

# **ALF LAYLAH WA LAYLAH**

## **(THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS)**

**Translated  
By  
Sir Richard Francis Burton**

**Courtesy:  
Shahid Riaz  
Islamabad - Pakistan  
shahid.riaz@gmail.com**

## **PART – 2**

### **The Tale Of The Three Apples**

THEY relate, O King of the Age and Lord of the Time and of these days, that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid summoned his Wazir Ja'afar one night and said to him: "I desire to go down into the city and question the common folk concerning the conduct of those charged with its governance, and those of whom they complain we will depose from office and those whom they commend we will promote." Quoth Ja'afar, "Hearkening and obedience!"

So the Caliph went down with Ja'afar and the eunuch Masrur to the town and walked about the streets and markets, and as they were threading a narrow alley, they came upon a very old man with a fishing net and crate to carry small fish on his head, and in his hands a staff, and as he walked at a leisurely pace, he repeated these lines:

"They say me: 'Thou shinest a light to mankind  
With thy lore as the night which the Moon doth upright!'  
I answer, 'A truce to your jests and your gibes.  
Without luck what is learning?- a poor-devil wight!  
If they take me to pawn with my lore in my pouch,  
With my volumes to read and my ink case to write,  
For one day's provision they never could pledge me,  
As likely on Doomsday to draw bill at sight.'  
How poorly, indeed, doth it fare wi' the poor,  
With his pauper existence and beggarly plight.  
In summer he faileth provision to find,  
In winter the fire pot's his only delight.  
The street dogs with bite and with bark to him rise,  
And each losel receives him with bark and with bite.  
If he lift up his voice and complain of his wrong,  
None pities or heeds him, however he's right,  
And when sorrows and evils like these he must brave,  
His happiest homestead were down in the grave."

When the Caliph heard his verses, he said to Ja'afar, "See this poor man and note his verses, for surely they point to his necessities." Then he accosted him and asked, "O Sheikh, what be thine occupation?" And the poor man answered: "O my lord, I am a fisherman with a family to keep and I have been out between midday and this time, and not a thing hath Allah made my portion wherewithal to feed my family. I cannot even pawn myself to buy them a supper, and I hate and disgust my life and I hanker after death." Quoth the Caliph, "Say me, wilt thou return with us to Tigris' bank and cast thy net on my luck, and whatsoever turneth up I will buy of thee for a hundred gold pieces?" The man rejoiced when he heard these words and said: "On my head be it! I will go back with you," and, returning with them riverward, made a cast and waited a while.

Then he hauled in the rope and dragged the net ashore and there appeared in it a chest, padlocked and heavy. The Caliph examined it and lifted it, finding, it weighty, so he gave the fisherman two hundred dinars and sent him about his business whilst Masrur, aided by the Caliph, carried the chest to the palace and set it down and lighted the candles. Ja'afar and Masrur then broke it open and found therein a basket of palm leaves corded with red worsted. This they cut open and saw within it a piece of carpet, which they lifted out, and

under it was a woman's mantilla folded in four, which they pulled out, and at the bottom of the chest they came upon a young lady, fair as a silver ingot, slain and cut into nineteen pieces. When the Caliph looked upon her he cried, "Alas!" and tears ran down his cheeks and turning to Ja'afar, he said: "O dog of Wazirs, shall folk be murdered in our reign and be cast into the river to be a burden and a responsibility for us on the Day of Doom? By Allah, we must avenge this woman on her murderer, and he shall be made die the worst of deaths!"

And presently he added: "Now, as surely as we are descended from the Sons of Abbas, if thou bring us not him who slew her, that we do her justice on him, I will hang thee at the gate of my palace, thee and forty of thy kith and kin by thy side." And the Caliph was wroth with exceeding rage. Quoth Ja'afar, "Grant me three days' delay," and quoth the Caliph, "We grant thee this." So Ja'afar went out from before him and returned to his own house, full of sorrow and saying to himself: "How shall I find him who murdered this damsel, that I may bring him before the Caliph? If I bring other than the murderer, it will be laid to my charge by the Lord. In very sooth I wot not what to do." He kept his house three days, and on the fourth day the Caliph sent one of the chamberlains for him, and as he came into the presence, asked him, "Where is the murderer of the damsel?" To which answered Ja'afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, am I inspector of murdered folk that I should ken who killed her?" The Caliph was furious at his answer and bade hang him before the palace gate, and commanded that a crier cry through the streets of Baghdad: "Whoso would see the hanging of Ja'afar, the Barmaki, Wazir of the Caliph, with forty of the Barmecides, his cousins and kinsmen, before the palace gate, let him come and let him look!" The people flocked out from all the quarters of the city to witness the execution of Ja'afar and his kinsmen, not knowing the cause.

Then they set up the gallows and made Ja'afar and the others stand underneath in readiness for execution, but whilst every eye was looking for the Caliph's signal, and the crowd wept for Ja'afar and his cousins of the Barmecides, lo and behold! a young man fair of face and neat of dress and of favor like the moon raining light, with eyes black and bright, and brow flower-white, and cheeks red as rose and young down where the beard grows, and a mole like a grain of ambergris, pushed his way through the people till he stood immediately before the Wazir and said to him: "Safety to thee from this strait, O Prince of the Emirs and Asylum of the Poor! I am the man who slew the woman ye found in the chest, so hang me for her and do her justice on me!" When Ja'afar heard the youth's confession he rejoiced at his own deliverance, but grieved and sorrowed for the fair youth.

And whilst they were yet talking, behold, another man well stricken in years pressed forward through the people and thrust his way amid the populace till he came to Ja'afar and the youth, whom he saluted, saying: "Ho, thou the Wazir and Prince sans peer! Believe not the words of this youth. Of a surety none murdered the damsel but I. Take her wreak on me this moment, for an thou do not thus, I will require it of thee before Almighty Allah." Then quoth the young man: "O Wazir, this is an old man in his dotage who wotteth not whatso he saith ever, and I am he who murdered her, so do thou avenge her on me!" Quoth the old man: "O my son, thou art young and desirest the joys of the world and I am old and weary and surfeited with the world. I will offer my life as a ransom for thee and for the Wazir and his cousins. No one murdered the damsel but I, so Allah upon thee, make haste to hang me, for no life is left in me now that hers is gone."

The Wazir marveled much at all this strangeness and taking the young man and the old man, carried them before the Caliph, where, after kissing the ground seven times between his hands, he said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I bring thee the murderer of the damsel!"

"Where is he?" asked the Caliph, and Ja'afar answered: "This young man saith, 'I am the murderer,' and this old man, giving him the lie, saith, 'I am the murderer,' and behold, here are the twain standing before thee." The Caliph looked at the old man and the young man and asked, "Which of you killed the girl?" The young man replied, "No one slew her save I," and the old man answered, "Indeed none killed her but myself." Then said the Caliph to Ja'afar, "Take the twain and hang them both." But Ja'afar rejoined, "Since one of them was the murderer, to hang the other were mere injustice." "By Him who raised the firmament and dispread the earth like a carpet," cried the youth, "I am he who slew the damsel," and he went on to describe the manner of her murder and the basket, the mantilla, and the bit of carpet- in fact, all that the Caliph had found upon her.

So the Caliph was certified that the young man was the murderer, whereat he wondered and asked him: "What was the cause of thy wrongfully doing this damsel to die, and what made thee confess the murder without the bastinado, and what brought thee here to yield up thy life, and what made thee say 'Do her wreak upon me'?" The youth answered: "Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that this woman was my wife and the mother of my children, also my first cousin and the daughter of my paternal uncle, this old man, who is my father's own brother. When I married her she was a maid, and Allah blessed me with three male children by her. She loved me and served me and I saw no evil in her, for I also loved her with fondest love. Now on the first day of this month she fell ill with grievous sickness and I fetched in physicians to her, but recovery came to her little by little, and when I wished her to go to the hammam bath, she said, 'There is something I long for before I go to the bath, and I long for it with an exceeding longing.' 'To hear is to comply,' said I. 'And what is it?' Quoth she, 'I have a queasy craving for an apple, to smell it and bite a bit of it.' I replied, 'Hadst thou a thousand longings, I would try to satisfy them!' So I went on the instant into the city and sought for apples, but could find none, yet had they cost a gold piece each, would I have bought them. I was vexed at this and went home and said, 'O daughter of my uncle, by Allah I can find none!' She was distressed, being yet very weakly, and her weakness increased greatly on her that night and I felt anxious and alarmed on her account.

"As soon as morning dawned I went out again and made the round of the gardens, one by one, but found no apples anywhere. At last there met me an old gardener, of whom I asked about them and he answered, 'O my son, this fruit is a rarity with us and is not now to be found save in the garden of the Commander of the Faithful at Bassorah, where the gardener keepeth it for the Caliph's eating.' I returned to my house troubled by my ill success, and my love for my wife and my affection moved me to undertake the journey, So I at me ready and set out and traveled fifteen days and nights, going and coming, and brought her three apples, which I bought from the gardener for three dinars. But when I went in to my wife and set them before her, she took no pleasure in them and let them lie by her side, for her weakness and fever had increased on her, and her malady lasted without abating ten days, after which she began to recover health.

"So I left my house and betaking me to my shop, sat there buying and selling. And about midday, behold, a great ugly black slave, long as a lance and broad as a bench, passed by my shop holding in hand one of the three apples, wherewith he was playing, Quoth I, 'O my good slave, tell me whence thou tookest that apple, that I may get the like of it?' He laughed and answered: 'I got it from my mistress, for I had been absent and on my return I found her lying ill with three apples by her side, and she said to me, "My horned wittol of a husband made a journey for them to Bassorah and bought them for three dinars." 'So I ate and drank with her and took this one from her.' When I heard such words from the slave, O Commander of the Faithful, the world grew black before my face, and I arose and locked up

my shop and went home beside myself for excess of rage. I looked for the apples and finding, only two of the three, asked my wife, 'O my cousin, where is the third apple?' And raising her head languidly, she answered, 'I wot not, O son of my uncle, where 'tis gone!' This convinced me that the slave had spoken the truth, so I took a knife and coming behind her, got upon her breast without a word said and cut her throat. Then I hewed off her head and her limbs in pieces and, wrapping her in her mantilla and a rag of carpet, hurriedly sewed up the whole, which I set in a chest and, locking it tight, loaded it on my he-mule and threw it into the Tigris with my own hands.

"So Allah upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, make haste to hang me, as I fear lest she appeal for vengeance on Resurrection Day. For when I had thrown her into the river and one knew aught of it, as I went back home I found my eldest son crying, and yet he knew naught of what I had done with his mother. I asked him, 'What hath made thee weep, my boy?' and he answered, 'I took one of the three apples which were by my mammy and went down into the lane to play with my brethren when behold, a big long black slave snatched it from my hand and said, "Whence hadst thou this?" Quoth I, "My father traveled far for it, and brought it from Bassorah for my mother, who was ill, and two other apples for which he paid three ducats." 'He took no heed of my words and I asked for the apple a second and a third time, but he cuffed me and kicked me and went off with it. I was afraid lest my mother should swinge me on account of the apple, so for fear of her I went with my brother outside the city and stayed there till evening closed in upon us, and indeed I am in fear of her. And now, by Allah, O my father, say nothing to her of this or it may add to her ailment!"

"When I heard what my child said, I knew that the slave was he who had foully slandered my wife, the daughter of my uncle, and was certified that I had slain her wrongfully. So I wept with exceeding weeping and presently this old man, my paternal uncle and her father, came in, and I told him what had happened and he sat down by my side and wept, and we ceased not weeping till midnight. We have kept up mourning for her these last five days and we lamented her in the deepest sorrow for that she was unjustly done to die. This came from the gratuitous lying of the slave, the blackamoor, and this was the manner of my killing her. So I conjure thee, by the honor of thine ancestors, make haste to kill me and do her justice upon me, as there is no living for me after her!"

The Caliph marveled at his words and said: "By Allah, the young man is excusable. I will hang none but the accursed slave, and I will do a deed which shall comfort the ill-at-ease and suffering, and which shall please the All-glorious King." Then he turned to Ja'afar and said to him: "Bring before me this accursed slave who was the sole cause of this calamity, and if thou bring him not before me within three days, thou shalt be slain in his stead." So Ja'afar fared forth weeping and saying: "Two deaths have already beset me, nor shall the crock come off safe from every shock. In this matter craft and cunning are of no avail, but He who preserved my life the first time can preserve it a second time. By Allah, I will not leave my house during the three days of life which remain to me, and let the Truth (whose perfection be praised!) do e'en as He will." So he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day he summoned the kazis and legal witnesses and made his last will and testament, and took leave of his children weeping.

Presently in came a messenger from the Caliph and said to him: "The Commander of the Faithful is in the most violent rage that can be, and he sendeth to seek thee and he sweareth that the day shall certainly not pass without thy being hanged unless the slave be forthcoming," When Ja'afar heard this he wept, and his children and slaves and all who were in the house wept with him. After he had bidden adieu to everybody except this

youngest daughter, he proceeded to farewell her, for he loved this wee one, who was a beautiful child, more than all his other children. And he pressed her to his breast and kissed her and wept bitterly at parting from her, when he felt something round inside the bosom of her dress and asked her, "O my little maid, what is in the bosom pocket?" "O my father," she replied, "it is an apple with the name of our Lord the Caliph written upon it. Rayhan our slave brought it to me four days ago, and would not let me have it till I gave him two dinars for it." When Ja'afar heard speak of the slave and the apple, he was glad and put his hand into his child's pocket and drew out the apple and knew it and rejoiced, saying, "O ready Dispeller of trouble!"

Then he bade them bring the slave and said to him, "Fie upon thee, Rayhan! Whence haddest thou this apple?" "By Allah, O my master," he replied, "though a he may get a man once off, yet may truth get him off, and well off, again and again. I did not steal this apple from thy palace nor from the gardens of the Commander of the Faithful. The fact is that five days ago, as I was walking along one of the alleys of this city, I saw some little ones at play and this apple in hand of one of them. So I snatched it from him and beat him, and he cried and said, 'O youth, this apple is my mother's and she is ill. She told my father how she longed for an apple, so he traveled to Bassorah and bought her three apples for three gold pieces, and I took one of them to play withal.' He wept again, but I paid no heed to what he said and carried it off and brought it here, and my little lady bought it of me for two dinars of gold. And this is the whole story."

When Ja'afar heard his words he marveled that the murder of the damsel and all this misery should have been caused by his slave. He grieved for the relation of the slave to himself while rejoicing over his own deliverance, and he repeated these lines:

"If ill betide thee through thy slave,  
Make him forthright thy sacrifice.  
A many serviles thou shalt find,  
But life comes once and never twice."

Then he took the slave's hand and, leading him to the Caliph, related the story from first to last, and the Caliph marveled with extreme astonishment, and laughed till he fell on his back, and ordered that the story be recorded and be made public amongst the people. But Ja'afar said, "Marvel not, O Commander of the Faithful, at this adventure, for it is not more wondrous than the History of the Wazir Nur al-Din Ali of Egypt and his brother Shams al-Din Mohammed." Quoth the Caliph, "Out with it, but what can be stranger than this story?" And Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will not tell it thee save on condition that thou pardon my slave." And the Caliph rejoined, "If it be indeed more wondrous than that of the three apples, I grant thee his blood, and if not I will surely slay thy slave." So Ja'afar began in these words the Tale of Nur Al-Din Ali and his son Badr Al-Din Hasan

### **Tale of Nur Al-Din Ali and his son Badr Al-Din Hasan**

KNOW, O Commander of the Faithful, that in times of yore the land of Egypt was ruled by a Sultan endowed with justice and generosity, one who loved the pious poor and companied with the Ulema and learned men. And he had a Wazir, a wise and an experienced, well versed in affairs and in the art of government. This Minister, who was a very old man, had two sons, as they were two moons. Never man saw the like of them for beauty and grace—the elder called Shams al-Din Mohammed and the younger Nur al-Din Ali. But the younger



excelled the elder in seemliness and pleasing semblance, so that folk heard his fame in far countries and men flocked to Egypt for the purpose of seeing him.

In course of time their father, the Wazir, died and was deeply regretted and mourned by the Sultan, who sent for his two sons and, investing them with dresses of honor, said to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for ye shall stand in your father's stead and be joint Ministers of Egypt." At this they rejoiced and kissed the ground before him and performed the ceremonial mourning for their father during a full month, after which time they entered upon the wazirate and the power passed into their hands as it had been in the hands of their father, each doing duty for a week at a time. They lived under the same roof and their word was one, and whenever the Sultan desired to travel they took it by turns to be in attendance on him.

It fortuned one night that the Sultan purposed setting out on a journey next morning, and the elder, whose turn it was to accompany him, was sitting conversing with his brother and said to him: "O my brother, it is my wish that we both marry, I and thou, two sisters, and go in to our wives on one and the same night." "Do, O my brother, as thou desirest," the younger replied, "for right is thy recking and surely I will comply with thee in whatso thou sayest." So they agreed upon this, and quoth Shams al-Din: "If Allah decree that we marry two damsels and go in to them on the same night, and they shall conceive on their bride nights and bear children to us on the same day, and by Allah's will thy wife bear thee a son and my wife bear me a daughter, let us wed them either to other, for they will be cousins." Quoth Nur al-Din: "O my brother, Shams al-Din, what dower wilt thou require from my son for thy daughter?" Quoth Shams al-Din: "I will take three thousand dinars and three pleasure gardens and three farms, and it would not be seemly that the youth make contract for less than this."

When Nur al-Din heard such demand, he said: "What manner of dower is this thou wouldest impose upon my son? Wottest thou not that we are brothers and both by Allah's grace Wazirs and equal in office? It behooveth thee to offer thy daughter to my son without marriage settlement, or, if one need be, it should represent a mere nominal value by way of show to the world. For thou knowest that the masculine is worthier than the feminine, and my son is a male and our memory will be preserved by him, not by thy daughter." "But what," said Shams al-Din, "is she to have?" And Nur al-Din continued, "Through her we shall not be remembered among the emirs of the earth, but I see thou wouldest do with me according to the saying, 'An thou wouldest bluff of a buyer, ask him high price and higher,' or as did a man who they say went to a friend and asked something of him being in necessity and was answered, 'Bismillah, in the name of Allah, I will do all what thou requirest, but come tomorrow!' Whereupon the other replied in this verse:

'When he who is asked a favor saith "Tomorrow,"  
The wise man wots 'tis vain to beg or borrow.'

Quoth Shams al-Din: "Basta! I see thee fail in respect to me by making thy son of more account than my daughter, and 'tis plain that thine understanding is of the meanest and that thou lackest manners. Thou remindest me of thy partnership in the wazirate, when I admitted thee to share with me only in pity for thee, and not wishing to mortify thee, and that thou mightest help me as a manner of assistant. But since thou talkest on this wise, by Allah, I will never marry my daughter to thy son- no, not for her weight in gold!" When Nur al-Din heard his brother's words, he waxed wroth and said: "And I too, I will never, never marry my son to thy daughter- no, not to keep from my lips the cup of death." Shams al-Din replied: "I would not accept him as a husband for her, and he is not worth a paring of her

nail. Were I not about to travel, I would make an example of thee. However, when I return thou shalt see, and I will show thee, how I can assert my dignity and vindicate my honor. But Allah doeth whatso He willeth."

When Nur al-Din heard this speech from his brother, he was filled with fury and lost his wits for rage, but he hid what he felt and held his peace; and each of the brothers passed the night in a place far apart, wild with wrath against the other.

As soon as morning dawned the Sultan fared forth in state and crossed over from Cairo to Jizah and made for the Pyramids, accompanied by the Wazir Shams al-Din, whose turn of duty it was, whilst his brother Nur al-Din, who passed the night in sore rage, rose with the light and prayed the dawn prayer. Then he betook himself to his treasury and, taking a small pair of saddlebags, filled them with gold. And he called to mind his brother's threats and the contempt wherewith he had treated him, and he repeated these couplets:

"Travel! And thou shalt find new friends for old ones left behind.  
Toil! For the sweets of human life by toil and moil are found.  
The stay-at-home no honor wins, nor aught attains but want,  
So leave thy place of birth and wander all the world around!  
I've seen, and very oft I've seen, how standing water stinks,  
And only flowing sweetens it and trotting makes it sound.  
And were the moon forever full and ne'er to wax or wane,  
Man would not strain his watchful eyes to see its gladsome round.  
Except the lion leave his lair, he ne'er would fell his game,  
Except the arrow leave the bow, ne'er had it reached its bound.  
Gold dust is dust the while it lies untraveled in the mine,  
And aloes wood mere fuel is upon its native ground.  
And gold shall win his highest worth when from his goal ungoaled,  
And aloes sent to foreign parts grows costlier than gold."

When he ended his verse, he bade one of his pages saddle him his Nubian mare mule with her padded selle. Now she was a dapple-gray, with ears like reed pens and legs like columns and a back high and strong as a dome builded on pillars. Her saddle was of gold cloth and her stirrups of Indian steel, and her housing of Ispahan velvet. She had trappings which would serve the Chosroes, and she was like a bride adorned for her wedding night. Moreover, he bade lay on her back a piece of silk for a seat, and a prayer carpet under which were his saddlebags. When this was done, he said to his pages and slaves: "I purpose going forth a-pleasuring outside the city on the road to Kalyub town, and I shall be three nights abroad, so let none of you follow me, for there is something straiteneth my breast." Then he mounted the mule in haste and, taking with him some provaunt for the way, set out from Cairo and faced the open and uncultivated country lying around it.

About noontide he entered Bilbays city, where he dismounted and stayed awhile to rest himself and his mule and ate some of his victual. He bought at Bilbays all he wanted for himself and forage for his mule and then fared on the way of the waste. Toward nightfall he entered a town called Sa'adiyah, where he alighted and took out somewhat of his viaticum and ate. Then he spread his strip of silk on the sand and set the saddlebags under his head and slept in the open air, for he was still overcome with anger. When morning dawned he mounted and rode onward till he reached the Holy City, Jerusalem, and thence he made Aleppo, where he dismounted at one of the caravanserais and abode three days to rest himself and the mule and to smell the air. Then, being determined to travel afar and Allah having written safety in his fate, he set out again, mending without wotting whither he was



going. And having fallen in with certain couriers, he stinted not traveling till he had reached Bassorah city, albeit he knew not what the place was.

It was dark night when he alighted at the khan, so he spread out his prayer carpet and took down the saddlebags from the back of the mule and gave her with her furniture in charge of the doorkeeper that he might walk her about. The man took her and did as he was bid. Now it so happened that the Wazir of Bassorah, a man shot in years, was sitting at the lattice window of his palace opposite the khan and he saw the porter walking the mule up and down. He was struck by her trappings of price, and thought her a nice beast fit for the riding of wazirs or even of royalties, and the more he looked, the more was he perplexed, till at last he said to one of his pages, "Bring hither yon doorkeeper." The page went and returned to the Wazir with the porter, who kissed the ground between his hands, and the Minister asked him, "Who is the owner of yonder mule, and what manner of man is he?" and he answered, "O my lord, the owner of this mule is a comely young man of pleasant manners, withal grave and dignified, and doubtless one of the sons of the merchants." When the Wazir heard the doorkeeper's words he arose forthright and, mounting his horse, rode to the khan and went in to Nur al-Din, who, seeing the Minister making toward him, rose to his feet and advanced to meet him and saluted him. The Wazir welcomed him to Bassorah and dismounting, embraced him and made him sit down by his side, and said, "O my son, whence comest thou, and what dost thou seek?" "O my lord," Nur al-Din replied, "I have come from Cairo city, of which my father was whilom Wazir, but he hath been removed to the grace of Allah." And he informed him of all that had befallen him from beginning to end, adding, "I am resolved never to return home before I have seen all the cities and countries of the world." When the Wazir heard this, he said to him: "O my son, hearken not to the voice of passion lest it cast thee into the pit, for indeed many regions be waste places, and I fear for thee the turns of Time." Then he let load the saddlebags and the silk and prayer carpets on the mule and carried Nur al-Din to his own house, where he lodged him in a pleasant place and entreated him honorably and made much of him, for he inclined to love him with exceeding love.

After a while he said to him: "O my son, here am I left a man in years and have no male children, but Allah hath blessed me with a daughter who eveneth thee in beauty, and I have rejected all her many suitors, men of rank and substance. But affection for thee hath entered into my heart. Say me, then, wilt thou be to her a husband? If thou accept this, I will go with thee to the Sultan of Bassorah and will tell him that thou art my nephew, the son of my brother, and bring thee to be appointed Wazir in my place that I may keep the house, for, by Allah, O my son, I am stricken in years and aweary." When Nur al-Din heard the Wazir's words, he bowed his head in modesty and said, "To hear is to obey!" At this the Wazir rejoiced and bade his servants prepare a feast and decorate the great assembly hall wherein they were wont to celebrate the marriages of emirs and grandees. Then he assembled his friends and the notables of the reign and the merchants of Bassorah, and when all stood before him he said to them: "I had a brother who was Wazir in the land of Egypt, and Allah Almighty blessed him with two sons, whilst to me, as well ye wot, He hath given a daughter. My brother charged me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, whereto I assented, and when my daughter was of age to marry, he sent me one of his sons, the young man now present, to whom I purpose marrying her, drawing up the contract and celebrating the night of unveiling with due ceremony. For he is nearer and dearer to me than a stranger, and after the wedding, if he please he shall abide with me, or if he desire to travel, I will forward him and his wife to his father's home." Hereat one and all replied, "Right is thy recking," and they looked at the bridegroom and were pleased with him.

So the Wazir sent for the kazi and legal witnesses and they wrote out the marriage contract,

after which the slaves perfumed the guests with incense, and served them with sherbet of sugar and sprinkled rose-water on them, and all went their ways. Then the Wazir bade his servants take Nur al-Din to the hammam baths and sent him a suit of the best of his own especial raiment, and napkins and towery and bowls and perfume-burners and all else that was required. And after the bath, when he came out and donned the dress, he was even as the full moon on the fourteenth night, and he mounted his mule and stayed not till he reached the Wazir's palace. There he dismounted and went in to the Minister and kissed his hands, and the Wazir bade him welcome, saying: "Arise and go in to thy wife this night, and on the morrow I will carry thee to the Sultan, and pray Allah bless thee with all manner of weal." So Nur al-Din left him and went in to his wife the Wazir's daughter.

Thus far concerning him, but as regards his elder brother, Shams al-Din, he was absent with the Sultan a long time, and when he returned from his journey he found not his brother, and he asked of his servants and slaves, who answered: "On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, thy brother mounted his mule fully caparisoned as for state procession saying, 'I am going towards Kalyub town, and I shall be absent one day or at most two days, for my breast is straitened, and let none of you follow me.' Then he fared forth, and from that time to this we have heard no tidings of him." Shams al-Din was greatly troubled at the sudden disappearance of his brother and grieved with exceeding grief at the loss, and said to himself: "This is only because I chided and upbraided him the night before my departure with the Sultan. Haply his feelings were hurt, and he fared forth a-traveling, but I must send after him." Then he went in to the Sultan and acquainted him with what had happened and wrote letters and dispatches, which he sent by running footmen to his deputies in every province. But during the twenty days of his brother's absence Nur al-Din had traveled far and had reached Bassorah, so after diligent search the messengers failed to come at any news of him and returned. Thereupon Shams al-Din despaired of finding his brother and said: "Indeed I went beyond all bounds in what I said to him with reference to the marriage of our children. Would that I had not done so! This all cometh of my lack of wit and want of caution."

Soon after this he sought in marriage the daughter of a Cairene merchant, and drew up the marriage contract, and went in to her. And it so chanced that on the very same night when Shams al-Din went in to his wife, Nur al-Din also went in to his wife, the daughter of the Wazir of Bassorah, this being in accordance with the will of Almighty Allah, that He might deal the decrees of Destiny to His creatures. Furthermore, it was as the two brothers had said, for their two wives became pregnant by them on the same night and both were brought to bed on the same day, the wife of Shams al-Din, Wazir of Egypt, of a daughter, never in Cairo was seen a fairer, and the wife of Nur al-Din of a son, none more beautiful was ever seen in his time, as one of the poets said concerning the like of him:

That jetty hair, that glossy brow,  
My slender waisted youth, of thine,  
Can darkness round creation throw,  
Or make it brightly shine.  
The dusky mole that faintly shows  
Upon his cheek, ah! blame it not.  
The tulip flower never blows  
Undarkened by its spot.

They named the boy Badr al-Din Hasan and his grandfather, the Wazir of Bassorah, rejoiced in him, and on the seventh day after his birth made entertainments and spread banquets which would befit the birth of kings' sons and heirs. Then he took Nur al-Din and

went up with him to the Sultan, and his son-in-law, when he came before the presence of the King, kissed the ground between his hands and repeated these verses, for he was ready of speech, firm of sprite and good in heart, as he was goodly in form:

"The world's best joys long be thy lot, my lord!  
And last while darkness and the dawn o'erlap.  
O thou who makest, when we greet thy gifts,  
The world to dance and Time his palms to clap."

Then the Sultan rose up to honor them and, thanking Nur al-Din for his fine compliment, asked the Wazir, "Who may be this young man?" And the Minister answered, "This is my brother's son," and related his tale from first to last. Quoth the Sultan, "And how comes he to be thy nephew and we have never heard speak of him?" Quoth the Minister: "O our lord the Sultan, I had a brother who was Wazir in the land of Egypt and he died, leaving two sons, whereof the elder hath taken his father's place and the younger, whom thou seest, came to me. I had sworn I would not marry my daughter to any but him, so when he came I married him to her. Now he is young and I am old, my hearing is dulled and my judgment is easily fooled, wherefore I would solicit our lord the Sultan to set him in my stead, for he is my brother's son and my daughter's husband, and he is fit for the wazirate, being a man of good counsel and ready contrivance."

The Sultan looked at Nur al-Din and liked him, so he stablished him in office as the Wazir had requested and formally appointed him, presenting him with a splendid dress of honor and a she-mule from his private stud, and assigning to him solde, stipends, and supplies. Nur al-Din kissed the Sultan's hand and went home, he and his father-in-law, joying with exceeding joy and saying, "All this followeth on the heels of the boy Hasan's birth!" Next day he presented himself before the King and, kissing the ground, began repeating:

"Grow thy weal and thy welfare day by day,  
And thy luck prevail o'er the envier's spite,  
And ne'er cease thy days to be white as day,  
And thy foeman's day to be black as night!"

The Sultan bade him be seated on the Wazir's seat, so he sat down and applied himself to the business of his office and went into the cases of the lieges and their suits, as is the wont of Ministers, while the Sultan watched him and wondered at his wit and good sense, judgment and insight. Wherefor he loved him and took him into intimacy. When the Divan was dismissed, Nur al-Din returned to his house and related what had passed to his father-in-law, who rejoiced. And thenceforward Nur al-Din ceased not so to administer the wazirate that the Sultan would not be parted from him night or day, and increased his stipends and supplies till his means were ample and he became the owner of ships that made trading voyages at his command, as well as of Mamelukes and blackamoor slaves. And he laid out many estates and set up Persian wheels and planted gardens.

When his son Hasan was four years of age, the old Wazir deceased, and he made for his father-in-law a sumptuous funeral ceremony ere he was laid in the dust. Then he occupied himself with the education of this son, and when the boy waxed strong and came to the age of seven, he brought him a fakir, a doctor of law and religion, to teach him in his own house, and charged him to give him a good education and instruct him in politeness and good manners. So the tutor made the boy read and retain all varieties of useful knowledge, after he had spent some years in learning the Koran by heart, and he ceased not to grow in beauty and stature and symmetry. The professor brought him up in his father's palace,

teaching him reading, writing and ciphering, theology, and belles lettres. His grandfather, the old Wazir, had bequeathed to him the whole of his property when he was but four years of age.

Now during all the time of his earliest youth he had never left the house till on a certain day his father, the Wazir Nur al-Din, clad him in his best clothes and, mounting him on a she-mule of the finest, went up with him to the Sultan. The King gazed at Badr al-Din Hasan and marveled at his comeliness and loved him. As for the city folk, when he first passed before them with his father, they marveled at his exceeding beauty and sat down on the road expecting his return, that they might look their fill on his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace. And they blessed him aloud as he passed and called upon Almighty Allah to bless him. The Sultan entreated the lad with especial favor and said to his father, "O Wazir, thou must needs bring him daily to my presence." Whereupon he replied, "I hear and I obey."

Then the Wazir returned home with his son and ceased not to carry him to court till he reached the age of twenty. At that time the Minister sickened and, sending for Badr al-Din Hasan, said to him: "Know, O my son, that the world of the present is but a house of mortality, while that the future is a house of eternity. I wish, before I die, to bequeath thee certain charges, and do thou take heed of what I say and incline thy heart to my words." Then he gave him his last instructions as to the properest way of dealing with his neighbors and the due management of his affairs, after which he called to mind his brother and his home and his native land and wept over his separation from those he had first loved.

Then he wiped away his tears and, turning to his son, said to him: "Before I proceed, O my son, to my last charges and injunctions, know that I have a brother, and thou hast an uncle, Shams al-Din hight, the Wazir of Cairo, with whom I parted, leaving him against his will. Now take thee a sheet of paper and write upon it whatso I say to thee." Badr al-Din took a fair leaf and set about doing his father's bidding, and he wrote thereon a full account of what had happened to his sire first and last: the dates of his arrival at Bassorah and of his forgatherings with the Wazir, of his marriage, of his going in to the Minister's daughter, and of the birth of his son- brief, his life of forty years from the day of his dispute with his brother, adding the words: "And this is written at my dictation, and may Almighty Allah be with him when I am gone!" Then he folded the paper and sealed it and said: "O Hasan, O my son, keep this paper with all care, for it will enable thee to establish thine origin and rank and lineage, and if anything contrary befall thee, set out for Cairo and ask for thine uncle and show him this paper, and say to him that I died a stranger far from mine own people and full of yearning to see him and them." So Badr al-Din Hasan took the document and folded it and, wrapping it up in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it like a talisman between the inner and outer cloth of his skullcap and wound his light turban round it. And he fell to weeping over his father and at parting with him, and he but a boy.

Then Nur al-Din lapsed into a swoon, the forerunner of death, but presently recovering himself, he said: "O Hasan, O my son, I will now bequeath to thee five last behests. The FIRST BEHEST is: Be overintimate with none, nor frequent any, nor be familiar with any. So shalt thou be safe from his mischief, for security lieth in seclusion of thought and a certain retirement from the society of thy fellows, and I have heard it said by a poet:

"In this world there is none thou mayst count upon  
To befriend thy case in the nick of need.  
So live for thyself nursing hope of none.  
Such counsel I give thee-enow, take heed!"

"The SECOND BEHEST is, O my son: Deal harshly with none lest fortune with thee deal hardly, for the fortune of this world is one day with thee and another day against thee, and all worldly goods are but a loan to be repaid. And I have heard a poet say:

"Take thought nor haste to will the thing thou wilt,  
Have ruth on man, for ruth thou mayst require.  
No hand is there but Allah's hand is higher,  
No tyrant but shall rue worse tyrant's ire!

"The THIRD BEHEST is: Learn to be silent in society and let thine own faults distract thine attention from the faults of other men, for it is said, 'In silence dwelleth safety,' and thereon I have heard the lines that tell us:

"Reserve's a jewel, Silence safety is.  
Whenas thou speakest, many a word withhold,  
For an of Silence thou repent thee once,  
Of speech thou shalt repent times manifold.

"The FOURTH BEHEST, O My son, is: Beware of winebibbing, for wine is the head of all frowardness and a fine solvent of human wits. So shun, and again I say shun, mixing strong liquor, for I have heard a poet say:

"From wine I turn and whoso wine cups swill,  
Becoming one of those who deem it ill.  
Wine driveth man to miss salvation way,  
And opes the gateway wide to sins that kill.

"The FIFTH BEHEST, O My Son, is: Keep thy wealth and it will keep thee, guard thy money and it will guard thee, and waste not thy substance lest haply thou come to want and must fare a-begging from the meanest of mankind. Save thy dirhams and deem them the sovereignest salve for the wounds of the world. And here again I have heard that one of the poets said:

"When fails my wealth no friend will deign befriend.  
When wealth abounds all friends their friendship tender.  
How many friends lent aid my wealth to spend,  
But friends to lack of wealth no friendship render."

On this wise Nur al-Din ceased not to counsel his son Badr al-Din Hasan till his hour came and, sighing one sobbing sigh, his life went forth. Then the voice of mourning and keening rose high in his house and the Sultan and all the grandees grieved for him and buried him. But his son ceased not lamenting his loss for two months, during which he never mounted horse, nor attended the Divan, nor presented himself before the Sultan. At last the King, being wroth with him, stablished in his stead one of his chamberlains and made him Wazir, giving orders to seize and set seals on all Nur al-Din's houses and goods and domains. So the new Wazir went forth with a mighty posse of chamberlains and people of the Divan, and watchmen and a host of idlers, to do this and to seize Badr al-Din Hasan and carry him before the King, who would deal with him as he deemed fit.

Now there was among the crowd of followers a Mameluke of the deceased Wazir who, when he had heard this order, urged his horse and rode at full speed to the house of Badr



al-Din Hasan, for he could not endure to see the ruin of his old master's son. He found him sitting at the gate with head hung down and sorrowing, as was his wont, for the loss of his father, so he dismounted and, kissing his hand, said to him, "O my lord and son of my lord, haste ere ruin come and lay waste!" When Hasan heard this he trembled and asked, "What may be the matter?" and the man answered: "The Sultan is angered with thee and hath issued a warrant against thee, and evil cometh hard upon my track, so flee with thy life!" At these words Hasan's heart flamed with the fire of bale, and his rose-red cheek turned pale, and he said to the Mameluke: "O my brother, is there time for me to go in and get some worldly gear which may stand me in stead during my strangerhood?" But the slave replied, "O my lord, up at once and save thyself and leave this house while it is yet time." And he quoted these lines:

"Escape with thy life, if oppression betide thee,  
And let the house tell of its builder's fate!  
Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it,  
Life for life never, early or late.  
It is strange men should dwell in the house of abjection  
When the plain of God's earth is so wide and so great!"

At these words of the Mameluke, Badr al-Din covered his head with the skirt of his garment and went forth on foot till he stood outside of the city, where he heard folk saying: "The Sultan hath sent his new Wazir to the house of the old Wazir, now no more, to seal his property and seize his son Badr al-Din Hasan and take him before the presence, that he may put him to death." And all cried, "Alas for his beauty and his loveliness!" When he heard this, he fled forth at hazard, knowing not whither he was going, and gave not over hurrying onward till Destiny drove him to his father's tomb. So he entered the cemetery and, threading his way through the graves, at last he reached the sepulcher, where he sat down and let fall from his head the skirt of his long robe, which was made of brocade with a gold-embroidered hem whereon were worked these couplets:

O thou whose forehead, like the radiant East,  
Tells of the stars of Heaven and bounteous dews,  
Endure thine honor to the latest day,  
And Time thy growth of glory ne'er refuse!

While he was sitting by his father's tomb, behold, there came to him a Jew as he were a shroff, a money-changer, with a pair of saddlebags containing much gold, who accosted him and kissed his hand, saying: "Whither bound, O my lord? 'Tis late in the day, and thou art clad but lightly, and I read signs of trouble in thy face." "I was sleeping within this very hour," answered Hasan, "when my father appeared to me and chid me for not having visited his tomb. So I awoke trembling and came hither forthright lest the day should go by without my visiting him, which would have been grievous to me." "O my lord," rejoined the Jew, "thy father had many merchantmen at sea, and as some of them are now due, it is my wish to buy of thee the cargo of the first ship that cometh into port with this thousand dinars of gold." "I consent," quoth Hasan, whereupon the Jew took out a bag full of gold and counted out a thousand sequins, which he gave to Hasan, the son of the Wazir, saying, "Write me a letter of sale and seal it."

So Hasan took a pen and paper and wrote these words in duplicate: "The writer, Hasan Badr al-Din, son of Wazir Nur al-Din, hath sold to Isaac the Jew all the cargo of the first of his father's ships which cometh into port, for a thousand dinars, and he hath received the price in advance." And after he had taken one copy, the Jew put it into his pouch and went

away, but Hasan fell a-weeping as he thought of the dignity and prosperity which had erst been his and night came upon him. So he leant his head against his father's grave and sleep overcame him- glory to Him who sleepeth not! He ceased not slumbering till the moon rose, when his head slipped from off the tomb and he lay on his back, with limbs outstretched, his face shining bright in the moonlight. Now the cemetery was haunted day and night by Jinns who were of the True Believers, and presently came out a Jinniyah who, seeing Hasan asleep, marveled at his beauty and loveliness and cried: "Glory to God! This youth can be none other than one of the Wuldan of Paradise." Then she flew firmamentward to circle it, as was her custom, and met an Ifrit on the wing, who saluted her, and said to him, "Whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," he replied. "Wilt thou come with me and look upon the beauty of a youth who sleepeth in yonder burial place?" she asked, and he answered, "I will."

So they flew till they lighted at the tomb and she showed him the youth and said, "Now diddest thou ever in thy born days see aught like this?" The Ifrit looked upon him and exclaimed: "Praise be to Him that hath no equal! But, O my sister, shall I tell thee what I have seen this day?" Asked she, "What is that?" and he answered: "I have seen the counterpart of this youth in the land of Egypt. She is the daughter of the Wazir Shams al-Din and she is a model of beauty and loveliness, of fairest favor and formous form, and dight with symmetry and perfect grace. When she had reached the age of nineteen, the Sultan of Egypt heard of her and, sending for the Wazir her father, said to him, 'Hear me, O Wazir. It hath reached mine ear that thou hast a daughter, and I wish to demand her of thee in marriage.' The Wazir replied:

"O our lord the Sultan, deign accept my excuses and take compassion on my sorrows, for thou knowest that my brother, who was partner with me in the wazirate, disappeared from amongst us many years ago and we wot not where he is. Now the cause of his departure was that one night, as we were sitting together and talking of wives and children to come, we had words on the matter and he went off in high dudgeon. But I swore that I would marry my daughter to none save to the son of my brother on the day her mother gave her birth, which was nigh upon nineteen years ago. I have lately heard that my brother died at Bassorah, where he had married the daughter of the Wazir and that she bare him a son, and I will not marry my daughter but to him in honor of my brother's memory. I recorded the date of my marriage and the conception of my wife and the birth of my daughter, and from her horoscope I find that her name is conjoined with that of her cousin, and there are damsels in foison for our lord the Sultan.'

"The King, hearing his Minister's answer and refusal, waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and cried: 'When the like of me asketh a girl in marriage of the like of thee, he conferreth an honor, and thou rejectest me and puttest me off with cold excuses! Now, by the life of my head, I will marry her to the meanest of my men in spite of the nose of thee!' There was in the palace a horse groom which was a Gobbo with a bunch to his breast and a hunch to his back, and the Sultan sent for him and married him to the daughter of the Wazir, lief or loth, and hath ordered a pompous marriage procession for him and that he go in to his bride this very night. I have not just flown hither from Cairo, where I left the hunchback at the door of the hammam bath amidst the Sultan's white slaves, who were waving lighted flambeaux about him. As for the Minister's daughter, she sitteth among her nurses and tirewomen, weeping and wailing, for they have forbidden her father to come near her. Never have I seen, O my sister, more hideous being than this hunchback, whilst the young lady is the likest of all folk to this young man, albeit even fairer than he."

At this the Jinniyah cried at him: "Thou liest! This youth is handsomer than anyone of his day." The Ifrit gave her the lie again, adding: "By Allah, O my sister, the damsel I speak of

is fairer than this. Yet none but he deserveth her, for they resemble each other like brother and sister, or at least cousins. And, wellaway, how she is wasted upon that hunchback!" Then said she, "O my brother, let us get under him and lift him up and carry him to Cairo, that we may compare him with the damsel of whom thou speakest and so determine whether of the twain is the fairer." "To hear is to obey!" replied he. "Thou speakest to the point, nor is there a righter recking than this of thine, and I myself will carry him." So he raised him from the ground and flew with him like a bird soaring in upper air, the Ifritah keeping close by his side at equal speed, till he alighted with him in the city of Cairo and set him down on a stone bench and woke him up. He roused himself and finding that he was no longer at his father's tomb in Bassorah city, he looked right and left and saw that he was in a strange place, and he would have cried out, but the Ifrit gave him a cuff which persuaded him to keep silence. Then he brought him rich raiment and clothed him therein and, giving him a lighted flambeau, said:

"Know that I have brought thee hither meaning to do thee a good turn for the love of Allah. So take this torch and mingle with the people at the hammam door and walk on with them without stopping till thou reach the house of the wedding festival. Then go boldly forward and enter the great saloon, and fear none, but take thy stand at the right hand of the hunchback bridegroom. And as often as any of the nurses and tirewomen and singing girls come up to thee, put thy hand into thy pocket, which thou wilt find filled with gold. Take it out and throw to them and spare not, for as often as thou thrustest fingers in pouch, thou shalt find it full of coin. Give largess by handfuls and fear nothing, but set thy trust upon Him who created thee, for this is not by thine own strength but by that of Allah Almighty, that His decrees may take effect upon His creatures."

When Badr al-Din Hasan heard these words from the Ifrit, he said to himself, "Would Heaven I knew what all this means and what is the cause of such kindness!" However, he mingled with the people and, lighting his flambeau, moved on with the bridal procession till he came to the bath, where he found the hunchback already on horseback. Then he pushed his way in among the crowd, a veritable beauty of a man in the finest apparel, wearing tarboosh and turban and a long-sleeved robe purpled with gold. And as often as the singing women stopped for the people to give him largess, he thrust his hand into his pocket and, finding it full of gold, took out a handful and threw it on the tambourine till he had filled it with gold pieces for the music girls and the tirewomen. The singers were amazed by his bounty and the people marveled at his beauty and loveliness and the splendor of his dress. He ceased not to do thus till he reached the mansion of the Wazir (who was his uncle), where the chamberlains drove back the people and forbade them to go forward, but the singing girls and the tirewomen said, "By Allah, we will not enter unless this young man enter with us, for he hath given us length o' life with his largess, and we will not display the bride unless he be present."

Therewith they carried him into the bridal hall and made him sit down, defying the evil glances of the hunchbacked bridegroom. The wives of the emirs and wazirs and chamberlains and courtiers all stood in double line, each holding a massy cierge ready lighted. All wore thin face veils, and the two rows right and left extended from the bride's throne to the head of the hall adjoining the chamber whence she was to come forth. When the ladies saw Badr al-Din Hasan and noted his beauty and loveliness and his face that shone like the new moon, their hearts inclined to him and the singing girls said to all that were present, "Know that this beauty crossed our hands with naught but red gold, so be not chary to do him womanly service and comply with all he says, no matter what he ask." So all the women crowded round Hasan with their torches and gazed on his loveliness and envied him his beauty, and one and all would gladly have lain on his bosom an hour, or

rather a year. Their hearts were so troubled that they let fall their veils from before their faces and said, "Happy she who belongeth to this youth or to whom he belongeth!" And they called down curses on the crooked groom and on him who was the cause of his marriage to the girl beauty, and as often as they blessed Badr al-Din Hasan they damned the hunchback, saying, "Verily this youth and none else deserveth our bride. Ah, wellaway for such a lovely one with this hideous Quasimodo! Allah's curse light on his head and on the Sultan who commanded the marriage!"

Then the singing girls beat their tabrets and lullilooed with joy, announcing the appearing of the bride, and the Wazir's daughter came in surrounded by her tirewomen, who had made her goodly to look upon. For they had perfumed her and incensed her and adorned her hair, and they had robed her in raiment and ornaments befitting the mighty Chosroes kings. The most notable part of her dress was a loose robe worn over her other garments. It was diapered in red gold with figures of wild beasts, and birds whose eyes and beaks were of gems and claws of red rubies and green beryl. And her neck was graced with a necklace of Yamani work, worth thousands of gold pieces, whose bezels were great round jewels of sorts, the like of which was never owned by Kaysar or by Tobba king. And the bride was as the full moon when at fullest on fourteenth night, and as she paced into the hall she was like one of the houris of Heaven- praise be to Him who created her in such splendor of beauty! The ladies encompassed her as the white contains the black of the eye, they clustering like stars whilst she shone amongst them like the moon when it eats up the clouds.

Now Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah was sitting in full gaze of the folk when the bride came forward with her graceful swaying and swimming gait, and her hunchbacked bridegroom stood up to meet and receive her. She, however, turned away from the wight and walked forward till she stood before her cousin Hasan, the son of her uncle. Whereat the people laughed. But when the wedding guests saw her thus attracted toward Badr al-Din, they made a mighty clamor and the singing women shouted their loudest. Whereupon he put his hand into his pocket and, pulling out a handful of gold, cast it into their tambourines, and the girls rejoiced and said, "Could we will our wish, this bride were thine!" At this he smiled and the folk came round him, flambeaux in hand, like the eyeball round the pupil, while the Gobbo bridegroom was left sitting alone much like a tailless baboon. For every time they lighted a candle for him it went out willy-nilly, so he was left in darkness and silence and looking at naught but himself.

When Badr al-Din Hasan saw the bridegroom sitting lonesome in the dark, and all the wedding guests with their flambeaux and wax candles crowding about himself, he was bewildered and marveled much, but when he looked at his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, he rejoiced and felt an inward delight. He longed to greet her, and gazed intently on her face, which was radiant with light and brilliancy. Then the tirewomen took off her veil and displayed her in all her seven toilettes before Badr al-Din Hasan, wholly neglecting the Gobbo, who sat moping alone, and when she opened her eyes, she said, "O Allah, make this man my goodman and deliver me from the evil of this hunchbacked groom." As soon as they had made an end of this part of the ceremony they dismissed the wedding guests, who went forth, women, children and all, and none remained save Hasan and the hunchback, whilst the tirewomen led the bride into an inner room to change her garb and gear and get her ready for the bridegroom.

Thereupon Quasimodo came up to Badr al-Din Hasan and said: "O my lord, thou hast cheered us this night with thy good company and overwhelmed us with thy kindness and courtesy, but now why not get thee up and go?" "Bismillah," he answered. "In Allah's name, so be it!" And rising, he went forth by the door, where the Ifrit met him and said, "Stay in thy



stead, O Badr al-Din, and when the hunchback goes out to the closet of ease, go in without losing time and seat thyself in the alcove, and when the bride comes say to her: "Tis I am thy husband, for the King devised this trick only fearing for thee the evil eye, and he whom thou sawest is but a syce, a groom, one of our stablemen.' Then walk boldly up to her and unveil her face, for jealousy hath taken us of this matter."

While Hasan was still talking with the Ifrit, behold, the groom fared forth from the hall and entering the closet of ease, sat down on the stool. Hardly had he done this when the Ifrit came out of the tank, wherein the water was, in semblance of a mouse and squeaked out "Zeek!" Quoth the hunchback, "What ails thee?" And the mouse grew and grew till it became a coal-black cat and caterwauled "Miaow! Miaow!" Then it grew still more and more till it became a dog and barked out, "Owh! Owh!" When the bridegroom saw this, he was frightened and exclaimed "Out with thee, O unlucky one!" But the dog grew and swelled till it became an ass colt that brayed and snorted in his face, "Hauk! Hauk!" Whereupon the hunchback quaked and cried, "Come to my aid, O people of the house!" But behold, the ass colt grew and became big as a buffalo and walled the way before him and spake with the voice of the sons of Adam, saying, "Woe to thee, O thou hunchback, thou stinkard, O thou filthiest of grooms!"

Hearing this, the groom was seized with a colic and he sat down on the jakes in his clothes with teeth chattering and knocking together. Quoth the Ifrit, "Is the world so strait to thee thou findest none to marry save my ladylove?" But as he was silent the Ifrit continued, "Answer me or I will do thee dwell in the dust!" "By Allah," replied the Gobbo, "O King of the Buffaloes, this is no fault of mine, for they forced me to wed her, and verily I wot not that she had a lover amongst the buffaloes. But now I repent, first before Allah and then before thee." Said the Ifrit to him: "I swear to thee that if thou fare forth from this place, or thou utter a word before sunrise, I assuredly will wring thy neck. When the sun rises, wend thy went and never more return to this house." So saying, the Ifrit took up the Gobbo bridegroom and set him head downward and feet upward in the slit of the privy, and said to him: "I will leave thee here, but I shall be on the lookout for thee till sunrise, and if thou stir before then, I will seize thee by the feet and dash out thy brains against the wall. So look out for thy life!"

Thus far concerning the hunchback, but as regards Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah, he left the Gobbo and the Ifrit jangling and wrangling and, going into the house, sat him down in the very middle of the alcove. And behold, in came the bride attended by an old woman, who stood at the door and said, "O Father of Uprightness, arise and take what God giveth thee." Then the old woman went away and the bride, Sitt al-Husn or the Lady of Beauty hight, entered the inner part of the alcove brokenhearted and saying in herself, "By Allah, I will never yield my person to him- no, not even were he to take my life!"

But as she came to the further end she saw Badr al-Hasan and she said, "Dearling! Art thou still sitting here? By Allah, I was wishing that thou wert my bridegroom, or at least that thou and the hunchbacked horsegroom were partners in me." He replied, "O beautiful lady, how should the syce have access to thee, and how should he share in thee with me?" "Then," quoth she, "who is my husband, thou or he?" "Sitt al-Husn," rejoined Hasan, "we have not done this for mere fun, but only as a device to ward off the evil eye from thee. For when the tirewomen and singers and wedding guests saw thy beauty being displayed to me, they feared fascination, and thy father hired the horsegroom for ten dinars and a porringer of meat to take the evil eye off us, and now he hath received his hire and gone his gait."

When the Lady of Beauty heard these words she smiled and rejoiced and laughed a pleasant laugh. Then she whispered him: "By the Lord, thou hast quenched a fire which



tortured me and now, by Allah, O my little dark-haired darling, take me to thee and press me to thy bosom!" Then she began singing:

"By Allah, set thy foot upon my soul,  
Since long, long years for this alone I long.  
And whisper tale of love in ear of me,  
To me 'tis sweeter than the sweetest song!  
No other youth upon my heart shall lie,  
So do it often, dear, and do it long."

Then she stripped off her outer gear and she threw open her chemise from the neck downward and showed her person and all the rondure of her hips. When Badr al-Din saw the glorious sight, his desires were roused, and he arose and doffed his clothes, and wrapping up in his bam, trousers the purse of gold which he had taken from the Jew and which contained the thousand dinars, he laid it under the edge of the bedding. Then he took off his turban and set it upon the settle atop of his other clothes, remaining in his skullcap and fine shirt of blue silk laced with gold. Whereupon the Lady of Beauty drew him to her and he did likewise. Then he took her to his embrace and found her a pearl unpierced, and he abaged her virginity and had joyance of her youth in his virility; and she conceived by him that very night. Then he laid his hand under her head and she did the same and they embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms, as a certain poet said of such lovers in these couplets:

Visit thy lover, spurn what envy told,  
No envious churl shall smile on love ensouled.  
Merciful Allah made no fairer sight  
Than coupled lovers single couch doth hold,  
Breast pressing breast and robed in joys their own,  
With pillowed forearms cast in finest mold.  
And when heart speaks to heart with tongue of love,  
Folk who would part them hammer steel ice-cold.  
If a fair friend thou find who cleaves to thee,  
Live for that friend, that friend in heart enfold.  
O ye who blame for love us lover-kind,  
Say, can ye minister to diseased mind?

This much concerning Badr al-Din Hasan and Sitt al-Husn his cousin, but as regards the Ifrit, as soon as he saw the twain asleep, he said to the Ifritah: "Arise, slip thee under the youth, and let us carry him back to his place ere dawn overtake us, for the day is near-hand." Thereupon she came forward and getting under him as he lay asleep, took him up clad only in his fine blue shirt, leaving the rest of his garments, and ceased not flying (and the Ifrit vying with her in flight) till the dawn advised them that it had come upon them midway, and the muezzin began his call from the minaret: "Haste ye to salvation! Haste ye to salvation!" Then Allah suffered His angelic host to shoot down the Ifrit with a shooting star, so he was consumed, but the Ifritah escaped, and she descended with Badr al-Din at the place where the Ifrit was burnt, and did not carry him back to Bassorah, fearing lest he come to harm.

Now by the order of Him who predestineth all things, they alighted at Damascus of Syria, and the Ifritah set down her burden at one of the city gates and flew away. When day arose and the doors were opened, the folk who came forth saw a handsome youth, with no other raiment but his blue shirt of gold-embroidered silk and skullcap, lying upon the ground

drowned in sleep after the hard labor of the night, which had not suffered him to take his rest. So the folk, looking at him, said: "Oh, her luck with whom this one spent the night! But would he had waited to don his garments!" Quoth another: "A sorry lot are the sons of great families! Haply he but now came forth of the tavern on some occasion of his own and his wine flew to his head, whereby he hath missed the place he was making for and strayed till he came to the gate of the city, and finding it shut, lay him down and went to by-by!"

As the people were bandying guesses about him, suddenly the morning breeze blew upon Badr al-Din and raising his shirt to his middle, showed a stomach and navel with something below it, and legs and thighs clear as crystal and smooth as cream. Cried the people, "By Allah, he is a pretty fellow!" and at the cry Badr al-Din awoke and found himself lying at a city gate with a crowd gathered around him. At this he greatly marveled and asked: "Where am I, O good folk, and what causeth you thus to gather round me, and what have I had to do with you?" and they answered: "We found thee lying here asleep during the call to dawn prayer, and this is all we know of the matter. But where diddest thou lie last night?" "By Allah, O good people," replied he, "I lay last night in Cairo." Said somebody, "Thou hast surely been eating hashish," and another, "He is a fool," and a third, "He is a citrouille," and a fourth asked him: "Art thou out of thy mind? Thou sleepest in Cairo and thou wakest in the morning at the gate of Damascus city!" Cried he: "By Allah, my good people, one and all, I lie not to you. Indeed I lay yesternight in the land of Egypt and yesternoon I was at Bassorah." Quoth one, "Well! well!" and quoth another, "Ho! ho!" and a third, "So! so!" and a fourth cried, "This youth is mad, is possessed of the Jinni!" So they clapped hands at him and said to one another: "Alas, the pity of it for his youth! By Allah, a madman! And madness is no respecter of persons."

Then said they to him: "Collect thy wits and return to thy reason! How couldest thou be in Bassorah yesterday and in Cairo yesternight and withal awake in Damascus this morning?" But he persisted, "Indeed I was a bridegroom in Cairo last night." "Belike thou hast been dreaming," rejoined they, "and sawest all this in thy sleep." So Hasan took thought for a while and said to them: "By Allah, this is no dream, nor visionlike doth it seem! I certainly was in Cairo, where they displayed the bride before me, in presence of a third person, the hunchback groom, who was sitting hard by. By Allah, O my brother, this be no dream, and if it were a dream, where is the bag of gold I bore with me, and where are my turban and my robe, and my trousers?"

Then he rose and entered the city, threading its highways and byways and bazaar streets, and the people pressed upon him and jeered at him, crying out "Madman! Madman!" till he, beside himself with rage, took refuge in a cook's shop. Now that cook had been a trifle too clever- that is, a rogue and thief- but Allah had made him repent and turn from his evil ways and open a cookshop, and all the people of Damascus stood in fear of his boldness and his mischief. So when the crowd saw the youth enter his shop, they dispersed, being afraid of him, and went their ways. The cook looked at Badr al-Din and, noting his beauty and loveliness, fell in love with him forthright and said: "Whence comest thou, O youth? Tell me at once thy tale, for thou art become dearer to me than my soul." So Hasan recounted to him all that had befallen him from beginning to end (but in repetition there is no fruition) and the cook said: "O my lord Badr al-Din, doubtless thou knowest that this case is wondrous and this story marvelous. Therefore, O my son, hide what hath betide thee, till Allah dispel what ills be thine, and tarry with me here the meanwhile, for I have no child and I will adopt thee." Badr al-Din replied, "Be it as thou wilt, O my uncle!" Whereupon the cook went to the bazaar and bought him a fine suit of clothes and made him don it, then fared with him to the kazi, and formally declared that he was his son. So Badr al-Din Hasan became known in

Damascus city as the cook's son, and he sat with him in the shop to take the silver, and on this wise he sojourned there for a time.

Thus far concerning him, but as regards his cousin, the Lady of Beauty, when morning dawned she awoke and missed Badr al-Din Hasan from her side; but she thought that he had gone to the privy and she sat expecting him for an hour or so, when behold, entered her father Shams al-Din Mohammed, Wazir of Egypt. Now he was disconsolate by reason of what had befallen him through the Sultan, who had entreated him harshly and had married his daughter by force to the lowest of his menials and he too a lump of a groom hunchbacked withal, and he said to himself, "I will slay this daughter of mine if her own free she had yielded her person to this accursed carle." So he came to the door of the bride's private chamber, and said, "Ho! Sitt al-Husn." She answered him: "Here am I! Here am I! O my lord," and came out unsteady of pit after the pains and pleasures of the night. And she kissed his hand, her face showing redoubled brightness and beauty for having lain in the arms of that gazelle, her cousin.

When her father, the Wazir, saw her in such case, he asked her, "O thou accursed, art thou rejoicing because of this horse groom?" And Sitt al-Husn smiled sweetly and answered: "By Allah, don't ridicule me. Enough of what passed yesterday when folk laughed at me, and evened me with that groom fellow who is not worthy to bring my husband's shoes or slippers- nay, who is not worth the paring of my husband's nails! By the Lord, never in my life have I nighted a night so sweet as yesternight, so don't mock by reminding me of the Gobbo." When her parent heard her words he was filled with fury, and his eyes glared and stared, so that little of them showed save the whites and he cried: "Fie upon thee! What words are these? 'Twas the hunchbacked horse groom who passed the night with thee!" "Allah upon thee," replied the Lady of Beauty, "do not worry me about the Gobbo- Allah damn his father- and leave jesting with me, for this groom was only hired for ten dinars and a porringer of meat and he took his wage and went his way. As for me, I entered the bridal chamber, where I found my true bridegroom sitting, after the singer women had displayed me to him- the same who had crossed their hands with red gold till every pauper that was present waxed wealthy. And I passed the night on the breast of my bonny man, a most lively darling, with his black eyes and joined eyebrows."

When her parent heard these words, the light before his face became night, and he cried out at her, saying: "O thou whore! What is this thou tellest me? Where be thy wits?" "O my father," she rejoined, "thou breakest my heart. Enough for thee that thou hast been so hard upon me! Indeed my husband who took my virginity is but just now gone to the draught-house, and I feel that I have conceived by him." The Wazir rose in much marvel and entered the privy, where he found the hunchbacked horse groom with his head in the hole and his heels in the air. At this sight he was confounded and said, "This is none other than he, the rascal hunchback!" So he called to him, "Ho, Hunchback!" The Gobbo grunted out, "Taghum! Taghum!" thinking it was the Ifrit spoke to him, so the Wazir shouted at him and said, "Speak out, or I'll strike off thy pate with this sword." Then quoth the hunchback, "By Allah, O Sheikh of the Ifrits, ever since thou settest me in this place I have not lifted my head, so Allah upon thee, take pity and entreat me kindly!"

When the Wazir heard this he asked: "What is this thou sayest? I'm the bride's father and no Ifrit." "Enough for thee that thou hast well-nigh done me die," answered Quasimodo. "Now go thy ways before he come upon thee who hath served me thus. Could ye not marry me to any save the ladylove of buffaloes and the beloved of Ifrits? Allah curse her, and curse him who married me to her and was the cause of this my case." Then said the Wazir to him, "Up and out of this place!" "Am I mad," cried the groom, "that I should go with thee

without leave of the Ifrit whose last words to me were: 'When the sun rises, arise and go thy gait.' So hath the sun risen, or no? For I dare not budge from this place till then." Asked the Wazir, "Who brought thee hither?" And he answered, "I came here yesternight for a call of nature and to do what none can do for me, when lo! a mouse came out of the water, and squeaked at me and swelled and waxed gross till it was big as a buffalo, and spoke to me words that entered my ears. Then he left me here and went away. Allah curse the bride and him who married me to her!"

The Wazir walked up to him and lifted his head out of the cesspool hole, and he fared forth running for dear life and hardly crediting that the sun had risen, and repaired to the Sultan, to whom he told all that had befallen him with the Ifrit. But the Wazir returned to the bride's private chamber, sore troubled in spirit about her, and said to her, "O my daughter, explain this strange matter to me!" Quoth she: "'Tis simply this. The bridegroom to whom they displayed me yestereve lay with me all night, and took my virginity, and I am with child by him. He is my husband, and if thou believe me not, there are his turban twisted as it was, lying on the settle and his dagger and his trousers beneath the bed with a something, I wot not what, wrapped up in them."

When her father heard this, he entered the private chamber and found the turban which had been left there by Badr al-Din Hasan, his brother's son, and he took it in hand and turned it over, saying, "This is the turban worn by Wazirs, save that it is of Mosul stuff." So he opened it and, finding what seemed to be an amulet sewn up in the fez, he unsewed the lining and took it out. Then he lifted up the trousers, wherein was the purse of the thousand gold pieces and opening that also, found in it a written paper. This he read, and it was the sale receipt of the Jew in the name of Badr al-Din Hasan son of Nur al-Din All, the Egyptian, and the thousand dinars were also there.

No sooner had Shams al-Din read this than he cried out with a loud cry and fell to the ground fainting, and as soon as he revived and understood the gist of the matter he marveled and said: "There is no god but the God, whose All-might is over all things! Knowest thou, O my daughter, who it was that became the husband of thy virginity?" "No," answered she, and he said: "Verily he is the son of my brother, thy cousin, and this thousand dinars is thy dowry. Praise be to Allah! And would I wot how this matter came about!" Then opened he the amulet which was sewn up and found therein a paper in the handwriting of his deceased brother, Nur al-Din the Egyptian, father of Badr al-Din Hasan. And when he saw the handwriting, he kissed it again and again, and he wept and wailed over his dead brother. Then he read the scroll and found in it recorded the dates of his brother's marriage with the daughter of the Wazir of Bassorah, and of his going in to her, and her conception, and the birth of Badr al-Din Hasan, and all his brother's history and doings up to his dying day.

So he marveled much and shook with joy and, comparing the dates with his own marriage and going in unto his wife and the birth of his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, he found that they perfectly agreed. So he took the document and, repairing with it to the Sultan, acquainted him with what had passed, from first to last, whereat the King marveled and commanded the case to be at once recorded. The Wazir abode that day expecting to see his brother's son, but he came not, and he waited a second day, a third day, and so on to the seventh day without any tidings of him. So he said, "By Allah, I will do a deed such as none hath ever done before me!" And he took reed pen and ink and drew upon a sheet of paper the plan of the whole house, showing whereabouts was the private chamber with the curtain in such a place and the furniture in such another and so on with all that was in the room. Then he folded up the sketch and, causing all the furniture to be collected, he took Badr al-Din's

garments and the turban and fez and robe and purse, and carried the whole to his house and locked them up, against the coming of his nephew, Badr al-Din Hasan, the son of his lost brother, with an iron padlock on which he set his seal.

As for the Wazir's daughter, when her tale of months was fulfilled, she bare a son like the full moon, the image of his father in beauty and loveliness and fair proportions and perfect grace. They cut his navel string and kohled his eyelids to strengthen his eyes, and gave him over to the nurses and nursery governesses, naming him Ajib, the Wonderful. His day was as a month and his month was as a year, and when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather sent him to school, enjoining the master to teach him Koran-reading, and to educate him well. He remained at the school four years, till he began to bully his schoolfellows and abuse them and bash them and thrash them and say: "Who among you is like me? I am the son of the Wazir of Egypt!"

At last the boys came in a body to complain to the monitor of what hard usage they were wont to have from Ajib, and he said to them: "I will tell you somewhat you may do to him so that he shall leave off coming to the school, and it is this. When he enters tomorrow, sit ye down about him and say some one of you to some other: 'By Allah, none shall play with us at this game except he tell us the names of his mamma and papa, for he who knows not the names of his mother and his father is a bastard, a son of adultery, and he shall not play with us.'" When morning dawned, the boys came to school, Ajib being one of them, and all flocked round him saying: "We will play a game wherein none shall join save he can tell the name of his mamma and his papa." And they all cried, "By Allah, good!" Then quoth one of them, "My name is Majid and my mammy's name is Alawiyah and my daddy's Izz al-Din." Another spoke in like guise and yet a third, till Ajib's turn came, and he said, "My name is Ajib, and my mother's is Sitt al-Husn, and my father's Shams al-Din, the Wazir of Cairo." "By Allah," cried they, "the Wazir is not thy true father." Ajib answered, "The Wazir is my father in very deed." Then the boys all laughed and clapped their hands at him, saying: "He does not know who is his papa. Get out from among us, for none shall play with us except he know his father's name."

Thereupon they dispersed from around him and laughed him to scorn, so his breast was straitened and he well-nigh choked with tears and hurt feelings. Then said the monitor to him: "We know that the Wazir is thy grandfather, the father of thy mother, Sitt al-Husn, and not thy father. As for thy father, neither dost thou know him nor yet do we, for the Sultan married thy mother to the hunchbacked horse groom, but the Jinnee came and slept with her and thou hast no known father. Leave, then, comparing thyself too advantageously with the little ones of the school, till thou know that thou hast a lawful father, for until then thou wilt pass for a child of adultery amongst them. Seest thou not that even a huckster's son knoweth his own sire? Thy grandfather is the Wazir of Egypt, but as for thy father, we wot him not and we say indeed that thou hast none. So return to thy sound senses!"

When Ajib heard these insulting words from the monitor and the schoolboys and understood the reproach they put upon him, he went out at once and ran to his mother, Sitt al-Husn, to complain, but he was crying so bitterly that his tears prevented his speech for a while. When she heard his sobs and saw his tears, her heart burned as though with fire for him, and she said: "O my son, why dost thou weep? Allah keep the tears from thine eyes! Tell me what hath betided thee." So he told her all that he heard from the boys and from the monitor and ended with asking, "And who, O my mother, is my father?" She answered, "Thy father is the Wazir of Egypt." But he said: "Do not lie to me. The Wazir is thy father, not mine! Who then is my father? Except thou tell me the very truth I will kill myself with this hanger."



When his mother heard him speak of his father she wept, remembering her cousin and her bridal night with him and all that occurred there and then, and she repeated these couplets:

"Love in my heart they lit and went their ways,  
And all I love to furthest lands withdrew,  
And when they left me sufferance also left,  
And when we parted Patience bade adieu.  
They fled and flying with my joys they fled,  
In very constancy my spirit flew.  
They made my eyelids flow with severance tears  
And to the parting pang these drops are due.  
And when I long to see reunion day, ruth I sue.  
My groans prolonging sore for ruth I sue.  
Then in my heart of hearts their shapes I trace,  
And love and longing care and care renew.  
O ye whose names cling round me like a cloak,  
Whose love yet closer than a shirt I drew,  
Beloved ones, how long this hard despite?  
How long this severance and this coy shy flight?"

Then she wailed and shrieked aloud and her son did the like, and behold, in came the Wazir, whose heart burnt within him at the sight of their lamentations and he said, "What makes you weep?" So the Lady of Beauty acquainted him with what happened between her son and the schoolboys, and he also wept, calling to mind his brother and what had past between them and what had betided his daughter and how he had failed to find out what mystery there was in the matter. Then he rose at once and, repairing to the audience hall, went straight to the King and told his tale and craved his permission to travel eastward to the city of Bassorah and ask after his brother's son. Furthermore, he besought the Sultan to write for him letters patent, authorizing him to seize upon Badr al-Din, his nephew and son-in-law, wheresoever he might find him. And he wept before the King, who had pity on him and wrote royal autographs to his deputies in all climes and countries and cities, whereat the Wazir rejoiced and prayed for blessings on him.

Then, taking leave of his sovereign, he returned to his house, where he equipped himself and his daughter and his adopted child Ajib with all things meet for a long march, and set out and traveled the first day and the second and the third and so forth till he arrived at Damascus city. The Wazir encamped on the open space called AlHasa, and after pitching tents, said to his servants, "A halt here for two days!" So they went into the city upon their several occasions, this to sell and that to buy, this to go to the hammam and that to visit the cathedral mosque of the Banu Umayyah, the Omniades, whose like is not in this world. Ajib also went, with his attendant eunuch, for solace and diversion to the city, and the servant followed with a quarterstaff of almond wood so heavy that if he struck a camel therewith the beast would never rise again.

When the people of Damascus saw Ajib's beauty and brilliancy and perfect grace and symmetry (for he was a marvel of comeliness and winning loveliness, softer than the cool breeze of the North, sweeter than limpid waters to man in drought, and pleasanter than the health for which sick man sueth), a mighty many followed him, whilst others ran on before and sat down on the road until he should come up, that they might gaze on him, till, as Destiny stopped opposite the shop of Ajib's father, Badr al-Din Hasan. Now his beard had grown long and thick and his wits had ripened during the twelve years which had passed

over him, and the cook and ex-rogue having died, the so-called Hasan of Bassorah had succeeded to his goods and shop, for that he had been formally adopted before the kazi and witnesses. When his son and the eunuch stepped before him, he gazed on Ajib and, seeing how very beautiful he was, his heart fluttered and throbbed, and blood drew to blood and natural affection spake out and his bowels yearned over him. He had just dressed a conserve of pomegranate grains with sugar, and Heaven implanted love wrought within him, so he called to his son Ajib and said: "O my lord, O thou who hast gotten the mastery of my heart and my very vitals and to whom my bowels yearn, say me, wilt thou enter my house and solace my soul by eating of my meat?"

Then his eyes streamed with tears which he could not stay, for he bethought him of what he had been and what he had become. When Ajib heard his father's words, his heart also yearned himward, and he looked at the eunuch and said to him: "Of a truth, O my good guard, my heart yearns to this cook. He is as one that hath a son far away from him. So let us enter and gladden his heart by tasting of his hospitality. Perchance for our so doing Allah may reunite me with my father." When the eunuch heard these words, he cried: "A fine thing this, by Allah! Shall the sons of Wazirs be seen eating in a common cookshop? Indeed I keep off the folk from thee with this quarterstaff lest they even look upon thee, and I dare not suffer thee to enter this shop at all."

When Hasan of Bassorah heard his speech he marveled and turned to the eunuch with the tears pouring down his cheeks, and Ajib said, "Verily my heart loves him!" But he answered: "Leave this talk. Thou shalt not go in." Thereupon the father turned to the eunuch and said, "O worthy sir, why wilt thou not gladden my soul by entering my shop? O thou who art like a chestnut, dark without but white of heart within! O thou of the like, of whom a certain poet said..." The eunuch burst out a-laughing and asked: "Said what? Speak out, by Allah, and be quick about it." So Hasan the Bassorite began reciting these couplets:

"If not master of manners or aught but discreet,  
In the household of kings no trust could he take,  
And then for the harem! What eunuch is he  
Whom angels would serve for his service' sake?"

The eunuch marveled and was pleased at these words, so he took Ajib by the hand and went into the cook's shop; whereupon Hasan the Bassorite ladled into a saucer some conserve of pomegranate grains wonderfully good, dressed with almonds and sugar, saying: "You have honored me with your company. Eat, then, and health and happiness to you!" Thereupon Ajib said to his father, "Sit thee down and eat with us, so perchance Allah may unite us with him we long for." Quoth Hasan, "O my son, hast thou then been afflicted in thy tender years with parting from those thou lovest?" Quoth Ajib: "Even so, O nuncle mine. My heart burns for the loss of a beloved one who is none other than my father, and indeed I come forth, I and my grandfather, to circle and search the world for him. Oh, the pity of it, and how I long to meet him!" Then he wept with exceeding weeping, and his father also wept seeing him weep and for his own bereavement, which recalled to him his long separation from dear friends and from his mother, and the eunuch was moved to pity for him.

Then they ate together till they were satisfied, and Ajib and the slave rose and left the shop. Hereat Hasan the Bassorite felt as though his soul had departed his body and had gone with them, for he could not lose sight of the boy during the twinkling of an eye, albeit he knew not that Ajib was his son. So he locked up his shop and hastened after them, and he walked so fast that he came up with them before they had gone out of the western gate.

The eunuch turned and asked him, "What ails thee?" and Badr al-Din answered, "When ye went from me, meseemed my soul had gone with you, and as I had business without the city gate, I purposed to bear you company till my matter was ordered, and so return." The eunuch was angered, and said to Ajib: "This is just what I feared! We ate that unlucky mouthful (which we are bound to respect), and here is the fellow following us from place to place, for the vulgar are ever the vulgar."

Ajib, turning and seeing the cook just behind him, was wroth, and his face reddened with rage and he said to the servant: "Let him walk the highway of the Moslems, but when we turn off it to our tents and find that he still follows us, we will send him about his business with a flea in his ear." Then he bowed his head and walked on, the eunuch walking behind him. But Hasan of Bassorah followed them to the plain Al-Hasa, and as they drew near to the tents, they turned round and saw him close on their heels, so Ajib was very angry, fearing that the eunuch might tell his grandfather what had happened. His indignation was the hotter for apprehension lest any say that after he had entered a cookshop the cook had followed him. So he turned and looked at Hasan of Bassorah and found his eyes fixed on his own, for the father had become a body without a soul, and it seemed to Ajib that his eye was a treacherous eye or that he was some lewd fellow.

So his rage redoubled and, stooping down, he took up a stone weighing half a pound and threw it at his father. It struck him on the forehead, cutting it open from eyebrow to eyebrow and causing the blood to stream down, and Hasan fell to the ground in a swoon whilst Ajib and the eunuch made for the tents. When the father came to himself, he wiped away the blood and tore off a strip from his turban and bound up his head, blaming himself the while, and saying, "I wronged the lad by shutting up my shop and following, so that he thought I was some evil-minded fellow." Then he returned to his place, where he busied himself with the sale of his sweetmeats, and he yearned after his mother at Bassorah, and wept over her and broke out repeating:

"Unjust it were to bid the world be just  
And blame her not. She ne'er was made for justice.  
Take what she gives thee, leave all grief aside,  
For now to fair and then to foul her lust is."

So Hasan of Bassorah set himself steadily to sell his sweetmeats, but the Wazir, his uncle, halted in Damascus three days and then marched upon Emesa, and passing through that town, he made inquiry there, and at every place where he rested. Thence he fared on by way of Hamah and Aleppo and thence through Diyar Bakr and Maridin and Mosul, still inquiring, till he arrived at Bassorah city. Here, as soon as he had secured a lodging, he presented himself before the Sultan, who entreated him with high honor and the respect due to his rank, and asked the cause of his coming. The Wazir acquainted him with his history and told him that the Minister Nur al-Din was his brother, whereupon the Sultan exclaimed, "Allah have mercy upon him!" and added: "My good Sahib, he was my Wazir for fifteen years and I loved him exceedingly. Then he died leaving a son who abode only a single month after his father's death, since which time he has disappeared and we could gain no tidings of him. But his mother, who is the daughter of my former Minister, is still among us."

When the Wazir Shams al-Din heard that his nephew's mother was alive and well, he rejoiced and said, "O King, I much desire to meet her." The King on the instant gave him leave to visit her, so he betook himself to the mansion of his brother Nur al-Din and cast sorrowful glances on all things in and around it and kissed the threshold. Then he

bethought him of his brother Nur al-Din Ali, and how he had died in a strange land far from kith and kin and friends, and he wept and repeated these lines:

"I wander 'mid these walls, my Lavla's walls,  
And kissing this and other wall I roam.  
'Tis not the walls or roof my heart so loves,  
But those who in this house had made their home."

Then he passed through the gate into a courtyard and found a vaulted doorway builded of hardest syenite inlaid with sundry kinds of multicolored marble. Into this he walked, and wandered about the house and, throwing many a glance around, saw the name of his brother Nur al-Din written in gold wash upon the walls. So he went up to the inscription and kissed it and wept and thought of how he had been separated from his brother and had now lost him forever.

Then he walked on till he came to the apartment of his brother's widow, the mother of Badr al-Din Hasan, the Egyptian. Now from the time of her son's disappearance she had never ceased weeping and wailing through the light hours and the dark, and when the years grew longsome with her, she built for him a tomb of marble in the midst of the saloon and there used to weep for him day and night, never sleeping save thereby. When the Wazir drew near her apartment, he heard her voice and stood behind the door while she addressed the sepulcher in verse and said:

"Answer, by Allah! Sepulcher, are all his beauties gone?  
Hath change the power to blight his charms, that beauty's paragon?  
Thou art not earth, O Sepulcher! Nor art thou sky to me.  
How comes it, then, in thee I see conjoint the branch and moon?"

While she was bemoaning herself after this fashion, behold, the Wazir went in to her and saluted her and informed her that he was her husband's brother, and, telling her all that had passed between them, laid open before her the whole story- how her son Badr al-Din Hasan had spent a whole night with his daughter full ten years ago, but had disappeared in the morning. And he ended with saying: "My daughter conceived by thy son and bare a male child who is now with me, and he is thy son and thy son's son by my daughter." When she heard the tidings that her boy Badr al-Din was still alive and saw her brother-in-law, she rose up to him and threw herself at his feet and kissed them. Then the Wazir sent for Ajib and his grandmother stood up and fell on his neck and wept, but Shams al-Din said to her: "This is no time for weeping. This is the time to get thee ready for traveling with us to the land of Egypt. Haply Allah will reunite me and thee with thy son and my nephew." Replied she, "Hearkening and obedience," and, rising at once, collected her baggage and treasures and her jewels, and equipped herself and her slave girls for the march, whilst the Wazir went to take his leave of the Sultan of Bassorah, who sent by him presents and rarities for the Sultan of Egypt.

Then he set out at once upon his homeward march and journeyed till he came to Damascus city, where he alighted in the usual place and pitched tents, and said to his suite, "We will halt a sennight here to buy presents and rare things for the Sultan." Now Ajib bethought him of the past, so he said to the eunuch: "O Laik, I want a little diversion. Come, let us go down to the great bazaar of Damascus and see what hath become of the cook whose sweetmeats we ate and whose head we broke, for indeed he was kind to us and we entreated him scurvily." The eunuch answered, "Hearing is obeying!" So they went forth from the tents, and the tie of blood drew Ajib toward his father, and forthwith they passed through the gateway, Bab al-Faradis hight, and entered the city and ceased not walking

through the streets till they reached the cookshop, where they found Hasan of Bassorah standing at the door. It was near the time of midafternoon prayer, and it so fortuneed that he had just dressed a confection of pomegranate grains.

When the twain drew near to him and Ajib saw him, his heart yearned toward him, and noticing the scar of the blow, which time had darkened on his brow, he said to him: "Peace be on thee, O man! Know that my heart is with thee." But when Badr al-Din looked upon his son, his vitals yearned and his heart fluttered, and he hung his head earthward and sought to make his tongue give utterance to his words, but he could not. Then he raised his head humbly and suppliant-wise toward his boy and repeated these couplets:

"I longed for my beloved, but when I saw his face,  
Abashed I held my tongue and stood with downcast eye,  
And hung my head in dread and would have hid my love,  
But do whatso I would, hidden it would not be.  
Volumes of complaints I had prepared, reproach and blame,  
But when we met, no single word remembered I."

And then said he to them: "Heal my broken heart and eat of my sweetmeats, for, by Allah, I cannot look at thee but my heart flutters. Indeed I should not have followed thee the other day but that I was beside myself." "By Allah," answered Ajib, "thou dost indeed love us! We ate in thy house a mouthful when we were here before and thou madest us repent for it, for that thou followedst us and wouldst have disgraced us, so now we will not eat aught with thee save on condition that thou make oath not to go out after us nor dog us. Otherwise we will not visit thee again during our present stay, for we shall halt a week here whilst my grandfather buys certain presents for the King." Quoth Hasan of Bassorah, "I promise you this."

So Ajib and the eunuch entered the shop, and his father set before them a saucerful of conserve of pomegranate grains. Said Ajib: "Sit thee down and eat with us. So haply shall Allah dispel our sorrows." Hasan the Bassorite was joyful and sat down and ate with them, but his eyes kept gazing fixedly on Ajib's face, for his very heart and vitals clove to him, and at last the boy said to him: "Did I not tell thee thou art a most noxious dotard? So do stint thy staring in my face!" Hasan kept putting morsels into Ajib's mouth at one time and at another time did the same by the eunuch, and they ate till they were satisfied and could no more. Then all rose up and the cook poured water on their hands, and loosing a silken waist shawl, dried them and sprinkled them with rose-water from a casting bottle he had by him. Then he went out and presently returned with a gugglet of sherbet flavored with rose-water, scented with musk, and cooled with snow, and he set this before them saying, "Complete your kindness to me!" So Ajib took the gugglet and drank and passed it to the eunuch, and it went round till their stomachs were full and they were surfeited with a meal larger than their wont.

Then they went away and made haste in walking till they reached the tents, and Ajib went in to his grandmother, who kissed him and, thinking of her son Badr al-Din Hasan, groaned aloud and wept. Then she asked Ajib: "O my son! Where hast thou been?" And he answered, "In Damascus city." Whereupon she rose and set before him a bit of scone and a saucer of conserve of pomegranate grains (which was too little sweetened), and she said to the eunuch, "Sit down with thy master!" Said the servant to himself: "By Allah, we have no mind to eat. I cannot bear the smell of bread." But he sat down, and so did Ajib, though his stomach was full of what he had eaten already and drunken. Nevertheless he took a bit of the bread and dipped it in the pomegranate conserve and made shift to eat it, but he found



it too little sweetened, for he was cloyed and surfeited, so he said, "Faugh, what be this wild-beast stuff?" "O my son," cried his grandmother, "dost thou find fault with my cookery? I cooked this myself and none can cook it as nicely as I can, save thy father, Badr al-Din Hasan." "By Allah, O my lady," Ajib answered, "this dish is nasty stuff, for we saw but now in the city of Bassorah a cook who so dresseth pomegranate grains that the very smell openeth a way to the heart and the taste would make a full man long to eat. And as for this mess compared with his, 'tis not worth either much or little."

When his grandmother heard his words, she waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and looked at the servant and said: "Woe to thee! Dost thou spoil my son, and dost take him into common cookshops?" The eunuch was frightened and denied, saying, "We did not go into the shop, we only passed by it." "By Allah," cried Ajib, "but we did go in, and we ate till it came out of our nostrils, and the dish was better than thy dish!" Then his grandmother rose and went and told her brother-in-law, who was incensed against the eunuch, and sending for him, asked him, "Why didst thou take my son into a cookshop?" And the eunuch, being frightened, answered, "We did not go in." But Ajib said, "We did go inside and ate conserve of pomegranate grains till we were full, and the cook gave us to drink of iced and sugared sherbet."

At this the Wazir's indignation redoubled and he questioned the castrato, but as he still denied, the Wazir said to him, "If thou speak sooth, sit down and eat before us." So he came forward and tried to eat, but could not, and threw away the mouthful crying: "O my lord! I am surfeited since yesterday." By this the Wazir was certified that he had eaten at the cook's, and bade the slaves throw him, which they did. Then they came down on him with a rib-basting which burned him till he cried for mercy and help from Allah, saying, "O my master, beat me no more and I will tell thee the truth." Whereupon the Wazir stopped the bastinado and said, "Now speak thou sooth." Quoth the eunuch, "Know then that we did enter the shop of a cook while he was dressing conserve of pomegranate grains, and he set some of it before us. By Allah! I never ate in my life its like, nor tasted aught nastier than this stuff which is now before us." Badr al-Din Hasan's mother was angry at this and said, "Needs must thou go back to the cook and bring me a saucer of conserved pomegranate grains from that which is in his shop and show it to thy master, that he may say which be the better and the nicer, mine or his." Said the unsexed, "I will."

So on the instant she gave him a saucer and a half-dinar and he returned to the shop and said to the cook, "O Sheikh of all Cooks, we have laid a wager concerning thy cookery in my lord's house, for they have conserve of pomegranate grains there also. So give me this half-dinar's worth and look to it, for I have eaten a full meal of stick on account of thy cookery, and so do not let me eat aught more thereof." Hasan of Bassorah laughed and answered: "By Allah, none can dress this dish as it should be dressed save myself and my mother, and she at this time is in a far country." Then he ladled out a saucerful and, finishing it off with musk and rose-water, put it in a cloth, which he sealed, and gave it to the eunuch, who hastened back with it. No sooner had Badr al-Din Hasan's mother tasted it and perceived its fine flavor and the excellence of the cookery then she knew who had dressed it, and she screamed and fell down fainting.

The Wazir, sorely startled, sprinkled rose-water upon her, and after a time she recovered and said: "If my son be yet of this world, none dressed this conserve of pomegranate grains but he, and this cook is my very son Badr al-Din Hasan. There is no doubt of it, nor can there be any mistake, for only I and he knew how to prepare it and I taught him." When the Wazir heard her words, he joyed with exceeding joy and said: "Oh, the longing of me for a sight of my brother's son! I wonder if the days will ever unite us with him! Yet it is to

Almighty Allah alone that we look for bringing about this meeting." Then he rose without stay or delay and, going to his suite, said to them, "Be off, some fifty of you, with sticks and staves to the cook's shop and demolish it, then pinion his arms behind him with his own turban, saying, 'It was thou madest that foul mess of pomegranate grains!' And drag him here perforce, but without doing him a harm." And they replied, "It is well."

Then the Wazir rode off without losing an instant to the palace and, forgathering with the Viceroy of Damascus, showed him the Sultan's orders. After careful perusal he kissed the letter and placing it upon his head, said to his visitor, "Who is this offender-of thine?" Quoth the Wazir, "A man which is a cook." So the Viceroy at once sent his apparitors to the shop, which they found demolished and everything in it broken to pieces, for whilst the Wazir was riding to the palace his men had done his bidding. Then they awaited his return from the audience, and Hasan of Bassorah, who was their prisoner, kept saying, "I wonder what they have found in the conserve of pomegranate grains to bring things to this pass!"

When the Wazir returned to them after his visit to the Viceroy, who had given him formal permission to take up his debtor and depart with him, on entering the tents he called for the cook. They brought him forward pinioned with his turban, and, when Badr al-Din Hasan saw his uncle, he wept with exceeding weeping and said, "O my lord, what is my offense against thee?" "Art thou the man who dressed that conserve of pomegranate grains?" asked the Wazir, and he answered "Yes! Didst thou find in it aught to call for the cutting off of my head?" Quoth the Wazir, "That were the least of thy deserts!" Quoth the cook, "O my lord, wilt thou not tell me my crime, and what aileth the conserve of pomegranate grains?" "Presently," replied the Wazir, and called aloud to his men, saying "Bring hither the camels."

So they struck the tents and by the Wazir's orders the servants took Badr al-Din Hasan and set him in a chest which they padlocked and put on a camel. Then they departed and stinted not journeying till nightfall, when they halted and ate some victual, and took Badr al-Din Hasan out of his chest and gave him a meal and locked him up again. They set out once more and traveled till they reached Kimrah, where they took him out of the box and brought him before the Wazir, who asked him, "Art thou he who dressed that conserve of pomegranate grains?" He answered "Yes, O my lord!" and the Wazir said, "Fetter him!" So they fettered him and returned him to the chest and fared on again till they reached Cairo and lighted at the quarter called Al-Raydaniyah. Then the Wazir gave order to take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest and sent for a carpenter and said to him, "Make me a cross of wood for this fellow!" Cried Badr al-Din Hasan, "And what wilt thou do with it?" and the Wazir replied, "I mean to crucify thee thereon, and nail thee thereto and parade thee all about the city."

"And why wilt thou use me after this fashion?" "Because of thy villainous cookery of conserved pomegranate grains. How durst thou dress it and sell it lacking pepper?" "And for that it lacked pepper, wilt thou do all this to me? Is it not enough that thou hast broken my shop and smashed my gear and boxed me up in a chest and fed me only once a day?" "Too little pepper! Too little pepper! This is a crime which can be expiated only upon the cross!" Then Badr al-Din Hasan marveled and fell a-mourning for his life, whereupon the Wazir asked him, "Of what thinkest thou?" and he answered him, "Of maggoty heads like thine, for an thou had one ounce of sense, thou hadst not treated me thus." Quoth the Wazir, "It is our duty to punish thee, lest thou do the like again." Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "Of a truth my offense were overpunished by the least of what thou hast already done to me, and Allah damn all conserve of pomegranate grains and curse the hour when I cooked it, and would I had died ere this!" But the Wazir rejoined, "There is no help for it. I must crucify a man who sells conserve of pomegranate grains lacking pepper."

All this time the carpenter was shaping the wood and Badr al-Din looked on, and thus they did till night, when his uncle took him and clapped him into the chest, saying, "The thing shall be done tomorrow!" Then he waited till he knew Badr al-Din Hasan to be asleep, when he mounted and, taking the chest up before him, entered the city and rode on to his own house, where he alighted and said to his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, "Praised be Allah Who hath reunited thee with thy husband, the son of thine uncle! Up now, and order the house as it was on thy bridal night." So the servants arose and lit the candles, and the Wazir took out his plan of the nuptial chamber, and directed them what to do till they had set everything in its stead, so that whoever saw it would have no doubt but it was the very night of the marriage. Then he bade them put down Badr al-Din Hasan's turban on the settle, as he had deposited it with his own hand, and in like manner his bag trousers and the purse which were under the mattress, and told his daughter to undress herself and go to bed in the private chamber as on her wedding night, adding: "When the son of thine uncle comes in to thee say to him, 'Thou hast loitered while going to the privy,' and call him to lie by thy side and keep him in converse till daybreak, when we will explain the whole matter to him."

Then he bade take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest, after loosing the fetters from his feet and stripping off all that was on him save the fine shirt of blue silk in which he had slept on his wedding night, so that he was well-nigh naked, and trouserless. All this was done whilst he was sleeping on utterly unconscious. Then, by doom of Destiny, Badr al-Din Hasan turned over and awoke, and finding himself in a lighted vestibule, said to himself, "Surely I am in the mazes of some dream." So he rose and went on a little to an inner door and looked in, and lo! he was in the very chamber wherein the bride had been displayed to him, and there he saw the bridal alcove and the settle and his turban and all his clothes.

When he saw this, he was confounded, and kept advancing with one foot and retiring with the other, saying, "Am I sleeping or waking?" And he began rubbing his forehead and saying (for indeed he was thoroughly astounded): "By Allah, verily this is the chamber of the bride who was displayed before me! Where am I, then? I was surely but now in a box!" Whilst he was talking with himself, Sitt al-Husn suddenly lifted the corner of the chamber curtain and said, "O my lord, wilt thou not come in? Indeed thou hast loitered long in the watercloset." When he heard her words and saw her face, he burst out laughing and said, "Of a truth this is a very nightmare among dreams!" Then he went in sighing, and pondered what had come to pass with him and was perplexed about his case, and his affair became yet more obscure to him when he saw his turban and bag trousers and when, feeling the pocket, he found the purse containing the thousand gold pieces. So he stood still and muttered: "Allah is All-knowing! Assuredly I am dreaming a wild waking dream!"

Then said the Lady of Beauty to him, "What ails thee to look puzzled and perplexed?" adding, "Thou wast a very different man during the first of the night!" He laughed and asked her, "How long have I been away from thee?" and she answered him: "Allah preserve thee and His Holy Name be about thee! Thou didst but go out an hour ago for an occasion and return. Are thy wits clean gone?" When Badr al-Din Hasan heard this, he laughed and said: "Thou hast spoken truth, but when I went out from thee, I forgot myself awhile in the draught-house and dreamed that I was a cook at Damascus and abode there ten years, and there came to me a boy who was of the sons of the great, and with him a eunuch." Here he passed his hand over his forehead and, feeling the scar, cried: "By Allah, O my lady, it must have been true, for he struck my forehead with a stone and cut it open from eyebrow to eyebrow, and here is the mark, so it must have been on wake." Then he added: "But perhaps I dreamt it when we fell asleep, I and thou, in each other's arms, for meseems it

was as though I traveled to Damascus without tarboosh and trousers and set up as a cook there."

Then he was perplexed and considered for a while, and said: "By Allah, I also fancied that I dressed a conserve of pomegranate grains and put too little pepper in it. By Allah, I must have slept in the numero-cent and have seen the whole of this is a dream, but how long was that dream!" "Allah upon thee," said Sitt al-Husn, "and what more sawest thou?" So he related all to her, and presently said, "By Allah, had I not woke up, they would have nailed me to a cross of wood!" "Wherefore?" asked she, and he answered: "For putting too little pepper in the conserve of pomegranate grains, and meseemed they demolished my shop and dashed to pieces my pots and pans, destroyed all my stuff, and put me in a box. Then they sent for the carpenter to fashion a cross for me and would have crucified me thereon. Now Alhamdolillah! thanks be to Allah, for that all this happened to me in sleep, and not on wake." Sitt al-Husn laughed and clasped him to her bosom and he her to his.

Then he thought again and said: "By Allah, it could not be save while I was awake. Truly I know not what to think of it." Then he lay down, and all the night he was bewildered about his case, now saying, "I was dreaming!" and then saying, "I was awake!" till morning, when his uncle Shams al-Din, the Wazir, came too him and saluted him. When Badr al-Din Hasan saw him he said: "By Allah, art thou not he who bade bind my hands behind me and smash my shop and nail me to a cross on a matter of conserved pomegranate grains because the dish lacked a sufficiency of pepper?" Whereupon the Wazir said to him: "Know, O my son, that truth hath shown it soothfast and the concealed hath been revealed! Thou art the son of my brother, and I did all this with thee to certify myself that thou wast indeed he who went in unto my daughter that night. I could not be sure of this till I saw that thou knewest the chamber and thy turban and thy trousers and thy gold and the papers in thy writing and in that of thy father, my brother, for I had never seen thee afore that and knew thee not. And as to thy mother, I have prevailed upon her to come with me from Bassorah."

So saying, he threw himself on his nephew's breast and wept for joy, and Badr al-Din Hasan, hearing these words from his uncle, marveled with exceeding marvel and fell on his neck and also shed tears for excess of delight. Then said the Wazir to him, "O my son, the sole cause of all this is what passed between me and thy sire," and he told him the manner of his father wayfaring to Bassorah and all that had occurred to part them. Lastly the Wazir sent for Ajib, and when his father saw him he cried, "And this is he who struck me with the stone!" Quoth the Wazir, "This is thy son!" And Badr al-Din Hasan threw himself upon his boy and began repeating:

"Long have I wept o'er severance' ban and bane,  
Long from mine eyelids tear rills rail and rain.  
And vowed I if Time reunion bring,  
My tongue from name of "Severance" I'll restrain.  
Joy hath o'ercome me to this stress that I  
From joy's revulsion to shed tears am fain.  
Ye are so trained to tears, O eyne of me!  
You weep with pleasure as you weep in pain."

When he had ended his verse his mother came in and threw herself upon him and began reciting:

"When we met we complained,  
Our hearts were sore wrung.

But plaint is not pleasant  
Fro' messenger's tongue."

Then she wept and related to him what had befallen her since his departure, and he told her what he had suffered, and they thanked Allah Almighty for their reunion.

Two days after his arrival the Wazir Shams al-Din went in to the Sultan and, kissing the ground between his hands, greeted him with the greeting due to kings. The Sultan rejoiced at his return and his face brightened and, placing him hard by his side, asked him to relate all he had seen in his wayfaring and whatso had betided him in his going and coming. So the Wazir told him all that had passed from first to last and the Sultan said: "Thanks be to Allah for thy victory and the winning of thy wish and thy safe return to thy children and thy people! And now I needs must see the son of thy brother, Hasan of Bassorah, so bring him to the audience hall tomorrow." Shams al-Din replied, "Thy slave shall stand in thy presence tomorrow, Inshallah, if it be God's will." Then he saluted him and, returning to his own house, informed his nephew of the Sultan's desire to see him, whereto replied Hasan, whilom the Bassorite, "Me slave is obedient to the orders of his lord." And the result was that next day he accompanied his uncle, Shams al-Din, to the Divan, and after saluting the Sultan and doing him reverence in most ceremonious obeisance and with most courtly obsequiousness, he began improvising these verses:

"The first in rank to kiss the ground shall deign  
Before you, and all ends and aims attain.  
You are Honor's fount, and all that hope of you,  
Shall gain more honor than Hope hoped to gain."

The Sultan smiled and signed to him to sit down. So he took a seat close to his uncle, Shams al-Din, and the King asked him his name. Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "The meanest of thy slaves is known as Hasan the Bassorite, who is instant in prayer for thee day and night." The Sultan was pleased at his words and, being minded to test his learning and prove his good breeding, asked him, "Dost thou remember any verses in praise of the mole on the cheek?" He answered, "I do," and began reciting:  
"When I think of my love and our parting smart,  
My groans go forth and my tears upstart.  
He's a mole that reminds me in color and charms  
O' the black o' the eye and the grain of the heart."

The King admired and praised the two couplets and said to him: "Quote something else. Allah bless thy sire, and may thy tongue never tire!" So he began:

That cheek mole's spot they evened with a grain  
Of Musk, nor did they here the simile strain.  
Nay, marvel at the face comprising all  
Beauty, nor falling short by single grain."

The King shook with pleasure and said to him: "Say more. Allah bless thy days!" So he began:

"O you whose mole on cheek enthroned recalls  
A dot of musk upon a stone of ruby,  
Grant me your favors! Be not stone at heart!  
Core of my heart, whose only sustenance you be!"



Quoth the King: "Fair comparison, O Hasan! Thou hast spoken excellently well and hast proved thyself accomplished in every accomplishment! Now explain to me how many meanings be there in the Arabic language for the word khal or mole." He replied, "Allah keep the King! Seven and fifty, and some by tradition say fifty." Said the Sultan, "Thou sayest sooth," presently adding, "Hast thou knowledge as to the points of excellence in beauty?" "Yes," answered Badr al-Din Hasan. "Beauty consisteth in brightness of face, clearness of complexion, shapeliness of nose, gentleness of eyes, sweetness of mouth, cleverness of speech, slenderness of shape, and seemliness of all attributes. But the acme of beauty is in the hair and indeed al-Shihab the Hijazi hath brought together all these items in his doggrel verse of the meter Rajaz, and it is this:

"Say thou to skin 'Be soft,' to face 'Be fair,'  
And gaze, nor shall they blame howso thou stare.  
Fine nose in Beauty's list is high esteemed,  
Nor less an eye full, bright and debonnair.  
Eke did they well to laud the lovely lips  
(Which e'en the sleep of me will never spare),  
A winning tongue, a stature tall and straight,  
A seemly union of gifts rarest rare.  
But Beauty's acme in the hair one views it,  
So hear my strain and with some few excuse it!"

The Sultan was captivated by his converse and, regarding him as a friend, asked, "What meaning is there in the saw 'Shurayh is foxier than the fox'?" And he answered, "Know, O King (whom Almighty Allah keep!), that the legist Shurayh was wont, during the days of the plague, to make a visitation to Al-Najaf, and whenever he stood up to pray, there came a fox which would plant himself facing him and which, by mimicking his movements, distracted him from his devotions. Now when this became longsome to him, one day he doffed his shirt and set it upon a cane and shook out the sleeves. Then, placing his turban on the top and girding its middle with a shawl, he stuck it up in the place where he used to pray. Presently up trotted the fox according to his custom and stood over against the figure, whereupon Shurayh came behind him, and took him. Hence the sayer saith, 'Shurayh is foxier than the fox.'" When the Sultan heard Badr al-Din Hasan's explanation he said to his uncle, Shams al-Din, "Truly this the son of thy brother is perfect in courtly breeding and I do not think that his like can be found in Cairo." At this Hasan arose and kissed the ground before him and sat down again as a Mameluke should sit before his master.

When the Sultan had thus assured himself of his courtly breeding and bearing and his knowledge of the liberal arts and belles-lettres, he joyed with exceeding joy and invested him with a splendid robe of honor and promoted him to an office whereby he might better his condition. Then Badr al-Din Hasan arose and, kissing the ground before the King, wished him continuance of glory and asked leave to retire with his uncle, the Wazir Shams al-Din. The Sultan gave him leave and he issued forth, and the two returned home, where food was set before them and they ate what Allah had given them. After finishing his meal Hasan repaired to the sitting chamber of his wife, the Lady of Beauty, and told her what had past between him and the Sultan, whereupon quoth she: "He cannot fail to make thee a cup companion and give thee largess in excess and load thee with favors and bounties. So shalt thou, by Allah's blessing, dispread, like the greater light, the rays of thy perfection wherever thou be, on shore or on sea." Said he to her, "I purpose to recite a Kasidah, an ode, in his praise, that he may redouble in affection for me." "Thou art right in thine intent," she answered, "so gather thy wits together and weigh thy words, and I shall surely see my

husband favored with his highest favor." Thereupon Hasan shut himself up and composed these couplets on a solid base and abounding in inner grace and copied them out in a handwriting of the nicest taste. They are as follows:

Mine is a Chief who reached most haught estate,  
Treading the pathways of the good and great.  
His justice makes all regions safe and sure,  
And against froward foes bars every gate.  
Bold lion, hero, saint, e'en if you call  
Seraph or Sovran he with an may rate!  
he poorest suppliant rich from him returns,  
All words to praise him were inadequate.  
He to the day of peace is saffron Morn,  
And murky Night in furious warfare's bate,  
Bow 'neath his gifts our necks, and by his deeds  
As King of freeborn souls he 'joys his state.  
Allah increase for us his term of years,  
And from his lot avert all risks and fears!

When he had finished transcribing the lines, he dispatched them in charge of one of his uncle's slaves to the Sultan, who perused them, and his fancy was pleased, so he read them to those present and all praised them with the highest praise. Thereupon he sent for the writer to his sitting chamber and said to him: "Thou art from this day forth my boon companion, and I appoint to thee a monthly solde of a thousand dirhams, over and above that I bestowed on thee aforetime." So Hasan rose and, kissing the ground before the King several times, prayed for the continuance of his greatness and glory and length of life and strength. Thus Badr al-Din Hasan the Bassorite waxed high in honor and his fame flew forth to many regions, and he abode in all comfort and solace and delight of life with his uncle and his own folk till death overtook him.

When the Caliph Harun al-Rashid heard this story from the mouth of his Wazir, Ja'afar the Barmecide, he marveled much and said, "It behooves that these stories be written in letters of liquid gold." Then he set the slaves at liberty and assigned to the youth who had slain his wife such a monthly stipend as sufficed to make his life easy. He also gave him a concubine from amongst his own slave girls, and the young man became one of his cup companions.

### **The City Of Many-Columned Iram And Abdullah Son Of Abi Kilabah**

IT is related that Abdullah bin Abi Kilabah went forth in quest of a she-camel which had strayed from him, and as he was wandering in the deserts of Al-Yaman and the district of Saba, behold, he came a great city girt by a vast castle around which were palaces and pavilions that rose high into middle air. He made for the place thinking to find there folk of whom he might ask concerning his she-camel. But when he reached it, he found it desolate, without a living soul in it. So (quoth he) I alighted and, hobbling my dromedary, and composing my mind, entered into the city.

Now when I came to the castle, I found it had two vast gates (never in the world was seen their like for size and height) inlaid with all manner jewels and jacinths, white and red, yellow and green. Beholding this, I marveled with great marvel and thought the case mighty wondrous. Then, entering the citadel in a flutter of fear and dazed with surprise and affright,

I found it long and wide, about equaling Al-Medinah in point of size. And therein were lofty palaces laid out in pavilions all built of gold and silver and inlaid with many colored jewels and jacinths and chrysolites and pearls. And the door leaves in the pavilions were like those of the castle for beauty, and their floors were strewn with great pearls and balls, no smaller than hazelnuts, of musk and ambergris and saffron.

Now when I came within the heart of the city and saw therein no created beings of the Sons of Adam, I was near swooning and dying for fear. Moreover, I looked down from the great roofs of the pavilion chambers and their balconies and saw rivers running under them, and in the main streets were fruit-laden trees and tall palms, and the manner of their building was one brick of gold and one of silver. So I said to myself, "Doubtless this is the Paradise promised for the world to come." Then I loaded me with the jewels of its gravel and the musk of its dust as much as I could carry, and returned to my own country, where I told the folk what I had seen.

After a time the news reached Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sufyan, who was then Caliph in Al-Hijaz, so he wrote to his lieutenant in San'a of Al-Yaman to send for the teller of the story and question him of the truth of the case. Accordingly the lieutenant summoned me and questioned me of my adventure and of all appertaining to it, and I told him what I had seen, whereupon he dispatched me to Mu'awiyah, before whom I, repeated the story of the strange sights, but he would not credit it. So I brought out to him some of the pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron, in which latter there was still some sweet savor, but the pearls were grown yellow and had lost pearly color.

Now Mu'awiyah wondered at this and, sending for Ka'ab al-Ahbar, said to him, "O Ka'ab, I have sent for thee to ascertain the truth of a certain matter and hope that thou wilt be able to certify me thereof." Asked Ka'ab, "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?" and Mu'awiyah answered, "Wottest thou of any city founded by man which is builded of gold and silver, the pillars whereof are of chrysolite and rubies and its gravel pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron?" He replied, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful, this is 'Iram with pillars decked and dight, the like of which was never made in the lands,' and the builder was Shaddad son of Ad the Greater." Quoth the Caliph, 'Tell us something of its history,' and Ka'ab said:

"Ad the Greater had two sons, Shadid and Shaddad, who when their father died ruled conjointly in his stead, and there was no King of the Kings of the earth but was subject to them. After awhile Shadid died and his brother Shaddad reigned over the earth alone. Now he was fond of reading in antique books, and happening upon the description of the world to come and of Paradise, with its pavilions and pileries and trees and fruits and so forth, his soul move him to build the like thereof in this world, after the fashion aforesaid. Now under his hand were a hundred thousand kings, each ruling over a hundred thousand chiefs, commanding each a hundred thousand warriors, so he called these all before him and said to them: 'I find in ancient books and annals a description of Paradise as it is to be in the next world, and I desire to build me its like in this world. Go ye forth therefore to the goodliest tract on earth and the most spacious, and build me there a city of gold and silver, whose gravel shall be chrysolite and rubies and pearls, and for support of its vaults make pillars of jasper. Fill it with palaces, whereon ye shall set galleries and balconies, and plant its lanes and thoroughfares with all manner trees bearing yellow-ripe fruits, and make rivers to run through it in channels of gold and silver.'

"Whereat said one and all, 'How are we able to do this thing thou hast commanded, and whence shall we get the chrysolites and rubies and pearls whereof thou speakest?' Quoth

he, 'What! Weet ye not that the kings of the world are subject to me and under my hand and that none therein dare gainsay my word?' Answered they, 'Yes, we know that.' Whereupon the King rejoined, 'Fare ye then to the mines of chrysolites and rubies and pearls and gold and silver and collect their produce and gather together all of value that is in the world, and spare no pains and leave naught. And take also for me such of these things as be in men's hands and let nothing escape you. Be diligent and beware of disobedience.' And thereupon he wrote letters to all the kings of the world and bade them gather together whatso of these things was in their subjects' hands, and get them to the mines of precious stones and metals, and bring forth all that was therein, even from the abysses of the seas.

"This they accomplished in the space of twenty years, for the number of rulers then reigning over the earth was three hundred and sixty kings. And Shaddad presently assembled from all lands and countries architects and engineers and men of art and laborers and handicraftsmen, who dispersed over the world and explored all the wastes and wolds and tracts and holds. At last they came to an uninhabited spot, a vast and fair open plain clear of sand hills and mountains, with founts flushing and rivers rushing, and they said, 'This is the manner of place the King commanded us to seek and ordered us to find.' So they busied themselves in building the city even as bade them Shaddad, King of the whole earth in its length and breadth, leading the fountains in channels and laying the foundations after the prescribed fashion. Moreover, all the kings of earth's several reigns sent thither jewels and precious stones and pearls large and small and carnelian and refined gold and virgin silver upon camels by land, and in great ships over the waters, and there came to the builders' hands of all these materials so great a quantity as may neither be told nor counted nor conceived.

"So they labored at the work three hundred years, and when they had brought it to end, they went to King Shaddad and acquainted him therewith. Then said he: 'Depart and make thereon an impregnable castle, rising and towering high in air, and build around it a thousand pavilions, each upon a thousand columns of chrysolite and ruby and vaulted with gold, that in each pavilion a wazir may dwell.' So they returned forthwith and did this in other twenty years, after which they again presented themselves before King Shaddad and informed him of the accomplishment of his will. Then he commanded his wazirs, who were a thousand in number, and his chief officers and such of his troops and others as he put trust in, to prepare for departure and removal to Many-columned Iram, in the suite and at the stirrup of Shaddad, son of Ad, King of the world, and he bade also such as he would of his women and his harem and of his handmaids and eunuchs make them ready for the journey.

"They spent twenty years in preparing for departure, at the end of which time Shaddad set out with his host, rejoicing in the attainment of his desire till there remained but one day's journey between him and Iram of the Pillars. Then Allah sent down on him and on the stubborn unbelievers with him a mighty rushing sound from the Heavens of His power, which destroyed them all with its vehement clamor, and neither Shaddad nor any of his company set eyes on the city. Moreover, Allah blotted out the road which led to the city, and it stands in its stead unchanged until the Resurrection Day and the Hour of Judgment."

So Mu'awiyah wondered greatly at Ka'ab al-Ahbar's story, and said to him, "Hath any mortal ever made his way to that city?" He replied, "Yes, one of the companions of Mohammed (on whom be blessing and peace!) reached it, doubtless and for sure after the same fashion as this man here seated." And (quoth Al-Sha'abi) it is related, on the authority of learned men of Himyar in Al-Yaman that Shaddad, when destroyed with all his host by the sound, was succeeded in his kingship by his son Shaddad the Less, whom he left viceregent in

Hazramaut and Saba when he and his marched upon Many-columned Iram. Now as soon as he heard of his father's death on the road, he caused his body to be brought back from the desert to Hazramaut and bade them hew him out a tomb in a cave, where he laid the body on a throne of gold and threw over the corpse threescore and ten robes of cloth of gold, purpled with precious stones. Lastly at his sire's head he set up a tablet of gold whereon were graven these verses:

Take warning O proud,  
And in length o' life vain!  
I'm Shaddad son of Ad,  
Of the forts castellan,  
Lord of pillars and power,  
Lord of tried might and main,  
Whom all earth sons obeyed  
For my mischief and bane,  
And who held East and West  
In mine awfulest reign.  
He preached me salvation  
Whom God did assain,  
But we crossed him and asked,  
"Can no refuge be ta'en?"  
When a Cry on us cried  
From th' horizon plain,  
And we fell on the field  
Like the harvested grain,  
And the Fixt Day await  
We, in earth's bosom lain!

Al-Sa'alibi also relateth: It chanced that two men once entered this cave and found steps at its upper end, so they descended and came to an underground chamber, a hundred cubits long by forty wide and a hundred high. In the midst stood a throne of gold, whereon lay a man of huge bulk, filling the whole length and breadth of the throne. He was covered with jewels and raiment gold-and-silver wrought, and at his head was a tablet of gold bearing an inscription. So they took the tablet and carried it off, together with as many bars of gold and silver and so forth as they could bear away. And men also relate the tale of The Sweep And The Noble Lady.

### **The Sweep And The Noble Lady**

DURING the season of the Meccan pilgrimage, whilst the people were making circuit about the Holy House and the place of compassing was crowded, behold, a man laid hold of the covering of the Ka'aba and cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying, "I beseech thee, O Allah, that she may once again be wroth with her husband and that I may know her!" A company of the pilgrims heard him and seized him and carried him to the Emir of the pilgrims, after a sufficiency of blows, and, said they, "O Emir, we found this fellow in the Holy Places, saying thus and thus." So the Emir commanded to hang him, but he cried, "O Emir, I conjure thee, by the virtue of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and preserve!), hear my story and then do with me as thou wilt." Quoth the Emir, "Tell thy tale forthright."

"Know then, O Emir," quoth the man, "that I am a sweep who works in the sheep slaughterhouses and carries off the blood and the offal to the rubbish heaps outside the



gates. And it came to pass as I went along one day with my ass loaded, I saw the people running away and one of them said to me, 'Enter this alley, lest haply they slay thee.' Quoth I, 'What aileth the folk running away?' and one of the eunuchs who were passing said to me, 'This is the harem of one of the notables, and her eunuchs drive the people out of her way and beat them all, without respect to persons.' So I turned aside with the donkey and stood still awaiting the dispersal of the crowd, and I saw a number of eunuchs with staves in their hands, followed by nigh thirty women slaves, and amongst them a lady as she were a willow wand or a thirsty gazelle, perfect in beauty and grace and amorous languor, and all were attending upon her.

"Now when she came to the mouth of the passage where I stood, she turned right and left and calling one of the castratos, whispered in his ear, and behold, he came up to me and laid hold of me, whilst another eunuch took my ass and made off with it. And when the spectators fled, the first eunuch bound me with a rope and dragged me after him, till I knew not what to do, and the people followed us and cried out, saying: 'This is not allowed of Allah! What hath this poor scavenger done that he should be bound with ropes?' and praying the eunuchs, 'Have pity on him and let him go, so Allah have pity on you!' And I the while said in my mind: 'Doubtless the eunuchry seized me because their mistress smelt the stink of the offal and it sickened her. Belike she is with child or ailing, but there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!'"

"So I continued walking on behind them till they stopped at the door of a great house, and, entering before me, brought me into a big hall- I know not how I shall describe its magnificence- furnished with the finest furniture. And the women also entered the hall, and I bound and held by the eunuch and saying to myself, 'Doubtless they will torture me here till I die and none know of my death.' However, after a while they carried me into a neat bathroom leading out of the hall, and as I sat there, behold, in came three slave girls, who seated themselves round me and said to me, 'Strip off thy rags and tatters.' So I pulled off my threadbare clothes and one of them fell a-rubbing my legs and feet whilst another scrubbed my head and a third shampooed my body. When they had made an end of washing me, they brought me a parcel of clothes and said to me, 'Put these on,' and I answered, 'By Allah, I know not how!' So they came up to me and dressed me, laughing together at me the while. After which they brought casting bottles full of rose-water, and sprinkled me therewith.

"Then I went out with them into another saloon- by Allah, I know not how to praise its splendor for the wealth of paintings and furniture therein- and entering it, I saw a person seated on a couch of Indian rattan with ivory feet, and before her a number of damsels. When she saw me, she rose to me and called me, so I went up to her and she seated me by her side. Then she bade her slave girls bring food, and they brought all manner of rich meats, such as I never saw in all my life. I do not even know the names of the dishes, much less their nature. So I ate my fill, and when the dishes had been taken away and we had washed our hands, she called for fruits, which came without stay or delay, and ordered me eat of them. And when we had ended eating she bade one of the waiting women bring the wine furniture. So they set on flagons of divers kinds of wine and burned perfumes in all the censers, what while a damsel like the moon rose and served us with wine to the sound of the smitten strings. And I drank, and the lady drank, till we were swized with wine and the whole time I doubted not but that all this was an illusion of sleep.

"Presently, she signed to one of the damsels to spread us a bed in such a place, which being done, she rose and took me by the hand and led me thither, and lay down and I lay with her till the morning, and as often as I pressed her to my breast I smelt the delicious

fragrance of musk and other perfumes that exhaled from her, and could not think otherwise but that I was in Paradise, or in the vain phantasies of a dream. Now when it was day, she asked me where I lodged and I told her, 'In such a place,' whereupon she gave me leave to depart, handing to me a kerchief worked with gold and silver and containing somewhat tied in it, and took leave of me, saying, 'Go to the bath with this.' I rejoiced and said to myself, 'If there be but five coppers here, it will buy me this day my morning meal.'

"Then I left her, as though I were leaving Paradise, and returned to my poor crib, where I opened the kerchief and found in it fifty miskals of gold. So I buried them in the ground and, buying two farthings' worth of bread and "kitchen," seated me at the door and broke my fast. After which I sat pondering my case, and continued so doing till the time of afternoon prayer, when lo! a slave girl accosted me saying, 'My mistress calleth for thee.' I followed her to the house aforesaid and, after asking permission, she carried me into the lady, before whom I kissed the ground, and she commanded me to sit and called for meat and wine as on the previous day. After which I again lay with her all night. On the morrow, she gave me a second kerchief, with other fifty dinars therein, and I took it and, going home, buried this also. In such pleasant condition I continued eight days running, going in to her at the hour of afternoon prayer and leaving her at daybreak, but on the eighth night, as I lay with her, behold, one of her slave girls came running in and said to me, 'Arise, go up into yonder closet.'

"So I rose and went into the closet, which was over the gate, and presently I heard a great clamor and tramp of horse, and, looking out of the window which gave on the street in front of the house, I saw a young man as he were the rising moon on the night of fullness come riding up attended by a number of servants and soldiers who were about him on foot. He alighted at the door and entering the saloon, found the lady seated on the couch. So he kissed the ground between her hands, then came up to her and kissed her hands, but she would not speak to him. However, he continued patiently to humble himself, and soothe her and speak her fair, till he made his peace with her, and they lay together that night. Now when her husband had made his peace with the young lady, he lay with her that night, and next morning the soldiers came for him and he mounted and rode away, whereupon she drew near to me and said, 'Sawest thou yonder man?' I answered, 'Yes,' and she said, 'He is my husband, and I will tell thee what befell me with him.'

"It came to pass one, day that we were sitting, he and I, in the garden within the house, and behold, he rose from my side and was absent a long while, till I grew tired of waiting and said to myself, 'Most like, he is in the privy.' So I arose and went to the watercloset, but not finding him there, went down to the kitchen, where I saw a slave girl, and when I enquired for him, she showed him to me lying with one of the cookmaids. Hereupon I swore a great oath that I assuredly would do adultery with the foulest and filthiest man in Baghdad, and the day the eunuch laid hands on thee, I had been four days going round about the city in quest of one who should answer to this description, but found none fouler nor filthier than thy good self. So I took thee and there passed between us that which Allah foreordained to us, and now I am quit of my oath.'

"Then she added, 'If, however, my husband return yet a pin to the cookmaid and lie with her, I will restore thee to thy lost place in my favors.' Now when I heard these words from her lips, what while she pierced my heart with the shafts of her glances, my tears streamed forth till my eyelids were chafed sore with weeping. Then she made them give me other fifty dinars (making in all four hundred gold pieces I had of her) and bade me depart. So I went out from her and came hither, that I might pray Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) to make her husband return to the cookmaid, that haply I might be again admitted to her favors."

When the Emir of the pilgrims heard the man's story, he set him free and said to the bystanders, "Allah upon you, pray for him, for indeed he is excusable."

### **The Man Who Stole The Dish Of Gold Wherein The Dog Ate**

SOME time erst there was a man who had accumulated debts, and his case was straitened upon him so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction, and he ceased not wandering on at random till he came after a time to a city tall of walls and firm of foundations. He entered it in a state of despondency and despair, harried by hunger and worn with the weariness of his way. As he passed through one of the main streets, he saw a company of the great going along, so he followed them till they reached a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not faring forward till they came in presence of a person seated at the upper end of a saloon, a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, surrounded by pages and eunuchs, as he were of the sons of the wazirs. When he saw the visitors, he rose to greet them and received them with honor, but the poor man aforesaid was confounded at his own boldness when beholding the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants, so drawing back in perplexity and fear for his life, sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him.

Now it chanced that whilst he was sitting, behold, in came a man with four sporting dogs, whereon were various kinds of raw silk and brocade and wearing round their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set privy for him. After which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, which he set severally before the dogs, one for each. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food for stress of hunger, and longed to go up to one of the dogs and eat with him. But fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and Allah Almighty inspired the dog with a knowledge of his case, so he drew back from the platter and signed to the man, who came and ate till he was filled. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog again signed to him to take for himself the dish and what food was left in it, and pushed it toward him with his forepaw. So the man took the dish and leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him.

Then he journeyed to another city, where he sold the dish and buying with the price a stock in trade, returned to his own town. There he sold his goods and paid his debts, and he throve and became affluent and rose to perfect prosperity. He abode in his own land, but after some years had passed he said to himself, "Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, and carry him a fit and handsome present and pay him the money value of that which his dog bestowed upon me." So he took the price of the dish and a suitable gift, and setting out, journeyed day and night till he came to that city. He entered it and sought the place where the man lived, but he found there naught save ruins moldering in row and croak of crow, and house and home desolate and all conditions in changed state. At this, his heart and soul were troubled, and he repeated the saying of him who saith:

"Void are the private rooms of treasury.  
As void were hearts of fear and piety.  
Changed is the wady, nor are its gazelles  
Those fawns, nor sand hills those I wont to see."

Now when the man saw these moldering ruins and witnessed what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the substantial things that erewhiles had been, a little reflection made it needless for him to inquire of the case, so he turned

away. Presently, seeing a wretched man, in a plight which made him shudder and feel goose skin, and which would have moved the very rock to ruth, he said to him: "Ho, thou! What have time and fortune done with the lord of this place? Where are his lovely faces, his shining full moons and splendid stars? And what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode, so that nothing save the walls thereof remain?" Quoth the other: "He is the miserable thou seest mourning that which hath left him naked. But knowest thou not the words of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!), wherein is a lesson to him who will learn by it and a warning to whoso will be warned thereby and guided in the right way, 'Verily it is the way of Allah Almighty to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again'?"

"If thou question of the cause of this accident, indeed it is no wonder, considering the chances and changes of Fortune. I was the lord of this place and I builded it and founded it and owned it, and I was the proud possessor of its full moons lucent and its circumstance resplendent and its damsels radiant and its garniture magnificent, but Time turned and did away from me wealth and servants and took from me what it had lent (not given), and brought upon me calamities which it held in store hidden. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question, so tell it me and leave wondering."

Thereupon the man who had waxed wealthy, being sore concerned, told him the whole story, and added: "I have brought thee a present, such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold which I took; for it was the cause of my affluence after poverty, and of the replenishment of my dwelling place after desolation, and of the dispersion of my trouble and straitness." But the man shook his head and weeping and groaning and complaining of his lot, answered: "Ho, thou! Methinks thou art mad, for this is not the way of a man of sense. How should a dog of mine make generous gift to thee of a dish of gold and I meanly take back the price of what a dog gave? This were indeed a strange thing! Were I in extremest unease and misery, by Allah, I would not accept of thee aught- no, not the worth of a nail paring! So return whence thou camest in health and safety." Whereupon the merchant kissed his feet and taking leave of him, returned whence he came, praising him and reciting this  
couplet:

"Men and dogs together are all gone by,  
So peace be with all of them, dogs and men!"

And Allah is All-knowing!

Again men tell the tale of The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through A Dream.

### **The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through A Dream**

THERE lived once in Baghdad a wealthy man and made of money, who lost all his substance and became so destitute that he could earn his living only by hard labor. One night he lay down to sleep dejected and heavyhearted, and saw in a dream a speaker who said to him, "Verily thy fortune is in Cairo. Go thither and seek it." So he set out for Cairo, but when he arrived there, evening overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque. Presently, by decree of Allah Almighty a band of bandits entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house, but the owners, being aroused by the noise of the thieves, awoke and cried out. Whereupon the Chief of Police came to their aid with his officers.

The robbers made off, but the Wali entered the mosque, and finding the man from Baghdad

asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm rods so grievous a beating that he was well-nigh dead. Then they cast him into jail, where he abode three days, after which the Chief of Police sent for him and asked him, "Whence art thou?" and he answered, "From Baghdad." Quoth the Wali, "And what brought thee to Cairo?" and quoth the Baghdadi, "I saw in a dream One who said to me, 'Thy fortune is in Cairo. Go thither to it.' But when I came to Cairo the fortune which he promised me proved to be the palm rods thou so generously gavest to me."

The Wali laughed till he showed his wisdom teeth and said, "O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me: 'There is in Baghdad a house in such a district and of such a fashion and its courtyard is laid out gardenwise, at the lower end whereof is a jetting fountain and under the same a great sum of money lieth buried. Go thither and take it.' Yet I went not, but thou, of the briefness of thy wit, hast journeyed from place to place on the faith of a dream, which was but an idle galimatias of sleep."

Then he gave him money, saying, "Help thee back herewith to thine own country," and he took the money and set out upon his homeward march. Now the house the Wali had described was the man's own house in Baghdad, so the wayfarer returned thither and, digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure. And thus Allah gave him abundant fortune, and a marvelous coincidence occurred.

And a story is also current of The Ebony Horse.

### **The Ebony Horse**

THERE was once in times of yore and ages long gone before, a great and puissant King, of the kings of the Persians, Sabur by name, who was the richest of all the kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed each and every in wit and wisdom. He was generous, openhanded and beneficent, and he gave to those who sought him and repelled not those who resorted to him, and he comforted the brokenhearted and honorably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon the oppressor. He had three daughters, like full moons of shining light or flower gardens blooming bright, and a son as he were the moon. And it was his wont to keep two festivals in the twelvemonth, those of the Nau-Roz, or New Year, and Mihrgan, the Autumnal Equinox, on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave largess and made proclamation of safety and security and promoted his chamberlains and viceroys. And the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the holy day, bringing him gifts and servants and eunuchs.

Now he loved science and geometry, and one festival day as he sat on his kingly throne there came in to him three wise men, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of craft and inventions, skilled in making things curious and rare, such as confound the wit, and versed in the knowledge of occult truths and perfect in mysteries and subtleties. And they were of three different tongues and countries: the first a Hindi or Indian, the second a Roumi or Greek, and the third a Farsi or Persian. The Indian came forward and, prostrating himself before the King, wished him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting his dignity; that is to say, a man of gold, set with precious gems and jewels of price and hending in hand a golden trumpet. When Sabur saw this, he asked, "O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?" and the Indian answered: "O my lord, if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this clarion against him and he will be seized with a palsy and drop down dead." Much the King



marveled at this and cried, "By Allah, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire."

Then came forward the Greek and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four and twenty chicks of the same metal. Sabur looked at them and turning to the Greek, said to him, "O sage, what is the virtue of this peacock?" "O my lord," answered he, "as often as an hour of the day or night passeth, it pecketh one of its young and crieth out and flappeth its wing, till the four and twenty hours are accomplished. And when the month cometh to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the crescent therein." And the King said, "An thou speak sooth, I will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire."

Then came forward the Persian sage and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse of the blackest ebony wood inlaid with gold and jewels, and ready harnessed with saddle, bridle, and stirrups such as befit kings, which when Sabur saw, he marveled with exceeding marvel and was confounded at the beauty of its form and the ingenuity of its fashion. So he asked, "What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and what the secret of its movement?" and the Persian answered, "O my lord, the virtue of this horse is that if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air and cover the space of a year in a single day."

The King marveled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon one another on the same day, and turning to the sage, said to him: "By Allah the Omnipotent, and our Lord the Beneficent, who created all creatures and feedeth them with meat and drink, an thy speech be veritable and the virtue of thy contrivance appear, I will assuredly give thee whatsoever thou lustest for and will bring thee to thy desire and thy wish!" Then he entertained the sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts, after which they brought the figures before him and each took the creature he had wroughten and showed him the mystery of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trump, the peacock pecked its chicks, and the Persian sage mounted the ebony horse, whereupon it soared with him high in air and descended again. When King Sabur saw all this, he was amazed and perplexed and felt like to fly for joy and said to the three sages: "Now I am certified of the truth of your words and it behooveth me to quit me of my promise. Ask ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give you that same."

Now the report of the King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered: "If the King be content with us and accept of our gifts and allow us to prefer a request to him, we crave of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-inlaw, for that the stability of kings may not be gainsaid." Quoth the King, "I grant you that which you wish and you desire," and bade summon the kazi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters. Now it fortuneed that the Princesses were behind a curtain, looking on, and when they heard this, the youngest considered her husband-to-be and behold, he was an old man, a hundred years of age, with hair frosted, forehead drooping, eyebrows mangy, ears slitten, beard and mustachios stained and dyed, eyes red and goggle, cheeks bleached and hollow, flabby nose like a brinjall or eggplant, face like a cobbles apron, teeth overlapping and lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous- in brief, a terror, a horror, a monster, for he was of the folk of his time the unsightliest and of his age the frightfulest. Sundry of his grinders had been knocked out and his eyeteeth were like the tusks of the Jinni who frighteneth poultry in henhouses.

Now the girl was the fairest and most graceful of her time, more elegant than the gazelle, however tender, than the gentlest zephyr blander, and brighter than the moon at her full, for

amorous fray right suitable, confounding in graceful sway the waving bough and outdoing in swimming gait the pacing roe,- in fine, she was fairer and sweeter by far than all her sisters. So when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and weeping and walling. Now the Prince, her brother, Kamar al-Akmar, or the Moon of Moons hight, was then newly returned from a journey and, hearing her weeping and crying, came in to her (for he loved her with fond affection, more than his other sisters) and asked her: "What aileth thee? What hath befallen thee? Tell me, and conceal naught from me." So she smote her breast and answered: "O my brother and my dear one, I have nothing to hide. If the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out, and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to make provision for me, and my Lord will provide." Quoth he, "Tell me what meaneth this talk and what hath straitened thy breast and troubled thy temper." "O my brother and my dear one," answered the Princess, "know that my father hath promised me in marriage to a wicked magician who brought him as a gift a horse of black wood, and hath bewitched him with his craft and his egromancy. But as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him, I had never come into this world!"

Her brother soothed her and solaced her, then fared to his sire and said: "What be this wizard to whom thou hast given my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present which he hast brought thee, so that thou hast killed my sister with chagrin? It is not right that this should be." Now the Persian was standing by, and when he heard the Prince's words, he was mortified and filled with fury, and the King said, "O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be amated with amazement." Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so, and, when the Prince saw it, it pleased him. So (being an accomplished cavalier) he mounted it forthright and struck its sides with the shovelshaped stirrup irons. But it stirred not, and the King said to the sage, "Go show him its movement, that he also may help thee to win thy wish."

Now the Persian bore the Prince a grudge because he willed not he should have his sister, so he showed him the pin of ascent on the right side of the horse and saying to him, "Trill this," left him. Thereupon the Prince trilled the pin and lo! the horse forthwith soared with him high in ether, as it were a bird, and gave not over flying till it disappeared from men's espying, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his case and said to the Persian, "O Sage, look how thou mayst make him descend." But he replied, "O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till Resurrection Day, for he, of his ignorance and pride, asked me not of the pin of descent, and I forgot to acquaint him therewith." When the King heard this, he was enraged with sore rage, and bade bastinado the sorcerer and clap him in jail, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and beat his face and smote his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and keening, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city, and thus their joy was turned to annoy and their gladness changed into sore affliction and sadness.

Thus far concerning them, but as regards the Prince, the horse gave not over soaring with him till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and saw death in the sides, and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying to himself: "Verily, this was a device of the sage to destroy me on account of my youngest sister. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I am lost without recourse, but I wonder, did not he who made the ascent pin make also a descent pin?" Now he was a man of wit and knowledge and intelligence, so he fell to feeling all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a screw like a cock's head on its right shoulder and the like on the left, when quoth he to himself, "I see no sip save these things like button."

Presently he turned the right-hand pin, whereupon the horse flew heavenward with increased speed. So he left it, and looking at the sinister shoulder and finding another pin, he wound it up and immediately the steed's upward motion slowed and ceased and it began to descend, little by little, toward the face of the earth, while the rider became yet more cautious and careful of his life. And when he saw this and knew the uses of the horse, his heart was filled with joy and gladness and he thanked Almighty Allah for that He had deigned deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whithersoever he would, making it rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete mastery over its every movement. He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's ascending flight had borne him afar from the earth, and as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various cities and countries over which he passed and which he knew not, never having seen them in his life.

Amongst the rest, he decried a city ordered after the fairest fashion in the midst of a verdant and riant land, rich in trees and streams, with gazelles pacing daintily over the plains, whereat he fell a-musing and said to himself, "Would I knew the name of yon town and in what land it is!" And he took to circling about it and observing it right and left. By this time, the day began to decline and the sun drew near to its downing, and he said in his mind, "Verily I find no goodlier place to night in than this city, so I will lodge here, and early on the morrow I will return to my kith and kin and my kingdom and tell my father and family what hath passed and acquaint him with what mine eyes have seen.

Then he addressed himself to seeking a place wherein he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should descry him, and presently, behold, he espied a-middlemost of the city a palace rising high in upper air surrounded by a great wall with lofty crenelles and battlements, guarded by forty black slaves clad in complete mail and armed with spears and swords, bows and arrows. Quoth he, "This is a goodly place," and turned the descent pin, whereupon the horse sank down with him like a weary bird, and alighted gently on the terrace roof of the palace. So the Prince dismounted and ejaculating "Alhamdolillah- praise be to Allah," he began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying: "By Allah, he who fashioned thee with these perfections was a cunning craftsman, and if the Almighty extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and kinsfolk in safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner bounties and benefit him with the utmost beneficence."

By this time night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof till he was assured that all in the palace slept, and indeed hunger and thirst were sore upon him for that he had not tasted food nor drunk water since he parted from his sire. So he said within himself, "Surely the like of this palace will not lack of victual," and, leaving the horse above, went down in search of somewhat to eat. Presently he came to a staircase and, descending it to the bottom, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, which shone in the light of the moon. He marveled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but sensed no sound of speaker and saw no living soul and stood in perplexed surprise, looking right and left and knowing not whither he should wend. Then said he to himself, "I may not do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it, and as soon as day shall dawn I will mount and ride away."

However, as he tarried talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace, and making toward it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the harem, at the head of a sleeping eunuch, as he were one of the Ifrits of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than lumber and broader than a bench. He lay before the door, with the

pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a bag of leather hanging from a column of granite. When the Prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, "I crave help from Allah the Supreme! O mine Holy One, even as Thou hast already delivered me from destruction, so vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of this palace!" So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and taking it, carried it aside and opened it and found in it food of the best.

He ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung up the provision bag in its place and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the slave slept on, knowing not whence Destiny should come to him. Then the Prince fared forward into the palace and ceased not till he came to a second door, with a curtain drawn before it. So he raised the curtain and, behold, on entering he saw a couch of the whitest ivory inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was thereon, and found a young lady lying asleep, chemised with her hair as she were the full moon rising over the eastern horizon, with flower-white brow and shining hair parting and cheeks like blood-red anemones, and dainty moles thereon. He was amazed at her as she lay in her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and grace, and he recked no more of death.

So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve, and, shuddering with pleasure, kissed her on the right cheek, whereupon she awoke forthright and opened her eyes, and seeing the Prince standing at her head, said to him, "Who art thou, and whence comest thou?" Quoth he, "I am thy slave and thy lover." Asked she, "And who brought thee hither?" and he answered, "My Lord and my fortune." Then said Shams al-Nahar (for such was her name) "Haply thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favor. By Allah, my sire lied in his throat when he spoke this thing, for thou art not other than beautiful." Now the son of the King of Hind had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him for that he was ugly and uncouth, and she thought the Prince was he. So when she saw his beauty and grace (for indeed he was like the radiant moon) the syntheism of love gat hold of her heart as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse.

Suddenly, her waiting women awoke and, seeing the Prince with their mistress, said to her, "O my lady, who is this with thee?" Quoth she: "I know not. I found him sitting by me when I woke up. Haply 'tis he who seeketh me in marriage of my sire." Quoth they, "O my lady, by Allah the All-Father, this is not he who seeketh thee in marriage, for he is hideous and this man is handsome and of high degree. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant." Then the handmaidens went out to the eunuch, and finding him slumbering, awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Said they, "How happeth it that thou art on guard at the palace and yet men come in to us whilst we are asleep?" When the black heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found it not, and fear took him, and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress and seeing the Prince sitting at talk with her, said to him, "O my lord, art thou man or Jinni?" Replied the Prince: "Woe to thee, O unluckiest of slaves. How darest thou even the sons of the royal Chosroes with one of the unbelieving Satans?" And he was as a raging lion.

Then he took the sword in his hand and said to the slave, "I am the King's son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her." And when the eunuch heard these words he replied, "O my lord, if thou be indeed of kind a man as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but for thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other." Thereupon the eunuch ran to the King, shrieking loud and rending his raiment and heaving dust upon his head. And when the King heard his outcry, he said to him: "What hath



befallen thee? Speak quickly and be brief, for thou hast fluttered my heart." Answered the eunuch, "O King, come to thy daughter's succor, for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a King's son hath got possession of her, so up and at him!"

When the King heard this, he thought to kill him and said, "How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?" Then he betook himself to the Princess's palace, where he found her slave women standing to await him, and asked them, "What is come to my daughter?" "O King," answered they, "slumber overcame us and when we awoke, we found a young man sitting upon her couch in talk with her, as he were the full moon. Never saw we aught fairer of favor than he. So we questioned him of his case and he declared that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a Jinni, but he is modest and well-bred, and doth nothing unseemly or which leadeth to disgrace."

Now when the King heard these words, his wrath cooled, and he raised the curtain little by little and looking in, saw sitting at talk with his daughter a Prince of the goodliest, with a face like the full moon for sheen. At this sight he could not contain himself, of his jealousy for his daughter's honor, and putting aside the curtain, rushed in upon them drawn sword in hand like a furious Ghul. Now when the Prince saw him he asked the Princess, "Is this thy sire?" and she answered, "Yes." Whereupon he sprang, to his feet and, seizing his sword, cried out at the King with so terrible a cry that he was confounded. Then the youth would have fallen on him with the sword, but the King, seeing that the Prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his scimitar and stood till the young man came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, "O youth, art thou a man or a Jinni?" Quoth the Prince: "Did I not respect thy right as mine host and thy daughter's honor, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou fellow me with devils, me that am a Prince of the sons of the royal Chosroes, who, had they wished to take thy kingdom, could shake thee like an earthquake from thy glory and thy dominions, and spoil thee of all thy possessions?"

Now when the King heard his words, he was confounded with awe and bodily fear of him and rejoined: "If thou indeed be of the sons of the Kings, as thou pretendest, how cometh it that thou enterest my palace without my permission, and smirchest mine honor, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and claiming that I have given her to thee to wife, I that have slain kings and king's sons who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my might and majesty when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to the vilest of deaths, they would slay thee forthright? Who shall deliver thee out of my hand?"

When the Prince heard this speech of the King, he answered: "Verily, I wonder at thee and at the shortness and denseness of thy wit! Say me, canst covet for thy daughter a mate comelier than myself, and hast ever seen a stouter-hearted man or one better fitted for a Sultan or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?" Rejoined the King: "Nay, by Allah! But I would have had thee, O youth, act after the custom of kings and demand her from me to wife before witnesses, that I might have married her to thee publicly. And now, even were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonored me in her person." Rejoined the Prince: "Thou sayest sooth, O King, but if thou summon thy slaves and thy soldiers and they fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendest, thou wouldst but publish thine own disgrace, and the folk would be divided between belief in thee and disbelief in thee. Wherefore, O King, thou wilt do well, meseemeth, to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee." Quoth the King, "Let me hear what thou hast to advise," and quoth the Prince:



"What I have to propose to thee is this: Either do thou meet me in combat singular, I and thou, and he who slayeth his adversary shall be held the worthier and having a better title to the kingdom; or else let me be this night, and whenas dawns the morn, draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants, but first tell me their number." Said the King, "They are forty thousand horse, besides my own slaves and their followers, who are the like of them in number." Thereupon said the Prince: "When the day shall break, do thou array them against me and say to them: 'This man is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle singlehanded against you all; for he pretendeth that he will overcome you and put you to the rout, and indeed that ye cannot prevail against him.' After which, leave me to do battle with them. If they slay me, then is thy secret the surer guarded and thine honor the better warded, and if I overcome them and see their backs, then is it the like of me a king should covet to his son-in-law."

So the King approved of his opinion and accepted his proposition, despite his awe at the boldness of his speech and amaze at the pretensions of the Prince to meet in fight his whole host, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the fray and so he should be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonor. Thereupon he called the eunuch and bade him go to his Wazir without stay and delay and command him to assemble the whole of the army and cause them don their arms and armor and mount their steeds. So the eunuch carried the King's order to the Minister, who straightway summoned the captains of the host and the lords of the realm and bade them don their harness of derring-do and mount horse and sally forth in battle array.

Such was their case, but as regards the King, he sat a long while conversing with the young Prince, being pleased with his wise speech and good sense and fine breeding. And when it was daybreak, he returned to his palace and, seating himself on his throne, commanded his merry men to mount, and bade them saddle one of the best of the royal steeds with handsome selle and housings and trappings and bring it to the Prince. But the youth said, "O King, I will not mount horse till I come in view of the troops and review them." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the King. Then the two repaired to the parade ground where the troops were drawn up, and the young Prince looked upon them and noted their great number. After which the King cried out to them, saying: "Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeketh my daughter in marriage, and in very sooth never have I seen a goodlier than he- no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier of arm, for he pretendeth that he can overcome you singlehanded, and force you to flight and that, were ye a hundred thousand in number, yet for him would ye be but few. Now when he chargeth down on you, do ye receive him upon point of pike and sharp of saber, for indeed he hath undertaken a mighty matter."

Then quoth the King to the Prince, "Up, O my son, and do thy devoir on them." Answered he: "O King, thou dealest not justly and fairly by me. How shall I go forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and the men be mounted?" The King retorted, "I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst, but choose thou which of my horses thou wilt." Then he said, "Not one of thy horses pleaseth me, and I will ride none but that on which I came." Asked the King, "And where is thy horse?" "Atop of thy palace." "In what part of my palace?" "On the roof." Now when the King heard these words, he cried: "Out on thee! This is the first sip thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof.? But we shall at once see if thou speak truth or lies." Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, "Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof." So all the people marveled at the young Prince's words, saying one to other, "How can a horse come down the steps from the roof.? Verily this is a thing whose like we never heard."

In the meantime the King's messenger repaired to the palace and, mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there, and never had he looked on a handsomer. But when he drew near and examined it, he saw that it was made of ebony and ivory. Now the officer was accompanied by other high officers, who also looked on, and they laughed to one another, saying: "Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spake? We cannot deem him other than mad. However, we shall soon see the truth of his case. Peradventure herein is some mighty matter, and he is a man of high degree." Then they lifted up the horse bodily, carrying it to the King, set it down before him. And all the lieges flocked round to look at it, marveling at the beauty of its proportions and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it, and wondered at it with extreme wonder, and he asked the Prince, "O youth, is this thy horse?" He answered, "Yes, O King, this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see the marvel it showeth." Rejoined the King, "Then take and mount it," and the Prince retorted, "I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it."

So the King bade them retire a bowshot from the horse, whereupon quoth its owner: "O King, see thou, I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy host and scatter them right and left and split their hearts asunder." Said the King, "Do as thou wilt, and spare not their lives, for they will not spare thine." Then the Prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, "When the youth cometh between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the sharps of our sabers." Quoth another: "By Allah, this is a mere misfortune. How shall we slay a youth so comely of face and shapely of form?" And a third continued: "Ye will have hard work to get the better of him, for the youth had not done this but for what he knew of his own prowess and pre-eminence of valor."

Meanwhile, having settled himself in his saddle, the Prince turned the pin of ascent whilst an eyes were strained to see what he would do, whereupon the horse began to heave and rock and sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements steed ever made, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with its rider and soared high into the sky. When the King saw this, he cried out to his men, saying: "Woe to you! Catch him, catch him, ere he 'scape you!" But his Wazirs and viceroys said to him: "O King, can a man overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty magician or Marid of the, Jinn, or devil, and Allah save thee from him! So praise thou the Almighty for deliverance of thee and of all thy host from his hand."

Then the King returned to his palace after seeing the feat of the Prince, and going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen them both on the parade ground. He found her grievously afflicted for the Prince and bewailing her separation from him, wherefore she fell sick with violent sickness and took to her pillow. Now when her father saw her on this wise, he pressed her to his breast and kissing her between the eyes, said to her: "O my daughter, praise Allah Almighty and thank Him for that He hath delivered us from this crafty enchanter, this villian, this low fellow, this thief who thought only of seducing thee!" And he repeated to her the story of the Prince and how he had disappeared in the firmament, and he abused him and cursed him, knowing not how dearly his daughter loved him. But she paid no heed to his words and did but redouble in her tears and wails, saying to herself, "By Allah, I will neither eat meat nor drain drink till Allah reunite me with him!" Her father was greatly concerned for her case and mourned much over her plight, but for all he could do to soothe her, love longing only increased on her.

Thus far concerning the King and Princess Shams al-Nahar, but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, when he had risen high in air, he turned his horse's head toward his native land,

and being alone, mused upon the beauty of the Princess and her loveliness. Now he had inquired of the King's people the name of the city and of its King and his daughter, and men had told him that it was the city of Sana'a. So he journeyed with all speed till he drew near his father's capital and, making an airy circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King's palace, where he left his horse whilst he descended into the palace, and seeing its threshold strewn with ashes, thought that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, all pale of faces and lean of frames. When his sire descried him and was assured that it was indeed his son, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit, but after a time, coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, clipping him to his bosom and rejoicing in him with exceeding joy and extreme gladness. His mother and sisters heard this, so they came in, and seeing the Prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping and joying with exceeding joyance.

Then they questioned him of his case, so he told them all that had past from first to last, and his father said to him, "Praised be Allah for thy safety, O coolth of my eyes and core of my heart!" Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad tidings flew through the city. So they beat drums and cymbals and, doffing the weed of mourning, they donned the gay garb of gladness and decorated the streets and markets, whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the King proclaimed a general pardon, and opening the prisons, released those who were therein prisoned. Moreover, he made banquets for the people, with great abundance of eating and drinking, for seven days and nights, and all creatures were gladsomest. And he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice.

After a while the Prince asked about the maker of the horse, saying, "O my father, what hath fortune done with him?" and the King answered: "Allah never bless him nor the hour wherein I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us, O my son, and he hath lain in jail since the day of thy disappearance." Then the King bade release him from prison and, sending for him, invested him in a dress of satisfaction and entreated him with the utmost favor and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife. Whereat the sage raged with sore rage and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the Prince had secured the secret of the steed and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son: "I reck thou wilt do well not to go near the horse henceforth, and more especially not to mount it after this day; for thou knowest not its properties, and belike thou art in error about it."

Now the Prince had told his father of his adventure with the King of Sana'a and his daughter, and he said, "Had the King intended to kill thee, he had done so, but thine hour was not yet come." When the rejoicings were at an end, the people returned to their places and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating, drinking, and making merry. Now the King had a handsome handmaiden who was skilled in playing the lute, so she took it and began to sweep the strings and sing thereto before the King and his son of separation of lovers, and she chanted the following verses:

"Deem not that absence breeds in me aught of forgetfulness.  
What should remember I did you fro' my remembrance wane?  
Time dies but never dies the fondest love for you we bear,  
And in your love I'll die and in your love I'll arise again."

When the Prince heard these verses, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart, and pine and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his bowels

yeamed in him for love of the King's daughter of Sana'a. So he rose forthright and, escaping his father's notice, went forth the palace to the horse and mounting it, turned the pin of ascent, whereupon birdlike it flew with him high in air and soared toward the upper regions of the sky. In early morning his father missed him, and going up to the pinnacle of the palace in great concern, saw his son rising into the firmament, whereat he was sore afflicted and repented in all penitence that he had not taken the horse and hidden it. And he said to himself, "By Allah, if but my son returned to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart may be at rest concerning my son." And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself.

Such was his case, but as regards the Prince, he ceased not flying on through air till he came to the city of Sana'a and alighted on the roof as before. Then he crept down stealthily and, finding the eunuch asleep, as of wont, raised the curtain and went on little by little till he came to the door of the Princess's alcove chamber and stopped to listen, when lo! he heard her shedding plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept round her. Presently, overhearing her weeping and wailing, quoth they, "O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourneth not for thee?" Quoth she, "O ye little of wit, is he for whom I mourn of those who forget or who are forgotten?" And she fell again to wailing and weeping, till sleep overcame her.

Hereat the Prince's heart melted for her and his gall bladder was like to burst, so he entered and, seeing her lying asleep without covering, touched her with his hand, whereupon she opened her eyes and espied him standing by her. Said he, "Why all this crying and mourning?" And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him and took him around the neck and kissed him and answered, "For thy sake and because of my separation from thee." Said he, "O my lady, I have been made desolate by thee all this long time!" But she replied, "'Tis thou who hast desolated me, and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!" Rejoined he: "O my lady, what thinkest thou of my case with thy father, and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O temptation and seduction of the Three Worlds, I had certainly slain him and made him a warning to all beholders, but even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake." Quoth she: "How couldst thou leave me? Can my life be sweet to me after thee?" Quoth he: "Let what hath happened suffice. I am now hungry, and thirsty." So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, and they sat eating and drinking and conversing till night was well-nigh ended; and when day broke he rose to take leave of her and depart ere the eunuch should awake.

Shams al-Nahar asked him, "Whither goest thou?" and he answered, "To my father's house, and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week." But she wept and said: "I conjure thee, by Allah the Almighty, take me with thee whereso thou wendest and make me not taste anew the bitter gourd of separation from thee." Quoth he, "Wilt thou indeed go with me?" and quoth she, "Yes." "Then," said he, "arise, that we depart." So she rose forthright and going to a chest, affayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price, and she fared forth, her handmaids recking naught. So he carried her up to the roof of the palace and, mounting the ebony horse, took her up behind him and made her fast to himself, binding her with strong bonds. After which he turned the shoulder pin of ascent and the horse rose with him high in air.

When her slave women saw this, they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who in hot haste ran to the palace roof and looking up, saw the magical horse flying away with the Prince and Princess. At this the King was troubled with ever-increasing trouble and cried out, saying, "O King's son, I conjure thee, by Allah, have ruth on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!" The Prince made him no reply, but, thinking in himself that

the maiden repented of leaving father and mother, asked her, "O ravishment of the age, say me, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy mother and father?" Whereupon she answered: "By Allah, O my lord, that is not my desire. My only wish is to be with thee, wherever thou art, for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even from my father and mother." Hearing these words, the Prince joyed with great joy, and made the horse fly and fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet her. Nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, wherein was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank, after which the Prince took horse again and set her behind him, binding her in his fear for her safety, after which they fared on till they came in sight of his father's capital.

At this, the Prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show his beloved the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her sire. So he set her down in one of his father's gardens without the city where his parent was wont to take his pleasure, and carrying her into a domed summerhouse prepared there for the King, left the ebony horse at the door and charged the damsel keep watch over it, saying, "Sit here till my messenger come to thee, for I go now to my father to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate." She was delighted when she heard these words and said to him, "Do as thou wilt," for she thereby understood that she should not enter the city but with due honor and worship, as became her rank.

Then the Prince left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and met him and welcomed him, and the Prince said to him: "Know that I have brought with me the King's daughter of whom I told thee, and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayest make ready the procession of estate and go forth to meet her and show her the royal dignity and troops and guards." Answered the King, "With joy and gladness," and straightway bade decorate the town with the goodliest adornment. Then he took horse and rode out in all magnificence and majesty, he and his host, high officers, and household, with drums and kettledrums, fifes and clarions and all manner instruments, whilst the Prince drew forth of his treasures jewelry and apparel and what else of the things which kings hoard and made a rare display of wealth-and splendor. Moreover he got ready for the Princess a canopied litter of brocades, green, red, and yellow, wherein he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave girls. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and preceded them to the pavilion where he had set her down, and searched but found naught, neither Princess nor horse.

When he saw this, he beat his face and rent his raiment and began to wander round about the garden as he had lost his wits, after which he came to his senses and said to himself: "How could she have come at the secret of this horse, seeing I told her nothing of it? Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse hath chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him." Then he sought the guardians of the garden and asked them if they had seen any pass the precincts, and said: "Hath anyone come in here? Tell me the truth and the whole truth, or I will at once strike off your heads." They were terrified by his threats, but they answered with one voice, "We have seen no man enter save the Persian sage, who came to gather healing herbs." So the Prince was certified that it was indeed he that had taken away the maiden, and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before the folk and, turning to his sire, told him what had happened and said to him: "Take the troops and march them back to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair."

When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him: "O my son, calm thy choler and master thy chagrin and come home with us and look what Idng's daughter thou



wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her." But the Prince paid no heed to his words and farewelling him, departed, whilst the King returned to the city, and their joy was changed into sore annoy. Now, as Destiny issued her decree, when the Prince left the Princess in the garden house and betook himself to his father's palace for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck certain simples and, scenting the sweet savor of musk and perfumes that exhaled from the Princess and impregnated the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw standing at the door the horse which he had made with his own hands. His heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had bemoaned its loss much since it had gone out of his hand. So he went up to it and, examining its every part, found it whole and sound, whereupon he was about to mount and ride away when he bethought himself and said, "Needs must I first look what the Prince hath brought and left here with the horse." So he entered the pavilion and seeing the Princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining sheen in the sky serene, knew her at the first glance to be some highborn lady, and doubted not but the Prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion whilst he went to the city to make ready for her entry in state procession with all splendor.

Then he went up to her and kissed the earth between her hands, whereupon she raised her eyes to him and, finding him exceedingly foul of face and favor, asked, "Who art thou?", and he answered, "O my lady, I am a messenger sent by the Prince, who hath bidden me bring thee to another pleasance nearer the city, for that my lady the Queen cannot walk so far and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee." Quoth she, "Where is the Prince?" and quoth the Persian, "He is in the city, with his sire, and forthwith he shall come for thee in great state." Said she: "O thou! Say me, could he find none handsomer to send to me?" Whereat loud laughed the sage and said: "Yea verily, he hath not a Mameluke as ugly as I am, but, O my lady, let not the ill favor of my face and the foulness of my form deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the Prince, verily thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee because of my uncomeliness and loathsomeness in his jealous love of thee. Else hath he Mamelukes and Negro slaves, pages, eunuchs, and attendants out of number, each goodlier than other."

Whenas she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him, so she rose forthright and, putting her hand in his, said, "O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?" He replied, "O my lady thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on," and she, "I cannot ride it by myself." Whereupon he smiled and knew that he was her master and said, "I will ride with thee myself." So he mounted and, taking her up behind him, bound her to himself with firm bonds, while she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the ascent pin, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro like a wave of the sea, and rose with them high in air, nor slackened in its flight till it was out of sight of the city. Now when Shams al-Nahar saw this, she asked him: "Ho, thou! What is become of that thou toldest me of my Prince, making me believe that he sent thee to me?" Answered the Persian, "Allah damn the Prince! He is a mean and skinflint knave." She cried: "Woe to thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment?" Whereto the Persian replied: "He is no lord of mine. Knowest thou who I am?" Rejoined the Princess, "I know nothing of thee save what thou toldest me," and retorted he: "What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the King's son. I have long lamented the loss of this horse which is under us, for I constructed it and made myself master of it. But now I have gotten firm hold of it and of thee too, and I will burn his heart even as he hath burnt mine, nor shall he ever have the horse again- no, never! So be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for I can be of more use to thee than he. And I am generous as I am wealthy. My servants and slaves shall obey thee as their mistress. I will robe thee in finest raiment and thine every wish shall be at thy will."

When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out, saying: "Ah, wellaway! I have not won my beloved and I have lost my father and mother!" And she wept bitter tears over what had befallen her, whilst the sage fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks and alighted in a verdant mead, abounding in streams and trees. Now this meadow lay near a city wherein was a King of high puissance, and it chanced that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the damsel and the horse by his side, and before the sage was ware, the King's slaves fell upon him and carried him and the lady and the horse to their master, who, noting the foulness of the man's favor and his loathsomeness and the beauty of the girl and her loveliness, said, "O my lady, what kin is this oldster to thee?" The Persian made haste to reply, saying, "She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother." But the lady at once gave him the lie and said: "O King, by Allah, I know him not, nor is he my husband. Nay, he is a wicked magician who hath stolen me away by force and fraud." Thereupon the King bade bastinado the Persian, and they beat him till he was well-nigh dead, after which the King commanded to carry him to the city and cast him into jail; and, taking from him the damsel and the ebony horse (though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion), set the girl in his seraglio and the horse amongst his hoards.

Such was the case with the sage and the lady, but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, he garbed himself in traveling gear and taking what he needed of money, set out tracking their trail in very sorry plight, and journeyed from the country to country and city to city seeking the Princess and inquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marveled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus he continued doing a long while, but for all his inquiry and quest, he could hit on no news of her. At last he came to her father's city of Sana'a and there asked for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, continuing to inquire concerning the twain as he went till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain khan and saw a company of merchants sitting at talk. So he sat down near them and heard one say, "O my friends, I lately witnessed a wonder of wonders." They asked, "What was that?" and he answered: "I was visiting such a district in such a city (naming the city wherein was the Princess), and I heard its people chatting of a strange thing which had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day hunting and coursing with a company of his courtiers and the lords of his realm, and issuing from the city, they came to a green meadow where they espied an old man standing, with a woman sitting hard by a horse of ebony. The man was foulest foul of face and loathly of form, but the woman was a marvel of beauty and loveliness and elegance and perfect grace, and as for the wooden horse, it was a miracle- never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more gracious than its make." Asked the others, "And what did the King with them?" and the merchant answered; "As for the man, the King seized him and questioned him of the damsel and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his paternal uncle, but she gave him the lie forthright and declared that he was a sorcerer and a villian. So the King took her from the old man and bade beat him and cast him into the trunk house. As for the ebony horse, I know not what became of it."

When the Prince heard these words, he drew near to the merchant and began questioning him discreetly and courteously touching the name of the city and of its King, which when he knew, he passed the night full of joy. And as soon as dawned the day he set out and traveled sans surcease till he reached that city. But when he would have entered, the gatekeepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King to question him of his condition and the craft in which he skilled and the cause of his coming thither- such being the usage and custom of their ruler. Now it was suppertime when he entered the city,

and it was then impossible to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting the stranger. So the guards carried him to the jail, thinking to lay him by the heels there for the night. But when the warders saw his beauty and loveliness, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him. They made him sit with them without the walls, and when food came to them, he ate with them what sufficed him.

As soon as they had made an end of eating, they turned to the Prince and said, "What countryman art thou?" "I come from Fars," answered he, "the land of the Chosroes." When they heard this, they laughed and one of them said: "O Chosroan, I have heard the talk of men and their histories and I have looked into their conditions, but never saw I or heard I a bigger liar than the Chosroan which is with us in the jail." Quoth another, "And never did I see aught fouler than his favor or more hideous than his visnomy." Asked the Prince, "What have ye seen of his lying?" and they answered: "He pretendeth that he is one of the wise! Now the King came upon him as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most beautiful woman and a horse of the blackest ebony- never saw I a handsomer. As for the damsel, she is with the King, who is enamored of her and would fain marry her. But she is mad, and were this man a leech, as he claimeth to be, he would have healed her, for the King doth his utmost to discover a cure for her case and a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers on her account, but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal hoard house, and the ugly man is here with us in prison, and as soon as night falleth, he weepeth and bemoaneth himself and will not let us sleep."

When the warders had recounted the case of the Persian egromancer they held in prison and his weeping and wailing, the Prince at once devised a device whereby he might compass his desire, and presently the guards of the gate, being minded to sleep, led him into the jail and locked the door. So he overheard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself in his own tongue, and saying: "Alack, and alas for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King's son, in that which I did with the damsel, for I neither left her nor won my will of her! All this cometh of my lack of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me. For whoso seeketh what suiteth him not at all, falleth with the like of my fall." Now when the King's son heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying: "How long will this weeping and wailing last? Say me, thinkest thou that hath befallen thee that which never befell other than thou?"

Now when the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to complain to him of his case and misfortunes. And as soon as the morning morrowed, the warders took the Prince and carried him before their King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when audience was impossible. Quoth the King to the Prince, "Whence comest thou, and what is thy name and trade, and why hast thou traveled hither?" He replied: "As to my name, I am called in Persian Harjah. As to my country, I come from the land of Fars, and I am of the men of art and especially of the art of medicine and healing the sick and those whom the Jinns drive mad. For this I go round about all countries and cities, to profit by adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a patient I heal him, and this is my craft." Now when the King heard this, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "O excellent sage, thou hast indeed come to us at a time when we need thee." Then he acquainted him with the case of the Princess, adding, "If thou cure her and recover her from her madness, thou shalt have of me everything thou seekest." Replied the Prince, "Allah save and favor the King. Describe to me all thou hast seen of her insanity, and tell me how long it is since the access attacked her, also how thou camest by her and the horse and the sage."

So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, "The sage is in jail." Quoth the Prince, "O auspicious King, and what hast thou done with the horse?" Quoth the King, "O youth, it is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure chambers." Whereupon said the Prince within himself: "The best thing I can do is first to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and sound, all will be well and end well. But if its motor works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved." Thereupon he turned to the King and said to him: "O King, I must see the horse in question. Haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel." "With all my heart," replied the King, and taking him by the hand, showed him into the place where the horse was. The Prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and sound, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King: "Allah save and exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her, for I hope in Allah to heal her by my healing hand through means of the horse." Then he bade them take care of the horse and the King carried him to the Princess's apartment, where her lover found her wringing her hands and writhing and beating herself against the ground, and tearing her garments to tatters as was her wont. But there was no madness of Jinn in her, and she did this but that none might approach her.

When the Prince saw her thus, he said to her, "No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of the Three Worlds," and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he managed to whisper, "I am Kamar al-Akmar," whereupon she cried out with a loud cry and fell down fainting for excess of joy. But the King thought this was epilepsy brought on by her fear of him, and by her suddenly being startled. Then the Prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her: "O Shams al-Nahar, O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for this our position needeth sufferance and skillful contrivance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. My first move will be now to go out to him and tell him that thou art possessed of a Jinn and hence thy madness, but that I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit if he will at once unbind thy bonds. So when he cometh in to thee, do thou speak him smooth words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be done for us as we desire." Quoth she, "Hearkening and obedience," and he went out to the King in joy and gladness, and said to him: "O august King, I have, by thy good fortune, discovered her disease and its remedy, and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to and speak her softly and treat her kindly, and promise her what thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee."

Thereupon the King went in to her, and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground before him, bade him welcome and said, "I admire how thou hast come to visit thy handmaid this day." Whereat he was ready to fly for joy and bade the waiting women and the eunuchs attend her and carry her to the hammam and make ready for her dresses and adornment. So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their salaams with the goodliest language and after the pleasantest fashion. Whereupon they clad her in royal apparel and, clasping a collar of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth as she were the full moon, and when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissed ground before him. Whereupon he joyed in her with joy exceeding and said to the Prince: "O Sage, O Philosopher, all this is of thy blessing. Allah increase to us the benefit of thy healing breath!" The Prince replied: "O King, for the completion of her cure it behooveth that thou go forth, thou and all thy troops and guards, to the place where thou foundest her, not forgetting the beast of black wood which was with her. For therein is a devil, and unless I exorcise him, he will return to her and afflict her at the head of every month." "With love and gladness," cried the King, "O thou Prince of all philosophers and most learned of all who see the light of day."



Then he brought out the ebony horse to the meadow in question and rode thither with all his troops and the Princess, little weeting the purpose of the Prince. Now when they came to the appointed place, the Prince, still habited as a leech, bade them set the Princess and the steed as far as eye could reach from the King and his troops, and said to him: "With thy leave, and at thy word, I will now proceed to the fumigations and conjurations, and here imprison the adversary of mankind, that he may never more return to her. After this, I shall mount this wooden horse, which seemeth to be made of ebony, and take the damsel up behind me, whereupon it will shake and sway to and fro and fare forward till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end. And after this thou mayest do with her as thou wilt." When the King heard his words, he rejoiced with extreme joy, so the Prince mounted the horse, and taking the damsel up behind him, whilst the King and his troops watched him, bound her fast to him. Then he turned the ascending pin and the horse took flight and soared with them high in air, till they disappeared from every eye.

After this the King abode half the day expecting their return, but they returned not. So when he despaired of them, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel, he went back to the city with his troops. He then sent for the Persian who was in prison and said to him: "O thou traitor, O thou villain, why didst thou hide from me the mystery of the ebony horse? And now a sharper hath come to me and hath carried it off, together with a slave girl whose ornaments are worth a mint of money, and I shall never see anyone or anything of them again!" So the Persian related to him all his past, first and last, and the King was seized with a fit of by which well-nigh ended his life. He shut himself up in his palace for a while, mourning and afflicted. But at last his Wazirs came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying: "Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be Allah who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!" And they ceased not from him till he was comforted for her loss.

Thus far concerning the the King, but as for the Prince, he continued his career toward his father's capital in joy and cheer, and stayed not till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the lady in safety. After which he went in to his father and mother and saluted them and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they were filled with solace and gladness. Then he spread great banquets for the townsfolk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the Princess and they took their joy of each other with exceeding joy. But his father brake the ebony horse in pieces and destroyed its mechanism for flight.

Moreover, the Prince wrote a letter to the Princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and informing him how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness, and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and curious rarities. And when the messenger arrived at the city which was Sana'a and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, he read the missive and rejoiced greatly thereat and accepted the presents, honoring and rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he forwarded rich gifts to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed, whereat he was much cheered. And after this the Prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him presents till, in course of time, his sire King Sabur deceased and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his lieges and conducting himself well and righteously toward them, so that the land submitted to him and his subjects did him loyal service. And Kamar al-Akmar and his wife Shams al-Nahar abode in the enjoyment of all satisfaction and solace of life till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Sunderer of societies, the Plunderer of palaces, the Caterer for cemeteries,



and the Garnerer of graves. And now glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the worlds visible and invisible!

Moreover I have heard tell the tale of The Angel Of Death With The Proud And The Devout Man.

### **The Angel Of Death With The Proud And The Devout Man**

IT is related, O auspicious King, that one of the olden monarchs was once minded to ride out in state with the officers of his realm and the grandees of his retinue and display to the folk the marvels of his magnificence. So he ordered his lords and emirs equip them therefor and commanded his keeper of the wardrobe to bring him of the richest of raiment, such as befitted the King in his state, and he bade them bring his steeds of the finest breeds and pedigrees every man heeds. Which being done, he chose out of the raiment what rejoiced him most and of the horses that which he deemed best, and donning the clothes, together with a collar set with margarites and rubies and all manner jewels, mounted and set forth in state, making his destrier prance and curvet among his troops and glorying in his pride and despotic power.

And Iblis came to him and, laying his hand upon his nose, blew into his nostrils the breath of hauteur and conceit, so that he magnified and glorified himself and said in his heart, "Who among men is like unto me?" And he became so pulled up with arrogance and self-sufficiency, and so taken up with the thought of his own splendor and magnificence, that he would not vouchsafe a glance to any man. Presently there stood before him one clad in tattered clothes and saluted him, but he returned not his salaam, whereupon the stranger laid hold of his horse's bridle. "Lift thy hand!" cried the King. "Thou knowest not whose bridle rein it is whereof thou takest hold." Quoth the other, "I have a need of thee." Quoth the King, "Wait till I alight, and then name thy need." Rejoined the stranger, "It is a secret and I will not tell it but in thine ear." So the King bowed his head to him and he said, "I am the Angel of Death and I purpose to take thy soul." Replied the King, "Have patience with me a little, whilst I return to my house and take leave of my people and children and neighbors and wife." "By no means so," answered the Angel. "Thou shalt never return nor look on them again, for the fated term of thy life is past."

So saying, he took the soul of the King (who fell off his horse's back dead) and departed thence. Presently the Death Angel met a devout man, of whom Almighty Allah had accepted, and saluted him. He returned the salute, and the Angel said to him, "O pious man, I have a need of thee which must be kept secret." "Tell it in my ear," quoth the devotee, and quoth the other, "I am the Angel of Death." Replied the man: "Welcome to thee! And praised be Allah for thy coming! I am aweary of awaiting thine arrival, for indeed long hath been thine absence from the lover which longeth for thee." Said the Angel, "If thou have any business, make an end of it," but the other answered, saying, "There is nothing so urgent to me as the meeting with my Lord, to whom be honor and glory!" And the Angel said, "How wouldst thou fain have me take thy soul? I am bidden to take it as thou willest and choolest." He replied, "Tarry till I make the wuzu ablution and pray, and when I prostrate myself, then take my soul while my body is on the ground." Quoth the Angel, "Verily, my Lord (be He extolled and exalted!) commanded me not to take thy soul but with thy consent and as thou shouldst wish, so I will do thy will." Then the devout man made the minor ablution and prayed, and the Angel of Death took his soul in the act of prostration and Almighty Allah transported it to the place of mercy and acceptance and forgiveness.

And they tell another tale of the adventures of Sindbad The Seaman And Sindbad The Landsman.

### **Sindbad The Seaman And Sindbad The Landsman**

THERE lived in the city of Baghdad during the reign of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, a man named Sindbad the Hammal, one in poor case who bore burdens on his head for hire. It happened to him one day of great heat that whilst he was carrying a heavy load, he became exceeding weary and sweated profusely, the heat and the weight alike oppressing him. Presently, as he was passing the gate of a merchant's house before which the ground was swept and watered, and there the air was temperate, he sighted a broad bench beside the door, so he set his load thereon, to take rest and smell the air. He sat down on the edge of the bench, and at once heard from within the melodious sound of lutes and other stringed instruments, and mirth-exciting voices singing and reciting, together with the song of birds warbling and glorifying Almighty Allah in various tunes and tonguess-turtles, mocking birds, merles, nightingales, cushats, and stone curlews- whereat he marveled in himself and was moved to mighty joy and solace.

Then he went up to the gate and saw within a great flower garden wherein were pages and black slaves and such a train of servants and attendants and so forth as is found only with kings and sultans. And his nostrils were greeted with the savory odours of an manner meats rich and delicate, and delicious and generous wines. So he raised his eyes heavenward and said, "Glory to Thee, O Lord, O Creator and Provider, Who providest whomso Thou wilt without count or stint! O mine Holy One, I cry Thee pardon for an sins and turn to Thee repenting of all offenses!

"How many by my labors, that evermore endure,  
All goods of life enjoy and in coolly shade recline?  
Each morn that dawns I wake in travail and in woe,  
And strange is my condition and my burden gars me pine.  
Many others are in luck and from miseries are free,  
And Fortune never load them with loads the like o' mine.  
They live their happy days in all solace and delight,  
Eat, drink, and dwell in honor 'mid the noble and the digne.  
All living things were made of a little drop of sperm,  
Thine origin is mine and my provenance is thine,  
Yet the difference and distance 'twixt the twain of us are far  
As the difference of savor 'twixt vinegar and wine.  
But at Thee, O God All-wise! I venture not to rail,  
Whose ordinance is just and whose justice cannot fail."

When Sindbad the Porter had made an end of reciting his verses, he bore up his burden and was about to fare on when there came forth to him from the gate a little foot page, fair of face and shapely of shape and dainty of dress, who caught him by the hand saying, "Come in and speak with my lord, for he calleth for thee." The porter would have excused himself to the page, but the lad would take no refusal, so he left his load with the doorkeeper in the vestibule and followed the boy into the house, which he found to be a goodly mansion, radiant and full of majesty, till he brought him to a grand sitting room wherein he saw a company of nobles and great lords seated at tables garnished with all manner of flowers and sweet-scented herbs, besides great plenty of dainty viands and fruits dried and fresh and confections and wines of the choicest vintages. There also were

instruments of music and mirth and lovely slave girls playing and singing. All the company was ranged according to rank, and in the highest place sat a man of worshipful and noble aspect whose beard sides hoariness had stricken, and he was stately of stature and fair of favor, agreeable of aspect and full of gravity and dignity and majesty. So Sindbad the Porter was confounded at that which he beheld and said in himself, "By Allah, this must be either a piece of Paradise or some king's palace!"

Then he saluted the company with much respect, praying for their prosperity, and kissing the ground before them, stood with his head bowed down in humble attitude. The master of the house bade him draw near and be seated and bespoke him kindly, bidding him welcome. Then he set before him various kinds of viands, rich and delicate and delicious, and the porter, after saying his Bismillah, fell to and ate his fill, after which he exclaimed, "Praised be Allah, whatso be our case!" and, washing his hands, returned thanks to the company for his entertainment. Quoth the host: "Thou art welcome, and thy day is a blessed. But what thy name and calling?" Quoth the other, "O my lord, my name is Sindbad the Hammal, and I carry folk's goods on my head for hire." The housemaster smiled and rejoined: "Know, O Porter, that thy name is even as mine, for I am Sindbad the Seaman. And now, O Porter, I would have thee let me hear the couplets thou recitedst at the gate anon.' The porter was abashed and replied: "Allah upon thee! Excuse me, for toil and travail and lack of luck when the hand is empty teach a man ill manners and boorish ways." Said the host: "Be not ashamed. Thou art become my brother. But repeat to me the verses, for they pleased me whenas I heard thee recite them at the gate."

Hereupon the Porter repeated the couplets and they delighted the merchant, who said to him: "Know, O Hammal, that my story is a wonderful one, and thou shalt hear all that befell me and all I underwent ere I rose to this state of prosperity and became the lord of this place wherein thou seest me. For I came not to this high estate save after travail sore and perils galore, and how much toil and trouble have I not suffered in days of yore! I have made seven voyages, by each of which hangeth a marvelous tale, such as confoundeth the reason, and all this came to pass by doom of Fortune and Fate. For from what Destiny doth write there is neither refuge nor flight. Know, then, good my lords," continued he, "that I am about to relate the First Voyage Of Sindbad Hight The Seaman.

### **First Voyage Of Sindbad Hight The Seaman**

MY father was a merchant, one of the notables of my native place, a moneyed man and ample of means, who died whilst I was yet a child, leaving me much wealth in money and lands and farmhouses. When I grew up, I laid hands on the whole and ate of the best and drank freely and wore rich clothes and lived lavishly, companioning and consorting with youths of my own age, and considering that this course of life would continue forever and ken no change. Thus did I for a long time, but at last I awoke from my heedlessness and, returning to my senses, I found my wealth had become unwealth and my condition ill-conditioned, and all I once hent had left my hand. And recovering my reason, I was stricken with dismay and confusion and bethought me of a saying of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), which I had heard aforetime from my father: things are better than other three. The day of death is better than the day of birth, a live dog is better than a dead lion, and the grave is better than want." Then I got together my remains of estates and property and sold all, even my clothes, for three thousand dirhams, with which I resolved to travel to foreign parts, remembering the saying of the poet:

By means of toil man shall scale the height,

Who to fame aspires mustn't sleep o' night.  
Who seeketh pearl in the deep must dive,  
Winning weal and wealth by his main and might.  
And who seeketh Fame without toil and strife  
Th' impossible seeketh and wasteth life.

So, taking heart, I bought me goods, merchandise and all needed for a voyage, and impatient to be at sea, I embarked, with a company of merchants, on board a ship bound for Bassorah. There we again embarked and sailed many days and nights, and we passed from isle to isle and sea to sea and shore to shore, buying and selling and bartering everywhere the ship touched, and continued our course till we came to an island as it were a garth of the gardens of Paradise. Here the captain cast anchor and, making fast to the shore, put out the landing planks. So all on board landed and made furnaces, and lighting fires therein, busied themselves in various ways, some cooking and some washing, whilst other some walked about the island for solace, and the crew fell to eating and drinking and playing and sporting. I was one of the walkers, but as we were thus engaged, behold the master, who was standing on the gunwale, cried out to us at the top of his voice, saying: "Ho there! Passengers, run for your lives and hasten back to the ship and leave your gear and save yourselves from destruction, Allah preserve you!. For this island whereon ye stand is no true island, but a great fish stationary a-middlemost of the sea, whereon the sand hath settled and trees have sprung up of old time, so that it is become like unto an island. But when ye lighted fires on it, it felt the heat and moved, and in a moment it will sink with you into the sea and ye will all be drowned. So leave your gear and seek your safety ere ye die!"

All who heard him left gear and goods, clothes washed and unwashed, fire pots and brass cooking pots, and fled back to the ship for their lives, and some reached it while others (amongst whom was I) did not, for suddenly the island shook and sank into the abysses of the deep, with all that were thereon, and the dashing sea surged over it with clashing waves. I sank with the others down, down into the deep, but Almighty Allah preserved me from drowning and threw in my way a great wooden tub of those that had served the ship's company for tubbing. I gripped it for the sweetness of life and, bestriding it like one riding, paddled with my feet like oars, whilst the waves tossed me as in sport right and left. Meanwhile the captain made sail and departed with those who had reached the ship, regardless of the drowning and the drowned. And I ceased not following the vessel with my eyes till she was hid from sight and I made sure of death.

Darkness closed in upon me while in this plight, and the winds and waves bore me on all that night and the next day, till the tub brought to with me under the lee of a lofty island with trees overhanging the tide. I caught hold of a branch and by its aid clambered up onto the land, after coming nigh upon death. But when I reached the shore, I found my legs cramped and numbed and my feet bore traces of the nibbling of fish upon their soles, withal I had felt nothing for excess of anguish and fatigue. I threw myself down on the island ground like a dead man, and drowned in desolation, swooned away, nor did I return to my senses till next morning, when the sun rose and revived me. But I found my feet swollen, so made shift to move by shuffling on my breech and crawling on my knees, for in that island were found store of fruits and springs of sweet water. I ate of the fruits, which strengthened me. And thus I abode days and nights till my life seemed to return and my spirits began to revive and I was better able to move about. So, after due consideration, I fell to exploring the island and diverting myself with gazing upon all things that Allah Almighty had created there, and rested under the trees, from one of which I cut me a staff to lean upon.

One day as I walked along the marge I caught sight of some object in the distance and thought it a wild beast or one of the monster creatures of the sea, but as I drew near it, looking hard the while, saw that it was a noble mare, tethered on the beach. Presently I went up to her, but she cried out against me with a great cry, so that I trembled for fear and turned to go away, when there came forth man from under the earth and followed me, crying out and saying, "Who and whence art thou, and what caused thee to come hither?" "O my lord," answered I, "I am in very sooth a waif, a stranger, and was left to drown with sundry others by the ship we voyaged in. But Allah graciously sent me a wodden tub, so I saved myself thereon and it floated with me, till the waves cast me up on this island." When he heard this, he took my hand and saying, "Come with me," carried me into a great sardab, or underground chamber, which was spacious as a saloon.

He made me sit down at its upper end, then he brought me somewhat of food and, being a-hungered, I ate till I was satisfied and refreshed. And when he had put me at mine ease, he questioned me of myself, and I told him all that had befallen me from first to last. And as he wondered at my adventure, I said: "By Allah, O my lord, excuse me, I have told thee the truth of my case and the accident which betided me, and now I desire that thou tell me who thou art and why thou abidest here under the earth and why thou hast tethered yonder mare on the brink of the sea." Answered he: "Know that I am one of the several who are, stationed in different parts of this island, and we are of the grooms of King Mihrjan, and under our hand are all his horses. Every month about new-moon tide we bring hither our best mares which have never been covered, and picket them on the seashore and hide ourselves in this place under the ground, so that none may espy us. Presently the stallions of the sea scent the mares and come up out of the water and, seeing no one, leap the mares and do their will of them. When they have covered them, they try to drag them away with them, but cannot, by reason of the leg ropes. So they cry out at them and butt at them and kick them, which we hearing, know that the stallions have dismounted, so we run out and shout at them, whereupon they are startled and return in fear to the sea. Then the mares conceive by them and bear colts and fillies worth a mint of money, nor is their like to be found on earth's face.

This is the time of the coming forth of the sea stallions, and Inshallah! I will bear thee to King Mihrjan and show thee our country. And know that hadst thou not happened on us, thou hadst perished miserably and none had known of thee. But I will be the means of the saving of thy life and of thy return to thine own land." I called down blessings on him and thanked him for his kindness and courtesy. And while we were yet talking, behold, the stallion came up out of the sea, and giving a great cry, sprang upon the mare and covered her. When he had done his will of her, he dismounted and would have carried her away with him, but could not by reason of the tether. She kicked and cried out at him, whereupon the groom took a sword and target and ran out of the underground saloon, smiting the buckler with the blade and calling to his company, who came up shouting and brandishing spears. And the stallion took fright at them and plunging into the sea like a buffalo, disappeared under the waves.

After this we sat awhile till the rest of the grooms came up, each leading a mare, and seeing me with their fellow syce, questioned me of my case, and I repeated my story to them. Thereupon they drew near me and spreading the table, ate and invited me to eat. So I ate with them, after which they took horse and mounting me on one of the mares, set out with me and fared on without ceasing till we came to the capital city of King Mihrjan, and going in to him, acquainted him with my story. Then he sent for me, and when they set me before him and salaams had been exchanged, he gave me a cordial welcome and wishing



me long life, bade me tell him my tale. So I related to him all that I had seen and all that had befallen me from first to last, whereat he marveled and said to me: "By Allah, O my son, thou hast indeed been miraculously preserved! Were not the term of thy life a long one, thou hadst not escaped from these straits. But praised be Allah for safety!" Then he spoke cheerily to me and entreated me with kindness and consideration. Moreover, he made me his agent for the port and registrar of all ships that entered the harbor. I attended him regularly, to receive his commandments, and he favored me and did me all manner of kindness and invested me with costly and splendid robes. Indeed, I was high in credit with him as an intercessor for the folk and an intermediary between them and him when they wanted aught of him.

I abode thus a great while, and as often as I passed through the city to the port, I questioned the merchants and travelers and sailors of the city of Baghdad, so haply I might hear of an occasion to return to my native land, but could find none who knew it or knew any who resorted thither. At this I was chagrined, for I was weary of long strangerhood, and my disappointment endured for a time till one day, going in to King Mihrijan, I found with him a company of Indians. I saluted them and they returned my salaam, and politely welcomed me and asked me of my country. When they asked me of my country, I questioned them of theirs and they told me that they were of various castes, some being called shakiriyah, who are the noblest of their casts and neither oppress nor offer violence to any, and others Brahmans, a folk who abstain from wine but live in delight and solace and merriment and own camels and horses and cattle. Moreover, they told me that the people of India are divided into two and seventy castes, and I marveled at this with exceeding marvel.

Amongst other things that I saw in King Mihrijan's dominions was an island called Kasil, wherein all night is heard the beating of drums and tabrets, but we were told by the neighboring islanders and by travelers that the inhabitants are people of diligence and judgment. In this sea I saw also a fish two hundred cubits long and the fishermen fear it, so they strike together pieces of wood and put it to flight. I also saw another fish with a head like that of an owl, besides many other wonders and rarities, which it would be tedious to recount. I occupied myself thus in visiting the islands till one day as I stood in the port with a staff in my hand, according to my custom, behold, a great ship, wherein were many merchants, came sailing for the harbor. When it reached the small inner port where ships anchor under the city, the master furled his sails and making fast to the shore, put out the landing planks, whereupon the crew fell to breaking bulk and landing cargo whilst I stood by, taking written note of them.

They were long in bringing the goods ashore, so I asked the master, "Is there aught left in thy ship?" and he answered: "O my lord, there are divers bales of merchandise in the hold, whose owner was drowned from amongst us at one of the islands on our course; so his goods remained in our charge by way of trust, and we purpose to sell them and note their price, that we may convey it to his people in the city of Baghdad, the Home of Peace." "What was the merchant's name?" quoth I, and quoth he, "Sindbad the Seaman," whereupon I straitly considered him and knowing him, cried out to him with a great cry, saying: "O Captain, I am that Sindbad the Seaman who traveled with other merchants, and when the fish heaved and thou calledst to us, some saved themselves and others sank, I being one of them. But Allah Almighty threw in my way a great tub of wood, of those the crew had used to wash withal, and the winds and waves carried me to this island, where by Allah's grace I fell in with King Mihrijan's grooms and they brought me hither to the King their master. When I told him my story, he entreated me with favor and made me his harbor-master, and I have prospered in his service and found acceptance with him. These bales therefore are mine, the goods which God hath given me."

The other exclaimed: "There is no Majesty and there is no Mihgt save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, there is neither conscience nor good faith left among men!" Said I, "O Rais, what mean these words, seeing that I have told thee my case?" And he answered, "Because thou heardest me say that I had with me goods whose owner was drowned, thou thinkest to take them without right. But this is forbidden by law to thee, for we saw him drown before our eyes, together with many other passengers, nor was one of them saved. So how canst thou pretend that thou art the owner of the goods?" "O Captain," said I, "listen to my story and give heed to my words, and my truth will be manifest to thee, for lying and leasing are the letter marks of the hypocrites." Then I recounted to him all that had befallen me since I sailed from Baghdad with him to the time when we came to the fish island where we were nearly drowned, and I reminded him of certain matters which had passed between us. Whereupon both he and the merchants were certified of the truth of my story and recognized me and gave me joy of my deliverance, saying: "By Allah, we thought not that thou hadst escaped drowning! But the Lord hath granted thee new life."

Then they delivered my bales to me, and I found my name written thereon, nor was aught thereof lacking. So I opened them and making up a present for King Miharjan of the finest and costliest of the contents, caused the sailors carry it up to the palace, where I went in to the King and laid my present at his feet, acquainting him with what had happened, especially concerning the ship and my goods, whereat he wondered with exceeding wonder, and the truth of an that I had told him was made manifest to him. His affection for me redoubled after that and he showed me exceeding honor and bestowed on me a great present in return for mine. Then I sold my bales and what other matters I owned, making a great profit on them, and bought me other goods and gear of the growth and fashion of the island city.

When the merchants were about to start on their homeward voyage, I embarked on board the ship all that I possessed, and going in to the King, thanked him for all his favors and friendship and craved his leave to return to my own land and friends. He farewelled me and bestowed on me great store of the country stuffs and produce, and I took leave of him and embarked. Then we set sail and fared on nights and days, by the permission of Allah Almighty, and Fortune served us and Fate favored us, so that we arrived in safety at Bassorah city, where I landed rejoiced at my safe return to my natal soil. After a short stay, I set out for Baghdad, the House of Peace, with store of goods and commodities of great price. Reaching the city in due time, I went straight to my own quarter and entered my house, where all my friends and kinsfolk came to greet me.

Then I bought me eunuchs and concubines, servants and Negro slaves, till I had a large establishment, and I bought me houses, and lands and gardens, till I was richer and in better case than before, and returned to enjoy the society of my friends and familiars more assiduously than ever, forgetting all I had suffered of fatigue and hardship and strangerhood and every peril of travel. And I applied myself to all manner joys and solaces and delights, eating the daintiest viands and drinking the deliciousest wines, and my wealth allowed this state of things to endure.

This, then, is the story of my first voyage, and tomorrow, Inshallah! I will tell you the tale of the second of my seven voyages. (Saith he who telleth the tale): Then Sindbad the Seaman made Sindbad the Landsman sup with him and bade give him a hundred gold pieces, saying, "Thou hast cheered us with thy company this day." The porter thanked him and, taking the gift, went his way, pondering that which he had heard and marveling mightily at what things betide mankind. He passed the night in his own place and with early morning

repaired to the abode of Sindbad the Seaman, who received him with honor and seated him by his side. As soon as the rest of the company was assembled, he set meat and drink before them, and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in cheerful case, he took up his discourse and recounted to them in these words the narrative of The Second Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman.

### **The Second Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman**

KNOW, O my brother, that I was living a most comfortable and enjoyable life, in all solace and delight, as I told you yesterday, until one day my mind became possessed with the thought of traveling about the world of men and seeing their cities and islands, and a longing seized me to traffic and to make money by trade. Upon this resolve I took a great store of cash and buying goods and gear fit for travel, bound them up in bales. Then I went down to the riverbank, where I found a noble ship and brand-new about to sail equipped with sails of fine cloth and well manned and provided. So I took passage in her, with a number of other merchants, and after embarking our goods, we weighed anchor the same day. Right fair was our voyage, and we sailed from place to place and from isle to isle, and whenever we anchored we met a crowd of merchants and notables and customers, and we took to buying and selling and bartering.

At last Destiny brought us to an island, fair and verdant, in trees abundant, with yellow-ripe fruits luxuriant, and flowers fragrant and birds warbling soft descant, and streams crystalline and radiant. But no sign of man showed to the descrier- no, not a blower of the fire. The captain made fast with us to this island, and the merchants and sailors landed and walked about, enjoying the shade of the trees and the song of the birds, that chanted the praises of the One, the Victorious, and marveling at the works of the Omnipotent King. I landed with the rest, and, sitting down by a spring of sweet water that welled up among the trees, took out some vivres I had with me and ate of that which Allah Almighty had allotted unto me. And so sweet was the zephyr and so fragrant were the flowers that presently I waxed drowsy and, lying down in that place, was soon drowned in sleep.

When I awoke, I found myself alone, for the ship had sailed and left me behind, nor had one of the merchants or sailors bethought himself of me. I searched the island right and left, but found neither man nor Jinn, whereat I was beyond measure troubled, and my gall was like to burst for stress of chagrin and anguish and concern, because I was left quite alone, without aught of worldly gear or meat or drink, weary and heartbroken. So I gave myself up for lost and said: "Not always doth the crock escape the shock. I was saved the first time by finding one who brought me from the desert island to an inhabited place, but now there is no hope for me." Then I fell to weeping and wailing and gave myself up to an access of rage, blaming myself for having again ventured upon the perils and hardships of voyage, whenas I was at my ease in mine own house in mine own land, taking my pleasure with good meat and good drink and good clothes and lacking nothing, neither money nor goods. And I repented me of having left Baghdad, and this the more after all the travails and dangers I had undergone in my first voyage, wherein I had so narrowly escaped destruction, and exclaimed, "Verily we are, Allah's, and unto Him we are returning!"

I was indeed even as one mad and Jinn-struck, and presently I rose and walked about the island, right and left and every whither, unable for trouble to sit or tarry in ay one place. Then I climbed a tall tree and looked in all directions, but saw nothing save sky and sea and trees and birds and isles and sands. However, after a while my eager glances fell upon some great white thing, afar off in the interior of the island. So I came down from the tree

and made for that which I had seen, and behold, it was a huge white dome rising high in air and of vast compass. I walked all around it, but found no door thereto, nor could I muster strength or nimbleness by reason of its exceeding smoothness and slipperiness. So I marked the spot where I stood and went round about the dome to measure its circumference, which I found fifty good paces. And as I stood casting about how to gain an entrance, the day being near its fall and the sun being near the horizon, behold, the sun was suddenly hidden from me and the air became dull and dar! Methought a cloud had come over the sun, but it was the season of summer, so I marveled at this and, lifting my head, looked steadfastly at the sky, when I saw that the cloud was none other than an enormous bird, of gigantic girth and inordinately wide of wing, which as it flew through the air veiled the sun and hid it from the island.

At this sight my wonder redoubled and I remembered a story I had heard aforetime of pilgrims and travelers, how in a certain island dwelleth a huge bird, called the "roc," which feedeth its young on elephants, and I was certified that the dome which caught my sight was none other than a roc's egg. As I looked and wondered at the marvelous works of the Almighty, the bird alighted on the dome and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs stretched out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! When I saw this, I arose and, unwinding my turban from my head, doubled it and twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound my waist fast to the legs of the roc, saying in myself, "Peradventure this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this desert island." I passed the night watching and fearing to sleep, lest the bird should fly away with me unawares, and as soon as the dawn broke and morn shone, the roc rose off its egg and spreading its wings with a great cry, flew up into the air dragging me with it, nor ceased it to soar and to tower till I thought it had reached the limit of the firmament. After which it descended earthward, little by little, till it lighted on the top of a high hill.

As soon as I found myself on the hard ground, I made haste to unbind myself, quaking for fear of the bird, though it took no heed of me nor even felt me, and loosing my turban from its feet, I made off with my best speed. Presently I saw it catch up in its huge claws something from the earth and rise with it high in air, and observing it narrowly, I saw it to be a serpent big of bulk and gigantic of girth, wherewith it flew away clean out of sight. I marveled at this, and faring forward, found myself on a peak overlooking a valley, exceeding great and wide and deep and bounded by vast mountains that spired high in air. None could descry their summits for the excess of their height, nor was any able to climb up thereto. When I saw this, I blamed myself for that which I had done and said: "Would Heaven I had tarried in the island! It was better than this wild desert, for there I had at least fruits to eat and water to drink, and here are neither trees nor fruits nor streams. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, as often as I am quit of one peril I fall into a worse danger and a more grievous."

However, I took courage and walking along the wady, found that its soil was of diamond, the stone wherewith they pierce minerals and precious stones and porcelain and onyx, for that it is a dense stone and a dure, whereon neither iron nor hardhed hath effect, neither can we cut off aught therefrom nor break it, save by means of loadstone. Moreover, the valley swarmed with snakes and vipers, each big as a palm tree, that would have made but one gulp of an elephant. And they came out by night, hiding during the day lest the rocs and eagles pounce on them and tear them to pieces, as was their wont, why I wot not. And I repented of what I had done and Allah, I have made haste to bring destruction upon myself!" The day began to wane as I went along, and I looked about for a place where I might pass the night, being in fear of the serpents, ace for my and I took no thought of meat



and drink in my concern for my life. Presently, I caught sight of a cave near-hand, with a narrow doorway, so I entered, and seeing a great stone close to the mouth, I rolled it up and stopped the entrance, saying to myself, "I am safe here for the night, and as soon as it is day, I will go forth and see what Destiny will do." Then I looked within the cave and saw at the upper end a great serpent brooding on her eggs, at which my flesh quaked and my hair stood on end, but I raised my eyes to Heaven and, committing my case to fate and lot, abode all that night without sleep till daybreak, when I rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave and went forth, staggering like a drunken man and giddy with watching and fear and hunger.

As in this sore case I walked along the valley, behold, there fell down before me a slaughtered beast. But I saw no one, whereat I marveled with great marvel and presently remembered a story I had heard aforetime of traders and pilgrims and travelers- how the mountains where are the diamonds are full of perils and terrors, nor can any fare through them, but the merchants who traffic in diamonds have a device by which they obtain them; that is to say, they take a sheep and slaughter and skin it and cut it in pieces and cast them down from the mountaintops into the valley sole, where, the meat being fresh and sticky with blood, some of the gems cleave to it. Then they leave it till midday, when the eagles and vultures swoop down upon it and carry it in their claws to the mountain summits, whereupon the merchants come and shout at them and scare them away from the meat. Then they come, and taking the diamonds which they find sticking to it, go their ways with them and leave the meat to the birds and beasts, nor can any come at the diamonds but by this device.

So when I saw the slaughtered beast fall (he pursued) and bethought me of the story, I went up to it and filled my pockets and shawl girdle and turban and the folds of my clothes with the choicest diamonds, and as I was thus engaged, down fell before me another great piece of meat. Then with my unrolled turban and lying on my back, I set the bit on my breast so that I was hidden by the meat, which was thus raised above the ground. Hardly had I gripped it when an eagle swooped down upon the flesh and, seizing it with his talons, flew up with it high in air and me clinging thereto, and ceased not its flight till it alighted on the head of one of the mountains, where, dropping the carcass he fell to rending it. But, behold, there arose behind him a great noise of shouting and clattering of wood, whereat the bird took fright and flew away. Then I loosed off myself the meat, with clothes daubed with blood therefrom, and stood up by its side. Whereupon up came the merchant who had cried out at the eagle, and seeing me standing there, bespoke me not, but was affrighted at me and shook with fear.

However, he went up to the carcass and, turning it over, found no diamonds sticking to it, whereat he gave a great cry and exclaimed: "Harrow, my disappointment! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah with Whom we seek refuge from Satan the stoned!" And he bemoaned himself and beat hand upon hand, saying: "Alas, the pity of it! How cometh this?" Then I went up-to him and he said to me, "Who art thou, and what causeth thee to come hither?" And I: "Fear not, I am a man and a good man and a merchant. My story is a wondrous and my adventures marvelous and the manner of my coming hither is prodigious. So be of good cheer. Thou shalt receive of me what shall rejoice thee, for I have with me great plenty of diamonds and I will give thee thereof what shall suffice thee, for each is better than aught thou couldst get otherwise. So fear nothing." The man rejoiced thereat and thanked and blessed me. Then we talked together till the other merchants, hearing me in discourse with their fellow, came up and saluted me, for each of them had thrown down his piece of meat.



And as I went off with them and told them my whole story, how I had suffered hardships at sea and the fashion of my reaching the valley. But I gave the owner of the meat a number of the stones I had by me, so they all wished me joy of my escape, saying: "By Allah, a new life hath been decreed to thee, for none ever reached yonder valley and came off thence alive before thee, but praised be Allah for thy safety!" We passed the night together in a safe and pleasant place, beyond measure rejoiced at my deliverance from the valley of Serpents and my arrival in an inhabited land. And on the morrow we set out and journeyed over the mighty range of mountains, seeing many serpents in the valley, till we came to a fair great island wherein was a garden of huge champhor trees under each of which a hundred men might take shelter. When the folk have a mind to get camphor, they bore into the upper part of the bole with a long iron, whereupon the liquid camphor, which is the sap of the tree, floweth out and they catch it in vessels, where it concreteth like gum; but after this the tree dieth and becometh firewood.

Moreover, there is in this island a kind of wild beast, called rhinoceros, that pastureth as do steers and buffaloes with us; but it is a huge brute, bigger of body than the camel, and like it feedeth upon the leaves and twigs of trees. It is a remarkable animal with a great and thick horn, ten cubits long, a-middleward its head, wherein, when cleft in twain, is the likeness of a man. Voyagers and pilgrims and travelers declare that this beast called karkadan will carry off a great elephant on its horn and graze about the island and the seacoast therewith and take no heed of it till the elephant dieth and its fat, melting in the sun, runneth down into the rhinoceros's eyes and blindeth him, so that he lieth down on the shore. Then comes the bird roc and carrieth off both the rhinoceros and that which is on its horn, to feed its young withal. Moreover, I saw in this island many kinds of oxen and buffaloes, whose like are not found in our country.

Here I sold some of the diamonds which I had by me for gold dinars and silver dirhams and bartered others for the produce of the country, and loading them upon beasts of burden, fared on with the merchants from valley to valley and town to town, buying and selling and viewing foreign countries and the works and creatures of Allah till we came to Bassorah city, where we abode a few days, after which I continued my journey to Baghdad. I arrived at home with great store of diamonds and money and goods, and forgathered with my friends and relations and gave alms and largess and bestowed curious gifts and made presents to all my friends and companions. Then I betook myself to eating well and drinking well and wearing fine clothes and making merry with my fellows, and forgot all my sufferings in the pleasures of return to the solace and delight of life, with light heart and broadened breast. And everyone who heard of my return came and questioned me of my adventures and of foreign countries, and I related to them all that had befallen me, and the much I had suffered, whereat they wondered and gave me joy of my safe return.

This, then, is the end of the story of my second voyage, and tomorrow, Inshallah! I will tell you what befell me in my third voyage. The company marveled at his story and supped with him, after which he ordered a hundred dinars of gold to be given to the porter, who took the sum with many thanks and blessings (which he stinted not even when he reached home) and went his way, wondering at what he had heard. Next morning as soon as day came in its sheen and shone, he rose and, praying the dawn prayer, repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, even as he had bidden him, and went in and gave him good morrow. The merchant welcomed him and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry with joy and jollity, their host began by saying: Harken, O my brothers, to what I am about to tell you, for it is even more wondrous than what you have already heard. But Allah alone kenneth what things His

Omniscience concealed from man! And listen to The Third Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman.

***Continue. . . . . , read part 3.***