minister of the great fire-temple, the Noubehar, at Balkh, where his ancestors had long held the same office. (It is even stated by El Mesoudi that *Bermek* was the title, not the name, of the high-priest of the fire, but this statement does not appear to be supported.) As tenders of the sacred fire and guardians of the temple, the family ranked among the chief grandees of the realm, and according to one author (the poet Mohammed ben Munadhir), who speaks of the Barmecides as "the descendants of the kings of the house of Bermek," it could lay claim to royal descent. Bermek is said to have had dealings with the later Ommiade Khalifs and to have stood high in their favour, but the first of the family to come into unequivocal prominence is his son Khalid.

Damascus, for a spot less impregnated with the memories of the fallen dynasty, and it is to his wise, just and liberal rule that the rapid prosperity of the new capital must be ascribed. According to El Mesoudi, Khalid surpassed, in prudence, bravery, learning, generosity and noble qualities and accomplishments, even his more celebrated descendants.

His son Yehya we first meet with as governor of Armenia under El Mensour. Under the latter's successor, El Mehdi, he became Secretary of State and was entrusted by the Khalif with the charge of his son Haroun's education. Yehya was the foster-father of this prince, who was born nearly at the same time as his own son El Fezl, and an exchange of infants for some reason took place between the mothers, Kheizuran suckling Fezl and Zubeideh (Yehya's wife) Haroun. The two boys thus became foster-brothers (a quasi-relation which, though merely nominal in Europe, is invested by Mohammedan law with rights and obligations nearly akin to those of actual brotherhood), and in consequence of this and of the semi-paternal authority exercised over him by Yehya, in his capacity of governor, Haroun was wont to call the latter father. It was to the prudence and boldness with which, during the short and stormy reign of the crackbrained tyrant El Hadi, Yehya played the difficult and dangerous part of governor and adviser of the heir presumptive (a rôle to which he clave with extraordinary fidelity and magnanimity, under the most discouraging circumstances), that the latter owed his throne and indeed his life, and the Barmecide came near

to paying dear for his loyalty to the youth whom his royal father had committed to his care, El Hadi, exasperated by the courage and skill with which he opposed his scheme for substituting his own son Jaafer for Haroun in the succession, having cast him into prison, where he would certainly have perished, but for the opportune intervention of Kheizuran, whose favourite he was and who procured the timely assassination of the Khalif. Immediately after El Hadi's death, Yehya was released and at once applied himself to securing the accession of his pupil, whom he succeeded in seating on the throne, without serious opposition. Haroun, thus become Khalif, hastened to acknowledge his obligations to Yehya and without delay appointed him his Chief Vizier, handing him (in token of investment with the executive power) his signet-ring, with the words, "My dear father, it is owing to the blessings and good fortune that attend you and to your excellent management that I am now seated on this throne, wherefore I confide to you the direction of affairs." Yehya was the wisest statesman, the most benevolent and magnanimous man of his time. Quoth Ibn Khellikan, "He was perfect in talent, judgment and noble qualities, highly distinguished for wisdom, nobleness of mind and elegance of language." He is called by a contemporary man of letters "the president of the Divan (or Board) of generous actions," and Oriental writers agree in ascribing to him all noble qualities that can combine in a man to compel the love and reverence of his kind. From the time of Haroun's accession to that of the horrible catastrophe which extinguished the

house of Bermek (*i.e.*,—with an insignificant interregnum, during which, for some unexplained cause, El Fezl ben Rebya, the bitter and unscrupulous foe of the Barmecides, was entrusted with the Vizierate,—from A.D. 786 to A.D. 803), Yehya and his sons Fezl and Jaafer wielded, with practically uncontrolled authority, the sovereignty of the East, Er Reshid (who seems from the moment of his sudden elevation to the throne to have devoted himself well-nigh exclusively to the curious mixture of debauchery and religious observances by which he endeavoured to conciliate his passion for all kinds of pleasure with the superstitious regard for the external appearances of orthodoxy that was no less pronounced a feature of his character and to have concerned himself little with the business of government), entirely devolving on them the executive power and endorsing all their acts and orders with a servility of which some singular instances are given in Muslim records. By his wise and high-minded administration, the great Vizier completely reorganized the vast empire of the Khalifs, still somewhat shattered by the intestine disorders that had troubled the last years of the Ommiade princes and the reigns of their immediate successors and raised it to a height of general prosperity which was the wonder of the world. He regulated the incidence of the taxes on a principle that, whilst benefiting the treasury by the increased return it occasioned, alleviated the burdens of the poorer classes, established a complete system of posts all over the empire, expended a great part of the revenue upon all sorts of magnificent public works, making roads and building

mosques, caravanserais, bridges, etc., etc., on every side, improved and perfected the organization of the police, encouraged agriculture and industry, procuring the introduction and cultivation of new arts and dividing the various crafts into guilds or syndicates, charged with the office of regularizing trade and the prevention of fraud, and by proper regulations immensely augmented the yield of the mines and other sources of natural wealth, organized public education on a liberal basis, founding schools, colleges and libraries in profusion and extending the most lavish encouragement to scholars, literati and men of science, native and foreign, continuing and fostering the splendid civilisation of the Persians and Græco-Latins and revivifying its partial effeteness with the quickening energy of the Arab genius; in short, he established and set in working order all the various and elaborate machinery of government that is necessary to the political and social economy of a great and heterogeneous empire, and founding law, order and justice everywhere, brought the dominions of the Khalifate to a pitch of civilisation and prosperity, moral and material, which Europe did not even begin to emulate till many centuries later and of which no country of that time, with the exception, perhaps, of China, then in the full flower of its civilisation, under the great dynasty of the Thangs, could offer even a partial example.

Yehya's four sons, Fezl, Jaafer, Mohammed and Mousa, were renowned for the same qualities and virtues as their illustrious father and all ordered their lives and actions in the spirit of his magnanimous saying, "This life is

a series of vicissitudes and wealth is but a loan; let us, then, follow the models offered by our predecessors and leave a good example to those who come after." The Khalif El Mamoun[1] is reported to have said, "Yehya ben Khalid and his sons had none [to equal them] in ability, in culture, in liberality and in bravery: it was well said by a poet, 'The sons of Yehya are four in number, like the elements: when put to the test, they will be found the elements of beneficence.' Quoth the poet Merwan ibn Abi Hefseh, 'The power of doing good is in the hands of princes; but the noble Barmecides did good and harmed not.' 'Their hands,' says Mohammed ibn Munadhir, 'were created for nought but deeds of beneficence and their feet for the boards of the pulpit;' and quoth El Atawi, 'The generous Barmecides learned beneficence and taught it to the human race; when they planted, they watered, and they never let the edifice they founded fall into ruin; when they conferred favours on mankind, they clothed their bounties in a raiment that endured for ever.'" The romantic generosity of the Barmecides it would, indeed, be difficult to exaggerate. Incredible as the instances of their liberality given in the Thousand and One Nights may appear, they are but one or two of hundreds of similar and well-authenticated anecdotes of the munificence of this truly princely house, and it is hardly too much to say that the history of the world

[1] He was brought up by Jaafer, whom Haroun appointed his governor, whilst his other son El Amin was in like manner committed to Fezl's charge.

makes no mention of a family every member of which was distinguished by so extraordinary a combination of the noblest qualities of heart and head. No contemporary historian or poet can name them without breaking out into passionate praise of their nobleness and as passionate lament for their unmerited fate. "Alas for the sons of Bermek," cries Salih ben Tarif, "and the happy days of their power! With them the world was as a bride; but now it is widowed and bereft of its children." "The Barmecides," says Fekhreddin Razi, "were to their time as a plume to the brow, as a crown to the head. The world was requickened under their administration and the empire carried to the highest pinnacle of splendour. They were the refuge of the afflicted, the providence of the unfortunate." And all who speak of them echo the same strain. Each of the four sons was distinguished by some special quality, in addition to the virtues which were the general appanage of the family, and the only weak point in their character appears to have been the noble fault they shared with Julius Cæsar[1] and Napoleon III. and

[1] *Nunquam nocere sustulit*, says Suetonius; "he could never bear to do harm." No feeling is more continually excited by the study of history, ancient and modern, than one of poignant regret that so many great and beneficent rulers should altogether have lacked that power of salutary severity, that (alas! in the interests of humanity, involved in the first condition of government, the summary suppression of "les coquins et les lâches," too often) necessary brutality, which carries men of far inferior genius, such as Bismarck, triumphantly over all opposition and enables a Narvaez to die peaceably in his bed, happy in the comfortable assurance that he has no enemies to forgive, having industriously shot them all.

to which they, like their compeers of the West, in all probability owed their ruin, *i.e.* the generous magnanimity and high-souled mansuetude, which led them to regard with heroic indifference the miserable plots of the enviers and calumniators, the assassins and intrigants, the "fishers in troubled water," the Fezl ben Rebyas and Mohammed ibn Abi Leiths, the Cassii and Cascæ, the Gambettas and Rocheforts, the professional seditionists and Bulgarian-Atrocity-mongers of their time, and forbade them to crush, by severe but just and necessary measures of repression, which, timely employed, might probably have preserved them for the general benefit of humanity, the dastardly intrigues which resulted in their destruction.[1]

Uniformly gifted as were the four sons of Yehya, Jaafer appears to have surpassed his brothers in mental power and accomplishments, whilst in no way yielding to them in all the virtues and nobilities for which they were

[1] The following are a few of the sayings of the Barmecides, as culled from contemporary historians. "The joy of him who is promised a favour is not equal to mine in granting one." "As for the man to whom I have done no good, I have still the choice before me [whether to favour him or no]; but him whom I have obliged, I am for ever engaged to serve." "Spend, when Fortune inclineth to thee,—for her bounty cannot then be exhausted,—and when she turneth away, for she will not abide with thee." "The benefactor who remindeth of a service rendered alloyeth the value thereof, and he who forgetteth a favour received is guilty of ingratitude and neglect of duty." "When a man's conduct towards his brethren is changed on obtaining authority, we know that authority is greater than he" (*i.e.* that he is too small for his dignity). "Injustice is disgraceful; an unwholesome pasture-ground is that of injustice."

conspicuous, and to have been distinguished, in particular, by a sweetness of temper and a chivalrous courtesy of demeanour, which Fezl, eminently good and noble as he was, lacked, of his own confession, he having a certain abruptness of manner that made him, though more in appearance than in reality, savour somewhat of the *Burbero Benefico* (the beneficent curmudgeon) of Goldoni.

Jaafer was indeed a remarkable and attractive figure in the history of the time. To the virtues of liberality, beneficence and hospitality that distinguished almost to excess all the members of his illustrious house, he added accomplishments and qualities which were peculiarly his own and which make him by far the most loveable and attractive character of the many that live for us in The Thousand and One Nights. "In the high rank which he attained," says Ibn Khellikan, "and the great power which he wielded, in loftiness of spirit and in the esteem and favour shown him by the Khalif, he stood without a rival. His disposition was generous, his looks encouraging, his demeanour kind; his liberality and munificence, the richness and prodigality of his donations are too well known to require mention." He had been educated with Er Reshid, and for some years after the latter's accession, served him as secretary of petitions, an arduous office (especially in the case of a monarch whose peculiar pretension it was to be always accessible to any of his subjects who had a request to make or a grievance to state), which he seems to have filled with the utmost brilliancy, showing, in particular, an intimate acquaintance

with the bewildering subtleties of Mohammedan law and jurisprudence. He was a man of exquisite culture and was accounted the best stylist of his day. He seems, indeed, to have been possessed, in a remarkable degree, of all the accomplishments of his time; and in particular, his knowledge of and power of composition in classical Arabic was so extensive and so elegant that amateurs of the pure literary style are said to have purchased, for their weight in gold, the scraps of parchment on which, as secretary of petitions, he had been wont to inscribe his decisions. His knowledge of law and jurisprudence was phenomenal and in these branches of learning he had been the favourite pupil of the celebrated Abou Yousuf, the first legist of his time. "He expressed his thoughts with great elegance and was remarkable for his eloquence and command of language; it is recorded that one night he wrote, in presence of Er Reshid, upwards of a thousand decisions on as many memorials that had been presented to the Khalif and that not one of these deviated in the least from what was warranted by the law."

Universally gifted, he put down, by fair means, the troublesome tribal war in Syria, and as viceroy of all the provinces of the East, restored peace and good government to the sorely mismanaged African provinces, whilst his brother Fezl performed the like office for Khorassan and the Western provinces of the empire. He educated the young prince El Mamoun, who never forgot his wise and noble teachings and lived to honour them by proving the best and most high-minded

monarch of the house of Abbas,[1] and being, on the death of the queen-mother Kheizuran, appointed chief Vizier, continued during the remainder of his life to exercise the functions of that high office with as much wisdom, justice, generosity and benefit to the kingdom as his father, brother and grandfather. Compassionate and forgiving almost to excess, no trait is recorded of him that shows any bitterness against personal enemies, nor does he ever appear to have availed himself of his immense power to punish the attempts that were perpetually made to injure him by men jealous of his character and position. On the contrary, such was his mansuetude and sweetness of nature, that he was always ready to intercede for the culprits, in cases where they had exposed themselves to the Khalif's displeasure. His strength of mind and moral courage were no less remarkable than his patience; the innate nobility of the man shines out in every act and every word; and he was always ready, often at the imminent risk of his own life, to intervene between the royal tiger whom he served and the unfortunate people under his control. Kindly, generous and charitable to excess and at the same time a firm, just and far-sighted

[1] To this prince, much more aptly than to his capricious and unprincipled father, might the epithets of "Good" and "Great" be applied; beside his many virtues, he had a much more real love and a deeper apprehension of the liberal arts and sciences than Er Reshid and did infinitely more than the latter to encourage and reward culture and learning; and this may probably be in great part attributed to the beneficent influence exercised over him by the teachings of his governor Jaafer.

administrator, he was passionately beloved by the people of Baghdad, whose miseries he spared no pains to alleviate and whose general prosperity may, in no small degree, be attributed to the untiring courage and self-sacrifice with which he was always ready to shield them, to the utmost of his power, from the ferocity and rapacity of his royal master.

Fezl, as the foster-brother of Er Reshid, was originally his most intimate friend and the companion of his private pleasures, being his constant associate in the carouses in which the Khalif passed his evenings, in the midst of his favourite women and musicians. For some unexplained reason, he appears to have become converted to the renunciation of such enjoyments as winebibbing and listening to music and tale-telling (forbidden to the strict Muslim) and to have abruptly withdrawn from the intimacy of the Khalif and forsworn association in his pleasures. This conduct on Fezl's part being probably construed by the umbrageous monarch as an implied censure on himself, he transferred his especial favour to Jaafer, a man of more savoir-vivre and easier composition than his austerer brother and more richly gifted with those social qualities of wit and gay and gallant humour so highly prized by Eastern princes in the companions of their pleasures; and he presently further emphasized his displeasure with Fezl by transferring the seals of government from him to Jaafer, as soon as the death of his mother Kheizuran, whose favourite Fezl was, left him at liberty to do so, appointing the deposed minister, whose services were too necessary to the empire

to be altogether dispensed with, to the most important extra-metropolitan post at his disposal, *i.e.* the government of Khorassan, an office involving the administration of nearly one-half of the dominions of the Khalifate. The manner in which this transfer of power was received by the Barmecides, as told by Ibn Khellikan, is strikingly illustrative of the magnanimity of the members of that illustrious house and their invincible attachment to one another. According to the famous biographer, Er Reshid said to Yehya, "Dear father, I wish to transfer to Jaafer the signet now held by my brother Fezl. I am ashamed to write that order to Fezl: do it for me." Yehya accordingly wrote to Fezl, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful commands that the signet be passed from thy right hand to thy left;" to which Fezl made answer in these words: "I hear and obey the word of the Commander of the Faithful concerning my brother. No favour is lost to me, which goes from me to Jaafer, and no rank is taken from me, when he receives it." On hearing this reply, Jaafer exclaimed, "What an admirable being is my brother! How noble is his soul!"

Naturally enough, Jaafer and his brilliant kinsmen were the objects of the bitterest jealousy and hatred to the courtiers and ecclesiastics of the day,—to the former especially for their Persian origin and for their commanding talents and popularity, and to the latter more particularly for their tolerance and their well-known, or at least shrewdly-suspected, adherence to some form of Persian Rationalism,—and many were the efforts, supported by lies and calumnies of the most unscrupulous character,

made by the enemies of the Bermekis to induce Er Reshid to withdraw his favour from them. These were long unsuccessful and would doubtless have continued to prove so (for, morose and passionate despot as he was, Er Reshid seems to have cherished a real affection for the brave and brilliant companion of his youth and to have estimated, at his real value to himself, the just, wise and gentle counsellor of his mature years), but for a circumstance that quickened the smouldering distrust and jealousy of the tyrant into an irrepressible outburst of fury and caused him to commit an act of which he afterwards bitterly repented, when (in Arabic phrase) repentance might no longer profit him. The circumstance in question was of a curious character. Jaafer appears to have, by the brilliancy of his conversational and other accomplishments, rendered himself so indispensable to the Khalif as a companion, as well as a minister, that the latter could not bear to be an hour without his company and for the purpose of having him always within call, insisted upon his occupying apartments within the private portion or serai of the palace; but, as royal etiquette, to which Er Reshid was devoutly attached, forbade the extension of this favour to any but actual members of the royal family, he conceived the plan of marrying Jaafer, pro formâ, to his favourite sister, the Princess Abbaseh.[1] The marriage

[1] Abbaseh was Haroun's elder sister and owed her great favour with him to the manner in which, during El Hadi's lifetime, she had exerted her influence over the latter to secure her younger brother's life and liberty.

was concluded, but the Khalif, with the unreasonable pride of an Eastern despot, forbade the parties to cohabit, an injunction which Jaafer himself made no effort to disobey. Abbaseh, however, was an exceedingly beautiful woman and she and Jaafer (who was then in the prime of manhood and one of the handsomest men of his day) fell passionately in love with each other, nor was it long before mutual desire prevailed to overleap the prohibited bounds. The most probable account of the way in which this came about seems that of Jafei (the author of the Mirat el Jenan), who represents the princess as having prevailed, by mingled threats and persuasions, upon Jaafer's mother Ettabeh to present her to him, whilst under the influence of wine, in the guise of the female slave of whom it was her habit to make her son a gift every Friday. This was accordingly done, and Abbaseh, after having passed some time in Jaafer's company, discovered herself to him, whereupon alarm dispelled the fumes of the wine and he sought out his mother and said to her, "Mother, thou hast ruined me." His words were prophetic. Abbaseh proved with child and gave birth to twins,[1] who were at once despatched to Mecca and there reared in secret by two devoted female attendants. The secret was kept from Er Reshid for about a twelvemonth, but was at last discovered to him in consequence of an incident peculiarly characteristic of the East. Abbaseh, with the unreflecting passion of Eastern ladies of high rank, beat one of her women with whom she was vexed, and the girl, in her spite,

[1] Some accounts mention one child only, but most say two.

revealed the fatal secret to Zubeideh, who seized an early opportunity of gratifying her rancour against both her husband's favourite sister and the Barmecides (especially Yehya, who, as intendant of the palace, enforced the rules of harem discipline with a strictness that was far from pleasing to the imperious Sultana), by repeating it to Er Reshid. Haroun's mind would already appear to have been poisoned against the Barmecides, not only by the inherent jealousy of a mean nature against the overwhelming superiority of the family in all qualities that confer distinction on their possessors, but by the enormous popularity which their good deeds had won them and the venomous insinuations of those miserable reptiles that thrive by calumny and treachery, whose rôle has always been so considerable in Oriental, even more than in European, courts, and by whose reports he was (or feigned to be) persuaded that Yehya and his sons aspired to oust himself from the Khalifate, an accusation for which no shadow of reason appears. Other subjects of displeasure are mentioned by historians as probable reasons for his treatment of the Barmecides, such as the conduct of Fezl above mentioned and that of Jaafer in releasing the unhappy betrayed Alide Yehya; but there can be no doubt that Haroun's chief and indeed only reason was his jealousy of the great family to whom he owed life, kingdom and renown. As to this, contemporary authorities are unanimous; according to Ibn Khellikan, Said ben Salim (a well-known grammarian and traditionist of the time[1]), when asked what crime the

[1] See Vol. IV. p. 234.

Barmecides had committed, answered, "Of a truth, they did nothing to warrant Er Reshid's conduct towards them; but their day had been long and that which continues long becomes irksome. There were persons of the best of men, who were fatigued with the length of the reign of the Khalif Omar [ibn el Khettab], though its like was never seen for justice, security, wealth and victories; they also bore with impatience the sway of Othman, and both were murdered. Besides, Er Reshid saw that generosity was become their wont, that the people were loud in their praise and that men's hopes were fixed on them and not on himself. Less than this suffices to excite the jealousy of princes; so Er Reshid conceived ill will against them, wreaked his vengeance on them and tried to find out faults. Besides this, a certain degree of presumption was sometimes visible in the conduct of Jaafer and Fezl, although Yehya was exempt from this; for he had more solid experience than his sons and better skill in affairs. This induced some of their enemies, such as Fezl ben Rebya, [Mohammed ibn Abi Leith] and others, to have recourse to Er Reshid, from whom they concealed the good done by the Barmecides and only told him of their faults, till they brought about what took place."

That the discovery of the disobedience of his orders by Jaafer and Abbaseh was not (as is contended by some historians) the real cause of Er Reshid's rage against the Barmecides, but only an additional element of exasperation and perhaps indeed a mere pretext, is evident from the deliberation with which he set about the ruin of the

house, the time which he allowed to elapse between his discovery of the fatal secret and the execution of his vengeance and the sudden and treacherous manner in which he carried out his sanguinary purpose. Nearly a year[1] would appear to have intervened between Zubeideh's malicious denunciation and the Khalif's return from Mecca, whither he had betaken himself, under pretence of pilgrimage, for the express purpose of verifying her disclosures. Here he found out Abbaseh's children and convinced by their resemblance to both parents of the truth of the story, caused them to be secretly conveyed to Irak, without letting any one know of the matter. With the Barmecides, meanwhile, he dissembled, showing them, if possible, more than his usual favour, till his return, when he halted at a place near Ambar, on the Euphrates, and after bestowing rich dresses of honour on the brothers and treacherously lulling to sleep any suspicions that Jaafer might have conceived[2] by insisting upon his giving himself up to conviviality in his own tent, what while he himself indulged in wine and mirth in the royal pavilion, suddenly, in the dead of the night, summoned one of his pages, Yasir[3] by name, and commanded him to go at once and bring him Jaafer's head. Yasir, greatly shocked,

[1] Arabic historians are far from precise on this point.

[2] Jaafer appears to have had some presentiment of approaching danger, which depressed his spirits and made him reluctant to engage in the carouse to which the Khalif urged him.

[3] Some authorities name Mesrour, but Yasir was certainly the executioner, though Mesrour might have been present as his superior officer and chief "Sword of the Khalif's Vengeance."

exclaimed, "Would I had died before this hour!" but dared not disobey and repaired to Jaafer's tent, where he found him carousing and acquainted him with his dreadful errand. Jaafer prevailed upon the messenger, who, like all the world, was indebted to him for many a favour, to return to the Khalif and tell him that he had put him to death. "If he expresses regret," said the Vizier, "I shall owe you my life; and if not, God's will be done." Yasir accordingly returned, leaving Jaafer without the tent, to Er Reshid, who said to him, "Well?" Whereupon he told him what had passed between himself and the Vizier. "Vile wretch," cried the Khalif, making use of the foulest imprecation known to the Arabs, "if thou answer me another word, I will send thee before him to the next world!" The page accordingly went out and striking off Jaafer's head, carried it to Er Reshid, who looked at it awhile, then bade him fetch two persons whom he named and whom, on their appearance, he commanded to strike off Yasir's head, alleging, with characteristic hypocrisy, that he could not bear the sight of Jaafer's murderer.[1]

Before giving the order for Jaafer's execution, Er Reshid had despatched an express to his chief of the police at Baghdad, bidding him seize Yehya and Fezl, before the news got wind, and cast them into the *Hebs ez Zenadikeh*[2] at Baghdad, and after secure the persons of their brothers, sons, grandchildren and all their other relatives and connections, even to their clerks. The

[1] Jaafer was thirty-seven years old at the time of his death.
[2] *i.e.* the prison of the Zenadikeh or atheists; see post.

order reached the Master of police in the middle of the night and he at once proceeded to execute it, securing the persons of the whole of the Barmecide family, as well as of their agents and dependents. According to Et Teberi, not a single person who had ever been connected with them was allowed to escape: every member of the family (with three exceptions) was put to death, even to their infant children, to the number, it is said, of over a thousand persons, and it need hardly be added that the "good" Haroun er Reshid confiscated to his own use the whole of their immense possessions. The race was absolutely exterminated, Yehya, Fezl and a brother of the former, Mohammed ben Khalid by name, being the only persons who appear to have survived this frightful massacre. The latter languished in prison during Er Reshid's life and was liberated by his successor. Some historians cast doubt upon this wholesale slaughter, but it is sufficient to ask, if it did not take place, how comes it that so numerous and notorious a family should all at once have so completely disappeared from the face of the earth as to leave no trace behind them?

The only members of the family whose fate is circumstantially related are Yehya and Fezl. With the former the sanguinary tyrant appears to have played as a cat with a mouse, hypocritically offering him his liberty; to which he replied that he preferred to remain with his son, with whom he was imprisoned, under circumstances of the greatest rigour, till his death, which occurred (A.D. 805) at the age of 74, after two years' imprisonment. His foster-brother Fezl Er Reshid caused to be

beaten till he was well-nigh dead, to wring from him a confession that he had secreted property beyond the immense amount that the Khalif had confiscated, but to no avail. Fezl was healed of the frightful wounds caused by this horrible treatment[1] by a doctor, to whom, on his recovery, he sent twenty thousand dirhems[2] that he had borrowed from a friend; but the doctor, though poor and in great distress, with rare magnanimity refused the money, saying, "I cannot accept payment for curing the greatest of the generous." In this wretched plight the two unfortunate survivors of the great Persian house displayed all the magnanimity for which they had been renowned in the days of their prosperity, supporting with high-souled patience and the noblest philosophy the miseries inflicted on them by the base rancour of the despot they had so faithfully served. The following touching anecdote will give some idea of the magnanimous spirit of the younger prisoner and Yehya yielded nothing to his son in the heroic longsuffering with which he bore his most unmerited woes. Fezl's love for his father was extreme: when in prison in winter they could not get warm water, which was necessary for Yehya, an old man over seventy, Fezl would take the copper ewer and apply it to his own stomach, so as in some measure to take off the chill for his father's use. He survived the latter three years and died in prison in

[1] He had received two hundred lashes, inflicted with such unsparing brutality that the doctor who tended him supposed from the state of his back that he had suffered at least a thousand strokes.

[2] About £500.

November, 808, four months only before the death of Er Reshid.[1]

The mock repentance shown by the latter, as evinced in his unreasoning anger against the innocent minister of his vengeance upon Jaafer, did not prevent him from offering the last indignities to the great Vizier's remains. His head he caused to be hung up at one and his trunk at the other end of the bridge over the Tigris, opposite the part where the Serat, the canal on which Baghdad was originally built, joins that river.[2] Here they remained for some months, till Er Reshid, being about to leave Baghdad, caused them to be taken down and burnt like those of the vilest criminal, the greatest indignity that could be offered to a Muslim, whose religion attaches the utmost importance to due burial and inculcates the necessity of appearing before God whole as at birth.

Authorities differ as to what became of Abbaseh, the hapless cause of this horrible tragedy; but, according to the most credible accounts, she was shut up in a chest and thrown into a pit, which her terrible brother caused to be then and there dug under the floor of her apartment. Then he sent for her children, who (says the old

[1] He is said to have frequently repeated the following verses of a contemporary poet in prison: "We address our complaints to God in our sufferings, for it is His hand which removeth pain and affliction. We have quitted the world and yet we still exist therein; we are not of the living, neither are we of the dead. When the gaoler chances to enter our cell, we wonder and exclaim, 'This man has come from the world.'"

[2] *i.e.* Kern es Serat (*i.e.* the fork or place of junction of the Serat), see antè, pp. 1 et seq.

chronicler) showed like two pearls, looked upon them pitifully and with tears in his eyes and commanded them to be cast alive into the pit, which he then caused to be closed up, weeping crocodile-tears the while. Thus a MS. history, whose writer is unknown, but other authorities state that he had the children burnt alive. Ibn el Jauzi relates that Yehya's wife Zubeideh, Haroun's foster-mother, after with great difficulty forcing her way into his presence, showed him his milk-teeth and the curls of hair that she had kept from his childhood and conjured him by these tokens of her claim upon him for fosterage (one of those most sacred to a Muslim) to spare her husband and son. The mean-minded Khalif was not to be moved, but offered to buy the relics of her; whereupon she, in her indignation, threw them down at his feet, saying, "I make thee a present of them." It is related by Mohammed ibn er Rehman, a contemporary *aalim* or man of learning and a member of the Khalif's family (the Hashimis), that he once saw at his mother's a woman of reverend mien, but poorly clad, who was introduced to him as the mother of Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, "There was a time when four hundred female slaves stood awaiting my orders and yet I thought that my son did not provide for me in a manner adequate to my rank; but now my only wish is to have two sheepskins, one for a bed and the other for a covering." Mohammed gave her five hundred dirhems,[1] and she well nigh died for excess of joy.

Among the various pretexts put forward by Er Reshid

[1] About £12 10s.

to cover the real reason of his rancorous spite against the Barmecides, he caused it to be bruited abroad that they were, though Muslims in outward show, fire-worshippers, like their ancestors, at heart; but the futility of this accusation is evident from the single fact that Fezl, when governor of Khorassan, pulled down the ancient temple (*i.e.* the Noubehar before mentioned) of the Fire, of which his forefathers had been the officiating priests, and built a magnificent mosque, exceeding in splendour the Temple at Mecca, in its stead. A more probable accusation is that they were at heart Zendics or Mundanists, a sect of Epicurean freethinkers, whose opinions, after a more primitive and practical fashion, followed in much the same Positivist track as those of the disciples of Auguste Comte in the present day and to which many of the most distinguished and ablest men of the day belonged. It is, therefore, not impossible or improbable that the Barmecides belonged to this sect; but it is fair to state that no shadow of proof exists of this. On the contrary, although they did not carry out the observances of Muslim ritual with the same mechanical exactitude as the hypocritical and superstitious tyrant their master, who is said to have prayed a hundred inclinations (*rekaät*) a day, they seem to have in no way offended against the tenets of Mohammedanism and to have fulfilled its external requirements with the moderate strictness of men of the world who made no pretension to pietism. Haroun attempted to give substance to this accusation by ordering Yehya and Fezl (as has been before mentioned) to the prison of the Zendics (*Hebs ez Zenadikeh*).

The horror and discontent excited in Baghdad by the miserable fate of the much and justly loved family was extreme and neither the sanguinary edict issued by the tyrant, to the effect that all who mourned the Barmecides should share their fate, nor the executions that followed it, availed to silence the popular grief and indignation. Elegies were composed by hundreds upon the fallen house and all the poets of the time (even those attached to the court) mourned them. "It was a heavy blow for me," cries Er Recashi, one of Er Reshid's "boon-companions," "to lose those princely stars by whose generous showers we were watered, when the skies withheld their rain. Let beneficence and the world say adieu to the glory of the Barmecides. By Allah, O son of Yehya, but for fear of spies and of the Khalif's eye, which sleeps not, we should compass thy gibbet [like the Kaabeh] and kiss it as men kiss the Sacred Stone!" "On seeing the sword fall on Jaafer," says Dibil el Khuzaï, "and hearing the Khalif's crier proclaim vengeance on Yehya, I wept for the world and felt how true it is that the goal of man's life is the quitting it." And indeed it would be hard to name a poet of the day who did not tune his lyre to the same sorrowful strain.

The following anecdotes will give some idea of the violence of the popular mourning for the Barmecides. The Khalif, hearing that, despite his prohibition, an old man named Mundir used every day to take his station before one of their ruined houses and harangue the passers-by on the great and noble deeds of the fallen family, sent for him and sentenced him to death; but

Mundir, obtaining leave to speak, drew so affecting a picture of the beneficence by which the Barmecides had rescued him from ruin and misery, that Haroun, moved to momentary repentance, not only pardoned him, but made him a present of a plate of gold, which the incorrigible old man received without a word of thanks, remarking only, "Yet another benefit that I owe to the Barmecides!" Abou Zekkar, a blind singer of Baghdad attached to Jaafer's household, who was present when Mesrour (or Yasir) cut off the latter's head, was instant with the executioner to slay him also and spare him (as he said) the misery of surviving his noble benefactor; which, being told to Haroun, he was touched by his fidelity and ordered him to be attached to his own suite, at the same salary as that allowed him by Jaafer. Ibrahim Ibn Othman ibn Nuheik was not so fortunate. Haroun, having heard of his lamentation for the Barmecides, invited him to the palace and after plying him freely with wine, drew from him, by hypocritical professions of regret for Jaafer's death, the avowal that he could not approve of his sovereign's treatment of so excellent a man and his opinion that it would be difficult to replace him; whereupon the treacherous tyrant threw off the mask and saying, "God damn thee!" ordered him to immediate execution.

After endeavouring in vain, by measures of the utmost rigour, to suppress the public manifestations of regret and love for the Barmecides, Er Reshid was ultimately compelled to desist and allow the people to give vent to their feelings as they pleased; but the popular indignation

and disaffection rose to such a pitch that he thought it well to leave Baghdad (whither he never returned) and take up his residence at Rekkeh, a city on the Euphrates, 115 miles E. of Aleppo. He soon felt the void left by the loss of his great ministers and gave way to bitter and unavailing remorse, in which, however, repentance had no part, it being merely sorrow for the results of the sin and not for the sin itself. "It is observed," says Price in his History of Mohammedanism, "that, on the extermination of the Barmecides, the affairs of Haroun fell into immediate and irretrievable confusion. Treason, revolt and rebellion assailed him in different parts of the empire [especially in Khorassan, where Fezl's beneficent government had not been forgotten and which was the native country of the family]. He felt himself from disease [and natural incapacity] unequal to the cares of government and expiated, by a tardy and unavailing regret, his unfeeling cruelty to the lamented race of Bermek." Fezl ben Rebya, whose treacherous malice had been largely instrumental in procuring the fall of the Barmecides, succeeded to their honours, but proved utterly unable to supply their place, and of this Er Reshid himself soon became conscious, as is shown by the following anecdote, related by El Jihshyari in his History of the Viziers. "Er Reshid," says he, "repented of his conduct to the Barmecides and deeply regretted the manner in which he had treated them. He said, before some of his brothers, that, were he but assured of the fidelity [that is to say, of the forgiveness] of Yehya and Fezl, he would reinstate them in their offices. He used

also to say [alluding evidently to Fezl ben Rebya], "Some people prompted us to punish our ablest and most faithful advisers and made us believe that themselves were capable of replacing them; but, when we did their will, they were not of the least use to us." And he recited the following line:

God curse your ancestors! Spare us your calumnies or fill their place.

The royal murderer appears never to have recovered his peace of mind; it is said that he never knew refreshing sleep after Jaafer's death and his confession is recorded that he would have given his whole realm to have called him back to life. According to Ibn Bedroun, his sister Uleiyeh once said to him, "My lord, I have not seen you enjoy a day of perfect happiness, since you put Jaafer to death. Why did you so?" To which Er Reshid replied, "If I thought my shirt knew the reason, I would tear it in pieces." When, after he had become convinced of the irreparableness of his loss, any blamed the Barmecides in his presence, he would say, "Perdition to your fathers! Cease to blame them or fill the void they have left." After the death of Jaafer and the imprisonment of Yehya and Fezl, he had no one in whom he could trust, having committed the fatal error of dividing his kingdom between his sons in his lifetime, and went in continual apprehension of being poisoned by the latter, fearing even to confide the knowledge of the lingering disease by which he died to his physicians, whom he suspected (not, it would seem, without cause) of being his sons' creatures, and it is said that even his old servant Mesrour,

whom he had overwhelmed with bounties, but who was in the pay of El Amin, brought him during his last journey a bad (*i.e.* a hard-trotting camel), to the intent that his ailment might be aggravated thereby. When (in 805) his old and faithful servant and foster-father Yehya died in his prison, there was found in his pocket a paper on which he had written these words, "The accuser is gone before and the accused will soon follow: the Cadi will be that equitable judge who is never unjust and who hath no need of evidence." This paper was sent to Er Reshid, who wept the rest of the day, and his face for some days after bore striking marks of sorrow. In November, 808, the noble Fezl was also, at the age of forty-six, released by death from his sufferings and the Khalif, on hearing of his decease, said, "My term is near unto his." His presentiments did not deceive him, for he survived the foster-brother and friend, to whom he was so deeply indebted and whom he had so cruelly wronged, but four months. His last act was to sentence to death, on some fancied slight, his physician Jebril ibn Bekhtiyeshou,[1] but, having respited him till the

[1] Another account of this matter is to the effect that, when he found himself dying, he upbraided his physician for failing to cure him, to which the latter replied that, if he had taken his advice and abstained from immoderate indulgence in women, he would not have come to such extremity, but that he was now beyond the reach of art, at which Er Reshid was so exasperated that he clapped him in prison and bade put him to death. The Khalif's chamberlain, who was his friend, took upon himself to respite Jebril, and meanwhile Haroun died. Jebril (who was El Amin's creature) was suspected of poisoning him; El Amin took him into his service on his father's death, and when El Mamoun succeeded to the Khalifate, he imprisoned the physician on that suspicion. El Amin is said to have feared that his father would deprive him of the succession in favour of the more deserving, though less favoured, Mamoun.

morrow, he himself died in the night of the 23rd March, 809, at Tous in Khorassan, where the rapid progress of his disease had compelled him to suspend his campaign against the Transoxanian insurgents. He was forty-seven years of age and had reigned upwards of twenty-three. Such was the miserable end of the "great" Khalif.

III.

The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night contains two hundred and sixty-four stories of all lengths, from an anecdote of half a page to a "history" of several hundred pages. The stories are very unequally distributed over the different Nights, which again vary greatly in length, the first fifty or sixty being nearly three times the average length of those in the remaining portion of the work. The stories may be roughly divided into five principal categories, as follows:

(1) "Histories" or long romances, founded or professing to be founded upon historical data and containing references to events which actually happened, such as the conquest of Syria and Persia by the Arabs and the wars between the Khalifs and the Emperors of Custentiniyeh or Constantinople. These are of comparatively rare occurrence, but comprise the longest stories in the collection, such as the history of King Omar ben Ennuman

and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan (which alone occupies nearly an eighth part of the entire work and in which occur incidentally the subordinate stories of Taj el Mulouk and Aziz and Azizeh), and that of Gherib and his brother Agib, a romance of apparently Bedouin origin, much resembling such stories as Antar and Abou Zeid.

(2) Anecdotes and short stories dealing with historical personages and with incidents and adventures belonging to the actual every-day life of the periods to which they refer. These are very numerous and relate for the most part to the epoch of the Abbaside Khalifs. To this category belong the many stories and anecdotes in which Er Reshid, his wife Zubeideh, his sons El Amin, El Mamoun and Abou Isa, his brother Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, the poets and musicians Isaac of Mosul and his father Ibrahim, El Asmaï, Abou Nuwas, etc., the Imam Abou Yousuf, the Barmecide princes Yehya, Fezl and Jaafer, and the various officers, governors and notables of the Khalifate, besides the Khosroës or ancient kings of Persia, Alexander the Great (Iskender the Two-horned, as the Orientals call him), and the Khalifs Omar ben el Khettab, Muawiyeh, Merwan, Abdulmelik, Suleiman, Omar ben Abdulaziz, Hisham and Welid ben Sehl (all of the house of Umeyyeh), the Abbaside Khalifs El Mensour, El Mutawekkil, El Mutezid and El Mustensir, the Fatimite Khalif El Hakim bi-amrillah, the Eyoubite Sultan El Melik en Nasir Selaheddin of Egypt (Saladin) and other historical personages figure. To this category also belong the stories (so common among the Arabs and Persians) celebrating the extravagant generosity and hospitality of such

typical personages as Hatim Taï, Maan ben Zaïdeh and the princes of the house of Bermek, and short isolated fragments of description, dealing, from a curiously distorted and mythical point of view, with historical or quasi-historical events. Of these latter singular examples are the story of the Khalif El Mamoun and the Pyramids of Egypt and the very curious version of the legend of Don Rodrigo (the last Gothic King of Spain) and the Tower of Hercules, called The City of Lebtait[1] and containing a description (evidently mythical) of the wonderful treasures and rarities (among others the enchanted table of Suleiman ben Daoud) found by the Arab conquerors in the city. The town in question is of course intended for Toledo, but it is always somewhat difficult to identify the European cities and places referred to in Arabic fiction, or indeed history, as the Muslim conquerors were not content with Arabicizing the Spanish names, but actually (apparently moved by a sort of nostalgic impulse) applied to such cities as Seville, Granada, Jaen, Xeres, Murcia, Malaga, etc., the designations of towns and provinces in Egypt, Syria and other Mohammedan countries, such as Hems, Damascus, Kinesrin, Arden, Palestine, Misr (Egypt), Fustat (old Cairo), etc.

(3) Romances and romantic fictions, comprising three different kinds of tales. The first subdivision includes purely romantic stories of considerable length, referring to no particular historical epoch and generally making free use of supernatural persons and agencies; such as the stories of Kemerezzeman and Budour, Aziz and Azizeh,

[1] Var. Lubteh.

Uns el Wujoud and the Vizier's Daughter Rosebud, The Enchanted Horse, the Queen of the Serpents, Hassan of Bassora and the King's Daughter of the Jinn, Jouder and his Brothers, Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal, Marouf, etc., etc. Under the second head may be classed stories apparently purely fictitious, but whose scene is laid in some definite historical epoch, in which are introduced historical personages and whose incidents and descriptions reproduce the manners and local circumstance of such cities as Baghdad, Bassora, Mosul, Damascus and Cairo and such periods as those of the Khalifs of the Abbaside dynasty or the Eyoubite Sultans of Egypt. These also are for the most part of considerable length and comprise such tales as the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, Noureddin and the Fair Persian, Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, Ghanim ben Eyoub, Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, The Voyages of Sindbad, Abdallah ben Fazil and his brothers, Ali Noureddin and the King's Daughter of the Franks, etc., etc. In this subdivision must also be included the stories or *nouvelles*[1] detailing the doings

[1] In many of the stories of this class (and indeed in the Nights generally, whenever roguery of any kind is in question) the crafty, perfidious old woman (such as Dhat ed Dewahi or Delileh) who assumes the character of a devotee and avails herself of this disguise to strip, rob, kidnap and murder her dupes or her enemies, is a familiar figure. Women are indeed generally presented in the work as creatures entirely governed by their sensual instincts, sectaries of the God *Wünsch*, lacking reason and religion, although, on the other hand, instances are not wanting in which female characters (*e.g.* Abrizeh) are painted in the most heroic colours, or (as Azizeh) hallowed to all time with the tenderest haloes of sentiment and sacrifice, and the introduction

of the rogues, sharpers and impostors of the time of the Khalifs and their encounters with the police of Baghdad and Cairo (who, by the by, appear like Vidocq and others, to have been drawn almost exclusively from the criminal classes and to have held their grades as the prizes of proved eminence in successful roguery), a class of fiction much favoured in the East, of which certain examples, *e.g.* the stories of the Barber and his Brothers, the Rogueries of Delileh the Crafty and her Daughter Zeyneb the Trickstress and the Adventures of Quicksilver Ali of Cairo (all in the Thousand and One Nights,) forcibly remind one of such "picaresque" novels of Lesage, Quevedo, Aleman and others, as Guzman de Alfarache, Lazarillo de Tormes, El Gran Tacaño, Gil Blas, etc., and from which indeed it is probable that these latter had in some respects an almost direct origin. The third subdivision embraces the most numerous section of the work, *i.e.* such altogether fictitious short stories and legends, romantic or sentimental, as may conveniently be classed under the general heading of contes fantastiques. To this class belong the stories of miracles and saints, in which Muslim literature is so rich, such as The Apples

of such figures as the learned slave-girl Taweddud and the female preacher in the dissertation upon the relative excellence of the sexes (Vol. IV.) proves the readiness of the Arabs to recognize moral and intellectual excellence in the weaker sex, whilst, as a compensation for the repulsive portrait of the hypocritical trickstress, so common in their pages, the authors not unfrequently present us with instances of sincere devotion and effectual piety on the part of their heroines, as well as of female saints, whose purity and zeal have gained them the power of working miracles.

of Paradise, The Pious Black Slave, The Blacksmith who could handle fire without hurt, The Ferryman and the Hermit, etc., etc.; the equally favourite class of stories of unfortunate lovers, such as Otbeh and Reyya and The Mad Lover, and such purely fantastic tales as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, The Man who never laughed again, The Enchanted Springs, The House with the Belvedere, The City of Irem, the three stories of the Angel of Death, etc., etc.; and lastly, such "merry gestes" and Boccaccio-like "inventions" as Ali the Persian and the Kurd Sharper, The Man of Yemen and his Six Slave-girls, The Man who saw the Night of Power, The Simpleton and the Sharper, the three stories of foolish Schoolmasters, The Lady and her Five Suitors (one of many stories of trickery practised by women upon their husbands or lovers), and most of the series of short tales known as "The Malice of Women." It is into this latter portion of the collection that European authors appear to have dipped most freely, many of the incidents in works of the Decameron and Heptameron kind and in such bodies of popular fiction as those collected or expanded by Grimm, Asbjornsen, Andersen, etc., etc., bearing unmistakable traces of affinity, immediate or derivative, with the Thousand and One Nights.

(4) Fables and apologues or short moral stories, such as The Cat and the Crow, The Birds and Beasts and the Son of Adam and the parables and moral instances of which the (Indian) story of Jelyaad and Shimas in great part consists.

(5) Tales, so called, such as Taweddud, the examination

of Nuzhet ez Zeman before Sherkan (Vol. II. pp. 80–96), of Wird Khan before his father (Vol. VIII. pp. 217–243) and the pietistic exercitations of Dhat ed Dewahi and her damsels before Omar ben Ennuman (Vol. II. pp. 120–134), in which the slightest thread of story serves as an excuse for the display of the heterogeneous "learning" (as the Arabs understood the word) of the author and for endless dissertations upon all things human and divine and sundry others. This class of story, though undeniably curious from the student's point of view, has little or no interest for the general reader, who will probably be inclined to agree with De Sacy that, if, in a certain light, edifying, it is "rien moins qu'amusant."

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night is the extreme simplicity of its style. Nothing can be more unlike the idea of barbaric splendour, of excessive and heterogeneous ornament, that we are accustomed to associate with the name, than the majority of the tales that compose the collection. The life described in it is mainly that of the people, those Arabs so essentially brave, sober, hospitable and kindly, almost hysterically sensitive to emotions of love and pity, as well as to artistic impressions, yet susceptible of being roused to strange excesses of ferocity and brutality, to be soon followed by bitter and unavailing repentance—a people whom extreme sensibility of the nervous tissue inclines to excess of sensuous enjoyment, yet who are capable of enduring without a murmur the severest hardships and of suffering patiently the most cruel vicissitudes of fortune, without other complaint

than that implied in the utterance of the Koranic formula (pronouncing which the Prophet has promised that no true believer shall be confounded), "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Especially in that portion which deals with the life and manners of the Arabs of Syria and Chaldæa, under the Khalifate of the house of Abbas, are there to be found stories that, in their bright simplicity or poignant pathos, remind one more of an old Mährchen than of what is generally known as Eastern fiction.

The Thousand and One Nights, composed, to all appearance, mainly of stories written from dictation and probably originally invented, in a quasi-extempore fashion, for public recitation, are necessarily for the most part confined to a purely conversational and so-called vulgar style. The crabbedness of classical Arabic, as exemplified in the Koran, with its abrupt abridgments and its mysterious hiatuses, is happily in general absent from its pages, nor are they often defaced by the still more terrible refinements of the ornate manner (*el bediya*, as it is technically called), of which a favourable specimen is the celebrated Mecamat of El Heriri and driven to extremity by the ingenious perversions of whose apostles, a savant cited by the learned author of the "Prolegomena" asserts it to be the dearest wish of his heart to see the Euphuists, who cultivated the science of ornaments in prose and verse, well flogged in public, whilst a crier proclaimed aloud their misdeeds, for the edification of the literary classes. Mr. Lane, indeed, in the notes to his version, gives us the sinister intelligence that certain

Egyptian rhetoricians, dissatisfied with what they considered the crude and vulgar style of the collection, had intimated their intention of revising and remodelling it; and I confess that to me such an undertaking seems as great a profanation as would be the remodelling of the Canterbury Tales or the Mort d'Arthur.

The splendour of description, the showers of barbaric pearl and gold, that are generally attributed to the work, exist but in isolated instances. The descriptions are usually of an extreme naïve and sometimes almost childish kind and constantly involve repetitions and amplifications such as characterise a story told to a child. They run generally in the same grooves and have a sort of gamut of standard comparisons, out of which they rarely stray. A beautiful youth is always a full moon, a slender and graceful girl a willow-wand or a thirsty gazelle; a mole on the cheek is a globule of ambergris, the eyebrows are a bended bow, the nose a curved sabre, the lips coral or Solomon's seal; the forehead is the new moon rising from the night of the hair, the eyes are lakes of jet or narcissus, the cheeks roses or blood-red anemones, the browlocks scorpions, the ringlets chains of ambergris, upholding the lamp of the face, the shape a lance or a flowering cane set in a hill of sand, the breasts half pomegranates or caskets of ivory and the teeth a necklace of pearls, a spray of camomile petals or the glittering seeds of the pomegranate set in their ruby pulp; and emotions and sentiments are rendered in much the same kind of figurative shorthand. Nevertheless, the constant recurrence of the same elements of description does not produce monotony. Even as in

music the multiform progressions of the various keys inform the unity of the unchanging gamut with limitless variations of combination and effect, so the play of sentiment and circumstance in the Arabian tales perpetually induces in the rigid scale of their ornaments fresh permutations of shifting colour and new harmonies of phantasy and expression.

The grace of pathos that hallows so many of its pages constitutes perhaps the chief charm of the collection, although the other features whose presence should contribute to the unity of a great romantic work are no less conspicuous, when the occasion calls for their display. What can be more poignant in its sad simplicity than The Mad Lover or The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh,[1] more dramatic in its almost tragic intensity than The Scavenger and the Noble Lady of Baghdad, more engaging, in its homely pathos, than the story of the forlorn royal children in Jerusalem and their adventures with the rascal Bedouin and the kind simple-souled stoker?[2] Where shall we find a more fervid *conte bleu* of devotion than The Apples of Paradise[3] or The Devout Prince or "legendes dorées" more instinct with the austere poetry of asceticism than The Pious Black Slave,[4] The Ferryman and the

[1] Vol. VI. p. 208. [2] Vol. II. pp. 57-73.

[3] Cf. the mediæval legend of St. Dorothy.

[4] Remarkable as affording the only instance of a black being favourably mentioned in the work. The African slave is commonly held up to execration in Arabian fiction as a monster of brutality and perfidy, lustfulness and ingratitude, and examples of this view of the negro character abound in the Thousand and One Nights.

Hermit,[1] or Abou Durraj and the Leper? For sustained romantic exaltation, it would be hard to surpass The City of Brass or the legend of Many-columned Irem, and few languages can produce such masterpieces of melancholy beauty as The Blacksmith who could handle fire without hurt or The Man who never laughed again, strains that linger in the thought like the tones of that "alte, ernste Weise" which haunts the hearing of the dying Tristan in the greatest of musical dramas. Nor is the power of effective poetical portraiture lacking, when required, *teste* the vivid picture of the Khalif's pleasure-garden at Baghdad[2] and the exquisitely imaginative description of the lute in Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's Daughter;[3] and when the movement of the story calls for the exercise of an austerer faculty, as in the battle-scenes of Omar ben Ennuman or Gherib, the text quickens into a stern and nervous energy, a vivid and unfaltering concision, that could hardly be excelled by Homer or Dante. Equally remarkable is the wealth of humour and wit that characterizes the work, whether (as in Ali the Persian and the Kurd Sharper) it bring to mind the headlong horseplay of Rabelais or (as in the episode of the Stoker,[4] of the Hashish-Eater in Ali Shar,[5] or of Jaafer and the old Bedouin) the rough but effective burlesque of John Heywood and the mediæval farce-writers, whether (as in the anecdotes of Abou Nuwas) it recall the cynical humour

[1] A story of distinctly Christian origin, possibly suggested by some vague reminiscence of the hermits of the Thebaïd.

[2] Vol. I. p. 341. [3] Vol. VIII. p. 80.

[4] Vol. II. p. 305. [5] Vol. IV.

of Boccaccio, or (as in Kafour[1] and Khelifeh) the cudgel-strokes of drollery, half naïve, half caustic, of Sancho or Sganarelle, or (as in the Man of Yemen and his Six Slave-girls) the deliberate wit of the Moyen de Parvenir, it is always apt and always effective, in utrumque paratus, equally at home with the rough and ready weapons of popular repartee and the more keenly attempered arms of satire and word-fence. The whole Oriental world of the Khalifate re-lives for us in these enchanted pages, from which nothing is rejected, nothing excluded as common or unclean, and in which all classes of the Muslim world are represented, king and slave, courtier and countryman, pietist and freethinker, learned and ignorant, wise and foolish, moralist and debauchee. Satire and sentiment, love and lewdness, wit and wisdom, holiness and hypocrisy, chase each other through the shifting scenes of this magic lantern of the East, in which the pure and self-sacrificing tenderness of an Azizeh "sticks fiery off indeed" from the selfish sensuality of her rivals, and the strains of exalted morality and passionate devoutness, the traits of heroic faith and unwearying magnanimity, that jostle with the satyr-orgies of an Abou Nuwas and the fiendish treachery of an Aboukir, show but the goodlier for the blackness of the baseness that encompasses them.

One of the chief stumbling-blocks in the path of a translator of the Thousand and One Nights is the peculiar shapelessness of Arabic prose. Without stops, capitals or other indications of breach of continuity and

[1] Vol. I. p. 368.

practically undivided into clauses or paragraphs, the text, if unbroken by verse, runs on in one long sentence, trailing after it a cumbrous train of accumulated "ands" and "thens," heedless of symmetry of phrase or clearness of expression and little careful to order the succession of the words in accordance with that of the sense, so that it is not uncommon to find some important member of a previous phrase cast up high and dry in the midst of a strange clause several lines in advance, for the Arab author, after he has apparently finished with one division of a subject and well entered another, thinks nothing of pulling short up and trying back for the purpose of making some addition of real or fancied necessity to the foregone passage of description or enumeration. To this most irritating peculiarity must be added a constant recurrence of useless repetitions and an all-pervading tautology, together with a habit of aggravating the (to the European ear) inherent incoherence of Eastern composition by a perpetual readiness to sacrifice directness and clarity of expression, if an outré turn of speech, a jingle of words or a trifling play of meanings can be secured by the employment of an obscure trope or a far-fetched synonym. One of the especial ornaments of Arabic prose (an excrescence born of the excessive facilities for rhyme afforded by a language whose every speaker is a versifier and the extravagant sensibility of Eastern peoples to antithesis of all kinds, whether of sound or thought) is the use of what is called *seja* or rhyming prose, with whose jingling tags it is the summit of every Arab author's

ambition to deck or disfigure (les deux se disent) his pages, and rare indeed is the virtue of the writer who carries self-denial so far as to neglect an opportunity of dragging in this figure, too often at the expense of sense and coherence. The Koran, which in the eyes of every true believer is impeccable and the model of all excellence, from the literary, as well as from the moral and religious point of view, is almost entirely written in this style, and as all post-Mohammedan literature, so far, at least, as the rules of composition are concerned, is modelled upon this all-sufficing volume, the use of the *seja* has, like a noxious water-weed that checks the current of a stream, overrun the native vigour of Arab prose and has by the sectaries of the *style fleuri* been carried to such an excess that its abuse has given rise to the irreverent dictum, *es seja feja*, rhyming prose is vexation of spirit. Happily, however, the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night is written in a so-called vulgar style and is therefore, though not free from the excrescence in question, less universally disfigured by it than works of more pretension to literary merit.

In presence of these difficulties, absolute literality is impossible to the translator who has any regard for style, and he is, therefore, compelled in some sort to remodel his original, phrase by phrase and even page by page, if, with all possible respect for fidelity to word and sense, he desire to spare his readers the weariness of wading through a jungle of phrases and sentences, in which the eye of the scholar alone can discern form and coherence.

The following passage, selected almost at random from the text of the Thousand and One Nights, will give some idea of the *literal* style of the original. Many more flagrant specimens might have been chosen and it would not be difficult to quote passages in which the faults of the composition envelope the meaning in a confusion well-nigh inextricable, especially where (as in the case of the beleaguerment of Constantinople by the Muslims [1]) the resource of comparison and collation with other texts of the story is wanting, the History of King Omar ben Ennuman being omitted from the Breslau Edition; but I prefer to cite one which offers no extravagant example of the defects of which I have spoken.

When the morning morrowed, he anointed the feet of him with the water the which they two had taken it from the herb and descended to the sea and went walking in it days and nights and he wondering at the horrors of the sea and the marvels of it and the rarities of it and he ceased not going upon the face of the water till he came to an island as indeed it [were] Paradise so Beloukiya went up to that island and became wondering at it and at the beauty of it and wandered in it and saw it a great island the dust of it saffron and the gravel of it of cornelian and precious stones and the hedges of it jessamine and the vegetation of it of the goodliest of the trees and the brightest of the sweet-scented herbs and the sweetest of them and in it springs running and the brushwood of it of the Comorin aloes and the Sumatra aloes and the reeds of it sugar-cane and around it the rose and the narcissus and the amaranth and the gilly-flower and the camomile and the lily and the violet and all that in it [were] kinds and colours and the birds of it warbled upon those trees and it was fair of attributes spacious of sides abundant of good things indeed it comprised all of beauty and charms and the warbling of

[1] Vol. II. p. 180.

the birds of it [was] pleasanter than the tones [of the chanters] of the Koran[1] and the trees of it tall and the birds of it speaking and the streams of it flowing and the springs of it running and the waters of it sweet and in it the gazelles frisked and the wild cattle came and went and the birds warbled on those branches and consoled the lover the love-afflicted.

A comparison of the above literal rendering with my previous translation (Vol. V. p. 66) of the passage will show that I have confined myself to arranging the disjecta membra of the original in their natural order, following the original wording as closely as is consistent with English idiom and the necessity of breaking up the endless phrases of the Arabic into convenient sentences and purging them from the excrescences of tautology and repetition that deface the text. Upon this principle I have throughout proceeded, endeavouring as far as possible to conciliate the claims of literality and fidelity to the characteristic idioms of the original with the genius of English prose and the exigencies of style. If, in this respect, some discrepancies should appear between the earlier and the latter parts of the translation, they must be attributed to the natural gradual change of method consequent on the experience gained in the course of the long labour of love which has occupied the leisure hours of seven years of a professional life and which I have now brought to an end, if not (in view of the enormous difficulties which the work of translation presents) with entire satisfaction to myself,

[1] *Rennat el methani.* An obscure meaning of *methani* is "the second (or other than the first) strings of lutes," and the clause may therefore, perhaps, be meant to read "the tones of the lute": but it is quite in Arab character to compare a sweet sound to Koran-reading.

at least, with the feeling that it is not for want of pains that I have, in many instances of which I am but too sensible, fallen short of my ideal.

The following is a specimen of the rhyming prose above mentioned, rendered in the jingle of the original. It is evident that it would have been by no means difficult to keep up the imitation throughout, but, upon consideration, I came, rightly or wrongly, to the conclusion that it was undesirable to do so, as it seemed to me that the *seja*-form was utterly foreign to the genius of English prose and that its preservation would be fatal to all vigour and harmony of style.

This letter is from him whom passion wastes away and whom desire doth slay and misery destroys him and dismay, him who of life despairs and looks for nought but death to end his cares, none is there to his mourning heart comfort or succour will impart, nor for his wakeful eye 'gainst care is helper nigh; his day is past in fire, his night in torment dire; his body for emaciation's wasted sore, and there comes to him no messenger from her he doth adore.

The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night contains a very large quantity of verse, unequally distributed throughout the various tales,[1] and before proceeding to speak of this feature of the work, it may interest my readers if I give a brief outline of the general

[1] Some of the stories, such as the Queen of the Serpents, The Enchanted Horse, Jelyaad and Shimas and others, mainly of Persian or Indian origin, contain little or none, whilst in others page after page is occupied by verse, which, for instance, forms nearly a fifth part of the (Egyptian) stories of Zein el Mewasif and Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's daughter.

principles upon which the prosody of the Arabs is founded. The invariable unit, upon which Arabic (and Persian) verse is built, is the *beit* or line (usually but improperly rendered "couplet"). The word *beit* signifies literally "a house,"[1] but by analogy "a tent" (and from this we may fairly conclude at least this fundamental part of Arabic prosody to have originated with the Bedouins or Arabs of the desert, as it is only they who would be likely to call a tent a house)[2] the verse being whimsically regarded by the Arabs as an erection; and this simile is carried out in the nomenclature of the different parts of the line, one foot being called a "tent-pole," another a "tent-peg" and the two hemistichs of the verse being known as the folds or leaves of the double door of the tent. Each beit is divided into two hemistichs of equal length, each containing three or four feet of two, three, four or five syllables, and the whole verse is known as a hexameter or octameter, according as it contains six or eight feet, or from sixteen to thirty-two syllables. A peculiarity of Arabic verse is the excess of long syllables over short and the absence of the dactyl and dibrach, the swiftest feet in use among Europeans, a characteristic which produces a graver and more stately movement of the rhythm than is common in European poetry. I should perhaps, however, observe that the qualifications "long" and "short" are somewhat empirically applied to the

[1] In its rudimentary form, it means "a night-place."

[2] This is yet more evident, if we consider the full name of the verse, i.e. *beit shar*, "a line of verse," *syn.* "a house of hair," that is to say, the tent made of camel's hair cloth used by the Bedouins.

syllables of Arabic feet, as their quantities appear to be hardly appreciable by an European ear, the "long," in particular, being of a shifting character, so much so, indeed, that certain readers of the Koran are said to have been known to make use of no less than seven varieties of this quantity. This being the case, it has been suggested by the eminent French orientalist, M. Stanislas Guiraud, that musical notation should be applied to the determining of the Arabic rhythms, but, notwithstanding the ingenuity and ability of his treatise on the subject, his tentatives do not as yet appear to have brought about any very definite result. Several Arabists of distinction, German and English, have indeed endeavoured, by the use of quantitative signs, to reproduce in their own languages the precise rhythm and accent of Arabic verse; but I confess that to myself, notwithstanding the ability and ingenuity displayed by the translators (who indeed have been the first to acknowledge the ill-success of their experiments and to pronounce against the feasibility of representing the Oriental metres by a similar arrangement of feet and accents in European verse), the result seems still more unsatisfactory and inartistic than that of the many unsuccessful attempts to introduce Greek and Latin rhythms into English metre. The genius of the two languages (Arabic and English) belonging, as they do, to opposite groups of speech-form, presents no point of union; and it seems to me, therefore, that the only satisfactory way of rendering Arabic poetry in English verse is to content oneself generally with observing the exterior form of the stanza,

the movement of the rhyme and (as far as possible) the identity in number of the syllables composing the beits.

The principal Arabic metres are sixteen in number, each subdivided by numerous variations; and it may, perhaps, be interesting to note here the somewhat whimsical names by which they are known in the East. The generic name given to them is *behr*, literally "sea," but, by analogy, the space comprised within the walls of a tent, thus continuing the metaphor before mentioned, and they are distinguished individually as the long, the extended, the open, the copious, the perfect, the trilling, the tremulous, the running, the swift, the flowing, the light, the analogous, the improvised, the curtailed, the approximative and the consecutive. The English reader will naturally suppose that these names are in some way descriptive and will doubtless be surprised to hear (and this fact alone will amply suffice to show how toto cœlo the genius of Oriental prosody differs from that of the West) that, in the opinion of those scholars who have most radically studied the question, they have no analogy whatever with the character of the various metres, but were (as far, at least, as concerns the thirteen primitive metres) manufactured by the inventor, as a mere memoria technica, after the model (*i.e.* the grammatical measure) of the fundamental feet upon which the respective "circles" or groups of metres are based. I should perhaps mention here that the system of Arabic prosody is said to have been invented by one Khelil, a grammarian, and to have been suggested to him by the strokes of a blacksmith's hammer upon an anvil: not the most promising combination of circumstance for the birth of so important a branch of art.

The principal form used in Arabic poetry (and that which most frequently occurs in the Thousand and One Nights) is the *Kesideh* or *Purpose-poem;* practically identical with the better-known (Persian) form of the Ghazel or love-song par excellence, with the exception that the latter is limited to eighteen beits or verses and must contain the name of the poet in the last beit. The Kesideh may be composed in any one of the sixteen metres and is built upon a single rhyme, the two hemistichs of the first beit rhyming with each other and with the second hemistich of each succeeding beit to the end of the poem, however long it may be. It is a curious fact that the same prohibition of *enjambement*, or the carrying on of the sense from one verse (or pair of hemistichs) to another, obtains in Arabic as in French classic verse, it being considered a fault not to complete the sense in the one verse. It is allowable to repeat the same rhyming word, but (according to the strict laws of prosody) not unless seven verses intervene. However, this and the preceding rule are constantly violated by Arab poets, who appear to have little scruple in repeating the rhyming word whenever it suits them, and in Persian verse (whose laws are essentially the same as those of Arabic prosody) the licence is still greater, the same word in the same sense being allowed to form the rhyme throughout a whole ghazel. The *Kitah* or Fragment, which is also of frequent occurrence in the work, is only a portion of a Kesideh, other than the *metla*, first or

double-rhyme verse. The *Rubaï* or quatrain is also a common form. It consists of four hemistichs rhyming with each other. The only other verse-form that occurs with any frequency is the *Mukhemmes* or Cinquain, a succession of stanzas, each formed of two beits and a hemistich, the five hemistichs of the first stanza having the same rhyme, whilst the first four of each succeeding stanza take a new rhyme and the fifth rhymes with the first stanza to the end of the poem. Another form of the Mukhemmes differs only from the first in that the last hemistichs of the stanzas rhyme with each other only, independently of the other hemistichs of the first stanza. The *Murebbes* or foursome song occurs once only in the Nights[1] and consists of a series of two-beit stanzas, the first three hemistichs of each of which rhyme with each other only, independently of the rest of the poem, and the fourth with that of every other stanza.

The *Muweshshih* or Ballad is another form which occurs once only in the Thousand and One Nights.[2] It is, perhaps, the most elaborate verse-form in the language and is said to have been invented by the Muslim poets of Spain, shortly after the Conquest, and to have been adopted from them by their brethren of Egypt and Syria. It consists of a succession of three-line stanzas, in the first of which all six hemistichs end with the same rhyme. In the second and succeeding stanzas, the first line and the first hemistich of the second line take a new rhyme; but the second hemistich of the second line resumes the rhyme of the first stanza and is followed by the third line

[1] Vol. I. p. 84. [2] Vol. VIII. p. 145.

of the latter, serving as a refrain to each stanza of the poem, which is often of considerable length. Other forms of the Muweshshih exist, but the above is the only one found in the Thousand and One Nights. Single lines are of frequent occurrence, which are apparently "blank" (that is to say, the two hemistichs of which do not rhyme with each other), but this is only apparent, as the verses in question are nothing more than an extract from a Kesideh, blank verse having no existence in Arab poetry.

One of the chief characteristics of Arabic verse is ingenuity and it is indeed from the Muslim poets of Spain and Portugal that the Cavalier Marino, Gongora and our own Euphuists seem, more or less directly, to have borrowed the concetti and agudezas with which their pages bristle. The Arab poet appears too often to aim at making his verse a sort of logogriph, susceptible of more than one meaning, and this peculiarity, combined with a passion for obscure synonyms and doubtful metaphors and an excessive use of syntactical and rhetorical figures (particularly those of ellipsis, enallage, anacoluthon, hyperbaton, metonymy, synecdoche and paronomasia) and the national tendency to imitate the incoherent abruptness of the Koran, too often renders Arabic verse a tangled skein, to unravel which demands an amount of labour and consideration hardly to be estimated by the result, as it appears in the form of translation. Add to this the mechanical difficulty of the transfer of idiom and metrical form from one language to another having no point in common with it and the special crux established by the indispensable condition

of the monorhyme (often carried to an extraordinary length, as in Vol. VIII. pp. 25–27, where one unlucky assonance must furnish forth no less than forty-eight rhymes), and it will be evident that the labour of rendering into isometrical English the vast body of verse contained in the Thousand and One Nights is one of no common hardship and that the translator who has, with perhaps too rash a confidence, undertaken so exacting a task, may fairly ask for no common indulgence towards the shortcomings of which he is himself abundantly conscious.

The Thousand and One Nights, apart from its attraction as the most comprehensive compendium of national romance in existence, is remarkable as presenting a singularly copious anthology of Arab verse. Almost all the great poets of the Khalifate, as well as many of those who preceded or were contemporaneous with the Prophet, are represented in its pages. Among the immense mass of metrical quotation contained in the various tales, I have been able, *currente calamo*, to identify selections from the works of no less than thirty-four of the chief poets of Islam, namely, Imrulcais, Elcameh ibn Abadeh, Antar, Adi ben Zeid, En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani, Amr ben Madi Kerib, Kab ben Zuheir, Jemil, Jerir, Uteiyeh, Abou Nuwas, Abou Temmam, El Asmaï, El Mutenebbi, El Heriri, Behaëddin Zuheir, Beshr ibn Burd, Er Recashi, Abou Musab, El Buhturi, Es Senefi, En Naweji (author or compiler of the famous anacreontic collection, the *Helbeit el Kumeit* or Race Course of the Bay Horse),[1] Dibil

[1] One of the many tropical names of wine.

el Khuzaï, Muslim ben el Welid el Ansari, En Nemri, El Hajiri, El Menazi, Ibn Ebbad, Aboulfiras el Hemdani, El Muhellebi, Ibn Jami, Et Tughraï, Ibn Abdoun el Andalousi and Ibn el Mutezz, and a more minute examination would no doubt largely add to the above list. As far as I can judge, from a cursory inspection, the Egyptian and Spanish Arabic poets are less fully represented in the collection than their brethren of Irak, Syria and Arabia, and it is, by the way, a notable fact, and one which tells strongly against Von Hammer's theory of the Persian origin of the work, that no single extract or translation from Persian verse is, to the best of my belief, known to exist in it.

The verse in the Thousand and One Nights is of the most various quality, ranging from high beauty to the utmost baldness. It rarely answers to our idea of that usually inserted in narrative fiction and contains little that can be described as songs. Its quality is often rhetorical rather than lyrical, and it appears frequently to have been inserted somewhat in the same way as we should use engravings or woodcuts, to illustrate and explain the prose text, or as music is employed in melodrama. It is often made use of to express a sudden emotion or exaltation of sentiment on the part of the personages introduced, much as the prose in Shakespeare's and other plays of the Elizabethan era rises occasionally into blank or rhymed verse, under stress of increased elevation or intensity of thought and feeling. As may be expected from a list of contributors which includes so many of the most renowned singers of Muslim civilisation,

we are often presented with poetry worthy of the name, whilst, on the other hand, many of the pieces[1] are mere rhymed amplifications of the prose text and seem to have been composed for the purpose by the compilers or the various copyists through whose hands the work must have passed. Again, (as in Uns el Wujoud) the verse in some of the tales has evidently been written expressly for their illustration and (though naturally of very unequal value) is often by no means lacking in poetic beauty and vigour,[2] thus proving that among the anonymous authors of the various parts of the work were poets of no mean ability.

[1] *e.g.* Vol. V. pp. 27 and 41.

[2] *e.g.* Vol. IV. p. 51.

THE END.

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