

THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT

**A Plain and Literal Translation
of the Arabian Nights Entertainments
by Richard F. Burton**

This promotional edition contains the first half of Volume One
and the *Conclusion* from Volume Ten



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Thousand Nights And A Night
A Plain and Literal Translation
of the Arabian Nights Entertainments
by Richard F. Burton

First published 1885–1888

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Inscribed to the Memory
of
My Lamented Friend
John Frederick Steinhäuser,
(Civil Surgeon, Aden)
who
A Quarter of a Century Ago
Assisted Me in this Translation.

“To the pure all things are pure”

(Puris omnia pura)

— *Arab Proverb*.

“Niuna corrotta mente intese mai sanamente parole.”

— “*Decameron*” — *conclusion*.

“Erubuit, posuitque meum Lucretia librum

Sed coram Bruto. Brute! recede, leget.”

— *Martial*.

“Mieulx est de ris que de larmes escripre,

Pour ce que rire est le propre des hommes.”

— *Rabelais*.

“The pleasure we derive from perusing the Thousand-and-One Stories makes us regret that we possess only a comparatively small part of these truly enchanting fictions.”

— *Crichton’s “History of Arabia.”*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Francis Burton was a man of an exceptional range of interests and achievements; traveler, explorer, adventurer, soldier, and diplomat. Speaking 29 European, Asian and African languages, he was a linguist, ethnologist and orientalist, as well as a writer and translator. Always outspoken, notorious for his interests in all matters of sexuality, never one to conform to conventional rules of social behavior, and, for what is known, possessed by an irascible temper, he was surrounded by rumors of scandal and violence, and thus never was promoted to military or diplomatic rank that would have fully matched his merits.

Burton was born on March 19th, 1821, in Devon, as son of a British army officer and his wealthy wife; during Burton's childhood and youth, the family traveled between England, France and Italy, during which time Burton learned French, Italian, Latin, and several local dialects.

In 1840 Burton enrolled in Trinity College at Oxford, from where he was expelled two years later. Here is not the place to describe in any detail the adventurous life on which Burton then embarked; it included military service in India (1842-49), a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina disguised as a Pakistani Muslim pilgrim (1853), an expedition to Ethiopia where he was the first European to enter the town of Harar (1854), army service in the Crimean War (1855), together with John Hanning Speke an expedition, funded by the Royal Geographic Society, into the depths of unexplored Central Africa, (1858), a travel to America (1860), and, after entering the Foreign Service, appointments as Consul to Fernando Po (Equatorial Guinea) from where he

explored the West African coast (1861), to Santos in Brazil (1865), to Damascus (1869) and finally to Trieste (1873); he was awarded knighthood (KCGM) in 1886. In 1851 Burton had met his future wife, Isabel Arundell; they married in 1861.

During all his life, Burton used every opportunity to study not only languages, but also people and their cultures, and he wrote extensively about his travels and his studies, some 40 books and hundreds of magazine articles. In addition, he created translations of erotic literature, namely *The Arabian Nights*, the *Kama Sutra*, and *The Perfumed Garden*, at his time considered pornography. To be able to publish them without risking jail, he founded a private society, the Kama Shastra Society, for whose members these books were exclusively printed.

Boldly defying conventional restraints and perceptions, he was nonetheless not free of his own prejudices, rash judgments and obscure notions. But on reading *The Book Of The Thousand Nights And A Night*, there is no doubt how much we owe to Burton's dedication, matched by his knowledge and his literary skills, to present us with a sweeping and authentic view of this huge timeless treasure, rescuing it from the confinements of the Victorian morals of his age.

Burton died in Trieste on October 20th, 1890, of a heart attack. Isabel, who survived him for several years, never recovered from the loss. She, herself a writer, had been (in his own words) her husband's "most ardent supporter," and assisted him with many of his writings. After his death though, believing to act in his interest, she burned many of his papers and unpublished manuscripts, among them a new translation of *The Perfumed Garden* called *The Scented Garden*, which she herself regarded to have been his "magnum opus" — a work that is now lost to us. The couple is buried at Mortlake, Surrey, in an elaborate tomb in the shape of a Bedouin tent.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This edition is based upon a “Burton Club” edition, a reprint of the 1900/01 American “Burton Society” edition, which again is faithful to the original “Kamashastra Society” edition.

Two major changes were made, concerning paragraphs and notes:

In the original, apart from the foreword, the text is set continuously, except for verses and headings — there are no paragraphs. Burton, it may be assumed, wanted to emphasize the steady flow of the narration, which, at its heart, is an oral one. Since this lack of any visual structure is inconvenient for the reader, for this edition paragraphs were introduced, with care taken to keep their disruptive effect at a minimum.

As to Burton’s notes, only those were included that add to the reader’s understanding of the translated text, and of those some were abridged. Not included were notes that, for instance, deal with intricate issues of the translation and distinctions from previous translations, those that give explanations where no explanation seems to be needed, those that provide background information that meanwhile is outdated, or those in which Burton expresses his own personal views of customs, moral standards, sexual behavior, penis lengths etc. of various nationalities or ethnic groups.

Other than that, few changes were made. Spelling was not changed, only *æ* and *œ* ligatures (in the foreword and in notes) were resolved to *ae* and *oe*. Standard (double) quotation marks for nested quotes were changed to single quotation marks. In some cases Burton’s use of colons and dashes for nested quotes was abandoned in favor of single

quotation marks. A few typographical errors or inconsistencies were corrected.

Hyphenation of compound words was retained, though some that were spelled inconsistently were standardized according to the majorities of their occurrences, for instance *slave-girl*, *wax-candle*, *well-nigh*, *Hammam-bath*, or, on the other hand, *tirewoman*.

Care was taken to correct OCR errors, though some will still have escaped detection — if you spot any, please do not hesitate to report them — thank you!

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THE TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

This work, labourious as it may appear, has been to me a labour of love, an unfailing source of solace and satisfaction. During my long years of official banishment to the luxuriant and deadly deserts of Western Africa, and to the dull and dreary half clearings of South America, it proved itself a charm, a talisman against ennui and despondency. Impossible even to open the pages without a vision starting into view; without drawing a picture from the pinacothek of the brain; without reviving a host of memories and reminiscences which are not the common property of travellers, however widely they may have travelled. From my dull and commonplace and "respectable" surroundings, the Jinn bore me at once to the land of my predilection, Arabia, a region so familiar to my mind that even at first sight, it seemed a reminiscence of some by-gone metem-psychic life in the distant Past. Again I stood under the diaphanous skies, in air glorious as aether, whose every breath raises men's spirits like sparkling wine. Once more I saw the evening star hanging like a solitaire from the pure front of the western firmament; and the after-glow transfiguring and transforming, as by magic, the homely and rugged features of the scene into a fairy-land lit with a light which never shines on other soils or seas. Then would appear the woollen tents, low and black, of the true Badawin, mere dots in the boundless waste of lion-tawny clays and gazelle-brown gravels, and the camp fire dotting like a glow-worm the village centre. Presently, sweetened by distance, would be heard the wild weird song of lads and lasses, driving or rather pelting, through the gloaming their sheep and goats; and the measured chant of the

spearsmen gravely stalking behind their charge, the camels; mingled with bleating of the flocks and the bellowing of the humpy herds; while the rermouse flitted overhead with his tiny shriek, and the rave of the jackal resounded through deepening glooms, and — most musical of music — the palm trees answered the whispers of the night-breeze with the softest tones of falling water.

And then a shift of scene. The Shaykhs and “white-beards” of the tribe gravely take their places, sitting with outspread skirts like hillocks on the plain, as the Arabs say, around the camp-fire, whilst I reward their hospitality and secure its continuance by reading or reciting a few pages of their favourite tales. The women and children stand motionless as silhouettes outside the ring; and all are breathless with attention; they seem to drink in the words with eyes and mouths as well as with ears. The most fantastic flights of fancy, the wildest improbabilities, the most impossible of impossibilities, appear to them utterly natural, mere matters of every-day occurrence. They enter thoroughly into each phase of feeling touched upon by the author: they take a personal pride in the chivalrous nature and knightly prowess of Taj al-Mulúk; they are touched with tenderness by the self-sacrificing love of Azízah; their mouths water as they hear of heaps of untold gold given away in largesse like clay; they chuckle with delight every time a Kázi or a Fakír — a judge or a reverend — is scurvily entreated by some Pantagruelist of the Wilderness; and, despite their normal solemnity and impassibility, all roar with laughter, sometimes rolling upon the ground till the reader’s gravity is sorely tried, at the tales of the garrulous Barber and of Ali and the Kurdish Sharper. To this magnetising mood the sole exception is when a Badawi of superior accomplishments, who sometimes says his prayers, ejaculates a startling “Astaghfaru’llah” — I pray Allah’s pardon! — for listening, not to Carlyle’s “downright lies,” but

to light mention of the sex whose name is never heard amongst the nobility of the Desert.

Nor was it only in Arabia that the immortal Nights did me such notable service: I found the wildlings of Somali-land equally amenable to its discipline; no one was deaf to the charm and the two women-cooks of my caravan, on its way to Harar, were incontinently dubbed by my men "Shahrazad" and "Dinazad."

It may be permitted me also to note that this translation is a natural outcome of my Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Meccah. Arriving at Aden in the (so-called) winter of 1852, I put up with my old and dear friend, Steinhaeuser, to whose memory this volume is inscribed; and, when talking over Arabia and the Arabs, we at once came to the same conclusion that, while the name of this wondrous treasury of Moslem folk-lore is familiar to almost every English child, no general reader is aware of the valuables it contains, nor indeed will the door open to any but Arabists. Before parting we agreed to "collaborate" and produce a full, complete, unvarnished, uncastrated copy of the great original, my friend taking the prose and I the metrical part; and we corresponded upon the subject for years. But whilst I was in the Brazil, Steinhaeuser died suddenly of apoplexy at Berne in Switzerland and, after the fashion of Anglo-India, his valuable MSS. left at Aden were dispersed, and very little of his labours came into my hands.

Thus I was left alone to my work, which progressed fitfully amid a host of obstructions. At length, in the spring of 1879, the tedious process of copying began and the book commenced to take finished form. But, during the winter of 1881-82, I saw in the literary journals a notice of a new version by Mr. John Payne, well known to scholars for his prowess in English verse, especially for his translation of "The Poems of Master Francis Villon, of Paris." Being then engaged on an

expedition to the Gold Coast (for gold), which seemed likely to cover some months, I wrote to the "Athenaeum" (Nov. 13, 1881) and to Mr. Payne, who was wholly unconscious that we were engaged on the same work, and freely offered him precedence and possession of the field till no longer wanted. He accepted my offer as frankly, and his priority entailed another delay lasting till the spring of 1885. These details will partly account for the lateness of my appearing, but there is yet another cause. Professional ambition suggested that literary labours, unpopular with the vulgar and the half educated, are not likely to help a man up the ladder of promotion. But common sense presently suggested to me that, professionally speaking, I was not a success, and, at the same time, that I had no cause to be ashamed of my failure. In our day, when we live under a despotism of the lower "middle class" Philister who can pardon anything but superiority, the prizes of competitive services are monopolized by certain "pets" of the *Médiocratie*, and prime favourites of that jealous and potent majority — the Mediocrities who know "no nonsense about merit." It is hard for an outsider to realise how perfect is the monopoly of commonplace, and to comprehend how fatal a stumbling-stone that man sets in the way of his own advancement who dares to think for himself, or who knows more or who does more than the mob of gentlemen-employés who know very little and who do even less.

Yet, however behindhand I may be, there is still ample room and verge for an English version of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments."

Our century of translations, popular and vernacular, from (Professor Antoine) Galland's delightful abbreviation and adaptation (A.D. 1704), in no wise represent the eastern original. The best and latest, the Rev. Mr. Foster's, which is diffuse and verbose, and Mr. G. Moir Bussey's, which is a re-correction, abound in gallicisms of style and

idiom; and one and all degrade a chef d'oeuvre of the highest anthropological and ethnographical interest and importance to a mere fairy-book, a nice present for little boys.

After nearly a century had elapsed, Dr. Jonathan Scott (LL.D. H.E.I.C.'s S., Persian Secretary to the G. G. Bengal; Oriental Professor, etc., etc.), printed his "Tales, Anecdotes, and Letters, translated from the Arabic and Persian," (Cadell and Davies, London, A.D. 1800); and followed in 1811 with an edition of "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments" from the MS. of Edward Wortley Montague (in 6 vols., small 8vo, London: Longmans, etc.). This work he (and he only) describes as "Carefully revised and occasionally corrected from the Arabic." The reading public did not wholly reject it, sundry texts were founded upon the Scott version and it has been imperfectly reprinted (4 vols., 8vo, Nimmo and Bain, London, 1883). But most men, little recking what a small portion of the original they were reading, satisfied themselves with the Anglo French epitome and metaphrase. At length in 1838, Mr. Henry Torrens, B.A., Irishman, lawyer ("of the Inner Temple") and Bengal Civilian, took a step in the right direction; and began to translate, "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," (1 vol., 8vo, Calcutta: W. Thacker and Co.) from the Arabic of the Aegyptian (!) MS. edited by Mr. (afterwards Sir) William H. Macnaghten. The attempt, or rather the intention, was highly creditable; the copy was carefully moulded upon the model and offered the best example of the *verbatim et literatim* style. But the plucky author knew little of Arabic, and least of what is most wanted, the dialect of Egypt and Syria. His prose is so conscientious as to offer up spirit at the shrine of letter; and his verse, always whimsical, has at times a manner of Hibernian whoop which is comical when it should be pathetic.

Lastly he printed only one volume of a series which completed would have contained nine or ten.

That amiable and devoted Arabist, the late Edward William Lane does not score a success in his “New Translation of the Tales of a Thousand and One Nights” (London: Charles Knight and Co., MDCCCXXXIX.) of which there have been four English editions, besides American, two edited by E. S. Poole. He chose the abbreviating Bulak Edition; and, of its two hundred tales, he has omitted about half and by far the more characteristic half: the work was intended for “the drawing-room table;” and, consequently, the workman was compelled to avoid the “objectionable” and aught “approaching to licentiousness.” He converts the Arabian Nights into the Arabian Chapters, arbitrarily changing the division and, worse still, he converts some chapters into notes. He renders poetry by prose and apologises for not omitting it altogether: he neglects assonance and he is at once too Oriental and not Oriental enough. He had small store of Arabic at the time — Lane of the Nights is not Lane of the Dictionary — and his pages are disfigured by many childish mistakes. Worst of all, the three handsome volumes are rendered unreadable as Sale’s Koran by their anglicised Latin, their sesquipedalian un-English words, and the stiff and stilted style of half a century ago when our prose was, perhaps, the worst in Europe. Their cargo of Moslem learning was most valuable to the student, but utterly out of place for readers of “The Nights;” re-published, as these notes have been separately (London, Chatto, 1883), they are an ethnological text book.

Mr. John Payne has printed, for the Villon Society and for private circulation only, the first and sole complete translation of the great compendium, “comprising about four times as much matter as that of Galland, and three times as much as that of any other translator;” and

I cannot but feel proud that he has honoured me with the dedication of “The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night.” His version is most readable: his English, with a sub-flavour of the Mabinogionic archaicism, is admirable; and his style gives life and light to the nine volumes whose matter is frequently heavy enough. He succeeds admirably in the most difficult passages and he often hits upon choice and special terms and the exact vernacular equivalent of the foreign word, so happily and so picturesquely that all future translators must perforce use the same expression under pain of falling far short. But the learned and versatile author bound himself to issue only five hundred copies, and “not to reproduce the work in its complete and uncastrated form.” Consequently his excellent version is caviare to the general — practically unprocurable.

And here I hasten to confess that ample use has been made of the three versions above noted, the whole being blended by a *callida junctura* into a homogeneous mass. But in the presence of so many predecessors a writer is bound to show some *raison d’être* for making a fresh attempt and this I proceed to do with due reserve.

Briefly, the object of this version is to show what “The Thousand Nights and a Night” really is. Not, however, for reasons to be more fully stated in the terminal Essay, by straining *verbum reddere verbo*, but by writing as the Arab would have written in English. On this point I am all with Saint Jerome (Pref. in Jobum) “Vel verbum e verbo, vel sensum e sensu, vel ex utroque commixtum, et medic temperatum genus translationis.” My work claims to be a faithful copy of the great Eastern Saga-book, by preserving intact, not only the spirit, but even the *mécanique*, the manner and the matter. Hence, however prosy and long-drawn out be the formula, it retains the scheme of The Nights because they are a prime feature in the original. The Ráwí or reciter, to whose

wits the task of supplying details is left, well knows their value: the openings carefully repeat the names of the dramatic personae and thus fix them in the hearer's memory. Without the Nights no Arabian Nights! Moreover it is necessary to retain the whole apparatus: nothing more ill-advised than Dr. Jonathan Scott's strange device of garnishing The Nights with fancy head-pieces and tail-pieces or the splitting-up of Galland's narrative by merely prefixing "Nuit," etc., ending moreover, with the cccxxivth Night: yet this has been done, apparently with the consent of the great Arabist Sylvestre de Sacy (Paris, Ernest Bourdin). Moreover, holding that the translator's glory is to add something to his native tongue, while avoiding the hideous hag-like nakedness of Torrens and the bald literalism of Lane, I have carefully Englished the picturesque turns and novel expressions of the original in all their outlandishness; for instance, when the dust-cloud raised by a tramping host is described as "walling the horizon." Hence peculiar attention has been paid to the tropes and figures which the Arabic language often packs into a single term; and I have never hesitated to coin a word when wanted, such as "she snorted and sparked," fully to represent the original. These, like many in Rabelais, are mere barbarisms unless generally adopted; in which case they become civilised and common currency.

Despite objections manifold and manifest, I have preserved the balance of sentences and the prose rhyme and rhythm which Easterns look upon as mere music. This "Saj'a," or cadence of the cooing dove, has in Arabic its special duties. It adds a sparkle to description and a point to proverb, epigram and dialogue; it corresponds with our "artful alliteration" (which in places I have substituted for it) and, generally, it defines the boundaries between the classical and the popular styles which jostle each other in The Nights. If at times it appear strained

and forced, after the wont of rhymed prose, the scholar will observe that, despite the immense copiousness of assonants and consonants in Arabic, the strain is often put upon it intentionally, like the *Rims cars* of Dante and the Troubadours. This rhymed prose may be “un-English” and unpleasant, even irritating to the British ear; still I look upon it as a *sine quâ non* for a complete reproduction of the original. In the terminal Essay I shall revert to the subject.

On the other hand when treating the versical portion, which may represent a total of ten thousand lines, I have not always bound myself by the metrical bonds of the Arabic, which are artificial in the extreme, and which in English can be made bearable only by a *tour de force*. I allude especially to the monorhyme, *Rim continuat* or *tirade monorime*, whose monotonous simplicity was preferred by the Troubadours for threnodies. It may serve well for three or four couplets but, when it extends, as in the Ghazal-canzon, to eighteen, and in the Kasidah, elegy or ode, to more, it must either satisfy itself with banal rhyme words, when the assonants should as a rule be expressive and emphatic; or, it must display an ingenuity, a smell of the oil, which assuredly does not add to the reader’s pleasure. It can perhaps be done and it should be done; but for me the task has no attractions: I can fence better in shoes than in sabots. Finally I print the couplets in Arab form separating the hemistichs by asterisks.

And now to consider one matter of special importance in the book — its *turpiloquium*. This stumbling-block is of two kinds, completely distinct. One is the simple, naïve and child-like indecency which, from Tangiers to Japan, occurs throughout general conversation of high and low in the present day. It uses, like the holy books of the Hebrews, expressions “plainly descriptive of natural situations;” and it treats in an unconventionally free and naked manner of subjects and matters

which are usually, by common consent, left undescribed. As Sir William Jones observed long ago, “that anything natural can be offensively obscene never seems to have occurred to the Indians or to their legislators; a singularity (?) pervading their writings and conversation, but no proof of moral depravity.” Another justly observes, *Les peuples primitifs n’y entendent pas malice: ils appellent les choses par leurs noms et ne trouvent pas condamnable ce qui est naturel*. And they are prying as children. For instance the European novelist marries off his hero and heroine and leaves them to consummate marriage in privacy; even Tom Jones has the decency to bolt the door. But the Eastern story-teller, especially this unknown “prose Shakespeare,” must usher you, with a flourish, into the bridal chamber and narrate to you, with infinite gusto, everything he sees and hears. Again we must remember that grossness and indecency, in fact *les turpitudes*, are matters of time and place; what is offensive in England is not so in Egypt; what scandalises us now would have been a tame joke *tempore Elisae*. Withal The Nights will not be found in this matter coarser than many passages of Shakespeare, Sterne, and Swift, and their uncleanness rarely attains the perfection of Alcofribas Naiser, “divin maître et atroce cochon.” The other element is absolute obscenity, sometimes, but not always, tempered by wit, humour and drollery; here we have an exaggeration of Petronius Arbiter, the handiwork of writers whose ancestry, the most religious and the most debauched of mankind, practised every abomination before the shrine of the Canopic Gods.

In accordance with my purpose of reproducing the Nights, not *virginibus puerisque*, but in as perfect a picture as my powers permit, I have carefully sought out the English equivalent of every Arabic word, however low it may be or “shocking” to ears polite; preserving, on the other hand, all possible delicacy where the indecency is not

intentional; and, as a friend advises me to state, not exaggerating the vulgarities and the indecencies which, indeed, can hardly be exaggerated. For the coarseness and crassness are but the shades of a picture which would otherwise be all lights. The general tone of *The Nights* is exceptionally high and pure. The devotional fervour often rises to the boiling point of fanaticism. The pathos is sweet, deep and genuine; tender, simple and true, utterly unlike much of our modern tinsel. Its life, strong, splendid and multitudinous, is everywhere flavoured with that unaffected pessimism and constitutional melancholy which strike deepest root under the brightest skies and which sigh in the face of heaven: —

*Vita quid est hominis? Viridis floriscula mortis;
Sole Oriente oriens, sole cadente cadens.*

Poetical justice is administered by the literary Kází with exemplary impartiality and severity; “denouncing evil doers and eulogising deeds admirably achieved.” The morale is sound and healthy; and at times we descry, through the voluptuous and libertine picture, vistas of a transcendental morality, the morality of Socrates in Plato. Subtle corruption and covert licentiousness are utterly absent; we find more real “vice” in many a short French roman, say *La Dame aux Camelias*, and in not a few English novels of our day than in the thousands of pages of the Arab. Here we have nothing of that most immodest modern modesty which sees covert implication where nothing is implied, and “improper” allusion when propriety is not outraged; nor do we meet with the Nineteenth Century refinement; innocence of the word not of the thought; morality of the tongue not of the heart, and the sincere homage paid to virtue in guise of perfect hypocrisy. It is, indeed, this unique contrast of a quaint element, childish crudities and nursery

indecencies and “vain and amatorious” phrase jostling the finest and highest views of life and character, shown in the kaleidoscopic shiftings of the marvellous picture with many a “rich truth in a tale’s pretence;” pointed by a rough dry humour which compares well with “wut;” the alternations of strength and weakness, of pathos and bathos, of the boldest poetry (the diction of Job) and the baldest prose (the Egyptian of to-day); the contact of religion and morality with the orgies of African Apuleius and Petronius Arbiter — at times taking away the reader’s breath — and, finally, the whole dominated everywhere by that marvellous Oriental fancy, wherein the spiritual and the supernatural are as common as the material and the natural; it is this contrast, I say, which forms the chiefest charm of *The Nights*, which gives it the most striking originality and which makes it a perfect expositor of the medieval Moslem mind.

Explanatory notes did not enter into Mr. Payne’s plan. They do with mine:* I can hardly imagine *The Nights* being read to any profit by men of the West without commentary. My annotations avoid only one subject, parallels of European folk-lore and fabliaux which, however interesting, would overswell the bulk of a book whose speciality is anthropology. The accidents of my life, it may be said without undue presumption, my long dealings with Arabs and other Mahommedans, and my familiarity not only with their idiom but with their turn of thought, and with that racial individuality which baffles description, have given me certain advantages over the average student, however deeply he may have studied. These volumes, moreover, afford me a long sought opportunity of noticing practices and customs which interest all mankind and which “Society” will not hear mentioned.

* For this edition only a small portion of Burton’s notes was retained; see *About this Edition*, p. 6.

Grate, the historian, and Thackeray, the novelist, both lamented that the *béguulerie* of their countrymen condemned them to keep silence where publicity was required; and that they could not even claim the partial licence of a Fielding and a Smollett. Hence a score of years ago I lent my best help to the late Dr. James Hunt in founding the Anthropological Society, whose presidential chair I first occupied (pp. 2-4 *Anthropologia*; London, Balliere, vol. i., No. 1, 1873). My motive was to supply travellers with an organ which would rescue their observations from the outer darkness of manuscript, and print their curious information on social and sexual matters out of place in the popular book intended for the Nipptisch and indeed better kept from public view. But, hardly had we begun when "Respectability," that whited sepulchre full of all uncleanness, rose up against us. "Propriety" cried us down with her brazen blatant voice, and the weak-kneed brethren fell away. Yet the organ was much wanted and is wanted still. All now known barbarous tribes in Inner Africa, America and Australia, whose instincts have not been overlaid by reason, have a ceremony which they call "making men." As soon as the boy shows proofs of puberty, he and his coevals are taken in hand by the mediciner and the Fetisheer; and, under priestly tuition, they spend months in the "bush," enduring hardships and tortures which impress the memory till they have mastered the "theorick and practick" of social and sexual relations. Amongst the civilised this fruit of the knowledge-tree must be bought at the price of the bitterest experience, and the consequences of ignorance are peculiarly cruel. Here, then, I find at last an opportunity of noticing in explanatory notes many details of the text which would escape the reader's observation, and I am confident that they will form a repertory of Eastern knowledge in its esoteric phase. The student who adds the notes of Lane ("Arabian Society," etc., before quoted)

to mine will know as much of the Moslem East and more than many Europeans who have spent half their lives in Orient lands. For facility of reference an index of anthropological notes is appended to each volume.*

The reader will kindly bear with the following technical details. Steinhæuser and I began and ended our work with the first Bulak ("Bul.") Edition printed at the port of Cairo in A.H. 1251 = A.D. 1835. But when preparing my MSS. for print I found the text incomplete, many of the stories being given in epitome and not a few ruthlessly mutilated with head or feet wanting. Like most Eastern scribes the Editor could not refrain from "improvements," which only debased the book; and his sole title to excuse is that the second Bulak Edition (4 vols. A.H. 1279 = A.D. 1863), despite its being "revised and corrected by Sheik Mahommed Qotch Al-Adewi," is even worse; and the same may be said of the Cairo Edit. (4 vols. A.H. 1297 = A.D. 1881). The Calcutta ("Calc.") Edition, with ten lines of Persian preface by the Editor, Ahmed al-Shirwani (A.D. 1814), was cut short at the end of the first two hundred Nights, and thus made room for Sir William Hay Macnaghten's Edition (4 vols. royal 4to) of 1839-42. This ("Mac."), as by far the least corrupt and the most complete, has been assumed for my basis with occasional reference to the Breslau Edition ("Bres.") wretchedly edited from a hideous Egyptian MS. by Dr. Maximilian Habicht (1825-43). The Bayrut Text "Alif-Leila we Leila" (4 vols. gt. 8vo, Beirut, 1881-83) is a melancholy specimen of The Nights taken entirely from the Bulak Edition by one Khalil Sarkis and converted to Christianity; beginning without Bismillah, continued with scrupulous

* These indexes are omitted from the volumes of the present edition.

castration and ending in ennui and disappointment. I have not used this missionary production.

As regards the transliteration of Arabic words I deliberately reject the artful and complicated system, ugly and clumsy withal, affected by scientific modern Orientalists. Nor is my sympathy with their prime object, namely to fit the Roman alphabet for supplanting all others. Those who learn languages, and many do so, by the eye as well as by the ear, well know the advantages of a special character to distinguish, for instance, Syriac from Arabic, Gujrati from Marathi. Again this Roman hand bewitched may have its use in purely scientific and literary works; but it would be wholly out of place in one whose purpose is that of the novel, to amuse rather than to instruct. Moreover the devices perplex the simple and teach nothing to the learned. Either the reader knows Arabic, in which case Greek letters, italics and “upper case,” diacritical points and similar typographic oddities are, as a rule with some exceptions, unnecessary; or he does not know Arabic, when none of these expedients will be of the least use to him. Indeed it is a matter of secondary consideration what system we prefer, provided that we mostly adhere to one and the same, for the sake of a consistency which saves confusion to the reader. I have especially avoided that of Mr. Lane, adopted by Mr. Payne, for special reasons against which it was vain to protest: it represents the debased brogue of Egypt or rather of Cairo; and such a word as Kemer (ez-Zeman) would be utterly unpronounceable to a Badawi. Nor have I followed the practice of my learned friend, Reverend G. P. Badger, in mixing bars and acute accents; the former unpleasantly remind man of those hateful dactyls and spondees, and the latter should, in my humble opinion, be applied to long vowels which in Arabic double, or should double, the length of the shorts. Dr. Badger uses the acute symbol to denote accent or stress

of voice; but such appoggio is unknown to those who speak with purest articulation; for instance whilst the European pronounces Muscat', and the Arab villager Mas'-kat; the Children of the Waste, "on whose tongues Allah descended," articulate Mas-kat. I have therefore followed the simple system adopted in my "Pilgrimage," and have accented Arabic words only when first used, thinking it unnecessary to preserve throughout what is an eyesore to the reader and a distress to the printer. In the main I follow "Johnson on Richardson," a work known to every Anglo-Orientalist as the old and trusty companion of his studies early and late; but even here I have made sundry deviations for reasons which will be explained in the Terminal Essay. As words are the embodiment of ideas and writing is of words, so the word is the spoken word; and we should write it as pronounced. Strictly speaking, the *e*-sound and the *o*-sound (viz. the Italian *o*-sound not the English which is peculiar to us and unknown to any other tongue) are not found in Arabic, except when the figure Imálah obliges: hence they are called "Yá al-Majhúl" and "Waw al-Majhúl" the unknown y (í) and u. But in all tongues vowel-sounds, the flesh which clothes the bones (consonants) of language, are affected by the consonants which precede and more especially which follow them, hardening and softening the articulation; and deeper sounds accompany certain letters as the *sád* compared with the *sín*. None save a defective ear would hold, as Lane does, "Maulid" (= birth-festival) "more properly pronounced 'Molid.'" Yet I prefer Khokh (peach) and Jokh (broad-cloth) to Khukh and Jukh; Ohod (mount) to Uhud; Obayd (a little slave) to Ubayd; and Hosayn (a fortlet, not the P. N. Al-Husayn) to Husayn. As for the short *e* in such words as "Memlúk" for "Mamlúk" (a white slave), "Eshe" for "Asha" (supper), and "Yemen" for "Al-Yaman," I consider it a flat Egyptianism, insufferable to an ear which admires

the Badawi pronunciation. Yet I prefer “Shelebi” (a dandy) from the Turkish Chelebi, to “Shalabi;” “Zebdani” (the Syrian village) to “Zabdani,” and “Fes and Miknes” (by the figure Imálah) to “Fás and Miknás,” our “Fez and Mequinez.”

With respect to proper names and untranslated Arabic words I have rejected all system in favour of common sense. When a term is incorporated in our tongue, I refuse to follow the purist and mortify the reader by startling innovation. For instance, Aleppo, Cairo and Bassorah are preferred to Halab, Kahirah and Al-Basrah; when a word is half-naturalised, like Alcoran or Koran, Bashaw or Pasha, which the French write Pacha; and Mahomet or Mohammed (for Muhammad), the modern form is adopted because the more familiar. But I see no advantage in retaining, simply because they are the mistakes of a past generation, such words as “Roc” (for Rikh), Khalif (a pretentious blunder for Kalífah and better written Caliph) and “genie” (= Jinn) a mere Gallic corruption not so terrible, however, as “a Bedouin” (= Badawi). As little too would I follow Mr. Lane in foisting upon the public such Arabisms as “Khuff” (a riding boot), “Mikra’ah” (a palm-rod) and a host of others for which we have good English equivalents. On the other hand I would use, but use sparingly, certain Arabic exclamations, as “Bismillah” (= in the name of Allah!) and “Inshallah” (= if Allah please!), which have special applications and which have been made familiar to English ears by the genius of Fraser and Morier.

I here end these desultory but necessary details to address the reader in a few final words. He will not think lightly of my work when I repeat to him that with the aid of my annotations supplementing Lane’s, the student will readily and pleasantly learn more of the Moslem’s manners and customs, laws and religion than is known to the average Orientalist; and, if my labours induce him to attack the text of

The Nights he will become master of much more Arabic than the ordinary Arab owns. This book is indeed a legacy which I bequeath to my fellow-countrymen in their hour of need. Over devotion to Hindu, and especially to Sanskrit literature, has led them astray from those (so-called) "Semitic" studies, which are the more requisite for us as they teach us to deal successfully with a race more powerful than any pagans — the Moslem. Apparently England is ever forgetting that she is at present the greatest Mohammedan empire in the world. Of late years she has systematically neglected Arabism and, indeed, actively discouraged it in examinations for the Indian Civil Service, where it is incomparably more valuable than Greek and Latin. Hence, when suddenly compelled to assume the reins of government in Moslem lands, as Afghanistan in times past and Egypt at present, she fails after a fashion which scandalises her few (very few) friends; and her crass ignorance concerning the Oriental peoples which should most interest her, exposes her to the contempt of Europe as well as of the Eastern world. When the regrettable raids of 1883-84, culminating in the miserable affairs of Tokar, Teb and Tamasi, were made upon the gallant Sudani negroids, the Bisharin outlying Sawakin, who were battling for the holy cause of liberty and religion and for escape from Turkish task-masters and Egyptian tax-gatherers, not an English official in camp, after the death of the gallant and lamented Major Morice, was capable of speaking Arabic. Now Moslems are not to be ruled by raw youths who should be at school and college instead of holding positions of trust and emolument. He who would deal with them successfully must be, firstly, honest and truthful and, secondly, familiar with and favourably inclined to their manners and customs if not to their law and religion. We may, perhaps, find it hard to restore to England those pristine virtues, that tone and temper, which made her what she is; but

at any rate we (myself and a host of others) can offer her the means of dispelling her ignorance concerning the Eastern races with whom she is continually in contact.

In conclusion I must not forget to notice that the Arabic ornamentations of these volumes were designed by my excellent friend Yacoub Artin Pasha, of the Ministry of Instruction, Cairo, with the aid of the well-known writing artist, Shaykh Mohammed Muunis the Cairene. My name, Al-Hajj Abdullah (= the Pilgrim Abdallah) was written by an English calligrapher, the lamented Professor Palmer who found a premature death almost within sight of Suez.

RICHARD F. BURTON

WANDERERS' CLUB, August 15, 1885.



THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT (ALF LAYLAH WA LAYLAH)

In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionating, the Compassionate!

PRAISE BE TO ALLAH * THE BENEFICENT KING * THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE * LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS * WHO SET UP THE FIRMAMENT WITHOUT PILLARS IN ITS STEAD * AND WHO STRETCHED OUT THE EARTH EVEN AS A BED * AND GRACE, AND PRAYER-BLESSING BE UPON OUR LORD MOHAMMED * LORD OF APOSTOLIC MEN * AND UPON HIS FAMILY AND COMPANION-TRAIN * PRAYER AND BLESSINGS ENDURING AND GRACE WHICH UNTO THE DAY OF DOOM SHALL REMAIN * AMEN! * O THOU OF THE THREE WORLDS SOVEREIGN!

And afterwards. Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become instances and examples to men of our modern day, that folk may view what admonishing chances befel other folk and may therefrom take warning; and that they may peruse the annals of antique peoples and all that hath betided them, and be thereby ruled and restrained: — Praise, therefore, be to Him who hath made the histories of the Past an admonition unto the Present!

Now of such instances are the tales called “A Thousand Nights and a Night,” together with their far-famed legends and wonders. Therein it is related (but Allah is All-knowing of His hidden things and All-ruling and All-honoured and All-giving and All-gracious and All-merciful!) that, in tide of yore and in time long gone before, there was a King of

the Kings of the Banu Sásán in the Islands of India and China, a Lord of armies and guards and servants and dependents.¹ He left only two sons, one in the prime of manhood and the other yet a youth, while both were Knights and Braves, albeit the elder was a doughtier horseman than the younger. So he succeeded to the empire; when he ruled the land and lorded it over his lieges with justice so exemplary that he was beloved by all the peoples of his capital and of his kingdom. His name was King Shahryár, and he made his younger brother, Shah Zamán hight, King of Samarcand in Barbarian-land.

These two ceased not to abide in their several realms and the law was ever carried out in their dominions; and each ruled his own kingdom, with equity and fair-dealing to his subjects, in extreme solace and enjoyment; and this condition continually endured for a score of years. But at the end of the twentieth twelvemonth the elder King yearned for a sight of his younger brother and felt that he must look upon him once more. So he took counsel with his Wazír² about visiting him, but the Minister, finding the project unadvisable, recommended that a letter be written and a present be sent under his charge to the younger brother with an invitation to visit the elder. Having accepted this advice the King forthwith bade prepare handsome gifts, such as horses with saddles of gem-encrusted gold; Mamelukes, or white slaves; beautiful handmaids, high-breasted virgins, and splendid stuffs and costly. He then wrote a letter to Shah Zaman expressing his warm love and great wish to see him, ending with these words, “We therefore

¹ The “Sons of Sásán” are the famous Sassanides whose dynasty ended with the Arabian Conquest (A.D. 641). “Island” (Jazírah) in Arabic also means “Peninsula,” and causes much confusion in geographical matters.

² The root is popularly supposed to be “wizr” (burden) and the meaning “Minister;” Wazír al-Wuzará being “Premier.”

hope of the favour and affection of the beloved brother that he will condescend to bestir himself and turn his face us-wards. Furthermore we have sent our Wazir to make all ordinance for the march, and our one and only desire is to see thee ere we die; but if thou delay or disappoint us we shall not survive the blow. Wherewith peace be upon thee!” Then King Shahryar, having sealed the missive and given it to the Wazir with the offerings aforementioned, commanded him to shorten his skirts and strain his strength and make all expedition in going and returning.

“Harkening and obedience!” quoth the Minister, who fell to making ready without stay and packed up his loads and prepared all his requisites without delay. This occupied him three days, and on the dawn of the fourth he took leave of his King and marched right away, over desert and hill-way, stony waste and pleasant lea without halting by night or by day. But whenever he entered a realm whose ruler was subject to his Suzerain, where he was greeted with magnificent gifts of gold and silver and all manner of presents fair and rare, he would tarry there three days, the term of the guest-rite; and, when he left on the fourth, he would be honourably escorted for a whole day’s march.

As soon as the Wazir drew near Shah Zaman’s court in Samarcand he despatched to report his arrival one of his high officials, who presented himself before the King; and, kissing ground between his hands, delivered his message. Hereupon the King commanded sundry of his Grandees and Lords of his realm to fare forth and meet his brother’s Wazir at the distance of a full day’s journey; which they did, greeting him respectfully and wishing him all prosperity and forming an escort and a procession. When he entered the city he proceeded straightway to the palace, where he presented himself in the royal presence; and, after kissing ground and praying for the King’s health

and happiness and for victory over all his enemies, he informed him that his brother was yearning to see him, and prayed for the pleasure of a visit. He then delivered the letter which Shah Zaman took from his hand and read: it contained sundry hints and allusions which required thought; but, when the King had fully comprehended its import, he said, "I hear and I obey the commands of the beloved brother!" adding to the Wazir, "But we will not march till after the third day's hospitality."

He appointed for the Minister fitting quarters of the palace; and, pitching tents for the troops, rationed them with whatever they might require of meat and drink and other necessaries. On the fourth day he made ready for wayfare and got together sumptuous presents befitting his elder brother's majesty, and stablished his chief Wazir viceroy of the land during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with their bales and loads, attendants and guards, within sight of the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's capital. But when the night was half spent he bethought him that he had forgotten in his palace somewhat which he should have brought with him, so he returned privily and entered his apartments, where he found the Queen, his wife, asleep on his own carpet-bed, embracing with both arms a black cook of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime.

When he saw this the world waxed black before his sight and he said, "If such case happen while I am yet within sight of the city what will be the doings of this damned whore during my long absence at my brother's court?" So he drew his scymitar and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened. Then he gave orders for immediate departure and set out at

once and began his travel; but he could not help thinking over his wife's treason and he kept ever saying to himself, "How could she do this deed by me? How could she work her own death?", till excessive grief seized him, his colour changed to yellow, his body waxed weak and he was threatened with a dangerous malady, such an one as bringeth men to die. So the Wazir shortened his stages and tarried long at the watering-stations and did his best to solace the King.

Now when Shah Zaman drew near the capital of his brother he despatched vaunt-couriers and messengers of glad tidings to announce his arrival, and Shahryar came forth to meet him with his Wazirs and Emirs and Lords and Grandees of his realm; and saluted him and joyed with exceeding joy and caused the city to be decorated in his honour. When, however, the brothers met, the elder could not but see the change of complexion in the younger and questioned him of his case whereto he replied, "'Tis caused by the travails of wayfare and my case needs care, for I have suffered from the change of water and air! but Allah be praised for reuniting me with a brother so dear and so rare!" On this wise he dissembled and kept his secret, adding, "O King of the time and Caliph of the tide, only toil and moil have tinged my face yellow with bile and hath made my eyes sink deep in my head." Then the two entered the capital in all honour; and the elder brother lodged the younger in a palace overhanging the pleasure garden; and, after a time, seeing his condition still unchanged, he attributed it to his separation from his country and kingdom. So he let him wend his own ways and asked no questions of him till one day when he again said, "O my brother, I see thou art grown weaker of body and yellower of colour."

“O my brother,” replied Shah Zaman “I have an internal wound:”³ still he would not tell him what he had witnessed in his wife. Thereupon Shahryar summoned doctors and surgeons and bade them treat his brother according to the rules of art, which they did for a whole month; but their sherbets and potions naught availed, for he would dwell upon the deed of his wife, and despondency, instead of diminishing, prevailed, and leach-craft treatment utterly failed.

One day his elder brother said to him, “I am going forth to hunt and course and to take my pleasure and pastime; maybe this would lighten thy heart.” Shah Zaman, however, refused, saying, “O my brother, my soul yearneth for naught of this sort and I entreat thy favour to suffer me tarry quietly in this place, being wholly taken up with my malady.” So King Shah Zaman passed his night in the palace and, next morning, when his brother had fared forth, he removed from his room and sat him down at one of the lattice-windows overlooking the pleasure grounds; and there he abode thinking with saddest thought over his wife’s betrayal and burning sighs issued from his tortured breast. And as he continued in this case lo! a postern of the palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open and out of it came twenty slave-girls surrounding his brother’s wife who was wondrous fair, a model of beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect loveliness and who paced with the grace of a gazelle which panteth for the cooling stream. Thereupon Shah Zaman drew back from the window, but he kept the bevy in sight espying them from a place whence he could not be espied.

They walked under the very lattice and advanced a little way into the garden till they came to a jetting fountain amiddlemost a great basin

³ i. e., I am sick at heart.

of water; then they stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then they all paired off, each with each: but the Queen, who was left alone, presently cried out in a loud voice, "Here to me, O my lord Saeed!" and then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight. He walked boldly up to her and threw his arms round her neck while she embraced him as warmly; then he bussed her and winding his legs round hers, as a button-loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls till all had satisfied their passions, and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing till day began to wane; when the Mamelukes rose from the damsels' bosoms and the blackamoor slave dismounted from the Queen's breast; the men resumed their disguises and all, except the negro who swarmed up the tree, entered the palace and closed the postern-door as before.

Now, when Shah Zaman saw this conduct of his sister-in-law he said in himself, "By Allah, my calamity is lighter than this! My brother is a greater King among the kings than I am, yet this infamy goeth on in his very palace, and his wife is in love with that filthiest of filthy slaves. But this only showeth that they all do it and that there is no woman but who cuckoldeth her husband, then the curse of Allah upon one and all and upon the fools who lean against them for support or who place the reins of conduct in their hands." So he put away his melancholy and despondency, regret and repine, and allayed his sorrow by constantly repeating those words, adding, "'Tis my conviction that no man in this world is safe from their malice!"

When supper-time came they brought him the trays and he ate with voracious appetite, for he had long refrained from meat, feeling unable

to touch any dish however dainty. Then he returned grateful thanks to Almighty Allah, praising Him and blessing Him, and he spent a most restful night, it having been long since he had savoured the sweet food of sleep. Next day he broke his fast heartily and began to recover health and strength, and presently regained excellent condition.

His brother came back from the chase ten days after, when he rode out to meet him and they saluted each other; and when King Shahryar looked at King Shah Zaman he saw how the hue of health had returned to him, how his face had waxed ruddy and how he ate with an appetite after his late scanty diet. He wondered much and said, "O my brother, I was so anxious that thou wouldst join me in hunting and chasing, and wouldst take thy pleasure and pastime in my dominion!" He thanked him and excused himself; then the two took horse and rode into the city and, when they were seated at their ease in the palace, the food-trays were set before them and they ate their sufficiency.

After the meats were removed and they had washed their hands, King Shahryar turned to his brother and said, "My mind is overcome with wonderment at thy condition. I was desirous to carry thee with me to the chase but I saw thee changed in hue, pale and wan to view, and in sore trouble of mind too. But now Alhamdolillah — glory be to God! — I see thy natural colour hath returned to thy face and that thou art again in the best of case. It was my belief that thy sickness came of severance from thy family and friends, and absence from capital and country, so I refrained from troubling thee with further questions. But now I beseech thee to expound to me the cause of thy complaint and thy change of colour, and to explain the reason of thy recovery and the return to the ruddy hue of health which I am wont to view. So speak out and hide naught!"

When Shah Zaman heard this he bowed groundwards awhile his head, then raised it and said, "I will tell thee what caused my complaint and my loss of colour; but excuse my acquainting thee with the cause of its return to me and the reason of my complete recovery: indeed I pray thee not to press me for a reply." Said Shahryar, who was much surprised by these words, "Let me hear first what produced thy pallor and thy poor condition."

"Know, then, O my brother," rejoined Shah Zaman, "that when thou sentest thy Wazir with the invitation to place myself between thy hands, I made ready and marched out of my city; but presently I minded me having left behind me in the palace a string of jewels intended as a gift to thee. I returned for it alone and found my wife on my carpet-bed and in the arms of a hideous black cook. So I slew the twain and came to thee, yet my thoughts brooded over this business and I lost my bloom and became weak. But excuse me if I still refuse to tell thee what was the reason of my complexion returning."

Shahryar shook his head, marvelling with extreme marvel, and with the fire of wrath flaming up from his heart, he cried, "Indeed, the malice of woman is mighty!" Then he took refuge from them with Allah and said, "In very sooth, O my brother, thou hast escaped many an evil by putting thy wife to death, and right excusable were thy wrath and grief for such mishap which never yet befel crowned King like thee. By Allah, had the case been mine, I would not have been satisfied without slaying a thousand women and that way madness lies! But now praise be to Allah who hath tempered to thee thy tribulation, and needs must thou acquaint me with that which so suddenly restored to thee complexion and health, and explain to me what causeth this concealment."

"O King of the Age, again I pray thee excuse my so doing!"

“Nay, but thou must.”

“I fear, O my brother, lest the recital cause thee more anger and sorrow than afflicted me.”

“That were but a better reason,” quoth Shahryar, “for telling me the whole history, and I conjure thee by Allah not to keep back aught from me.” Thereupon Shah Zaman told him all he had seen, from commencement to conclusion, ending with these words, “When I beheld thy calamity and the treason of thy wife, O my brother, and I reflected that thou art in years my senior and in sovereignty my superior, mine own sorrow was belittled by the comparison, and my mind recovered tone and temper: so throwing off melancholy and despondency, I was able to eat and drink and sleep, and thus I speedily regained health and strength. Such is the truth and the whole truth.”

When King Shahryar heard this he waxed wroth with exceeding wrath, and rage was like to strangle him; but presently he recovered himself and said, “O my brother, I would not give thee the lie in this matter, but I cannot credit it till I see it with mine own eyes.”

“An thou wouldst look upon thy calamity,” quoth Shah Zaman, “rise at once and make ready again for hunting and coursing, and then hide thyself with me, so shalt thou witness it and thine eyes shall verify it.”

“True,” quoth the King; whereupon he let make proclamation of his intent to travel, and the troops and tents fared forth without the city, camping within sight, and Shahryar sallied out with them and took seat amidmost his host, bidding the slaves admit no man to him. When night came on he summoned his Wazir and said to him, “Sit thou in my stead and let none wot of my absence till the term of three days.” Then the brothers disguised themselves and returned by night with all secrecy to the palace, where they passed the dark hours: and at dawn

they seated themselves at the lattice overlooking the pleasure grounds, when presently the Queen and her handmaids came out as before, and passing under the windows made for the fountain. Here they stripped, ten of them being men to ten women, and the King's wife cried out, "Where art thou, O Saeed?" The hideous blackamoor dropped from the tree straightway; and, rushing into her arms without stay or delay, cried out, "I am Sa'ad al-Din Saood!" The lady laughed heartily, and all fell to satisfying their lusts, and remained so occupied for a couple of hours, when the white slaves rose up from the handmaidens' breasts and the blackamoor dismounted from the Queen's bosom: then they went into the basin and, after performing the Ghushl, or complete ablution, donned their dresses and retired as they had done before.

When King Shahryar saw this infamy of his wife and concubines he became as one distraught and he cried out, "Only in utter solitude can man be safe from the doings of this vile world! By Allah, life is naught but one great wrong." Presently he added, "Do not thwart me, O my brother, in what I propose;" and the other answered, "I will not." So he said, "Let us up as we are and depart forthright hence, for we have no concern with Kingship, and let us overwander Allah's earth, worshipping the Almighty till we find some one to whom the like calamity hath happened; and if we find none then will death be more welcome to us than life."

So the two brothers issued from a second private postern of the palace; and they never stinted wayfaring by day and by night, until they reached a tree a-middle of a meadow hard by a spring of sweet water on the shore of the salt sea. Both drank of it and sat down to take their rest; and when an hour of the day had gone by, lo! they heard a mighty roar and uproar in the middle of the main as though the heavens were falling upon the earth; and the sea brake with waves before them, and

from it towered a black pillar, which grew and grew till it rose skywards and began making for that meadow. Seeing it, they waxed fearful exceedingly and climbed to the top of the tree, which was a lofty; whence they gazed to see what might be the matter. And behold, it was a Jinni,⁴ huge of height and burly of breast and bulk, broad of brow and black of blee, bearing on his head a coffer of crystal. He strode to land, wading through the deep, and coming to the tree whereupon were the two Kings, seated himself beneath it. He then set down the coffer on its bottom and out of it drew a casket, with seven padlocks of steel, which he unlocked with seven keys of steel he took from beside his thigh, and out of it a young lady to come was seen, white-skinned and of winsomest mien, of stature fine and thin, and bright as though a moon of the fourteenth night she had been, or the sun raining lively sheen. Even so the poet Utayyah hath excellently said: —

*She rose like the morn as she shone through the night * And she gilded
the grove with her gracious sight:*

*From her radiance the sun taketh increase when * She unveileth and
shameth the moonshine bright.*

*Bow down all beings between her hands * As she showeth charms with
her veil undight.*

*And she floodeth cities with torrent tears * When she flasheth her look
of leven-light.*

The Jinni seated her under the tree by his side and looking at her said,

⁴ The Arab. singular, fem. Jinniyah. We know nothing concerning the status of the Jinn amongst the pre-Moslemic or pagan Arabs: the Moslems made him a supernatural anthropoid being, created of subtile fire, not of earth like man, propagating his kind, ruled by mighty kings, the last being Ján bin Ján, missionarised by Prophets and subject to death and Judgment.

“O choicest love of this heart of mine! O dame of noblest line, whom I snatched away on thy bride night that none might prevent me taking thy maidenhead or tumble thee before I did, and whom none save myself hath loved or hath enjoyed: O my sweetheart! I would lief sleep a little while.” He then laid his head upon the lady’s thighs; and, stretching out his legs which extended down to the sea, slept and snored and snarked like the roll of thunder. Presently she raised her head towards the tree-top and saw the two Kings perched near the summit; then she softly lifted off her lap the Jinni’s pate which she was tired of supporting and placed it upon the ground; then standing upright under the tree signed to the Kings, “Come ye down, ye two, and fear naught from this Ifrit.”⁵

They were in a terrible fright when they found that she had seen them and answered her in the same manner, “Allah upon thee and by thy modesty, O lady, excuse us from coming down!” But she rejoined by saying, “Allah upon you both, that ye come down forthright, and if ye come not, I will rouse upon you my husband, this Ifrit, and he shall do you to die by the illest of deaths;” and she continued making signals to them. So, being afraid, they came down to her and she rose before them and said, “Stroke me a strong stroke, without stay or delay, otherwise will I arouse and set upon you this Ifrit who shall slay you straightway.”

They said to her, “O our lady, we conjure thee by Allah, let us off this work, for we are fugitives from such and in extreme dread and terror of this thy husband. How then can we do it in such a way as thou desirest?”

“Leave this talk: it needs must be so;” quoth she, and she swore

⁵ This variety of the Jinn is generally, but not always, a malignant being, hostile and injurious to mankind.

them by Him who raised the skies on high, without prop or pillar, that, if they worked not her will, she would cause them to be slain and cast into the sea. Whereupon out of fear King Shahryar said to King Shah Zaman, “O my brother, do thou what she biddeth thee do;” but he replied, “I will not do it till thou do it before I do.” And they began disputing about futtering her. Then quoth she to the twain, “How is it I see you disputing and demurring; if ye do not come forward like men and do the deed of kind ye two, I will arouse upon you the Ifrit.”

At this, by reason of their sore dread of the Jinni, both did by her what she bade them do; and, when they had dismounted from her, she said, “Well done!” She then took from her pocket a purse and drew out a knotted string, whereon were strung five hundred and seventy seal rings, and asked, “Know ye what be these?” They answered her saying, “We know not!” Then quoth she; “These be the signets of five hundred and seventy men who have all futtered me upon the horns of this foul, this foolish, this filthy Ifrit; so give me also your two seal rings, ye pair of brothers.” When they had drawn their two rings from their hands and given them to her, she said to them, “Of a truth this Ifrit bore me off on my bride-night, and put me into a casket and set the casket in a coffer and to the coffer he affixed seven strong padlocks of steel and deposited me on the deep bottom of the sea that raves, dashing and clashing with waves; and guarded me so that I might remain chaste and honest, quotha! that none save himself might have connexion with me. But I have lain under as many of my kind as I please, and this wretched Jinni wotteth not that Destiny may not be averted nor hindered by aught, and that whatso woman willeth the same she fulfilleth however man nilleth. Even so saith one of them: —

*Rely not on women; * Trust not to their hearts,
Whose joys and whose sorrows * Are hung to their parts!
Lying love they will swear thee * Whence guile ne'er departs:
Take Yusuf⁶ for sample * 'Ware sleights and 'ware smarts!
Iblis⁷ ousted Adam * (See ye not?) thro' their arts.*

And another saith: —

*Stint thy blame, man! 'Twill drive to a passion without bound; * My
fault is not so heavy as fault in it hast found.
If true lover I become, then to me there cometh not * Save what
happened unto many in the by-gone stound.
For wonderful is he and right worthy of our praise * Who from wiles
of female wits kept him safe and kept him sound.”*

Hearing these words they marvelled with exceeding marvel, and she went from them to the Ifrit and, taking up his head on her thigh as before, said to them softly, “Now wend your ways and bear yourselves beyond the bounds of his malice.” So they fared forth saying either to other, “Allah! Allah!” and, “There be no Majesty and there be no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great; and with Him we seek refuge from women’s malice and sleight, for of a truth it hath no mate in might. Consider, O my brother, the ways of this marvellous lady with an Ifrit who is so much more powerful than we are. Now since there hath happened to him a greater mishap than that which befel us and which should bear us abundant consolation, so return we to our coun-

⁶ The Joseph of the Koran, very different from him of Genesis.

⁷ “Iblis,” from a root meaning The Despairer, with a suspicious likeness to Diabolos. Some translate it The Calumniator, as Satan is the Hater.

tries and capitals, and let us decide never to intermarry with woman-kind and presently we will show them what will be our action.”

Thereupon they rode back to the tents of King Shahryar, which they reached on the morning of the third day; and, having mustered the Wazirs and Emirs, the Chamberlains and high officials, he gave a robe of honour to his Viceroy and issued orders for an immediate return to the city. There he sat him upon his throne and sending for the Chief Minister, the father of the two damsels who (Inshallah!) will presently be mentioned, he said, “I command thee to take my wife and smite her to death; for she hath broken her plight and her faith.” So he carried her to the place of execution and did her die. Then King Shahryar took brand in hand and repairing to the Serraglio slew all the concubines and their Mamelukes. He also swore himself by a binding oath that whatever wife he married he would abate her maidenhead at night and slay her next morning to make sure of his honour; “For,” said he, “there never was nor is there one chaste woman upon face of earth.” Then Shah Zaman prayed for permission to fare homewards; and he went forth equipped and escorted and travelled till he reached his own country.

Meanwhile Shahryar commanded his Wazir to bring him the bride of the night that he might go in to her; so he produced a most beautiful girl, the daughter of one of the Emirs and the King went in unto her at eventide and when morning dawned he bade his Minister strike off her head; and the Wazir did accordingly for fear of the Sultan. On this wise he continued for the space of three years; marrying a maiden every night and killing her the next morning, till folk raised an outcry against him and cursed him, praying Allah utterly to destroy him and his rule; and women made an uproar and mothers wept and parents fled with their daughters till there remained not in the city a young

person fit for carnal copulation. Presently the King ordered his Chief Wazir, the same who was charged with the executions, to bring him a virgin as was his wont; and the Minister went forth and searched and found none; so he returned home in sorrow and anxiety fearing for his life from the King.

Now he had two daughters, Shahrázád and Dunyázád hight,⁸ of whom the elder had perused the books, annals and legends of preceding Kings, and the stories, examples and instances of by-gone men and things; indeed it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred. Now on that day she said to her father, “Why do I see thee thus changed and laden with cark and care? Concerning this matter quoth one of the poets: —

*Tell whoso hath sorrow * Grief never shall last:
E'en as joy hath no morrow * So woe shall go past.”*

When the Wazir heard from his daughter these words he related to her, from first to last, all that had happened between him and the King. Thereupon said she, “By Allah, O my father, how long shall this slaughter of women endure? Shall I tell thee what is in my mind in order to save both sides from destruction?”

“Say on, O my daughter,” quoth he, and quoth she, “I wish thou wouldst give me in marriage to this King Shahryar; either I shall live or

⁸ “Shahrázád” (Persian) = City-freer, in the older version Scheherazade (probably both from Shirzád = lion-born). “Dunyázád” = World-freer.

I shall be a ransom for the virgin daughters of Moslems and the cause of their deliverance from his hands and thine.”

“Allah upon thee!” cried he in wrath exceeding that lacked no feeding, “O scanty of wit, expose not thy life to such peril! How durst thou address me in words so wide from wisdom and un-far from foolishness? Know that one who lacketh experience in worldly matters readily falleth into misfortune; and whoso considereth not the end keepeth not the world to friend, and the vulgar say: — I was lying at mine ease: nought but my officiousness brought me unease.”

“Needs must thou,” she broke in, “make me a doer of this good deed, and let him kill me an he will: I shall only die a ransom for others.”

“O my daughter,” asked he, “and how shall that profit thee when thou shalt have thrown away thy life?” and she answered, “O my father it must be, come of it what will!”

The Wazir was again moved to fury and blamed and reproached her, ending with, “In very deed — I fear lest the same befall thee which befel the Bull and the Ass with the Husbandman.”

“And what,” asked she, “befel them, O my father?”

Whereupon the Wazir began the

Tale of the Bull and the Ass.

Know, O my daughter, that there was once a merchant who owned much money and many men, and who was rich in cattle and camels; he had also a wife and family and he dwelt in the country, being experienced in husbandry and devoted to agriculture. Now Allah Most High had endowed him with understanding the tongues of beasts and birds of every kind, but under pain of death if he divulged the gift to any.

So he kept it secret for very fear. He had in his cow-house a Bull and an Ass each tethered in his own stall one hard by the other. As the merchant was sitting near hand one day with his servants and his children were playing about him, he heard the Bull say to the Ass, “Hail and health to thee O Father of Waking!⁹ for that thou enjoyest rest and good ministering; all under thee is clean-swept and fresh-sprinkled; men wait upon thee and feed thee, and thy provaunt is sifted barley and thy drink pure spring water, while I (unhappy creature!) am led forth in the middle of the night, when they set on my neck the plough and a something called Yoke; and I tire at cleaving the earth from dawn of day till set of sun. I am forced to do more than I can and to bear all manner of ill-treatment from night to night; after which they take me back with my sides torn, my neck flayed, my legs aching and mine eyelids sore with tears. Then they shut me up in the byre and throw me beans and crushed straw, mixed with dirt and chaff; and I lie in dung and filth and foul stinks through the livelong night. But thou art ever in a place swept and sprinkled and cleansed, and thou art always lying at ease, save when it happens (and seldom enough!) that the master hath some business, when he mounts thee and rides thee to town and returns with thee forthright. So it happens that I am toiling and distress while thou takest thine ease and thy rest; thou sleepest while I am sleepless; I hunger still while thou eatest thy fill, and I win contempt while thou winnest good will.”

When the Bull ceased speaking, the Ass turned towards him and said, “O Broad-o’-Brow, O thou lost one! he lied not who dubbed thee Bull-head, for thou, O father of a Bull, hast neither forethought nor

⁹ Arab. “Abú Yakzán” = the Waker, because the ass brays at dawn.

contrivance; thou art the simplest of simpletons, and thou knowest naught of good advisers. Hast thou not heard the saying of the wise: —

*For others these hardships and labours I bear * And theirs is the
pleasure and mine is the care;
As the bleacher who blacketh his brow in the sun * To whiten the
raiment which other men wear.*

But thou, O fool, art full of zeal and thou toilest and moilest before the master; and thou tearest and wearest and slayest thyself for the comfort of another. Hast thou never heard the saw that saith, None to guide and from the way go wide? Thou wendest forth at the call to dawn-prayer and thou returnest not till sundown; and through the livelong day thou endurest all manner hardships; to wit, beating and belabouring and bad language. Now hearken to me, Sir Bull! when they tie thee to thy stinking manger, thou pawest the ground with thy forehand and lashest out with thy hind hoofs and pushest with thy horns and bellowest aloud, so they deem thee contented. And when they throw thee thy fodder thou fallest on it with greed and hastenest to line thy fair fat paunch. But if thou accept my advice it will be better for thee and thou wilt lead an easier life even than mine. When thou goest a-field and they lay the thing called Yoke on thy neck, lie down and rise not again though haply they swinge thee; and, if thou rise, lie down a second time; and when they bring thee home and offer thee thy beans, fall backwards and only sniff at thy meat and withdraw thee and taste it not, and be satisfied with thy crushed straw and chaff; and on this wise feign thou art sick, and cease not doing thus for a day or two days or even three days, so shalt thou have rest from toil and moil.”

When the Bull heard these words he knew the Ass to be his friend and thanked him, saying, “Right is thy rede;” and prayed that all bles-

sings might requite him, and cried, "O Father Wakener! thou hast made up for my failings." (Now the merchant, O my daughter, understood all that passed between them.) Next day the driver took the Bull, and settling the plough on his neck, made him work as wont; but the Bull began to shirk his ploughing, according to the advice of the Ass, and the ploughman drubbed him till he broke the yoke and made off; but the man caught him up and leathered him till he despaired of his life. Not the less, however, would he do nothing but stand still and drop down till the evening. Then the herd led him home and stabled him in his stall: but he drew back from his manger and neither stamped nor ramped nor butted nor bellowed as he was wont to do; whereat the man wondered. He brought him the beans and husks, but he sniffed at them and left them and lay down as far from them as he could and passed the whole night fasting. The peasant came next morning; and, seeing the manger full of beans, the crushed straw untasted and the ox lying on his back in sorriest plight, with legs outstretched and swollen belly, he was concerned for him, and said to himself, "By Allah, he hath assuredly sickened and this is the cause why he would not plough yesterday." Then he went to the merchant and reported, "O my master, the Bull is ailing; he refused his fodder last night; nay more, he hath not tasted a scrap of it this morning."

Now the merchant-farmer understood what all this meant, because he had overheard the talk between the Bull and the Ass, so quoth he, "Take that rascal donkey, and set the yoke on his neck, and bind him to the plough and make him do Bull's work." Thereupon the ploughman took the Ass, and worked him through the live long day at the Bull's task; and, when he failed for weakness, he made him eat stick till his ribs were sore and his sides were sunken and his neck was flayed by the yoke; and when he came home in the evening he could hardly drag

his limbs along, either forehand or hind-legs. But as for the Bull, he had passed the day lying at full length and had eaten his fodder with an excellent appetite, and he ceased not calling down blessings on the Ass for his good advice, unknowing what had come to him on his account. So when night set in and the Ass returned to the byre the Bull rose up before him in honour, and said, “May good tidings gladden thy heart, O Father Wakener! through thee I have rested all this day and I have eaten my meat in peace and quiet.” But the Ass returned no reply, for wrath and heart-burning and fatigue and the beating he had gotten; and he repented with the most grievous of repentance; and quoth he to himself: “This cometh of my folly in giving good counsel; as the saw saith, I was in joy and gladness, nought save my officiousness brought me this sadness. But I will bear in mind my innate worth and the nobility of my nature; for what saith the poet?

*Shall the beautiful hue of the Basil fail * Tho’ the beetle’s foot o’er the Basil crawl?*

*And though spider and fly be its denizens * Shall disgrace attach to the royal hall?*

*The cowrie, I ken, shall have currency * But the pearl’s clear drop, shall its value fall?*

And now I must take thought and put a trick upon him and return him to his place, else I die.” Then he went away to his manger, while the Bull thanked him and blessed him.

And even so, O my daughter, said the Wazir, thou wilt die for lack of wits; therefore sit thee still and say naught and expose not thy life to such stress; for, by Allah, I offer thee the best advice, which cometh of my affection and kindly solicitude for thee.”

“O my father,” she answered, “needs must I go up to this King and

be married to him." Quoth he, "Do not this deed;" and quoth she, "Of a truth I will:" whereat he rejoined, "If thou be not silent and bide still, I will do with thee even what the merchant did with his wife."

"And what did he?" asked she.

Know then, answered the Wazir, that after the return of the Ass the merchant came out on the terrace-roof with his wife and family, for it was a moonlit night and the moon at its full. Now the terrace overlooked the cow-house and presently, as he sat there with his children playing about him, the trader heard the Ass say to the Bull, "Tell me, O Father Broad o' Brow, what thou purposest to do to-morrow?"

The Bull answered, "What but continue to follow thy counsel, O Aliboron? Indeed it was as good as good could be and it hath given me rest and repose; nor will I now depart from it one tittle: so, when they bring me my meat, I will refuse it and blow out my belly and counterfeit crank."

The Ass shook his head and said, "Beware of so doing, O Father of a Bull!"

The Bull asked, "Why," and the Ass answered, "Know that I am about to give thee the best of counsel, for verily I heard our owner say to the herd, If the Bull rise not from his place to do his work this morning and if he retire from his fodder this day, make him over to the butcher that he may slaughter him and give his flesh to the poor, and fashion a bit of leather from his hide. Now I fear for thee on account of this. So take my advice ere a calamity befall thee; and when they bring thee thy fodder eat it and rise up and bellow and paw the ground, or our master will assuredly slay thee: and peace be with thee!" Thereupon the Bull arose and lowed aloud and thanked the Ass, and said, "To-morrow I will readily go forth with them;" and he at once ate up

all his meat and even licked the manger. (All this took place and the owner was listening to their talk.)

Next morning the trader and his wife went to the Bull's crib and sat down, and the driver came and led forth the Bull who, seeing his owner, whisked his tail and brake wind, and frisked about so lustily that the merchant laughed a loud laugh and kept laughing till he fell on his back. His wife asked him, "Whereat laughest thou with such loud laughter as this?"; and he answered her, "I laughed at a secret something which I have heard and seen but cannot say lest I die my death." She returned, "Perforce thou must discover it to me, and disclose the cause of thy laughing even if thou come by thy death!" But he rejoined, "I cannot reveal what beasts and birds say in their lingo for fear I die." Then quoth she, "By Allah, thou liest! this is a mere pretext: thou laughest at none save me, and now thou wouldest hide somewhat from me. But by the Lord of the Heavens! an thou disclose not the cause I will no longer cohabit with thee: I will leave thee at once." And she sat down and cried. Whereupon quoth the merchant, "Woe betide thee! what means thy weeping? Fear Allah and leave these words and query me no more questions."

"Needs must thou tell me the cause of that laugh," said she, and he replied, "Thou wottest that when I prayed Allah to vouchsafe me understanding of the tongues of beasts and birds, I made a vow never to disclose the secret to any under pain of dying on the spot."

"No matter," cried she, "tell me what secret passed between the Bull and the Ass and die this very hour an thou be so minded;" and she ceased not to importune him till he was worn out and clean distraught. So at last he said, "Summon thy father and thy mother and our kith and kin and sundry of our neighbours," which she did; and he

sent for the Kazi¹⁰ and his assessors, intending to make his will and reveal to her his secret and die the death; for he loved her with love exceeding because she was his cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, and the mother of his children, and he had lived with her a life of an hundred and twenty years. Then, having assembled all the family and the folk of his neighbourhood, he said to them, "By me there hangeth a strange story, and 'tis such that if I discover the secret to any, I am a dead man." Therefore quoth every one of those present to the woman, "Allah upon thee, leave this sinful obstinacy and recognise the right of this matter, lest haply thy husband and the father of thy children die." But she rejoined, "I will not turn from it till he tell me, even though he come by his death." So they ceased to urge her; and the trader rose from amongst them and repaired to an out-house to perform the Wuzu-ablution,¹¹ and he purposed thereafter to return and to tell them his secret and to die.

Now, daughter Shahrazad, that merchant had in his out-houses some fifty hens under one cock, and whilst making ready to farewell his folk he heard one of his many farm-dogs thus address in his own tongue the Cock, who was flapping his wings and crowing lustily and jumping from one hen's back to another and treading all in turn, saying "O Chanticleer! how mean is thy wit and how shameless is thy conduct! Be he disappointed who brought thee up? Art thou not ashamed of thy doings on such a day as this?"

"And what," asked the Rooster, "hath occurred this day?" when the Dog answered, "Dost thou not know that our master is this day making ready for his death? His wife is resolved that he shall disclose the

¹⁰ The older "Cadi," a judge in religious matters. The Shuhúd, or Assessors, are officers of the Mahkamah or Kazi's Court.

¹¹ The lesser ablution of hands, face and feet; a kind of "washing the points."

secret taught to him by Allah, and the moment he so doeth he shall surely die. We dogs are all a-mourning; but thou clappest thy wings and clarionest thy loudest and treadest hen after hen. Is this an hour for pastime and pleasuring? Art thou not ashamed of thyself?"

"Then by Allah," quoth the Cock, "is our master a lack-wit and a man scanty of sense: if he cannot manage matters with a single wife, his life is not worth prolonging. Now I have some fifty Dame Partlets; and I please this and provoke that and starve one and stuff another; and through my good governance they are all well under my control. This our master pretendeth to wit and wisdom, and he hath but one wife, and yet knoweth not how to manage her."

Asked the Dog, "What then, O Cock, should the master do to win clear of his strait?"

"He should arise forthright," answered the Cock, "and take some twigs from yon mulberry-tree and give her a regular back-basting and rib-roasting till she cry: — I repent, O my lord! I will never ask thee a question as long as I live! Then let him beat her once more and soundly, and when he shall have done this he shall sleep free from care and enjoy life. But this master of ours owns neither sense nor judgment."

"Now, daughter Shahrazad," continued the Wazir, "I will do to thee as did that husband to that wife." Said Shahrazad, "And what did he do?"

He replied, "When the merchant heard the wise words spoken by his Cock to his Dog, he arose in haste and sought his wife's chamber, after cutting for her some mulberry-twigs and hiding them there; and then he called to her, 'Come into the closet that I may tell thee the secret while no one seeth me and then die.' She entered with him and he locked the door and came down upon her with so sound a beating

of back and shoulders, ribs, arms and legs, saying the while, ‘Wilt thou ever be asking questions about what concerneth thee not?’ that she was well-nigh senseless. Presently she cried out, ‘I am of the repentant! By Allah, I will ask thee no more questions, and indeed I repent sincerely and wholesomely.’ Then she kissed his hand and feet and he led her out of the room submissive as a wife should be. Her parents and all the company rejoiced and sadness and mourning were changed into joy and gladness. Thus the merchant learnt family discipline from his Cock and he and his wife lived together the happiest of lives until death. And thou also, O my daughter!” continued the Wazir, “Unless thou turn from this matter I will do by thee what that trader did to his wife.”

But she answered him with much decision, “I will never desist, O my father, nor shall this tale change my purpose. Leave such talk and tattle. I will not listen to thy words and, if thou deny me, I will marry myself to him despite the nose of thee. And first I will go up to the King myself and alone and I will say to him: — I prayed my father to wive me with thee, but he refused being resolved to disappoint his lord, grudging the like of me to the like of thee.” Her father asked, “Must this needs be?” and she answered, “Even so.”

Hereupon the Wazir being weary of lamenting and contending, persuading and dissuading her, all to no purpose, went up to King Shahryar and, after blessing him and kissing the ground before him, told him all about his dispute with his daughter from first to last and how he designed to bring her to him that night. The King wondered with exceeding wonder; for he had made an especial exception of the Wazir’s daughter, and said to him, “O most faithful of Counsellors, how is this? Thou wottest that I have sworn by the Raiser of the Heavens that after I have gone in to her this night I shall say to thee on

the morrow's morning: — Take her and slay her! and, if thou slay her not, I will slay thee in her stead without fail.”

“Allah guide thee to glory and lengthen thy life, O King of the age,” answered the Wazir, “it is she that hath so determined: all this have I told her and more; but she will not hearken to me and she persisteth in passing this coming night with the King's Majesty.” So Shahryar rejoiced greatly and said, “'Tis well; go get her ready and this night bring her to me.”

The Wazir returned to his daughter and reported to her the command saying, “Allah make not thy father desolate by thy loss!” But Shahrazad rejoiced with exceeding joy and gat ready all she required and said to her younger sister, Dunyazad, “Note well what directions I entrust to thee! When I have gone in to the King I will send for thee and when thou comest to me and seest that he hath had his carnal will of me, do thou say to me: — O my sister, an thou be not sleepy, relate to me some new story, delectable and delightsome, the better to speed our waking hours;” and I will tell thee a tale which shall be our deliverance, if so Allah please, and which shall turn the King from his blood-thirsty custom.” Dunyazad answered, “With love and gladness.”

So when it was night their father the Wazir carried Shahrazad to the King who was gladdened at the sight and asked, “Hast thou brought me my need?” and he answered, “I have.” But when the King took her to his bed and fell to toying with her and wished to go in to her she wept; which made him ask, “What aileth thee?”

She replied, “O King of the age, I have a younger sister and lief would I take leave of her this night before I see the dawn.” So he sent at once for Dunyazad and she came and kissed the ground between his hands, when he permitted her to take her seat near the foot of the couch. Then the King arose and did away with his bride's maidenhead

and the three fell asleep. But when it was midnight Shahrazad awoke and signalled to her sister Dunyazad who sat up and said, "Allah upon thee, O my sister, recite to us some new story, delightful and delectable, wherewith to while away the waking hours of our latter night."

"With joy and goodly gree," answered Shahrazad, "if this pious and auspicious King permit me."

"Tell on," quoth the King who chanced to be sleepless and restless and therefore was pleased with the prospect of hearing her story. So Shahrazad rejoiced; and thus, on the first night of the Thousand Nights and a Night, she began with the

Tale of the Trader and the Jinni.

It is related, O auspicious King, that there was a merchant of the merchants who had much wealth, and business in various cities. Now on a day he mounted horse and went forth to recover monies in certain towns, and the heat sore oppressed him; so he sat beneath a tree and, putting his hand into his saddle-bags, took thence some broken bread and dry dates and began to break his fast. When he had ended eating the dates he threw away the stones with force and lo! an Ifrit appeared, huge of stature and brandishing a drawn sword, wherewith he approached the merchant and said, "Stand up that I may slay thee, even as thou slewest my son!"

Asked the merchant, "How have I slain thy son?" and he answered, "When thou atest dates and throwest away the stones they struck my son full in the breast as he was walking by, so that he died forthwith."

Quoth the merchant, "Verily from Allah we proceeded and unto Allah are we returning. There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save

in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! If I slew thy son, I slew him by chance medley. I pray thee now pardon me.”

Rejoined the Jinni, “There is no help but I must slay thee.” Then he seized him and dragged him along and, casting him to the earth, raised the sword to strike him; whereupon the merchant wept, and said, “I commit my case to Allah,” and began repeating these couplets: —

*Containeth Time a twain of days, this of blessing that of bane * And
holdeth Life a twain of halves, this of pleasure that of pain.
See'st not when blows the hurricane, sweeping stark and striking
strong * None save the forest giant feels the suffering of the strain?
How many trees earth nourisheth of the dry and of the green * Yet
none but those which bear the fruits for cast of stone complain.
See'st not how corpses rise and float on the surface of the tide * While
pearls o'price lie hidden in the deepest of the main!
In Heaven are unnumberèd the many of the stars * Yet ne'er a star but
Sun and Moon by eclipse is overta'en.
Well judgedst thou the days that saw thy faring sound and well * And
countedst not the pangs and pain whereof Fate is ever fain.
The nights have kept thee safe and the safety brought thee pride * But
bliss and blessings of the night are 'genderers of bane!*

When the merchant ceased repeating his verses the Jinni said to him, “Cut thy words short, by Allah! needs must I slay thee.” But the merchant spake him thus, “Know, O thou Ifrit, that I have debts due to me and much wealth and children and a wife and many pledges in hand; so permit me to go home and discharge to every claimant his claim; and I will come back to thee at the head of the new year. Allah

be my testimony and surety that I will return to thee; and then thou mayest do with me as thou wilt and Allah is witness to what I say.”

The Jinni took sure promise of him and let him go; so he returned to his own city and transacted his business and rendered to all men their dues and after informing his wife and children of what had betided him, he appointed a guardian and dwelt with them for a full year. Then he arose, and made the Wuzu-ablution to purify himself before death and took his shroud under his arm and bade farewell to his people, his neighbours and all his kith and kin, and went forth despite his own nose.¹² They then began weeping and wailing and beating their breasts over him; but he travelled until he arrived at the same garden, and the day of his arrival was the head of the New Year.

As he sat weeping over what had befallen him, behold, a Shaykh,¹³ a very ancient man, drew near leading a chained gazelle; and he saluted that merchant and wishing him long life said, “What is the cause of thy sitting in this place and thou alone and this be a resort of evil spirits?”

The merchant related to him what had come to pass with the Ifrit, and the old man, the owner of the gazelle, wondered and said, “By Allah, O brother, thy faith is none other than exceeding faith and thy story right strange; were it graven with gravers on the eye-corners, it were a warner to whoso would be warned.” Then seating himself near the merchant he said, “By Allah, O my brother, I will not leave thee until I see what may come to pass with thee and this Ifrit.” And presently as he sat and the two were at talk the merchant began to feel fear and terror and exceeding grief and sorrow beyond relief and ever-growing care and extreme despair. And the owner of the gazelle was

¹² i. e., sorely against his will.

¹³ Arab. “Shaykh” = an old man (primarily), an elder, a chief (of the tribe, guild, etc.), and honourably addressed to any man.

hard by his side; when behold, a second Shaykh approached them, and with him were two dogs both of greyhound breed and both black. The second old man after saluting them with the salam, also asked them of their tidings and said “What causeth you to sit in this place, a dwelling of the Ján?”¹⁴ So they told him the tale from beginning to end, and their stay there had not lasted long before there came up a third Shaykh, and with him a she-mule of bright bay coat; and he saluted them and asked them why they were seated in that place. So they told him the story from first to last: and of no avail, O my master, is a twice-told tale!

There he sat down with them, and lo! a dust-cloud advanced and a mighty sand-devil appeared amidmost of the waste. Presently the cloud opened and behold, within it was that Jinni hending in hand a drawn sword, while his eyes were shooting fire-sparks of rage. He came up to them and, haling away the merchant from among them, cried to him, “Arise that I may slay thee, as thou slewest my son, the life-stuff of my liver.”¹⁵ The merchant wailed and wept, and the three old men began sighing and crying and weeping and wailing with their companion. Presently the first old man (the owner of the gazelle) came out from among them and kissed the hand of the Ifrit and said, “O Jinni, thou Crown of the Kings of the Jann! were I to tell thee the story of me and this gazelle and thou shouldst consider it wondrous wouldst thou give me a third part of this merchant’s blood?”

Then quoth the Jinni “Even so, O Shaykh! if thou tell me this tale,

¹⁴ The word is mostly plural = Jinnís: it is also singular = a demon; and Ján bin Ján has been noticed.

¹⁵ With us moderns “liver” suggests nothing but malady: in Arabic and Persian as in the classic literature of Europe it is the seat of passion, the heart being that of affection.

and I hold it a marvellous, then will I give thee a third of his blood.” Thereupon the old man began to tell

The First Shaykh’s Story.

Know O Jinni! that this gazelle is the daughter of my paternal uncle, my own flesh and blood, and I married her when she was a young maid, and I lived with her well-nigh thirty years, yet was I not blessed with issue by her. So I took me a concubine who brought to me the boon of a male child fair as the full moon, with eyes of lovely shine and eyebrows which formed one line, and limbs of perfect design. Little by little he grew in stature and waxed tall; and when he was a lad fifteen years old, it became needful I should journey to certain cities and I travelled with great store of goods. But the daughter of my uncle (this gazelle) had learned gramarye and egromancy and clerkly craft from her childhood; so she bewitched that son of mine to a calf, and my handmaid (his mother) to a heifer, and made them over to the herdsman’s care. Now when I returned after a long time from my journey and asked for my son and his mother, she answered me, saying “Thy slave-girl is dead, and thy son hath fled and I know not whither he is sped.”

So I remained for a whole year with grieving heart, and streaming eyes until the time came for the Great Festival of Allah. Then sent I to my herdsman bidding him choose for me a fat heifer; and he brought me one which was the damsel, my handmaid, whom this gazelle had ensorcelled. I tucked up my sleeves and skirt and, taking a knife, proceeded to cut her throat, but she lowed aloud and wept bitter tears. Thereat I marvelled and pity seized me and I held my hand, saying to the herd, “Bring me other than this.” Then cried my cousin, “Slay her,

for I have not a fatter nor a fairer!" Once more I went forward to sacrifice her, but she again lowed aloud upon which in ruth I refrained and commanded the herdsman to slay her and flay her. He killed her and skinned her but found in her neither fat nor flesh, only hide and bone; and I repented when penitence availed me naught. I gave her to the herdsman and said to him, "Fetch me a fat calf;" so he brought my son ensorcelled.

When the calf saw me, he brake his tether and ran to me, and fawned upon me and wailed and shed tears; so that I took pity on him and said to the herdsman, "Bring me a heifer and let this calf go!" Thereupon my cousin (this gazelle) called aloud at me, saying, "Needs must thou kill this calf; this is a holy day and a blessed, whereon naught is slain save what be perfect-pure; and we have not amongst our calves any fatter or fairer than this!" Quoth I, "Look thou upon the condition of the heifer which I slaughtered at thy bidding and how we turn from her in disappointment and she profited us on no wise; and I repent with an exceeding repentance of having killed her: so this time I will not obey thy bidding for the sacrifice of this calf." Quoth she, "By Allah the Most Great, the Compassionating, the Compassionate! there is no help for it; thou must kill him on this holy day, and if thou kill him not to me thou art no man and I to thee am no wife."

Now when I heard those hard words, not knowing her object I went up to the calf, knife in hand —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say. Then quoth her sister to her, "How fair is thy tale, and how grateful, and how sweet and how tasteful!" And Shahrazad answered her, "What is this to that I could tell thee on the coming night, were I to live and the King would spare me?" Then said the

King in himself, “By Allah, I will not slay her, until I shall have heard the rest of her tale.”

So they slept the rest of that night in mutual embrace till day fully brake. Then the King went forth to his audience-hall and the Wazir went up with his daughter’s shroud under his arm. The King issued his orders, and promoted this and deposed that, until the end of the day; and he told the Wazir no whit of what had happened. But the Minister wondered thereat with exceeding wonder; and when the Court broke up King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Second Night,

said Dunyazad to her sister Shahrazad, “O my sister, finish for us that story of the Merchant and the Jinni;” and she answered, “With joy and goodly gree, if the King permit me.” Then quoth the King, “Tell thy tale;” and Shahrazad began in these words:

It hath reached me, O auspicious King and Heaven-directed Ruler! that when the merchant purposed the sacrifice of the calf but saw it weeping, his heart relented and he said to the herdsman, “Keep the calf among my cattle.” All this the old Shaykh told the Jinni who marvelled much at these strange words. Then the owner of the gazelle continued: —

O Lord of the Kings of the Jann, this much took place and my uncle’s daughter, this gazelle, looked on and saw it, and said, “Butcher me this calf, for surely it is a fat one;” but I bade the herdsman take it away and he took it and turned his face homewards. On the next day as I was sitting in my own house, lo! the herdsman came and, standing before me said, “O my master, I will tell thee a thing which shall gladden thy soul, and shall gain me the gift of good tidings.” I answered,

“Even so.” Then said he, “O merchant, I have a daughter, and she learned magic in her childhood from an old woman who lived with us. Yesterday when thou gavest me the calf, I went into the house to her, and she looked upon it and veiled her face; then she wept and laughed alternately and at last she said: — O my father, hath mine honour become so cheap to thee that thou bringest in to me strange men? I asked her: — Where be these strange men and why wast thou laughing, and crying?; and she answered, Of a truth this calf which is with thee is the son of our master, the merchant; but he is ensorcelled by his stepdame who bewitched both him and his mother: such is the cause of my laughing; now the reason of his weeping is his mother, for that his father slew her unawares. Then I marvelled at this with exceeding marvel and hardly made sure that day had dawned before I came to tell thee.”

When I heard, O Jinni, my herdsman’s words, I went out with him, and I was drunken without wine, from the excess of joy and gladness which came upon me, until I reached his house. There his daughter welcomed me and kissed my hand, and forthwith the calf came and fawned upon me as before. Quoth I to the herdsman’s daughter, “Is this true that thou sayest of this calf?” Quoth she, “Yea, O my master, he is thy son, the very core of thy heart.” I rejoiced and said to her, “O maiden, if thou wilt release him thine shall be whatever cattle and property of mine are under thy father’s hand.” She smiled and answered, “O my master, I have no greed for the goods nor will I take them save on two conditions; the first that thou marry me to thy son and the second that I may bewitch her who bewitched him and imprison her, otherwise I cannot be safe from her malice and malpractices.”

Now when I heard, O Jinni, these, the words of the herdsman’s

daughter, I replied, "Beside what thou askest all the cattle and the household stuff in thy father's charge are thine and, as for the daughter of my uncle, her blood is lawful to thee."

When I had spoken, she took a cup and filled it with water: then she recited a spell over it and sprinkled it upon the calf, saying, "If Almighty Allah created thee a calf, remain so shaped, and change not; but if thou be enchanted, return to thy whilom form, by command of Allah Most Highest!" and lo! he trembled and became a man. Then I fell on his neck and said, "Allah upon thee, tell me all that the daughter of my uncle did by thee and by thy mother." And when he told me what had come to pass between them I said, "O my son, Allah favoured thee with one to restore thee, and thy right hath returned to thee." Then, O Jinni, I married the herdsman's daughter to him, and she transformed my wife into this gazelle, saying: — Her shape is a comely and by no means loathsome. After this she abode with us night and day, day and night, till the Almighty took her to Himself. When she deceased, my son fared forth to the cities of Hind, even to the city of this man who hath done to thee what hath been done; and I also took this gazelle (my cousin) and wandered with her from town to town seeking tidings of my son, till Destiny drove me to this place where I saw the merchant sitting in tears. Such is my tale!

Quoth the Jinni, "This story is indeed strange, and therefore I grant thee the third part of his blood."

Thereupon the second old man, who owned the two greyhounds, came up and said, "O Jinni, if I recount to thee what befel me from my brothers, these two hounds, and thou see that it is a tale even more wondrous and marvellous than what thou hast heard, wilt thou grant to me also the third of this man's blood?" Replied the Jinni, "Thou hast

my word for it, if thine adventures be more marvellous and wondrous.” Thereupon he thus began

The Second Shaykh’s Story.

Know, O lord of the Kings of the Jann! that these two dogs are my brothers and I am the third. Now when our father died and left us a capital of three thousand gold pieces, I opened a shop with my share, and bought and sold therein, and in like guise did my two brothers, each setting up a shop. But I had been in business no long while before the elder sold his stock for a thousand dinars, and after buying outfit and merchandise, went his ways to foreign parts. He was absent one whole year with the caravan; but one day as I sat in my shop, behold, a beggar stood before me asking alms, and I said to him, “Allah open thee another door!”¹⁶ Whereupon he answered, weeping the while, “Am I so changed that thou knowest me not?” Then I looked at him narrowly, and lo! it was my brother, so I rose to him and welcomed him; then I seated him in my shop and put questions concerning his case. “Ask me not,” answered he; “my wealth is awaste and my state hath waxed un-stated!” So I took him to the Hammám-bath¹⁷ and clad him in a suit of my own and gave him lodging in my house.

Moreover, after looking over the accounts of my stock-in-trade and the profits of my business, I found that industry had gained me one thousand dinars, while my principal, the head of my wealth, amounted to two thousand. So I shared the whole with him saying, “Assume that

¹⁶ The formula used in refusing alms to an “asker” or in rejecting an insufficient offer: “Allah will open to thee!” (some door of gain — not mine)! Another favourite ejaculation is “Allah Karim” = Allah is All-beneficent! meaning Ask Him, not me.

¹⁷ The public bath.

thou hast made no journey abroad but hast remained at home; and be not cast down by thine ill-luck.” He took the share in great glee and opened for himself a shop; and matters went on quietly for a few nights and days. But presently my second brother (yon other dog), also setting his heart upon travel, sold off what goods and stock-in-trade he had, and albeit we tried to stay him he would not be stayed: he laid in an outfit for the journey and fared forth with certain wayfarers.

After an absence of a whole year he came back to me, even as my elder brother had come back; and when I said to him, “O my brother, did I not dissuade thee from travel?” he shed tears and cried, “O my brother, this be destiny’s decree: here I am a mere beggar, penniless and without a shirt to my back.” So I led him to the bath, O Jinni, and clothing him in new clothes of my own wear, I went with him to my shop and served him with meat and drink. Furthermore I said to him, “O my brother, I am wont to cast up my shop-accounts at the head of every year, and whatso I shall find of surplusage is between me and thee.”¹⁸ So I proceeded, O Ifrit, to strike a balance and, finding two thousand dinars of profit, I returned praises to the Creator (be He extolled and exalted!) and made over one half to my brother, keeping the other to myself. Thereupon he busied himself with opening a shop and on this wise we abode many days.

After a time my brothers began pressing me to travel with them; but I refused, saying, “What gained ye by your voyage that I should gain thereby?” As I would not give ear to them we went back each to his own shop where we bought and sold as before. They kept urging me to travel for a whole twelvemonth, but I refused to do so till full six years were past and gone when I consented with these words, “O my

¹⁸ In Arabic the speaker always puts himself first, even if he address the King, without intending incivility.

brothers, here am I, your companion of travel: now let me see what monies you have by you." I found, however, that they had not a doit, having squandered their substance in high diet and drinking and carnal delights. Yet I spoke not a word of reproach; so far from it I looked over my shop accounts once more, and sold what goods and stock-in-trade were mine; and, finding myself the owner of six thousand ducats, I gladly proceeded to divide that sum in halves, saying to my brothers, "These three thousand gold pieces are for me and for you to trade withal," adding, "Let us bury the other moiety underground that it may be of service in case any harm befall us, in which case each shall take a thousand wherewith to open shops." Both replied, "Right is thy recking;" and I gave to each one his thousand gold pieces, keeping the same sum for myself, to wit, a thousand dinars.

We then got ready suitable goods and hired a ship and, having embarked our merchandise, proceeded on our voyage, day following day, a full month, after which we arrived at a city, where we sold our venture; and for every piece of gold we gained ten. And as we turned again to our voyage we found on the shore of the sea a maiden clad in worn and ragged gear, and she kissed my hand and said, "O master, is there kindness in thee and charity? I can make thee a fitting return for them." I answered, "Even so; truly in me are benevolence and good works, even though thou render me no return." Then she said, "Take me to wife, O my master, and carry me to thy city, for I have given myself to thee; so do me a kindness and I am of those who be meet for good works and charity: I will make thee a fitting return for these and be thou not shamed by my condition."

When I heard her words, my heart yearned towards her, in such sort as willed it Allah (be He extolled and exalted!); and took her and clothed her and made ready for her a fair resting-place in the vessel,

and honourably entreated her. So we voyaged on, and my heart became attached to her with exceeding attachment, and I was separated from her neither night nor day, and I paid more regard to her than to my brothers. Then they were estranged from me, and waxed jealous of my wealth and the quantity of merchandise I had, and their eyes were opened covetously upon all my property. So they took counsel to murder me and seize my wealth, saying, "Let us slay our brother and all his monies will be ours;" and Satan made this deed seem fair in their sight; so when they found me in privacy (and I sleeping by my wife's side) they took us both up and cast us into the sea.

My wife awoke startled from her sleep and, forthright becoming an Ifritah,¹⁹ she bore me up and carried me to an island and disappeared for a short time; but she returned in the morning and said, "Here am I, thy faithful slave, who hath made thee due recompense; for I bore thee up in the waters and saved thee from death by command of the Almighty. Know that I am a Jinniyah, and as I saw thee my heart loved thee by will of the Lord, for I am a believer in Allah and in His Apostle (whom Heaven bless and preserve!). Thereupon I came to thee conditioned as thou sawest me and thou didst marry me, and see now I have saved thee from sinking. But I am angered against thy brothers and assuredly I must slay them."

When I heard her story I was surprised and, thanking her for all she had done, I said, "But as to slaying my brothers this must not be." Then I told her the tale of what had come to pass with them from the beginning of our lives to the end, and on hearing it quoth she, "This night will I fly as a bird over them and will sink their ship and slay them." Quoth I, "Allah upon thee, do not thus, for the proverb saith,

¹⁹ A she-Ifrit, not necessarily an evil spirit.

O thou who doest good to him that doth evil, leave the evil doer to his evil deeds. Moreover they are still my brothers.” But she rejoined, “By Allah, there is no help for it but I slay them.”

I humbled myself before her for their pardon, whereupon she bore me up and flew away with me till at last she set me down on the terrace-roof of my own house. I opened the doors and took up what I had hidden in the ground; and after I had saluted the folk I opened my shop and bought me merchandise. Now when night came on I went home, and there I saw these two hounds tied up; and, when they sighted me, they arose and whined and fawned upon me; but ere I knew what happened my wife said, “These two dogs be thy brothers!” I answered, “And who hath done this thing by them?” and she rejoined, “I sent a message to my sister and she entreated them on this wise, nor shall these two be released from their present shape till ten years shall have passed.”

And now I have arrived at this place on my way to my wife’s sister that she may deliver them from this condition, after their having endured it for half a score of years. As I was wending onwards I saw this young man, who acquainted me with what had befallen him, and I determined not to fare hence until I should see what might occur between thee and him. Such is my tale!

Then said the Jinni, “Surely this is a strange story and therefor I give thee the third portion of his blood and his crime.” Thereupon quoth the third Shaykh, the master of the mare-mule, to the Jinni, “I can tell thee a tale more wondrous than these two, so thou grant me the remainder of his blood and of his offense,” and the Jinni answered, “So be it!” Then the old man began

The Third Shaykh's Story.

Know, O Sultan and head of the Jann, that this mule was my wife. Now it so happened that I went forth and was absent one whole year; and when I returned from my journey I came to her by night, and saw a black slave lying with her on the carpet-bed and they were talking, and dallying, and laughing, and kissing and playing the close-buttock game. When she saw me, she rose and came hurriedly at me with a gugglet²⁰ of water; and, muttering spells over it, she besprinkled me and said, "Come forth from this thy shape into the shape of a dog;" and I became on the instant a dog. She drove me out of the house, and I ran through the doorway nor ceased running until I came to a butcher's stall, where I stopped and began to eat what bones were there.

When the stall-owner saw me, he took me and led me into his house, but as soon as his daughter had sight of me she veiled her face from me, crying out, "Dost thou bring men to me and dost thou come in with them to me?" Her father asked, "Where is the man?"; and she answered, "This dog is a man whom his wife hath ensorcelled and I am able to release him." When her father heard her words, he said, "Allah upon thee, O my daughter, release him." So she took a gugglet of water and, after uttering words over it, sprinkled upon me a few drops, saying, "Come forth from that form into thy former form." And I returned to my natural shape. Then I kissed her hand and said, "I wish thou wouldest transform my wife even as she transformed me." Thereupon she gave me some water, saying, "As soon as thou see her

²⁰ Arab. "Kullah," the wide mouthed jug, "daurak" being the narrow. They are used either for water or sherbet and, being made of porous clay, "sweat," and keep the contents cool.

asleep, sprinkle this liquid upon her and speak what words thou hearest me utter, so shall she become whatsoever thou desirest.”

I went to my wife and found her fast asleep; and, while sprinkling the water upon her, I said, “Come forth from that form into the form of a mare-mule.” So she became on the instant a she-mule, and she it is whom thou seest with thine eyes, O Sultan and head of the Kings of the Jann!

Then the Jinni turned towards her and said, “Is this sooth?” And she nodded her head and replied by signs, “Indeed, ’tis the truth: for such is my tale and this is what hath befallen me.”

Now when the old man had ceased speaking the Jinni shook with pleasure and gave him the third of the merchant’s blood. —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say. Then quoth Dunyazad, “O, my sister, how pleasant is thy tale, and how tasteful; how sweet and how grateful!” She replied, “And what is this compared with that I could tell thee, the night to come, if I live and the King spare me?” Then thought the King, “By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her tale, for truly it is wondrous.” So they rested that night in mutual embrace until the dawn. After this the King went forth to his Hall of Estate, and the Wazir and the troops came in and the court was crowded, and the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed, bidding and forbidding during the rest of the day. Then the Divan broke up, and King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Third Night,

and the King had had his will of the Wazir’s daughter, Dunyazad, her

sister, said to her, “Finish for us that tale of thine;” and she replied, “With joy and goodly gree!”

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the third old man told a tale to the Jinni more wondrous than the two preceding, the Jinni marvelled with exceeding marvel, and, shaking with delight, cried, “Lo! I have given thee the remainder of the merchant’s punishment and for thy sake have I released him.” Thereupon the merchant embraced the old men and thanked them, and these Shaykhs wished him joy on being saved and fared forth each one for his own city. Yet this tale is not more wondrous than the fisherman’s story.

Asked the King, “What is the fisherman’s story?” And she answered by relating the tale of

The Fisherman and the Jinni.

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was a Fisherman well stricken in years who had a wife and three children, and withal was of poor condition. Now it was his custom to cast his net every day four times, and no more. On a day he went forth about noontide to the sea shore, where he laid down his basket; and, tucking up his shirt and plunging into the water, made a cast with his net and waited till it settled to the bottom. Then he gathered the cords together and haled away at it, but found it weighty; and however much he drew it landwards, he could not pull it up; so he carried the ends ashore and drove a stake into the ground and made the net fast to it. Then he stripped and dived into the water all about the net, and left not off working hard until he had brought it up. He rejoiced thereat and, donning his clothes, went to the net, when he found in it a dead jackass which had torn the meshes. Now when he saw it, he exclaimed in his grief, “There

is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah the Glorious, the Great!" Then quoth he, "This is a strange manner of daily bread;" and he began reciting in extempore verse: —

*O toiler through the glooms of night in peril and in pain * Thy toiling
stint for daily bread comes not by might and main!
Seest thou not the fisher seek afloat upon the sea * His bread, while
glimmer stars of night as set in tangled skein.
Anon he plungeth in despite the buffet of the waves * The while to
sight the bellying net his eager glances strain;
Till joying at the night's success, a fish he bringeth home * Whose
gullet by the hook of Fate was caught and cut in twain.
When buys that fish of him a man who spent the hours of night *
Reckless of cold and wet and gloom in ease and comfort fain,
Laud to the Lord who gives to this, to that denies his wishes * And
dooms one toil and catch the prey and other eat the fishes.*

Then quoth he, "Up and to it; I am sure of His beneficence, Inshallah!" So he continued: —

*When thou art seized of Evil Fate, assume * The noble soul's long-
suffering: 'tis thy best:
Complain not to the creature; this be 'plaint * From one most Ruthful
to the ruthlessest.*

The Fisherman, when he had looked at the dead ass, got it free of the toils and wrung out and spread his net; then he plunged into the sea, saying, "In Allah's name!" and made a cast and pulled at it, but it grew heavy and settled down more firmly than the first time. Now he thought that there were fish in it, and he made it fast, and doffing his clothes went into the water, and dived and haled until he drew it up

upon dry land. Then found he in it a large earthen pitcher which was full of sand and mud; and seeing this he was greatly troubled and began repeating these verses: —

*Forbear, O troubles of the world, * And pardon an ye will forbear:
I went to seek my daily bread * I find that breadless I must fare:
For neither handcraft brings me aught * Nor Fate allots to me a
share:*

*How many fools the Pleiads reach * While darkness whelms the wise
and ware.*

So he prayed pardon of Allah and, throwing away the jar, wrung his net and cleansed it and returned to the sea the third time to cast his net and waited till it had sunk. Then he pulled at it and found therein potsherds and broken glass; whereupon he began to speak these verses: —

*He is to thee that daily bread thou canst nor loose nor bind * Nor pen
nor writ avail thee aught thy daily bread to find:*

*For joy and daily bread are what Fate deigneth to allow; * This soil is
sad and sterile ground, while that makes glad the hind.*

*The shafts of Time and Life bear down full many a man of worth *
While bearing up to high degree wights of ignoble mind.*

*So come thou, Death! for verily life is not worth a straw * When low
the falcon falls withal the mallard wings the wind:*

*No wonder 'tis thou seest how the great of soul and mind * Are poor,
and many a losel carle to height of luck designed.*

*This bird shall overfly the world from east to furthest west * And that
shall win her every wish though ne'er she leave the nest.*

Then raising his eyes heavenwards he said, “O my God! verily Thou wottest that I cast not my net each day save four times; the third is

done and as yet Thou hast vouchsafed me nothing. So this time, O my God, deign give me my daily bread.” Then, having called on Allah’s name, he again threw his net and waited its sinking and settling; whereupon he haled at it but could not draw it in for that it was entangled at the bottom. He cried out in his vexation “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!” and he began reciting: —

*Fie on this wretched world, an so it be * I must be whelmed by grief
and misery:*

*Tho’ gladsome be man’s lot when dawns the morn * He drains the cup
of woe ere eve he see:*

*Yet was I one of whom the world when asked * “Whose lot is
happiest?” oft would say “’Tis he!”*

Thereupon he stripped and, diving down to the net, busied himself with it till it came to land. Then he opened the meshes and found therein a cucumber-shaped jar of yellow copper, evidently full of something, whose mouth was made fast with a leaden cap, stamped with the seal-ring of our Lord Sulayman son of David (Allah accept the twain!). Seeing this the Fisherman rejoiced and said, “If I sell it in the brass-bazar ’tis worth ten golden dinars.” He shook it and finding it heavy continued, “Would to Heaven I knew what is herein. But I must and will open it and look to its contents and store it in my bag and sell it in the brass-market.” And taking out a knife he worked at the lead till he had loosened it from the jar; then he laid the cup on the ground and shook the vase to pour out whatever might be inside. He found nothing in it; whereat he marvelled with an exceeding marvel. But presently there came forth from the jar a smoke which spired heavenwards into aether (whereat he again marvelled with mighty marvel), and which trailed along earth’s surface till presently, having reached its full height,

the thick vapour condensed, and became an Ifrit, huge of bulk, whose crest touched the clouds while his feet were on the ground. His head was as a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs long as masts and his mouth big as a cave; his teeth were like large stones, his nostrils ewers, his eyes two lamps and his look was fierce and lowering.

Now when the Fisherman saw the Ifrit his side muscles quivered, his teeth chattered, his spittle dried up and he became blind about what to do. Upon this the Ifrit looked at him and cried, “There is no god but *the* God, and Sulayman is the prophet of God;” presently adding, “O Apostle of Allah, slay me not; never again will I gainsay thee in word nor sin against thee in deed.” Quoth the Fisherman, “O Márid,²¹ diddest thou say, Sulayman the Apostle of Allah; and Sulayman is dead some thousand and eight hundred years ago, and we are now in the last days of the world! What is thy story, and what is thy account of thyself, and what is the cause of thy entering into this cucurbit?”

Now when the Evil Spirit heard the words of the Fisherman, quoth he; “There is no god but *the* God: be of good cheer, O Fisherman!” Quoth the Fisherman, “Why biddest thou me to be of good cheer?” and he replied, “Because of thy having to die an ill death in this very hour.” Said the Fisherman, “Thou deservest for thy good tidings the withdrawal of Heaven’s protection, O thou distant one! Wherefore shouldest thou kill me and what thing have I done to deserve death, I who freed thee from the jar, and saved thee from the depths of the sea, and brought thee up on the dry land?”

Replied the Ifrit, “Ask of me only what mode of death thou wilt die, and by what manner of slaughter shall I slay thee.” Rejoined the

²¹ Márid is one of the tribes of the Jinn, generally but not always hostile to man. His female is “Máridah.”

Fisherman, “What is my crime and wherefore such retribution?” Quoth the Ifrit, “Hear my story, O Fisherman!” and he answered, “Say on, and be brief in thy saying, for of very sooth my life-breath is in my nostrils.”²²

Thereupon quoth the Jinni, “Know, that I am one among the heretical Jann and I sinned against Sulayman, David-son (on the twain be peace!) I together with the famous Sakhr al-Jinni;²³ whereupon the Prophet sent his minister, Asaf son of Barkhiyá, to seize me; and this Wazir brought me against my will and led me in bonds to him (I being downcast despite my nose) and he placed me standing before him like a suppliant. When Sulayman saw me, he took refuge with Allah and bade me embrace the True Faith and obey his behests; but I refused, so sending for this cucurbit²⁴ he shut me up therein, and stopped it over with lead whereon he impressed the Most High Name, and gave his orders to the Jann who carried me off, and cast me into the midmost of the ocean. There I abode an hundred years, during which I said in my heart, ‘Whoso shall release me, him will I enrich for ever and ever.’ But the full century went by and, when no one set me free, I entered upon the second five score saying, ‘Whoso shall release me, for him I will open the hoards of the earth.’ Still no one set me free and thus four hundred years passed away. Then quoth I, ‘Whoso shall release me, for

²² i. e. about to fly out.

²³ “Sulayman,” when going out to ease himself, entrusted his seal-ring upon which his kingdom depended to a concubine “Amínah” (the “Faithful”), when Sakhr, transformed to the King’s likeness, came in and took it. The prophet was reduced to beggary, but after forty days the demon fled throwing into the sea the ring which was swallowed by a fish and eventually returned to Sulayman. This Talmudic fable is hinted at in the Koran, and commentators have extensively embroidered it.

²⁴ Arab. “Kumkam,” a gourd-shaped bottle of metal, china or glass, still used for sprinkling scents.

him will I fulfil three wishes.’ Yet no one set me free. Thereupon I waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and said to myself, ‘Whoso shall release me from this time forth, him will I slay and I will give him choice of what death he will die;’ and now, as thou hast released me, I give thee full choice of deaths.”

The Fisherman, hearing the words of the Ifrit, said, “O Allah! the wonder of it that I have not come to free thee save in these days!” adding, “Spare my life, so Allah spare thine; and slay me not, lest Allah set one to slay thee.” Replied the Contumacious One, “There is no help for it; die thou must; so ask me by way of boon what manner of death thou wilt die.” Albeit thus certified the Fisherman again addressed the Ifrit saying, “Forgive me this my death as a generous reward for having freed thee;” and the Ifrit, “Surely I would not slay thee save on account of that same release.”

“O Chief of the Ifrits,” said the Fisherman, “I do thee good and thou requitest me with evil! in very sooth the old saw lieth not when it saith: —

*We wrought them weal, they met our weal with ill; * Such, by my life!
is every bad man’s labour:
To him who benefits unworthy wights * Shall hap what hapt to
Ummi-Amir’s neighbour.”*²⁵

Now when the Ifrit heard these words he answered, “No more of this talk, needs must I kill thee.” Upon this the Fisherman said to himself, “This is a Jinni; and I am a man to whom Allah hath given a passably cunning wit, so I will now cast about to compass his destruction by my contrivance and by mine intelligence; even as he took counsel only of

²⁵ Arab. meaning “the Mother of Amir,” a nickname for the hyena, which bites the hand that feeds it.

his malice and his frowardness.”²⁶ He began by asking the Ifrit, “Hast thou indeed resolved to kill me?” and, receiving for all answer, “Even so,” he cried, “Now in the Most Great Name, graven on the seal-ring of Sulayman the Son of David (peace be with the holy twain!), an I question thee on a certain matter wilt thou give me a true answer?”

The Ifrit replied “Yea;” but, hearing mention of the Most Great Name, his wits were troubled and he said with trembling, “Ask and be brief.” Quoth the Fisherman, “How didst thou fit into this bottle which would not hold thy hand; no, nor even thy foot, and how came it to be large enough to contain the whole of thee?” Replied the Ifrit, “What! dost not believe that I was all there?” and the Fisherman rejoined, “Nay! I will never believe it until I see thee inside with my own eyes.” —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fourth Night,

her sister said to her, “Please finish us this tale, an thou be not sleepy!” so she resumed: —

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Fisherman said to the Ifrit, “I will never and nowise believe thee until I see thee inside it with mine own eyes;” the Evil Spirit on the instant shook and became a vapour, which condensed, and entered the jar little and little, till all was well inside when lo! the Fisherman in hot haste took the

²⁶ The intellect of man is stronger than that of the Jinni; the Ifrit, however, enters the jar because he has been adjured by the Most Great Name and not from mere stupidity. The seal-ring of Solomon according to the Rabbis contained a chased stone which told him everything he wanted to know.

leaden cap with the seal and stoppered therewith the mouth of the jar and called out to the Ifrit, saying, "Ask me by way of boon what death thou wilt die! By Allah, I will throw thee into the sea²⁷ before us and here will I build me a lodge; and whoso cometh hither I will warn him against fishing and will say: — In these waters abideth an Ifrit who giveth as a last favour a choice of deaths and fashion of slaughter to the man who saveth him!"

Now when the Ifrit heard this from the Fisherman and saw himself in limbo, he was minded to escape, but this was prevented by Solomon's seal; so he knew that the Fisherman had cozened and outwitted him, and he waxed lowly and submissive and began humbly to say, "I did but jest with thee." But the other answered, "Thou liest, O vilest of the Ifrits, and meanest and filthiest!" and he set off with the bottle for the sea side; the Ifrit calling out "Nay! Nay!" and he calling out "Aye! Aye!" Thereupon the Evil Spirit softened his voice and smoothed his speech and abased himself, saying, "What wouldest thou do with me, O Fisherman?"

"I will throw thee back into the sea," he answered; "where thou hast been housed and homed for a thousand and eight hundred years; and now I will leave thee therein till Judgment-day: did I not say to thee: — Spare me and Allah shall spare thee; and slay me not lest Allah slay thee? yet thou spurnedst my supplication and hadst no intention save to deal ungraciously by me, and Allah hath now thrown thee into my hands and I am cunninger than thou."

Quoth the Ifrit, "Open for me that I may bring thee weal." Quoth the Fisherman, "Thou liest, thou accursed! my case with thee is that of the Wazir of King Yúnán with the sage Dúbán."

²⁷ Arab. "Bahr" which means a sea, a large river, a sheet of water, etc., lit. water cut or trenched in the earth.

“And who was the Wazir of King Yunan and who was the sage Duban; and what was the story about them?” quoth the Ifrit, whereupon the Fisherman began to tell the

Tale of the Wazir and the Sage Duban.

Know, O thou Ifrit, that in days of yore and in ages long gone before, a King called Yunan reigned over the city of Fars of the land of the Roum.²⁸ He was a powerful ruler and a wealthy, who had armies and guards and allies of all nations of men; but his body was afflicted with a leprosy which leaches and men of science failed to heal. He drank potions and he swallowed powders and he used unguents, but naught did him good and none among the host of physicians availed to procure him a cure. At last there came to his city a mighty healer of men and one well stricken in years, the sage Duban hight. This man was a reader of books, Greek, Persian, Roman, Arabian, and Syrian; and he was skilled in astronomy and in leechcraft, the theorick as well as the practick; he was experienced in all that healeth and that hurteth the body; conversant with the virtues of every plant, grass and herb, and their benefit and bane; and he understood philosophy and had compassed the whole range of medical science and other branches of the knowledge-tree.

Now this physician passed but few days in the city, ere he heard of the King's malady and all his bodily sufferings through the leprosy with which Allah had smitten him; and how all the doctors and wise men

²⁸ “Fárs” (whence “Persia”) is the central Province of the grand old Empire now a mere wreck, “Rúm” (which I write Roum, in order to avoid Jamaica) is the neo-Roman or Byzantine Empire, while “Yunan” is the classical Arab term for Greece (Ionia) which unlearned Moslems believe to be now under water.

had failed to heal him. Upon this he sat up through the night in deep thought and, when broke the dawn and appeared the morn and light was again born, and the Sun greeted the Good whose beauties the world adorn, he donned his handsomest dress and going in to King Yunan, he kissed the ground before him: then he prayed for the endurance of his honour and prosperity in fairest language and made himself known saying, “O King, tidings have reached me of what befel thee through that which is in thy person; and how the host of physicians have proved themselves unavailing to abate it; and lo! I can cure thee, O King; and yet will I not make thee drink of draught or anoint thee with ointment.”

Now when King Yunan heard his words he said in huge surprise, “How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou make me whole I will enrich thee even to thy son’s son and I will give thee sumptuous gifts; and whatso thou wishest shall be thine and thou shalt be to me a cup-companion²⁹ and a friend.” The King then robed him with a dress of honour and entreated him graciously and asked him, “Canst thou indeed cure me of this complaint without drug and unguent?” and he answered, “Yes! I will heal thee without the pains and penalties of medicine.” The King marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, “O physician, when shall be this whereof thou speakest, and in how many days shall it take place? Haste thee, O my son!” He replied, “I hear and I obey; the cure shall begin to-morrow.”

So saying he went forth from the presence, and hired himself a house in the city for the better storage of his books and scrolls, his medicines and his aromatic roots. Then he set to work at choosing the fittest drugs and simples and he fashioned a bat hollow within, and

²⁹ Arab. “Nadīm,” a term often occurring. It denotes one who was intimate enough to drink with the Caliph, a very high honour and a dangerous.

furnished with a handle without, for which he made a ball; the two being prepared with consummate art. On the next day when both were ready for use and wanted nothing more, he went up to the King; and, kissing the ground between his hands bade him ride forth on the parade ground³⁰ there to play at pall and mall. He was accompanied by his suite, Emirs and Chamberlains, Wazirs and Lords of the realm and, ere he was seated, the sage Duban came up to him, and handing him the bat said, "Take this mall and grip it as I do; so! and now push for the plain and leaning well over thy horse drive the ball with all thy might until thy palm be moist and thy body perspire: then the medicine will penetrate through thy palm and will permeate thy person. When thou hast done with playing and thou feelest the effects of the medicine, return to thy palace, and make the Ghushl-ablution in the Hammam-bath, and lay thee down to sleep; so shalt thou become whole; and now peace be with thee!"

Thereupon King Yunan took the bat from the Sage and grasped it firmly; then, mounting steed, he drove the ball before him and galloped after it till he reached it, when he struck it with all his might, his palm gripping the bat handle the while; and he ceased not malling the ball till his hand waxed moist and his skin, perspiring, imbibed the medicine from the wood. Then the sage Duban knew that the drugs had penetrated his person and bade him return to the palace and enter the Hammam without stay or delay; so King Yunan forthright returned and ordered them to clear for him the bath. They did so, the carpet spreaders making all haste, and the slaves all hurry and got ready a

³⁰ Arab. Maydán (from Persian); an open space, in or near the city, used for reviewing troops, races, playing the Jeríd (cane-spear) and other sports and exercises. The game here alluded to is our "polo," or hockey on horseback, a favourite with the Persian Kings.

change of raiment for the King. He entered the bath and made the total ablution long and thoroughly; then donned his clothes within the Hammam and rode therefrom to his palace where he lay him down and slept.

Such was the case with King Yunan, but as regards the sage Duban, he returned home and slept as usual and when morning dawned he repaired to the palace and craved audience. The King ordered him to be admitted; then, having kissed the ground between his hands, in allusion to the King he recited these couplets with solemn intonation: —

*Happy is Eloquence when thou art named her sire * But mourns she
whenas other man the title claimed.*

*O Lord of fairest presence, whose illuming rays * Clear off the fogs of
doubt aye veiling deeds high famed,*

*Ne'er cease thy face to shine like Dawn and rise of Morn * And never
show Time's face with heat of ire inflamed!*

*Thy grace hath favoured us with gifts that worked such wise * As
rain-clouds raining on the hills by wolds enframed:*

*Freely thou lavishedst thy wealth to rise on high * Till won from Time
the heights whereat thy grandeur aimed.*

Now when the Sage ceased reciting, the King rose quickly to his feet and fell on his neck; then, seating him by his side he bade dress him in a sumptuous dress; for it had so happened that when the King left the Hammam he looked on his body and saw no trace of leprosy: the skin was all clean as virgin silver. He joyed thereat with exceeding joy, his breast broadened with delight and he felt thoroughly happy. Presently, when it was full day he entered his audience-hall and sat upon the throne of his kingship whereupon his Chamberlains and Grandees

flocked to the presence and with them the sage Duban. Seeing the leach the King rose to him in honour and seated him by his side; then the food trays furnished with the daintiest viands were brought and the physician ate with the King, nor did he cease accompanying him all that day. Moreover, at nightfall he gave the physician Duban two thousand gold pieces, besides the usual dress of honour and other gifts galore, and sent him home on his own steed.

After the Sage had fared forth King Yunan again expressed his amazement at the leach's art, saying, "This man medicined my body from without nor anointed me with aught of ointments: by Allah, surely this is none other than consummate skill! I am bound to honour such a man with rewards and distinction, and take him to my companion and my friend during the remainder of my days." So King Yunan passed the night in joy and gladness for that his body had been made whole and had thrown off so pernicious a malady.

On the morrow the King went forth from his Serraglio and sat upon his throne, and the Lords of Estate stood about him, and the Emirs and Wazirs sat as was their wont on his right hand and on his left. Then he asked for the Sage Duban, who came in and kissed the ground before him, when the King rose to greet him and, seating him by his side, ate with him and wished him long life. Moreover he robed him and gave him gifts, and ceased not conversing with him until night approached. Then the King ordered him, by way of salary, five dresses of honour and a thousand dinars. The physician returned to his own house full of gratitude to the King. Now when next morning dawned the King repaired to his audience-hall, and his Lords and Nobles surrounded him and his Chamberlains and his Ministers, as the white encloseth the black of the eye.

Now the King had a Wazir among his Wazirs, unsightly to look

upon, an ill-omened spectacle; sordid, ungenerous, full of envy and evil will. When this Minister saw the King place the physician near him and give him all these gifts, he jaloused him and planned to do him a harm, as in the saying on such subject, “Envy lurks in every body;” and the saying, “Oppression hideth in every heart: power revealeth it and weakness concealeth it.” Then the Minister came before the King and, kissing the ground between his hands, said, “O King of the age and of all time, thou in whose benefits I have grown to manhood, I have weighty advice to offer thee, and if I withhold it I were a son of adultery and no true-born man; wherefore an thou order me to disclose it I will so do forthwith.”

Quoth the King (and he was troubled at the words of the Minister), “And what is this counsel of thine?” Quoth he, “O glorious monarch, the wise of old have said: — Whoso regardeth not the end, hath not Fortune to friend; and indeed I have lately seen the King on far other than the right way; for he lavisheth largesse on his enemy, on one whose object is the decline and fall of his kingship: to this man he hath shown favour, honouring him with over honour and making of him an intimate. Wherefore I fear for the King’s life.”

The King, who was much troubled and changed colour, asked, “Whom dost thou suspect and anent whom doest thou hint?” and the Minister answered, “O King, an thou be asleep, wake up! I point to the physician Duban.”

Rejoined the King, “Fie upon thee! This is a true friend who is favoured by me above all men, because he cured me with something which I held in my hand, and he healed my leprosy which had baffled all physicians; indeed he is one whose like may not be found in these days — no, not in the whole world from furthest east to utmost west! And it is of such a man thou sayest such hard sayings. Now from

this day forward I allot him a settled solde and allowances, every month a thousand gold pieces; and, were I to share with him my realm 'twere but a little matter. Perforce I must suspect that thou speakest on this wise from mere envy and jealousy as they relate of the King Sindibád." —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say. Then quoth Dunyazad, "O my sister, how pleasant is thy tale, and how tasteful, how sweet, and how grateful!" She replied, "And where is this compared with what I could tell thee on the coming night if the King deign spare my life?" Then said the King in himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her tale, for truly it is wondrous." So they rested that night in mutual embrace until the dawn. Then the King went forth to his Hall of Rule, and the Wazir and the troops came in, and the audience-chamber was thronged and the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed and bade and forbade during the rest of that day till the Court broke up, and King Shahryar returned to his palace.

Now when it was the Fifth Night,

her sister said, "Do you finish for us thy story if thou be not sleepy," and she resumed: —

It hath reached me, O auspicious King and mighty Monarch, that King Yunan said to his Minister, "O Wazir, thou art one whom the evil spirit of envy hath possessed because of this physician, and thou plottest for my putting him to death, after which I should repent me full sorely, even as repented King Sindibad for killing his falcon."

Quoth the Wazir, "Pardon me, O King of the age, how was that?" So the King began the

Story of King Sindibad and his Falcon.

It is said (but Allah is All-knowing!) that there was a King of the Kings of Fars, who was fond of pleasuring and diversion, especially coursing and hunting. He had reared a falcon which he carried all night on his fist, and whenever he went a-chasing he took with him this bird; and he bade make for her a golden cuplet hung around her neck to give her drink therefrom. One day as the King was sitting quietly in his palace, behold, the high falconer of the household suddenly addressed him, “O King of the age, this is indeed a day fit for birding.”

The King gave orders accordingly and set out taking the hawk on fist; and they fared merrily forwards till they made a Wady³¹ where they planted a circle of nets for the chase; when lo! a gazelle came within the toils and the King cried, “Whoso alloweth yon gazelle to spring over his head and loseth her, that man will I surely slay.” They narrowed the nets about the gazelle when she drew near the King’s station; and, planting herself on her hind quarter, crossed her forehead over her breast, as if about to kiss the earth before the King. He bowed his brow low in acknowledgment to the beast; when she bounded high over his head and took the way of the waste. Thereupon the King turned towards his troops and, seeing them winking and pointing at him, he asked, “O Wazir, what are my men saying?” and the Minister answered, “They say thou didst proclaim that whoso alloweth the gazelle to spring over his head, that man shall be put to death.”

Quoth the King, “Now, by the life of my head! I will follow her up till I bring her back.” So he set off galloping on the gazelle’s trail and gave not over tracking till he reached the foot-hills of a mountain-chain where the quarry made for a cave. Then the King cast off at it the

³¹ The Wady is the bed of a watercourse which flows only after rains.

falcon which presently caught it up and, swooping down, drove her talons into its eyes, bewildering and blinding it; and the King drew his mace and struck a blow which rolled the game over. He then dismounted; and, after cutting the antelope's throat and flaying the body, hung it to the pommel of his saddle.

Now the time was that of the siesta and the wold was parched and dry, nor was any water to be found anywhere; and the King thirsted and his horse also; so he went about searching till he saw a tree dropping water, as it were melted butter, from its boughs. Thereupon the King who wore gauntlets of skin to guard him against poisons took the cup from the hawk's neck, and filling it with the water set it before the bird, and lo! the falcon struck it with her pounces and upset the liquid. The King filled it a second time with the dripping drops, thinking his hawk was thirsty; but the bird again struck at the cup with her talons and overturned it. Then the King waxed wroth with the hawk and filling the cup a third time offered it to his horse: but the hawk upset it with a flirt of wings. Quoth the King, "Allah confound thee, thou unluckiest of flying things! thou keepest me from drinking, and thou deprivest thyself also, and the horse." So he struck the falcon with his sword and cut off her wing; but the bird raised her head and said by signs, "Look at that which hangeth on the tree!"

The King lifted up his eyes accordingly and caught sight of a brood of vipers, whose poison-drops he mistook for water; thereupon he repented him of having struck off his falcon's wing, and mounting horse, fared on with the dead gazelle, till he arrived at the camp, his starting place. He threw the quarry to the cook saying, "Take and broil it," and sat down on his chair, the falcon being still on his fist when suddenly the bird gasped and died; whereupon the King cried out in sorrow and remorse for having slain that falcon which had saved his

life. Now this is what occurred in the case of King Sindibad; and I am assured that were I to do as thou desirest I should repent even as the man who killed his parrot.”

Quoth the Wazir, “And how was that?” And the King began to tell the

Tale of the Husband and the Parrot.

A certain man and a merchant to boot had married a fair wife, a woman of perfect beauty and grace, symmetry and loveliness, of whom he was mad-jealous, and who contrived successfully to keep him from travel. At last an occasion compelling him to leave her, he went to the bird-market and bought him for one hundred gold pieces a she-parrot which he set in his house to act as duenna, expecting her to acquaint him on his return with what had passed during the whole time of his absence; for the bird was kenning and cunning and never forgot what she had seen and heard.

Now his fair wife had fallen in love with a young Turk, who used to visit her, and she feasted him by day and lay with him by night. When the man had made his journey and won his wish he came home; and, at once causing the Parrot be brought to him, questioned her concerning the conduct of his consort whilst he was in foreign parts. Quoth she, “Thy wife hath a man-friend who passed every night with her during thine absence.” Thereupon the husband went to his wife in a violent rage and bashed her with a bashing severe enough to satisfy any body.

The woman, suspecting that one of the slave-girls had been tattling to the master, called them together and questioned them upon their oaths, when all swore that they had kept the secret, but that the Parrot

had not, adding, "And we heard her with our own ears." Upon this the woman bade one of the girls to set a hand-mill under the cage and grind therewith and a second to sprinkle water through the cage-roof and a third to run about, right and left, flashing a mirror of bright steel through the livelong night. Next morning when the husband returned home after being entertained by one of his friends, he bade bring the Parrot before him and asked what had taken place whilst he was away.

"Pardon me, O my master," quoth the bird, "I could neither hear nor see aught by reason of the exceeding murk and the thunder and lightning which lasted throughout the night." As it happened to be the summer-tide the master was astounded and cried, "But we are now in mid Tammúz,³² and this is not the time for rains and storms."

"Ay, by Allah," rejoined the bird, "I saw with these eyes what my tongue hath told thee." Upon this the man, not knowing the case nor smoking the plot, waxed exceeding wroth; and, holding that his wife had been wrongously accused, put forth his hand and pulling the Parrot from her cage dashed her upon the ground with such force that he killed her on the spot. Some days afterwards one of his slave-girls confessed to him the whole truth, yet would he not believe it till he saw the young Turk, his wife's lover, coming out of her chamber, when he bared his blade and slew him by a blow on the back of the neck; and he did the same by the adulteress; and thus the twain, laden with mortal sin, went straightways to Eternal Fire. Then the merchant knew that the Parrot had told him the truth anent all she had seen and he mourned grievously for her loss, when mourning availed him not.

The Minister, hearing the words of King Yunan, rejoined, "O Monarch, high in dignity, and what harm have I done him, or what evil

³² The Hebrew-Syrian month July used to express the height of summer.

have I seen from him that I should compass his death? I would not do this thing, save to serve thee, and soon shalt thou sight that it is right; and if thou accept my advice thou shalt be saved, otherwise thou shalt be destroyed even as a certain Wazir who acted treacherously by the young Prince.”

Asked the King, “How was that?” and the Minister thus began the

Tale of the Prince and the Ogress.

A certain King, who had a son over much given to hunting and coursing, ordered one of his Wazirs to be in attendance upon him whithersoever he might wend. One day the youth set out for the chase accompanied by his father’s Minister; and, as they jogged on together, a big wild beast came in sight. Cried the Wazir to the King’s son, “Up and at yon noble quarry!” So the Prince followed it until he was lost to every eye and the chase got away from him in the waste; whereby he was confused and he knew not which way to turn, when lo! a damsel appeared ahead and she was in tears.

The King’s son asked, “Who art thou?” and she answered, “I am daughter to a King among the Kings of Hind, and I was travelling with a caravan in the desert when drowsiness overcame me, and I fell from my beast unwittingly; whereby I am cut off from my people and sore bewildered.” The Prince, hearing these words, pitied her case and, mounting her on his horse’s crupper, travelled until he passed by an old ruin, when the damsel said to him, “O my master, I wish to obey a call of nature”: he therefore set her down at the ruin where she delayed so long that the King’s son thought that she was only wasting time; so he followed her without her knowledge and behold, she was a Ghúlah, a wicked Ogress, who was saying to her brood, “O my

children, this day I bring you a fine fat youth for dinner;" whereto they answered, "Bring him quick to us, O our mother, that we may browse upon him our bellies full."

The Prince hearing their talk, made sure of death and his side-muscles quivered in fear for his life, so he turned away and was about to fly. The Ghulah came out and seeing him in sore affright (for he was trembling in every limb) cried, "Wherefore art thou afraid?" and he replied, "I have hit upon an enemy whom I greatly fear." Asked the Ghulah, "Diddest thou not say: — I am a King's son?" and he answered, "Even so." Then quoth she, "Why dost not give thine enemy something of money and so satisfy him?" Quoth he, "He will not be satisfied with my purse but only with my life, and I mortally fear him and am a man under oppression." She replied, "If thou be so distressed, as thou deemest, ask aid against him from Allah, who will surely protect thee from his ill-doing and from the evil whereof thou art afraid." Then the Prince raised his eyes heavenwards and cried, "O Thou who answerest the necessitous when he calleth upon Thee and dispellest his distress; O my God! grant me victory over my foe and turn him from me, for Thou over all things art Almighty." The Ghulah, hearing his prayer, turned away from him, and the Prince returned to his father, and told him the tale of the Wazir; whereupon the King summoned the Minister to his presence and then and there slew him.

Thou likewise, O King, if thou continue to trust this leach, shalt be made to die the worst of deaths. He verily thou madest much of and whom thou entreatedest as an intimate, will work thy destruction. Seest thou not how he healed the disease from outside thy body by something grasped in thy hand? Be not assured that he will not destroy thee by something held in like manner!

Replied King Yunan, "Thou hast spoken sooth, O Wazir, it may

well be as thou hintest O my well-advising Minister; and belike this Sage hath come as a spy searching to put me to death; for assuredly if he cured me by a something held in my hand, he can kill me by a something given me to smell.” Then asked King Yunan, “O Minister, what must be done with him?” and the Wazir answered, “Send after him this very instant and summon him to thy presence; and when he shall come strike him across the neck; and thus shalt thou rid thyself of him and his wickedness, and deceive him ere he can deceive thee.”

“Thou hast again spoken sooth, O Wazir,” said the King and sent one to call the Sage who came in joyful mood for he knew not what had appointed for him the Compassionate; as a certain poet saith by way of illustration: —

*O Thou who fearest Fate, confiding fare * Trust all to Him who built
the world, and wait:*

*What Fate saith “Be” perforce must be, my lord! * And safe art thou
from th’ undecreed of Fate.*

As Duban the physician entered he addressed the King in these lines: —

*An fail I of my thanks to thee nor thank thee day by day * For whom
composed I prose and verse, for whom my say and lay?*

*Thou lavishedst thy generous gifts ere they were craved by me * Thou
lavishedst thy boons unsought sans pretext or delay:*

*How shall I stint my praise of thee, how shall I cease to laud * The
grace of thee in secrecy and patentest display?*

*Nay; I will thank thy benefits, for aye thy favours lie * Light on my
thought and tongue, though heavy on my back they weigh.*

And he said further on the same theme: —

*Turn thee from grief nor care a jot! * Commit thy needs to Fate and
Lot!*

*Enjoy the Present passing well * And let the Past be clean forgot;
For whatso haply seemeth worse * Shall work thy weal as Allah wot:
Allah shall do whate'er He wills * And in His will oppose Him not.*

And further still: —

*To th' All-wise Subtle One trust worldly things * Rest thee from all
whereto the worldling clings:
Learn wisely well naught cometh by thy will * But e'en as willeth
Allah, King of Kings.*

And lastly: —

*Gladsome and gay forget thine every grief * Full often grief the wisest
hearts outwore:
Thought is but folly in the feeble slave * Shun it and so be savèd
evermore.*

Said the King for sole return, “Knowest thou why I have summoned thee?” and the Sage replied, “Allah Most Highest alone kenneth hidden things!” But the King rejoined, “I summoned thee only to take thy life and utterly to destroy thee.”

Duban the Wise wondered at this strange address with exceeding wonder and asked, “O King, and wherefore wouldest thou slay me, and what ill have I done thee?” and the King answered, “Men tell me thou art a spy sent hither with intent to slay me; and lo! I will kill thee ere I be killed by thee;” then he called to his Sworder, and said, “Strike me off the head of this traitor and deliver us from his evil practices.”

Quoth the Sage, “Spare me and Allah will spare thee; slay me not or Allah shall slay thee.” And he repeated to him these very words, even as I to thee, O Ifrit, and yet thou wouldst not let me go, being bent upon my death.

King Yunan only rejoined, “I shall not be safe without slaying thee; for, as thou healedst me by something held in hand, so am I not secure against thy killing me by something given me to smell or otherwise.” Said the physician, “This then, O King, is thy requital and reward; thou returnest only evil for good.” The King replied, “There is no help for it; die thou must and without delay.”

Now when the physician was certified that the King would slay him without waiting, he wept and regretted the good he had done to other than the good. As one hath said on this subject: —

*Of wit and wisdom is Maymúnah³³ bare * Whose sire in wisdom all
the wits outstrippeth:*

*Man may not tread on mud or dust or clay * Save by good sense, else
trippeth he and slippeth.*

Hereupon the Sworder stepped forward and bound the Sage Duban’s eyes and bared his blade, saying to the King, “By thy leave;” while the physician wept and cried, “Spare me and Allah will spare thee, and slay me not or Allah shall slay thee,” and began repeating: —

*I was kind and ’scapèd not, they were cruel and escaped; * And my
kindness only led me to Ruination Hall;*

*If I live I’ll ne’er be kind; if I die, then all be damned * Who follow me,
and curses their kindliness befall.*

³³ Some proverbial name now forgotten.

“Is this,” continued Duban, “the return I meet from thee? Thou givest me, meseems, but crocodile-boon.” Quoth the King, “What is the tale of the crocodile?”, and quoth the physician, “Impossible for me to tell it in this my state; Allah upon thee, spare me, as thou hopest Allah shall spare thee.” And he wept with exceeding weeping.

Then one of the King’s favourites stood up and said, “O King! grant me the blood of this physician; we have never seen him sin against thee, or doing aught save healing thee from a disease which baffled every leach and man of science.” Said the King, “Ye wot not the cause of my putting to death this physician, and this it is. If I spare him, I doom myself to certain death; for one who healed me of such a malady by something held in my hand, surely can slay me by something held to my nose; and I fear lest he kill me for a price, since haply he is some spy whose sole purpose in coming hither was to compass my destruction. So there is no help for it; die he must, and then only shall I be sure of my own life.” Again cried Duban, “Spare me and Allah shall spare thee; and slay me not or Allah shall slay thee.” But it was in vain.

Now when the physician, O Ifrit, knew for certain that the King would kill him, he said, “O King, if there be no help but I must die, grant me some little delay that I may go down to my house and release myself from mine obligations and direct my folk and my neighbours where to bury me and distribute my books of medicine. Amongst these I have one, the rarest of rarities, which I would present to thee as an offering: keep it as a treasure in thy treasury.”

“And what is in the book?” asked the King and the Sage answered, “Things beyond compt; and the least of secrets is that if, directly after thou hast cut off my head, thou open three leaves and read three lines of the page to thy left hand, my head shall speak and answer every

question thou deignest ask of it." The King wondered with exceeding wonder and shaking with delight at the novelty, said, "O physician, dost thou really tell me that when I cut off thy head it will speak to me?" He replied, "Yes, O King!" Quoth the King, "This is indeed a strange matter!" and forthwith sent him closely guarded to his house, and Duban then and there settled all his obligations.

Next day he went up to the King's audience hall, where Emirs and Wazirs, Chamberlains and Nabobs, Grandees and Lords of Estate were gathered together, making the presence-chamber gay as a garden of flower-beds. And lo! the physician came up and stood before the King, bearing a worn old volume and a little étui of metal full of powder, like that used for the eyes. Then he sat down and said, "Give me a tray." So they brought him one and he poured the powder upon it and levelled it and lastly spake as follows: "O King, take this book but do not open it till my head falls; then set it upon this tray, and bid press it down upon the powder, when forthright the blood will cease flowing. That is the time to open the book."

The King thereupon took the book and made a sign to the Swordsman, who arose and struck off the physician's head, and placing it on the middle of the tray, pressed it down upon the powder. The blood stopped flowing, and the sage Duban unclosed his eyes and said, "Now open the book, O King!" The King opened the book, and found the leaves stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth and, by moistening it, he easily turned over the first leaf, and in like way the second, and the third, each leaf opening with much trouble; and when he had unstuck six leaves he looked over them and, finding nothing written thereon, said, "O physician, there is no writing here!" Duban replied, "Turn over yet more;" and he turned over three others in the same way.

Now the book was poisoned; and before long the venom penetrated his system, and he fell into strong convulsions and he cried out, "The poison hath done its work!" Whereupon the sage Duban's head began to improvise: —

*There be rulers who have ruled with a foul tyrannic sway * But they soon became as though they had never, never been:
Just, they had won justice: they oppressed and were opprest * By Fortune, who requited them with ban and bane and teen:
So they faded like the morn, and the tongue of things repeats * "Take this for that, nor vent upon Fortune's ways thy spleen."*

No sooner had the head ceased speaking than the King rolled over dead.

Now I would have thee know, O Ifrit, that if King Yunan had spared the sage Duban, Allah would have spared him; but he refused so to do and decreed to do him dead, wherefore Allah slew him; and thou too, O Ifrit, if thou hadst spared me, Allah would have spared thee. —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say: then quoth Dunyazad, "O my sister, how pleasant is thy tale and how tasteful; how sweet, and how grateful!" She replied, "And where is this compared with what I could tell thee this coming night, if I live and the King spare me?" Said the King in himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her story, for truly it is wondrous." They rested that night in mutual embrace until dawn: then the King went forth to his Darbar; the Wazirs and troops came in and the audience-hall was crowded; so the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed and bade and forbade the rest of that day, when the court broke up, and King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Sixth Night,

her sister, Dunyazad, said to her, “Pray finish for us thy story;” and she answered, “I will if the King give me leave.”

“Say on,” quoth the King. And she continued: —

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Fisherman said to the Ifrit, “If thou hadst spared me I would have spared thee, but nothing would satisfy thee save my death; so now I will do thee die by jailing thee in this jar and I will hurl thee into this sea.” Then the Marid roared aloud and cried, “Allah upon thee, O Fisherman don’t! Spare me, and pardon my past doings; and, as I have been tyrannous, so be thou generous, for it is said among sayings that go current: — O thou who doest good to him who hath done thee evil, suffice for the ill-doer his ill-deeds, and do not deal with me as did Umamah to ’Atikah.”³⁴ Asked the Fisherman, “And what was their case?” and the Ifrit answered, “This is not the time for story-telling and I in this prison; but set me free and I will tell thee the tale.”

Quoth the Fisherman, “Leave this language: there is no help but that thou be thrown back into the sea nor is there any way for thy getting out of it for ever and ever. Vainly I placed myself under thy protection, and I humbled myself to thee with weeping, while thou soughtest only to slay me, who had done thee no injury deserving this at thy hands; nay, so far from injuring thee by any evil act, I worked thee nought but weal in releasing thee from that jail of thine. Now I knew thee to be an evil-doer when thou diddest to me what thou didst, and know, that when I have cast thee back into the sea, I will warn whomsoever may fish thee up of what hath befallen me with thee, and I will advise him to toss thee back again; so shalt thou abide here under

³⁴ The tale of these two women is now forgotten.

these waters till the End of Time shall make an end of thee.” But the Ifrit cried aloud, “Set me free; this is a noble occasion for generosity and I make covenant with thee and vow never to do thee hurt and harm; nay, I will help thee to what shall put thee out of want.”

The Fisherman accepted his promises on both conditions, not to trouble him as before, but on the contrary to do him service; and, after making firm the plight and swearing him a solemn oath by Allah Most Highest he opened the cucurbit. Thereupon the pillar of smoke rose up till all of it was fully out; then it thickened and once more became an Ifrit of hideous presence, who forthright administered a kick to the bottle and sent it flying into the sea. The Fisherman, seeing how the cucurbit was treated and making sure of his own death, piddled in his clothes and said to himself, “This promiseth badly;” but he fortified his heart, and cried, “O Ifrit, Allah hath said: — Perform your covenant; for the performance of your covenant shall be inquired into hereafter. Thou hast made a vow to me and hast sworn an oath not to play me false lest Allah play thee false, for verily he is a jealous God who respiteth the sinner, but letteth him not escape. I say to thee as said the Sage Duban to King Yunan, “Spare me so Allah may spare thee!”

The Ifrit burst into laughter and stalked away, saying to the Fisherman, “Follow me;” and the man paced after him at a safe distance (for he was not assured of escape) till they had passed round the suburbs of the city. Thence they struck into the uncultivated grounds, and crossing them descended into a broad wilderness, and lo! in the midst of it stood a mountain-tarn. The Ifrit waded in to the middle and again cried, “Follow me;” and when this was done he took his stand in the centre and bade the man cast his net and catch his fish. The Fisherman looked into the water and was much astonished to see therein vari-

coloured fishes, white and red, blue and yellow; however he cast his net and, hauling it in, saw that he had netted four fishes, one of each colour. Thereat he rejoiced greatly and more when the Ifrit said to him, "Carry these to the Sultan and set them in his presence; then he will give thee what shall make thee a wealthy man; and now accept my excuse, for by Allah at this time I wot none other way of benefiting thee, inasmuch I have lain in this sea eighteen hundred years and have not seen the face of the world save within this hour. But I would not have thee fish here save once a day." The Ifrit then gave him Godspeed, saying, "Allah grant we meet again;" and struck the earth with one foot, whereupon the ground clove asunder and swallowed him up.

The Fisherman, much marvelling at what had happened to him with the Ifrit, took the fish and made for the city; and as soon as he reached home he filled an earthen bowl with water and therein threw the fish which began to struggle and wriggle about. Then he bore off the bowl upon his head and, repairing to the King's palace (even as the Ifrit had bidden him) laid the fish before the presence; and the King wondered with exceeding wonder at the sight, for never in his lifetime had he seen fishes like these in quality or in conformation. So he said, "Give those fish to the stranger slave-girl who now cooketh for us," meaning the bond-maiden whom the King of Roum had sent to him only three days before, so that he had not yet made trial of her talents in the dressing of meat. Thereupon the Wazir carried the fish to the cook and bade her fry them, saying, "O damsel, the King sendeth this say to thee: — I have not treasured thee, O tear o' me! save for stress-time of me; approve, then, to us this day thy delicate handiwork and thy savoury cooking; for this dish of fish is a present sent to the Sultan and evidently a rarity."

The Wazir, after he had carefully charged her, returned to the King,

who commanded him to give the Fisherman four hundred dinars: he gave them accordingly, and the man took them to his bosom and ran off home stumbling and falling and rising again and deeming the whole thing to be a dream. However, he bought for his family all they wanted and lastly he went to his wife in huge joy and gladness.

So far concerning him; but as regards the cookmaid, she took the fish and cleansed them and set them in the frying-pan, basting them with oil till one side was dressed. Then she turned them over and, behold, the kitchen wall clave asunder, and therefrom came a young lady, fair of form, oval of face, perfect in grace, with eyelids which Kohl-lines enchase. Her dress was a silken head-kerchief fringed and tasseled with blue: a large ring hung from either ear; a pair of bracelets adorned her wrists; rings with bezels of priceless gems were on her fingers; and she hent in hand a long rod of rattan-cane which she thrust into the frying-pan, saying, “O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your covenant?”

When the cook-maiden saw this apparition she swooned away. The young lady repeated her words a second time and a third time, and at last the fishes raised their heads from the pan, and saying in articulate speech “Yes! Yes!” began with one voice to recite: —

*Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! * And if ye fain
forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!*

After this the young lady upset the frying-pan and went forth by the way she came in and the kitchen wall closed upon her. When the cook-maiden recovered from her fainting-fit, she saw the four fishes charred black as charcoal, and crying out, “His staff brake in his first bout,” she again fell swooning to the ground. Whilst she was in this case the Wazir came for the fish, and looking upon her as insensible she lay,

not knowing Sunday from Thursday, shoved her with his foot and said, "Bring the fish for the Sultan!" Thereupon recovering from her fainting-fit she wept and informed him of her case and all that had befallen her. The Wazir marvelled greatly and exclaiming, "This is none other than a right strange matter!", he sent after the Fisherman and said to him, "Thou, O Fisherman, must needs fetch us four fishes like those thou broughtest before."

Thereupon the man repaired to the tarn and cast his net; and when he landed it, lo! four fishes were therein exactly like the first. These he at once carried to the Wazir, who went in with them to the cook-maiden and said, "Up with thee and fry these in my presence, that I may see this business." The damsel arose and cleansed the fish, and set them in the frying-pan over the fire; however they remained there but a little while ere the wall clave asunder and the young lady appeared, clad as before and holding in hand the wand which she again thrust into the frying-pan, saying, "O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your olden covenant?" And behold, the fish lifted their heads, and repeated "Yes! Yes!" and recited this couplet:

*Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! * But if ye fain
forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!*

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventh Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the fishes spoke, and the young lady upset the frying-pan with her rod, and went forth by the way she came and the wall closed up, the Wazir cried

out, “This is a thing not to be hidden from the King.” So he went and told him what had happened, whereupon quoth the King, “There is no help for it but that I see this with mine own eyes.” Then he sent for the Fisherman and commanded him to bring four other fish like the first and to take with him three men as witnesses.

The Fisherman at once brought the fish: and the King, after ordering them to give him four hundred gold pieces, turned to the Wazir and said, “Up and fry me the fishes here before me!” The Minister, replying “To hear is to obey;” bade bring the frying-pan, threw therein the cleansed fish and set it over the fire; when lo! the wall clave asunder, and out burst a black slave like a huge rock or a remnant of the tribe Ad³⁵ bearing in hand a branch of a green tree; and he cried in loud and terrible tones, “O fish! O fish! be ye all constant to your antique covenant?” whereupon the fishes lifted their heads from the frying-pan and said, “Yes! Yes! we be true to our vow;” and they again recited the couplet: —

*Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! * But if ye fain
forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!*

Then the huge blackamoor approached the frying-pan and upset it with the branch and went forth by the way he came in. When he vanished from their sight the King inspected the fish; and, finding them all charred black as charcoal, was utterly bewildered and said to the Wazir, “Verily this is a matter whereanent silence cannot be kept, and as for the fishes, assuredly some marvellous adventure connects with them.” So he bade bring the Fisherman and asked him, saying “Fie on thee, fellow! whence come these fishes?” and he answered, “From a

³⁵ Prehistoric Arabs who measured from 60 to 100 cubits high.

tarn between four heights lying behind this mountain which is in sight of thy city." Quoth the King, "How many days' march?" Quoth he, "O our lord the Sultan, a walk of half hour." The King wondered and, straightway ordering his men to march and horsemen to mount, led off the Fisherman who went before as guide, privily damning the Ifrit.

They fared on till they had climbed the mountain and descended unto a great desert which they had never seen during all their lives; and the Sultan and his merry men marvelled much at the wold set in the midst of four mountains, and the tarn and its fishes of four colours, red and white, yellow and blue. The King stood fixed to the spot in wonderment and asked his troops and all present, "Hath any one among you ever seen this piece of water before now?" and all made answer, "O King of the age, never did we set eyes upon it during all our days." They also questioned the oldest inhabitants they met, men well stricken in years, but they replied, each and every, "A lakelet like this we never saw in this place." Thereupon quoth the King, "By Allah I will neither return to my capital nor sit upon the throne of my forbears till I learn the truth about this tarn and the fish therein."

He then ordered his men to dismount and bivouac all around the mountain; which they did; and summoning his Wazir, a Minister of much experience, sagacious, of penetrating wit and well versed in affairs, said to him, "'Tis in my mind to do a certain thing, whereof I will inform thee; my heart telleth me to fare forth alone this night and root out the mystery of this tarn and its fishes. Do thou take thy seat at my tent-door, and say to the Emirs and Wazirs, the Nabobs and the Chamberlains, in fine to all who ask thee: — The Sultan is ill at ease, and he hath ordered me to refuse all admittance; and be careful thou let none know my design." And the Wazir could not oppose him. Then the King changed his dress and ornaments and, slinging his sword over

his shoulder, took a path which led up one of the mountains and marched for the rest of the night till morning dawned; nor did he cease wayfaring till the heat was too much for him.

After his long walk he rested for a while, and then resumed his march and fared on through the second night till dawn, when suddenly there appeared a black point in the far distance. Hereat he rejoiced and said to himself, "Haply some one here shall acquaint me with the mystery of the tarn and its fishes." Presently, drawing near the dark object he found it a palace built of swart stone plated with iron; and, while one leaf of the gate stood wide open, the other was shut. The King's spirits rose high as he stood before the gate and rapped a light rap; but hearing no answer he knocked a second knock and a third; yet there came no sign. Then he knocked his loudest but still no answer, so he said, "Doubtless 'tis empty." Thereupon he mustered up resolution, and boldly walked through the main gate into the great hall and there cried out aloud, "Holla, ye people of the palace! I am a stranger and a wayfarer; have you aught here of victual?"

He repeated his cry a second time and a third but still there came no reply; so strengthening his heart and making up his mind he stalked through the vestibule into the very middle of the palace and found no man in it. Yet it was furnished with silken stuffs gold-starred; and the hangings were let down over the door-ways. In the midst was a spacious court off which set four open saloons each with its raised daïs, saloon facing saloon; a canopy shaded the court and in the centre was a jetting fount with four figures of lions made of red gold, spouting from their mouths water clear as pearls and diaphanous gems. Round about the palace birds were let loose and over it stretched a net of golden wire, hindering them from flying off; in brief there was everything but human beings.

The King marvelled mightily thereat, yet felt he sad at heart for that he saw no one to give him account of the waste and its tarn, the fishes, the mountains and the palace itself. Presently as he sat between the doors in deep thought behold, there came a voice of lament, as from a heart grief-spent and he heard the voice chanting these verses: —

*I hid what I endured of him³⁶ and yet it came to light, * And nightly
sleep mine eyelids fled and changed to sleepless night:
Oh world! Oh Fate! withhold thy hand and cease thy hurt and harm *
Look and behold my hapless sprite in dolour and affright:
Wilt ne'er show ruth to highborn youth who lost him on the way * Of
Love, and fell from wealth and fame to lowest basest wight.
Jealous of Zephyr's breath was I as on your form he breathed * But
whenas Destiny descends she blindeth human sight,
What shall the hapless archer do who when he fronts his foe * And
bends his bow to shoot the shaft shall find his string undight?
When cark and care so heavy bear on youth of generous soul * How
shall he 'scape his lot and where from Fate his place of flight?*

Now when the Sultan heard the mournful voice he sprang to his feet; and, following the sound, found a curtain let down over a chamber-door. He raised it and saw behind it a young man sitting upon a couch about a cubit above the ground; and he fair to the sight, a well shaped wight, with eloquence dight; his forehead was flower-white, his cheek rosy bright, and a mole on his cheek-breadth like an ambergris-mite; even as the poet doth indite: —

*A youth slim-waisted from whose locks and brow * The world in
blackness and in light is set.*

³⁶ He speaks of his wife but euphemistically in the masculine.

*Throughout Creation's round no fairer show * No rarer sight thine
eye hath ever met:*

*A nut-brown mole sits throned upon a cheek * Of rosiest red beneath
an eye of jet.*

The King rejoiced and saluted him, but he remained sitting in his caftan of silken stuff purpled with Egyptian gold and his crown studded with gems of sorts; but his face was sad with the traces of sorrow. He returned the royal salute in most courteous wise adding, "O my lord, thy dignity demandeth my rising to thee; and my sole excuse is to crave thy pardon." Quoth the King, "Thou art excused, O youth; so look upon me as thy guest come hither on an especial object. I would thou acquaint me with the secrets of this tarn and its fishes and of this palace and thy loneliness therein and the cause of thy groaning and wailing." When the young man heard these words he wept with sore weeping; till his bosom was drenched with tears and began reciting: —

*Say him who careless sleeps what while the shaft of Fortune flies *
How many doth this shifting world lay low and raise to rise?
Although thine eye be sealed in sleep, sleep not th' Almighty's eyes *
And who hath found Time ever fair, or Fate in constant guise?*

Then he sighed a long-fetched sigh and recited: —

*Confide thy case to Him, the Lord who made mankind; * Quit cark
and care and cultivate content of mind;
Ask not the Past or how or why it came to pass: * All human things by
Fate and Destiny were designed!*

The King marvelled and asked him, "What maketh thee weep, O

young man?" and he answered, "How should I not weep, when this is my case!" Thereupon he put out his hand and raised the skirt of his garment, when lo! the lower half of him appeared stone down to his feet while from his navel to the hair of his head he was man.

The King, seeing this his plight, grieved with sore grief and of his compassion cried, "Alack and well-away! in very sooth, O youth, thou heapest sorrow upon my sorrow. I was minded to ask thee the mystery of the fishes only: whereas now I am concerned to learn thy story as well as theirs. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Lose no time, O youth, but tell me forthright thy whole tale." Quoth he, "Lend me thine ears, thy sight and thine insight;" and quoth the King, "All are at thy service!"

Thereupon the youth began, "Right wondrous and marvellous is my case and that of these fishes; and were it graven with gravers upon the eye-corners it were a warner to whoso would be warned."

"How is that?" asked the King, and the young man began to tell the

Tale of the Ensorcelled Prince.

Know then, O my lord, that whilome my sire was King of this city, and his name was Mahmúd, entitled Lord of the Black Islands, and owner of what are now these four mountains. He ruled three score and ten years, after which he went to the mercy of the Lord and I reigned as Sultan in his stead. I took to wife my cousin, the daughter of my paternal uncle, and she loved me with such abounding love that whenever I was absent she ate not and she drank not until she saw me again. She cohabited with me for five years till a certain day when she went forth to the Hammam-bath; and I bade the cook hasten to get ready all requisites for our supper. And I entered this palace and lay down on

the bed where I was wont to sleep and bade two damsels to fan my face, one sitting by my head and the other at my feet. But I was troubled and made restless by my wife's absence and could not sleep; for although my eyes were closed my mind and thoughts were wide awake.

Presently I heard the slave-girl at my head say to her at my feet, "O Mas'údah, how miserable is our master and how wasted in his youth and oh! the pity of his being so betrayed by our mistress, the accursed whore!" The other replied, "Yes indeed: Allah curse all faithless women and adulterous; but the like of our master, with his fair gifts, deserveth something better than this harlot who lieth abroad every night." Then quoth she who sat by my head, "Is our lord dumb or fit only for bubbling that he questioneth her not!" and quoth the other, "Fie on thee! doth our lord know her ways or doth she allow him his choice? Nay, more, doth she not drug every night the cup she giveth him to drink before sleep-time, and put Bhang into it? So he sleepeth and wotteth not whither she goeth, nor what she doeth; but we know that, after giving him the drugged wine, she donneth her richest raiment and perfumeth herself and then she fareth out from him to be away till break of day; then she cometh to him, and burneth a pastile under his nose and he awaketh from his deathlike sleep."

When I heard the slave-girls' words, the light became black before my sight and I thought night would never fall. Presently the daughter of my uncle came from the baths; and they set the table for us and we ate and sat together a fair half-hour quaffing our wine as was ever our wont. Then she called for the particular wine I used to drink before sleeping and reached me the cup; but, seeming to drink it according to my wont, I poured the contents into my bosom; and, lying down, let her hear that I was asleep. Then, behold, she cried, "Sleep out the

night, and never wake again: by Allah, I loathe thee and I loathe thy whole body, and my soul turneth in disgust from cohabiting with thee; and I see not the moment when Allah shall snatch away thy life!” Then she rose and donned her fairest dress and perfumed her person and slung my sword over her shoulder; and, opening the gates of the palace, went her ill way.

I rose and followed her as she left the palace and she threaded the streets until she came to the city gate, where she spoke words I understood not, and the padlocks dropped of themselves as if broken and the gate-leaves opened. She went forth (and I after her without her noticing aught) till she came at last to the outlying mounds³⁷ and a reed fence built about a round-roofed hut of mud-bricks. As she entered the door, I climbed upon the roof which commanded a view of the interior, and lo! my fair cousin had gone in to a hideous negro slave with his upper lip like the cover of a pot, and his lower like an open pot; lips which might sweep up sand from the gravel-floor of the cot. He was to boot a leper and a paralytic, lying upon a strew of sugarcane trash and wrapped in an old blanket and the foulest rags and tatters.

She kissed the earth before him, and he raised his head so as to see her and said, “Woe to thee! what call hadst thou to stay away all this time? Here have been with me sundry of the black brethren, who drank their wine and each had his young lady, and I was not content to drink because of thine absence.” Then she, “O my lord, my heart’s love and coolth of my eyes, knowest thou not that I am married to my cousin whose very look I loathe, and hate myself when in his company? And did not I fear for thy sake, I would not let a single sun arise

³⁷ The rubbish heaps which outlie Eastern cities, some (near Cairo) are over a hundred feet high.

before making his city a ruined heap wherein raven should croak and howlet hoot, and jackal and wolf harbour and loot; nay I had removed its very stones to the back side of Mount Káf.” Rejoined the slave, “Thou liest, damn thee! Now I swear an oath by the valour and honour of blackamoor men (and deem not our manliness to be the poor manliness of white men), from to-day forth if thou stay away till this hour, I will not keep company with thee nor will I glue my body with thy body and strum and belly-bump. Dost play fast and loose with us, thou cracked pot, that we may satisfy thy dirty lusts? stinkard! bitch! vilest of the vile whites!”

When I heard his words, and saw with my own eyes what passed between these two wretches, the world waxed dark before my face and my soul knew not in what place it was. But my wife humbly stood up weeping before and wheedling the slave, and saying, “O my beloved, and very fruit of my heart, there is none left to cheer me but thy dear self; and, if thou cast me off who shall take me in, O my beloved, O light of my eyes?” And she ceased not weeping and abasing herself to him until he deigned be reconciled with her. Then was she right glad and stood up and doffed her clothes, even to her petticoat-trousers, and said, “O my master what hast thou here for thy hand- maiden to eat?”

“Uncover the basin,” he grumbled, “and thou shalt find at the bottom the broiled bones of some rats we dined on; pick at them, and then go to that slop-pot where thou shalt find some leavings of beer which thou mayest drink.” So she ate and drank and washed her hands, and went and lay down by the side of the slave, upon the cane-trash and, stripping herself stark naked, she crept in with him under his foul coverlet and his rags and tatters. When I saw my wife, my cousin, the daughter of my uncle, do this deed I clean lost my wits,

and climbing down from the roof, I entered and took the sword which she had with her and drew it, determined to cut down the twain. I first struck at the slave's neck and thought that the death decree had fallen on him: —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighth Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young ensorcelled Prince said to the King,

When I smote the slave with intent to strike off his head, I thought that I had slain him; for he groaned a loud hissing groan, but I had cut only the skin and flesh of the gullet and the two arteries! It awoke the daughter of my uncle, so I sheathed the sword and fared forth for the city; and, entering the palace, lay upon my bed and slept till morning when my wife aroused me and I saw that she had cut off her hair and had donned mourning garments. Quoth she, “O son of my uncle, blame me not for what I do; it hath just reached me that my mother is dead, and my father hath been killed in holy war, and of my brothers one hath lost his life by a snake-sting and the other by falling down some precipice; and I can and should do naught save weep and lament.” When I heard her words I refrained from all reproach and said only, “Do as thou list; I certainly will not thwart thee.”

She continued sorrowing, weeping and wailing one whole year from the beginning of its circle to the end, and when it was finished she said to me, “I wish to build me in thy palace a tomb with a cupola, which I will set apart for my mourning and will name the House of Lamentations.” Quoth I again, “Do as thou list!” Then she builded for herself

a cenotaph wherein to mourn, and set on its centre a dome under which showed a tomb like a Santon's sepulchre. Thither she carried the slave and lodged him; but he was exceeding weak by reason of his wound, and unable to do her love-service; he could only drink wine and from the day of his hurt he spake not a word, yet he lived on because his appointed hour was not come. Every day, morning and evening, my wife went to him and wept and wailed over him and gave him wine and strong soups, and left not off doing after this manner a second year; and I bore with her patiently and paid no heed to her. One day, however, I went in to her unawares; and I found her weeping and beating her face and crying, "Why art thou absent from my sight, O my heart's delight? Speak to me, O my life; talk with me, O my love?" Then she recited these verses: —

*For your love my patience fails and albeit you forget * I may not; nor
to other love my heart can make reply:
Bear my body, bear my soul wheresoever you may fare * And where
you pitch the camp let my body buried lie:
Cry my name above my grave, and an answer shall return * The
moaning of my bones responsive to your cry.*

Then she recited, weeping bitterly the while: —

*The day of my delight is the day when draw you near * And the day of
mine affright is the day you turn away:
Though I tremble through the night in my bitter dread of death *
When I hold you in my arms I am free from all affray.*

Once more she began reciting: —

*Though a-morn I may awake with all happiness in hand * Though
the world all be mine and like Kisra-kings I reign;
To me they had the worth of the winglet of the gnat * When I fail to see
thy form, when I look for thee in vain.*

When she had ended for a time her words and her weeping I said to her, “O my cousin, let this thy mourning suffice, for in pouring forth tears there is little profit!”

“Thwart me not,” answered she, “in aught I do, or I will lay violent hands on myself!” So I held my peace and left her to go her own way; and she ceased not to cry and keen and indulge her affliction for yet another year. At the end of the third year I waxed weary of this longsome mourning, and one day I happened to enter the cenotaph when vexed and angry with some matter which had thwarted me, and suddenly I heard her say, “O my lord, I never hear thee vouchsafe a single word to me! Why dost thou not answer me, O my master?” and she began reciting: —

*O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his beauty set in shade? * Hast thou
darkened that countenance all-sheeny as the noon?
O thou tomb! neither earth nor yet heaven art to me * Then how
cometh it in thee are conjoined my sun and moon?*

When I heard such verses as these rage was heaped upon my rage; I cried out, “Well-away! how long is this sorrow to last?” and I began repeating: —

*O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his horrors set in blight? * Hast thou
darkenèd his countenance that sickeneth the soul?
O thou tomb! neither cess-pool nor pipkin art to me * Then how
cometh it in thee are conjoinèd soil and coal?*

When she heard my words she sprang to her feet crying, "Fie upon thee, thou cur! all this is of thy doings; thou hast wounded my heart's darling and thereby worked me sore woe and thou hast wasted his youth so that these three years he hath lain abed more dead than alive!" In my wrath I cried, "O thou foulest of harlots and filthiest of whores ever fattered by negro slaves who are hired to have at thee! Yes indeed it was I who did this good deed;" and snatching up my sword I drew it and made at her to cut her down. But she laughed my words and mine intent to scorn crying, "To heel, hound that thou art! Alas for the past which shall no more come to pass nor shall any one avail the dead to raise. Allah hath indeed now given into my hand him who did to me this thing, a deed that hath burned my heart with a fire which died not and a flame which might not be quenched!"

Then she stood up; and, pronouncing some words to me unintelligible, she said, "By virtue of my egromancy become thou half stone and half man;" whereupon I became what thou seest, unable to rise or to sit, and neither dead nor alive. Moreover she ensorcelled the city with all its streets and garths, and she turned by her gramarye the four islands into four mountains around the tarn whereof thou questionest me; and the citizens, who were of four different faiths, Moslem, Nazarene, Jew and Magian, she transformed by her enchantments into fishes; the Moslems are the white, the Magians red, the Christians blue and the Jews yellow.³⁸ And every day she tortureth me and scourgeth me with an hundred stripes, each of which draweth floods of blood

³⁸ The Soldan of Egypt, Mohammed ibn Kala'ún, in the early eighth century (Hijrah = our fourteenth), issued a sumptuary law compelling Christians and Jews to wear indigo-blue and saffron-yellow turbans, the white being reserved for Moslems. But the custom was much older and Mandeville (chaps. ix.) describes it in A.D. 1322 when it had become the rule.

and cutteth the skin of my shoulders to strips; and lastly she clotheth my upper half with a hair-cloth and then throweth over them these robes.

Hereupon the young man again shed tears and began reciting: —

*In patience, O my God, I endure my lot and fate; * I will bear at will
of Thee whatsoever be my state:*

*They oppress me; they torture me; they make my life a woe * Yet haply
Heaven's happiness shall compensate my strait:*

*Yea, straitened is my life by the bane and hate o' foes * But Mustafá
and Murtazá³⁹ shall ope me Heaven's gate.*

After this the Sultan turned towards the young Prince and said, “O youth, thou hast removed one grief only to add another grief; but now, O my friend, where is she; and where is the mausoleum wherein lieth the wounded slave?”

“The slave lieth under yon dome,” quoth the young man, “and she sitteth in the chamber fronting yonder door. And every day at sunrise she cometh forth, and first strippeth me, and whippeth me with an hundred strokes of the leathern scourge, and I weep and shriek; but there is no power of motion in my lower limbs to keep her off me. After ending her tormenting me she visiteth the slave, bringing him wine and boiled meats. And to-morrow at an early hour she will be here.” Quoth the King, “By Allah, O youth, I will as suredly do thee a good deed which the world shall not willingly let die, and an act of derring-do which shall be chronicled long after I am dead and gone by.”

³⁹ The ancient “Mustaphá” = the Chosen (prophet, i.e. Mohammed), also titled Al-Mujtaba, the Accepted. “Murtaza”= the Elect, i.e. the Caliph Ali is the older “Mortada” or “Mortadi,” meaning “one pleasing to (or acceptable to) Allah.”

Then the King sat him by the side of the young Prince and talked till nightfall, when he lay down and slept; but, as soon as the false dawn⁴⁰ showed, he arose and doffing his outer garments bared his blade and hastened to the place wherein lay the slave. Then was he ware of lighted candles and lamps, and the perfume of incenses and unguents; and, directed by these, he made for the slave and struck him one stroke killing him on the spot: after which he lifted him on his back and threw him into a well that was in the palace. Presently he returned and, donning the slave's gear, lay down at length within the mausoleum with the drawn sword laid close to and along his side.

After an hour or so the accursed witch came; and, first going to her husband, she stripped off his clothes and, taking a whip, flogged him cruelly while he cried out, "Ah! enough for me the case I am in! take pity on me, O my cousin!" But she replied, "Didst thou take pity on me and spare the life of my true love on whom I doated?" Then she drew the cilice over his raw and bleeding skin and threw the robe upon all and went down to the slave with a goblet of wine and a bowl of meat-broth in her hands. She entered under the dome weeping and wailing, "Well-away!" and crying, "O my lord! speak a word to me! O my master! talk awhile with me!" and began to recite these couplets: —

*How long this harshness, this unlove, shall bide? * Suffice thee not
tear-floods thou hast espied?*

*Thou dost prolong our parting purposely * And if wouldst please my
foe, thou'rt satisfied!*

Then she wept again and said, "O my lord! speak to me, talk with me!"
The King lowered his voice and, twisting his tongue, spoke after the

⁴⁰ The gleam (zodiacal light) preceding the true dawn; the Persians suppose that it is caused by the sun shining through a hole in the world-encircling Mount Kaf.

fashion of the blackamoors and said “’lack! ’lack! there be no Ma’esty and there be no Might save in Allauh, the Gloriose, the Greät!” Now when she heard these words she shouted for joy, and fell to the ground fainting; and when her senses returned she asked, “O my lord, can it be true that thou hast power of speech?” and the King making his voice small and faint answered, “O my cuss! dost thou deserve that I talk to thee and speak with thee?”

“Why and wherefore?” rejoined she; and he replied, “The why is that all the livelong day thou tormentest thy hubby; and he keeps calling on ’eaven for aid until sleep is strange to me even from evenin’ till mawnin’, and he prays and damns, cussing us two, me and thee, causing me disquiet and much bother: were this not so, I should long ago have got my health; and it is this which prevents my answering thee.” Quoth she, “With thy leave I will release him from what spell is on him;” and quoth the King, “Release him and let’s have some rest!”

She cried, “To hear is to obey;” and, going from the cenotaph to the palace, she took a metal bowl and filled it with water and spake over it certain words which made the contents bubble and boil as a cauldron seetheth over the fire. With this she sprinkled her husband saying, “By virtue of the dread words I have spoken, if thou becamest thus by my spells, come forth out of that form into thine own former form.” And lo and behold! the young man shook and trembled; then he rose to his feet and, rejoicing at his deliverance, cried aloud, “I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and in very truth Mohammed is His Apostle, whom Allah bless and keep!” Then she said to him, “Go forth and return not hither, for if thou do I will surely slay thee;” screaming these words in his face.

So he went from between her hands; and she returned to the dome and, going down to the sepulchre, she said, “O my lord, come forth to

me that I may look upon thee and thy goodliness!” The King replied in faint low words, “What thing hast thou done? Thou hast rid me of the branch but not of the root.” She asked, “O my darling! O my negroling! what is the root?” And he answered, “Fie on thee, O my cuss! The people of this city and of the four islands every night when it’s half passed lift their heads from the tank in which thou hast turned them to fishes and cry to Heaven and call down its anger on me and thee; and this is the reason why my body’s baulked from health. Go at once and set them free; then come to me and take my hand, and raise me up, for a little strength is already back in me.”

When she heard the King’s words (and she still supposed him to be the slave) she cried joyously, “O my master, on my head and on my eyes be thy commend, Bismillah!⁴¹” So she sprang to her feet and, full of joy and gladness, ran down to the tarn and took a little of its water in the palm of her hand —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninth Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young woman, the sorceress, took in hand some of the tarn-water and spake over it words not to be understood, the fishes lifted their heads and stood up on the instant like men, the spell on the people of the city having been removed. What was the lake again became a crowded capital; the bazars were thronged with folk who bought and sold; each citizen was occupied with his own calling and the four hills became

⁴¹ “In the name of Allah!”

islands as they were whilome. Then the young woman, that wicked sorceress, returned to the King and (still thinking he was the negro) said to him, “O my love! stretch forth thy honoured hand that I may assist thee to rise.”

“Nearer to me,” quoth the King in a faint and feigned tone. She came close as to embrace him when he took up the sword lying hid by his side and smote her across the breast, so that the point showed gleaming behind her back. Then he smote her a second time and cut her in twain and cast her to the ground in two halves. After which he fared forth and found the young man, now freed from the spell, awaiting him and gave him joy of his happy release while the Prince kissed his hand with abundant thanks.

Quoth the King, “Wilt thou abide in this city or go with me to my capital?” Quoth the youth, “O King of the age, wottest thou not what journey is between thee and thy city?”

“Two days and a half,” answered he; whereupon said the other, “An thou be sleeping, O King, awake! Between thee and thy city is a year’s march for a well-girt walker, and thou haddest not come hither in two days and a half save that the city was under enchantment. And I, O King, will never part from thee; no, not even for the twinkling of an eye.” The King rejoiced at his words and said, “Thanks be to Allah who hath bestowed thee upon me! From this hour thou art my son and my only son, for that in all my life I have never been blessed with issue.”

Thereupon they embraced and joyed with exceeding great joy; and, reaching the palace, the Prince who had been spell-bound informed his lords and his grandees that he was about to visit the Holy Places as a pilgrim, and bade them get ready all things necessary for the occasion. The preparations lasted ten days, after which he set out

with the Sultan, whose heart burned in yearning for his city whence he had been absent a whole twelvemonth. They journeyed with an escort of Mamelukes⁴² carrying all manners of precious gifts and rarities, nor stinted they wayfaring day and night for a full year until they approached the Sultan's capital, and sent on messengers to announce their coming. Then the Wazir and the whole army came out to meet him in joy and gladness, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their King; and the troops kissed the ground before him and wished him joy of his safety. He entered and took seat upon his throne and the Minister came before him and, when acquainted with all that had befallen the young Prince, he congratulated him on his narrow escape.

When order was restored throughout the land the King gave largesse to many of his people, and said to the Wazir, "Hither the Fisherman who brought us the fishes!" So he sent for the man who had been the first cause of the city and the citizens being delivered from enchantment and, when he came into the presence, the Sultan bestowed upon him a dress of honour, and questioned him of his condition and whether he had children. The Fisherman gave him to know that he had two daughters and a son, so the King sent for them and, taking one daughter to wife, gave the other to the young Prince and made the son his head-treasurer. Furthermore he invested his Wazir with the Sultanate of the City in the Black Islands whilome belonging to the young Prince, and dispatched with him the escort of fifty armed slaves together with dresses of honour for all the Emirs and Grandees.

The Wazir kissed hands and fared forth on his way; while the Sultan and the Prince abode at home in all the solace and the delight

⁴² Arab. "Mamlúk" (plur. Mamálik) lit. a chattel; and in *The Nights* a white slave trained to arms.

of life; and the Fisherman became the richest man of his age, and his daughters wived with Kings, until death came to them. And yet, O King! this is not more wondrous than the story of

The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad.

Once upon a time there was a Porter in Baghdad, who was a bachelor and who would remain unmarried. It came to pass on a certain day, as he stood about the street leaning idly upon his crate, behold, there stood before him an honourable woman in a mantilla of Mosul silk, broidered with gold and bordered with brocade; her walking-shoes were also purfled with gold and her hair floated in long plaits. She raised her face-veil and, showing two black eyes fringed with jetty lashes, whose glances were soft and languishing and whose perfect beauty was ever blandishing, she accosted the Porter and said in the suavest tones and choicest language, "Take up thy crate and follow me."

The Porter was so dazzled he could hardly believe that he heard her aright, but he shouldered his basket in hot haste saying in himself, "O day of good luck! O day of Allah's grace!" and walked after her till she stopped at the door of a house. There she rapped, and presently came out to her an old man, a Nazarene, to whom she gave a gold piece, receiving from him in return what she required of strained wine clear as olive oil; and she set it safely in the hamper, saying, "Lift and follow." Quoth the Porter, "This, by Allah, is indeed an auspicious day, a day propitious for the granting of all a man wisheth." He again hoisted up the crate and followed her; till she stopped at a fruiterer's shop and bought from him Shámi apples and Osmáni quinces and Ománi peaches, and cucumbers of Nile growth, and Egyptian limes

and Sultáni oranges and citrons; besides Aleppine jasmine, scented myrtle berries, Damascene nenuphars, flower of privet and camomile, blood-red anemones, violets, and pomegranate-bloom, eglantine and narcissus, and set the whole in the Porter's crate, saying, "Up with it."

So he lifted and followed her till she stopped at a butcher's booth and said, "Cut me off ten pounds of mutton." She paid him his price and he wrapped it in a banana-leaf, whereupon she laid it in the crate and said "Hoist, O Porter." He hoisted accordingly, and followed her as she walked on till she stopped at a grocer's, where she bought dry fruits and pistachio-kernels, Tihámah raisins, shelled almonds and all wanted for dessert, and said to the Porter, "Lift and follow me." So he up with his hamper and after her till she stayed at the confectioner's, and she bought an earthen platter, and piled it with all kinds of sweetmeats in his shop, open-worked tarts and fritters scented with musk and "soap-cakes," and lemon-loaves and melon-preserves, and "Zaynab's combs," and "ladies' fingers," and "Kazi's tit-bits" and goodies of every description; and placed the platter in the Porter's crate.

Thereupon quoth he (being a merry man), "Thou shouldest have told me, and I would have brought with me a pony or a she-camel to carry all this market-stuff." She smiled and gave him a little cuff on the nape saying, "Step out and exceed not in words for (Allah willing!) thy wage will not be wanting." Then she stopped at a perfumer's and took from him ten sorts of waters, rose scented with musk, orange-flower, water-lily, willow-flower, violet and five others; and she also bought two loaves of sugar, a bottle for perfume-spraying, a lump of male incense, aloe-wood, ambergris and musk, with candles of Alexandria wax; and she put the whole into the basket, saying, "Up with thy crate and after me." He did so and followed until she stood before the greengrocer's, of whom she bought pickled safflower and olives, in

brine and in oil; with tarragon and cream-cheese and hard Syrian cheese; and she stowed them away in the crate saying to the Porter, "Take up thy basket and follow me." He did so and went after her till she came to a fair mansion fronted by a spacious court, a tall, fine place to which columns gave strength and grace: and the gate thereof had two leaves of ebony inlaid with plates of red gold.

The lady stopped at the door and, turning her face-veil sideways, knocked softly with her knuckles whilst the Porter stood behind her, thinking of naught save her beauty and loveliness. Presently the door swung back and both leaves were opened, whereupon he looked to see who had opened it; and behold, it was a lady of tall figure, some five feet high; a model of beauty and loveliness, brilliance and symmetry and perfect grace. Her forehead was flower-white; her cheeks like the anemone ruddy bright; her eyes were those of the wild heifer or the gazelle, with eyebrows like the crescent-moon which ends Sha'abán and begins Ramazán; her mouth was the ring of Sulayman, her lips coral-red, and her teeth like a line of strung pearls or of camomile petals. Her throat recalled the antelope's, and her breasts, like two pomegranates of even size, stood at bay as it were, her body rose and fell in waves below her dress like the rolls of a piece of brocade, and her navel would hold an ounce of benzoin ointment. In fine she was like her of whom the poet said: —

*On Sun and Moon of palace cast thy sight * Enjoy her flower-like face,
her fragrant light:*

*Thine eyes shall never see in hair so black * Beauty encase a brow so
purely white:*

*The ruddy rosy cheek proclaims her claim * Though fail her name
whose beauties we indite:*

*As sways her gait I smile at hips so big * And weep to see the waist they
bear so slight.*

When the Porter looked upon her his wits were waylaid, and his senses were stormed so that his crate went nigh to fall from his head, and he said to himself, "Never have I in my life seen a day more blessed than this day!" Then quoth the lady-portress to the lady-cateress, "Come in from the gate and relieve this poor man of his load."

So the provisioner went in followed by the portress and the Porter and went on till they reached a spacious ground-floor hall, built with admirable skill and beautified with all manner colours and carvings; with upper balconies and groined arches and galleries and cupboards and recesses whose curtains hung before them. In the midst stood a great basin full of water surrounding a fine fountain, and at the upper end on the raised daïs was a couch of juniper-wood set with gems and pearls, with a canopy like mosquito-curtains of red satin-silk looped up with pearls as big as filberts and bigger. Thereupon sat a lady bright of blee, with brow beaming brilliancy, the dream of philosophy, whose eyes were fraught with Babel's gramarye and her eyebrows were arched as for archery; her breath breathed ambergris and perfumery and her lips were sugar to taste and carnelian to see. Her stature was straight as the letter I and her face shamed the noon-sun's radiancy; and she was even as a galaxy, or a dome with golden marquetry or a bride displayed in choicest finery or a noble maid of Araby. Right well of her sang the bard when he said: —

*Her smiles twin rows of pearls display * Chamomile-buds or rimey
spray*

*Her tresses stray as night let down * And shames her light the dawn
o' day.*

The third lady rising from the couch stepped forward with graceful swaying gait till she reached the middle of the saloon, when she said to her sisters, "Why stand ye here? take it down from this poor man's head!" Then the cateress went and stood before him, and the portress behind him while the third helped them, and they lifted the load from the Porter's head; and, emptying it of all that was therein, set everything in its place. Lastly they gave him two gold pieces, saying, "Wend thy ways, O Porter."

But he went not, for he stood looking at the ladies and admiring what uncommon beauty was theirs, and their pleasant manners and kindly dispositions (never had he seen goodlier); and he gazed wistfully at that good store of wines and sweet-scented flowers and fruits and other matters. Also he marvelled with exceeding marvel, especially to see no man in the place and delayed his going; whereupon quoth the eldest lady, "What aileth thee that goest not; haply thy wage be too little?" And, turning to her sister the cateress, she said, "Give him another dinar!" But the Porter answered, "By Allah, my lady, it is not for the wage; my hire is never more than two dirhams; but in very sooth my heart and my soul are taken up with you and your condition. I wonder to see you single with ne'er a man about you and not a soul to bear you company; and well you wot that the minaret toppleth o'er unless it stand upon four, and you want this same fourth; and women's pleasure without man is short of measure, even as the poet said: —

*Seest not we want for joy four things all told * The harp and lute, the
flute and flageolet;
And be they companied with scents four-fold * Rose, myrtle, anemone
and violet;*

*Nor please all eight an four thou wouldst withhold * Good wine and youth and gold and pretty pet.*

You be three and want a fourth who shall be a person of good sense and prudence; smart witted, and one apt to keep careful counsel.”

His words pleased and amused them much; and they laughed at him and said, “And who is to assure us of that? We are maidens and we fear to entrust our secret where it may not be kept, for we have read in a certain chronicle the lines of one Ibn al-Sumam: —

*Hold fast thy secret and to none unfold * Lost is a secret when that secret's told:*

*An fail thy breast thy secret to conceal * How canst thou hope another's breast shall hold?*

And Abu Nowás said well on the same subject: —

*Who trusteth secret to another's hand * Upon his brow deserveth burn of brand!”*

When the Porter heard their words he rejoined, “By your lives! I am a man of sense and a discreet, who hath read books and perused chronicles; I reveal the fair and conceal the foul and I act as the poet adviseth: —

*None but the good a secret keep * And good men keep it unrevealed:
It is to me a well-shut house * With keyless locks and door ensealed.”*

When the maidens heard his verse and its poetical application addressed to them they said, “Thou knowest that we have laid out all our monies on this place. Now say, hast thou aught to offer us in return for entertainment? For surely we will not suffer thee to sit in our company

and be our cup-companion, and gaze upon our faces so fair and so rare without paying a round sum. Wottest thou not the saying: —

Sans hope of gain

Love's not worth a grain?"

Whereto the lady-portress added, "If thou bring anything thou art a something; if no thing, be off with thee, thou art a nothing;" but the procuratrix interposed, saying, "Nay, O my sisters, leave teasing him for by Allah he hath not failed us this day, and had he been other he never had kept patience with me, so whatever be his shot and scot I will take it upon myself."

The Porter, overjoyed, kissed the ground before her and thanked her saying, "By Allah, these monies are the first fruits this day hath given me." Hearing this they said, "Sit thee down and welcome to thee," and the eldest lady added, "By Allah, we may not suffer thee to join us save on one condition, and this it is, that no questions be asked as to what concerneth thee not, and frowardness shall be soundly flogged." Answered the Porter, "I agree to this, O my lady, on my head and my eyes be it! Lookye, I am dumb, I have no tongue."

Then arose the provisioneress and tightening her girdle set the table by the fountain and put the flowers and sweet herbs in their jars, and strained the wine and ranged the flasks in row and made ready every requisite. Then sat she down, she and her sisters, placing amidst them the Porter who kept deeming himself in a dream; and she took up the wine flagon, and poured out the first cup and drank it off, and likewise a second and a third.⁴³ After this she filled a fourth cup which

⁴³ She drinks first, the custom of the universal East, to show that the wine she had bought was unpoisoned.

she handed to one of her sisters; and, lastly, she crowned a goblet and passed it to the Porter, saying: —

*Drink the dear draught, drink free and fain * What healeth every
grief and pain.*

He took the cup in his hand and, louting low, returned his best thanks and improvised: —

*Drain not the bowl save with a trusty friend * A man of worth whose
good old blood all know:
For wine, like wind, sucks sweetness from the sweet * And stinks when
over stench it haply blow:*

Adding: —

*Drain not the bowl; save from dear hand like thine * The cup recalls
thy gifts; thou, gifts of wine.*

After repeating this couplet he kissed their hands and drank and was drunk and sat swaying from side to side and pursued: —

*All drinks wherein is blood the Law unclean * Doth hold save one, the
bloodshed of the vine:
Fill! fill! take all my wealth bequeathed or won * Thou fawn! a
willing ransom for those eyne.*

Then the cateress crowned a cup and gave it to the portress, who took it from her hand and thanked her and drank. Thereupon she poured again and passed to the eldest lady who sat on the couch, and filled yet another and handed it to the Porter. He kissed the ground before them; and, after drinking and thanking them, he again began to recite: —

*Here! Here! by Allah, here! * Cups of the sweet, the dear!
Fill me a brimming bowl * The Fount o' Life I speer.*

Then the Porter stood up before the mistress of the house and said, "O lady, I am thy slave, thy Mameluke, thy white thrall, thy very bondsman;" and he began reciting: —

*A slave of slaves there standeth at thy door * Lauding thy generous
boons and gifts galore:
Beauty! may he come in awhile to 'joy * Thy charms? for Love and I
part nevermore!*

She said to him, "Drink; and health and happiness attend thy drink." So he took the cup and kissed her hand and recited these lines in song: —

*I gave her brave old wine that like her cheeks * Blushed red or flame
from furnace flaring up:
She bussed the brim and said with many a smile * How durst thou
deal folk's cheek for folk to sup?
"Drink!" (said I) "these are tears of mine whose tinct * Is heart-blood
sighs have boiled in the cup."*

She answered him in the following couplet: —

*An tears of blood for me, friend, thou hast shed * Suffer me sup them,
by thy head and eyes!*

Then the lady took the cup, and drank it off to her sisters' health, and they ceased not drinking (the Porter being in the midst of them), and dancing and laughing and reciting verses and singing ballads and ritor-nellos. All this time the Porter was carrying on with them, kissing,

toying, biting, handling, groping, fingering; whilst one thrust a dainty morsel in his mouth, and another slapped him; and this cuffed his cheeks, and that threw sweet flowers at him; and he was in the very paradise of pleasure, as though he were sitting in the seventh sphere among the Houris of Heaven.

They ceased not doing after this fashion until the wine played tricks in their heads and worsted their wits; and, when the drink got the better of them, the portress stood up and doffed her clothes till she was mother-naked. However, she let down her hair about her body by way of shift, and throwing herself into the basin disported herself and dived like a duck and swam up and down, and took water in her mouth, and spurted it all over the Porter, and washed her limbs, and between her breasts, and inside her thighs and all around her navel. Then she came up out of the cistern and throwing herself on the Porter's lap said, "O my lord, O my love, what callest thou this article?" pointing to her slit, her solution of continuity.

"I call that thy cleft," quoth the Porter, and she rejoined, "Wah! wah, art thou not ashamed to use such a word?" and she caught him by the collar and soundly cuffed him. Said he again, "Thy womb, thy vulva;" and she struck him a second slap crying, "O fie, O fie, this is another ugly word; is there no shame in thee?" Quoth he, "Thy coynte;" and she cried, "O thou! art wholly destitute of modesty?" and thumped and bashed him. Then cried the Porter, "Thy clitoris," whereat the eldest lady came down upon him with a yet sorer beating, and said, "No;" and he said, "'Tis so," and the Porter went on calling the same commodity by sundry other names, but whatever he said they beat him more and more till his neck ached and swelled with the blows he had gotten; and on this wise they made him a butt and a laughing-stock. At last he turned upon them asking, "And what do you women

call this article?" Whereto the damsel made answer, "The basil of the bridges." Cried the Porter, "Thank Allah for my safety: aid me and be thou propitious, O basil of the bridges!"

They passed round the cup and tossed off the bowl again, when the second lady stood up; and, stripping off all her clothes, cast herself into the cistern and did as the first had done; then she came out of the water and throwing her naked form on the Porter's lap pointed to her machine and said, "O light of mine eyes, do tell me what is the name of this concern?" He replied as before, "Thy slit;" and she rejoined, "Hath such term no shame for thee?" and cuffed him and buffeted him till the saloon rang with the blows. Then quoth she, "O fie! O fie! how canst thou say this without blushing?" He suggested, "The basil of the bridges;" but she would not have it and she said, "No! no!" and struck him and slapped him on the back of the neck. Then he began calling out all the names he knew, "Thy slit, thy womb, thy coynte, thy clitoris;" and the girls kept on saying, "No! no!" So he said, "I stick to the basil of the bridges;" and all the three laughed till they fell on their backs and laid slaps on his neck and said, "No! no! that's not its proper name." Thereupon he cried, "O my sisters, what *is* its name?" and they replied, "What sayest thou to the husked sesame-seed?"

Then the cateress donned her clothes and they fell again to carousing, but the Porter kept moaning, "Oh! and Oh!" for his neck and shoulders, and the cup passed merrily round and round again for a full hour. After that time the eldest and handsomest lady stood up and stripped off her garments, whereupon the Porter took his neck in hand, and rubbed and shampoo'd it, saying, "My neck and shoulders are on the way of Allah!"⁴⁴ Then she threw herself into the basin, and

⁴⁴ i.e. common property for all to beat.

swam and dived, sported and washed; and the Porter looked at her naked figure as though she had been a slice of the moon and at her face with the sheen of Luna when at full, or like the dawn when it brighteneth, and he noted her noble stature and shape, and those glorious forms that quivered as she went; for she was naked as the Lord made her. Then he cried “Alack! Alack!” and began to address her, versifying in these couplets: —

*“If I liken thy shape to the bough when green * My likeness errs and I
sore mistake it;
For the bough is fairest when clad the most * And thou art fairest
when mother-naked.”*

When the lady heard his verses she came up out of the basin and, seating herself upon his lap and knees, pointed to her genitory and said, “O my lordling, what be the name of this?” Quoth he, “The basil of the bridges;” but she said, “Bah, bah!” Quoth he, “The husked sesame;” quoth she, “Pooh, pooh!” Then said he, “Thy womb;” and she cried, “Fie, Fie! art thou not ashamed of thyself?” and cuffed him on the nape of the neck. And whatever name he gave declaring “’Tis so,” she beat him and cried “No! no!” till at last he said, “O my sisters, and what *is* its name?” She replied, “It is entitled the Khan⁴⁵ of Abu Mansur;” whereupon the Porter replied, “Ha! ha! O Allah be praised for safe deliverance! O Khan of Abu Mansur!” Then she came forth and dressed and the cup went round a full hour.

At last the Porter rose up, and stripping off all his clothes, jumped into the tank and swam about and washed under his bearded chin and armpits, even as they had done. Then he came out and threw himself

⁴⁵ Better known to us as Caravanserai, the “Travellers’ Bungalow” of India: in the Khan, however, shelter is to be had, but neither bed nor board.

into the first lady's lap and rested his arms upon the lap of the portress, and reposed his legs in the lap of the cateress and pointed to his prickle and said, "O my mistresses, what is the name of this article?" All laughed at his words till they fell on their backs, and one said, "Thy pintle!" But he replied, "No!" and gave each one of them a bite by way of forfeit. Then said they, "Thy pizzle!" but he cried "No," and gave each of them a hug; —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Tenth Night,

quoth her sister Dunyazad, "Finish for us thy story;" and she answered, "With joy and goodly gree."

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsels stinted not saying to the Porter "Thy prickle, thy pintle, thy pizzle," and he ceased not kissing and biting and hugging until his heart was satisfied, and they laughed on till they could no more. At last one said, "O our brother, what, then, is it called?" Quoth he, "Know ye not?" Quoth they, "No!"

"Its veritable name," said he, "is mule Burst-all, which browseth on the basil of the bridges, and muncheth the husked sesame, and nighteth in the Khan of Abu Mansur." Then laughed they till they fell on their backs, and returned to their carousel, and ceased not to be after this fashion till night began to fall. Thereupon said they to the Porter, "Bismillah, O our master, up and on with those sorry old shoes of thine and turn thy face and show us the breadth of thy shoulders!" Said he, "By Allah, to part with my soul would be easier for me than

departing from you: come let us join night to day, and to-morrow morning we will each wend our own way.”

“My life on you,” said the procuratrix, “suffer him to tarry with us, that we may laugh at him: we may live out our lives and never meet with his like, for surely he is a right merry rogue and a witty.” So they said, “Thou must not remain with us this night save on condition that thou submit to our commands, and that whatso thou seest, thou ask no questions thereanent, nor enquire of its cause.”

“All right,” rejoined he, and they said, “Go read the writing over the door.” So he rose and went to the entrance and there found written in letters of gold wash; **WHOSO SPEAKETH OF WHAT CONCERNETH HIM NOT, SHALL HEAR WHAT PLEASETH HIM NOT!** The Porter said, “Be ye witnesses against me that I will not speak on whatso concerneth me not.” Then the cateress arose, and set food before them and they ate; after which they changed their drinking-place for another, and she lighted the lamps and candles and burned ambergris and aloes-wood, and set on fresh fruit and the wine service, when they fell to carousing and talking of their lovers. And they ceased not to eat and drink and chat, nibbling dry fruits and laughing and playing tricks for the space of a full hour when lo! a knock was heard at the gate.

The knocking in no wise disturbed the seance, but one of them rose and went to see what it was and presently returned, saying, “Truly our pleasure for this night is to be perfect.”

“How is that?” asked they; and she answered, “At the gate be three Persian Kalandars with their beards and heads and eyebrows shaven; and all three blind of the left eye — which is surely a strange chance. They are foreigners from Roum-land with the mark of travel plain upon them; they have just entered Baghdad, this being their first visit to our city; and the cause of their knocking at our door is simply

because they cannot find a lodging. Indeed one of them said to me: — Haply the owner of this mansion will let us have the key of his stable or some old out-house wherein we may pass this night; for evening had surprised them and, being strangers in the land, they knew none who would give them shelter. And, O my sisters, each of them is a figure o' fun after his own fashion; and if we let them in we shall have matter to make sport of."

She gave not over persuading them till they said to her, "Let them in, and make thou the usual condition with them that they speak not of what concerneth them not, lest they hear what pleaseth them not." So she rejoiced and going to the door presently returned with the three monoculars whose beards and mustachios were clean shaven. They salam'd and stood afar off by way of respect; but the three ladies rose up to them and welcomed them and wished them joy of their safe arrival and made them sit down.

The Kalandars looked at the room and saw that it was a pleasant place, clean swept and garnished with flowers; and the lamps were burning and the smoke of perfumes was spireing in air; and beside the dessert and fruits and wine, there were three fair girls who might be maidens; so they exclaimed with one voice, "By Allah, 'tis good!" Then they turned to the Porter and saw that he was a merry-faced wight, albeit he was by no means sober and was sore after his slappings. So they thought that he was one of themselves and said, "A mendicant like us! whether Arab or foreigner." But when the Porter heard these words, he rose up, and fixing his eyes fiercely upon them, said, "Sit ye here without exceeding in talk! Have you not read what is writ over the door? surely it befitteth not fellows who come to us like paupers to wag your tongues at us."

“We crave thy pardon, O Fakír,”⁴⁶ rejoined they, “and our heads are between thy hands.” The ladies laughed consumedly at the squabble; and, making peace between the Kalandars and the Porter, seated the new guests before meat and they ate. Then they sat together, and the portress served them with drink; and, as the cup went round merrily, quoth the Porter to the askers, “And you, O brothers mine, have ye no story or rare adventure to amuse us withal?”

Now the warmth of wine having mounted to their heads they called for musical instruments; and the portress brought them a tambourine of Mosul, and a lute of Irák, and a Persian harp; and each mendicant took one and tuned it; this the tambourine and those the lute and the harp, and struck up a merry tune while the ladies sang so lustily that there was a great noise. And whilst they were carrying on, behold, some one knocked at the gate, and the portress went to see what was the matter there. Now the cause of that knocking, O King (quoth Shahrazad) was this, the Caliph, Hárún al-Rashíd, had gone forth from the palace, as was his wont now and then, to solace himself in the city that night, and to see and hear what new thing was stirring; he was in merchant’s gear, and he was attended by Ja’afar, his Wazir, and by Masrúr his Sworder of Vengeance. As they walked about the city, their way led them towards the house of the three ladies; where they heard the loud noise of musical instruments and singing and merriment; so quoth the Caliph to Ja’afar, “I long to enter this house and hear those songs and see who sing them.” Quoth Ja’afar, “O Prince of the Faithful; these folk are surely drunken with wine, and I fear some mischief betide us if we get amongst them.”

“There is no help but that I go in there,” replied the Caliph, “and I

⁴⁶ A religious mendicant generally.

desire thee to contrive some pretext for our appearing among them.” Ja’afar replied, “I hear and I obey;” and knocked at the door, whereupon the portress came out and opened. Then Ja’afar came forward and kissing the ground before her said, “O my lady, we be merchants from Tiberias-town: we arrived at Baghdad ten days ago; and, alighting at the merchants’ caravanserai, we sold all our merchandise. Now a certain trader invited us to an entertainment this night; so we went to his house and he set food before us and we ate: then we sat at wine and wassail with him for an hour or so when he gave us leave to depart; and we went out from him in the shadow of the night and, being strangers, we could not find our way back to our Khan. So haply of your kindness and courtesy you will suffer us to tarry with you this night, and Heaven will reward you!”

The portress looked upon them and seeing them dressed like merchants and men of grave looks and solid, she returned to her sisters and repeated to them Ja’afar’s story; and they took compassion upon the strangers and said to her, “Let them enter.” She opened the door to them, when said they to her, “Have we thy leave to come in?”

“Come in,” quoth she; and the Caliph entered followed by Ja’afar and Masrur; and when the girls saw them they stood up to them in respect and made them sit down and looked to their wants, saying, “Welcome, and well come and good cheer to the guests, but with one condition!”

“What is that?” asked they, and one of the ladies answered, “Speak not of what concerneth you not, lest ye hear what pleaseth you not.”

“Even so,” said they; and sat down to their wine and drank deep. Presently the Caliph looked on the three Kalandars and, seeing them each and every blind of the left eye, wondered at the sight; then he gazed upon the girls and he was startled and he marvelled with exceed-

ing marvel at their beauty and loveliness. They continued to carouse and to converse and said to the Caliph, "Drink!" but he replied, "I am vowed to Pilgrimage;" and drew back from the wine. Thereupon the portress rose and spreading before him a table-cloth worked with gold, set thereon a porcelain bowl into which she poured willow-flower water with a lump of snow and a spoonful of sugar-candy. The Caliph thanked her and said in himself, "By Allah, I will recompense her tomorrow for the kind deed she hath done."

The others again addressed themselves to conversing and carousing; and, when the wine gat the better of them, the eldest lady who ruled the house rose and making obeisance to them took the cateress by the hand, and said, "Rise, O my sister and let us do what is our devoir." Both answered "Even so!" Then the portress stood up and proceeded to remove the table-service and the remnants of the banquet; and renewed the pastiles and cleared the middle of the saloon. Then she made the Kalandars sit upon a sofa at the side of the estrade, and seated the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur on the other side of the saloon; after which she called the Porter, and said, "How scanty is thy courtesy! now thou art no stranger; nay, thou art one of the household." So he stood up and, tightening his waist-cloth, asked, "What would ye I do?" and she answered, "Stand in thy place."

Then the procuratrix rose and set in the midst of the saloon a low chair and, opening a closet, cried to the Porter, "Come help me." So he went to help her and saw two black bitches with chains round their necks; and she said to him, "Take hold of them;" and he took them and led them into the middle of the saloon. Then the lady of the house arose and tucked up her sleeves above her wrists and, seizing a scourge, said to the Porter, "Bring forward one of the bitches." He brought her forward, dragging her by the chain, while the bitch wept,

and shook her head at the lady who, however, came down upon her with blows on the sconce; and the bitch howled and the lady ceased not beating her till her forearm failed her. Then, casting the scourge from her hand, she pressed the bitch to her bosom and, wiping away her tears with her hands, kissed her head. Then she said to the Porter, "Take her away and bring the second;" and, when he brought her, she did with her as she had done with the first.

Now the heart of the Caliph was touched at these cruel doings; his chest straitened and he lost all patience in his desire to know why the two bitches were so beaten. He threw a wink at Ja'afar wishing him to ask, but the Minister turning towards him said by signs, "Be silent!"

Then quoth the portress to the mistress of the house, "O my lady, arise and go to thy place that I in turn may do my devoir." She answered, "Even so;" and, taking her seat upon the couch of juniper-wood, pargetted with gold and silver, said to the portress and cateress, "Now do ye what ye have to do." Thereupon the portress sat upon a low seat by the couch side; but the procuratrix, entering a closet, brought out of it a bag of satin with green fringes and two tassels of gold. She stood up before the lady of the house and shaking the bag drew out from it a lute which she tuned by tightening its pegs; and when it was in perfect order, she began to sing these quatrains: —

*Ye are the wish, the aim of me * And when, O Love, thy sight I see
The heavenly mansion openeth; * But Hell I see when lost thy sight.*

*From thee comes madness; nor the less * Comes highest joy, comes
ecstasy:*

*Nor in my love for thee I fear * Or shame and blame, or hate and
spite.*

*When Love was throned within my heart * I rent the veil of modesty;*

*And stints not Love to rend that veil * Garring disgrace on grace to
 alight;*
*The robe of sickness then I donned * But rent to rags was secrecy:
 Wherefore my love and longing heart * Proclaim your high supremest
 might;*
*The tear-drop railing adown my cheek * Telleth my tale of ignomy:
 And all the hid was seen by all * And all my riddle ree'd aright.
 Heal then my malady, for thou * Art malady and remedy!
 But she whose cure is in thy hand * Shall ne'er be free of bane and
 blight;*
*Burn me those eyne that radiance rain * Slay me the swords of
 phantasy;*
*How many hath the sword of Love * Laid low, their high degree
 despite?*
*Yet will I never cease to pine * Nor to oblivion will I flee.
 Love is my health, my faith, my joy * Public and private, wrong or
 right.*
*O happy eyes that sight thy charms * That gaze upon thee at their
 gree!*
*Yea, of my purest wish and will * The slave of Love I'll aye be hight.*

When the damsel heard this elegy in quatrains she cried out “Alas! Alas!” and rent her raiment, and fell to the ground fainting; and the Caliph saw scars of the palm-rod on her back and welts of the whip; and marvelled with exceeding wonder. Then the portress arose and sprinkled water on her and brought her a fresh and very fine dress and put it on her. But when the company beheld these doings their minds were troubled, for they had no inkling of the case nor knew the story thereof; so the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “Didst thou not see the scars

upon the damsel's body? I cannot keep silence or be at rest till I learn the truth of her condition and the story of this other maiden and the secret of the two black bitches." But Ja'afar answered, "O our lord, they made it a condition with us that we speak not of what concerneth us not, lest we come to hear what pleaseth us not."

Then said the portress "By Allah, O my sister, come to me and complete this service for me." Replied the procuratrix, "With joy and goodly gree;" so she took the lute; and leaned it against her breasts and swept the strings with her finger-tips, and began singing: —

*Give back mine eyes their sleep long ravishèd * And say me whither be
my reason fled:*

*I learnt that lending to thy love a place * Sleep to mine eyelids mortal
foe was made.*

*They said, "We held thee righteous, who waylaid * Thy soul?" "Go ask
his glorious eyes," I said.*

*I pardon all my blood he pleased to spill * Owing his troubles drove
him blood to shed.*

*On my mind's mirror sun-like sheen he cast * Whose keen reflection
fire in vitals bred.*

*Waters of Life let Allah waste at will * Suffice my wage those lips of
dewy red:*

*An thou address my love thou'lt find a cause * For plaint and tears or
ruth or lustihed.*

*In water pure his form shall greet your eyne * When fails the bowl nor
need ye drink of wine.*

Then she quoted from the same ode: —

*I drank, but the draught of his glance, not wine; * And his swaying
gait swayed to sleep these eyne:
'Twas not grape-juice gript me but grasp of Past * 'Twas not bowl
o'erbowled me but gifts divine:
His coiling curl-lets my soul ennetted * And his cruel will all my wits
outwitted.*

After a pause she resumed: —

*If we 'plain of absence what shall we say? * Or if pain afflict us where
wend our way?
An I hire a truchman to tell my tale * The lover's plaint is not told
for pay:
If I put on patience, a lover's life * After loss of love will not last a day:
Naught is left me now but regret, repine * And tears flooding cheeks
for ever and aye:
O thou who the babes of these eyes hast fled * Thou art homed in heart
that shall never stray;
Would heaven I wot hast thou kept our pact * Long as stream shall
flow, to have firmest fay?
Or hast forgotten the weeping slave * Whom groans afflict and whom
griefs waylay?
Ah, when severance ends and we side by side * Couch, I'll blame thy
rigours and chide thy pride!*

Now when the portress heard her second ode she shrieked aloud and said, "By Allah! 'tis right good!"; and laying hands on her garments tore them, as she did the first time, and fell to the ground fainting. Thereupon the procuratrix rose and brought her a second change of clothes after she had sprinkled water on her. She recovered and sat

upright and said to her sister the cateress, “Onwards, and help me in my duty, for there remains but this one song.” So the provisioneress again brought out the lute and began to sing these verses: —

*How long shall last, how long this rigour rife of woe * May not suffice
thee all these tears thou seest flow?*

*Our parting thus with purpose fell thou dost prolong * Is't not enough
to glad the heart of envious foe?*

*Were but this lying world once true to lover-heart * He had not
watched the weary night in tears of woe:*

*Oh pity me whom overwhelmed thy cruel will * My lord, my king, 'tis
time some ruth to me thou show:*

*To whom reveal my wrongs, O thou who murdered me? * Sad, who of
broken troth the pangs must undergo!*

*Increase wild love for thee and phrenzy hour by hour * And days of
exile minute by so long, so slow;*

*O Moslems, claim vendetta for this slave of Love * Whose sleep Love
ever wastes, whose patience Love lays low:*

*Doth law of Love allow thee, O my wish! to lie * Lapt in another's
arms and unto me cry “Go!”?*

*Yet in thy presence, say, what joys shall I enjoy * When he I love but
works my love to overthrow?*

When the portress heard the third song she cried aloud; and, laying hands on her garments, rent them down to the very skirt and fell to the ground fainting a third time, again showing the scars of the scourge. Then said the three Kalandars, “Would Heaven we had never entered this house, but had rather nighted on the mounds and heaps outside the city! for verily our visit hath been troubled by sights which cut to the heart.” The Caliph turned to them and asked, “Why so?” and they

made answer, "Our minds are sore troubled by this matter." Quoth the Caliph, "Are ye not of the household?" and quoth they, "No; nor indeed did we ever set eyes on the place till within this hour."

Hereat the Caliph marvelled and rejoined, "This man who sitteth by you, would he not know the secret of the matter?" and so saying he winked and made signs at the Porter. So they questioned the man but he replied, "By the All-might of Allah, in love all are alike! I am the growth of Baghdad, yet never in my born days did I darken these doors till to-day and my companying with them was a curious matter."

"By Allah," they rejoined, "we took thee for one of them and now we see thou art one like ourselves." Then said the Caliph, "We be seven men, and they only three women without even a fourth to help them; so let us question them of their case; and, if they answer us not, fain we will be answered by force." All of them agreed to this except Ja'afar who said, "This is not my recking; let them be; for we are their guests and, as ye know, they made a compact and condition with us which we accepted and promised to keep: wherefore it is better that we be silent concerning this matter; and, as but little of the night remaineth, let each and every of us gang his own gait." Then he winked at the Caliph and whispered to him, "There is but one hour of darkness left and I can bring them before thee to-morrow, when thou canst freely question them all concerning their story."

But the Caliph raised his head haughtily and cried out at him in wrath, saying, "I have no patience left for my longing to hear of them: let the Kalandars question them forthright." Quoth Ja'afar, "This is not my rede." Then words ran high and talk answered talk, and they disputed as to who should first put the question, but at last all fixed upon the Porter. And as the jingle increased the house-mistress could

not but notice it and asked them, “O ye folk! on what matter are ye talking so loudly?”

Then the Porter stood up respectfully before her and said, “O my lady, this company earnestly desire that thou acquaint them with the story of the two bitches and what maketh thee punish them so cruelly; and then thou fallest to weeping over them and kissing them; and lastly they want to hear the tale of thy sister and why she hath been bastinado’d with palm-sticks like a man. These are the questions they charge me to put, and peace be with thee.”

Thereupon quoth she who was the lady of the house to the guests, “Is this true that he saith on your part?” and all replied, “Yes!” save Ja’afar who kept silence. When she heard these words she cried, “By Allah, ye have wronged us, O our guests, with grievous wronging; for when you came before us we made compact and condition with you, that whoso should speak of what concerneth him not should hear what pleaseth him not. Sufficeth ye not that we took you into our house and fed you with our best food? But the fault is not so much yours as hers who let you in.” Then she tucked up her sleeves from her wrists and struck the floor thrice with her hand crying, “Come ye quickly;” and lo! a closet door opened and out of it came seven negro slaves with drawn swords in hand to whom she said, “Pinion me those praters’ elbows and bind them each to each.” They did her bidding and asked her, “O veiled and virtuous! is it thy high command that we strike off their heads?”; but she answered, “Leave them awhile that I question them of their condition, before their necks feel the sword.”

“By Allah, O my lady!” cried the Porter, “slay me not for other’s sin; all these men offended and deserve the penalty of crime save myself. Now by Allah, our night had been charming had we escaped the mortification of those monocular Kalandars whose entrance into a

populous city would convert it into a howling wilderness.” Then he repeated these verses: —

*“How fair is ruth the strong man deigns not smother! * And fairest
fair when shown to weakest brother:
By Love’s own holy tie between us twain, * Let one not suffer for the
sin of other.*

When the Porter ended his verse the lady laughed —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eleventh Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady, after laughing at the Porter despite her wrath, came up to the party and spake thus, “Tell me who ye be, for ye have but an hour of life; and were ye not men of rank and, perhaps, notables of your tribes, you had not been so froward and I had hastened your doom.” Then said the Caliph, “Woe to thee, O Ja’afar, tell her who we are lest we be slain by mistake; and speak her fair before some horror befall us.”

“’Tis part of thy deserts,” replied he; whereupon the Caliph cried out at him saying, “There is a time for witty words and there is a time for serious work.”

Then the lady accosted the three Kalandars and asked them, “Are ye brothers?”; when they answered, “No, by Allah, we be naught but Fakirs and foreigners.” Then quoth she to one among them, “Wast thou born blind of one eye?”; and quoth he, “No, by Allah, ’twas a marvellous matter and a wondrous mischance which caused my eye to be torn out, and mine is a tale which, if it were written upon

the eye-corners with needle-gravers, were a warnor to whoso would be warned.” She questioned the second and third Kalandar; but all replied like the first, “By Allah, O our mistress, each one of us cometh from a different country, and we are all three the sons of Kings, sovereign Princes ruling over suzerains and capital cities.” Thereupon she turned towards them and said, “Let each and every of you tell me his tale in due order and explain the cause of his coming to our place; and if his story please us let him stroke his head⁴⁷ and wend his way.”

The first to come forward was the Hammál, the Porter, who said, “O my lady, I am a man and a porter. This dame, the cateress, hired me to carry a load and took me first to the shop of a vintner, then to the booth of a butcher; thence to the stall of a fruiterer; thence to a grocer who also sold dry fruits; thence to a confectioner and a perfumer-cum-druggist and from him to this place where there happened to me with you what happened. Such is my story and peace be on us all!”

At this the lady laughed and said, “Rub thy head and wend thy ways!”; but he cried, “By Allah, I will not stump it till I hear the stories of my companions.” Then came forward one of the Monoculars and began to tell her

The First Kalandar’s Tale.

Know, O my lady, that the cause of my beard being shorn and my eye being out-torn was as follows. My father was a King and he had a brother who was a King over another city; and it came to pass that I and my cousin, the son of my paternal uncle, were both born on one and the same day. And years and days rolled on; and, as we grew up,

⁴⁷ That is “make his bow;” as the English peasant pulls his forelock.

I used to visit my uncle every now and then and to spend a certain number of months with him.

Now my cousin and I were sworn friends; for he ever entreated me with exceeding kindness; he killed for me the fattest sheep and strained the best of his wines, and we enjoyed long conversing and carousing. One day when the wine had gotten the better of us, the son of my uncle said to me, "O my cousin, I have a great service to ask of thee; and I desire that thou stay me not in whatso I desire to do!" And I replied, "With joy and goodly will." Then he made me swear the most binding oaths and left me; but after a little while he returned leading a lady veiled and richly apparelled with ornaments worth a large sum of money. Presently he turned to me (the woman being still behind him) and said, "Take this lady with thee and go before me to such a burial ground" (describing it, so that I knew the place), "and enter with her into such a sepulchre and there await my coming."

The oaths I swore to him made me keep silence and suffered me not to oppose him; so I led the woman to the cemetery and both I and she took our seats in the sepulchre; and hardly had we sat down when in came my uncle's son, with a bowl of water, a bag of mortar and an adze somewhat like a hoe. He went straight to the tomb in the midst of the sepulchre and, breaking it open with the adze set the stones on one side; then he fell to digging into the earth of the tomb till he came upon a large iron plate, the size of a wicket-door; and on raising it there appeared below it a staircase vaulted and winding. Then he turned to the lady and said to her, "Come now and take thy final choice!" She at once went down by the staircase and disappeared; then quoth he to me, "O son of my uncle, by way of completing thy kindness, when I shall have descended into this place, restore the trap-door to where it was, and heap back the earth upon it as it lay before;

and then of thy goodness mix this unslaked lime which is in the bag with this water which is in the bowl and, after building up the stones, plaster the outside so that none looking upon it shall say: — This is a new opening in an old tomb. For a whole year have I worked at this place whereof none knoweth but Allah, and this is the need I have of thee;” presently adding, “May Allah never bereave thy friends of thee nor make them desolate by thine absence, O son of my uncle, O my dear cousin!” And he went down the stairs and disappeared for ever.

When he was lost to sight I replaced the iron plate and did all his bidding till the tomb became as it was before; and I worked almost unconsciously for my head was heated with wine. Returning to the palace of my uncle, I was told that he had gone forth a-sporting and hunting; so I slept that night without seeing him; and, when the morning dawned, I remembered the scenes of the past evening and what happened between me and my cousin; I repented of having obeyed him when penitence was of no avail, I still thought, however, that it was a dream. So I fell to asking for the son of my uncle; but there was none to answer me concerning him; and I went out to the grave-yard and the sepulchres, and sought for the tomb under which he was, but could not find it; and I ceased not wandering about from sepulchre to sepulchre, and tomb to tomb, all without success, till night set in.

So I returned to the city, yet I could neither eat nor drink; my thoughts being engrossed with my cousin, for that I knew not what was become of him; and I grieved with exceeding grief and passed another sorrowful night, watching until the morning. Then went I a second time to the cemetery, pondering over what the son of mine uncle had done; and, sorely repenting my hearkening to him, went round among all the tombs, but could not find the tomb I sought. I mourned over the

past, and remained in my mourning seven days, seeking the place and ever missing the path. Then my torture of scruples grew upon me till I well-nigh went mad, and I found no way to dispel my grief save travel and return to my father.

So I set out and journeyed homeward; but as I was entering my father's capital a crowd of rioters sprang upon me and pinioned me. I wondered thereat with all wonderment, seeing that I was the son of the Sultan, and these men were my father's subjects and amongst them were some of my own slaves. A great fear fell upon me, and I said to my soul, "Would heaven I knew what hath happened to my father!" I questioned those that bound me of the cause of their so doing, but they returned me no answer.

However, after a while one of them said to me (and he had been a hired servant of our house), "Fortune hath been false to thy father; his troops betrayed him and the Wazir who slew him now reigneth in his stead and we lay in wait to seize thee by the bidding of him." I was well-nigh distraught and felt ready to faint on hearing of my father's death; when they carried me off and placed me in presence of the usurper. Now between me and him there was an olden grudge, the cause of which was this. I was fond of shooting with the stone-bow,⁴⁸ and it befel one day, as I was standing on the terrace-roof of the palace, that a bird lighted on the top of the Wazir's house when he happened to be there. I shot at the bird and missed the mark; but I hit the Wazir's eye and knocked it out as fate and fortune decreed. Even so saith the poet: —

⁴⁸ Arab. "Kaus al-Banduk;" with two strings joined by a bit of cloth which supports a ball of dry clay or stone. It is chiefly used for birding.

*We tread the path where Fate hath led * The path Fate writ we fain
must tread:*

*And man in one land doomed to die * Death no where else shall do
him dead.*

And on like wise saith another: —

*Let Fortune have her wanton way * Take heart and all her words
obey:*

*Nor joy nor mourn at anything * For all things pass and no things
stay.*

Now when I knocked out the Wazir's eye he could not say a single word, for that my father was King of the city; but he hated me ever after and dire was the grudge thus caused between us twain. So when I was set before him hand-bound and pinioned, he straightway gave orders for me to be beheaded. I asked, "For what crime wilt thou put me to death?"; whereupon he answered, "What crime is greater than this?" pointing the while to the place where his eye had been.

Quoth I, "This I did by accident not of malice prepense;" and quoth he, "If thou didst it by accident, I will do the like by thee with intention." Then cried he, "Bring him forward," and they brought me up to him, when he thrust his finger into my left eye and gouged it out; whereupon I became one-eyed as ye see me. Then he bade bind me hand and foot, and put me into a chest and said to the sworder, "Take charge of this fellow, and go off with him to the waste lands about the city; then draw thy scymitar and slay him, and leave him to feed the beasts and birds." So the headsman fared forth with me and when he was in the midst of the desert, he took me out of the chest (and I with both hands pinioned and both feet fettered) and was about to bandage

my eyes before striking off my head. But I wept with exceeding weeping until I made him weep with me and, looking at him I began to recite these couplets: —

*I deemed you coat-o'-mail that should withstand * The foeman's shafts, and you proved foeman's brand;
I hoped your aidance in mine every chance * Though fail my left to aid my dexter hand:
Aloof you stand and hear the railer's gibe * While rain their shafts on me the giber-band:
But an ye will not guard me from my foes * Stand clear, and succour neither these nor those!*

And I also quoted: —

*I deemed my brethren mail of strongest steel * And so they were — from foes to fend my dart!
I deemed their arrows surest of their aim; * And so they were — when aiming at my heart!*

When the headsman heard my lines (he had been sworder to my sire and he owed me a debt of gratitude) he cried, “O my lord, what can I do, being but a slave under orders?” presently adding, “Fly for thy life and nevermore return to this land, or they will slay thee and slay me with thee, even as the poet said: —

*Take thy life and fly whenas evils threat; * Let the ruined house tell its owner's fate:
New land for the old thou shalt seek and find * But to find new life thou must not await.*

*Strange that men should sit in the stead of shame, * When Allah's
world is so wide and great!*

*And trust not other, in matters grave * Life itself must act for a life
beset:*

*Ne'er would proul the lion with maned neck, * Did he reckon on aid
or of others reck."*

Hardly believing in my escape, I kissed his hand and thought the loss of my eye a light matter in consideration of my escaping from being slain. I arrived at my uncle's capital; and, going in to him, told him of what had befallen my father and myself; whereat he wept with sore weeping and said, "Verily thou addest grief to my grief, and woe to my woe; for thy cousin hath been missing these many days; I wot not what hath happened to him, and none can give me news of him." And he wept till he fainted. I sorrowed and condoled with him; and he would have applied certain medicaments to my eye, but he saw that it was become as a walnut with the shell empty. Then said he, "O my son, better to lose eye and keep life!"

After that I could no longer remain silent about my cousin, who was his only son and one dearly loved, so I told him all that had happened. He rejoiced with extreme joyance to hear news of his son and said, "Come now and show me the tomb;" but I replied, "By Allah, O my uncle, I know not its place, though I sought it carefully full many times, yet could not find the site." However, I and my uncle went to the graveyard and looked right and left, till at last I recognised the tomb and we both rejoiced with exceeding joy.

We entered the sepulchre and loosened the earth about the grave; then, upraising the trap-door, descended some fifty steps till we came to the foot of the staircase when lo! we were stopped by a blinding

smoke. Thereupon said my uncle that saying whose sayer shall never come to shame, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!” and we advanced till we suddenly came upon a saloon, whose floor was strewed with flour and grain and provisions and all manner necessaries; and in the midst of it stood a canopy sheltering a couch. Thereupon my uncle went up to the couch and inspecting it found his son and the lady who had gone down with him into the tomb, lying in each other’s embrace; but the twain had become black as charred wood; it was as if they had been cast into a pit of fire. When my uncle saw this spectacle, he spat in his son’s face and said, “Thou hast thy deserts, O thou hog! this is thy judgment in the transitory world, and yet remaineth the judgment in the world to come, a durer and a more enduring.” —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twelfth Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kalandar thus went on with his story before the lady and the Caliph and Ja’afar: —

My uncle struck his son with his slipper⁴⁹ as he lay there a black heap of coal. I marvelled at his hardness of heart, and grieving for my cousin and the lady, said, “By Allah, O my uncle, calm thy wrath: dost thou not see that all my thoughts are occupied with this misfortune, and how sorrowful I am for what hath befallen thy son, and how

⁴⁹ Striking with the shoe, the pipe-stick and similar articles is highly insulting, because they are not made, like whips and scourges, for such purpose. Here the East and the West differ diametrically.

horrible it is that naught of him remaineth but a black heap of charcoal? And is not that enough, but thou must smite him with thy slipper?"

Answered he, "O son of my brother, this youth from his boyhood was madly in love with his own sister; and often and often I forbade him from her, saying to myself: — They are but little ones. However, when they grew up sin befel between them; and, although I could hardly believe it, I confined him and chided him and threatened him with the severest threats; and the eunuchs and servants said to him: — Beware of so foul a thing which none before thee ever did, and which none after thee will ever do; and have a care lest thou be dishonoured and disgraced among the Kings of the day, even to the end of time. And I added: — Such a report as this will be spread abroad by caravans, and take heed not to give them cause to talk or I will assuredly curse thee and do thee to death. After that I lodged them apart and shut her up; but the accursed girl loved him with passionate love, for Satan had got the mastery of her as well as of him and made their foul sin seem fair in their sight. Now when my son saw that I separated them, he secretly built this souterrain and furnished it and transported to it victuals, even as thou seest; and, when I had gone out a-sporting, came here with his sister and hid from me. Then His righteous judgment fell upon the twain and consumed them with fire from Heaven; and verily the last judgment will deal them durer pains and more enduring!" Then he wept and I wept with him; and he looked at me and said, "Thou art my son in his stead." And I bethought me awhile of the world and of its chances, how the Wazir had slain my father and had taken his place and had put out my eye; and how my cousin had come to his death by the strangest chance: and I wept again and my uncle wept with me. Then we mounted the steps and let down the iron

plate and heaped up the earth over it; and, after restoring the tomb to its former condition, we returned to the palace.

But hardly had we sat down ere we heard the tom-toming of the kettle-drum and tantara of trumpets and clash of cymbals; and the rattling of war-men's lances; and the clamours of assailants and the clanking of bits and the neighing of steeds; while the world was canopied with dense dust and sand-clouds raised by the horses' hoofs. We were amazed at sight and sound, knowing not what could be the matter; so we asked and were told us that the Wazir who usurped my father's kingdom had marched his men; and that after levying his soldiery and taking a host of wild Arabs into service, he had come down upon us with armies like the sands of the sea; their number none could tell and against them none could prevail.

They attacked the city unawares; and the citizens, being powerless to oppose them, surrendered the place: my uncle was slain and I made for the suburbs saying to myself, "If thou fall into this villain's hands he will assuredly kill thee." On this wise all my troubles were renewed; and I pondered all that had betided my father and my uncle and I knew not what to do; for if the city people or my father's troops had recognised me they would have done their best to win favour by destroying me; and I could think of no way to escape save by shaving off my beard and my eyebrows. So I shore them off and, changing my fine clothes for a Kalandar's rags, I fared forth from my uncle's capital and made for this city; hoping that peradventure some one would assist me to the presence of the Prince of the Faithful, and the Caliph who is the Viceregent of Allah upon earth. Thus have I come hither that I might tell him my tale and lay my case before him.

I arrived here this very night, and was standing in doubt whither I should go, when suddenly I saw this second Kalandar; so I salam'd

to him saying: — “I am a stranger!” and he answered: — “I too am a stranger!” And as we were conversing behold, up came our companion, this third Kalandar, and saluted us saying: — “I am a stranger!” And we answered: — “We too be strangers!” Then we three walked on and together till darkness overtook us and Destiny drave us to your house. Such, then, is the cause of the shaving of my beard and mustachios and eyebrows; and the manner of my losing my right eye.

They marvelled much at this tale and the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “By Allah, I have not seen nor have I heard the like of what hath happened to this Kalandar!” Quoth the lady of the house, “Rub thy head and wend thy ways;” but he replied, “I will not go, till I hear the history of the two others.” Thereupon the second Kalandar came forward; and, kissing the ground, began to tell

The Second Kalandar’s Tale.

Know, O my lady, that I was not born one-eyed and mine is a strange story; an it were graven with needle-graver on the eye-corners, it were a warner to whoso would be warned.

I am a King, son of a King, and was brought up like a Prince. I learned intoning the Koran according the seven schools; and I read all manner books, and held disputations on their contents with the doctors and men of science; moreover I studied star-lore and the fair sayings of poets and I exercised myself in all branches of learning until I surpassed the people of my time; my skill in calligraphy exceeded that of all the scribes; and my fame was bruited abroad over all climes and cities, and all the kings learned to know my name.

Amongst others the King of Hind heard of me and sent to my father to invite me to his court, with offerings and presents and rarities

such as befit royalties. So my father fitted out six ships for me and my people; and we put to sea and sailed for the space of a full month till we made the land. Then we brought out the horses that were with us in the ships; and, after loading the camels with our presents for the Prince, we set forth inland. But we had marched only a little way, when behold, a dust-cloud up-flew, and grew until it walled the horizon from view. After an hour or so the veil lifted and discovered beneath it fifty horsemen, ravening lions to the sight, in steel armour dight. We observed them straightly and lo! they were cutters-off of the highway, wild as wild Arabs.

When they saw that we were only four and had with us but the ten camels carrying the presents, they dashed down upon us with lances at rest. We signed to them, with our fingers, as it were saying, "We be messengers of the great King of Hind, so harm us not!" but they answered on like wise, "We are not in his dominions to obey nor are we subject to his sway." Then they set upon us and slew some of my slaves and put the lave to flight; and I also fled after I had gotten a wound, a grievous hurt, whilst the Arabs were taken up with the money and the presents which were with us.

I went forth unknowing whither I went, having become mean as I was mighty; and I fared on until I came to the crest of a mountain where I took shelter for the night in a cave. When day arose I set out again, nor ceased after this fashion till I arrived at a fair city and a well-filled. Now it was the season when Winter was turning away with his rime and to greet the world with his flowers came Prime, and the young blooms were springing and the streams flowed ringing, and the birds were sweetly singing, as saith the poet concerning a certain city when describing it: —

*A place secure from every thought of fear * Safety and peace for ever
lord it here:*

*Its beauties seem to beautify its sons * And as in Heaven its happy folk
appear.*

I was glad of my arrival for I was wearied with the way, and yellow of face for weakness and want; but my plight was pitiable and I knew not whither to betake me. So I accosted a Tailor sitting in his little shop and saluted him; he returned my salam, and bade me kindly welcome and wished me well and entreated me gently and asked me of the cause of my strangerhood. I told him all my past from first to last; and he was concerned on my account and said, "O youth, disclose not thy secret to any: the King of this city is the greatest enemy thy father hath, and there is blood-wit between them and thou hast cause to fear for thy life." Then he set meat and drink before me; and I ate and drank and he with me; and we conversed freely till night-fall, when he cleared me a place in a corner of his shop and brought me a carpet and a coverlet. I tarried with him three days; at the end of which time he said to me, "Knowest thou no calling whereby to win thy living, O my son?"

"I am learned in the law," I replied, "and a doctor of doctrine; an adept in art and science, a mathematician and a notable penman." He rejoined, "Thy calling is of no account in our city, where not a soul understandeth science or even writing or aught save money-making." Then said I, "By Allah, I know nothing but what I have mentioned;" and he answered, "Gird thy middle and take thee a hatchet and a cord, and go and hew wood in the wold for thy daily bread, till Allah send thee relief; and tell none who thou art lest they slay thee." Then he bought me an axe and a rope and gave me in charge to certain wood-cutters; and with these guardians I went forth into the forest, where

I cut fuel-wood the whole of my day and came back in the evening bearing my bundle on my head. I sold it for half a dinar, with part of which I bought provision and laid by the rest.

In such work I spent a whole year and when this was ended I went out one day, as was my wont, into the wilderness; and, wandering away from my companions, I chanced on a thickly grown lowland in which there was an abundance of wood. So I entered and I found the gnarled stump of a great tree and loosened the ground about it and shovelled away the earth. Presently my hatchet rang upon a copper ring; so I cleared away the soil and behold, the ring was attached to a wooden trap-door. This I raised and there appeared beneath it a staircase. I descended the steps to the bottom and came to a door, which I opened and found myself in a noble hall strong of structure and beautifully built, where was a damsel like a pearl of great price, whose favour banished from my heart all grief and cark and care; and whose soft speech healed the soul in despair and captivated the wise and ware. Her figure measured five feet in height; her breasts were firm and upright; her cheek a very garden of delight; her colour lively bright; her face gleamed like dawn through curly tresses which gloomed like night, and above the snows of her bosom glittered teeth of a pearly white. As the poet said of one like her: —

*Slim-waisted loveling, jetty hair-encrowned * A wand of willow on a sandy mound:*

And as saith another. —

*Four things that meet not, save they here unite * To shed my heart-blood and to rape my sprite:*

*Brilliantest forehead; tresses jetty bright; * Cheeks rosy red and stature
beauty-dight.*

When I looked upon her I prostrated myself before Him who had created her, for the beauty and loveliness He had shaped in her, and she looked at me and said, “Art thou man or Jinni?”

“I am a man,” answered I, and she, “Now who brought thee to this place where I have abided five-and-twenty years without even yet seeing man in it?” Quoth I (and indeed I found her words wonder-sweet, and my heart was melted to the core by them), “O my lady, my good fortune led me hither for the dispelling of my cark and care.”

Then I related to her all my mishap from first to last, and my case appeared to her exceeding grievous; so she wept and said, “I will tell thee my story in my turn. I am the daughter of the King Ifitamus, lord of the Islands of Abnús,⁵⁰ who married me to my cousin, the son of my paternal uncle; but on my wedding night an Ifrit named Jirjís bin Rajmús, first cousin, that is mother’s sister’s son, of Iblís, the Foul Fiend, snatched me up and, flying away with me like a bird, set me down in this place, whither he conveyed all I needed of fine stuffs, raiment and jewels and furniture, and meat and drink and other else. Once in every ten days he comes here and lies a single night with me, and then wends his way, for he took me without the consent of his family; and he hath agreed with me that if ever I need him by night or by day, I have only to pass my hand over yonder two lines engraved upon the alcove, and he will appear to me before my fingers cease touching. Four days have now passed since he was here; and, as there remain six days before he come again, say me, wilt thou abide with me five days, and go hence the day before his coming?”

⁵⁰ The “Ebony” Islands.

I replied “Yes, and yes again! O rare, if all this be not a dream!” Hereat she was glad and, springing to her feet, seized my hand and carried me through an arched doorway to a Hammam-bath, a fair hall and richly decorate. I doffed my clothes, and she doffed hers; then we bathed and she washed me; and when this was done we left the bath, and she seated me by her side upon a high divan, and brought me sherbet scented with musk. When we felt cool after the bath, she set food before me and we ate and fell to talking; but presently she said to me, “Lay thee down and take thy rest, for surely thou must be weary.” So I thanked her, my lady, and lay down and slept soundly, forgetting all that had happened to me.

When I awoke I found her rubbing and shampooing my feet; so I again thanked her and blessed her and we sat for awhile talking. Said she, “By Allah, I was sad at heart, for that I have dwelt alone underground for these five-and-twenty years; and praise be to Allah, who hath sent me some one with whom I can converse!” Then she asked, “O youth, what sayest thou to wine?” and I answered, “Do as thou wilt.” Whereupon she went to a cupboard and took out a sealed flask of right old wine and set off the table with flowers and scented herbs and began to sing these lines: —

*Had we known of thy coming we fain had dispread * The cores of our
hearts or the balls of our eyes;
Our cheeks as a carpet to greet thee had thrown * And our eyelids had
strown for thy feet to betread.*

Now when she finished her verse I thanked her, for indeed love of her had gotten hold of my heart and my grief and anguish were gone. We sat at converse and carousel till nightfall, and with her I spent the night — such night never spent I in all my life! On the morrow delight

followed delight till midday, by which time I had drunken wine so freely that I had lost my wits, and stood up, staggering to the right and to the left, and said “Come, O my charmer, and I will carry thee up from this underground vault and deliver thee from the spell of thy Jinni.” She laughed and replied “Content thee and hold thy peace: of every ten days one is for the Ifrit and the other nine are thine.” Quoth I (and in good sooth drink had got the better of me), “This very instant will I break down the alcove whereon is graven the talisman and summon the Ifrit that I may slay him, for it is a practice of mine to slay Ifrits!”

When she heard my words her colour waxed wan and she said, “By Allah, do not!” and she began repeating: —

*This is a thing wherein destruction lies * I rede thee shun it an thy wits be wise.*

And these also: —

*O thou who seekest severance, draw the rein * Of thy swift steed nor seek o’ermuch t’ advance;*

*Ah stay! for treachery is the rule of life, * And sweets of meeting end in severance.*

I heard her verse but paid no heed to her words, nay, I raised my foot and administered to the alcove a mighty kick —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirteenth Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the second Kalandar thus continued his tale to the lady: —

But when, O my mistress, I kicked that alcove with a mighty kick, behold, the air starkened and darkened and thundered and lightened; the earth trembled and quaked and the world became invisible. At once the fumes of wine left my head: I cried to her, “What is the matter?” and she replied, “The Ifrit is upon us! did I not warn thee of this? By Allah, thou hast brought ruin upon me; but fly for thy life and go up by the way thou camest down!” So I fled up the staircase; but, in the excess of my fear, I forgot sandals and hatchet. And when I had mounted two steps I turned to look for them, and lo! I saw the earth cleave asunder, and there arose from it an Ifrit, a monster of hideousness, who said to the damsel, “What trouble and pother be this wherewith thou disturbest me? What mishap hath betided thee?”

“No mishap hath befallen me” she answered, “save that my breast was straitened and my heart heavy with sadness! so I drank a little wine to broaden it and to hearten myself; then I rose to obey a call of Nature, but the wine had gotten into my head and I fell against the alcove.”

“Thou liest, like the whore thou art!” shrieked the Ifrit; and he looked around the hall right and left till he caught sight of my axe and sandals and said to her, “What be these but the belongings of some mortal who hath been in thy society?” She answered, “I never set eyes upon them till this moment: they must have been brought by thee hither cleaving to thy garments.” Quoth the Ifrit, “These words are absurd; thou harlot! thou strumpet!” Then he stripped her stark naked and, stretching her upon the floor, bound her hands and feet to four

stakes, like one crucified; and set about torturing and trying to make her confess.

I could not bear to stand listening to her cries and groans; so I climbed the stair on the quake with fear; and when I reached the top I replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth. Then repented I of what I had done with penitence exceeding; and thought of the lady and her beauty and loveliness, and the tortures she was suffering at the hands of the accursed Ifrit, after her quiet life of five-and-twenty years; and how all that had happened to her was for the cause of me. I bethought me of my father and his kingly estate and how I had become a woodcutter; and how, after my time had been awhile serene, the world had again waxed turbid and troubled to me. So I wept bitterly and repeated this couplet: —

*What time Fate's tyranny shall most oppress thee * Perpend! one day
shall joy thee, one distress thee!*

Then I walked till I reached the home of my friend, the Tailor, whom I found most anxiously expecting me; indeed he was, as the saying goes, on coals of fire for my account. And when he saw me he said, “All night long my heart hath been heavy, fearing for thee from wild beasts or other mischances. Now praise be to Allah for thy safety!” I thanked him for his friendly solicitude and, retiring to my corner, sat pondering and musing on what had befallen me; and I blamed and chided myself for my meddlesome folly and my frowardness in kicking the alcove.

I was calling myself to account when behold, my friend, the Tailor, came to me and said, “O youth, in the shop there is an old man, a Persian, who seeketh thee: he hath thy hatchet and thy sandals which he had taken to the woodcutters, saying, “I was going out at what time the Mu’azzin began the call to dawn-prayer, when I chanced upon

these things and know not whose they are; so direct me to their owner." The woodcutters recognised thy hatchet and directed him to thee: he is sitting in my shop, so fare forth to him and thank him and take thine axe and sandals."

When I heard these words I turned yellow with fear and felt stunned as by a blow; and, before I could recover myself, lo! the floor of my private room clove asunder, and out of it rose the Persian who was the Ifrit. He had tortured the lady with exceeding tortures, notwithstanding she would not confess to him aught; so he took the hatchet and sandals and said to her, "As surely as I am Jirjis of the seed of Iblis, I will bring thee back the owner of this and these!" Then he went to the woodcutters with the pretence aforesaid and, being directed to me, after waiting a while in the shop till the fact was confirmed, he suddenly snatched me up as a hawk snatcheth a mouse and flew high in air; but presently descended and plunged with me under the earth (I being aswoon the while), and lastly set me down in the subterranean palace wherein I had passed that blissful night. And there I saw the lady stripped to the skin, her limbs bound to four stakes and blood welling from her sides.

At the sight my eyes ran over with tears; but the Ifrit covered her person and said, "O wanton, is not this man thy lover?" She looked upon me and replied, "I wot him not nor have I ever seen him before this hour!" Quoth the Ifrit, "What! this torture and yet no confessing;" and quoth she, "I never saw this man in my born days, and it is not lawful in Allah's sight to tell lies on him."

"If thou know him not," said the Ifrit to her, "take this sword and strike off his head." She hent the sword in hand and came close up to me; and I signalled to her with my eyebrows, my tears the while flowing adown my cheeks. She understood me and made answer,

also by signs, “How couldest thou bring all this evil upon me?” and I rejoined after the same fashion, “This is the time for mercy and forgiveness.” And the mute tongue of my case spake aloud saying: —

*Mine eyes were dragomans for my tongue betied * And told full clear
the love I fain would hide:*

*When last we met and tears in torrents railed * For tongue struck
dumb my glances testified:*

*She signed with eye-glance while her lips were mute * I signed with
fingers and she kenned th’ implied:*

*Our eyebrows did all duty ’twixt us twain; * And we being speechless
Love spake loud and plain.*

Then, O my mistress, the lady threw away the sword and said, “How shall I strike the neck of one I wot not, and who hath done me no evil? Such deed were not lawful in my law!” and she held her hand. Said the Ifrit, “’Tis grievous to thee to slay thy lover; and, because he hath lain with thee, thou endurest these torments and obstinately refuseth to confess. After this it is clear to me that only like loveth and pitieth like.” Then he turned to me and asked me, “O man, haply thou also dost not know this woman;” whereto I answered, “And pray who may she be? assuredly I never saw her till this instant.”

“Then take the sword,” said he “and strike off her head and I will believe that thou wottest her not and will leave thee free to go, and will not deal hardly with thee.” I replied, “That will I do;” and, taking the sword went forward sharply and raised my hand to smite. But she signed to me with her eyebrows, “Have I failed thee in aught of love; and is it thus that thou requitest me?”

I understood what her looks implied and answered her with an eye-

glance, "I will sacrifice my soul for thee." And the tongue of the case wrote in our hearts these lines: —

*How many a lover with his eyebrows speaketh * To his beloved, as his passion pleadeth:*

*With flashing eyne his passion he inspireth * And well she seeth what his pleading needeth.*

*How sweet the look when each on other gazeth; * And with what swiftness and how sure it speedeth:*

*And this with eyebrows all his passion writeth; * And that with eyeballs all his passion readeth.*

Then my eyes filled with tears to overflowing and I cast the sword from my hand saying, "O mighty Ifrit and hero, if a woman lacking wits and faith deem it unlawful to strike off my head, how can it be lawful for me, a man, to smite her neck whom I never saw in my whole life. I cannot do such misdeed though thou cause me drink the cup of death and perdition." Then said the Ifrit, "Ye twain show the good understanding between you; but I will let you see how such doings end." He took the sword, and struck off the lady's hands first, with four strokes, and then her feet; whilst I looked on and made sure of death and she farewelled me with her dying eyes. So the Ifrit cried at her, "Thou whorest and makest me a wittol with thine eyes;" and struck her so that her head went flying.

Then he turned to me and said, "O mortal, we have it in our law that, when the wife committeth advowtry it is lawful for us to slay her. As for this damsel I snatched her away on her bride-night when she was a girl of twelve and she knew no one but myself. I used to come to her once every ten days and lie with her the night, under the semblance of a man, a Persian; and when I was well assured that she had

cuckolded me, I slew her. But as for thee I am not well satisfied that thou hast wronged me in her; nevertheless I must not let thee go unharmed; so ask a boon of me and I will grant it.”

Then I rejoiced, O my lady, with exceeding joy and said, “What boon shall I crave of thee?” He replied, “Ask me this boon; into what shape I shall bewitch thee; wilt thou be a dog, or an ass or an ape?” I rejoined (and indeed I had hoped that mercy might be shown me), “By Allah, spare me, that Allah spare thee for sparing a Moslem and a man who never wronged thee.” And I humbled myself before him with exceeding humility, and remained standing in his presence, saying, “I am sore oppressed by circumstance.” He replied “Talk me no long talk, it is in my power to slay thee; but I give thee instead thy choice.”

Quoth I, “O thou Ifrit, it would besit thee to pardon me even as the Envied pardoned the Envier.” Quoth he, “And how was that?” and I began to tell him the

Tale of the Envier and the Envied.

They relate, O Ifrit, that in a certain city were two men who dwelt in adjoining houses, having a common party-wall; and one of them envied the other and looked on him with an evil eye, and did his utmost endeavour to injure him; and, albeit at all times he was jealous of his neighbour, his malice at last grew on him till he could hardly eat or enjoy the sweet pleasures of sleep. But the Envied did nothing save prosper; and the more the other strove to injure him, the more he got and gained and throve.

At last the malice of his neighbour and the man’s constant endeavour to work him a harm came to his knowledge; so he said, “By Allah! God’s earth is wide enough for its people;” and, leaving the neighbour-

hood, he repaired to another city where he bought himself a piece of land in which was a dried up draw-well, old and in ruinous condition. Here he built him an oratory and, furnishing it with a few necessaries, took up his abode therein, and devoted himself to prayer and worshipping Allah Almighty; and Fakirs and holy mendicants flocked to him from all quarters; and his fame went abroad through the city and that country side.

Presently the news reached his envious neighbour, of what good fortune had befallen him and how the city notables had become his disciples; so he travelled to the place and presented himself at the holy man's hermitage, and was met by the Envied with welcome and greeting and all honour. Then quoth the Envier, "I have a word to say to thee; and this is the cause of my faring hither, and I wish to give thee a piece of good news; so come with me to thy cell." Thereupon the Envied arose and took the Envier by the hand, and they went in to the inmost part of the hermitage; but the Envier said, "Bid thy Fakirs retire to their cells, for I will not tell thee what I have to say, save in secret where none may hear us." Accordingly the Envied said to his Fakirs, "Retire to your private cells;" and, when all had done as he bade them, he set out with his visitor and walked a little way until the twain reached the ruinous old well. And as they stood upon the brink the Envier gave the Envied a push which tumbled him headlong into it, unseen of any; whereupon he fared forth, and went his ways, thinking to have had slain him.

Now this well happened to be haunted by the Jann who, seeing the case, bore him up and let him down little by little, till he reached the bottom, when they seated him upon a large stone. Then one of them asked his fellows, "Wot ye who be this man?" and they answered, "Nay." "This man," continued the speaker, "is the Envied hight who,

flying from the Envier, came to dwell in our city, and here founded this holy house, and he hath edified us by his litanies and his lections of the Koran; but the Envier set out and journeyed till he rejoined him, and cunningly contrived to deceive him and cast him into the well where we now are. But the fame of this good man hath this very night come to the Sultan of our city who designeth to visit him on the morrow on account of his daughter.”

“What aileth his daughter?” asked one, and another answered, “She is possessed of a spirit; for Maymun, son of Damdam, is madly in love with her; but, if this pious man knew the remedy, her cure would be as easy as could be.” Hereupon one of them inquired, “And what is the medicine?” and he replied, “The black tom-cat which is with him in the oratory hath, on the end of his tail, a white spot, the size of a dirham; let him pluck seven white hairs from the spot, then let him fumigate her therewith and the Marid will flee from her and not return; so she shall be sane for the rest of her life.”

All this took place, O Ifrit, within earshot of the Envied who listened readily. When dawn broke and morn arose in sheen and shone, the Fakirs went to seek the Shaykh and found him climbing up the wall of the well; whereby he was magnified in their eyes. Then, knowing that naught save the black tom-cat could supply him with the remedy required, he plucked the seven tail-hairs from the white spot and laid them by him; and hardly had the sun risen ere the Sultan entered the hermitage, with the great lords of his estate, bidding the rest of his retinue to remain standing outside. The Envied gave him a hearty welcome, and seating him by his side asked him, “Shall I tell thee the cause of thy coming?” The King answered, “Yes.” He continued, “Thou hast come upon pretext of a visitation; but it is in thy heart to question me of thy daughter.” Replied the King, “’Tis even so, O thou

holy Shaykh;” and the Envied continued, “Send and fetch her, and I trust to heal her forthright (an such it be the will of Allah!).”

The King in great joy sent for his daughter, and they brought her pinioned and fettered. The Envied made her sit down behind a curtain and taking out the hairs fumigated her therewith; whereupon that which was in her head cried out and departed from her. The girl was at once restored to her right mind and veiling her face, said, “What hath happened and who brought me hither?” The Sultan rejoiced with a joy that nothing could exceed, and kissed his daughter’s eyes, and the holy man’s hand; then, turning to his great lords, he asked, “How say ye! What fee deserveth he who hath made my daughter whole?” and all answered, “He deserveth her to wife;” and the King said, “Ye speak sooth!” So he married him to her and the Envied thus became son-in-law to the King. And after a little the Wazir died and the King said, “Whom can I make Minister in his stead?”

“Thy son-in-law,” replied the courtiers. So the Envied became a Wazir; and after a while the Sultan also died and the lieges said, “Whom shall we make King?” and all cried, “The Wazir.” So the Wazir was forthright made Sultan, and he became King regnant, a true ruler of men. One day as he had mounted his horse, and, in the eminence of his kinglihood, was riding amidst his Emirs and Wazirs and the Grandees of his realm his eye fell upon his old neighbour, the Envier, who stood afoot on his path; so he turned to one of his Ministers, and said, “Bring hither that man and cause him no affright.” The Wazir brought him and the King said, “Give him a thousand miskáls of gold from the treasury, and load him ten camels with goods for trade, and send him under escort to his own town.” Then he bade his enemy farewell and sent him away and forbore to punish him for the many and great evils he had done.

See, O Ifrit, the mercy of the Envied to the Envier, who had hated him from the beginning and had borne him such bitter malice and never met him without causing him trouble; and had driven him from house and home, and then had journeyed for the sole purpose of taking his life by throwing him into the well. Yet he did not requite his injurious dealing, but forgave him and was bountiful to him.

Then I wept before him, O my lady, with sore weeping, never was there sorer, and I recited: —

*Pardon my fault, for 'tis the wise man's wont * All faults to pardon
and revenge forgo:*

*In sooth all manner faults in me contain * Then deign of goodness
mercy-grace to show:*

*Whoso imploreth pardon from on High * Should hold his hand from
sinners here below.*

Said the Ifrit, “Lengthen not thy words! As to my slaying thee fear it not, and as to my pardoning thee hope it not; but from my bewitching thee there is no escape.” Then he tore me from the ground which closed under my feet and flew with me into the firmament till I saw the earth as a large white cloud or a saucer in the midst of the waters. Presently he set me down on a mountain, and taking a little dust, over which he muttered some magical words, sprinkled me therewith, saying, “Quit that shape and take thou the shape of an ape!” And on the instant I became an ape, a tail-less baboon, the son of a century.⁵¹

Now when he had left me and I saw myself in this ugly and hateful shape, I wept for myself, but resigned my soul to the tyranny of Time and Circumstance, well weeting that Fortune is fair and constant to no

⁵¹ A hundred years old.

man. I descended the mountain and found at the foot a desert plain, long and broad, over which I travelled for the space of a month till my course brought me to the brink of the briny sea. After standing there awhile, I was ware of a ship in the offing which ran before a fair wind making for the shore. I hid myself behind a rock on the beach and waited till the ship drew near, when I leaped on board.

I found her full of merchants and passengers and one of them cried, "O Captain, this ill-omened brute will bring us ill-luck!" and another said, "Turn this ill-omened beast out from among us;" the Captain said, "Let us kill it!" another said, "Slay it with the sword;" a third, "Drown it;" and a fourth, "Shoot it with an arrow." But I sprang up and laid hold of the Rais's⁵² skirt, and shed tears which poured down my chops. The Captain took pity on me, and said, "O merchants! this ape hath appealed to me for protection and I will protect him; henceforth he is under my charge: so let none do him aught hurt or harm, otherwise there will be bad blood between us." Then he entreated me kindly and whatsoever he said I understood and ministered to his every want and served him as a servant, albeit my tongue would not obey my wishes; so that he came to love me.

The vessel sailed on, the wind being fair, for the space of fifty days; at the end of which we cast anchor under the walls of a great city wherein was a world of people, especially learned men, none could tell their number save Allah. No sooner had we arrived than we were visited by certain Mameluke-officials from the King of that city; who, after boarding us, greeted the merchants and giving them joy of safe arrival said, "Our King welcometh you, and sendeth you this roll of paper, whereupon each and every of you must write a line. For ye shall

⁵² The Captain or Master of the ship (not the owner).

know that the King's Minister, a calligrapher of renown, is dead, and the King hath sworn a solemn oath that he will make none Wazir in his stead who cannot write as well as he could." He then gave us the scroll which measured ten cubits long by a breadth of one, and each of the merchants who knew how to write wrote a line thereon, even to the last of them; after which I stood up (still in the shape of an ape) and snatched the roll out of their hands.

They feared lest I should tear it or throw it overboard; so they tried to stay me and scare me, but I signed to them that I could write, whereat all marvelled, saying, "We never yet saw an ape write." And the Captain cried, "Let him write; and if he scribble and scrabble we will kick him out and kill him; but if he write fair and scholarly I will adopt him as my son; for surely I never yet saw a more intelligent and well-mannered monkey than he. Would Heaven my real son were his match in morals and manners." I took the reed, and stretching out my paw, dipped it in ink and wrote, in the hand used for letters, these two couplets: —

*Time hath recorded gifts she gave the great; * But none recorded thine
which be far higher;
Allah ne'er orphan men by loss of thee * Who be of Goodness mother,
Bounty's sire.*

And I wrote in Rayhání or larger letters elegantly curved: —

*Thou hast a reed⁵³ of rede to every land, * Whose driving causeth all
the world to thrive;*

⁵³ I need hardly say that Easterns use a reed, a Calamus (Kalam applied only to the cut reed) for our quills and steel pens.

*Nil is the Nile of Misraim by thy boons * Who makest misery smile
with fingers five.*

Then I wrote in the Suls character: —

*There be no writer who from Death shall fleet, * But what his hand
hath writ men shall repeat:*

*Write, therefore, naught save what shall serve thee when * Thou see't
on Judgment-Day an so thou see't!*

Then I wrote in the character Naskh: —

*When to sore parting Fate our love shall doom, * To distant life by
Destiny decreed,*

*We cause the inkhorn's lips to 'plain our pains, * And tongue our
utterance with the talking reed.*

And I wrote in the Túmár character: —

*Kingdom with none endures; if thou deny * This truth, where be the
Kings of earlier earth?*

*Set trees of goodliness while rule endures, * And when thou art fallen
they shall tell thy worth.*

And I wrote in the character Muhakkak: —

*When oped the inkhorn of thy wealth and fame * Take ink of generous
heart and gracious hand;*

*Write brave and noble deeds while write thou can * And win thee
praise from point of pen and brand.*

Then I gave the scroll to the officials and, after we all had written our line, they carried it before the King. When he saw the paper no writing

pleased him save my writing; and he said to the assembled courtiers, “Go seek the writer of these lines and dress him in a splendid robe of honour; then mount him on a she-mule,⁵⁴ let a band of music precede him and bring him to the presence.” At these words they smiled and the King was wroth with them and cried, “O accursed! I give you an order and you laugh at me?”

“O King,” replied they, “if we laugh ’tis not at thee and not without a cause.” “And what is it?” asked he; and they answered, “O King, thou orderest us to bring to thy presence the man who wrote these lines; now the truth is that he who wrote them is not of the sons of Adam, but an ape, a tail-less baboon, belonging to the ship-Captain.” Quoth he, “Is this true that you say?” Quoth they, “Yea! by the rights of thy munificence!”

The King marvelled at their words and shook with mirth and said, “I am minded to buy this ape of the Captain.” Then he sent messengers to the ship with the mule, the dress, the guard and the state-drums, saying, “Not the less do you clothe him in the robe of honour and mount him on the mule and let him be surrounded by the guards and preceded by the band of music.” They came to the ship and took me from the Captain and robed me in the robe of honour and, mounting me on the she-mule, carried me in state-procession through the streets; whilst the people were amazed and amused. And folk said to one another, “Halloo! is our Sultan about to make an ape his Minister?”; and came all agog crowding to gaze at me, and the town was astir and turned topsy-turvy on my account.

When they brought me up to the King and set me in his presence, I kissed the ground before him three times, and once before the High

⁵⁴ The male is used only for loads.

Chamberlain and great officers, and he bade me be seated, and I sat respectfully on shins and knees, and all who were present marvelled at my fine manners, and the King most of all. Thereupon he ordered the lieges to retire; and, when none remained save the King's majesty, the Eunuch on duty and a little white slave, he bade them set before me the table of food, containing all manner of birds, whatever hoppeth and flieth and treadeth in nest, such as quail and sand-grouse. Then he signed me to eat with him; so I rose and kissed ground before him, then sat me down and ate with him. And when the table was removed I washed my hands in seven waters and took the reed-case and reed; and wrote instead of speaking these couplets: —

*Wail for the little partridges on porringer and plate; * Cry for the
ruin of the fries and stews well marinate:*

*Wail for the little partridges on porringer and plate; * Cry for the
ruin of the fries and stews well marinate:*

*Keen as I keen for loved, lost daughters of the Katá-grouse, * And
omelette round the fair enbrownd fowls agglomerate:*

*O fire in heart of me for fish, those deux poissons I saw, * Bedded on
new made scones and cakes in piles to laniate.*

*For thee, O vermicelli! aches my very maw! I hold * Without thee every
taste and joy are clean annihilate.*

*Those eggs have rolled their yellow eyes in torturing pains of fire * Ere
served with hash and fritters hot, that delicatèst cate.*

*Praisèd be Allah for His baked and roast and ah! how good * This
pulse, these pot-herbs steeped in oil with eysill combinate!*

*When hunger sated was, I elbow-propt fell back upon * Meat-
pudding⁵⁵ wherein gleamed the bangles that my wits amate.*

⁵⁵ Arab. "Harisah," a favourite dish of wheat (or rice) boiled and reduced to a paste

*Then woke I sleeping appetite to eat as though in sport * Sweets from
brocaded trays and kickshaws most elaborate.*

*Be patient, soul of me! Time is a haughty, jealous wight; * To-day he
seems dark-lowering and to-morrow fair to sight.*

Then I rose and seated myself at a respectful distance while the King read what I had written, and marvelled, exclaiming, “O the miracle, that an ape should be gifted with this graceful style and this power of penmanship! By Allah, ’tis a wonder of wonders!” Presently they set before the King choice wines in flagons of glass and he drank: then he passed on the cup to me; and I kissed the ground and drank and wrote on it: —

*With fire they boiled me to loose my tongue,⁵⁶ * And pain and patience
gave for fellowship:*

*Hence comes it hands of men upbear me high * And honey-dew from
lips of maid I sip!*

And these also: —

*Morn saith to Night, “withdraw and let me shine;” * So drain we
draughts that dull all pain and pine:*

*I doubt, so fine the glass, the wine so clear, * If ’tis the wine in glass
or glass in wine.*

The King read my verse and said with a sigh, “Were these gifts in a man, he would excel all the folk of his time and age!” Then he called for the chess-board, and said, “Say, wilt thou play with me?”; and I

with shredded meat, spices and condiments. The “bangles” is a pretty girl eating with him.

⁵⁶ This is the *vinum coctum*, the boiled wine, still a favourite in Southern Italy and Greece.

signed with my head, "Yes." Then I came forward and ordered the pieces and played with him two games, both of which I won. He was speechless with surprise; so I took the pen-case and, drawing forth a reed, wrote on the board these two couplets: —

*Two hosts fare fighting thro' the livelong day * Nor is their battling
ever finishèd,*

*Until, when darkness girdeth them about, * The twain go sleeping in
a single bed.*

The King read these lines with wonder and delight and said to his Eunuch, "O Mukbil, go to thy mistress, Sitt al-Husn,⁵⁷ and say her, 'Come, speak the King who biddeth thee hither to take thy solace in seeing this right wondrous ape!'" So the Eunuch went out and presently returned with the lady who, when she saw me veiled her face and said, "O my father! hast thou lost all sense of honour? How cometh it thou art pleased to send for me and show me to strange men?"

"O Sitt al-Husn," said he, "no man is here save this little foot-page and the Eunuch who reared thee and I, thy father. From whom, then, dost thou veil thy face?" She answered, "This whom thou deemest an ape is a young man, a clever and polite, a wise and learned and the son of a King; but he is ensorcelled and the Ifrit Jirjaris, who is of the seed of Iblis, cast a spell upon him, after putting to death his own wife the daughter of King Ifitamus lord of the Islands of Abnus."

The King marvelled at his daughter's words and, turning to me, said, "Is this true that she saith of thee?"; and I signed by a nod of my head the answer, "Yea, verily;" and wept sore. Then he asked his

⁵⁷ The "Lady of Beauty."

daughter, “Whence knewest thou that he is ensorcelled?”; and she answered, “O my dear papa, there was with me in my childhood an old woman, a wily one and a wise and a witch to boot, and she taught me the theory of magic and its practice; and I took notes in writing and therein waxed perfect, and have committed to memory an hundred and seventy chapters of egromantic formulas, by the least of which I could transport the stones of thy city behind the Mountain Kaf and the Circumambient Main,⁵⁸ or make its site an abyss of the sea and its people fishes swimming in the midst of it.”

“O my daughter,” said her father, “I conjure thee, by my life, disenchant this young man, that I may make him my Wazir and marry thee to him, for indeed he is an ingenious youth and a deeply learned.”

“With joy and goodly gree,” she replied and, hending in hand an iron knife whereon was inscribed the name of Allah in Hebrew characters, she described a wide circle —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fourteenth Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kalandar continued his tale thus: —

O my lady, the King’s daughter hent in hand a knife whereon were inscribed Hebrew characters and described a wide circle in the midst of the palace-hall, and therein wrote in Cufic letters mysterious names and talismans; and she uttered words and muttered charms, some of

⁵⁸ “Káf” has been noticed as the mountain which surrounds earth as a ring does the finger: it is popularly used like our Alp and Alpine. The “circumambient Ocean” (Bahr al-muhit) is the Homeric Ocean-stream.

which we understood and others we understood not. Presently the world waxed dark before our sight till we thought that the sky was falling upon our heads, and lo! the Ifrit presented himself in his own shape and aspect. His hands were like many-pronged pitch-forks, his legs like the masts of great ships, and his eyes like cressets of gleaming fire. We were in terrible fear of him but the King's daughter cried at him, "No welcome to thee and no greeting, O dog!" whereupon he changed to the form of a lion and said, "O traitress, how is it thou hast broken the oath we sware that neither should contraire other!"

"O accursed one," answered she, "how could there be a compact between me and the like of thee?" Then said he, "Take what thou has brought on thyself;" and the lion opened his jaws and rushed upon her; but she was too quick for him; and, plucking a hair from her head, waved it in the air muttering over it the while; and the hair straightway became a trenchant sword-blade, wherewith she smote the lion and cut him in twain. Then the two halves flew away in air and the head changed to a scorpion and the Princess became a huge serpent and set upon the accursed scorpion, and the two fought, coiling and uncoiling, a stiff fight for an hour at least. Then the scorpion changed to a vulture and the serpent became an eagle which set upon the vulture, and hunted him for an hour's time, till he became a black tom-cat, which miauled and grinned and spat. Thereupon the eagle changed into a piebald wolf and these two battled in the palace for a long time, when the cat, seeing himself overcome, changed into a worm and crept into a huge red pomegranate, which lay beside the jetting fountain in the midst of the palace hall. Whereupon the pomegranate swelled to the size of a water-melon in air; and, falling upon the marble pavement of the palace, broke to pieces, and all the grains fell out and were scattered about till they covered the whole floor. Then the wolf shook

himself and became a snow-white cock, which fell to picking up the grains purposing not to leave one; but by doom of destiny one seed rolled to the fountain-edge and there lay hid.

The cock fell to crowing and clapping his wings and signing to us with his beak as if to ask, "Are any grains left?" But we understood not what he meant, and he cried to us with so loud a cry that we thought the palace would fall upon us. Then he ran over all the floor till he saw the grain which had rolled to the fountain edge, and rushed eagerly to pick it up when behold, it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish and dived to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock changed to a big fish, and plunged in after the other, and the two disappeared for a while and lo! we heard loud shrieks and cries of pain which made us tremble. After this the Ifrit rose out of the water, and he was as a burning flame; casting fire and smoke from his mouth and eyes and nostrils. And immediately the Princess likewise came forth from the basin and she was one live coal of flaming lowe; and these two, she and he, battled for the space of an hour, until their fires entirely compassed them about and their thick smoke filled the palace. As for us we panted for breath, being well-nigh suffocated, and we longed to plunge into the water fearing lest we be burnt up and utterly destroyed; and the King said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah the Glorious, the Great! Verily we are Allah's and unto Him are we returning! Would Heaven I had not urged my daughter to attempt the disenchantment of this ape-fellow, whereby I have imposed upon her the terrible task of fighting yon accursed Ifrit against whom all the Ifrits in the world could not prevail. And would Heaven we had never seen this ape, Allah never assain nor bless the day of his coming! We thought to do a good deed by him before the face of Allah, and to release him from enchantment, and now we have

brought this trouble and travail upon our heart.” But I, O my lady, was tongue-tied and powerless to say a word to him.

Suddenly, ere we were ware of aught, the Ifrit yelled out from under the flames and, coming up to us as we stood on the estrade, blew fire in our faces. The damsel overtook him and breathed blasts of fire at his face and the sparks from her and from him rained down upon us, and her sparks did us no harm, but one of his sparks alighted upon my eye and destroyed it making me a monocular ape; and another fell on the King’s face scorching the lower half, burning off his beard and mustachios and causing his under teeth to fall out; while a third alighted on the Castrato’s breast, killing him on the spot. So we despaired of life and made sure of death when lo! a voice repeated the saying, “Allah is most Highest! Allah is most Highest! Aidance and victory to all who the Truth believe; and disappointment and disgrace to all who the religion of Mohammed, the Moon of Faith, unbelieve.”

The speaker was the Princess who had burnt the Ifrit, and he was become a heap of ashes. Then she came up to us and said, “Reach me a cup of water.” They brought it to her and she spoke over it words we understood not, and sprinkling me with it cried, “By virtue of the Truth, and by the Most Great name of Allah, I charge thee return to thy former shape.” And behold, I shook, and became a man as before, save that I had utterly lost an eye. Then she cried out, “The fire! The fire! O my dear papa an arrow from the accursed hath wounded me to the death, for I am not used to fight with the Jann; had he been a man I had slain him in the beginning. I had no trouble till the time when the pomegranate burst and the grains scattered, but I overlooked the seed wherein was the very life of the Jinni. Had I picked it up he had died on the spot, but as Fate and Fortune decreed, I saw it not; so he came upon me all unawares and there befel between him and me a sore

struggle under the earth and high in air and in the water; and, as often as I opened on him a gate, he opened on me another gate and a stronger, till at last he opened on me the gate of fire, and few are saved upon whom the door of fire openeth. But Destiny willed that my cunning prevail over his cunning; and I burned him to death after I vainly exhorted him to embrace the religion of Al-Islam. As for me I am a dead woman; Allah supply my place to you!”

Then she called upon Heaven for help and ceased not to implore relief from the fire; when lo! a black spark shot up from her robed feet to her thighs; then it flew to her bosom and thence to her face. When it reached her face she wept and said, “I testify that there is no god but *the* God and that Mahommed is the Apostle of God!” And we looked at her and saw naught but a heap of ashes by the side of the heap that had been the Ifrit. We mourned for her and I wished I had been in her place, so had I not seen her lovely face who had worked me such weal become ashes; but there is no gainsaying the will of Allah.

When the King saw his daughter’s terrible death, he plucked out what was left of his beard and beat his face and rent his raiment; and I did as he did and we both wept over her. Then came in the Chamberlains and Grandees and were amazed to find two heaps of ashes and the Sultan in a fainting fit; so they stood round him till he revived and told them what had befallen his daughter from the Ifrit; whereat their grief was right grievous and the women and the slave-girls shrieked and keened, and they continued their lamentations for the space of seven days. Moreover the King bade build over his daughter’s ashes a vast vaulted tomb, and burn therein wax tapers and sepulchral lamps: but as for the Ifrit’s ashes they scattered them on the winds, speeding them to the curse of Allah.

Then the Sultan fell sick of a sickness that well-nigh brought him to

his death for a month's space; and, when health returned to him and his beard grew again and he had been converted by the mercy of Allah to Al-Islam, he sent for me and said, "O youth, Fate had decreed for us the happiest of lives, safe from all the chances and changes of Time, till thou camest to us, when troubles fell upon us. Would to Heaven we had never seen thee and the foul face of thee! For we took pity on thee and thereby we have lost our all. I have on thy account first lost my daughter who to me was well worth an hundred men, secondly I have suffered that which befel me by reason of the fire and the loss of my teeth, and my Eunuch also was slain. I blame thee not, for it was out of thy power to prevent this: the doom of Allah was on thee as well as on us and thanks be to the Almighty for that my daughter delivered thee, albeit thereby she lost her own life! Go forth now, O my son, from this my city, and suffice thee what hath befallen us through thee, even although 'twas decreed for us. Go forth in peace; and if I ever see thee again I will surely slay thee." And he cried out at me.

So I went forth from his presence, O my lady, weeping bitterly and hardly believing in my escape and knowing not whither I should wend. And I recalled all that had befallen me, my meeting the tailor, my love for the damsel in the palace beneath the earth, and my narrow escape from the Ifrit, even after he had determined to do me die; and how I had entered the city as an ape and was now leaving it a man once more. Then I gave thanks to Allah and said, "My eye and not my life!" and before leaving the place I entered the bath and shaved my poll and beard and mustachios and eyebrows; and cast ashes on my head and donned the coarse black woollen robe of a Kalandar. Then I fared forth, O my lady, and every day I pondered all the calamities which had betided me, and I wept and repeated these couplets: —

*I am distraught, yet verily His ruth abides with me, * Tho' round me
gather hosts of ills, whence come I cannot see:
Patient I'll be till Patience self with me impatient wax; * Patient for
ever till the Lord fulfil my destiny:
Patient I'll bide without complaint, a wronged and vanquisht man; *
Patient as sunparcht wight that spans the desert's sandy sea:
Patient I'll be till Aloe's self unwittingly allow * I'm patient under
bitterer things than bitterest aloë:⁵⁹
No bitterer things than aloes or than patience for mankind; * Yet
bitterer than the twain to me were Patience' treachery:
My sere and seamed and seared brow would dragoman my sore * If
soul could search my sprite and there unsecret secrecy:
Were hills to bear the load I bear they'd crumble 'neath the weight, *
'twould still the roaring wind, 'twould quench the flame-tongue's
flagrancy,
And whoso saith the world is sweet certès a day he'll see * With more
than aloes' bitterness and aloes' pungency.*

Then I journeyed through many regions and saw many a city intending for Baghdad, that I might seek audience, in the House of Peace,⁶⁰ with the Commander of the Faithful and tell him all that had befallen me. I arrived here this very night and found my brother in Allah, this first Kalandar, standing about as one perplexed; so I saluted him with "Peace be upon thee," and entered into discourse with him. Presently

⁵⁹ These lines are hardly translatable. Arab. "Sabr" means "patience" as well as "aloes," hereby lending itself to a host of puns and double entendres more or less vile.

⁶⁰ Every city in the East has its specific title: this was given to Baghdad either on account of its superior police or simply because it was the Capital of the Caliphate. The Tigris was also called the "River of Peace (or Security)."

up came our brother, this third Kalandar, and said to us, "Peace be with you! I am a stranger;" whereto we replied, "And we too be strangers, who have come hither this blessed night." So we all three walked on together, none of us knowing the other's history, till Destiny drave us to this door and we came in to you. Such then is my story and my reason for shaving my beard and mustachios, and this is what caused the loss of my eye.

Said the house-mistress, "Thy tale is indeed a rare; so rub thy head and wend thy ways;" but he replied, "I will not budge till I hear my companions' stories." Then came forward the third Kalandar, and said: — O illustrious lady! my history is not like that of these my comrades, but more wondrous and far more marvellous. In their case Fate and Fortune came down on them unawares; but I drew down destiny upon my own head and brought sorrow on mine own soul, and shaved my own beard and lost my own eye. Hear then

The Third Kalandar's Tale.

Know, O my lady, that I also am a King and the son of a King and my name is Ajīb son of Kazīb. When my father died I succeeded him; and I ruled and did justice and dealt fairly by all my lieges. I delighted in sea trips, for my capital stood on the shore, before which the ocean stretched far and wide; and nearhand were many great islands with sconces and garrisons in the midst of the main. My fleet numbered fifty merchantmen, and as many yachts for pleasance, and an hundred and fifty sail ready fitted for holy war with the Unbelievers.

It fortun'd that I had a mind to enjoy myself on the islands aforesaid, so I took ship with my people in ten keel; and, carrying with me a month's victual, I set out on a twenty days' voyage. But one night a

head wind struck us, and the sea rose against us with huge waves; the billows sorely buffeted us and a dense darkness settled round us. We gave ourselves up for lost and I said, "Whoso endangereth his days, e'en an he 'scape deserveth no praise." Then we prayed to Allah and besought Him; but the storm-blasts ceased not to blow against us nor the surges to strike us till morning broke, when the gale fell, the seas sank to mirrory stillness and the sun shone upon us kindly clear.

Presently we made an island where we landed and cooked somewhat of food, and ate heartily and took our rest for a couple of days. Then we set out again and sailed other twenty days, the seas broadening and the land shrinking. Presently the current ran counter to us, and we found ourselves in strange waters, where the Captain had lost his reckoning, and was wholly bewildered in this sea; so said we to the look-out man, "Get thee to the mast-head and keep thine eyes open." He swarmed up the mast and looked out and cried aloud, "O Rais, I espy to starboard something dark, very like a fish floating on the face of the sea, and to larboard there is a loom in the midst of the main, now black and now bright." When the Captain heard the look-out's words he dashed his turband on the deck and plucked out his beard and beat his face saying, "Good news indeed! we be all dead men; not one of us can be saved." And he fell to weeping and all of us wept for his weeping and also for our lives; and I said, "O Captain, tell us what it is the look-out saw."

"O my Prince," answered he, "know that we lost our course on the night of the storm, which was followed on the morrow by a two-days' calm during which we made no way; and we have gone astray eleven days reckoning from that night, with ne'er a wind to bring us back to our true course. To-morrow by the end of the day we shall come to a mountain of black stone, hight the Magnet Mountain; for thither the

currents carry us willy-nilly. As soon as we are under its lea, the ship's sides will open and every nail in plank will fly out and cleave fast to the mountain; for that Almighty Allah hath gifted the loadstone with a mysterious virtue and a love for iron, by reason whereof all which is iron travelleth towards it; and on this mountain is much iron, how much none knoweth save the Most High, from the many vessels which have been lost there since the days of yore. The bright spot upon its summit is a dome of yellow laton from Andalusia, vaulted upon ten columns; and on its crown is a horseman who rideth a horse of brass and holdeth in hand a lance of laton; and there hangeth on his bosom a tablet of lead graven with names and talismans." And he presently added, "And, O King, none destroyeth folk save the rider on that steed, nor will the egromancy be dispelled till he fall from his horse."

Then, O my lady, the Captain wept with exceeding weeping and we all made sure of death-doom and each and every one of us farewelled his friend and charged him with his last will and testament in case he might be saved. We slept not that night and in the morning we found ourselves much nearer the Loadstone Mountain, whither the waters drave us with a violent send. When the ships were close under its lea they opened and the nails flew out and all the iron in them sought the Magnet Mountain and clove to it like a network; so that by the end of the day we were all struggling in the waves round about the mountain. Some of us were saved, but more were drowned and even those who had escaped knew not one another, so stupefied were they by the beating of the billows and the raving of the winds.

As for me, O my lady, Allah (be His name exalted!) preserved my life that I might suffer whatso He willed to me of hardship, misfortune and calamity; for I scrambled upon a plank from one of the ships, and the wind and waters threw it at the feet of the Mountain. There I

found a practicable path leading by steps carved out of the rock to the summit, and I called on the name of Allah Almighty —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifteenth Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the third Kalandar said to the lady (the rest of the party sitting fast bound and the slaves standing with swords drawn over their heads): —

And after calling on the name of Almighty Allah and passionately beseeching Him, I breasted the ascent, clinging to the steps and notches hewn in the stone, and mounted little by little. And the Lord stilled the wind and aided me in the ascent, so that I succeeded in reaching the summit. There I found no resting-place save the dome, which I entered, joying with exceeding joy at my escape; and made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer, a thanksgiving to God for my preservation. Then I fell asleep under the dome, and heard in my dream a mysterious Voice saying, “O son of Khazib! when thou wakest from thy sleep dig under thy feet and thou shalt find a bow of brass and three leaden arrows, inscribed with talismans and characts. Take the bow and shoot the arrows at the horseman on the dome-top and free mankind from this sore calamity. When thou hast shot him he shall fall into the sea, and the horse will also drop at thy feet: then bury it in the place of the bow. This done, the main will swell and rise till it is level with the mountain-head, and there will appear on it a skiff carrying a man of laton (other than he thou shalt have shot) holding in his hand a pair of paddles. He will come to thee and do thou embark with him but beware of saying Bismillah or of otherwise naming Allah

Almighty. He will row thee for a space of ten days, till he bring thee to certain Islands called the Islands of Safety, and thence thou shalt easily reach a port and find those who will convey thee to thy native land; and all this shall be fulfilled to thee so thou call not on the name of Allah.”

Then I started up from my sleep in joy and gladness and, hastening to do the bidding of the mysterious Voice, found the bow and arrows and shot at the horseman and tumbled him into the main, whilst the horse dropped at my feet; so I took it and buried it. Presently the sea surged up and rose till it reached the top of the mountain; nor had I long to wait ere I saw a skiff in the offing coming towards me. I gave thanks to Allah; and, when the skiff came up to me, I saw therein a man of brass with a tablet of lead on his breast inscribed with talismans and characts; and I embarked without uttering a word. The boatman rowed on with me through the first day and the second and the third, in all ten whole days, till I caught sight of the Islands of Safety; whereat I joyed with exceeding joy and for stress of gladness exclaimed, “Allah! Allah! In the name of Allah! There is no god but *the* God and Allah is Almighty.” Thereupon the skiff forthwith upset and cast me upon the sea; then it righted and sank deep into the depths.

Now I am a fair swimmer, so I swam the whole day till nightfall, when my forearms and shoulders were numbed with fatigue and I felt like to die; so I testified to my faith, expecting naught but death. The sea was still surging under the violence of the winds, and presently there came a billow like a hillock; and, bearing me up high in air, threw me with a long cast on dry land, that His will might be fulfilled. I crawled up the beach and doffing my raiment wrung it out to dry and spread it in the sunshine: then I lay me down and slept the whole

night. As soon as it was day, I donned my clothes and rose to look whither I should walk.

Presently I came to a thicket of low trees; and, making a cast round it, found that the spot whereon I stood was an islet, a mere holm, girt on all sides by the ocean; whereupon I said to myself, “Whatso freeth me from one great calamity casteth me into a greater!” But while I was pondering my case and longing for death behold, I saw afar off a ship making for the island; so I clomb a tree and hid myself among the branches. Presently the ship anchored and landed ten slaves, blackamoors, bearing iron hoes and baskets, who walked on till they reached the middle of the island. Here they dug deep into the ground, until they uncovered a plate of metal which they lifted, thereby opening a trap-door. After this they returned to the ship and thence brought bread and flour, honey and fruits, clarified butter, leather bottles containing liquors and many household stuffs; also furniture, table-service and mirrors; rugs, carpets and in fact all needed to furnish a dwelling; and they kept going to and fro, and descending by the trap-door, till they had transported into the dwelling all that was in the ship. After this the slaves again went on board and brought back with them garments as rich as may be, and in the midst of them came an old, old man, of whom very little was left, for Time had dealt hardly and harshly with him, and all that remained of him was a bone wrapped in a rag of blue stuff, through which the winds whistled west and east. As saith the poet of him: —

*Time gars me tremble Ah, how sore the baulk! * While Time in pride
of strength doth ever stalk:*

*Time was I walked nor ever felt I tired, * Now am I tired albe I never
walk!*

And the Shaykh held by the hand a youth cast in beauty's mould, all elegance and perfect grace; so fair that his comeliness deserved to be proverbial; for he was as a green bough or the tender young of the roe, ravishing every heart with his loveliness and subduing every soul with his coquetry and amorous ways. It was of him the poet spake when he said: —

*Beauty they brought with him to make compare, * But Beauty hung
her head in shame and care:*

*Quoth they, "O Beauty, hast thou seen his like?" * And Beauty cried,
"His like? not anywhere!"*

They stinted not their going, O my lady, till all went down by the trap-door and did not reappear for an hour, or rather more; at the end of which time the slaves and the old man came up without the youth and, replacing the iron plate and carefully closing the door-slab as it was before, they returned to the ship and made sail and were lost to my sight.

When they turned away to depart, I came down from the tree and, going to the place I had seen them fill up, scraped off and removed the earth; and in patience possessed my soul till I had cleared the whole of it away. Then appeared the trap-door which was of wood, in shape and size like a millstone; and when I lifted it up it disclosed a winding staircase of stone. At this I marvelled and, descending the steps till I reached the last, found a fair hall, spread with various kinds of carpets and silk stuffs, wherein was a youth sitting upon a raised couch and leaning back on a round cushion with a fan in his hand and nosegays and posies of sweet scented herbs and flowers before him; but he was alone and not a soul near him in the great vault. When he saw me he turned pale; but I saluted him courteously and said, "Set thy mind at

ease and calm thy fears; no harm shall come near thee; I am a man like thyself and the son of a King to boot; whom the decrees of Destiny have sent to bear thee company and cheer thee in thy loneliness. But now tell me, what is thy story and what causeth thee to dwell thus in solitude under the ground?"

When he was assured that I was of his kind and no Jinni, he rejoiced and his fine colour returned; and, making me draw near to him he said, "O my brother, my story is a strange story and 'tis this. My father is a merchant-jeweller possessed of great wealth, who hath white and black slaves travelling and trading on his account in ships and on camels, and trafficking with the most distant cities; but he was not blessed with a child, not even one. Now on a certain night he dreamed a dream that he should be favoured with a son, who would be short lived; so the morning dawned on my father bringing him woe and weeping. On the following night my mother conceived and my father noted down the date of her becoming pregnant. Her time being fulfilled she bare me; whereat my father rejoiced and made banquets and called together the neighbors and fed the Fakirs and the poor, for that he had been blessed with issue near the end of his days. Then he assembled the astrologers and astronomers who knew the places of the planets, and the wizards and wise ones of the time, and men learned in horoscopes and nativities, and they drew out my birth scheme and said to my father: — Thy son shall live to fifteen years, but in his fifteenth there is a sinister aspect; an he safely tide it over he shall attain a great age. And the cause that threateneth him with death is this. In the Sea of Peril standeth the Mountain Magnet hight; on whose summit is a horseman of yellow laton seated on a horse also of brass and bearing on his breast a tablet of lead. Fifty days after this rider shall fall from

his steed thy son will die and his slayer will be he who shoots down the horseman, a Prince named Ajib son of King Khazib.

My father grieved with exceeding grief to hear these words; but reared me in tenderest fashion and educated me excellently well until my fifteenth year was told. Ten days ago news came to him that the horseman had fallen into the sea and he who shot him down was named Ajib son of King Khazib. My father thereupon wept bitter tears at the need of parting with me and became like one possessed of a Jinni. However, being in mortal fear for me, he built me this place under the earth; and, stocking it with all required for the few days still remaining, he brought me hither in a ship and left me here. Ten are already past and, when the forty shall have gone by without danger to me, he will come and take me away; for he hath done all this only in fear of Prince Ajib. Such, then, is my story and the cause of my loneliness.”

When I heard his history I marvelled and said in my mind, “I am the Prince Ajib who hath done all this; but as Allah is with me I will surely not slay him!” So said I to him, “O my lord, far from thee be this hurt and harm and then, please Allah, thou shalt not suffer cark nor care nor aught disquietude, for I will tarry with thee and serve thee as a servant, and then wend my ways; and after having borne thee company during the forty days, I will go with thee to thy home where thou shalt give me an escort of some of thy Mamelukes with whom I may journey back to my own city; and the Almighty shall requite thee for me.” He was glad to hear these words, when I rose and lighted a large wax-candle and trimmed the lamps and the three lanterns; and I set on meat and drink and sweetmeats. We ate and drank and sat talking over various matters till the greater part of the night was gone; when he lay down to rest and I covered him up and went to sleep myself.

Next morning I arose and warmed a little water, then lifted him gently so as to awake him and brought him the warm water wherewith he washed his face and said to me, "Heaven requite thee for me with every blessing, O youth! By Allah, if I get quit of this danger and am saved from him whose name is Ajib bin Khazib, I will make my father reward thee and send thee home healthy and wealthy; and, if I die, then my blessing be upon thee." I answered, "May the day never dawn on which evil shall betide thee; and may Allah make my last day before thy last day!" Then I set before him somewhat of food and we ate; and I got ready perfumes for fumigating the hall, wherewith he was pleased. Moreover I made him a Mankalah-cloth; and we played and ate sweetmeats and we played again and took our pleasure till nightfall, when I rose and lighted the lamps, and set before him somewhat to eat, and sat telling him stories till the hours of darkness were far spent. Then he lay down to rest and I covered him up and rested also.

And thus I continued to do, O my lady for days and nights, and affection for him took root in my heart and my sorrow was eased, and I said to myself, "The astrologers lied when they predicted that he should be slain by Ajib bin Khazib: by Allah, I will not slay him." I ceased not ministering to him and conversing and carousing with him and telling him all manner tales for thirty-nine days. On the fortieth night the youth rejoiced and said, "O my brother, Alhamdulillah! — praise be to Allah — who hath preserved me from death and this is by thy blessing and the blessing of thy coming to me; and I pray God that He restore thee to thy native land. But now, O my brother, I would thou warm me some water for the Ghusl-ablution and do thou kindly bathe me and change my clothes." I replied, "With love and gladness;" and I heated water in plenty and carrying it in to him washed his body

all over, the washing of health,⁶¹ with meal of lupins and rubbed him well and changed his clothes and spread him a high bed whereon he lay down to rest, being drowsy after bathing. Then said he, “O my brother, cut me up a water-melon, and sweeten it with a little sugar-candy.” So I went to the store-room and bringing out a fine water-melon I found there, set it on a platter and laid it before him saying, “O my master hast thou not a knife?”

“Here it is,” answered he, “over my head upon the high shelf.” So I got up in haste and taking the knife drew it from its sheath; but my foot slipped in stepping down and I fell heavily upon the youth holding in my hand the knife which hastened to fulfil what had been written on the Day that decided the destinies of man, and buried itself, as if planted, in the youth’s heart. He died on the instant. When I saw that he was slain and knew that I had slain him, maugre myself, I cried out with an exceeding loud and bitter cry and beat my face and rent my raiment and said, “Verily we be Allah’s and unto Him we be returning, O Moslems! O folk fain of Allah! there remained for this youth but one day of the forty dangerous days which the astrologers and the learned had foretold for him; and the predestined death of this beautiful one was to be at my hand. Would Heaven I had not tried to cut the water-melon. What dire misfortune is this I must bear lief or loath? What a disaster! What an affliction! O Allah mine, I implore thy pardon and declare to Thee my innocence of his death. But what God willeth let that come to pass.” —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

⁶¹ The bath first taken after sickness.

Now when it was the Sixteenth Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ajib thus continued his tale to the lady: —

When I was certified that I had slain him, I arose and ascending the stairs replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth as before. Then I looked out seawards and saw the ship cleaving the waters and making for the island, wherefore I was afeard and said, “The moment they come and see the youth done to death, they will know ’twas I who slew him and will slay me without respite.” So I climbed up into a high tree and concealed myself among its leaves; and hardly had I done so when the ship anchored and the slaves landed with the ancient man, the youth’s father, and made direct for the place and when they removed the earth they were surprised to see it soft. Then they raised the trap-door and went down and found the youth lying at full length, clothed in fair new garments, with a face beaming after the bath, and the knife deep in his heart. At the sight they shrieked and wept and beat their faces, loudly cursing the murderer; whilst a swoon came over the Shaykh so that the slaves deemed him dead, unable to survive his son. At last they wrapped the slain youth in his clothes and carried him up and laid him on the ground covering him with a shroud of silk. Whilst they were making for the ship the old man revived; and, gazing on his son who was stretched out, fell on the ground and strewed dust over his head and smote his face and plucked out his beard; and his weeping redoubled as he thought of his murdered son and he swooned away once more. After awhile a slave went and fetched a strip of silk whereupon they lay the old man and sat down at his head.

All this took place and I was on the tree above them watching everything that came to pass; and my heart became hoary before my

head waxed grey, for the hard lot which was mine, and for the distress and anguish I had undergone, and I fell to reciting: —

*How many a joy by Allah's will hath fled * With flight escaping sight
of wisest head!*

*How many a sadness shall begin the day, * Yet grow right gladsome
ere the day is sped!*

*How many a weal trips on the heels of ill, * Causing the mourner's
heart with joy to thrill!*

But the old man, O my lady, ceased not from his swoon till near sunset, when he came to himself and, looking upon his dead son, he recalled what had happened, and how what he had dreaded had come to pass; and he beat his face and head and recited these couplets: —

*Racked is my heart by parting fro' my friends * And two rills ever fro'
my eyelids flow:*

*With them⁶² went forth my hopes, Ah, well away! * What shift
remaineth me to say or do?*

*Would I had never looked upon their sight, * What shift, fair sirs,
when paths e'er straiter grow?*

*What charm shall calm my pangs when this wise burn * Longings of
love which in my vitals glow?*

*Would I had trod with them the road of Death! * Ne'er had befel us
twain this parting-blow:*

*Allah: I pray the Ruthful show me ruth * And mix our lives nor part
them evermo'e!*

*How blest were we as 'neath one roof we dwelt * Conjoined in joys nor
recking aught of woe;*

⁶² Anglicè “him.”

*Till Fortune shot us pith the severance shaft; * Ah who shall patient
bear such parting throe?
And dart of Death struck down amid the tribe * The age's pearl that
Morn saw brightest show:
I cried the while his case took speech and said: — * Would Heaven,
my son, Death mote his doom foreslow!
Which be the readiest road wi' thee to meet * My Son! for whom I
would my soul bestow?
If sun I call him no! the sun doth set; * If moon I call him, wane the
moons; Ah no!
O sad mischance o' thee, O doom of days, * Thy place none other love
shall ever know:
Thy sire distracted sees thee, but despairs * By wit or wisdom Fate to
overthrow:
Some evil eye this day hath cast its spell * And foul befal him as it
foul befel!*

Then he sobbed a single sob and his soul fled his flesh. The slaves shrieked aloud, "Alas, our lord!" and showered dust on their heads and redoubled their weeping and wailing. Presently they carried their dead master to the ship side by side with his dead son and, having transported all the stuff from the dwelling to the vessel, set sail and disappeared from mine eyes. I descended from the tree and, raising the trap-door, went down into the underground dwelling where everything reminded me of the youth; and I looked upon the poor remains of him and began repeating these verses: —

*Their tracks I see, and pine with pain and pang * And on deserted
hearths I weep and yearn:*

*And Him I pray who doomèd them depart * Some day vouchsafe the
boon of safe return.*

Then, O my lady, I went up again by the trap-door, and every day I used to wander round about the island and every night I returned to the underground hall. Thus I lived for a month, till at last, looking at the western side of the island, I observed that every day the tide ebbed, leaving shallow water for which the flow did not compensate; and by the end of the month the sea showed dry land in that direction. At this I rejoiced making certain of my safety; so I arose and fording what little was left of the water got me to the main land, where I fell in with great heaps of loose sand in which even a camel's hoof would sink up to the knee. However I emboldened my soul and wading through the sand behold, a fire shone from afar burning with a blazing light. So I made for it hoping haply to find succour, and broke out into these verses: —

*Belike my Fortune may her bridle turn * And Time bring weal
although he's jealous hight;
Forward my hopes, and further all my needs, * And passèd ills with
present weals requite.*

And when I drew near the fire aforesaid lo! it was a palace with gates of copper burnished red which, when the rising sun shone thereon, gleamed and glistened from afar showing what had seemed to me a fire. I rejoiced in the sight, and sat down over against the gate, but I was hardly settled in my seat before there met me ten young men clothed in sumptuous gear and all were blind of the left eye which appeared as plucked out. They were accompanied by a Shaykh, an old, old man,

and much I marvelled at their appearance, and their all being blind of the same eye.

When they saw me, they saluted me with the Salam and asked me of my case and my history; whereupon I related to them all what had befallen me, and what full measure of misfortune was mine. Marvelling at my tale they took me to the mansion, where I saw ranged round the hall ten couches each with its blue bedding and coverlet of blue stuff⁶³ and amiddlemost stood a smaller couch furnished like them with blue and nothing else. As we entered each of the youths took his seat on his own couch and the old man seated himself upon the smaller one in the middle saying to me, “O youth, sit thee down on the floor and ask not of our case nor of the loss of our eyes.” Presently he rose up and set before each young man some meat in a charger and drink in a large mazer, treating me in like manner; and after that they sat questioning me concerning my adventures and what had betided me: and I kept telling them my tale till the night was far spent.

Then said the young men, “O our Shaykh, wilt not thou set before us our ordinary? The time is come.” He replied, “With love and gladness,” and rose and entering a closet disappeared, but presently returned bearing on his head ten trays each covered with a strip of blue stuff. He set a tray before each youth and, lighting ten wax-candles, he stuck one upon each tray, and drew off the covers and lo! under them was naught but ashes and powdered charcoal and kettle

⁶³ Dark blue is the colour of mourning in Egypt as it was of the Roman Republic. The Persians hold that this tint was introduced by Kay Kawús (B.C. 600) when mourning for his son Siyáwush. It was continued till the death of Husayn on the 10th of Muharram (the first month, then representing the vernal equinox) when it was changed for black. As a rule Moslems do not adopt this symbol of sorrow (called “Hidád”) looking upon the practice as somewhat idolatrous and foreign to Arab manners.

soot. Then all the young men tucked up their sleeves to the elbows and fell a-weeping and wailing and they blackened their faces and smeared their clothes and buffeted their brows and beat their breasts, continually exclaiming, "We were sitting at our ease but our frowardness brought us unease!" They ceased not to do this till dawn drew nigh, when the old man rose and heated water for them; and they washed their faces, and donned other and clean clothes.

Now when I saw this, O my lady, for very wonderment my senses left me and my wits went wild and heart and head were full of thought, till I forgot what had betided me and I could not keep silence feeling I fain must speak out and question them of these strangenesses; so I said to them, "How come ye to do this after we have been so open-hearted and frolicksome? Thanks be to Allah ye be all sound and sane, yet actions such as these befit none but mad men or those possessed of an evil spirit. I conjure you by all that is dearest to you, why stint ye to tell me your history, and the cause of your losing your eyes and your blackening your faces with ashes and soot?"

Hereupon they turned to me and said, "O young man, hearken not to thy youthide's suggestions and question us no questions." Then they slept and I with them and when they awoke the old man brought us somewhat of food; and, after we had eaten and the plates and goblets had been removed, they sat conversing till night-fall when the old man rose and lit the wax-candles and lamps and set meat and drink before us. After we had eaten and drunken we sat conversing and carousing in companionship till the noon of night, when they said to the old man, "Bring us our ordinary, for the hour of sleep is at hand!" So he rose and brought them the trays of soot and ashes; and they did as they had done on the preceding night, nor more, nor less.

I abode with them after this fashion for the space of a month during

which time they used to blacken their faces with ashes every night, and to wash and change their raiment when the morn was young; and I but marvelled the more and my scruples and curiosity increased to such a point that I had to forego even food and drink. At last, I lost command of myself, for my heart was aflame with fire unquenchable and lowe unconcealable and I said, “O young men, will ye not relieve my trouble and acquaint me with the reason of thus blackening your faces and the meaning of your words: — We were sitting at our ease but our frowardness brought us unease?” Quoth they “’Twere better to keep these things secret.”

Still I was bewildered by their doings to the point of abstaining from eating and drinking and, at last wholly losing patience, quoth I to them, “There is no help for it: ye must acquaint me with what is the reason of these doings.” They replied, “We kept our secret only for thy good: to gratify thee will bring down evil upon thee and thou wilt become a monocular even as we are.” I repeated “There is no help for it and, if ye will not, let me leave you and return to mine own people and be at rest from seeing these things, for the proverb saith: —

*Better ye ’bide and I take my leave: * For what eye sees not heart shall never grieve.”*

Thereupon they said to me, “Remember, O youth, that should ill befall thee we will not again harbour thee nor suffer thee to abide amongst us;” and bringing a ram they slaughtered it and skinned it. Lastly they gave me a knife saying, “Take this skin and stretch thyself upon it and we will sew it around thee, presently there shall come to thee a certain bird, hight Rukh,⁶⁴ that will catch thee up in his pounces and tower

⁶⁴ The older Roc, of which more in the Tale of Sindbad.

high in air and then set thee down on a mountain. When thou feelest he is no longer flying, rip open the pelt with this blade and come out of it; the bird will be scared and will fly away and leave thee free. After this fare for half a day, and the march will place thee at a palace wondrous fair to behold, towering high in air and builded of Khalanj, lign-aloes and sandal-wood, plated with red gold, and studded with all manner emeralds and costly gems fit for seal-rings. Enter it and thou shalt win to thy wish for we have all entered that palace; and such is the cause of our losing our eyes and of our blackening our faces. Were we now to tell thee our stories it would take too long a time; for each and every of us lost his left eye by an adventure of his own.”

I rejoiced at their words and they did with me as they said; and the bird Rukh bore me off and set me down on the mountain. Then I came out of the skin and walked on till I reached the palace. The door stood open as I entered and found myself in a spacious and goodly hall, wide exceedingly, even as a horse-course; and around it were an hundred chambers with doors of sandal and aloes woods plated with red gold and furnished with silver rings by way of knockers. At the head or upper end of the hall I saw forty damsels, sumptuously dressed and ornamented and one and all bright as moons; none could ever tire of gazing upon them and all so lovely that the most ascetic devotee on seeing them would become their slave and obey their will.

When they saw me the whole bevy came up to me and said “Welcome and well come and good cheer to thee, O our lord! This whole month have we been expecting thee. Praised be Allah who hath sent us one who is worthy of us, even as we are worthy of him!” Then they made me sit down upon a high divan and said to me, “This day thou art our lord and master, and we are thy servants and thy handmaids, so order us as thou wilt.” And I marvelled at their case.

Presently one of them arose and set meat before me and I ate and they ate with me; whilst others warmed water and washed my hands and feet and changed my clothes and others made ready sherbets and gave us to drink; and all gathered around me being full of joy and gladness at my coming. Then they sat down and conversed with me till nightfall, when five of them arose and laid the trays and spread them with flowers and fragrant herbs and fruits, fresh and dried, and confections in profusion. At last they brought out a fine wine-service with rich old wine; and we sat down to drink and some sang songs and others played the lute and psaltery and recorders and other instruments, and the bowl went merrily round. Hereupon such gladness possessed me that I forgot the sorrows of the world one and all and said, "This is indeed life; O sad that 'tis fleeting!"

I enjoyed their company till the time came for rest; and our heads were all warm with wine, when they said, "O our lord, choose from amongst us her who shall be thy bed-fellow this night and not lie with thee again till forty days be past." So I chose a girl fair of face and perfect in shape, with eyes Kohl-edged by nature's hand; hair long and jet black with slightly parted teeth⁶⁵ and joining brows: 'twas as if she were some limber graceful branchlet or the slender stalk of sweet basil to amaze and to bewilder man's fancy, even as the poet said of such an one: —

*To even her with greeny bough were vain * Fool he who finds her
beauties in the roe:*

*When hath the roe those lively lovely limbs * Or honey dewes those lips
alone bestow?*

⁶⁵ A slight parting between the two front incisors, the upper only, is considered a beauty by Arabs.

*Those eyne, soul-piercing eyne, which slay with love, * Which bind the
victim by their shafts laid low?*

*My heart to second childhood they beguiled * No wonder: love-sick
man again is child!*

And I repeated to her the maker's words who said: —

*None other charms but thine shall greet mine eyes, * Nor other image
can my heart surprise:*

*Thy love, my lady, captives all my thoughts * And on that love I'll die
and I'll arise.*

So I lay with her that night; none fairer I ever knew; and, when it was morning, the damsels carried me to the Hammam-bath and bathed me and robed me in fairest apparel. Then they served up food, and we ate and drank and the cup went round till nightfall when I chose from among them one fair of form and face, soft-sided and a model of grace, such an one as the poet described when he said: —

*On her fair bosom caskets twain I scanned, * Sealed fast with musk-
seals lovers to withstand;*

*With arrowy glances stand on guard her eyes, * Whose shafts would
shoot who dares put forth a hand.*

With her I spent a most goodly night; and, to be brief, O my mistress, I remained with them in all solace and delight of life, eating and drinking, conversing and carousing and every night lying with one or other of them. But at the head of the new year they came to me in tears and bade me farewell, weeping and crying out and clinging about me; whereat I wondered and said, “What may be the matter? verily you break my heart!” They exclaimed, “Would Heaven we had never

known thee; for, though we have companied with many, yet never saw we a pleasanter than thou or a more courteous.” And they wept again.

“But tell me more clearly,” asked I, “what causeth this weeping which maketh my gall-bladder⁶⁶ like to burst;” and they answered, “O our lord and master, it is severance which maketh us weep; and thou, and thou only, art the cause of our tears. If thou hearken to us we need never be parted and if thou hearken not we part for ever; but our hearts tell us that thou wilt not listen to our words and this is the cause of our tears and cries.”

“Tell me how the case standeth?”

“Know, O our lord, that we are the daughters of Kings who have met here and have lived together for years; and once in every year we are perforce absent for forty days; and afterwards we return and abide here for the rest of the twelvemonth eating and drinking and taking our pleasure and enjoying delights: we are about to depart according to our custom; and we fear lest after we be gone thou contraire our charge and disobey our injunctions. Here now we commit to thee the keys of the palace which containeth forty chambers and thou mayest open of these thirty and nine, but beware (and we conjure thee by Allah and by the lives of us!) lest thou open the fortieth door, for therein is that which shall separate us for ever.” Quoth I, “Assuredly I will not open it, if it contain the cause of severance from you.” Then one among them came up to me and falling on my neck wept and recited these verses: —

*If Time unite us after absent-while, * The world harsh frowning on
our lot shall smile;*

⁶⁶ i.e. makes me taste the bitterness of death, “bursting the gall-bladder” (Marárah) being our “breaking the heart.”

*And if thy semblance deign adorn mine eyes, * I'll pardon Time past
wrongs and by-gone guile.*

And I recited the following: —

*When drew she near to bid adieu with heart unstrung, * While care
and longing on that day her bosom wrung;
Wet pearls she wept and mine like red carnelians rolled * And, joined
in sad rivièrè, around her neck they hung.*

When I saw her weeping I said, “By Allah I will never open that fortieth door, never and no wise!” and I bade her farewell. Thereupon all departed flying away like birds; signalling with their hands farewells as they went and leaving me alone in the palace. When evening drew near I opened the door of the first chamber and entering it found myself in a place like one of the pleasaunces of Paradise. It was a garden with trees of freshest green and ripe fruits of yellow sheen; and its birds were singing clear and keen and rills ran wimpling through the fair terrene. The sight and sounds brought solace to my sprite; and I walked among the trees, and I smelt the breath of the flowers on the breeze; and heard the birdies sing their melodies hymning the One, the Almighty in sweetest litanies; and I looked upon the apple whose hue is parcel red and parcel yellow; as said the poet: —

*Apple whose hue combines in union mellow * My fair's red cheek, her
hapless lover's yellow.*

Then I looked upon the quince, and inhaled its fragrance which putteth to shame musk and ambergris, even as the poet hath said: —

*Quince every taste conjoins; in her are found * Gifts which for queen
of fruits the Quince have crowned;*

*Her taste is wine, her scent the waft of musk; * Pure gold her hue, her shape the Moon's fair round.*

Then I looked upon the pear whose taste surpasseth sherbet and sugar; and the apricot whose beauty striketh the eye with admiration, as if she were a polished ruby. Then I went out of the place and locked the door as it was before.

When it was the morrow I opened the second door; and entering found myself in a spacious plain set with tall date-palms and watered by a running stream whose banks were shrubbed with bushes of rose and jasmine, while privet and eglantine, oxe-eye, violet and lily, narcissus, origane and the winter gilliflower carpeted the borders; and the breath of the breeze swept over these sweet-smelling growths diffusing their delicious odours right and left, perfuming the world and filling my soul with delight. After taking my pleasure there awhile I went from it and, having closed the door as it was before, opened the third door wherein I saw a high open hall pargetted with parti-coloured marbles and *pietra dura* of price and other precious stones, and hung with cages of sandal-wood and eagle-wood; full of birds which made sweet music, such as the "Thousand-voiced,"⁶⁷ and the cushat, the merle, the turtle-dove and the Nubian ring-dove. My heart was filled with pleasure thereby; my grief was dispelled and I slept in that aviary till dawn.

Then I unlocked the door of the fourth chamber and therein found a grand saloon with forty smaller chambers giving upon it. All their doors stood open: so I entered and found them full of pearls and jacinths and beryls and emeralds and corals and carbuncles, and all manner precious gems and jewels, such as tongue of man may not

⁶⁷ A kind of mocking bird.

describe. My thought was stunned at the sight and I said to myself, “These be things methinks united which could not be found save in the treasuries of a King of Kings, nor could the monarchs of the world have collected the like of these!” And my heart dilated and my sorrows ceased, “For,” quoth I, “now verily am I the monarch of the age, since by Allah’s grace this enormous wealth is mine; and I have forty damsels under my hand nor is there any to claim them save myself.”

Then I gave not over opening place after place until nine and thirty days were passed and in that time I had entered every chamber except that one whose door the Princesses had charged me not to open. But my thoughts, O my mistress, ever ran on that forbidden fortieth and Satan urged me to open it for my own undoing; nor had I patience to forbear, albeit there wanted of the trysting time but a single day. So I stood before the chamber aforesaid and, after a moment’s hesitation, opened the door which was plated with red gold, and entered. I was met by a perfume whose like I had never before smelt; and so sharp and subtle was the odour that it made my senses drunken as with strong wine, and I fell to the ground in a fainting fit which lasted a full hour.

When I came to myself I strengthened my heart and, entering, found myself in a chamber whose floor was bespread with saffron and blazing with light from branched candelabra of gold and lamps fed with costly oils, which diffused the scent of musk and ambergris. I saw there also two great censers each big as a mazer-bowl, flaming with lign-aloes, nadd-perfume,⁶⁸ ambergris and honied scents; and the place was full of their fragrance. Presently, O my lady, I espied a noble steed, black as the murks of night when murkiest, standing, ready saddled

⁶⁸ A compound scent of ambergris, musk and aloes.

and bridled (and his saddle was of red gold) before two mangers, one of clear crystal wherein was husked sesame, and the other also of crystal containing water of the rose scented with musk. When I saw this I marvelled and said to myself, “Doubtless in this animal must be some wondrous mystery;” and Satan cozened me, so I led him without the palace and mounted him; but he would not stir from his place. So I hammered his sides with my heels, but he moved not, and then I took the rein-whip,⁶⁹ and struck him withal. When he felt the blow, he neighed a neigh with a sound like deafening thunder and, opening a pair of wings flew up with me in the firmament of heaven far beyond the eyesight of man.

After a full hour of flight he descended and alighted on a terrace roof and shaking me off his back lashed me on the face with his tail and gouged out my left eye causing it roll along my cheek. Then he flew away. I went down from the terrace and found myself again amongst the ten one-eyed youths sitting upon their ten couches with blue covers; and they cried out when they saw me, “No welcome to thee, nor aught of good cheer! We all lived of lives the happiest and we ate and drank of the best; upon brocades and cloths of gold we took rest and we slept with our heads on beauty’s breast, but we could not await one day to gain the delights of a year!” Quoth I, “Behold I have become one like unto you and now I would have you bring me a tray full of blackness, wherewith to blacken my face, and receive me into your society.” “No, by Allah,” quoth they, “thou shalt not sojourn with us and now get thee hence!” So they drove me away.

Finding them reject me thus I foresaw that matters would go hard with me, and I remembered the many miseries which Destiny had

⁶⁹ The ends of the bridle-reins forming the whip.

written upon my forehead; and I fared forth from among them heavy-hearted and tearful-eyed, repeating to myself these words, "I was sitting at mine ease but my frowardness brought me to unease." Then I shaved beard and mustachios and eyebrows, renouncing the world, and wandered in Kalandar-garb about Allah's earth; and the Almighty decreed safety for me till I arrived at Baghdad, which was on the evening of this very night. Here I met these two other Kalandars standing bewildered; so I saluted them saying, "I am a stranger!" and they answered, "And we likewise be strangers!" By the freak of Fortune we were like to like, three Kalandars and three monoculars all blind of the left eye. Such, O my lady, is the cause of the shearing of my beard and the manner of my losing an eye.

Said the lady to him, "Rub thy head and wend thy ways;" but he answered, "By Allah, I will not go until I hear the stories of these others." Then the lady, turning towards the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur, said to them, "Do ye also give an account of yourselves, you men!" Whereupon Ja'afar stood forth and told her what he had told the portress as they were entering the house; and when she heard his story of their being merchants and Mosul-men who had outrun the watch, she said, "I grant you your lives each for each sake, and now away with you all." So they all went out and when they were in the street, quoth the Caliph to the Kalandars, "O company, whither go ye now, seeing that the morning hath not yet dawned?" Quoth they, "By Allah, O our lord, we know not where to go."

"Come and pass the rest of the night with us," said the Caliph and, turning to Ja'afar, "Take them home with thee and to-morrow bring them to my presence that we may chronicle their adventures." Ja'afar did as the Caliph bade him and the Commander of the Faithful returned to his palace; but sleep gave no sign of visiting him that night

and he lay awake pondering the mishaps of the three Kalandar-princes and impatient to know the history of the ladies and the two black bitches. No sooner had morning dawned than he went forth and sat upon the throne of his sovereignty; and, turning to Ja'afar, after all his Grandees and Officers of state were gathered together, he said, "Bring me the three ladies and the two bitches and the three Kalandars."

So Ja'afar fared forth and brought them all before him (and the ladies were veiled); then the Minister turned to them and said in the Caliph's name, "We pardon you your maltreatment of us and your want of courtesy, in consideration of the kindness which forewent it, and for that ye knew us not: now however I would have you to know that ye stand in presence of the fifth of the sons of Abbas, Harun al-Rashid, brother of Caliph Músá al-Hádi, son of Al-Mansúr; son of Mohammed the brother of Al-Saffáh bin Mohammed who was first of the royal house. Speak ye therefore before him the truth and the whole truth!" When the ladies heard Ja'afar's words touching the Commander of the Faithful, the eldest came forward and said, "O Prince of True Believers, my story is one which, were it graven with needle-gravers upon the eye-corners were a warner for whoso would be warned and an example for whoso can take profit from example." —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventeenth Night,

she said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that she stood forth before the Commander of the Faithful and began to tell

The Eldest Lady's Tale.

Verily a strange tale is mine and 'tis this: — Yon two black bitches are my eldest sisters by one mother and father; and these two others, she who beareth upon her the signs of stripes and the third our procuratrix are my sisters by another mother. When my father died, each took her share of the heritage and, after a while my mother also deceased, leaving me and my sisters-german three thousand dinars; so each daughter received her portion of a thousand dinars and I the same, albe the youngest. In due course of time my sisters married with the usual festivities and lived with their husbands, who bought merchandise with their wives' monies and set out on their travels together. Thus they threw me off.

My brothers-in-law were absent with their wives five years, during which period they spent all the money they had and, becoming bankrupt, deserted my sisters in foreign parts amid stranger folk. After five years my eldest sister returned to me in beggar's gear with her clothes in rags and tatters and a dirty old mantilla; and truly she was in the foulest and sorriest plight. At first sight I did not know my own sister; but presently I recognised her and said "What state is this?"

"O our sister," she replied, "Words cannot undo the done; and the reed of Destiny hath run through what Allah decreed." Then I sent her to the bath and dressed her in a suit of mine own, and boiled for her a bouillon and brought her some good wine and said to her, "O my sister, thou art the eldest, who still standest to us in the stead of father and mother; and, as for the inheritance which came to me as to you twain, Allah hath blessed it and prospered it to me with increase; and my circumstances are easy, for I have made much money by spinning and cleaning silk; and I and you will share my wealth alike." I entreated

her with all kindness and she abode with me a whole year, during which our thoughts and fancies were always full of our other sister.

Shortly after she too came home in yet fouler and sorrier plight than that of my eldest sister; and I dealt by her still more honorably than I had done by the first, and each of them had a share of my substance. After a time they said to me, “O our sister, we desire to marry again, for indeed we have not patience to drag on our days without husbands and to lead the lives of widows bewitched;” and I replied, “O eyes of me! ye have hitherto seen scanty weal in wedlock, for now-a-days good men and true are become rarities and curiosities; nor do I deem your projects advisable, as ye have already made trial of matrimony and have failed.” But they would not accept my advice and married without my consent: nevertheless I gave them outfit and dowries out of my money; and they fared forth with their mates.

In a mighty little time their husbands played them false and, taking whatever they could lay hands upon, levanted and left them in the lurch. Thereupon they came to me ashamed and in abject case and made their excuses to me, saying, “Pardon our fault and be not wroth with us; for although thou art younger in years yet art thou older in wit; henceforth we will never make mention of marriage; so take us back as thy handmaidens that we may eat our mouthful.” Quoth I, “Welcome to you, O my sisters, there is naught dearer to me than you.” And I took them in and redoubled my kindness to them.

We ceased not to live after this loving fashion for a full year, when I resolved to sell my wares abroad and first to fit me a conveyance for Bassorah; so I equipped a large ship, and loaded her with merchandise and valuable goods for traffic, and with provaunt and all needful for a voyage, and said to my sisters, “Will ye abide at home whilst I travel, or would ye prefer to accompany me on the voyage?”

“We will travel with thee,” answered they, “for we cannot bear to be parted from thee.” So I divided my monies into two parts, one to accompany me and the other to be left in charge of a trusty person, for, as I said to myself, “Haply some accident may happen to the ship and yet we remain alive; in which case we shall find on our return what may stand us in good stead.”

I took my two sisters and we went a-voyaging some days and nights; but the master was careless enough to miss his course, and the ship went astray with us and entered a sea other than the sea we sought. For a time we knew naught of this; and the wind blew fair for us ten days, after which the look-out man went aloft to see about him and cried, “Good news!” Then he came down rejoicing and said, “I have seen what seemeth to be a city as ’twere a pigeon.” Hereat we rejoiced and, ere an hour of the day had passed, the buildings showed plain in the offing and we asked the Captain, “What is the name of yonder city?”; and he answered, “By Allah I wot not, for I never saw it before and never sailed these seas in my life: but, since our troubles have ended in safety, remains for you only to land there with your merchandise and, if you find selling profitable, sell and make your market of what is there; and if not, we will rest here two days and provision ourselves and fare away.”

So we entered the port and the Captain went up town and was absent awhile, after which he returned to us and said, “Arise; go up into the city and marvel at the works of Allah with His creatures and pray to be preserved from His righteous wrath!” So we landed and going up into the city, saw at the gate men hending staves in hand; but when we drew near them, behold, they had been translated by the anger of Allah and had become stones. Then we entered the city and found all who therein woned into black stones enstoned: not an

inhabited house appeared to the espier, nor was there a blower of fire. We were awe struck at the sight and threaded the market streets where we found the goods and gold and silver left lying in their places; and we were glad and said, "Doubtless there is some mystery in all this." Then we dispersed about the thoroughfares and each busied himself with collecting the wealth and money and rich stuffs, taking scanty heed of friend or comrade.

As for myself I went up to the castle which was strongly fortified; and, entering the King's palace by its gate of red gold, found all the vaiselle of gold and silver, and the King himself seated in the midst of his Chamberlains and Nabobs and Emirs and Wazirs; all clad in raiment which confounded man's art. I drew nearer and saw him sitting on a throne incrustated and inlaid with pearls and gems; and his robes were of gold-cloth adorned with jewels of every kind, each one flashing like a star. Around him stood fifty Mamelukes, white slaves, clothed in silks of divers sorts holding their drawn swords in their hands; but when I drew near to them lo! all were black stones. My understanding was confounded at the sight, but I walked on and entered the great hall of the Harím,⁷⁰ whose walls I found hung with tapestries of gold-striped silk and spread with silken carpets embroidered with golden flowers. Here I saw the Queen lying at full length arrayed in robes purpled with fresh young⁷¹ pearls; on her head was a diadem set with many sorts of gems each fit for a ring and around her neck hung collars and necklaces. All her raiment and her ornaments were in natural state but she had been turned into a black stone by Allah's wrath.

⁷⁰ The olden "Harem" (or gynaeceum, Pers. Zenanah, Serraglio): Harím is also used by synecdoche for the inmates; especially the wife.

⁷¹ The pearl is supposed in the East to lose 1% per ann. of its splendour and value.

Presently I espied an open door for which I made straight and found leading to it a flight of seven steps. So I walked up and came upon a place pargetted with marble and spread and hung with gold-worked carpets and tapestry, amiddlemost of which stood a throne of juniper-wood inlaid with pearls and precious stones and set with bosses of emeralds. In the further wall was an alcove whose curtains, bestrung with pearls, were let down and I saw a light issuing therefrom; so I drew near and perceived that the light came from a precious stone as big as an ostrich-egg, set at the upper end of the alcove upon a little chryselephantine couch of ivory and gold; and this jewel, blazing like the sun, cast its rays wide and side. The couch also was spread with all manner of silken stuffs amazing the gazer with their richness and beauty. I marvelled much at all this, especially when seeing in that place candles ready lighted; and I said in my mind, "Needs must some one have lighted these candles." Then I went forth and came to the kitchen and thence to the buttery and the King's treasure-chambers; and continued to explore the palace and to pace from place to place; I forgot myself in my awe and marvel at these matters and I was drowned in thought till the night came on.

Then I would have gone forth, but knowing not the gate I lost my way, so I returned to the alcove whither the lighted candles directed me and sat down upon the couch; and wrapping myself in a coverlet, after I had repeated somewhat from the Koran, I would have slept but could not, for restlessness possessed me. When night was at its noon I heard a voice chanting the Koran in sweetest accents; but the tone thereof was weak; so I rose, glad to hear the silence broken, and followed the sound until I reached a closet whose door stood ajar. Then peeping through a chink I considered the place and lo! it was an oratory wherein was a prayer-niche with two wax-candles burning and

lamps hanging from the ceiling. In it too was spread a prayer-carpet whereupon sat a youth fair to see; and before him on its stand was a copy of the Koran, from which he was reading. I marvelled to see him alone alive amongst the people of the city and entering saluted him; whereupon he raised his eyes and returned my salam. Quoth I, “Now by the Truth of what thou readest in Allah’s Holy Book, I conjure thee to answer my question.”

He looked upon me with a smile and said, “O handmaid of Allah, first tell me the cause of thy coming hither, and I in turn will tell what hath befallen both me and the people of this city, and what was the reason of my escaping their doom.” So I told him my story whereat he wondered; and I questioned him of the people of the city, when he replied, “Have patience with me for a while, O my sister!” and, reverently closing the Holy Book, he laid it up in a satin bag. Then he seated me by his side; and I looked at him and behold, he was as the moon at its full, fair of face and rare of form, soft-sided and slight, of well-proportioned height, and cheek smoothly bright and diffusing light; in brief a sweet, a sugar-stick, even as saith the poet of the like of him in these couplets: —

*That night th’ astrologer a scheme of planets drew, * And lo! a
graceful shape of youth appeared in view:*

*Saturn had stained his locks with Saturninest jet, * And spots of nut-
brown musk on rosy side-face blew:⁷²*

*Mars tintured either cheek with tinct of martial red; * Sagittal shots
from eyelids Sagittarius threw:*

⁷² The Persian poets have a thousand conceits in praise of the “mole.”

*Dowered him Mercury with bright mercurial wit; * Bore off the Bear⁷³
 what all man's evil glances grew:
 Amazed stood Astrophil to sight the marvel-birth * When louted low
 the Moon at full to buss the Earth.*

And of a truth Allah the Most High had robed him in the raiment of perfect grace and had purpled and fringed it with a cheek all beauty and loveliness, even as the poet saith of such an one: —

*By his eyelids shedding perfume and his fine slim waist I swear, *
 By the shooting of his shafts barbed with sorcery passing rare;
 By the softness of his sides, and glances' lingering light; * And brow
 of dazzling day-tide ray and night within his hair;
 By his eyebrows which deny to who look upon them rest, * Now bidding
 now forbidding, ever dealing joy and care;
 By the rose that decks his cheek, and the myrtle of its moss;⁷⁴ *
 By jacinths bedded in his lips and pearl his smile lays bare;
 By his graceful bending neck and the curving of his breast, * Whose
 polished surface beareth those granados, lovely pair;
 By his heavy hips that quiver as he passeth in his pride; * Or he resteth
 with that waist which is slim beyond compare;
 By the satin of his skin, by that fine unsullied sprite; * By the beauty
 that containeth all things bright and debonnair;
 By that ever-open hand; by the candour of his tongue; * By noble blood
 and high degree whereof he's hope and heir;
 Musk from him borrows muskiness she loveth to exhale * And all the
 airs of ambergris through him perfume the air;*

⁷³ Arab. "Suhá" a star in the Great Bear introduced only to balance "wushát" = spies, enviers, enemies, whose "evil eye" it will ward off.

⁷⁴ The myrtle is the young hair upon the side-face.

*The sun, methinks, the broad bright sun, before my love would pale *
And sans his splendour would appear a paring of his nail.*

I glanced at him with one glance of eyes which caused me a thousand sighs; and my heart was at once taken captive-wise, so I asked him, “O my lord and my love, tell me that whereof I questioned thee;” and he answered, “Hearing is obeying! Know O handmaid of Allah, that this city was the capital of my father who is the King thou sawest on the throne transfigured by Allah’s wrath to a black stone, and the Queen thou foundest in the alcove is my mother. They and all the people of the city were Magians who fire adored in lieu of the Omnipotent Lord and were wont to swear by lowe and heat and shade and light and the spheres revolving day and night. My father had ne’er a son till he was blest with me near the last of his days; and he reared me till I grew up and prosperity anticipated me in all things.

Now it so fortunated that there was with us an old woman well stricken in years, a Moslemah who, inwardly believing in Allah and His Apostle, conformed outwardly with the religion of my people; and my father placed thorough confidence in her for that he knew her to be trustworthy and virtuous; and he treated her with ever-increasing kindness believing her to be of his own belief. So when I was well-nigh grown up my father committed me to her charge saying: — Take him and educate him and teach him the rules of our faith; let him have the best instructions and cease not thy fostering care of him. So she took me and taught me the tenets of Al-Islam with the divine ordinances of the Wuzu-ablution and the five daily prayers and she made me learn the Koran by rote, often repeating: — Serve none save Allah Almighty! When I had mastered this much of knowledge she said to me: — O my son, keep this matter concealed from thy sire and reveal naught to him

lest he slay thee. So I hid it from him and I abode on this wise for a term of days when the old woman died, and the people of the city redoubled in their impiety and arrogance and the error of their ways. One day, while they were as wont, behold, they heard a loud and terrible sound and a crier crying out with a voice like roaring thunder so every ear could hear, far and near: — O folk of this city, leave ye your fire-worshipping and adore Allah the All-compassionate King!

At this, fear and terror fell upon the citizens and they crowded to my father (he being King of the city) and asked him: — What is this awesome voice we have heard, for it hath confounded us with the excess of its terror?; and he answered: — Let not a voice fright you nor shake your steadfast sprite nor turn you back from the faith which is right. Their hearts inclined to his words and they ceased not to worship the fire and they persisted in rebellion for a full year from the time they heard the first voice; and on the anniversary came a second cry, and a third at the head of the third year, each year once. Still they persisted in their malpractises till one day at break of dawn, judgment and the wrath of Heaven descended upon them with all suddenness, and by the visitation of Allah all were metamorphosed into black stones, they and their beasts and their cattle; and none was saved save myself who at the time was engaged in my devotions. From that day to this I am in the case thou seest, constant in prayer and fasting and reading and reciting the Koran; but I am indeed grown weary by reason of my loneliness, having none to bear me company.”

Then said I to him (for in very sooth he had won my heart and was the lord of my life and soul), “O youth, wilt thou fare with me to Baghdad city and visit the Olema and men learned in the law and doctors of divinity and get thee increase of wisdom and understanding and theology? And know that she who standeth in thy presence will be

thy handmaid, albeit she be head of her family and mistress over men and eunuchs and servants and slaves. Indeed my life was no life before it fell in with thy youth. I have here a ship laden with merchandise; and in very truth Destiny drove me to this city that I might come to the knowledge of these matters, for it was fated that we should meet.” And I ceased not to persuade him and speak him fair and use every art till he consented. —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighteenth Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady ceased not persuading with soft speech the youth to depart with her till he consented and said “Yes.” She slept that night lying at his feet and hardly knowing where she was for excess of joy.

As soon as the next morning dawned (she pursued, addressing the Caliph), I arose and we entered the treasuries and took thence whatever was light in weight and great in worth; then we went down side by side from the castle to the city, where we were met by the Captain and my sisters and slaves who had been seeking for me. When they saw me they rejoiced and asked what had stayed me, and I told them all I had seen and related to them the story of the young Prince and the transformation wherewith the citizens had been justly visited. Hereat all marvelled, but when my two sisters (these two bitches, O Commander of the Faithful!) saw me by the side of my young lover they jaloused me on his account and were wroth and plotted mischief against me.

We awaited a fair wind and went on board rejoicing and ready to fly for joy by reason of the goods we had gotten, but my own greatest

joyance was in the youth; and we waited awhile till the wind blew fair for us and then we set sail and fared forth. Now as we sat talking, my sisters asked me, "And what wilt thou do with this handsome young man?"; and I answered, "I purpose to make him my husband!" Then I turned to him and said, "O my lord, I have that to propose to thee wherein thou must not cross me; and this it is that, when we reach Baghdad, my native city, I offer thee my life as thy handmaiden in holy matrimony, and thou shalt be to me baron and I will be femme to thee." He answered, "I hear and I obey!; thou art my lady and my mistress and whatso thou doest I will not gainsay." Then I turned to my sisters and said, "This is my gain; I content me with this youth and those who have gotten aught of my property let them keep it as their gain with my good will."

"Thou sayest and doest well," answered the twain, but they imagined mischief against me. We ceased not spooning before a fair wind till we had exchanged the sea of peril for the seas of safety and, in a few days, we made Bassorah-city, whose buildings loomed clear before us as evening fell. But after we had retired to rest and were sound asleep, my two sisters arose and took me up, bed and all, and threw me into the sea: they did the same with the young Prince who, as he could not swim, sank and was drowned and Allah enrolled him in the noble army of Martyrs. As for me would Heaven I had been drowned with him, but Allah deemed that I should be of the saved; so when I awoke and found myself in the sea and saw the ship making off like a dash of lightning, He threw in my way a piece of timber which I bestrided, and the waves tossed me to and fro till they cast me upon an island coast, a high land and an uninhabited.

I landed and walked about the island the rest of the night and, when morning dawned, I saw a rough track barely fit for child of Adam

to tread, leading to what proved a shallow ford connecting island and mainland. As soon as the sun had risen I spread my garments to dry in its rays; and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters; then I set out along the foot-track and ceased not walking till I reached the mainland. Now when there remained between me and the city but a two hours' journey behold, a great serpent, the bigness of a date-palm, came fleeing towards me in all haste, gliding along now to the right then to the left till she was close upon me, whilst her tongue lolled ground-wards a span long and swept the dust as she went. She was pursued by a Dragon who was not longer than two lances, and of slender build about the bulk of a spear and, although her terror lent her speed, and she kept wriggling from side to side, he overtook her and seized her by the tail, whereat her tears streamed down and her tongue was thrust out in her agony. I took pity on her and, picking up a stone and calling upon Allah for aid, threw it at the Dragon's head with such force that he died then and there; and the serpent opening a pair of wings flew into the lift and disappeared from before my eyes. I sat down marvelling over that adventure, but I was weary and, drowsiness overcoming me, I slept where I was for a while.

When I awoke I found a jet-black damsel sitting at my feet shampooing them; and by her side stood two black bitches (my sisters, O Commander of the Faithful!). I was ashamed before her and, sitting up, asked her, "O my sister, who and what art thou?"; and she answered, "How soon hast thou forgotten me! I am she for whom thou wroughtest a good deed and sowedest the seed of gratitude and slewest her foe; for I am the serpent whom by Allah's aidance thou didst just now deliver from the Dragon. I am a Jinniyah and he was a Jinn who hated me, and none saved my life from him save thou. As soon as thou freedest me from him I flew on the wind to the ship

whence thy sisters threw thee, and removed all that was therein to thy house. Then I ordered my attendant Marids to sink the ship and I transformed thy two sisters into these black bitches; for I know all that hath passed between them and thee; but as for the youth, of a truth he is drowned.” So saying, she flew up with me and the bitches, and presently set us down on the terrace-roof of my house, wherein I found ready stored the whole of what property was in my ship, nor was aught of it missing.

“Now” (continued the serpent that was), “I swear by all engraven on the seal-ring of Solomon (with whom be peace!) unless thou deal to each of these bitches three hundred stripes every day I will come and imprison thee for ever under the earth.” I answered, “Hearkening and obedience!”; and away she flew. But before going she again charged me saying, “I again swear by Him who made the two seas flow⁷⁵ (and this be my second oath) if thou gainsay me I will come and transform thee like thy sisters.” Since then I have never failed, O Commander of the Faithful, to beat them with that number of blows till their blood flows with my tears, I pitying them the while, and well they wot that their being scourged is no fault of mine and they accept my excuses. And this is my tale and my history!

The Caliph marvelled at her adventures and then signed to Ja’afar who said to the second lady, the Portress, “And thou, how camest thou by the welts and wheals upon thy body?” So she began the

Tale of the Portress.

Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I had a father who, after ful-

⁷⁵ i.e. the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

filling his time, deceased and left me great store of wealth. I remained single for a short time and presently married one of the richest of his day. I abode with him a year when he also died, and my share of his property amounted to eighty thousand dinars in gold according to the holy law of inheritance. Thus I became passing rich and my reputation spread far and wide, for I had made me ten changes of raiment, each worth a thousand dinars. One day as I was sitting at home, behold, there came in to me an old woman with lantern jaws and cheeks sucked in, and eyes rucked up, and eyebrows scant and scald, and head bare and bald; and teeth broken by time and mauled, and back bending and neck-nape nodding, and face blotched, and rheum running, and hair like a snake black-and-white-speckled, in complexion a very fright, even as saith the poet of the like of her: —

*Ill-omened hag! unshriven be her sins * Nor mercy visit her on dying
bed:*

*Thousand head-strongest he-mules would her guiles, * Despite their
bolting, lead with spider thread.*

And as saith another: —

*A hag to whom th' unlawful lawfullest * And witchcraft wisdom in
her sight are grown:*

*A mischief-making brat, a demon-maid, * A whorish woman and a
pimping crone.*

When the old woman entered she salamed to me and kissing the ground before me, said, “I have at home an orphan daughter and this night are her wedding and her displaying.”⁷⁶ We be poor folks and

⁷⁶ Arab. “Jilá” = the displaying of the bride before the bridegroom for the first time, in different dresses, to the number of seven which are often borrowed for the

strangers in this city knowing none inhabitant and we are broken-hearted. So do thou earn for thyself a recompense and a reward in Heaven by being present at her displaying and, when the ladies of this city shall hear that thou art to make act of presence, they also will present themselves; so shalt thou comfort her affliction, for she is sore bruised in spirit and she hath none to look to save Allah the Most High.” Then she wept and kissed my feet reciting these couplets: —

*Thy presence bringeth us a grace * We own before thy winsome face:
And wert thou absent ne'er an one * Could stand in stead or take thy
place.*

So pity gat hold on me and compassion and I said, “Hearing is consenting and, please Allah, I will do somewhat more for her; nor shall she be shown to her bridegroom save in my raiment and ornaments and jewelry.” At this the old woman rejoiced and bowed her head to my feet and kissed them, saying, “Allah requite thee weal, and comfort thy heart even as thou hast comforted mine! But, O my lady, do not trouble thyself to do me this service at this hour; be thou ready by supper-time, when I will come and fetch thee.” So saying she kissed my hand and went her ways.

I set about stringing my pearls and donning my brocades and making my toilette, little recking what Fortune had in womb for me, when suddenly the old woman stood before me, simpering and smiling till she showed every tooth-stump, and quoth she, “O my mistress, the city madams have arrived and when I apprized them that thou promisedst to be present, they were glad and they are now awaiting thee and looking eagerly for thy coming and for the honour of meeting thee.”

occasion. The happy man must pay a fee called “the tax of face-unveiling” before he can see her features.

So I threw on my mantilla and, making the old crone walk before me and my handmaidens behind me, I fared till we came to a street well watered and swept neat, where the winnowing breeze blew cool and sweet. Here we were stopped by a gate arched over with a dome of marble stone firmly seated on solidest foundation, and leading to a Palace whose walls from earth rose tall and proud, and whose pinnacle was crowned by the clouds, and over the doorway were writ these couplets: —

*I am the wone where Mirth shall ever smile; * The home of Joyance
through my lasting while:
And 'mid my court a fountain jets and flows, * Nor tears nor troubles
shall that fount defile:
The marge with royal Nu'uman's⁷⁷ bloom is dight, * Myrtle,
Narcissus-flower and Chamomile.*

Arrived at the gate, before which hung a black curtain, the old woman knocked and it was opened to us; when we entered and found a vestibule spread with carpets and hung around with lamps all alight and wax-candles in candelabra adorned with pendants of precious gems and noble ores. We passed on through this passage till we entered a saloon, whose like for grandeur and beauty is not to be found in this world. It was hung and carpeted with silken stuffs, and was illuminated with branches, sconces and tapers ranged in double row, an avenue abutting on the upper or noble end of the saloon, where stood a couch of juniper-wood encrusted with pearls and gems and surmounted by a baldaquin with mosquito-curtains of satin looped up with margarites.

⁷⁷ Arab. "Shakáik al-Nu'uman," lit. the fissures of Nu'uman, the beautiful anemone, which a tyrannical King of Hirah, Nu'uman Al-Munzir, a contemporary of Mohammed, attempted to monopolize.

And hardly had we taken note of this when there came forth from the baldaquin a young lady and I looked, O Commander of the Faithful, upon a face and form more perfect than the moon when fullest, with a favour brighter than the dawn gleaming with saffron-hued light, even as the poet sang when he said: —

*Thou paces the palace a marvel-sight, * A bride for a Kisrá's or
Kaisar's night!*

*Wantons the rose on thy roseate cheek, * O cheek as the blood of the
dragon bright!*

*Slim-waisted, languorous, sleepy-eyed, * With charms which promise
all love-delight:*

*And the tire which attires thy tiara'd brow * Is a night of woe on a
morn's glad light.*

The fair young girl came down from the estrade and said to me, “Welcome and well come and good cheer to my sister, the dearly-beloved, the illustrious, and a thousand greetings!” Then she recited these couplets: —

*An but the house could know who cometh 'twould rejoice, * And kiss
the very dust whereon thy foot was placed;*

*And with the tongue of circumstance the walls would say, * “Welcome
and hail to one with generous gifts engraced!”*

Then sat she down and said to me, “O my sister, I have a brother who hath had sight of thee at sundry wedding-feasts and festive seasons: he is a youth handsomer than I, and he hath fallen desperately in love with thee, for that bounteous Destiny hath garnered in thee all beauty and perfection; and he hath given silver to this old woman that she might visit thee; and she hath contrived on this wise to foregather us twain.

He hath heard that thou art one of the nobles of thy tribe nor is he aught less in his; and, being desirous to ally his lot with thy lot, he hath practised this device to bring me in company with thee; for he is fain to marry thee after the ordinance of Allah and his Apostle; and in what is lawful and right there is no shame.”

When I heard these words and saw myself fairly entrapped in the house, I said, “Hearing is consenting.” She was delighted at this and clapped her hands; whereupon a door opened and out of it came a young man blooming in the prime of life, exquisitely dressed, a model of beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, with gentle winning manners and eyebrows like a bended bow and shaft on cord, and eyes which bewitched all hearts with sorcery lawful in the sight of the Lord; even as saith some rhymer describing the like of him: —

*His face as the face of the young moon shines * And Fortune stamps
him with pearls for signs.*

And Allah favour him who said: —

*Blest be his beauty; blest the Lord's decree * Who cast and shaped a
thing so bright of blee:*

*All gifts of beauty he conjoins in one; * Lost in his love is all
humanity;*

*For Beauty's self inscribed on his brow * “I testify there be no Good
but he!”*

When I looked at him my heart inclined to him and I loved him; and he sat by my side and talked with me a while, when the young lady again clapped her hands and behold, a side-door opened and out of it came the Kazi with his four assessors as witnesses; and they saluted us and, sitting down, drew up and wrote out the marriage-contract

between me and the youth and retired. Then he turned to me and said, "Be our night blessed," presently adding, "O my lady, I have a condition to lay on thee." Quoth I, "O my lord, what is that?" Whereupon he arose and fetching a copy of the Holy Book presented it to me saying, "Swear hereon thou wilt never look at any other than myself nor incline thy body or thy heart to him." I swore readily enough to this and he joyed with exceeding joy and embraced me round the neck while love for him possessed my whole heart. Then they set the table before us and we ate and drank till we were satisfied; but I was dying for the coming of the night. And when night did come he led me to the bride-chamber and slept with me on the bed and continued to kiss and embrace me till the morning — such a night I had never seen in my dreams.

I lived with him a life of happiness and delight for a full month, at the end of which I asked his leave to go on foot to the bazar and buy me certain especial stuffs and he gave me permission. So I donned my mantilla and, taking with me the old woman and a slave-girl, I went to the khan of the silk-mercens, where I seated myself in the shop-front of a young merchant whom the old woman recommended, saying to me, "This youth's father died when he was a boy and left him great store of wealth: he hath by him a mighty fine stock of goods and thou wilt find what thou seekest with him, for none in the bazar hath better stuffs than he." Then she said to him, "Show this lady the most costly stuffs thou hast by thee;" and he replied, "Hearkening and obedience!" Then she whispered me, "Say a civil word to him!"; but I replied, "I am pledged to address no man save my lord." And as she began to sound his praise I said sharply to her, "We want nought of thy sweet speeches; our wish is to buy of him whatsoever we need, and return home." So he brought me all I sought and I offered him his money,

but he refused to take it saying, "Let it be a gift offered to my guest this day!" Then quoth I to the old woman, "If he will not take the money, give him back his stuff."

"By Allah," cried he, "not a thing will I take from thee: I sell it not for gold or for silver, but I give it all as a gift for a single kiss; a kiss more precious to me than everything the shop containeth." Asked the old woman, "What will the kiss profit thee?"; and, turning to me, whispered, "O my daughter, thou hearest what this young fellow saith? What harm will it do thee if he get a kiss from thee and thou gettest what thou seekest at that price?" Replied I, "I take refuge with Allah from such action! Knowest thou not that I am bound by an oath?" But she answered, "Now whist! just let him kiss thee and neither speak to him nor lean over him, so shalt thou keep thine oath and thy silver, and no harm whatever shall befall thee." And she ceased not to persuade me and importune me and make light of the matter till evil entered into my mind and I put my head in the poke⁷⁸ and, declaring I would ne'er consent, consented. So I veiled my eyes and held up the edge of my mantilla between me and the people passing and he put his mouth to my cheek under the veil. But while kissing me he bit me so hard a bite that it tore the flesh from my cheek, and blood flowed fast and faintness came over me.

The old woman caught me in her arms and, when I came to myself, I found the shop shut up and her sorrowing over me and saying, "Thank Allah for averting what might have been worse!" Then she said to me, "Come, take heart and let us go home before the matter become public and thou be dishonoured. And when thou art safe inside the house feign sickness and lie down and cover thyself up; and I will

⁷⁸ We should say "into the noose."

bring thee powders and plasters to cure this bite withal, and thy wound will be healed at the latest in three days." So after a while I arose and I was in extreme distress and terror came full upon me; but I went on little by little till I reached the house when I pleaded illness and lay me down.

When it was night my husband came in to me and said, "What hath befallen thee, O my darling, in this excursion of thine?"; and I replied, "I am not well: my head acheth badly." Then he lighted a candle and drew near me and looked hard at me and asked, "What is that wound I see on thy cheek and in the tenderest part too?" And I answered, "When I went out to-day with thy leave to buy stuffs, a camel laden with firewood jostled me and one of the pieces tore my veil and wounded my cheek as thou seest; for indeed the ways of this city are strait."

"To-morrow," cried he, "I will go complain to the Governor, so shall he gibbet every fuel-seller in Baghdad."

"Allah upon thee," said I, "burden not thy soul with such sin against any man. The fact is I was riding on an ass and it stumbled, throwing me to the ground; and my cheek lighted upon a stick or a bit of glass and got this wound."

"Then," said he, "to-morrow I will go up to Ja'afar the Barmaki and tell him the story, so shall he kill every donkey-boy in Baghdad."

"Wouldst thou destroy all these men because of my wound," said I, "when this which befel me was by decree of Allah and His destiny?" But he answered, "There is no help for it;" and, springing to his feet, plied me with words and pressed me till I was perplexed and frightened; and I stuttered and stammered and my speech waxed thick and I said, "This is a mere accident by decree of Allah." Then, O Commander of the Faithful, he guessed my case and said, "Thou hast

been false to thine oath.” He at once cried out with a loud cry, whereupon a door opened and in came seven black slaves whom he commanded to drag me from my bed and throw me down in the middle of the room. Furthermore, he ordered one of them to pinion my elbows and squat upon my head; and a second to sit upon my knees and secure my feet; and drawing his sword he gave it to a third and said, “Strike her, O Sa’ad, and cut her in twain and let each one take half and cast it into the Tigris that the fish may eat her; for such is the retribution due to those who violate their vows and are unfaithful to their love.” And he redoubled in wrath and recited these couplets: —

*An there be one who shares with me her love, * I’d strangle Love tho’
life by Love were slain;
Saying, O Soul, Death were the nobler choice, * For ill is Love when
shared ’twixt partners twain.*

Then he repeated to the slave, “Smite her, O Sa’ad!” And when the slave who was sitting upon me made sure of the command he bent down to me and said, “O my mistress, repeat the profession of Faith and bethink thee if there be any thing thou wouldst have done; for verily this is the last hour of thy life.”

“O good slave,” said I, “wait but a little while and get off my head that I may charge thee with my last injunctions.” Then I raised my head and saw the state I was in, how I had fallen from high degree into lowest disgrace; and into death after life (and such life!) and how I had brought my punishment on myself by my own sin; whereupon the tears streamed from mine eyes and I wept with exceeding weeping. But he looked on me with eyes of wrath, and began repeating: —

*Tell her who turneth from our love to work it injury sore, * And taketh
her a fine new love the old love tossing o'er:*

*We cry enough o' thee ere thou enough of us shalt cry! * What past
between us doth suffice and haply something more.*

When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I wept and looked at him and began repeating these couplets: —

*To severance you doom my love and all unmoved remain; * My tear-
sore lids you sleepless make and sleep while I complain:*

*You make firm friendship reign between mine eyes and insomny; * Yet
can my heart forget you not, nor tears can I restrain:*

*You made me swear with many an oath my troth to hold for aye; * But
when you reigned my bosom's lord you wrought me traitor-bane:*

*I loved you like a silly child who wots not what is Love; * Then spare
the learner, let her not be by the master slain!*

*By Allah's name I pray you write, when I am dead and gone, * Upon
my tomb, This died of Love whose senses Love had ta'en:*

*Then haply one shall pass that way who fire of Love hath felt, * And
treading on a lover's heart with ruth and woe shall melt.*

When I ended my verses tears came again; but the poetry and the weeping only added fury to his fury, and he recited: —

*'Twas not satiety bade me leave the dearling of my soul, * But that she
sinned a mortal sin which clipt me in its clip:*

*She sought to let another share the love between us twain, * But my
True Faith of Unity refuseth partnership.*

When he ceased reciting I wept again and prayed his pardon and humbled myself before him and spoke him softly, saying to myself,

“I will work on him with words; so haply he will refrain from slaying me, even though he take all I have.” So I complained of my sufferings and began to repeat these couplets: —

*Now, by thy life and wert thou just my life thou hadst not ta'en, * But
who can break the severance-law which parteth lovers twain!
Thou loadest me with heavy weight of longing love, when I * Can
hardly bear my chemisette for weakness and for pain:
I marvel not to see my life and soul in ruin lain: * I marvel much to
see my frame such severance-pangs sustain.*

When I ended my verse I wept again; and he looked at me and reviled me in abusive language, repeating these couplets: —

*Thou wast all taken up with love of other man, not me; * 'Twas thine
to show me severance-face, 'twas only mine to see:
I'll leave thee for that first thou wast of me to take thy leave * And
patient bear that parting blow thou borest so patiently:
E'en as thou soughtest other love, so other love I'll seek, * And make the
crime of murdering love thine own atrocity.*

When he had ended his verses he again cried out to the slave, “Cut her in half and free us from her, for we have no profit of her.” So the slave drew near me, O Commander of the Faithful, and I ceased bandying verses and made sure of death and, despairing of life, committed my affairs to Almighty Allah, when behold, the old woman rushed in and threw herself at my husband’s feet and kissed them and wept and said, “O my son, by the rights of my fosterage and by my long service to thee, I conjure thee pardon this young lady, for indeed she hath done nothing deserving such doom. Thou art a very young man and I fear lest her death be laid at thy door; for it is said: — Whoso slayeth shall

be slain. As for this wanton (since thou deemest her such) drive her out from thy doors, from thy love and from thy heart.” And she ceased not to weep and importune him till he relented and said, “I pardon her, but needs must I set on her my mark which shall show upon her all my life.” Then he bade the slaves drag me along the ground and lay me out at full length, after stripping me of all my clothes; and when the slaves had so sat upon me that I could not move, he fetched in a rod of quince-tree and came down with it upon my body, and continued beating me on the back and sides till I lost consciousness from excess of pain, and I despaired of life. Then he commanded the slaves to take me away as soon as it was dark, together with the old woman to show them the way and throw me upon the floor of the house wherein I dwelt before my marriage. They did their lord’s bidding and cast me down in my old home and went their ways.

I did not revive from my swoon till dawn appeared, when I applied myself to the dressing of my wounds with ointments and other medicaments; and I medicined myself, but my sides and ribs still showed signs of the rod as thou hast seen. I lay in weakly case and confined to my bed for four months before I was able to rise and health returned to me. At the end of that time I went to the house where all this had happened and found it a ruin; the street had been pulled down end-long and rubbish-heaps rose where the building erst was; nor could I learn how this had come about. Then I betook myself to this my sister on my father’s side and found her with these two black bitches. I saluted her and told her what had betided me and the whole of my story and she said, “O my sister, who is safe from the despite of Time and secure? Thanks be to Allah who has brought thee off safely;” and she began to say: —

*Such is the World, so bear a patient heart * When riches leave thee
and when friends depart!*

Then she told me her own story, and what had happened to her with her two sisters and how matters had ended; so we abode together and the subject of marriage was never on our tongues for all these years. After a while we were joined by our other sister, the procuratrix, who goeth out every morning and buyeth all we require for the day and night; and we continued in such condition till this last night. In the morning our sister went out, as usual, to make her market and then befel us what befel from bringing the Porter into the house and admitting these three Kalandar-men.

We entreated them kindly and honourably and a quarter of the night had not passed ere three grave and respectable merchants from Mosul joined us and told us their adventures. We sat talking with them but on one condition which they violated, whereupon we treated them as sorted with their breach of promise, and made them repeat the account they had given of themselves. They did our bidding and we forgave their offence; so they departed from us and this morning we were unexpectedly summoned to thy presence. And such is our story! The Caliph wondered at her words and bade the tale be recorded and chronicled and laid up in his muniment-chambers. —

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nineteenth Night,

she continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph commanded this story and those of the sister and the Kalandars to be

recorded in the archives and be set in the royal muniment-chambers. Then he asked the eldest lady, the mistress of the house, "Knowest thou the whereabouts of the Ifritah who spelled thy sisters?"; and she answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, she gave me a ringlet of her hair saying: — Whenas thou wouldest see me, burn a couple of these hairs and I will be with thee forthright, even though I were beyond Caucasus-mountain." Quoth the Caliph, "Bring me hither the hair." So she brought it and he threw the whole lock upon the fire.

As soon as the odour of the burning hair dispread itself, the palace shook and trembled, and all present heard a rumbling and rolling of thunder and a noise as of wings and lo! the Jinniyah who had been a serpent stood in the Caliph's presence. Now she was a Moslemah, so she saluted him and said, "Peace be with thee O Vicar of Allah;" whereto he replied, "And with thee also be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessing." Then she continued, "Know that this damsel sowed for me the seed of kindness, wherefor I cannot enough requite her, in that she delivered me from death and destroyed mine enemy. Now I had seen how her sisters dealt with her and felt myself bound to avenge her on them. At first I was minded to slay them, but I feared it would be grievous to her, so I transformed them to bitches; but if thou desire their release, O Commander of the Faithful, I will release them to pleasure thee and her for I am of the Moslems."

Quoth the Caliph, "Release them and after we will look into the affair of the beaten lady and consider her case carefully; and if the truth of her story be evidenced I will exact retaliation from him who wronged her." Said the Ifritah, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will forthwith release them and will discover to thee the man who did that deed by this lady and wronged her and took her property, and he is the nearest of all men to thee!" So saying she took a cup of water and

muttered a spell over it and uttered words there was no understanding; then she sprinkled some of the water over the faces of the two bitches, saying, "Return to your former human shape!" whereupon they were restored to their natural forms and fell to praising their Creator.

Then said the Ifritah, "O Commander of the Faithful, of a truth he who scourged this lady with rods is thy son Al-Amin brother of Al-Maamun; for he had heard of her beauty and loveliness and he played a lover's stratagem with her and married her according to the law and committed the crime (such as it is) of scourging her. Yet indeed he is not to be blamed for beating her, for he laid a condition on her and swore her by a solemn oath not to do a certain thing; however, she was false to her vow and he was minded to put her to death, but he feared Almighty Allah and contented himself with scourging her, as thou hast seen, and with sending her back to her own place. Such is the story of the second lady and the Lord knoweth all."

When the Caliph heard these words of the Ifritah, and knew who had beaten the damsel, he marvelled with mighty marvel and said, "Praise be to Allah, the Most High, the Almighty, who hath shown his exceeding mercy towards me, enabling me to deliver these two damsels from sorcery and torture, and vouchsafing to let me know the secret of this lady's history! And now by Allah, we will do a deed which shall be recorded of us after we are no more." Then he summoned his son Al-Amin and questioned him of the story of the second lady, the portress; and he told it in the face of truth; whereupon the Caliph bade call into presence the Kazis and their witnesses and the three Kalandars and the first lady with her sisters german who had been ensorcelled; and he married the three to the three Kalandars whom he knew to be princes and sons of Kings and he appointed them chamberlains about his person, assigning to them stipends and allowances and all that they

required, and lodging them in his palace at Baghdad. He returned the beaten lady to his son, Al-Amin, renewing the marriage-contract between them and gave her great wealth and bade rebuild the house fairer than it was before. As for himself he took to wife the procuratrix and lay with her that night: and next day he set apart for her an apartment in his Serraglio, with handmaidens for her service and a fixed daily allowance. And the people marvelled at their Caliph's generosity and natural beneficence and princely wisdom; nor did he forget to send all these histories to be recorded in his annals.

When Shahrazad ceased speaking Dunyazad exclaimed, "O my own sister, by Allah in very sooth this is a right pleasant tale and a delectable; never was heard the like of it, but prithee tell me now another story to while away what yet remaineth of the waking hours of this our night." She replied, "With love and gladness if the King give me leave;" and he said, "Tell thy tale and tell it quickly." So she began, in these words, the Tale of the Three Apples.

* * * * *

The rest of Volume 1 is here omitted.

The following *Conclusion* is taken from Volume 10.

CONCLUSION

Now, during this time, Shahrazad had borne the King three boy children: so, when she had made an end of the story of Ma'aruf, she rose to her feet and kissing ground before him, said, "O King of the time and unique one of the age and the tide, I am thine handmaid and these thousand nights and a night have I entertained thee with stories of folk gone before and admonitory instances of the men of yore. May I then make bold to crave a boon of Thy Highness?" He replied, "Ask, O Shahrazad, and it shall be granted to 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 boy children, one walking, one crawling and one sucking. She took them and setting them before the King, again 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, as a dole to these infants; for, an thou kill me, they will become motherless and will find none among women to rear them as they should be reared." When the King heard this, he wept and straining the boys to his bosom, said, "By Allah, O Shahrazad, I pardoned thee before the coming of these children, for that I found thee chaste, pure, ingenuous and pious! Allah bless thee and thy father and thy mother and thy root and thy branch! I take the Almighty to witness against me that I exempt thee from aught that can harm thee."

So she kissed his hands and feet and rejoiced with exceeding joy, saying, "The Lord make thy life long and increase thee in dignity and majesty!"; presently adding, "Thou marvelledst at that which

befel thee on the part of women; yet there betided the Kings of the Chosroës before thee greater mishaps and more grievous than that which hath befallen thee, and indeed I have set forth unto thee that which happened to Caliphs and Kings and others with their women, but the relation is longsome and hearkening groweth tedious, and in this is all sufficient warning for the man of wits and admonishment for the wise.” Then she ceased to speak, and when King Shahriyar heard her speech and profited by that which she said, he summoned up his reasoning powers and cleansed his heart and caused his understanding revert and turned to Allah Almighty and said to himself, “Since there befel the Kings of the Chosroës more than that which hath befallen me, never, whilst I live, shall I cease to blame myself for the past. As for this Shahrazad, her like is not found in the lands; so praise be to Him who appointed her a means for delivering His creatures from oppression and slaughter!” Then he arose from his séance and kissed her head, whereat she rejoiced, she and her sister Dunyazad, with exceeding joy.

When the morning morrowed, the King went forth and sitting down on the throne of the Kingship, summoned the Lords of his land; whereupon the Chamberlains and Nabobs and Captains of the host went in to him and kissed ground before him. He distinguished the Wazir, Shahrazad’s sire, with special favour and bestowed on him a costly and splendid robe of honour and entreated him with the utmost kindness, and said to him, “Allah 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 folk. Indeed I have found her pure and pious, chaste and ingenuous, and Allah hath vouchsafed me by her three boy children; wherefore praised be He for his passing favour.” Then he bestowed robes of honour upon his Wazirs, and Emirs and

Chief Officers and he set forth to them briefly that which had betided him with Shahrazad and how he had turned from his former ways and repented him of what he had done and purposed to take the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, to wife and let draw up the marriage-contract with her.

When those who were present heard this, they kissed the ground before him and blessed him and his betrothed Shahrazad, and the Wazir thanked her. Then Shahriyar made an end of his sitting in all weal, whereupon the folk dispersed to their dwelling-places and the news was bruited abroad that the King purposed to marry the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad. Then he proceeded to make ready the wedding gear, and presently he sent after his brother, King Shah Zaman, who came, and King Shahriyar went forth to meet him with the troops. Furthermore, they decorated the city after the goodliest fashion and diffused scents from censers and burnt aloes-wood and other perfumes in all the markets and thoroughfares and rubbed themselves with saffron, what while the drums beat and the flutes and pipes sounded and mimes and mountebanks played and plied their arts and the King lavished on them gifts and largesse; and in very deed it was a notable day.

When they came to the palace, King Shahriyar commanded to spread the tables with beasts roasted whole and sweetmeats and all manner of viands and bade the crier cry to the folk that they should come up to the Divan and eat and drink and that this should be a means of reconciliation between him and them. So, high and low, great and small came up unto him and they abode on that wise, eating and drinking, seven days with their nights. Then the King shut himself up with his brother and related to him that which had betided him with the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, during the past three years and told

him what he had heard from her of proverbs and parables, chronicles and pleasantries, quips and jests, stories and anecdotes, dialogues and histories and elegies and other verses; whereat King Shah Zaman marvelled with the uttermost marvel and said, "Fain would I take her younger sister to wife, so we may be two brothers-german to two sisters-german, and they on like wise be sisters to us; for that the calamity which befel me was the cause of our discovering that which befel thee and all this time of three years past I have taken no delight in woman, save that I lie each night with a damsel of my kingdom, and every morning I do her to death; but now I desire to marry thy wife's sister Dunyazad."

When King Shahriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced with joy exceeding and arising forthright, went in to his wife Shahrazad and acquainted her with that which his brother purposed, namely that he sought her sister Dunyazad in wedlock; whereupon she answered, "O King of the age, we seek of him one condition, to wit, that he take up his abode with us, for that I cannot brook to be parted from my sister an hour, because we were brought up together and may not endure separation each from other. If he accept this pact, she is his handmaid."

King Shahriyar returned to his brother and acquainted him with that which Shahrazad had said; and he replied, "Indeed, this is what was in my mind, for that I desire nevermore to be parted from thee one hour. As for the kingdom, Allah the Most High shall send to it whomso He chooseth, for that I have no longer a desire for the kingship." When King Shahriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced exceedingly and said, "Verily, this is what I wished, O my brother. So Alhamdolillah — Praised be Allah — who hath brought about union between us."

Then he sent after the Kazis and Olema, Captains and Notables,

and they married the two brothers to the two sisters. The contracts were written out and the two Kings bestowed robes of honour of silk and satin on those who were present, whilst the city was decorated and the rejoicings were renewed. The King commanded each Emir and Wazir and Chamberlain and Nabob to decorate his palace and the folk of the city were gladdened by the presage of happiness and contentment. King Shahriyar also bade slaughter sheep and set up kitchens and made bride-feasts and fed all comers, high and low; and he gave alms to the poor and needy and extended his bounty to great and small. Then the eunuchs went forth, that they might perfume the Hammam for the brides; so they scented it with rosewater and willow-flower-water and pods of musk and fumigated it with Kákili⁷⁹ eagle-wood and ambergris.

Then Shahrazad entered, she and her sister Dunyazad, and they cleansed their heads and clipped their hair. When they came forth of the Hammam-bath, they donned raiment and ornaments; such as men were wont prepare for the Kings of the Chosroës; and among Shahrazad's apparel was a dress purfled with red gold and wrought with counterfeit presentments of birds and beasts. And the two sisters encircled their necks with necklaces of jewels of price, in the like whereof Iskander⁸⁰ rejoiced not, for therein were great jewels such as amazed the wit and dazzled the eye; and the imagination was bewildered at their charms, for indeed each of them was brighter than the sun and the moon. Before them they lighted brilliant flambeaux of wax in candelabra of gold, but their faces outshone the flambeaux, for that they had eyes sharper than unsheathed swords and the lashes of their eyelids bewitched all hearts. Their cheeks were rosy red and

⁷⁹ i. e. Sumatran.

⁸⁰ i. e. Alexander, according to the Arabs.

their necks and shapes gracefully swayed and their eyes wantoned like the gazelle's; and the slave-girls came to meet them with instruments of music.

Then the two Kings entered the Hammam-bath, and when they came forth, they sat down on a couch set with pearls and gems, whereupon the two sisters came up to them and stood between their hands, as they were moons, bending and leaning from side to side in their beauty and loveliness. Presently they brought forward Shahrazad and displayed her, for the first dress, in a red suit; whereupon King Shahriyar rose to look upon her and the wits of all present, men and women, were bewitched for that she was even as saith of her one of her describers: —

*A sun on wand in knoll of sand she showed, * Clad in her cramoisy-hued chemisette:*

*Of her lips' honey-dew she gave me drink * And with her rosy cheeks quencht fire she set.*

Then they attired Dunyazad in a dress of blue brocade and she became as she were the full moon when it shineth forth. So they displayed her in this, for the first dress, before King Shah Zaman, who rejoiced in her and well-nigh swooned away for love-longing and amorous desire; yea, he was distraught with passion for her, whenas he saw her, because she was as saith of her one of her describers in these couplets: —

*She comes apparelled in an azure vest * Ultramarine as skies are deckt and dight:*

*I view'd th' unparallel'd sight, which showed my eyes * A Summer-moon upon a Winter-night.*

Then they returned to Shahrazad and displayed her in the second dress, a suit of surpassing goodliness, and veiled her face with her hair like a chin-veil.⁸¹ Moreover, they let down her side-locks and she was even as saith of her one of her describers in these couplets: —

*O hail to him whose locks his cheeks o'ershade, * Who slew my life
by cruel hard despight:
Said I, "Hast veiled the Morn in Night?" He said, * "Nay I but veil
Moon in hue of Night."*

Then they displayed Dunyazad in a second and a third and a fourth dress and she paced forward like the rising sun, and swayed to and fro in the insolence of beauty; and she was even as saith the poet of her in these couplets: —

*The sun of beauty she to all appears * And, lovely coy she mocks all
loveliness:
And when he fronts her favour and her smile * A-morn, the sun of day
in clouds must dress.*

Then they displayed Shahrazad in the third dress and the fourth and the fifth and she became as she were a Bán-branch snell or a thirsting gazelle, lovely of face and perfect in attributes of grace, even as saith of her one in these couplets: —

*She comes like fullest moon on happy night. * Taper of waist with
shape of magic might:*

⁸¹ All these coquetries require as much inventiveness as a cotillon; the text alludes to fastening the bride's tresses across her mouth giving her the semblance of beard and mustachios.

*She hath an eye whose glances quell mankind, * And ruby on her
cheeks reflects his light:*

*Enveils her hips the blackness of her hair; * Beware of curls that bite
with viper-bite!*

*Her sides are silken-soft, that while the heart * Mere rock behind that
surface 'scapes our sight:*

*From the fringed curtains of her eyne she shoots * Shafts that at
furthest range on mark alight.*

Then they returned to Dunyazad and displayed her in the fifth dress and in the sixth, which was green, when she surpassed with her loveliness the fair of the four quarters of the world and outvied, with the brightness of her countenance, the full moon at rising tide; for she was even as saith of her the poet in these couplets: —

*A damsel 'twas the tiring's art had decked with snare and sleight, * And
robed with rays as though the sun from her had borrowed light:*

*She came before us wondrous clad in chemisette of green, * As veiled by
his leafy screen Pomegranate hides from sight:*

*And when he said, "How callest thou the fashion of thy dress?" * She
answered us in pleasant way with double meaning dight,*

*"We call this garment crève-coeur; and rightly is it hight, * For many
a heart wi' this we brake and harried many a sprite."*

Then they displayed Shahrazad in the sixth and seventh dresses and clad her in youth's clothing, whereupon she came forward swaying from side to side and coquettishly moving and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled all eyes with her glances. She shook her sides and swayed her haunches, then put her hair on sword-hilt and went up to King Shahriyar, who embraced her as hospitable host

embraceth guest, and threatened her in her ear with the taking of the sword; and she was even as saith of her the poet in these words: —

*Were not the Murk⁸² of gender male, * Than feminines surpassing fair,
Tirewomen they had grudged the bride, * Who made her beard and
whiskers wear!*

Thus also they did with her sister Dunyazad, and when they had made an end of the display the King bestowed robes of honour on all who were present and sent the brides to their own apartments. Then Shahrazad went in to King Shahriyar and Dunyazad to King Shah Zaman and each of them solaced himself with the company of his beloved consort and the hearts of the folk were comforted.

When morning morrowed, the Wazir came in to the two Kings and kissed ground before them; wherefore they thanked him and were large of bounty to him. Presently they went forth and sat down upon couches of Kingship, whilst all the Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees and Lords of the land presented themselves and kissed ground. King Shahriyar ordered them dresses of honour and largesse and they prayed for the permanence and prosperity of the King and his brother. Then the two Sovrans appointed their sire-in-law the Wazir to be Viceroy in Samarcand and assigned him five of the Chief Emirs to accompany him, charging them attend him and do him service. The Minister kissed the ground and prayed that they might be vouchsafed length of life: then he went in to his daughters, whilst the Eunuchs and Ushers walked before him, and saluted them and farewellled them.

They kissed his hands and gave him joy of the Kingship and bestowed on him immense treasures; after which he took leave of them

⁸² Arab. Sawád = the blackness of the hair.

and setting out, fared days and nights, till he came near Samarcand, where the townspeople met him at a distance of three marches and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy. So he entered the city and they decorated the houses and it was a notable day. He sat down on the throne of his kingship and the Wazirs did him homage and the Grandees and Emirs of Samarcand and all prayed that he might be vouchsafed justice and victory and length of continuance. So he bestowed on them robes of honour and entreated them with distinction and they made him Sultan over them.

As soon as his father-in-law had departed for Samarcand, King Shahriyar summoned the Grandees of his realm and made them a stupendous banquet of all manner of delicious meats and exquisite sweetmeats. He also bestowed on them robes of honour and guerdoned them and divided the kingdoms between himself and his brother in their presence, whereat the folk rejoiced. Then the two Kings abode, each ruling a day in turn, and they were ever in harmony each with other while on similar wise their wives continued in the love of Allah Almighty and in thanksgiving to Him; and the peoples and the provinces were at peace and the preachers prayed for them from the pulpits, and their report was bruited abroad and the travellers bore tidings of them to all lands.

In due time King Shahriyar summoned chroniclers and copyists and bade them write all that had betided him with his wife, first and last; so they wrote this and named it "*The Stories of the Thousand Nights and A Night.*" The book came to thirty volumes and these the King laid up in his treasury. And the two brothers abode with their wives in all pleasance and solace of life and its delights, for that indeed Allah the Most High had changed their annoy into joy; and on this wise they continued till there took them the Destroyer of delights and

the Severer of societies, the Desolator of dwelling-places and Garnerer of grave-yards, and they were translated to the ruth of Almighty Allah; their houses fell waste and their palaces lay in ruins and the Kings inherited their riches.

Then there reigned after them a wise ruler, who was just, keen-witted and accomplished and loved tales and legends, especially those which chronicle the doings of Sovrans and Sultans, and he found in the treasury these marvellous stories and wondrous histories, contained in the thirty volumes aforesaid. So he read in them a first book and a second and a third and so on to the last of them, and each book astounded and delighted him more than that which preceded it, till he came to the end of them. Then he admired whatso he had read therein of description and discourse and rare traits and anecdotes and moral instances and reminiscences and bade the folk copy them and dispread them over all lands and climes; wherefore their report was bruited abroad and the people named them "*The marvels and wonders of the Thousand Nights and A Night.*" This is all that hath come down to us of the origin of this book, and Allah is All-knowing.⁸³

So Glory be to Him whom the shifts of Time waste not away, nor doth aught of chance or change affect His sway: whom one case diverteth not from other case and Who is sole in the attributes of perfect grace. And prayer and peace be upon the Lord's Pontiff and Chosen One among His creatures, our lord MOHAMMED the Prince of mankind through whom we supplicate Him for a goodly and a godly

FINIS.

⁸³ i.e. God only knows if it be true or not.

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