

ALF LAYLAH WA LAYLAH

(THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS)

**Translated
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PART – 3

The Third Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman

AS I told you yesterday, I returned from my second voyage overjoyed at my safety and with great increase of wealth, Allah having requited me all that I had wasted and lost, and I abode awhile in Baghdad city savoring the utmost ease and prosperity and comfort and happiness, till the carnal man was once more seized with longing for travel and diversion and adventure, and yearned after traffic and lucre and emolument, for that the human heart is naturally prone to evil. So, making up my mind, I laid in great plenty of goods suitable for a sea voyage and repairing to Bassorah, went down to the shore and found there a fine ship ready to sail, with a full crew and a numerous company of merchants, men of worth and substance, faith, piety, and consideration. I embarked with them and we set sail on the blessing of Allah Almighty and on His aidance and His favor to bring our voyage to a safe and prosperous issue, and already we congratulated one another on our good fortune and boon voyage.

We fared on from sea to sea and from island to island and city to city, in all delight and contentment, buying and selling wherever we touched, and taking our solace and our pleasure, till one day when as we sailed athwart the dashing sea swollen with clashing billows, behold, the master (who stood on the gunwale examining the ocean in all directions) cried out with a great cry, and buffeted his face and pluckt out his beard and rent his raiment, and bade furl the sail and cast the anchors. So we said to him, "O Rais, what is the matter?" "Know, O my brethren (Allah preserve you!) that the wind hath gotten the better of us and hath driven us out of our course into midocean, and Destiny, for our ill luck, hath brought us to the Mountain of the Zughb, a hairy folk like apes, among whom no man ever fell and came forth alive. And my heart presageth that we all be dead men."

Hardly had the master made an end of his speech when the apes were upon us. They surrounded the ship on all sides, swarming like locusts and crowding the shore. They were the most frightful of wild creatures, covered with black hair like felt, foul of favor and small of stature, being but four spans high, yellow-eyed and black-faced. None knoweth their language nor what they are, and they shun the company of men. We feared to slay them or strike them or drive them away, because of their inconceivable multitude, lest if we hurt one, the rest fall on us and slay us, for numbers prevail over courage. So we let them do their will, albeit we feared they would plunder our goods and gear. They swarmed up the cables and gnawed them asunder, and on like wise they did with all the ropes of the ship, so that it fell off from the wind and stranded upon their mountainous coast. Then they laid hands on all the merchants and crew, and landing us on the island, made off with the ship and its cargo and went their ways, we wot not whither.

We were thus left on the island, eating of its fruits and potherbs and drinking of its streams till one day we espied in its midst what seemed an inhabited house. So we made for it as fast as our feet could carry us and, behold, it was a castle strong and tall, compassed about with a lofty wall, and having a two-leaved gate of ebony wood, both of which leaves open stood. We entered and found within a space wide and bare like a great square, round which stood many high doors open thrown, and at the farther end a long bench of stone and braziers, with cooking gear hanging thereon and about it great Plenty of bones. But we saw no one and marveled thereat with exceeding wonder. Then we sat down in the courtyard a little while, and presently falling asleep, slept from the forenoon till sundown, when lo! the earth trembled under our feet and the air rumbled with a terrible tone.

Then there came down upon us, from the top of the castle, a huge creature in the likeness of a man, black of color, tall and big of bulk, as he were a great date tree, with eyes like coals of fire and eyeteeth like boar's tusks and a vast big gape like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had long loose lips like camel's hanging down upon his breast, and ears like two jars falling over his shoulder blades, and the nails of his hands were like the claws of a lion. When we saw this frightful giant, we were like to faint and every moment increased our fear and terror, and we became as dead men for excess of horror and affright. And after trampling upon the earth, he sat awhile on the bench. Then he arose and coming to us, seized me by the arm, choosing me out from among my comrades the merchants. He took me up in his hand and turning me over, felt me as a butcher feeleth a sheep he is about to slaughter, and I but a little mouthful in his hands. But finding me lean and fleshless for stress of toil and trouble and weariness, let me go and took up another, whom in like manner he turned over and felt and let go. Nor did he cease to feel and turn over the rest of us, one after another, till he came to the master of the ship.

Now he was a sturdy, stout, broad-shouldered wight, fat and in full vigor, so he pleased the giant, who seized him as a butcher seizeth a beast, and throwing him down, set his foot on his neck and brake it, after which he fetched a long spit and thrusting it up his backside, brought it forth of the crown of his head. Then, lighting a fierce fire, he set over it the spit with the rais thereon, and turned it over the coals till the flesh was roasted, when he took the spit off the fire and set it like a kobab stick before him. Then he tare the body, limb from limb, as one jointeth a chicken and, rending the flesh with his nails, fell to eating of it and gnawing the bones, till there was nothing left but some of these, which he threw on one side of the wall. This done, he sat for a while, then he lay down on the stone bench and fell asleep, snarking and snoring like the gurgling of a lamb or a cow with its throat cut, nor did he awake till morning, when he rose and fared forth and went his ways.

As soon as we were certified that he was gone, we began to talk with one another, weeping and bemoaning ourselves for the risk we ran, and saying: "Would Heaven we had been drowned in the sea or that the apes had eaten us! That were better than to be roasted over the coals. By Allah, this is a vile, foul death! But whatso the Lord willeth must come-to pass, and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Him, the Glorious, the Great! We shall assuredly perish miserably and none will know of us, as there is no escape for us from this place." Then we arose and roamed about the island, hoping that haply we might find a place to hide us in or a means of flight, for indeed death was a light matter to us, provided we were not roasted over the fire and eaten. However, we could find no hiding place, and the evening overtook us, so, of the excess of our terror, we returned to the castle and sat down awhile.

Presently, the earth trembled under our feet and the black ogre came up to us and turning us over, felt one after other till he found a man to his liking, whom he took and served as he had done the captain, killing and roasting and eating him. After which he lay down on the bench and slept and night, snarling and snoring like a beast with its throat cut, till daybreak, when he arose and went out as before. Then we drew together and conversed and add one to other, "By Allah, we had better throw ourselves into the sea and be drowned than die roasted for this is an abominable death!" Quoth one of us: "Hear ye my words! Let us cast about to kill him, and be at peace from the grief of him and rid the Moslems of his barbarity and tyranny." Then said I: "Hear me, O my brothers. If there is nothing for it but to slay him, let us carry some of this firewood and planks down to the seashore and make us a boat wherein, if we succeed in slaughtering him, we may either embark and let the waters carry

us whither Allah willeth, or else abide here till some ship pass, when we will take passage in it. If we fail to kill him, we will embark in the boat and put out to sea. And if we be drowned, we shall at least escape being roasted over a kitchen fire with sliced weasands, whilst if we escape, we escape, and if we be drowned, we die martyrs." "By Allah," said they all, "this rede is a right," and we agreed upon this, and set about carrying it out. So we haled down to the beach the pieces of wood which lay about the bench, and making a boat, moored it to the strand, after which we stowed therein somewhat of victual and returned to the castle.

As soon as evening fell the earth trembled under our feet and in came the blackamoor upon us, snarling like a dog about to bite. He came up to us, and feeling us and turning us over one by one, took one of us and did with him as he had done before and ate him, after which he lay down on the bench and snored and snorted like thunder. As soon as we were assured that he slept, we arose and taking two iron spits of those standing there, heated them in the fiercest of the fire till they were red-hot, like burning coals, when we gripped fast hold of them, and going up to the giant as he lay snoring on the bench, thrust them into his eyes and pressed upon them, all of us, with our united might, so that his eyeballs burst and he became stone-blind. Thereupon he cried with a great cry, whereat our hearts trembled, and springing up from the bench, he fell a-groping after us, blindfold. We fled from him right and left and he saw us not, for his sight was altogether blent, but we were in terrible fear of him and made sure we were dead men despairing of escape. Then he found the door, feeling for it with his hands, and went out roaring aloud, and behold, the earth shook under us for the noise of his roaring, and we quaked for fear. As he quitted the castle we followed him and betook ourselves to the place where we had moored our boat, saying to one another: "If this accursed abide absent till the going down of the sun and come not to the castle, we shall know that he is dead; and if he come back, we will embark in the boat and paddle till we escape, committing our affair to Allah."

But as we spoke, behold, up came the blackamoor with other two as they were Ghuls, fouler and more frightful than he, with eyes like red-hot coals, which when we saw, we hurried into the boat and casting off the moorings, paddled away, and pushed out to sea. As soon as the ogres caught sight of us, they cried out at us, and running down to the seashore, fell a-pelting us with rocks, whereof some fell amongst us and others fell into the sea. We paddled with all our might till we were beyond their reach, but the most part of us were slain by the rock-throwing, and the winds and waves sported with us and carried us into the midst of the dashing sea, swollen with billows clashing. We knew not whither we went, and my fellows died one after another till there remained but three, myself and two others, for as often as one died, we threw him into the sea. We were sore exhausted for stress of hunger, but we took courage and heartened one another and worked for dear life, and paddled with main and might till the winds cast us upon an island, as we were dead men for fatigue and fear and famine.

We landed on the island and walked about it for a while, finding that it abounded in trees and streams and birds, and we ate of the fruits and rejoiced in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea. And thus we did till nightfall, when we lay down and fell asleep for excess of fatigue. But we had hardly closed our eyes before we were aroused by a hissing sound, like the sough of wind, and awakening, saw a serpent like a dragon, a seldseen sight, of monstrous make and belly of enormous bulk, which lay in a circle around us. Presently it reared its head, and seizing one of my companions, swallowed him up to his shoulders. Then it gulped down the rest of him, and we heard his ribs crack in its belly. Presently it went its way, and we abode in sore amazement and grief for our comrade and mortal fear for ourselves, saying: "By Allah, this is a marvelous thing!

Each kind of death that threateneth us is more terrible than the last We were rejoicing in our escape from the black ogre and our deliverance from the perils of the sea, but now we have fallen into that which is worse. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! By the Almighty, we have escaped from the blackamoor and from drowning, but how shall we escape from this abominable and viperish monster?" Then we walked about the island, eating of its fruits and drinking of its streams till dusk, when we climbed up into a high tree and went to sleep there, I being on the topmost bough.

As soon as it was dark night, up came the serpent, looking right and left, and making for the tree whereon we were, climbed up to my comrade and swallowed him down to his shoulders. Then it coiled about the bole with him, whilst I, who could not take my eyes off the sight, heard his bones crack in its belly, and it swallowed him whole, after which it slid down from the tree. When the day broke and the light showed me that the serpent was gone, I came down, as I were a dead man for stress of fear and anguish, and thought to cast myself into the sea and be at rest from the woes of the world, but could not bring myself to this, for verily life is dear. So I took five pieces of wood, broad and long, and bound one crosswise to the soles of my feet and others in like fashion on my right and left sides and over my breast, and the broadest and largest I bound across my head and made them fast with ropes. Then I lay down on the ground on my back, so that I was completely fenced in by the pieces of wood, which enclosed me like a bier.

So as soon as it was dark, up came the serpent as usual, and made toward me, but could not get at me to swallow me for the wood that fenced me in. So it wriggled round me on every side whilst I looked on like one dead by reason of my terror, and every now and then it would glide away, and come back. But as often as it tried to come at me, it was hindered by the pieces of wood wherewith I had bound myself on every side. It ceased not to beset me thus from sundown till dawn, but when the light of day shone upon the beast it made off, in the utmost fury and extreme disappointment. Then I put out my hand and unbound myself, well-nigh down among the dead men for fear and suffering, and went down to the island shore, whence a ship afar off in the midst of the waves suddenly struck my sight. So I tore off a great branch of a tree and made signs with it to the crew, shouting out the while, which when the ship's company saw they said to one another: "We must stand in and see what this is. Peradventure 'tis a man." So they made for the island and presently heard my cries, whereupon they took me on board and questioned me of my case. I told them all my adventures from first to last, whereat they marveled mightily and covered my shame with some of their clothes. Moreover, they set before me somewhat of food and I ate my fill and I drank cold sweet water and was mightily refreshed, and Allah Almighty quickened me after I was virtually dead. So I praised the Most Highest and thanked Him for His favors and exceeding mercies, and my heart revived in me after utter despair, till meseemed as if all I had suffered were but a dream I had dreamed.

We sailed on with a fair wind the Almighty sent us till we came to an island called Al-Salahitah, which aboundeth in sandalwood, when the captain cast anchor. And when we had cast anchor, the merchants and the sailors landed with their goods to sell and to buy. Then the captain turned to me and said: "Hark'ee, thou art a stranger and a pauper and tellest us that thou hast undergone frightful hardships, wherefore I have a mind to benefit thee with somewhat that may further thee to thy native land, so thou wilt ever bless me and pray for me." "So be it," answered I. "Thou shalt have my prayers." Quoth he: "Know then that there was with us a man, a traveler, whom we lost, and we know not if he be alive or dead, for we had no news of him. So I purpose to commit his bales of goods to thy charge, that thou mayst sell them in this island. A part of the proceeds we will give thee as an

equivalent for thy pains and service, and the rest we will keep till we return to Baghdad, where we will inquire for his family and deliver it to them, together with the unsold goods. Say me then, wilt thou undertake the charge and land and sell them as other merchants do?" I replied, "Hearkening and obedience to thee, O my lord, and great is thy kindness to me," and thanked him. Whereupon he bade the sailors and porters bear the bales in question ashore, and commit them to my charge.

The ship's scribe asked him, "O master, what bales are these, and what merchant's name shall I write upon them?" and he answered: "Write on them the name of Sindbad the Seaman, him who was with us in the ship and whom we lost at the roc's island, and of whom we have no tidings. For we mean this stranger to sell them, and we will give him a part of the price for his pains and keep the rest till we return to Baghdad, where if we find the owner we will make it over to him, and if not, to his family." And the clerk said, "Thy words are apposite and thy rede is right." Now when I heard the captain give orders for the bales to be inscribed with my name, I said to myself, "By Allah, I am Sindbad the Seaman!" So I armed myself with courage and patience and waited till all the merchants had landed and were gathered together, talking and chattering about buying and selling. Then I went up to the captain and asked him, "O my lord, knowest thou what manner of man was this Sindbad whose goods thou hast committed to me for sale?" and he answered, "I know of him naught save that he was a man from Baghdad city, Sindbad hight the Seaman, who was drowned with many others when we lay anchored at such an island, and I have heard nothing of him since then."

At this I cried out with a great cry and said: "O Captain, whom Allah keep! know that I am that Sindbad the Seaman and that I was not drowned, but when thou castest anchor at the island, I landed with the rest of the merchants and crew. And I sat down in a pleasant place by myself and ate somewhat of food I had with me and enjoyed myself till I became drowsy and was drowned in sleep. And when I awoke, I found no ship, and none near me. These goods are my goods and these bales are my bales, and all the merchants who fetch jewels from the Valley of Diamonds saw me there and will bear me witness that I am the very Sindbad the Seaman; for I related to them everything that had befallen me and told them how you forgot me and left me sleeping on the island, and that betided me which betided me." When the passengers and crew heard my words, they gathered about me and some of them believed me and others disbelieved, but presently, behold, one of the merchants, hearing me mention the Valley of Diamonds, came up to me and said to them: "Hear what I say, good people! When I related to you the most wonderful things in my travels, and I told you that at the time we cast down our slaughtered animals into the Valley of Serpents (I casting with the rest as was my wont), there came up a man hanging to mine, ye believed me not and live me the lie." "Yes," quoth they, "thou didst tell us some such tale, but we had no call to credit thee." He resumed: "Now this is the very man, by token that he gave me diamonds of great value and high price whose like are not to be found, requiting me more than would have come up sticking to my quarter of meat. And I companied with him to Bassorah city, where he took leave of us and went on to his native stead whilst we returned to our own land. This is he, and he told us his name, Sindbad the Seaman, and how the ship left him on the desert island. And know ye that Allah hath sent him hither, so might the truth of my story be made manifest to you. Moreover, these are his goods, for when he first forgathered with us, he told us of them; and the truth of his words is patent."

Hearing the merchant's speech, the captain came up to me and considered me straitly awhile, after which he said, "What was the mark on thy bales?" "Thus and thus," answered I, and reminded him of somewhat that had passed between him and me when I shipped

with him from Bassorah. Thereupon he was convinced that I was indeed Sindbad the Seaman and took me round the neck and gave me joy of my safety, saying: "By Allah, O my lord, thy case is indeed wondrous and thy tale marvelous. But lauded be Allah Who hath brought thee and me together again, and Who hath restored to thee thy goods and gear!" Then I disposed of my merchandise to the best of my skill, and profited largely on them, whereat I rejoiced with exceeding joy and congratulated myself on my safety and the recovery of my goods. We ceased not to buy and sell at the several islands till we came to the land of Hind, where we bought cloves and ginger and all manner spices. And thence we fared on to the land of Sind, where also we bought and sold.

In these Indian seas I saw wonders without number or count, amongst others a fish like a cow which bringeth forth its young and suckleth them like human beings, and of its skin bucklers are made. There were eke fishes like asses and camels and tortoises twenty cubits wide. And I saw also a bird that cometh out of a sea shell and layeth eggs and hatcheth her chicks on the surface of the water, never coming up from the sea to the land. Then we set sail again with a fair wind and the blessing of Almighty Allah, and after a prosperous voyage, arrived safe and sound at Bassorah. Here I abode a few days, and presently returned to Baghdad, where I went at once to my quarter and my house and saluted my family and familiars and friends. I had gained on this voyage what was beyond count and reckoning, so I gave alms and largess and clad the widow and orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions and intimates and forgot while eating well and drinking well and dressing well everything that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had suffered.

These, then, are the most admirable things I sighted on my third voyage, and tomorrow, an it be the will of Allah, you shall come to me and I will relate the adventures of my fourth voyage, which is still more wonderful than those you have already heard. (Saith he who telleth the tale): Then Sindbad the Seaman bade give Sindbad the Landsman a hundred golden dinars as of wont, and called for food. So they spread the tables and the company ate the night meal and went their ways, marveling at the tale they had heard. The porter after taking his gold passed the night in his own house, also wondering at what his namesake the seaman had told him, and as soon as day broke and the morning showed with its sheen and shone, he rose and praying the dawn prayer, betook himself to Sindbad the Seaman, who returned his salute and received him with an open breast and cheerful favor and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when he caused set on food and they ate and drank and made merry. Then Sindbad the Seaman bespoke them and related to them the narrative of The Fourth Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman.

The Fourth Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman

KNOW, O my brethren, that after my return from my third voyage and forgathering with my friends, and forgetting all my perils and hardships in the enjoyment of ease and comfort and repose, I was visited one day by a company of merchants who sat down with me and talked of foreign travel and traffic till the old bad man within me yearned to go with them and enjoy the sight of strange countries, and I longed for the society of the various races of mankind and for traffic and profit. So I resolved to travel with them and, buying the necessaries for a long voyage and great store of costly goods, more than ever before, transported them from Baghdad to Bassorah, where I took ship with the merchants in question, who were of the chief of the town. We set out, trusting in the blessing of Almighty Allah, and with a favoring breeze and the best conditions we sailed from island to island and sea to sea till one day

there arose against us a contrary wind and the captain cast out his anchors and brought the ship to a standstill, fearing lest she should founder in midocean.

Then we all fell to prayer and humbling ourselves before the Most High, but as we were thus engaged there smote us a furious squall which tore the sails to rags and tatters. The anchor cable parted and, the ship foundering, we were cast into the sea, goods and all. I kept myself afloat by swimming half the day till, when I had given myself up for lost, the Almighty threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, whereon I and some others of the merchants scrambled and, mounting it as we would a horse, paddled with our feet in the sea. We abode thus a day and a night, the wind and waves helping us on, and on the second day shortly before the midtime between sunrise and noon the breeze freshened and the sea wrought and the rising waves cast us upon an island, well-nigh dead bodies for weariness and want of sleep, cold and hunger and fear and thirst. We walked about the shore and found abundance of herbs, whereof we ate enough to keep breath in body and to stay our failing spirits, then lay down and slept till morning hard by the sea. And when morning came with its sheen and shone, we arose and walked about the island to the right and left till we came in sight of an inhabited house afar off. So we made toward it, and ceased not walking till we reached the door thereof when lo! a number of naked men issued from it, and without saluting us or a word said, laid hold of us masterfully and carried us to their King, who signed us to sit. So we sat down and they set food before us such as we knew not and whose like we had never seen in all our lives. My companions ate of it, for stress of hunger, but my stomach revolted from it and I would not eat, and my refraining from it was, by Allah's favor, the cause of my being alive till now. For no sooner had my comrades tasted of it than their reason fled and their condition changed and they began to devour it like madmen possessed of an evil spirit. Then the savages give them to drink of coconut oil and anointed them therewith, and straightway after drinking thereof their eyes turned into their heads and they fell to eating greedily, against their wont.

When I saw this, I was confounded, and concerned for them, nor was I less anxious about myself, for fear of the naked folk. So I watched them narrowly, and it was not long before I discovered them to be a tribe of Magian cannibals whose King was a Ghul. All who came to their country or whoso they caught in their valleys or on their roads they brought to this King and fed them upon that food and anointed them with that oil, whereupon their stomachs dilated that they might eat largely, whilst their reason fled and they lost the power of thought and became idiots. Then they stuffed them with coconut oil and the aforesaid food till they became fat and gross, when they slaughtered them by cutting their throats and roasted them for the King's eating, but as for the savages themselves, they ate human flesh raw. When I saw this, I was sore dismayed for myself and my comrades, who were now become so stupefied that they knew not what was done with them. And the naked folk committed them to one who used every day to lead them out and pasture them on the island like cattle. And they wandered amongst the trees and rested at will, thus waxing very fat.

As for me, I wasted away and became sickly for fear and hunger and my flesh shriveled on my bones, which when the savages saw, they left me alone and took no thought of me and so far forgot me that one day I gave them the slip and walking out of their place, made for the beach, which was distant, and there espied a very old man seated on a high place girt by the waters. I looked at him and knew him for the herdsman who had charge of pasturing my fellows, and with him were many others in like case. As soon as he saw me, he knew me to be in possession of my reason and not afflicted like the rest whom he was pasturing, so signed to me from afar, as who should say, "Turn back and take the right-hand road, for that will lead thee into the King's highway." So I turned back, as he bade me, and followed

the right-hand road, now running for fear and then walking leisurely to rest me, till I was out of the old man's sight. By this time the sun had gone down and the darkness set in, so I sat down to rest and would have slept, but sleep came not to me that night for stress of fear and famine and fatigue.

When the night was half spent, I rose and walked on till the day broke in all its beauty and the sun rose over the heads of the lofty hills and athwart the low gravelly plains. Now I was weary and hungry and thirsty, so I ate my fill of herbs and grasses that grew in the island and kept life in body and stayed my stomach, after which I set out again and fared on all that day and the next night, staying my greed with roots and herbs. Nor did I cease walking for seven days and their nights, till the morn of the eighth day, when I caught sight of a faint object in the distance. So I made toward it, though my heart quaked for all I had suffered first and last, and, behold, it was a company of men gathering pepper grains. As soon as they saw me, they hastened up to me and surrounding me on all sides, said to me, "Who art thou, and whence come?" I replied, "Know, O folk, that I am a poor stranger," and acquainted them with my case and all the hardships and perils I had suffered, whereat they marveled and gave me joy of my safety, saying: "By Allah, this is wonderful! But how didst thou escape from these blacks who swarm in the island and devour all who fall in with them, nor is any safe from them, nor can any get out of their clutches?"

And after I had told them the fate of my companions, they made me sit by them till they got quit of their work, and fetched me somewhat of good food, which I ate, for I was hungry, and rested awhile. After which they took ship with me and carrying me to their island home, brought me before their King, who returned my salute and received me honorably and questioned me of my case. I told him all that had befallen me from the day of my leaving Baghdad city, whereupon he wondered with great wonder at my adventures, he and his courtiers, and bade me sit by him. Then he called for food and I ate with him what sufficed me and washed my hands and returned thanks to Almighty Allah for all His favors, praising Him and glorifying Him. Then I left the King and walked for solace about the city, which I found wealthy and populous, abounding in market streets well stocked with food and merchandise and full of buyers and sellers. So I rejoiced at having reached so pleasant a place and took my ease there after my fatigues, and I made friends with the townsfolk, nor was it long before I became more in honor and favor with them and their King than any of the chief men of the realm.

Now I saw that all the citizens, great and small, rode fine horses, high-priced and thoroughbred, without saddles or housings, whereat I wondered and said to the King: "Wherefore, O my lord, dost thou not ride with a saddle? Therein is ease for the rider and increase of power." "What is a saddle?" asked he. "I never saw nor used such a thing in all my life." And I answered, "With thy permission I will make thee a saddle, that thou mayst ride on it and see the comfort thereof." And quoth he, "Do so." So quoth I to him, "Furnish me with some woods." which being brought, I sought me a clever carpenter and sitting by him, showed him how to make the saddletree, portraying for him the fashion thereof in ink on the wood. Then I took wool and teased it and made felt of it, and, covering the saddletree with leather, stuffed it, and polished it, and attached the girth and stirrup leathers. After which I fetched a blacksmith and described to him the fashion of the stirrups and bridle bit. So he forged a fine pair of stirrups and a bit, and filed them smooth and tinned them. Moreover, I made fast to them fringes of silk and fitted bridle leathers to the bit. Then I fetched one of the best of the royal horses and saddling and bridling him, hung the stirrups to the saddle and led him to the King. The thing took his fancy and he thanked me,

then he mounted and rejoiced greatly in the saddle and rewarded me handsomely for my work.

When the King's Wazir saw the saddle, he asked of me one like it, and I made it for him. Furthermore, all the grandees and officers of state came for saddles to me, so I fell to making saddles (having taught the craft to the carpenter and blacksmith) and selling them to all who sought, till I amassed great wealth and became in high honor and great favor with the King and his household and grandees. I abode thus till one day, as I was sitting with the King in all respect and contentment, he said to me: "Know thou, O such a one, thou art become one of us, dear as a brother, and we hold thee in such regard and affection that we cannot part with thee nor suffer thee to leave our city. Wherefore I desire of thee obedience in a certain matter, and I will not have thee gainsay me." Answered I: "O King, what is it thou desirest of me? Far be it from me to gainsay thee in aught, for I am indebted to thee for many favors and bounties and much kindness, and (praised be Allah!) I am become one of thy servants." Quoth he: "I have a mind to marry thee to a fair, clever, and agreeable wife who is wealthy as she is beautiful, so thou mayest be naturalized and domiciled with us. I will lodge thee with me in my palace, wherefore oppose me not neither cross me in this." When I heard these words I was ashamed and held my peace nor could make him any answer, by reason of my much bashfulness before him. Asked he, "Why dost thou not reply to me, O my son?" and I answered, saying, "O my master, it is thine to command, O King of the Age!" So he summoned the kazi and the witnesses and married me straightway to a lady of a noble tree and high pedigree, wealthy in moneys and means, the flower of an ancient race, of surpassing beauty and grace, and the owner of farms and estates and many a dwelling place.

Now after the King my master had married me to this choice wife, he also gave me a great and goodly house standing alone, together with slaves and officers, and assigned me pay and allowances. So I became in all ease and contentment and delight and forgot everything which had befallen me of weariness and trouble and hardship. For I loved my wife with fondest love and she loved me no less, and we were as one, and abode in the utmost comfort of life and in its happiness. And I said in myself, "When I return to my native land, I will carry her with me." But whatso is predestined to a man, that needs must be, and none knoweth what shall befall him. We lived thus a great while, till Almighty Allah bereft one of my neighbors of his wife. Now he was a gossip of mine, so hearing the cry of the keeners, I went in to condole him on his loss and found him in very ill plight, full of trouble and weary of soul and mind. I condoled with him and comforted him, saying: "Mourn not for thy wife, who hath now found the mercy of Allah. The Lord will surely give thee a better in her stead, and thy name shall be great and thy life shall be long in the land, Inshallah!"

But he wept bitter tears and replied: "O my friend, how can I marry another wife, and how shall Allah replace her to me with a better than she, whenas I have but one day left to live?" "O my brother," said I, "return to thy senses and announce not glad tidings of thine own death, for thou art well, sound, and in good case." "By thy life, O my friend," rejoined he, "tomorrow thou wilt lose me, and wilt never see me again till the Day of Resurrection." I asked, "How so?" and he answered: "This very day they bury my wife, and they bury me with her in one tomb. For it is the custom with us, if the wife die first, to bury the husband alive with her, and in like manner the wife if the husband die first, so that neither may enjoy life after losing his or her mate." "By Allah," cried I, "this is a most vile, lewd custom, and not to be endured of any!" Meanwhile, behold, the most part of the townsfolk came in and fell to condoling with my gossip for his wife and for himself.

Presently they laid the dead woman out, as was their wont, and setting her on a bier, carried her and her husband without the city till they came to a place in the side of a mountain at the end of the island by the sea. And here they raised a great rock and discovered the mouth of a stone-riveted pit or well, leading down into a vast underground cavern that ran beneath the mountain. Into this pit they threw the corpse, then, tying a rope of palm fibers under the husband's armpits, they let him down into the cavern, and with him a great pitcher of fresh water and seven scones by way of viaticum. When he came to the bottom, he loosed himself from the rope and they drew it up, and stopping the mouth of the pit with the great stone, they returned to the city, leaving my friend in the cavern with his dead wife. When I saw this, I said to myself, "By Allah, this fashion of death is more grievous than the first!" And I went in to the King and said to him, "O my lord, why do ye bury the quick with the dead?" Quoth he: "It hath been the custom, thou must know, of our forebears and our olden kings from time immemorial, if the husband die first, to bury his wife with him, and the like with the wife, so we may not sever them, alive or dead." I asked, "O King of the Age, if the wife of a foreigner like myself die among you, deal ye with him as with yonder man?" and he answered, "Assuredly we do with him even as thou hast seen." When I heard this, my gall bladder was like to burst, for the violence of my dismay and concern for myself. My wit became dazed, I felt as if in a vile dungeon, and hated their society, for I went about in fear lest my wife should die before me and they bury me alive with her. However, after a while I comforted myself, saying, "Haply I shall predecease her, or shall have returned to my own land before she die, for none knoweth which shall go first and which shall go last."

Then I applied myself to diverting my mind from this thought with various occupations, but it was not long before my wife sickened and complained and took to her pillow and fared after a few days to the mercy of Allah. And the King and the rest of the folk came, as was their wont, to condole with me and her family and to console us for her loss, and not less to condole with me for myself. Then the women washed her, and arraying her in her richest raiment and golden ornaments, necklaces, and jewelry, laid her on the bier and bore her to the mountain aforesaid, where they lifted the cover of the pit and cast her in. After which all my intimates and acquaintances and my wife's kith and kin came round me, to farewell me in my lifetime and console me for my own death, whilst I cried out among them, saying: "Almighty Allah never made it lawful to bury the quick with the dead! I am a stranger, not one of your kind, and I cannot abear your custom, and had I known it I never would have wedded among you!" They heard me not and paid no heed to my words, but laying hold of me, bound me by force and let me down into the cavern, with a large gugglet of sweet water and seven cakes of bread, according to their custom. When I came to the bottom, they called out to me to cast myself loose from the cords, but I refused to do so, so they threw them down on me and, closing the mouth of the pit with the stones aforesaid, went their ways.

I looked about me and found myself in a vast cave full of dead bodies that exhaled a fulsome and loathsome smell, and the air was heavy with the groans of the dying. Thereupon I fell to blaming myself for what I had done, saying: "By Allah, I deserve all that hath befallen me and all that shall befall me! What curse was upon me to take a wife in this city? There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! As often as I say I have escaped from one calamity, I fall into a worse. By Allah, this is an abominable death to die! Would Heaven I had died a decent death and been washed and shrouded like a man and a Moslem. Would I had been drowned at sea, or perished in the mountains! It were better than to die this miserable death!" And on such wise I kept blaming

my own folly and greed of gain in that black hole, knowing not night from day, and I ceased not to ban the Foul Fiend and to bless the Almighty Friend. Then I threw myself down on the bones of the dead and lay there, imploring Allah's help, and in the violence of my despair invoking death, which came not to me, till the fire of hunger burned my stomach and thirst set my throat aflame, when I sat up and feeling for the bread, ate a morsel and upon it swallowed a mouthful of water.

After this, the worst night I ever knew, I arose, and exploring the, cavern, found that it extended a long way with hollows in its sides, and its floor was strewn with dead bodies and rotten bones that had lain there from olden time. So I made myself a place in a cavity of the cavern, afar from the corpses lately thrown down, and there slept. I abode thus a long while, till my provision was like to give out, and yet I ate not save once every day or second day, nor did I drink more than an occasional draught, for fear my victual should fail me before my death. And I said to myself: "Eat little and drink little. Belike the Lord shall vouchsafe deliverance to thee!" One day as I sat thus, pondering my case and bethinking me how I should do when my bread and water should be exhausted, behold, the stone that covered the opening was suddenly rolled away and the light streamed down upon me. Quoth I: "I wonder what is the matter. Haply they have brought another corpse." Then I espied folk standing about the mouth of the pit, who presently let down a dead man and a live woman, weeping and bemoaning herself, and with her an ampler supply of bread and water than usual. I saw her and she was a beautiful woman, but she saw me not. And they closed up the opening and went away. Then I took the leg bone of a dead man and, going up to the woman, smote her on the crown of the head, and she cried one cry and fell down in a swoon. I smote her a second and a third time, till she was dead, when I laid hands on her bread and water and found on her great plenty of ornaments and rich apparel, necklaces, jewels and gold trinkets, for it was their custom to bury women in all their finery. I carried the vivres to my sleeping place in the cavern side and ate and drank of them sparingly, no more than sufficed to keep the life in me, lest the provaunt come speedily to an end and I perish of hunger and thirst.

Yet did I never wholly lose hope in Almighty Allah. I abode thus a great while, killing all the live folk they let down into the cavern and taking their provisions of meat and drink, till one day, as I slept, I was awakened by something scratching and burrowing among the bodies in a corner of the cave and said, "What can this be?" fearing wolves or hyenas. So I sprang up, and seizing the leg bone aforesaid, made for the noise. As soon as the thing was ware of me, it fled from me into the inward of the cavern, and lo! it was a wild beast. However, I followed it to the further end, till I saw afar off a point of light not bigger than a star, now appearing and then disappearing. So I made for it, and as I drew near, it grew larger and brighter, till I was certified that it was a crevice in the rock, leading to the open country, and I said to myself: "There must be some reason for this opening. Either it is the mouth of a second pit such as that by which they let me down, or else it is a natural fissure in the stonery." So I bethought me awhile, and nearing the light, found that it came from a breach in the back side of the mountain, which the wild beasts had enlarged by burrowing, that they might enter and devour the dead and freely go to and from. When I saw this, my spirits revived and hope came back to me and I made sure of life, after having died a death. So I went on, as in a dream, and making shift to scramble through the breach, found myself on the slope of a high mountain overlooking the salt sea and cutting off all access thereto from the island, so that none could come at that part of the beach from the city. I praised my Lord and thanked Him, rejoicing greatly and heartening myself with the prospect of deliverance.

Then I returned through the crack to the cavern and brought out all the food and water I had

saved up, and donned some of the dead folk's clothes over my own. After which I gathered together all the collars and necklaces of pearls and jewels and trinkets of gold and silver set with precious stones and other ornaments and valuables I could find upon the corpses, and making them into bundles with the graveclothes and raiment of the dead, carried them out to the back of the mountain facing the seashore, where I established myself, purposing to wait there till it should please Almighty Allah to send me relief by means of some passing ship. I visited the cavern daily, and as often as I found folk buried alive there, I killed them all indifferently, men and women, and took their victual and valuables and transported them to my seat on the seashore.

Thus I abode a long while till one day I caught sight of a ship passing in the midst of the clashing sea swollen with dashing billows. So I took a piece of a white shroud I had with me, and tying it to a staff, ran along the seashore making signals therewith and calling to the people in the ship, till they espied me, and hearing my shouts, sent a boat to fetch me off. When it drew near, the crew called out to me, saying, "Who art thou, and how camest thou to be on this mountain, whereon never saw we any in our born days?" I answered: "I am a gentleman and a merchant who hath been wrecked and saved myself on one of the planks of the ship, with some of my goods. And by the blessing of the Almighty and the decrees of Destiny and my own strength and skill, after much toil and moil I have landed with my gear in this place, where I awaited some passing ship to take me off." So they took me in their boat, together with the bundles I had made of the jewels and valuables from the cavern, tied up in clothes and shrouds, and rowed back with me to the ship, where the captain said to me: "How camest thou, O man, to yonder place on yonder mountain behind which lieth a great city? All my life I have sailed these seas and passed to and fro hard by these heights, yet never saw I here any living thing save wild beasts and birds." I repeated to him the story I had told the sailors, but acquainted him with nothing of that which had befallen me in the city and the cavern, lest there should be any of the islandry in the ship.

Then I took out some of the best pearls I had with me and offered them to the captain, saying: "O my lord, thou hast been the means of saving me off this mountain. I have no ready money, but take this from me in requital of thy kindness and good offices.-But he refused to accept it of me, saying: "When we find a shipwrecked man on the seashore or on an island, we take him up and give him meat and drink, and if he be naked we clothe him, nor take we aught from him- nay, when we reach a port of safety, we set him ashore with a present of our own money and entreat him kindly and charitably, for the love of Allah the Most High." So I prayed that his life be long in the land and rejoiced in my escape, trusting to be delivered from my stress and to forget my past mishaps, for every time I remembered being let down into the cave with my dead wife I shuddered in horror.

Then we pursued our voyage and sailed from island to island and sea to sea till we arrived at the Island of the Bell which containeth a city two days' journey in extent, whence after a six days' ran we reached the Island Kala, hard by the land of Hind. This place is governed by a potent and puissant King, and it produceth excellent camphor and an abundance of the Indian rattan. Here also is a lead mine. At last by the decree of Allah we arrived in safety at Bassorah town, where I tarried a few days, then went on to Baghdad city, and finding my quarter, entered my house with lively pleasure. There I forgathered with my family and friends, who rejoiced in my happy return and give me joy of my safety. I laid up in my storehouses all the goods I had brought with me, and gave alms and largess to fakirs and beggars and clothed the widow and the orphan. Then I gave myself up to pleasure and enjoyment, returning to my old merry mode of life.

Such, then, be the most marvelous adventures of my fourth voyage, but tomorrow, if you will kindly come to me, I will tell you that which befell me in my fifth voyage, which was yet rarer and more marvelous than those which forewent it. And thou, O my brother Sindbad the Landsman, shalt sup with me as thou art wont. (Saith he who telleth the tale): When Sindbad the Seaman had made an end of his story, he called for supper, so they spread the table and the guests ate the evening meal, after which he gave the porter a hundred dinars as usual, and he and the rest of the company went their ways, glad at heart and marveling at the tales they had heard, for that each story was more extraordinary than that which forewent it. The porter Sindbad passed the night in his own house, in all joy and cheer and wonderment, and as soon as morning came with its sheen and shone, he prayed the dawn prayer and repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, who welcomed him and bade him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when they ate and drank and made merry and the talk went round amongst them. Presently, their host began the narrative of The Fifth Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman.

The Fifth Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman

KNOW, O my brothers, that when I had been awhile on shore after my fourth voyage, and when, in my comfort and pleasures and merrymakings and in my rejoicing over my large gains and profits, I had forgotten all I had endured of perils and sufferings, the carnal man was again seized with the longing to travel and to see foreign countries and islands. Accordingly I bought costly merchandise suited to my purpose and, making it up into bales, repaired to Bassorah, where I walked about the river quay till I found a fine tall ship, newly builded, with gear unused and fitted ready for sea. She pleased me, so I bought her and, embarking my goods in her, hired a master and crew, over whom I set certain of my slaves and servants as inspectors. A number of merchants also brought their outfits and paid me freight and passage money. Then, after reciting the fatihah, we set sail over Allah's pool in all joy and cheer, promising ourselves a prosperous voyage and much profit.

We sailed from city to city and from island to island and from sea to sea viewing the cities and countries by which we passed, and selling and buying in not a few, till one day we came to a great uninhabited island, deserted and desolate, whereon was a white dome of biggest bulk half buried in the sands. The merchants landed to examine this dome, leaving me in the ship, and when they drew near, behold, it was a huge roc's egg. They fell abating it with stones, knowing not what it was, and presently broke it open, whereupon much water ran out of it and the young roc appeared within. So they pulled it forth of the shell and cut its throat and took of it great store of meat. Now I was in the ship and knew not what they did, but presently one of the passengers came up to me and said, "O my lord, come and look at the egg that we thought to be a dome." So I looked, and seeing the merchants beating it with stones, called out to them: "Stop, stop! Do not meddle with that egg, or the bird roc will come out and break our ship and destroy us." But they paid no heed to me and gave not over smiting upon the egg, when behold, the day grew dark and dun and the sun was hidden from us, as if some great cloud had passed over the firmament. So we raised our eyes and saw that what we took for a cloud was the roc poised between us and the sun, and it was his wings that darkened the day. When he came and saw his egg broken, he cried a loud cry, whereupon his mate came flying up and they both began circling about the ship, crying out at us with voices louder than thunder. I called to the rais and crew, "Put out to sea and seek safety in flight, before we be all destroyed!" So the

merchants came on board and we cast off and made haste from the island to gain the open sea.

When the rocs saw this, they flew off, and we crowded all sail on the ship, thinking to get out of their country, but presently the two reappeared and flew after us and stood over us, each carrying in its claws a huge boulder which it had brought from the mountains. As soon as the he-roc came up with us, he let fall upon us the rock he held in his pounces, but the master put about ship, so that the rock missed her by some small matter and plunged into the waves with such violence that the ship pitched high and then sank into the trough of the sea, and the bottom the ocean appeared to us. Then the she-roc let fall her rock, which was bigger than that of her mate, and as Destiny had decreed, it fell on the poop of the ship and crushed it, the rudder flying into twenty pieces. Whereupon the vessel foundered and all and everything on board were cast into the main. As for me, I struggled for sweet life till Almighty Allah threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, to which I clung and bestriding it, fell a-paddling with my feet.

Now the ship had gone down hard by an island in the midst of the main, and the winds and waves bore me on till, by permission of the Most High, they cast me up on the shore of the island, at the last gasp for toil and distress and half-dead with hunger and thirst. So I landed more like a corpse than a live man, and throwing myself down on the beach, lay there awhile till I began to revive and recover spirits, when I walked about the island, and found it as it were one of the garths and gardens of Paradise. Its trees, in abundance dight, bore ripe-yellow fruit for freight, its streams ran clear and bright, its flowers were fair to scent and to sight, and its birds warbled with delight the praises of Him to whom belong Permanence and All-might. So I ate my fill of the fruits and slaked my thirst with the water of the streams till I could no more, and I returned thanks to the Most High and glorified Him, after which I sat till nightfall hearing no voice and seeing none inhabitant. Then I lay down, well-nigh dead for travail and trouble and terror, and slept without surcease till morning, when I arose and walked about under the trees till I came to the channel of a draw well fed by a spring of running water, by which well sat an old man of venerable aspect, girt about with a waistcloth made of the fiber of palm fronds. Quoth I to myself. "Haply this Sheikh is of those who were wrecked in the ship and hath made his way to this island."

So I drew near to him and saluted him, and he returned my salaam by signs, but spoke not, and I said to him, "O nuncle mine, what causeth thee to sit here?" He shook his head and moaned and signed to me with his hand as who should say, "Take me on thy shoulders and carry me to the other side of the well channel." And quoth I in my mind: "I will deal kindly with him and do what he desireth. It may be I shall win me a reward in Heaven, for he may be a paralytic." So I took him on my back, and carrying him to the place whereat he pointed, said to him, "Dismount at thy leisure." But he would not get off my back, and wound his legs about my neck. I looked at them, and seeing that they were like a buffalo's hide for blackness and roughness, was affrighted and would have cast him off, but he clung to me and gripped my neck with his legs till I was well-nigh choked, the world grew black in my sight and I fell senseless to the ground like one dead.

But he still kept his seat and raising his legs, drummed with his heels and beat harder than palm rods my back and shoulders, till he forced me to rise for excess of pain. Then he signed to me with his hand to carry him hither and thither among the trees which bore the best fruits, and if ever I refused to do his bidding or loitered or took my leisure, he beat me with his feet more grievously than if I had been beaten with whips. He ceased not to signal with his hand wherever he was minded to go, so I carried him about the island, like a

captive slave, and he dismounted not night or day. And whenas he wished to sleep, he wound his legs about my neck and leaned back and slept awhile, then arose and beat me, whereupon I sprang up in haste, unable to gainsay him because of the pain he inflicted on me. And indeed I blamed myself and sore repented me of having taken compassion on him, and continued in this condition, suffering fatigue not to be described, till I said to myself: "I wrought him a weal and he requited me with my ill. By Allah, never more will I do any man a service so long as I live!" And again and again I besought the Most High that I might die, for stress of weariness and misery.

And thus I abode a long while till one day I came with him to a place wherein was abundance of gourds, many of them dry. So I took a great dry gourd and cutting open the head, scooped out the inside and cleaned it, after which I gathered grapes from a vine which grew hard by and squeezed them into the gourd till it was full of the juice. Then I stopped up the mouth and set it in the sun, where I left it for some days until it became strong wine, and every day I used to drink of it, to comfort and sustain me under my fatigues with that froward and obstinate fiend. And as often as I drank myself drunk, I forgot my troubles and took new heart. One day he saw me and signed to me with his hand, as who should say, "What is that?" Quoth I, "It is an excellent cordial, which cheereth the heart and reviveth the spirits." Then, being heated with wine, I ran and danced with him among the trees, clapping my hands and singing and making merry, and I staggered under him by design.

When he saw this, he signed to me to give him the gourd that he might drink, and I feared him and gave it him. So he took it, and draining it to the dregs, cast it on the ground, whereupon he grew frolicsome and began to clap hands and jig to and fro on my shoulders, and he made water upon me so copiously that all my dress was drenched. But presently, the fumes of the wine rising to his head, he became helplessly drunk and his side muscles and limbs relaxed and he swayed to and fro on my back. When I saw that he had lost his senses for drunkenness, I put my hand to his legs and, loosing them from my neck, stooped down well-nigh to the ground and threw him at full length. Then I took up a great stone from among the trees and coming up to him, smote him therewith on the head with all my might and crushed in his skull as he lay dead-drunk. Thereupon his flesh and fat and blood being in a pulp, he died and went to his deserts, The Fire, no mercy of Allah be upon him! I then returned, with a heart at ease, to my former station on the seashore, and abode in that island many days, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and keeping a lookout for passing ships, till one day, as I sat on the beach recalling all that had befallen me and saying, "I wonder if Allah will save me alive and restore me to my home and family and friends!" behold, a ship was making for the island through the dashing sea and clashing waves. Presently it cast anchor and the passengers landed, so I made for them, and when they saw me all hastened up to me and gathering round me, questioned me of my case and how I came thither. I told them all that had betided me, whereat they marveled with exceeding marvel and said: "He who rode on thy shoulder is called the Sheikh-al-Bahr or Old Man of the Sea, and none ever felt his legs on neck and came off alive but thou, and those who die under him he eateth. So praised be Allah for thy safety!" Then they set somewhat of food before me, whereof I ate my fill, and gave me somewhat of clothes, wherewith I clad myself anew and covered my nakedness. After which they took me up into the ship and we sailed days and nights till Fate brought us to a place called the City of Apes, builded with lofty houses, all of which gave upon the sea, and it had a single gate studded and strengthened with iron nails.

Now every night as soon as it is dusk the dwellers in this city used to come forth of the

gates and, putting out to sea in boats and ships, pass the night upon the waters in their fear lest the apes should come down on them from the mountains. Hearing this, I was sore troubled, remembering what I had before suffered from the ape kind. Presently I landed to solace myself in the city, but meanwhile the ship set sail without me, and I repented of having gone ashore, and calling to mind my companions and what had befallen me with the apes, first and after, sat down and fell aweeping and lamenting. Presently one of the townsfolk accosted me and said to me, "O my lord, meseemeth thou art a stranger to these parts?" "Yes," answered I, "I am indeed a stranger and a poor one, who came hither in a ship which cast anchor here, and I landed to visit the town. But when I would have gone on board again, I found they had sailed without me." Quoth he, "Come and embark with us, for if thou lie the night in the city, the apes will destroy thee." "Hearkening and obedience," replied I, and rising, straightway embarked with him in one of the boats, whereupon they pushed off from shore, and anchoring a mile or so from the land, there passed the night. At daybreak they rowed back to the city, and landing, went each about his business. Thus they did every night, for if any tarried in the town by night the apes came down on him and slew him. As soon as it was day, the apes left the place and ate of the fruits of the gardens, then went back to the mountains and slept there till nightfall, when they again came down upon the city.

Now this place was in the farthest part of the country of the blacks, and one of the strangest things that befell me during my sojourn in the city was on this wise. One of the company with whom I passed the night in the boat asked me: "O my lord, thou art apparently a stranger in these parts. Hast thou any craft whereat thou canst work?" and I answered: "By Allah, O my brother, I have no trade nor know I any handicraft, for I was a merchant and a man of money and substance and had a ship of my own, laden with great store of goods and merchandise. But it foundered at sea and all were drowned excepting me, who saved myself on a piece of plank which Allah vouchsafed to me of His favor."

Upon this he brought me a cotton bag and giving it to me, said: "Take this bag and fill it with pebbles from the beach and go forth with a company of the townsfolk to whom I will give a charge respecting thee. Do as they do and belike thou shalt gain what may further thy return voyage to thy native land." Then he carried me to the beach, where I filled my bag with pebbles large and small, and presently we saw a company of folk issue from the town, each bearing a bag like mine, filled with pebbles. To these he committed me, commending me to their care, and saying: "This man is a stranger, so take him with you and teach him how to gather, that he may get his daily bread, and you will earn your reward and recompense in Heaven." "On our head and eyes be it!" answered they, and bidding me welcome, fared on with me till we came to a spacious wady, full of lofty trees with trunks so smooth that none might climb them.

Now sleeping under these trees were many apes, which when they saw us rose and fled from us and swarmed up among the branches, whereupon my companions began to pelt them with what they had in their bags, and the apes fell to plucking of the fruit of the trees and casting them at the folk. I looked at the fruits they cast at us and found them to be Indian or coconuts, so I chose out a great tree full of apes, and going up to it, began to pelt them with stones, and they in return pelted me with nuts, which I collected, as did the rest. So that even before I had made an end of my bagful of pebbles, I had gotten great plenty of nuts. And as soon as my companions had in like manner gotten as many nuts as they could carry, we returned to the city, where we arrived at the fag end of day. Then I went in to the kindly man who had brought me in company with the nut-gatherers and gave him all I had gotten, thanking him for his kindness, but he would not accept them, saying, "Sell them and

make profit by the price," and presently he added (giving me the key of a closet in his house): "Store thy nuts in this safe place and go thou forth every morning and gather them as thou hast done today, and choose out the worst for sale and supplying thyself; but lay up the rest here, so haply thou mayst collect enough to serve thee for thy return home." "Allah requite thee!" answered I, and did as he advised me, going out daily with the coconut gatherers, who commended me to one another and showed me the best-stocked trees. Thus did I for some time, till I had laid up great store of excellent nuts, besides a large sum of money, the price of those I had sold. I became thus at my ease and bought all I saw and had a mind to, and passed my time pleasantly, greatly enjoying my stay in the city, till as I stood on the beach one day a great ship steering through the heart of the sea presently cast anchor by the shore and landed a company of merchants, who proceeded to sell and buy and barter their goods for coconuts and other commodities.

Then I went to my friend and told him of the coming of the ship and how I had a mind to return to my own country, and he said, " 'Tis for thee to decide." So I thanked him for his bounties and took leave of him. Then, going to the captain of the ship, I agreed with him for my passage and embarked my coconuts and what else I possessed. We weighed anchor the same day and sailed from island to island and sea to sea, and whenever we stopped, I sold and traded with my coconuts, and the Lord requited me more than I erst had and lost. Amongst other places, we came to an island abounding in cloves and cinnamon and pepper, and the country people told me that by the side of each pepper bunch groweth a great leaf which shadeth it from the sun and casteth the water off it in the wet season; but when the rain ceaseth, the leaf turneth over and droopeth down by the side of the bunch. Here I took in great store of pepper and cloves and cinnamon, in exchange for coconuts, and we passed thence to the Island of Al-Usirat, whence cometh the Comorin aloes wood, and thence to another island, five days' journey in length, where grows the Chinese lign aloes, which is better than the Comorin. But the people of this island are fouler of condition and religion than those of the other, for that they love fornication and wine bibbing, and know not prayer nor call to prayer.

Thence we came to the pearl fisheries, and I gave the divers some of my coconuts and said to them, "Dive for my luck and lot!" They did so and brought up from the deep bright great store of large and priceless pearls, and they said to me, "By Allah, O my master, thy luck is a lucky!" Then we sailed on, with the blessing of Allah (Whose name be exalted!), and ceased not sailing till we arrived safely at Bassorah. There I abode a little and then went on to Baghdad, where I entered my quarter and found my house and forgathered with my family and saluted my friends, who gave me joy of my safe return, and I laid up all my goods and valuables in my storehouses. Then I distributed alms and largess and clothed the widow and the orphan and made presents to my relations and comrades, for the Lord had requited me fourfold that I had lost. After which I returned to my old merry way of life and forgot all I had suffered in the great profit and gain I had made.

Such, then, is the history of my fifth voyage and its wonderments, and now to supper, and tomorrow, come again and I will tell you what befell me in my sixth voyage, for it was still more wonderful than this. (Saith he who telleth the tale): Then he called for food, and the servants spread the table, and when they had eaten the evening meal, he bade give Sindbad the Porter a hundred golden dinars and the landsman returned home and lay him down to sleep, much marveling at all he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was light, he prayed the dawn prayer, and, after blessing Mohammed the Cream of all creatures, betook himself to the house of Sindbad the Seaman and wished him a good day. The merchant bade him sit, and talked with him till the rest of the company arrived. Then the

servants spread the table, and when they had well eaten and drunken and were mirthful and merry, Sindbad the Seaman began in these words the narrative of The Sixth Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman.

The Sixth Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman

KNOW, O my brothers and friends and companions all, that I abode some time, after my return from my fifth voyage, in great solace and satisfaction and mirth and merriment, joyance and enjoyment, and I forgot what I had suffered, seeing the great gain and profit I had made, till one day as I sat making merry and enjoying myself with my friends, there came in to me a company of merchants whose case told tales of travel, and talked with me of voyage and adventure and greatness of pelf and lucre. Hereupon I remembered the days of my return abroad, and my joy at once more seeing my native land and forgathering with my family and friends, and my soul yearned for travel and traffic. So, compelled by Fate and Fortune, I resolved to undertake another voyage, and, buying me fine and costly merchandise meet for foreign trade, made it up into bales, with which I journeyed from Baghdad to Bassorah.

Here I found a great ship ready for sea and full of merchants and notables, who had with them goods of price, so I embarked my bales therein. And we left Bassorah in safety and good spirits under the safeguard of the King, the Preserver, and continued our voyage from place to place and from city to city, buying and selling and profiting and diverting ourselves with the sight of countries where strange folk dwell. And Fortune and the voyage smiled upon us till one day, as we went along, behold, the captain suddenly cried with a great cry and cast his turban on the deck. Then he buffeted his face like a woman and plucked out his beard and fell down in the waist of the ship well-nigh fainting for stress of grief and rage, and crying, "Oh, and alas for the ruin of my house and the orphanship of my poor children!" So all the merchants and sailors came round about him and asked him, "O master, what is the matter?" For the light had become night before, their sight. And he answered, saying: "Know, O folk, that we have wandered from our course and left the sea whose ways we wot, and come into a sea whose ways I know not, and unless Allah vouchsafe us a means of escape, we are all dead men. Wherefore pray ye to the Most High that He deliver us from this strait. Haply amongst you is one righteous whose prayers the Lord will accept." Then he arose and clomb the mast to see an there were any escape from that strait. And he would have loosed the sails, but the wind redoubled upon the ship and whirled her round thrice and drave her backward, whereupon her rudder brake and she fell off toward a high mountain.

With this the captain came down from the mast, saying: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great, nor can man prevent that which is foreordained of Fate! By Allah, we are fallen on a place of sure destruction, and there is no way of escape for us, nor can any of us be saved!" Then we all fill a-weeping over ourselves and bidding one another farewell for that our days were come to an end, and we had lost an hopes of life. Presently the ship struck the mountain and broke up, and all and everything on board of her were plunged into the sea. Some of the merchants were drowned and others made shift to reach the shore and save themselves upon the mountain, I amongst the number. And when we got ashore, we found a great island, or rather peninsula, whose base was strewn with wreckage and crafts and goods and gear cast up by the sea from broken ships whose passengers had been drowned, and the quantity confounded count and calculation. So I climbed the cliffs into the inward of the isle and

walked on inland till I came to a stream of sweet water that welled up at the nearest foot of the mountains and disappeared in the earth under the range of hills on the opposite side. But all the other passengers went over the mountains to the inner tracts, and, dispersing hither and thither, were confounded at what they saw and became like madmen at the sight of the wealth and treasures wherewith the shores were strewn.

As for me, I looked into the bed of the stream aforesaid and saw therein great plenty of rubies, and great royal pearls and all kinds of jewels and precious stones, which were as gravel in the bed of the rivulets that ran through the fields, and the sands sparkled and glittered with gems and precious ores. Moreover, we found in the island abundance of the finest lign aloes, both Chinese and Comorin. And there also is a spring of crude ambergris, which floweth like wax or gum over the stream banks, for the great heat of the sun, and runneth down to the seashore, where the monsters of the deep come up and, swallowing it, return into the sea. But it burneth in their bellies, so they cast it up again and it congealeth on the surface of the water, whereby its color and quantities are changed, and at last the waves cast it ashore, and the travelers and merchants who know it collect it and sell it. But as to the raw ambergris which is not swallowed, it floweth over the channel and congealeth on the banks, and when the sun shineth on it, it melteth and scenteth the whole valley with a musk-like fragrance. Then when the sun ceaseth from it, it congealeth again. But none can get to this place where is the crude ambergris, because of the mountains which enclose the island on all sides and which foot of man cannot ascend.

We continued thus to explore the island, marveling at the wonderful works of Allah and the riches we found there, but sore troubled for our own case, and dismayed at our prospects. Now we had picked up on the beach some small matter of victual from the wreck and husbanded it carefully eating but once every day or two, in our fear lest it should fail us and we die miserably of famine and affright. Moreover, we were weak for colic brought on by seasickness and low diet, and my companions deceased, one after other, till there was but a small company of us left. Each that died we washed and shrouded in some of the clothes and linen cast ashore by the tides, and after a little, the rest of my fellows perished one by one, till I had buried the last of the party and abode alone on the island, with but a little provision left, I who was wont to have so much. And I wept over myself, saying: "Would Heaven I had died before my companions and they had washed me and buried me! It had been better than I should perish and none wash me and shroud me and bury me. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the glorious, the Great!" Now after I had buried the last of my party and abode alone on the island, I arose and dug me a deep grave on the seashore, saying to myself: "Whenas I grow weak and know that death cometh to me, I will cast myself into the grave and die there, so the wind may drift the sand over me and cover me and I be buried therein."

Then I fell to reproaching myself for my little wit in leaving my native land and betaking me again to travel after all I had suffered during my first five voyages, and when I had not made a single one without suffering more horrible perils and more terrible hardships than in its forerunners, and having no hope of escape from my present stress. And I repented me of my folly and bemoaned myself, especially as I had no need of money, seeing that I had enough and could not spend what I had- no, nor a half of it in all my life. However, after a while Allah sent me a thought, and I said to myself: "By God, needs must this stream have an end as well as a beginning, ergo an issue somewhere, and belike its course may lead to some inhabited place. So my best plan is to make me a little boat big enough to sit in, and carry it and, launching it on the river, embark therein and drop down the stream. If I escape, I escape, by God's leave, and if I perish, better die in the river than here." Then, sighing for

myself, I set to work collecting a number of pieces of Chinese and Comorin aloes wood and I bound them together with ropes from the wreckage. Then I chose out from the broken-up ships straight planks of even size and fixed them firmly upon the aloes wood, making me a boat raft a little narrower than the channel of the stream, and I tied it tightly and firmly as though it were nailed. Then I loaded it with the goods, precious ores and jewels, and the union pearls which were like gravel, and the best of the ambergris crude and pure, together with what I had collected on the island and what was left me of victual and wild herbs. Lastly I lashed a piece of wood on either side, to serve me as oars, and launched it, and embarking, did according to the saying of the poet:

Fly, fly with life whenas evils threat,
Leave the house to tell of its builder's fate!
Land after land shalt thou seek and find,
But no other life on thy wish shall wait.
Fret not thy soul in thy thoughts o' night,
All woes shall end or sooner or late.
Whoso is born in one land to die,
There and only there shall gang his pit.
Nor trust great things to another wight,
Soul hath only soul for confederate.

My boat raft drifted with the stream, I pondering the issue of my affair, and the drifting ceased not till I came to the place where it disappeared beneath the mountain. I rowed my conveyance into the place, which was intensely dark, and the current carried the raft with it down the underground channel. The thin stream bore me on through a narrow tunnel where the raft touched either side and my head rubbed against the roof, return therefrom being impossible. Then I blamed myself for having thus risked my life, and said, "If this passage grow any straiter, the raft will hardly pass, and I cannot turn back, so I shall inevitably perish miserably in this place." And I threw myself down upon my face on the raft, by reason of the narrowness of the channel, whilst the stream ceased not to carry me along, knowing not night from day for the excess of the gloom which encompassed me about and my terror and concern for myself lest I should perish. And in such condition my course continued down the channel, which now grew wider and then straiter. Sore a-weary by reason of the darkness which could be felt, I feel asleep as I lay prone on the craft, and I slept knowing not an the time were long or short.

When I awoke at last, I found myself in the light of Heaven and opening my eyes, I saw myself in a broad of the stream and the raft moored to an island in the midst of a number of Indians and Abyssinians. As soon as these blackamoors saw that I was awake, they came up to me and bespoke me in their speech. But I understood not what they said and thought that this was a dream and a vision which had betided me for stress of concern and chagrin. But I was delighted at my escape from the river. When they saw I understood them not and made them no answer, one of them came forward and said to me in Arabic: "Peace be with thee, O my brother! Who art thou, and whence farest thou hither? How camest thou into this river, and what manner of land lies behind yonder mountains, for never knew we anyone make his way thence to us?" Quoth I: "And upon thee be peace and the ruth of Allah and His blessing! Who are ye, and what country is this?" "O my brother," answered he, "we are husbandmen and tillers of the soil, who came out to water our fields and plantations, and finding thee asleep on this raft, laid hold of it and made it fast by us, against thou shouldst awake at thy leisure. So tell us how thou camest hither." I answered,

"For Allah's sake, O my lord, ere I speak give me somewhat to eat, for I am starving, and after ask me what thou wilt."

So he hastened to fetch me food and I ate my fill, till I was refreshed and my fear was calmed by a good bellyful and my life returned to me. Then I rendered thanks to the Most High for mercies great and small, glad to be out of the river and rejoicing to be amongst them, and I told them all my adventures from first to last, especially my troubles in the narrow channel. They consulted among themselves and said to one another, "There is no help for it but we carry him with us and present him to our King, that he may acquaint him with his adventures." So they took me, together with raft boat and its lading of moneys and merchandise, jewels, minerals, and golden gear, and brought me to their King, who was King of Sarandib, telling him what had happened. Whereupon he saluted me and bade me welcome. Then he questioned me of my condition and adventures through the man who had spoken Arabic, and I repeated to him my story from beginning to end, whereat he marveled exceedingly and gave me joy of my deliverance. After which I arose and fetched from the raft great store of precious ores and jewels and ambergris and lip aloes and presented them to the King, who accepted them and entreated me with the utmost honor, appointing me a lodging in his own palace. So I consorted with the chief of the islanders, and they paid me the utmost respect. And I quitted not the royal palace.

Now the Island Sarandib lieth under the equinoctial line, its night and day both numbering twelve hours. It measureth eighty leagues long by a breadth of thirty and its width is bounded by a lofty mountain and a deep valley. The mountain is conspicuous from a distance of three days, and it containeth many kinds of, rubies and other minerals, and spice trees of all sorts. The surface is covered with emery, wherewith gems are cut and fashioned; diamonds are in its rivers and pearls are in its valleys. I ascended that mountain and solaced myself with a view of its marvels, which are indescribable, and afterward I returned to the King. Thereupon all the travelers and merchants who came to the place questioned me of the affairs of my native land and of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his rule, and I told them of him and of that wherefor he was renowned, and they praised him because of this, whilst I in turn questioned them of the manners and customs of their own countries and got the knowledge I desired.

One day the King himself asked me of the fashions and form of government of my country, and I acquainted him with the circumstance of the Caliph's sway in the city of Baghdad and the justice of his rule. The King marveled at my account of his appointments and said: "By Allah, the Caliph's ordinances are indeed wise and his fashions of praiseworthy guise, and thou hast made me love him by what thou tellest me. Wherefore I have a mind to make him a present and send it by thee." Quoth I: "Hearkening and obedience, O my lord. I will bear thy gift to him and inform him that thou art his sincere lover and true friend." Then I abode with the King in great honor and regard and consideration for a long while till one day, as I sat in his palace, I heard news of a company of merchants that were fitting out ship for Bassorah, and said to myself, "I cannot do better than voyage with these men." So I rose without stay or delay and kissed the King's hand and acquainted him with my longing to set out with the merchants, for that I pined after my people and mine own land. Quoth he, "Thou art thine own master, yet if it be thy will to abide with us, on our head and eyes be it, for thou gladdenest us with thy company." "By Allah, O my lord," answered I, "thou hast indeed overwhelmed me with thy favors and well-doings, but I weary for a sight of my friends and family and native country."

When he heard this, he summoned the merchants in question and commended me to their

care, paying my freight and passage money. Then he bestowed on me great riches from his treasuries and charged me with a magnificent present for the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Moreover, he gave me a sealed letter, saying, "Carry this with thine own hand to the Commander of the Faithful, and give him many salutations from us!" "Hearing and obedience," I replied. The missive was written on the skin of the khawi (which is finer than lamb parchment and of yellow color), with ink of ultramarine, and the contents were as follows: "Peace be with thee from the King of Al-Hind, before whom are a thousand elephants and upon whose palace crenelles are a thousand jewels. But after (laud to the Lord and praises to His Prophet!) we send thee a trifling gift, which be thou pleased to accept. Thou art to us a brother and a sincere friend, and great is the love we bear for thee in heart. Favor us therefore with a reply. The gift besitteth not thy dignity, but we beg of thee, O our brother, graciously to accept it, and peace be with thee." And the present was a cup of ruby a span high, the inside of which was adorned with precious pearls; and a bed covered with the skin of the serpent which swalloweth the elephant, which skin hath spots each like a dinar and whoso sitteth upon it never sickeneth; and a hundred thousand miskals of Indian lign aloes and a slave girl like a shining moon.

Then I took leave of him and of all my intimates and acquaintances in the island, and embarked with the merchants aforesaid. We sailed with a fair wind, committing ourselves to the care of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!), and by His permission arrived at Bassorah, where I passed a few days and nights equipping myself and packing up my bales. Then I went on to Baghdad city, the House of Peace, where I sought an audience of the Caliph and laid the King's presents before him. He asked me whence they came, and I said to him, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I know not the name of the city nor the way thither!" He then asked me, "O Sindbad, is this true which the King writeth?" and I answered, after kissing the ground: "O my lord, I saw in his kingdom much more than he hath written in his letter. For state processions a throne is set for him upon a huge elephant eleven cubits high, and upon this he sitteth having his great lords and officers and guests standing in two ranks, on his right hand and on his left. At his head is a man hending in hand a golden javelin and behind him another with a great mace of gold whose head is an emerald a span long and as thick as a man's thumb. And when he mounteth horse there mount with him a thousand horsemen clad in gold brocade and silk, and as the King proceedeth a man precedeth him, crying, 'This is the King of great dignity, of high authority!' And he continueth to repeat his praises in words I remember not, saying at the end of his panegyric, 'This is the King owning the crown whose like nor Solomon nor the Mihraj ever possessed.' Then he is silent and one behind him proclaimeth, saying, 'He will die! Again I say he will die!' and the other addeth, 'Extolled be the perfection of the Living who dieth not!' Moreover, by reason of his justice and ordinance and intelligence, there is no kazi in his city, and all his lieges distinguish between truth and falsehood." Quoth the Caliph: "How great is this King! His letter hath shown me this, and as for the mightiness of his dominion thou hast told us what thou hast eyewitnessed. By Allah, he hath been endowed with wisdom, as with wide rule."

Then I related to the Commander of the Faithful all that had befallen me in my last voyage, at which he wondered exceedingly and bade his historians record my story and store it up in his treasuries, for the edification of all who might see it. Then he conferred on me exceeding great favors, and I repaired to my quarter and entered my home, where I warehoused all my goods and possessions. Presently my friends came to me and I distributed presents among my family and gave alms and largess, after which I yielded myself to joyance and enjoyment, mirth and merrymaking, and forgot all that I had suffered.

Such, then, O my brothers, is the history of what befell me in my sixth voyage, and tomorrow, Inshallah! I will tell you the story of my seventh and last voyage, which is still more wondrous and marvelous than that of the first six. (Saith he who telleth the tale): Then be bade lay the table, and the company supped with him, after which he gave the porter a hundred dinars, as of wont, and they all went their ways, marveling beyond measure at that which they had heard. Sindbad the Landsman went home and slept as of wont. Next day he rose and prayed the dawn prayer and repaired to his namesake's house, where, after the company was all assembled, the host began to relate The Seventh Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman.

The Seventh Voyage Of Sindbad The Seaman

KNOW, O company, that after my return from my sixth voyage, which brought me abundant profit, I resumed my former life in all possible joyance and enjoyment and mirth and making merry day and night. And I tarried sometime in this solace and satisfaction, till my soul began once more to long to sail the seas and see foreign countries and company with merchants and hear new things. So, having made up my mind, I packed up in bales a quantity of precious stuffs suited for sea trade and repaired with them from Baghdad city to Bassorah town, where I found a ship ready for sea, and in her a company of considerable merchants. I shipped with them and, becoming friends, we set forth on our venture in health and safety, and sailed with a wind till we came to a city called Madinat-al-Sin.

But after we had left it, as we fared on in all cheer and confidence, devising of traffic and travel, behold, there sprang up a violent head wind and a tempest of rain fell on us and drenched us and our goods. So we covered the bales with our cloaks and garments and drugget and canvas, lest they be spoiled by the rain, and betook ourselves to prayer and supplication to Almighty Allah, and humbled ourselves before Him for deliverance from the peril that was upon us. But the captain arose and, tightening his girdle, tucked up his skirts, and after taking refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned, clomb to the masthead, whence he looked out right and left, and gazing at the passengers and crew, fell to buffeting his face and plucking out his beard. So we cried to him, "O Rais, what is the matter?" and he replied, saying: "Seek ye deliverance of the Most High from the strait into which we have fallen, and bemoan yourselves and take leave of one another. For know that the wind hath gotten the mastery of us, and hath driven us into the uttermost of the seas world." Then he came down from the masthead and opening his sea chest, pulled but a bag of blue cotton, from which he took a powder like ashes. This he set in a saucer wetted with a little water, and after waiting a short time, smelt and tasted it. And then he took out of the chest a booklet, wherein he read awhile, and said, weeping:

"Know, O ye passengers, that in this book is a marvelous matter, denoting that whoso cometh hither shall surely die, without hope of escape. For that this ocean is called the Sea of the Clime of the King, wherein is the sepulcher of our lord Solomon, son of David (on both be peace!), and therein are serpents of vast bulk and fearsome aspect. And what ship soever cometh to these climes, there riseth to her a great fish out of the sea and swalloweth her up with all and everything on board her." Hearing these words from the captain, great was our wonder, but hardly had he made an end of speaking when the ship was lifted out of the water and let fall again, and we applied to praying the death prayer and committing our souls to Allah.

Presently we heard a terrible great cry like the loud-pealing thunder whereat we were terror-

struck and became as dead men, giving ourselves up for lost. Then, behold, there came up to us a huge fish, as big as a tall mountain, at whose sight we became wild for affright and, weeping sore, made ready for death, marveling at its vast size and gruesome semblance. When lo! a second fish made its appearance, than which we had seen naught more monstrous. So we bemoaned ourselves of our lives and farewelled one another. But suddenly up came a third fish bigger than the two first, whereupon we lost the power of thought and reason and were stupefied for the excess of our fear and horror. Then the three fish began circling round about the ship and the third and biggest opened his mouth to swallow it, and we looked into its mouth and, behold, it was wider than the gate of a city and its throat was like a long valley. So we besought the Almighty and called for succor upon His Apostle (on whom be blessing and peace!), when suddenly a violent squall of wind arose and smote the ship, which rose out of the water and settled upon a great reef, the haunt of sea monsters, where it broke up and fell asunder into planks, and all and everything on board were plunged into the sea.

As for me, I tore off all my clothes but my gown, and swam a little way, till I happened upon one of the ship's planks, whereto I clung and bestrode it like a horse, whilst the winds and the waters sported with me and the waves carried me up and cast me down. And I was in most piteous plight for fear and distress and hunger and thirst. Then I reproached myself for what I had done and my soul was weary after a life of ease and comfort, and I said to myself: "O Sindbad, O Seaman, thou repentest not and yet thou art ever suffering hardships and travails, yet wilt thou not renounce sea travel, or an thou say, 'I renounce,' thou liest in thy renouncement. Endure then with patience that which thou sufferest, for verily thou deservest all that betideth thee!" And I ceased not to humble myself before Almighty Allah and weep and bewail myself, recalling my former estate of solace and satisfaction and mirth and merriment and joyance. And thus I abode two days, at the end of which time I came to a great island abounding in trees and streams. There I landed and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters, till I was refreshed and my life returned to me and my strength and spirits were restored and I recited:

"Oft when thy case shows knotty and tangled skein,
Fate downs from Heaven and straightens every ply.
In patience keep thy soul till clear thy lot,
For He who ties the knot can eke untie."

Then I walked about till I found on the further side a great river of sweet water, running with a strong current, whereupon I called to mind the boat raft I had made aforetime and said to myself: "Needs must I make another. Haply I may free me from this strait. If I escape, I have my desire and I vow to Allah Almighty to foreswear travel. And if I perish, I shall be at peace and shall rest from toil and moil." So I rose up and gathered together great store of pieces of wood from the trees (which were all of the finest sandalwood, whose like is not albe' I knew it not), and made shift to twist creepers and tree twigs into a kind of rope, with which I bound the billets together and so contrived a raft. Then saying, "An I be saved, 'tis of God's grace," I embarked thereon and committed myself to the current, and it bore me on for the first day and the second and the third after leaving the island whilst I lay in the raft, eating not and drinking, when I was athirst, of the water of the river, till I was weak and giddy as a chicken for stress of fatigue and famine and fear.

At the end of this time I came to a high mountain, whereunder ran the river, which when I saw, I feared for my life by reason of the straitness I had suffered in my former journey, and I would fain have stayed the raft and landed on the mountainside. But the current

overpowered me and drew it into the subterranean passage like an archway, whereupon I gave myself up for lost and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" However, after a little the raft glided into open air and I saw before me a wide valley, whereinto the river fell with a noise like the rolling of thunder and a swiftness as the rushing of the wind. I held onto the raft, for fear of falling off it, whilst the waves tossed me right and left, and the craft continued to descend with the current, nor could I avail to stop it nor turn it shoreward till it stopped me at a great and goodly city, grandly edified and containing much people. And when the townsfolk saw me on the raft, dropping down with the current, they threw me out ropes, which I had not strength enough to hold. Then they tossed a net over the craft and drew it ashore with me, whereupon I fell to the ground amidst them, as I were a dead man, for stress of fear and hunger and lack of sleep.

After a while, there came up to me out of the crowd an old man of reverend aspect, well stricken in years, who welcomed me and threw over me abundance of handsome clothes, wherewith I covered my nakedness. Then he carried me to the hammam bath and brought me cordial sherbets and delicious perfumes. Moreover, when I came out, he bore me to his house, where his people made much of me and, seating me in a pleasant place, set rich food before me, whereof I ate my fill and returned thanks to God the Most High for my deliverance. Thereupon his pages fetched me hot water, and I washed my hands, and his handmaids brought me silken napkins, with which I dried them and wiped my mouth. Also the Sheikh set apart for me an apartment in a part of his house, and charged his pages and slave girls to wait upon me and do my will and supply my wants. They were assiduous in my service, and I abode with him in the guest chamber three days, taking my ease of good eating and good drinking and good scents till life returned to me and my terrors subsided and my heart was calmed and my mind was eased.

On the fourth day the Sheikh, my host, came in to me and said: "Thou cheerest us with thy company, O my son, and praised be Allah for thy safety! Say, wilt thou now come down with me to the beach and the bazaar and sell thy goods and take their price? Belike thou mayest buy thee wherewithal to traffic. I have ordered my servants to remove thy stock in trade from the sea, and they have piled it on the shore." I was silent awhile and said to myself, "What mean these words, and what goods have I?" Then said he: "O my son, be not troubled nor careful, but come with me to the market, and if any offer for thy goods what price contenteth thee, take it. But an thou be not satisfied, I lay em up for thee in my warehouse, against a fitting occasion for sale." So I bethought me of my case and said to myself, "Do his bidding and see what are these goods!" and I said to him: "O my nuncle the Sheikh I hear and obey. I may not gainsay thee in aught, for Allah's blessing is on all thou dost."

Accordingly he guided me to the market street, where I found that he had taken in pieces the raft which carried me and which was of sandalwood, and I heard the broker crying it for sale. Then the merchants came and opened the gate of bidding for the wood and bid against one another till its price reached a thousand dinars, when they left bidding and my host said to me: "Hear, O my son, this is the current price of thy goods in hard times like these. Wilt thou sell them for this, or shall I lay them up for thee in my storehouses till such time as prices rise?" "O my lord," answered I, "the business is in thy hands. Do as thou wilt." Then asked he: "Wilt thou sell the wood to me, O my son, for a hundred gold pieces over and above what the merchants have bidden for it?" and I answered, "Yes, I have sold it to thee for monies received." So he bade his servants transport the wood to his storehouses, and, carrying me back to his house, seated me, and counted out to me the

purchase money. After which he laid it in bags and, setting them in a privy place, locked them up with an iron padlock and gave me its key.

Some days after this the Sheikh said to me, "O my son, I have somewhat to propose to thee, wherein I trust thou wilt do my bidding." Quoth I, "What is it?" Quoth he: "I am a very old man, and have no son, but I have a daughter who is young in years and fair of favor and endowed with abounding wealth and beauty. Now I have a mind to marry her to thee, that thou mayest abide with her in this our country. And I will make, thee master of all I have in hand, for I am an old man and thou shalt stand in my stead." I was silent for shame and made him no answer, whereupon he continued: "Do my desire in this, O my son, for I wish but thy weal. And if thou wilt but as I say, thou shalt have her at once and be as my son, and all that is under my hand or that cometh to me shall be thine. If thou have a mind to traffic and travel to thy native land, none shall hinder thee, and thy property will be at thy sole disposal. So do as thou wilt." "By Allah, O my uncle," replied I, "thou art become to me even as my father, and I am a stranger and have undergone many hardships, while for stress of that which I have suffered naught of judgment or knowledge is left to me. It is for thee, therefore, to decide what I shall do."

Hereupon he sent his servants for the kazi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter, making for us a noble marriage feast and high festival. When I went in to her, I found her perfect in beauty and loveliness and symmetry and grace, clad in rich raiment and covered with a profusion of ornaments and necklaces and other trinkets of gold and silver and precious stones, worth a mint of money, a price none could pay. She pleased me, and we loved each other, and I abode with her in all solace and delight of life till her father was taken to the mercy of Allah Almighty. So we shrouded him and buried him, and I laid hands on the whole of his property and all his servants and slaves became mine. Moreover, the merchants installed me in his office, for he was their sheikh and their chief, and none of them purchased aught but with his knowledge and by his leave. And now his rank passed on to me.

When I became acquainted with the townsfolk, I found that at the beginning of each month they were transformed, in that their faces changed and they became like unto birds and they put forth wings wherewith they flew unto the upper regions of the firmament; and none remained in the city save the women and children. And I said in my mind, "When the first of the month cometh, I will ask one of them to carry me with them, whither they go." So when the time came and their complexion changed and their forms altered, I went in to one of the townsfolk and said to him: "Allah upon thee! Carry me with thee, that I might divert myself with the rest and return with you." "This may not be," answered he. But I ceased not to solicit him, and I importuned him till he consented. Then I went out in his company, without telling any of my family or servants or friends, and he took me on his back and flew up with me so high in air that I heard the angels glorifying God in the heavenly dome, whereat I wondered and exclaimed: "Praised be Allah! Extolled be the perfection of Allah!"

Hardly had I made an end of pronouncing the tasbih- praised be Allah!- when there came out a fire from Heaven and all but consumed the company. Whereupon they fled from it and descended with curses upon me and, casting me down on a high mountain, went away exceeding wroth with me, and left me there alone. As I found myself in this plight, I repented of what I had done and reproached myself for having undertaken that for which I was unable, saying: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! No sooner am I delivered from one affliction than I fall into a worse." And I continued in this case, knowing not whither I should go, when lo! there came up two young

men, as they were moons, each using as a staff a rod of red gold. So I approached them and saluted them; and when they returned my salaam, I said to them: Allah upon you twain. Who are ye, and what are ye?" Quoth they, "We are of the servants of the Most High Allah, abiding in this mountain," and giving me a rod of red gold they had with them, went their ways and left me.

I walked on along the mountain ridge, staying my steps with the staff and pondering the case of the two youths, when behold, a serpent came forth from under the mountain, with a man in her jaws whom she had swallowed even to below his navel, and he was crying out and saying, "Whoso delivereth me, Allah will deliver him from all adversity!" So I went up to the the serpent and smote her on the head with the golden staff, whereupon she cast the man forth of her mouth. Then I smote her a second time, and she turned and fled, whereupon he came up to me and said, "Since my deliverance from yonder serpent hath been at thy hands I will never leave thee, and thou shalt be my comrade on this mountain." "And welcome," answered I. So we fared on along the mountain till we fell in with a company of folk, and I looked and saw amongst them the very man who had carried me and cast me down there. I went up to him and spake him fair, excusing to him and saying, "O my comrade, it is not thus that friend should deal with friend." Quoth he, "It was thou who well-nigh destroyed us by thy tasbih and thy glorifying God on my back." Quoth I, "Pardon me, for I had no knowledge of this matter, but if thou wilt take me with thee, I swear not to say a word."

So he relented and consented to carry me with him, but he made an express condition that so long as I abode on his back, I should abstain from pronouncing the tasbih or otherwise glorifying God. Then I gave the wand of gold to him whom I had delivered from the serpent and bade him farewell, and my friend took me on his back and flew with me as before, till he brought me to the city and set me down in my own house. My wife came to meet me and, saluting me, gave me joy of my safety and then said: "Beware of going forth hereafter with yonder folk, neither consort with them, for they are brethren of the devils, and know not how to mention the name of Allah Almighty, neither worship they Him." "And how did thy father with them?" asked I, and she answered: "My father was not of them, neither did he as they. And as now he is dead, methinks thou hadst better sell all we have and with the price buy merchandise and journey to thine own country and people, and I with thee; for I care not to tarry in this city, my father and my mother being dead." So I sold all the Sheikh's property piecemeal, and looked for one who should be journeying thence to Bassorah that I might join myself to him.

And while thus doing I heard of a company of townsfolk who had a mind to make the voyage but could not find them a ship, so they bought wood and built them a great ship, wherein I took passage with them, and paid them all the hire. Then we embarked, I and my wife, with all our movables, leaving our houses and domains and so forth, and set sail, and ceased not sailing from island to island and from sea to sea, with a fair wind and a favoring, till we arrived at Bassorah safe and sound. I made no stay there, but freighted another vessel and, transferring my goods to her, set out forthright for Baghdad city, where I arrived in safety, and entering my quarter and repairing to my house, forgathered with my family and friends and familiars and laid up my goods in my warehouses.

When my people, who, reckoning the period of my absence on this my seventh voyage, had found it to be seven and twenty years and had given up all hope of me, heard of my return, they came to welcome me and to give me joy of my safety. And I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they marveled with exceeding marvel. Then I foreswore

travel and vowed to Allah the Most High I would venture no more by land or sea, for that this seventh and last voyage had surfeited me of travel and adventure, and I thanked the Lord (be He praised and glorified!), and blessed Him for having restored me to my kith and kin and country and home. "Consider, therefore, O Sindbad, O Landsman," continued Sindbad the Seaman, "what sufferings I have undergone and what perils and hardships I have endured before coming to my present state." "Allah upon thee, O my Lord!" answered Sindbad the, Landsman. "Pardon me the wrong I did thee." And they ceased not from friendship and fellowship, abiding in all cheer and pleasures and solace of life till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of Societies, and the Shatterer of palaces and the Caterer for Cemeteries; to wit, the Cup of Death, and glory be to the Living One who dieth not! And there is a tale touching The Lady And Her Five Suitors.

The Lady And Her Five Suitors

A WOMAN of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveler. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, for pure ennui, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, and they loved each other with exceeding love. One day the youth quarreled with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the Chief of Police, and he cast into prison. When the news came to the merchant's wife his mistress, she well-nigh lost her wits. Then she arose and donning her richest clothes, repaired to the house of the Chief of Police. She saluted him and presented a written petition to this purport: "He thou hast clapped in jail is my brother Such-and-such, who fell out with Such-a-one, and those who testified against him bore false witness. He hath been wrongfully imprisoned, and I have none other to come in to me nor to provide for my support, therefore I beseech thee of thy grace to release him." When the magistrate had read the paper, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her forthright, so he said to her: "Go into the houses till I bring him before me. Then I will send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," replied she, "I have none to protect me save Almighty Allah! I am a stranger and may not enter any man's abode." Quoth the Wali, "I will not let him go except thou come to my home and I take my will of thee." Rejoined she, "If it must be so, thou must needs come to my lodging and sit and sleep the siesta and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy abode?" asked he, and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for such a time.

Then she went out from him, leaving his heart taken with love of her, and she repaired to the Kazi of the city, to whom she said, "O our lord the Kazi!" He exclaimed, "Yes!" and she continued, "Look into my case, and thy reward be with Allah the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" and quoth she, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but that one, and it is on his account that I come to thee, because the Wali hath imprisoned him for a criminal and men have borne false witness against him that he is a wrongdoer, and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the Chief of Police."

When the Kazi looked on her, he fell in love with her forthright and said to her: "Enter the house and rest awhile with my handmaids whilst I send to the Wali to release thy brother. If I knew the money fine which is upon him, I would pay it out of my own purse, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleaseth me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." Quoth he, "An thou wilt not come in, wend thy ways." Then said she, "An thou wilt have it so, O our lord, it will be privier and better in my place than in thine, for here are slave girls and eunuchs and goers-in and comers-out, and indeed I am a woman who wotteth naught of this fashion, but need compelleth." Asked the

Kazi, "And where is thy house?" and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for the same day and time as the Chief of Police.

Then she went out from him to the Wazir, to whom she preferred her petition for the release from prison of her brother, who was absolutely necessary to her. But he also required her of herself, saying, "Suffer me to have my will of thee and I will set thy brother free." Quoth she: "An thou wilt have it so, be it in my house, for there it will be privier both for me and for thee. It is not far distant, and thou knowest that which behooveth us women of cleanliness and adornment." Asked he, "Where is thy house?" "In such a place," answered she, and appointed him for the same time as the two others.

Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" enquired he, and she replied, "'Twas thy Chief of Police." When the King heard her speech, it transpierced his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Kazi and release her brother. Quoth she: "O King, this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or nill, and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune. But if he come to my house, he will do me the more honor by setting step therein, even as saith the poet:

"O my friends, have ye seen or have ye heard
Of his visit whose virtues I hold so high?"

Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she appointed him for the same time as the three others, and told him where her house was.

Then she left him, and betaking herself to man which was a carpenter, said to him: "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments one above other, each with its door for locking up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." Replied he: "My price will be four dinars. But, O noble lady and well-protected, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favors, I will ask nothing of thee. Rejoined she, "An there be no help but that thou have it so, then make thou five compartments with their padlocks." And she appointed him to bring it exactly on the day required. Said he, "It is well. Sit down, O my lady, and I will make it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down by him whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had made an end of it, she chose to see it at once carried home and set up in the sitting chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different color, after which she applied herself to making ready meat and drink, fruits, flowers, and perfumes.

Now when the appointed trysting day came, she donned her costliest dress and adorned herself and scented herself, then spread the sitting room with various kinds of rich carpets, and sat down to await who should come. And behold, the Kazi was the first to appear, devancing rest, and when she saw him, she rose to her feet and kissed the ground before him, then, taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her on the couch and lay with him and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, doff thy clothes and turban and assume this yellow cassock and this headkerchief, whilst I bring thee meat and drink, and after thou shalt win thy will." So saying, she took his clothes and turban and clad him in the cassock and the kerchief. But hardly she done this when lo! there came a knocking at the door. Asked he, "Who is that rapping at the door?" and she answered, "My husband." Quoth the Kazi, "What is to be done, and where shall I go?" Quoth she, "Fear nothing. I will hide thee in this cabinet," and he, "Do as seemeth good to thee."

So she took him by the hand and pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door upon him. Then she went to the house door, where she found the Wali, so she bussed ground before him and taking his hand, brought him into the saloon, where, she made him sit down and said to him: "O my lord, this house is thy house, this place is thy place, and I am thy handmaid. Thou shalt pass all this day with me, wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping gown." So she took away his clothes and made him assume the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her. After which she sat by him on the divan and she sported with him while he toyed with her awhile, till he put out his hand to her. Whereupon she said to him: "O our lord, this day is thy day and none shall share in it with thee. But first, of thy favor and benevolence, write me an order for my brother's release from gaol, that my heart may be at ease." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience. On my head and eyes be it!" and wrote a letter to his treasurer, saying: "As soon as this communication shall reach thee, do thou set Such-a-one, free, without stay or delay, neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began to toy again with him on the divan when, behold, someone knocked at the door. He asked, "Who is that?" and she answered, "My husband." "What shall I do?" said he, and she, "Enter this cabinet, till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment from the bottom and padlocked the door on him, and meanwhile the Kazi heard all they said.

Then she went to the house door and opened it, whereupon lo! the Wazir entered. She bussed the ground before him and received him with all honor and worship, saying: "O my lord, thou exaltest us by thy coming to our house. Allah never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated him on the divan and said to him, "O my lord, doff thy heavy dress and turban and don these lighter vestments." So he put off his clothes and turban and she clad him in a blue cassock and a tall red bonnet, and said to him: "Erst thy garb was that of the wazirate, so leave it to its own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep." Thereupon she began to play with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her, but she put him off, saying, "O my lord, this shall not fail us." As they were talking there came a knocking at the door, and the Wazir asked her, "Who is that?" to which she answered, "My husband." Quoth he, "What is to be done?" Qhoth she, "Enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee, and fear thou nothing."

So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on after which she went out and opened the house door when lo and behold! in came the King. As soon as she saw him she kissed ground before him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the divan at the upper end. Then said she to him, "Verily, O King, thou dost us high honor, and if we brought thee to gift the world and all that therein is, it would not be worth a single one of thy steps usward." And when he had taken his seat upon the divan she said, "Give me leave to speak one word." "Say what thou wilt." answered he, and she said, "O my lord, take thine ease and doff thy dress and turban." Now his clothes were worth a thousand dinars, and when he put them off she clad him in a patched gown, worth at the very most ten dirhams, and fell to talking and jesting with him, all this while the folk in the cabinet hearing everything that passed, but not daring to say a word. Presently the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his design of her, when she said, "This thing shall not fail us, but I had first promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting chamber, and I have that which shall content thee." Now as they were speaking, someone knocked at the door and he asked her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she, and he, "Make him go away of his own goodwill, or I will fare forth to him and send him away perforce." Replied

she, "Nay, O my lord, have patience till I send him away by my skillful contrivance." "And I, how shall I do!" inquired the King. Whereupon she took him by the hand and making him enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him.

Then she went out and opened the house door, when behold, the carpenter entered and saluted her. Quoth she, "What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?" "What aileth it, O my lady?" asked he, and she answered, "The top compartment is too strait." Rejoined he, "Not so," and she, "Go in thyself and see. It is not wide enough for thee." Quoth he, "It is wide enough for four." and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon she locked the door on him. Then she took the letter of the Chief of Police and carried it to the Treasurer, who, having read and understood it, kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all she had done and he said, "And how shall we act now?" She answered, "We will remove hence to another city, for after this work there is no tarrying for us here."

So the twain packed up what goods they had and, loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city. Meanwhile, the five abode each in his compartment of the cabinet without eating or drinking three whole days, during which time they held their water until at last the carpenter could retain his no longer, so he staled on the King's head, and the King urined on the Wazir's head, and the Wazir piddled on the Wali, and the Wali pissed on the head of the Kazi. Whereupon the Judge cried out and said: "What nastiness is this? Doth not what strait we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?" The Chief of Police recognized the Kazi's voice and answered, saying aloud, "Allah increase thy reward, O Kazi!" And when the Kazi heard him he knew him for the Wali. Then the Chief of Police lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" and the Wazir answered, saying, "Allah increase thy reward, O Wali!" whereupon he knew him to be the Minister. Then the Wazir lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" But when the King heard and recognized his Minister's voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair.

Then said the Wazir: "May Allah damn this woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the chief officers of the state, except the King. Quoth the King, "Hold your peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd strumpet." Whereat cried the carpenter: "And I, what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four gold pieces, and when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, diverting the King and doing away his chagrin. Presently the neighbors came up to the house and, seeing it deserted, said one to other: "But yesterday our neighbor, the wife of Such-a-one, was in it, but now no sound is to be heard therein nor is soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the Wali or the King and we be cast into prison and regret not doing this thing before."

So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw a large wooden cabinet and heard men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a Jinni in this cabinet?-and his fellow, "Let us heap fuel about it and burn it with fire." When the Kazi heard this, he bawled out to them, "Do it not!" And they said to one another, "Verily the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Thereupon the Kazi repeated somewhat of the Sublime Koran and said to the neighbors, "Draw near to the cabinet wherein we are." So they drew near, and he said, "I am So-and-so the Kazi, and ye are Such-a-one and Such-a-one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbors, "Who brought you here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end. Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors and let out Kazi, Wazir, Wali, King, and carpenter in their queer disguises; and each, when he saw how the others were

accoutered, fell a-laughing at them. Now she had taken away all their clothes, so every one of them sent to his people for fresh clothes and put them on and went out, covering himself therewith from the sight of the folk. Consider, therefore, what a trick this woman played off upon the folk!

And I have heard tell also a tale of Khalifah The Fisherman Of Baghdad.

Khalifah The Fisherman Of Baghdad

THERE was once in tides of yore and in ages and times long gone before in the city of Baghdad a fisherman, Khalifah hight, a pauper wight, who had never once been married in all his days. It chanced one morning that he took his net and went with it to the river as was his wont, with the view of fishing before the others came. When he reached the bank, he girt himself and tucked up his skirts. Then stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it a first cast and a second, but it brought up naught. He ceased not to throw it till he had made ten casts, and still naught came up therein, wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said: "I crave pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and unto Him I repent. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Whatso He willeth is and whatso He nilleth is not! Upon Allah (to Whom belong Honor and Glory!) dependeth daily bread! When as He giveth to His servant, none denieth him; and when as He denieth a servant, none giveth to him." And of the excess of his distress, he recited these two couplets:

"An Fate afflict thee, with grief manifest,
Prepare thy patience and make broad thy breast;
For of His grace the Lord of all the worlds
Shall send to wait upon unrest sweet Rest."

Then he said in his mind, "I will make this one more cast, trusting in Allah, so haply He may not disappoint my hope." And he rose, and casting into the river the net as far as his arm availed, gathered the cords in his hands and waited a full hour, after which he pulled at it and, finding it heavy, handled it gently and drew it in, little by little, till he got it ashore, when lo and behold! he saw in it a one-eyed, lame-legged ape. Seeing this, quoth Khalifah: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah Verily, we are Allah's and to Him we are returning! What meaneth this heartbreaking, miserable ill luck and hapless fortune? What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the destinies of Almighty Allah!" Then he took the ape and tied him with a cord to a tree which grew on the riverbank, and grasping a whip he had with him, raised his arm in the air, thinking to bring down the scourge upon the quarry, when Allah made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying: "O Khalifah, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in Allah; for He will give thee thy daily bread."

Hearing this, Khalifah went down to the river, and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before, so he ceased not to tug at it till he brought it to land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart, kohl-darkened eyes, and hands stained with henna dyes; and he was laughing, and wore a tattered waistcloth about his middle. Quoth Khalifah, "Praised be Allah Who hath changed the fish of the river into apes!" Then, going up to the first ape, who was still tied to the tree, he said to him: "See, O unlucky, how fulsome was the counsel thou gavest me! None but

thou made me light on this second ape; and for that thou gavest me good morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness, I am become distressed and weary, without dirham or dinar."

So saying, he hent in hand a stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it upon the lame ape, when the creature cried out for mercy and said to him: "I conjure thee, by Allah, spare me for the sake of this my fellow, and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire!" So he held his hand from him, and throwing down the stick, went up to and stood by the second ape, who said to him: "O Khalifah, this my speech will profit thee naught except thou hearken to what I say to thee; but an thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the cause of thine enrichment." Asked Khalifah, "And what hast thou to say to me that I may obey thee therein?" The ape answered, "Leave me bound on the bank and hie thee down to the river, then cast thy net a third time, and after I will tell thee what to do."

So he took his net, and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in, and finding it heavy, labored at it and ceased not his travail till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape. But this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with henna and his eyes blackened with kohl. When Khalifah saw this, he exclaimed: "Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! Verily, this is a blessed day from first to last. Its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of the first ape, and the scroll is known by its superscription! Verily, today is a day of apes. There is not a single fish left in the river, and we are come out today but to catch monkeys!"

Then he turned to the third ape and said, "And what thing thou also, O unlucky?" Quoth the ape, "Dost thou not know me, O Khalifah!" and quoth he, "Not I!" The ape cried, "I am the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, the shroff." Asked Khalifah, "And what dost thou for him?" and the ape answered, "I give him good morrow at the first of the day, and he gaineth five ducats; and again at the end of the day, I give him good even, and he gaineth other five ducats." Whereupon Khalifah turned to the first ape and said to him: "See, O unlucky, what fine apes other folk have! As for thee, thou givest me good morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thy ill-omened phiz, and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!" So saying, he took the cattle stick, and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Abu al-Sa'adat's ape said to him: "Let him be, O Khalifah. Hold thy hand and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do."

So Khalifah threw down the stick, and walking up to him, cried, "And what hast thou to say to me, O monarch of all monkeys?" Replied the ape: "Leave me and the other two apes here, and take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever cometh up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall gladden thee." He replied, "I hear and obey," and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder, reciting these couplets:

"When straitened is my breast I will of my Creator pray,
Who may and can the heaviest weight lighten in easiest way,
For ere man's glance can turn or close his eye by God His grace
Waxeth the broken whole and yieldeth jail its prison prey.
Therefore with Allah one and all of thy concerns commit,
Whose grace and favor men of wit shall nevermore gainsay."

Now when Khalifah had made an end of his verse, he went down to the river, and casting his net, waited awhile. After which he drew it up and found therein a fine young fish, with a

big head, a tail like a ladle, and eyes like two gold pieces. When Khalifah saw this fish, he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he took it, marveling, and carried it to the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the universal world. Quoth the ape, "O Khalifah, what wilt thou do with this, and with thine ape?" and quoth the fisherman: "I will tell thee, O monarch of monkeys, all I am about to do. Know then that first, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed, my ape, and take thee in his stead, and give thee every day to eat of whatso thou wilt." Rejoined the ape: "Since thou hast made choice of me, I will tell thee how thou shalt do wherein, if it please Allah Almighty, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Lend thy mind, then, to what I say to thee and 'tis this! Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of the dike and cast thy net into the Tigris. Then after waiting awhile, draw it up and thou shalt find therein a fish than which thou never sawest a finer in thy whole life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this."

So Khalifah rose forthright, and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great catfish the bigness of a lamb. Never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him: "Gather thee some green grass and set half of it in a basket; lay the fish therein and cover it with the other moiety. Then, leaving us here tied, shoulder the basket and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee by the way, answer him not, but fare on till thou comest to the market street of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, Sheikh of the shroffs, and wilt see him sitting on a mattress, with a cushion behind him and two collars, one for gold and one for silver, before him, while around him stand his Mamelukes and Negro slaves and servant lads. Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying: 'O Abu al-Sa'adat, verily I went out today to fish and cast my net in thy name, and Allah Almighty sent me this fish.' He will ask, 'Hast thou shown it to any but me?' and do thou answer, 'No, by Allah!' Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars; but do thou return them also, and so do with everything he may offer thee; and take naught from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold.

Then will he say to thee, 'Tell me what thou wouldst have, and do thou reply, 'By Allah, I will not sell the fish save for two words!' He will ask, 'What are they?' And do thou answer, 'Stand up and say, "Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give Khalifah the fisherman my ape in exchange for his ape, and that I barter for his lot my lot and luck for his luck." This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold.' If he do this, I will every day give thee good morrow and good even, and every day thou shalt gain ten dinars of good gold; whilst this one-eyed, lame-legged ape shall daily give the Jew good morrow, and Allah shall afflict him every day with an avanie which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath naught. Harken then to my words, so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright."

Quoth Khalifah: "I accept thy counsel, O monarch of all the monkeys! But as for this unlucky, may Allah never bless him! I know not what to do with him." Quoth the ape, "Let him go into the water, and let me go also." "I hear and obey," answered Khalifah, and unbound the three apes, and they went down into the river. Then he took up the catfish, which he washed, then laid it in the basket upon some green grass, and covered it with other, and lastly, shouldering his load, set out with the basket upon his shoulder and ceased not faring till he entered the city of Baghdad. And as he threaded the streets the folk knew him and cried out to him, saying, "What hast thou there, O Khalifah?" But he paid no heed to them and passed on till he came to the market street of the money-changers and

fared between the shops, as the ape had charged him, till he found the Jew seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a King of the Kings of Khorasan. He knew him at first sight; so he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat raised his eyes and recognizing him, said: "Welcome, O Khalifah! What wantest thou, and what is thy need? If any have missaid thee or spited thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Chief of Police, who shall do thee justice on him." Replied Khalifah: "Nay, as thy head liveth, O chief of the Jews, none hath missaid me. But I went forth this morning to the river and, casting my net into the Tigris on thy luck, brought up this fish."

Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Jew, who admired it and said, the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments, I dreamt last night that the Virgin came to me and said, 'Know, O Abu al-Sa'adat, that I have sent thee a pretty present!' And doubtless 'tis this fish." Then he turned to Khalifah and said to him, "By thy faith, hath any seen it but I?" Khalifah replied, "No, by Allah, and by Abu Bakr the Veridical, none hath seen it save thou, O chief of the Jews!" Whereupon the Jew turned to one of his lads and said to him: "Come, carry this fish to my house and bid Sa'adah dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and hie me home." And Khalifah said, "Go, O my lad, let the master's wife fry some of it and broil the rest." Answered the boy, "I hear and I obey, O my lord," and, taking the fish, went away with it to the house.

Then the Jew put out his hand and gave Khalifah the fisherman a dinar, saying, "Take this for thyself, O Khalifah, and spend it on thy family." When Khalifah saw the dinar on his palm, he took it, saying, "Laud to the Lord of Dominion!" as if he had never seen aught of gold in his life, and went somewhat away. But before he had gone far, he was minded of the ape's charge and turning back, threw down the ducat, saying: "Take thy gold and give folk back their fish! Dost thou make a laughingstock of folk?" The Jew, hearing this, thought he was jesting, and offered him two dinars upon the other, but Khalifah said: "Give me the fish, and no nonsense. How knewest thou I would sell it at this price?" Whereupon the Jew gave him two more dinars and said, "Take these five ducats for thy fish and leave greed." So Khalifah hent the five dinars in hand and went away, rejoicing, and gazing and marveling at the gold and saying: "Glory be to God! There is not with the Caliph of Baghdad what is with me this day!"

Then he ceased not faring on till he came to the end of the market street, when he remembered the words of the ape and his charge, and returning to the Jew, threw him back the gold. Quoth he: "What aileth thee, O Khalifah? Dost thou want silver in exchange for gold?" Khalifah replied: "I want nor dirhams nor dinars. I only want thee to give me back folk's fish." With this the Jew waxed wroth and shouted out at him, saying: "O Fisherman, thou bringest me a fish not worth a sequin and I give thee five for it, yet art thou not content! Art thou Jinn-mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it." Answered Khalifah, "I will not sell it for silver nor for gold, only for two sayings thou shalt say me."

When the Jew heard speak of the "two sayings," his eyes sank into his head, he breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage, and said to him, "O nail paring of the Moslems, wilt thou have me throw off my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and stultify my belief and my conviction which I inherited of old from my forebears?" Then he cried out to the servants who were in waiting and said: "Out on you! Bash me this unlucky rogue's neck and bastinado him soundly!" So they came down upon him with blows and ceased not beating him till he fell beneath the shop, and the Jew said to them, "Leave him and let him rise." Whereupon Khalifah jumped up as if naught ailed him, and the Jew

said to him: "Tell me what price thou asketh for this fish and I will give it thee; for thou hast gotten but scant good of us this day." Answered the fisherman, "Have no fear for me, O master, because of the beating, for I can eat ten donkeys' rations of stick."

The Jew laughed at his words and said, "Allah upon thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the right of my faith, I will give it thee!" The fisherman replied, "Naught from thee will remunerate me for this fish save the two words whereof I spake." And the Jew said, "Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Moslem." Khalifah rejoined: "By Allah, O Jew, an thou Islamize, 'twill nor advantage the Moslems nor damage the Jews. And in like manner, an thou hold to thy misbelief 'twill nor damage the Moslems nor advantage the Jews. But what I desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say: 'Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for the ape of Khalifah the fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck'." Quoth the Jew, "If this be all thou desirest, 'twill sit lightly upon me." So he rose without stay or delay and standing on his feet, repeated the required words. After which he turned to the fisherman and asked him, "Hast thou aught else to ask of me?" "No," answered he, and the Jew said, "Go in peace!"

Hearing this Khalifah sprung to his feet forthright, took up his basket and net, and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with travail, when he found it full of fish of all kinds. Presently up came a woman with a dish, who gave him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it, and after her a eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and so forth till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten a hundred dinars.

Now Khalifah the fisherman had quarters in the Passage of the Merchants, and as he lay one night in his lodging much bemused with hashish, he said to himself: "O Khalifah, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten a hundred golden dinars. Needs must the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, hear of this from someone, and haply he will be wanting money and will send for thee and say to thee: 'I need a sum of money and it hath reached me that thou hast an hundred dinars, so do thou lend them to me those same.' I shall answer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I am a poor man, and whoso told thee that I had a hundred dinars lied against me, for I have naught of this.' Thereupon be will commit me to the Chief of Police, saying, 'Strip him of his clothes and torment him with the bastinado till he confess and give up the hundred dinars in his possession.' Wherefore, meseemeth to provide against this predicament, the best thing I can do is to rise forthright and bash myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating." And his hashish said to him, "Rise, doff thy dress."

So he stood up, and putting off his clothes, took a whip he had by him and set handy a leather pillow. Then he fell to lashing himself, laying every other blow upon the pillow and roaring out the while: "Alas! Alas! By Allah, 'tis a false saying, O my lord, and they have lied against me, for I am a poor fisherman and have naught of the goods of the world!" The noise of the whip falling on the pillow and on his person resounded in the still of night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and they said: "Whatever can ail the poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him? 'Twould seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him." Presently they all came forth of their lodgings at the noise of the blows and the crying, and repaired to Khalifah's room, but they found the door locked and said one to other: "Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the adjoining saloon. It behooveth us to climb over by the roofs."

So they clomb over the roofs, and coming down through the skylight, saw him naked and flogging himself, and asked him, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered: "Know, O folk, that I have gained some dinars and fear lest my case be carried up to the Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, and he send for me and demand of me those same gold pieces; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that if I deny, he will torture me, so I am torturing myself, by way of accustoming me to what may come." The merchants laughed at him and said: "Leave this fooling. May Allah not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten! Verily thou hast disturbed us this night and hast troubled our hearts."

So Khalifah left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he rose and would have gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and said in his mind: "An I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt about my waist, peradventure someone will see me and lay in wait for me till he come upon me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money. But I have a device that should serve me well, right well." So he jumped up forthright and made him a pocket in the collar of his gabardine, and tying the hundred dinars up in a purse, laid them in the collar pocket. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris, where he made a cast, but brought up naught. So he removed from that place to another and threw again, but once more the net came up empty. And he went on removing from place to place till he had gone half a day's journey from the city, ever casting the net, which kept bringing up naught. So he said to himself, "By Allah, I will throw my net a-stream but this once more, whether ill come of it or weal!"

Then he hurled the net with all his force, of the excess of his wrath, and the purse with the hundred dinars flew out of his collar pocket and, lighting in midstream, was carried away by the strong current. Whereupon he threw down the net, and doffing his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue, without chancing on it. When he despaired of finding the purse, he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but staff, net, and basket and sought for his clothes but could light on no trace of them. So he said in himself: "O vilest of those wherefor was made the byword: 'The pilgrimage is not perfected save by copulation with the camel!'" Then he wrapped the net about him, and taking staff in one hand and basket in other, went trotting about like a camel in rut, running right and left and backward and forward, disheveled and dusty, as he were a rebel Marid let loose from Solomon's prison.

So far for what concerns the fisherman Khalifah; but as regards the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, he had a friend, a jeweler called Ibn al-Kirnas, and all the traders, brokers, and middlemen knew him for the Caliph's merchant. Wherefore there was naught sold in Baghdad by way of rarities and things of price or Mamelukes or handmaidens but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, behold, there came up to him the Sheikh of the brokers, with a slave girl whose like seers never saw, for she was of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, and among her gifts that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner musical instruments. So Ibn al-Kirnas bought her for five thousand golden dinars and clothed her with other thousand. After which he carried her to the Prince of True Believers, with whom she lay the night, and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all sorts of arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Kut al-Kulub and she was even as saith the poet:

I fix my glance on her, whene'er she wends,
And nonacceptance of my glance breeds pain.
She favors graceful-necked gazelle at gaze,
And "Graceful as gazelle" to say we're fain.

On the morrow the Caliph sent for Ibn al-Kirnas, the jeweler, and bade him receive ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with the slave girl Kut al-Kulub and he forsook the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, for all she was the daughter of his father's brother, and he abandoned all his favorite concubines and abode a whole month without stirring from Kut al-Kulub's side save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her all in haste. This was grievous to the lords of the realm and they complained thereof to the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, who bore with the Commander of the Faithful and waited till the next Friday, when he entered the cathedral mosque and, forgathering with the Caliph, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories anent seld-seen love and lovers, with intent to draw out what was in his mind.

Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah, O Ja'afar, this is not of my choice, but my heart is caught in the snare of love and wot I not what is to be done!" The Wazir Ja'afar replied: "O Commander of the Faithful, thou knowest how this girl Kut al-Kulub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which hand possesseth soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing, which is that the highest boast of kings and princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, perchance it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her." Rejoined the Caliph: "Thou sayest well, O Ja'afar. Come let us go a-hunting forthright, without stay or delay." So soon as Friday prayers were prayed, they left the mosque, and at once mounting their she-mules, rode forth to the chase, occupied with talk, and their attendants outwent them.

Presently the heat became overhot and Al-Rashid said to his Wazir, "O Ja'afar, I am sore athirst." Then he looked around, and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, asked Ja'afar, "Seest thou what I see?" Answered the Wazir: "Yes; O Commander of the Faithful. I see a dim figure on a high mound. Belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber plot, and in whatso wise water will not be lacking in his neighborhood," presently adding, "I will go to him and fetch thee some." But Al-Rashid said: "My mule is swifter than thy mule, so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of this person drink and return." So saying, he urged his she-mule, which started off like racing wind or railing water, and in the twinkling of an eye made the mound, where he found the figure he had, seen to be none other than Khalifah the fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net.

And indeed he was horrible to behold, as to and fro he rolled with eyes for very redness like cresset gleam and dusty hair in disheveled trim, as he were, Ifrit or a lion grim. Al-Rashid saluted him and he returned his salutation, but he was wroth, and fires might have been lit at his breath. Quoth the Caliph, "O man, hast thou any water?" and quote Khalifah: "How, thou, art thou blind, or Jinnmad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for 'tis behind this mound." So Al-Rashid went around the mound, and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule. Then without a moment's delay he returned to Khalifah and said to him, "What aileth thee, O man, to stand here, and what is thy calling.?" The fisherman cried: "This is a stranger and sillier question than that about the water! Seest thou not the gear of my craft on my shoulder?" Said the Caliph, "Belike thou art a fisherman?" and he replied, "Yes."

Asked Al-Rashid, "Where is thy gabardine, and where are thy waistcloth and girdle, and where be the rest of thy raiment?"

Now these were the very things which had been taken from Khalifah, like for like, so when he heard the Caliph name them, he got into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the riverbank, and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftness than the blinding levin, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, "Hark ye, man, bring me back my things and leave jesting and joking." Al-Rashid replied, "By Allah, I have not seen thy clothes, nor know aught of them!" Now the Caliph had large cheeks and a small mouth, so Khalifah said to him: "Belike thou art by trade a singer, or a piper on pipes? But bring me back my clothes fairly and without more ado, or I will bash thee with this my staff till thou bepiss thyself and befoul thy clothes." When Al-Rashid saw the staff in the fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said to himself, "By Allah, I cannot brook from this mad beggar half a blow of that staff!" Now he had on a satin gown, so he pulled it off and gave it to Khalifah, saying, "O man, take this in place of thy clothes." The fisherman took it and turned it about and said, "My clothes are worth ten of this painted aba cloak," and rejoined the Caliph, "Put it on till I bring thee thy gear."

So Khalifah donned the gown, but finding it too long for him, took a knife he had with him tied to the handle of his basket, and cut off nigh a third of the skirt, so that it fell only beneath his knees. Then he turned to Al-Rashid and said to him, "Allah upon thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping." Replied the Caliph, "My wage is ten dinars a month," and Khalifah continued: "By Allah, my poor fellow, thou makest me sorry for thee! Why, I make thy ten dinars every day! Hast thou a mind to take service with me, and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee? So shalt thou make five dinars a day and be my slavey and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff." Quoth Al-Rashid, "I will well," and quoth Khalifah: "Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright."

So Al-Rashid alighted, and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khalifah said to him, "O piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thy forearm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus." Accordingly the Caliph took heart of grace and, doing as the fisherman showed him, threw the net and pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khalifah came to his aid and tugged at it with him, but the two together could not hale it up. Whereupon said the fisherman: "O piper of ill-omen, for the first time I took thy gown in place of my clothes, but this second time I will have thine ass and will beat thee to boot till thou bepiss and beskit thyself, an I find my net torn." Quoth Al-Rashid, "Let the twain of us pull at once." So they both pulled together, and succeeded with difficulty in hauling that net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colors, and Khalifah said to Al-Rashid: "By Allah, O piper, thou art foul of favor but an thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a mighty fine fisherman. But now 'twere best thou bestraddle thine ass and make for the market and fetch me a pair of frails, and I will look after the fish till thou return, when I and thou will load it on thine ass's back. I have scales and weights and all we want, so we can take them with us, and thou wilt have nothing to do but to hold the scales and punch the price. For here we have fish worth twenty dinars. So be fast with the frails and loiter not."

Answered the Caliph, "I hear and obey" and mounting, left him with his fish, and spurred his mule, in high good humor, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the fisherman till he came up to Ja'afar, who said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, belike when thou wentest down to drink, thou foundest a pleasant flower garden and enteredst and tookest

thy pleasure therein alone?" At this Al-Rashid fell a laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying: "O Commander of the Faithful, Allah make joy to endure for thee and do away annoy from thee! What was the cause of thy delaying when thou farest to drink, and what hath befallen thee?" Quoth the Caliph, "Verily, a right wondrous tale and a joyous adventure and a wondrous hath befallen me.

And he repeated to them what had passed between himself and the fisherman and his words, "Thou stolest my clothes!" and how he had given him his gown and how he had cut off a part of it, finding it too long for him. Said Ja'afar, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee, but now I will go straight to the fisherman and buy it of him." The Caliph replied, "By Allah, he hath cut off a third part of the skirt and spoilt it! But, O Ja'afar, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish, which I left on the bank with my master Khalifah, and he is watching them and waiting for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a matchet. Then we are to go, I and he, to the market and sell the fish and share the price." Ja'afar rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will bring you a purchaser for your fish." And Al-Rashid retorted: "O Ja'afar, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khalifah, who taught me angling, I will give him for it a gold dinar!" So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the Caliph, and they all arose and made for the riverside.

Now while Khalifah was expecting the Caliph's return with the two frails, behold, the Mamelukes swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-embroidered kerchiefs, beating one another in their eagerness to get at the fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "Doubtless these are the fish of Paradise!" and hending two fish right hand and left, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, "O Allah, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me at this very moment." And suddenly up to him came a black slave which was the chief of the Caliph's Negro eunuchs. He had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to make water by the way, and finding that naught remained of the fish, little or much, looked right and left till he espied Khalifah standing in the stream with a fish in either hand, and said to him, "Come hither, O Fisherman!" But Khalifah replied, "Begone and none of your impudence!" So the eunuch went up to him and said, "Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price." Replied the fisherman: "Art thou little of wit? I will not sell them." Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khalifah cried out, saying: "Strike not, O loon! Better largess than the mace."

So saying, he threw the two fishes to the eunuch, who took them and laid them in his kerchief. Then he put hand in pouch, but found not a single dirham, and said to Khalifah: "O fisherman, verily thou art out of luck for, by Allah, I have not a silver about me! But come tomorrow to the palace of the Caliphate and ask for the eunuch Sandal, whereupon the castratos will direct thee to me, and by coming thither thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and therewith wend thy ways." Quoth Khalifah, "Indeed, this is a blessed day, and its blessedness was manifest from the first of it!"

Then he shouldered his net and returned to Baghdad, and as he passed through the streets, the folk saw the Caliph's gown on him and stared at him till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the Caliph's tailor. When the man saw him wearing dress of the apparel of the Caliph, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, "O Khalifah, whence hadst thou that gown?" Replied the fisherman: "What aileth thee to be impudent? I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. I forgave him the

cutting off of his hand for that he stole my clothes and gave me this cape in their place." So the tailor knew that the Caliph had come upon him as he was fishing and jested with him and given him the gown.

Such was his case, but as regards Harun al-Rashid, he had gone out a-hunting and a-fishing only to divert his thoughts from the damsel Kut al-Kulub. But when Zubaydah heard of her and of the Caliph's devotion to her, the lady was fired with the jealousy which the more especially fireth women, so that she refused meat and drink and rejected the delights of sleep, and awaited the Caliph's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel. So when she learnt that he was gone hunting and fishing, she bade her women furnish the palace fairly and decorate it splendidly and serve up viands and confections. And amongst the rest she made a China dish of the daintiest sweetmeats that can be made, wherein she had put bhang.

Then she ordered one of her eunuchs go to the damsel Kut al-Kulub and bid her to the banquet, saying: "The Lady Zubaydah bint alKasim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine today, and having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, longeth to divert herself with somewhat of thine art." Kut al-Kulub replied, "Hearing and obedience are due to Allah and the Lady Zubaydah," and rose without stay or delay, unknowing what was hidden for her in the secret purpose. Then she took with her what instruments she needed and, accompanying the eunuch, ceased not faring till she stood in the presence of the Princess. When she entered she kissed the ground before her again and again, then rising to her feet, said: "Peace be on the Lady of the exalted seat and the presence whereto none may avail, daughter of the house Abbasi and scion of the Prophet's family! May Allah fulfill thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years!"

Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and presently the Lady Zubaydah raised her eyes and considered her beauty and loveliness. She saw a damsel with cheeks smooth as rose and breasts like granado, a face moon-bright, a brow flower-white, and great eyes black as night. Her eyelids were languor-dight and her face beamed with light, as if the sun from her forehead arose and the murks of the night from the locks of her brow. And the fragrance of musk from her breath strayed, and flowers bloomed in her lovely face inlaid. The moon beamed from her forehead and in her slender shape the branches swayed. She was like the full moon shining in the nightly shade. Her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were like a bow arched, and her lips of coral molded. Her beauty amazed all who espied her and her glances amated all who eyed her. Glory be to Him Who formed her and fashioned her and perfected her!

Quoth the Lady Zubaydah: "Well come, and welcome and fair cheer to thee, O Kut al-Kulub! Sit and divert us with thine art and the goodliness of thine accomplishments." Quoth the damsel, "I hear and I obey," and rose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner pleasing arts, till the Princess came near to fall in love with her and said to herself, "Verily, my cousin Al-Rashid is not to blame for loving her!" Then the damsel kissed ground before Zubaydah and sat down, whereupon they set food before her. Presently they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof, and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backward and she sank on the ground sleeping. With this, the lady said to her women, "Carry her up to one of the chambers, till I summon her," and they replied, "We hear and we obey. Then said she to one of her eunuchs, "Fashion me a chest and bring it hitherto to me!" And shortly afterward she bade make the semblance of a tomb and spread the report that Kut al-Kulub had choked and

died, threatening her familiars that she would smite the neck of whoever should say, "She is alive."

Now, behold, the Caliph suddenly returned from the chase, and the first inquiry he made was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom the Lady Zubaydah had charged to declare she was dead if the Caliph should ask for her and, kissing ground before him, said: "May thy head live, O my lord! Be certified that Kut al-Kulub choked in eating and is dead." Whereupon cried Al-Rashid, "God never gladden thee with good news, O thou bad slave!" and entered the palace, where he heard of her death from everyone and asked, "Where is her tomb?" So they brought him to the sepulcher and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, "This is her burial place." The Caliph, weeping sore for her, abode by the tomb a full hour, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress and the deepest melancholy.

So the Lady Zubaydah saw that her plot had succeeded, and forthright sent for the eunuch and said, "Hither with the chest!" He set it before her, when she bade bring the damsel, and locking her up therein, said to the eunuch: "Take all pains to sell this chest, and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked. Then give alms with its price." So he took it and went forth to do her bidding.

Thus fared it with these, but as for Khalifah the fisherman, when morning morrowed and shone with its light and sheen, he said to himself, "I cannot do aught better today than visit the eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the palace of the Caliphate." So he went forth of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found Mamelukes, Negro slaves, and eunuchs standing and sitting, and looking at them, behold, seated amongst them was the eunuch who had taken the fish of him, with the white slaves waiting on him. Presently, one of the Mameluke lads called out to him, whereupon the eunuch turned to see who he was and lo! it was the fisherman. Now when Khalifah was ware that he saw him and recognized him, he said to him: "I have not failed thee, O my little Tulip! On this wise are men of their word." Hearing his address, Sandal the eunuch laughed and replied, "By Allah, thou art right, O Fisherman," and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat. But at that moment there arose a great clamor. So he raised his head to see what was to do, and finding that it was the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide coming forth from the Caliph's presence, he rose to him and forewent him, and they walked about conversing for a longsome time.

Khalifah the fisherman waited awhile, then, growing weary of standing, and finding that the eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, "O my lord Tulip, give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him because of the Minister's presence, so he went on talking with Ja'afar and took no notice whatever of the fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah: "O slow o' pay! May Allah put to shame all churls and all who take folk's goods and are niggardly with them! I put myself under thy protection, O my lord Bran-belly, to give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Ja'afar, and the Minister saw the fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he was saying. So he said to Sandal, misliking his behavior, "O Eunuch, what would yonder beggar with thee?" Sandal replied, "Dost thou not know him, O my lord the Wazir?" and Ja'afar answered: "By Allah I know him not! How should I know a man I have never seen but at this moment?"

Rejoined the Eunuch: "O my lord, this is the fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks

of the Tigris. I came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Prince of True Believers emptyhanded when all the Mamelukes had some. Presently I espied the fisherman standing in midstream, calling on Allah, with four fishes in his hands, and said to him, 'Give me what thou hast there and take their worth.' He handed me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, purposing to gift him with somewhat, but found naught therein and said, 'Come to me in the palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to aid thee in thy poverty.' So he came to me today and I was putting hand to pouch, that I might give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting. And this is the whole story how he cometh to be standing here."

The Wazir, hearing this account, smiled and said: "O Eunuch, how is it that this fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou satisfiest him not? Dost thou not know him, O chief of the eunuchs?" "No," answered Sandal, and Ja'afar said. "This is the master of the Commander of the Faithful, and his partner and our lord the Caliph hath arisen this morning strait of breast, heavy of heart, and troubled in thought, nor is there aught will broaden his breast save this fisherman. So let him not go till I crave the Caliph's pleasure concerning him and bring him before him. Perchance Allah will relieve him of his oppression and console him for the loss of Kut al-Kulub by means of the fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to? better himself, and thou wilt be the cause of this." Replied Sandal: "O my lord, do as thou wilt, and may Allah Almighty long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow Allah perpetuate and prosper it, root and branch!"

Then the Wazir Ja'afar rose up and went in to the Caliph, and Sandal ordered the Mamelukes not to leave the fisherman, whereupon Khalifah cried: "How goodly is thy bounty, O Tulip! The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for debts in arrears!" When Ja'afar came into the presence of the Caliph, he found him sitting with his head bowed earthward, breast straitened and mind melancholy, humming the verses of the poet:

My blamers instant bid that I for her become consoled,
But I, what can I do, whose heart declines to be controlled?
And how can I in patience bear the loss of lovely maid
When fails me patience for a love that holds with firmest hold!
Ne'er I'll forget her nor the bowl that 'twixt us both went round
And wine of glances maddened me with drunkenness ensouled.

Whenas Ja'afar stood in the presence, he said: "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, Defender of the honor of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles, Allah assain him and save him and his family one and an!" The Caliph raised his head and answered, "And on thee be. peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings!" Quoth Ja'afar, "With leave of the Prince of True Believers, his servant would speak without restraint." Asked the Caliph: "And when was restraint put upon thee in speech, and thou the Prince of Wazirs? Say what thou wilt." Answered Ja'afar: "When I went out, O my lord, from before thee, intending for my house, I saw standing at the door thy master and teacher and partner, Khalifah the fisherman, who was aggrieved at thee and complained of thee, saying: 'Glory be to God! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but never came back. And this is not the way of a good partner or of a good apprentice.' So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good; and if not, tell him, that he may take to partner another."

Now when the Caliph heard these words, he smiled and his straitness of breast was done away with and he said, "My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the fisherman standeth at the door?" and Ja'afar replied, "By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he standeth at the door." Quoth the Caliph: "O Ja'afar, by Allah, I will assuredly do my best to give him his due! If Allah at my hands send him misery, he shall have it, and if prosperity, he shall have it." Then he took a piece of paper, and cutting it in pieces, said to the Wazir: "O Ja'afar, write down with thine own hand twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least appointment to the Caliphate; also twenty kinds of punishment, from the highest beating to death." "I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Ja'afar, and did as he was bidden.

Then said the Caliph: "O Ja'afar, I swear by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hamzah and Akil, that I mean to summon the fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I. And whatsoever is written in the paper which he shall choose, I will give it to him. Though it be the Caliphate, I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him. And on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me." When Ja'afar heard this, he said to himself: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction and I shall be the cause. But the Caliph hath sworn, so nothing remains now but to bring him in, and naught will happen save whatso Allah willeth." Accordingly he went out to Khalifah the fisherman and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the Caliph, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself: "What a stupid I was to come after yonder ill-omened slave, Tulip, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!" Ja'afar fared on with him, with Mamelukes before and behind, whilst he said, "Doth not arrest suffice, but these must go behind and before me, to hinder my making off?" till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the Wazir said to him: "Mark my words, O Fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!"

Then he raised the great curtain and Khalifah's eyes fell on the Caliph, who was seated on his couch, with the lords of the realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said: "Well come, and welcome to thee, O piper! 'Twas not right of thee to make thyself a fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting to guard the fish, and never to return! For, before I was aware, there came up Mamelukes on beasts of all manner colors, and snatched away the fish from me, I standing alone. And this was all of thy fault, for hadst thou returned with the frails forthright, we had sold a hundred dinars' worth of fish. And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But thou, who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?" The Caliph smiled, and raising a corner of the curtain, put forth his head and said to the fisherman, "Come hither and take thee one of these papers." Quoth Khalifah the fisherman: "Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and today thou hast become an astrologer, but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he waxeth." Thereupon Ja'afar said: "Take the paper at once, and do as the Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee, without prating."

So he came forward and put forth his hand saying, "Far be it from me that this piper should ever again be my knave and fish with me!" Then, taking the paper, he handed it to the Caliph, saying: "O piper, what hath come out for me therein? Hide naught thereof." So Al-Rashid received it and passed it on to Ja'afar and said to him, "Read what is therein." He looked at it and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious,

the Great!" Said the Caliph: "Good news, O Ja'afar? What seest thou therein?" Answered the Wazir: "O Commander of the Faithful there came up from the paper, 'Let the Fisherman receive a hundred blows with a stick.'" So the Caliph commanded to beat the Fisherman and they gave him a hundred sticks, after which he rose, saying: "Allah damn this, O Branbelly! Are jail and sticks part of the game?"

Then said Ja'afar: "O Commander of the Faithful, this poor devil is come to the river, and how shall he go away thirsting? We hope that among the alms deeds of the Commander of the Faithful he may have leave to take another paper, so haply somewhat may come out wherewithal he may succor his poverty." Said the Caliph: "By Allah, O Ja'afar, if he take another paper and death be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the cause." Answered Ja'afar, "If he die he will be at rest." But Khalifah the fisherman said to him: "Allah ne'er, gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that ye seek to slay me?" Quoth Ja'afar, "Take thee a paper, and crave the blessing of Allah Almighty!"

So he put out his hand, and taking a paper, gave it to Ja'afar, who read it and was silent. The Caliph asked, "Why art thou silent, O son of Yahya?" and he answered: "O Commander of the Faithful, there hath come out on this paper, 'Naught shall be given to the fisherman.'" Then said the Caliph: "His daily bread will not come from us. Bid him fare forth from before our face." Quoth Ja'afar: "By the claims of thy pious forefathers, let him take a third paper. It may be it will bring him alimony," and quoth the Caliph, "Let him take one and no more."

So he put out his hand and took a third paper, and behold, therein was written, "Let the Fisherman be given one dinar." Ja'afar cried to him, "I sought good fortune for thee, but Allah willed not to thee aught save this dinar." And Khalifah answered: "Verily, a dinar for every hundred sticks were rare good luck. May Allah not send thy body health!" The Caliph laughed at him and Ja'afar took him by the hand and led him out. When he reached the door, Sandal the eunuch saw him and said to him: "Hither, O Fisherman! Give us portion of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee whilst jesting with thee." Replied Khalifah: "By Allah, O Tulip, thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, O nigger? Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of a hundred blows and have earned one dinar, and thou art but too welcome to it." So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears flowing down the plain of his cheeks.

When the eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken sooth and called to the lads to fetch him back. So they brought him back and Sandal, putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied a hundred golden dinars into the fisherman's hand, saying, "Take this gold in payment of thy fish, and wend thy ways." So Khalifah, in high good humor, took the hundred ducats and the Caliph's one dinar and went his way, and forgot the beating.

Now as Allah willed it for the furthering of that which He had decreed, he passed by the mart of the handmaidens, and seeing there a mighty ring where many folks were forgathering, said to himself, "What is this crowd?" So he brake through the merchants and others, who said, "Make wide the way for Skipper Rapsallion, and let him pass." Then he looked, and behold, he saw a chest, with a eunuch seated thereon and an old man standing by it, and the Sheikh was crying: "O merchants, O men of money, who will hasten and hazard his coin for this chest of unknown contents from the palace of the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? How much shall I say for you? Allah

bless you all!" Quoth one of the merchants; "By Allah, this is a risk! But I will say one word, and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars." Quoth another, "Fifty," and they went on bidding, one against other, till the price reached a hundred ducats.

Then said the crier, "Will any of you bid more, O merchants?" And Khalifah the fisherman said, "Be it mine for a hundred dinars and one dinar." The merchants, hearing these words, thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, "O Eunuch, sell it to Khalifah for a hundred dinars and one dinar!" Quoth the eunuch: "By Allah, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O Fisherman. The Lord bless thee in it, and here with thy gold." So Khalifah pulled out the ducats and gave them to the eunuch, who, the bargain being duly made, delivered to him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot, after which he returned to the palace and acquainted the Lady Zubaydah with what he had done, whereat she rejoiced. Meanwhile the fisherman hove the chest on shoulder, but could not carry it on this wise for the excess of its weight, so he lifted it onto his head and thus bore it to the quarter where he lived. Here he set it down, and being weary, sat awhile bemusing what had befallen him and saying in himself, "Would Heaven I knew what is in this chest!"

Then he opened the door of his lodging and haled the chest till he got it into his closet, after which he strove to open it, but failed. Quoth he: "What folly possessed me to buy this chest? There is no help for it but to break it open and see what is herein." So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said to himself, "I will leave it till tomorrow." Then he would have stretched him out to sleep, but could find no room, for the chest filled the whole closet. So he got upon it and lay him down. But when he had lain awhile, behold, he felt something stir under him, whereat sleep forsook him and his reason fled. So he arose and cried: "Meseems there be Jinns in the chest. Praise to Allah Who suffered me not to open it! For had I done so, they had risen against me in the dark and slain me, and from them would have befallen me naught of good."

Then he lay down again, when lo! the chest moved a second time, more than before, whereupon he sprang to his feet and said: "There it goes again. But this is terrible!" And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not find it and had not the wherewithal to buy another. So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the most part of the folk were asleep, but they awoke at his crying and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered, "Bring me a lamp, for the Jinn are upon me." They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, wherewith he returned to his closet. Then he smote the lock of the chest with a stone and broke it, and opening it, saw a damsel like a houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with bhang, but at that moment she threw up the stuff and awoke. Then she opened her eyes, and feeling herself confined and cramped, moved. At this sight quoth Khalifah, "By Allah, O my lady, whence art thou?" and quoth she, "Bring me jessamine, and narcissus." And Khalifah answered, "There is naught here but henna flowers."

Thereupon she came to herself, and considering Khalifah, said to him, "What art thou?" presently adding, "And where am I?" He said, "Thou art in my lodging." Asked she, "Am I not in the palace of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid?" And quoth he: "What manner of thing is Al-Rashid? O madwoman, Thou art naught but my slave girl. I bought thee this very day for a hundred dinars and one dinar, and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this here chest." When she heard these words she said to him, "What is thy name?" Said he: "My name is Khalifah. How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know my ascendant to have been otherwise?" She laughed and cried: "Spare me this talk! Hast thou anything to eat?" Replied he: "No, by Allah, nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days, and am

now in want of a morsel." She asked, "Hast thou no money?" and he said: "Allah keep this chest which hath beggared me. I gave all I had for it and am become bankrupt."

The damsel laughed at him and said: "Up with thee and seek of thy neighbors somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry." So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the folk were asleep, but they awoke and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" Answered he, "O my neighbors, I am hungry and have nothing to eat." So one came down to him with a bannock and another with broken meats and a third with a bittock of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber, and so on till his lap was full and he returned to his closet and laid the whole between her hands, saying, "Eat." But she laughed at him, saying: "How can I eat of this when I have not a mug of water whereof to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die." Quoth he, "I will fill thee this pitcher." So he took the pitcher, and going forth, stood 'm the midst of the street and cried out, saying, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Quoth they, "What calamity is upon thee tonight, O Khalifah!" And he said, "Ye gave me food and I ate, but now I am athirst, so give me to drink."

Thereupon one came down to him with a mug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet, and he filled his pitcher, and bearing it back, said to the damsel, "O my lady, thou lackest nothing now." Answered she, "True, I want nothing more at this present." Quoth he, "Speak to me and say me thy story." And quoth she: "Fie upon thee! An thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Kut al-Kulub, the Caliph's handmaiden, and the Lady Zubaydah was jealous of me, so she drugged me with bhang and set me in this chest," presently adding: "Alhamdolillah- praised be God- for that the matter hath come to easy issue and no worse! But this befell me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the Caliph Al-Rashid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment." Quoth Khalifah, "Is not Al-Rashid he in whose palace I was imprisoned?" "Yes," answered she, and he said: "By Allah, never saw I more niggardly wight than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me a hundred blows with a stick yesterday and but one dinar, for all I taught him to fish and made him my partner, but he played me false." Replied she: "Leave this unseemly talk, and open thine eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt win thy wish."

When he heard her words, it was if he had been asleep and awoke, and Allah removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck, and he answered, "O my head and eyes!" Then said he to her, "Sleep, in the name of Allah." So she lay down and fell asleep (and he afar from her) till the morning, when she sought of him ink case and paper, and when they were brought, wrote to Ibn al-Kirnas, the Caliph's friend, acquainting him with her case and how at the end of all that had befallen her she was with Khalifah the fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the scroll, saying-"Take this and hie thee to the jewel market and ask for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweler and give him this paper, and speak not." "I hear and I obey," answered Khalifah, and going with the scroll to the market, inquired for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas. They directed him thither, and on entering it he saluted the merchant, who returned his salaam with contempt and said to him, "What dost thou want?" Thereupon he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the fisherman a beggar who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his lads, "Give him half a dirham." Quoth Khalifah: "I want no alms. Read the paper."

So Ibn al-Kirnas took the letter and read it, and no sooner knew its import than he kissed it and laid it on his head. Then he arose and said to Khalifah, "O my brother, where is thy house?" Asked Khalifah: "What wantest thou with my house? Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave girl?" Then Ibn al-Kirnas answered: "Not so. On the contrary, I will buy thee

somewhat whereof you may eat, thou and she." So he said, "My house is in such a quarter," and the merchant rejoined: "Thou hast done well. May Allah not give thee health, O unlucky one!" Then he called out to two of his slaves and said to them: "Carry this man to the shop of Mohsin the shroff and say to him, 'O Mohsin, give this man a thousand dinars of gold,' then bring him back to me in haste."

So they carried him to the money-changer, who paid him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dapple she-mule worth a thousand dinars, with Mamelukes and pages about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweler to Khalifah, "Bismillah, mount this mule." Replied he, "I won't, for by Allah, I fear she throw me," and quoth Ibn al-Kirnas, "By God, needs must thou mount." So he came up, and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out, whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him. But he rose and said, "Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great jenny-ass?" Thereupon Ibn al-Kirnas left him in the market, and repairing to the Caliph, told him of the damsel, after which he returned and removed her to his own house.

Meanwhile Khalifah went home to look after the handmaid and found the people of the quarter forgathering and saying: "Verily, Khalifah is today in a terrible pickle! Would we knew whence he can have gotten this damsel!" Quoth one of them: "He is a mad pimp. Haply he found her lying on the road drunken, and carried her to his own house, and his absence showeth that he knoweth his offense." As they were talking, behold, up came Khalifah, and they said to him: "What a plight is thine, O unhappy! Knowest thou not what is come to thee?" He replied, "No, by Allah!" and they said: "But just now there came Mamelukes and took away thy slave girl whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not." Asked Khalifah, "And how came they to take my slave girl?" and quoth one, "Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him."

But he, so far from heeding them, returned running to the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him: "By Allah, 'twas not right of thee to wheedle me and meanwhile send thy Mamelukes to take my slave girl!" Replied the jeweler, "O idiot, come with me, and hold thy tongue." So he took him and carried him into a house handsomely builded, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave girls like moons round her. Sighting her, Ibn al-Kirnas kissed ground before her, and she said, "What hast thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he owned?" He replied, "O my lady, I gave him a thousand golden dinars," and related to her Khalifah's history from first to last, whereat she laughed and said: "Blame him not, for he is but a common wight. These other thousand dinars are a gift from me to him, and Almighty Allah willing, he shall win of the Caliph what shall enrich him."

As they were talking, there came a eunuch from the Commander of the Faithful in quest of Kut al-Kulub, for when he knew that she was in the house of Ibn al-Kirnas, he could not endure, the severance, but bade bring her forthwith. So she repaired to the Palace, taking Khalifah with her, and going into the presence, kissed ground before the Caliph, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had brought her. She replied: "He is a man, Khalifah the fisherman hight, and there he standeth at the door. He telleth me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the Caliph in fishing." Asked Al-Rashid, "Is he at the door?" and she answered, "Yes." So the Caliph sent for him and he kissed ground before him and wished him endurance of glory and prosperity. The Caliph marveled at him and laughed at him, and said to him, "O Fisherman, wast thou in very deed

my partner yesterday?" Khalifah took his meaning, and heartening his heart and summoning spirit, replied: "By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thy cousin, I know her not in anywise and have had no commerce with her save by way of sight and speech!"

Then he repeated to him all that had befallen him since he last saw him, whereat the Caliph laughed and his breast broadened and he said to Khalifah, "Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou who bringest to owners their own!" But he was silent, so the Caliph ordered him fifty thousand dinars of gold and a costly dress of honor such as great sovereigns don, and a she-mule, and gave him black slaves of the Sudan to serve him, so that he became as he were one of the kings of that time. The Caliph was rejoiced at the recovery of his favorite and knew that all this was the doing of his cousin-wife, the Lady Zubaydah, wherefore he, was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great while, visiting her not, neither inclining to pardon her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his wrath, and her face, that was wont to be rosy, waxed pale and wan till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful, making her excuses to him and confessing her offenses, and ending with these verses:

I long once more the love that was between us to regain,
That I may quench the fire of grief and bate the force of bane.
O lord of me, have ruth upon the stress my passion deals,
Enough to me is what you doled of sorrow and of pain.
'Tis life to me an deign you keep the troth you deigned to plight,
'Tis death to me an troth you break and fondest vows profane.
Given I've sinned a sorry sin, yet grant me ruth, for naught,
By Allah, sweeter is than friend who is of pardon fain.

When the Lady Zubaydah's letter reached the Caliph, and reading it, he saw that she confessed her offense and sent her excuses to him therefor, he said to himself, "Verily, all sins doth Allah forgive-aye, Gracious, Merciful is He!" And he returned her an answer expressing satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly.

As for Khalifah the fisherman, the Caliph assigned him a monthly solde of fifty dinars, and took him into especial favor, which would lead to rank and dignity, honor and worship. Then he kissed ground before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the eunuch Sandal, who had given him the hundred dinars, saw him, and knowing him, said to him, "O Fisherman, whence all this?" So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sandal rejoiced, because he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, "Wilt thou not give me largess of this wealth which is now become thine?" So Khalifah put hand to pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the eunuch, who said, "Keep thy coins, and Allah bless thee therein!" and marveled at his manliness and at the liberality of his soul, for all his late poverty.

Then, leaving the eunuch, Khalifah mounted his she-mule and rode, with the slaves' hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging at the khan, whilst the folk stared at him in surprise for that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted from his beast, they accosted him and inquired the cause of his change from poverty to prosperity, and he told them an that had happened to him from incept to conclusion. Then he bought a fine

mansion and laid out thereon much money, till it was perfect in all points. And he took up his abode therein and was wont to recite thereon these two couplets:

Behold a house that's like the Dwelling of Delight,
Its aspect heals the sick and banishes despite.
Its sojourn for the great and wise appointed is,
And Fortune fair therein abideth day and night.

Then, as soon as he was settled in his house, he sought him in marriage the daughter of one of the chief men of the city, a handsome girl, and went in unto her and led a life of solace and satisfaction, joyaunce and enjoyment; and he rose to passing affluence and exceeding prosperity. So when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to Allah (extolled and excelled be He!) for what He had bestowed on him of wealth exceeding and of favors ever succeeding, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful. And thereafter Khalifah continued to pay frequent visits to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, with whom he found acceptance and who ceased not to overwhelm him with boons and bounty. And he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honor and happiness and joy and gladness, and in riches more than sufficing and in rank ever rising- brief, a sweet life and a savory, pure as pleasurable, till there came to him die Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. And extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence and He is the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die! And amongst the tales they, tell is one of Abu Kir The Dyer And Abu Sir The Barber.

Abu Kir The Dyer And Abu Sir The Barber

THERE dwelt once, in Alexander city, two men, of whom one was a dyer, by name of Abu Kir, and the other a barber, Abu Sir, and they were neighbors in the market street, where their shops stood side by side. The dyer was a swindler and a liar, an exceeding wicked wight, as if indeed his head temples were hewn out of a boulder rock or fashioned of the threshold of a Jewish synagogue, nor was he ashamed of any shameful work he wrought amongst the folk. It was his wont, when any brought him cloth for staining, first to require of him payment under pretense of buying dyestuffs therewith. So the customer would give him the wage in advance and wend his ways, and the dyer would spend all he received on meat and drink, after which he would sell the cloth itself as soon as ever its owner turned his back and waste its worth in eating and drinking not else, for he ate not but of the daintiest and most delicate viands nor drank but of the best of that which doth away the wit of man. And when the owner of the cloth came to him, he would say to him, "Return to me tomorrow before sunrise and thou shalt find thy stuff dyed."

So the customer would go away, saying to himself, "One day is near another day," and return next day at the appointed time, when the dyer would say to him: "Come tomorrow. Yesterday I was not at work, for I had with me guests and was occupied with doing what their wants required till they went, but tomorrow before sunrise come and take thy cloth dyed." So he would fare forth and return on the third day, when Abu Kir would say to him: "Indeed yesterday I was excusable, for my wife was brought to bed in the night, and all day I was busy with manifold matters, but tomorrow, without fail, come and take thy cloth dyed." When the man came again at the appointed time, he would put him off with some other pretense, it mattered little what, and would swear to him, as often as he came, till the customer lost patience and said, "How often wilt thou say to me, 'Tomorrow?' Give me my stuff, I will not have it dyed." Whereupon the dyer would make answer: "By Allah, O my

brother, I am abashed at thee, but I must tell the truth and may Allah harm all who harm folk in their goods!" The other would exclaim, "Tell me what hath happened," and Abu Kir would reply: "As for thy stuff, I dyed that same on matchless wise and hung it on the drying rope, but 'twas stolen and I know not who stole it." If the owner of the stuff were of the kindly he would say, "Allah will compensate me," and if he were of the ill-conditioned, he would haunt him with exposure and insult, but would get nothing of him, though he complained of him to the judge.

He ceased not doing thus till his report was noised abroad among the folk and each used to warn other against Abu Kir, who became a byword amongst them. So they all held aloof from him and none would be entrapped by him save those who were ignorant of his character; but for all this, he failed not daily to suffer insult and exposure from Allah's creatures. By reason of this his trade became slack, and he used to go to the shop of his neighbor the barber Abu Sir and sit there, facing the dyery and with his eyes on the door. Whenever he espied anyone who knew him not standing at the dyery door with a piece of stuff in his hand, he would leave the barber's booth and go up to him saying, "What seekest thou, O thou?" and the man would reply, "Take and dye me this thing." So the dyer would ask, "What color wilt thou have it?" For, with all his knavish tricks, his hand was in all manner of dyes. But he was never true to anyone, wherefore poverty had gotten the better of him. Then he would take the stuff and say, "Give me my wage in advance, and come tomorrow and take the stuff." So the stranger would advance him the money and wend his way, whereupon Abu Kir would carry the cloth to the market street and sell it and with its price buy meat and vegetables and tobacco and fruit and what not else he needed. But whenever he saw anyone who had given him stuff to dye standing at the door of his shop, he would not come forth to him or even show himself to him.

On this wise he abode years and years, till it fortun'd one day that he received cloth to dye from a man of wrath, and sold it and spent the proceeds. The owner came to him every day, but found him not in his shop; for whenever he espied anyone who had claim against him, he would flee from him into the shop of the barber, Abu Sir. At last that angry man, finding that he was not to be seen and growing weary of such work, repaired to the kazi, and bringing one of his sergeants to the shop, nailed up the door, in presence of a number of Moslems, and sealed it, for that he saw therein naught save some broken pans of earthenware, to stand him instead of his stuff. After which the sergeant took the key, saying to the neighbors, "Tell him to bring back this man's cloth, then come to me and take his shop-key," and went his way, he and the man.

Then said Abu Sir to Abu Kir: "What ill business is this? Whoever bringeth thee aught, thou lovest it for him. What hath become of this angry man's stuff.?" Answered the dyer, "O my neighbor, 'twas stolen from me." "Prodigious!" exclaimed the barber. "Whenever anyone giveth thee aught, a thief stealeth it from thee! Art thou then the meeting place of every rogue upon town? But I doubt me thou liest, so tell me the truth." Replied Abu Kir, "O my neighbor, none hath stolen aught from me." Asked Abu Sir, "What then dost thou with the people's property?" and the dyer answered, "Whenever anyone giveth me aught to dye, I sell it and spend the price." Quoth Abu Sir, "Is this permitted thee of Allah?" and quoth Abu Kir, "I do this only out of poverty, because business is slack with me and I am poor and have nothing." And he went on to complain to him of the dullness of his trade and his lack of means.

Abu Sir in like manner lamented the little profit of his own calling, saying: "I am a master of

my craft and have not my equal in this city, but no one cometh to me to be polled, because I am a pauper. And I loathe this art and mystery, O my brother." Abu Kir replied: "And I also loathe my own craft, by reason of its slackness. But, O my brother, what call is there for our abiding in this town? Let us depart from it, I and thou, and solace ourselves in the lands of mankind, carrying in our hands our crafts which are in demand all the world over. So shall we breathe the air, and rest from this grievous trouble." And he ceased not to command travel to Abu Sir till the barber became wishful to set out, so they agreed upon their route. When they agreed to travel together, Abu Kir said to Abu Sir: "O my neighbor, we are become brethren and there is no difference between us, so it behooveth us to recite the fatihah that he of us who gets work shall of his gain feed him who is out of work, and whatever is left, we will lay in a chest. And when we return to Alexandria, we will divide it fairly and equally." "So be it," replied Abu Sir, and they repeated the opening chapter of the Koran on this understanding.

Then Abu Sir locked up his shop and gave the key to its owner, whilst Abu Kir left his door locked and sealed and let the key lie with the kazi's sergeant. After which they took their baggage and embarked on the morrow in a galleon upon the salt sea. They set sail the same day and fortune attended them, for, of Abu Sir's great good luck, there was not a barber in the ship, albeit it carried a hundred and twenty men, besides captain and crew. So when they loosed the sails, the barber said to the dyer: "O my brother, this is the sea, and we shall need meat and drink. We have but little provaunt with us and haply the voyage will be long upon us, wherefore methinks I will shoulder my budget and pass among the passengers, and maybe someone will say to me, 'Come hither, O barber, and shave me,' and I will shave him for a scone or a silver bit or a draught of water. So shall we profit by this, I and thou too." "There's no harm in that," replied the dyer, and laid down his head and slept, whilst the barber took his gear and water tasse, and throwing over his shoulder a rag to serve as napkin (because he was poor), passed among the passengers.

Quoth one of them, "Ho, master, come and shave me." So he shaved him, and the man gave him a half-dirham, whereupon quoth Abu Sir: "O my brother, I have no use for this bit. Hadst thou given me a scone, 'twere more blessed to me in this sea, for I have a shipmate, and we are short of provision." So he gave him a loaf and a slice of cheese and filled him the tasse with sweet water. The barber carried all this to Abu Kir and said, "Eat the bread and cheese and drink the water." Accordingly he ate and drank, whilst Abu Sir again took up his shaving gear and, tasse in hand and rag on shoulder, went round about the deck among the passengers. One man he shaved for two scones and another for a bittock of cheese, and he was in demand, because there was no other barber on board. Also he bargained with everyone who said to him, "Ho, master, shave me!" for two loaves and a half-dirham, and they gave him whatever he sought, so that by sundown he had collected thirty loaves and thirty silvers with store of cheese and olives and botargos. And besides these he got from the passengers whatever he asked for and was soon in possession of things galore.

Amongst the rest, he shaved the captain, to whom he complained of his lack of victual for the voyage, and the skipper said to him, "That art welcome to bring thy comrade every night and sup with me, and have no care for that so long as ye sail with us." Then he returned to the dyer, whom he found asleep. So he roused him, and when Abu Kir awoke, he saw at his head an abundance of bread and cheese and olives and botargos and said, "Whence gottest thou all this?" "From the bounty of Allah Almighty," replied Abu Sir. Then Abu Kir would have fallen to, but the barber said to him: "Eat not of this, O my brother, but leave it to serve us another time. For know that I shaved the captain and complained to him of our

lack of victual, whereupon quoth he: 'Welcome to thee! Bring thy comrade and sup both of ye with me every night.' And this night we sup with him for the first time."

But Abu Kir replied, "My head goeth round with seasickness and I cannot rise from my stead, so let me sup off these things and fare thou alone to the captain." Abu Sir replied, "There is no harm in that," and sat looking at the other as he ate, and saw him hew off gobbets as the quarryman heweth stone from the hill quarries and gulp them down with the gulp of an elephant which hath not eaten for days, bolting another mouthful ere he had swallowed the previous one and glaring the while at that which was before him with the glowering of a Ghul, and blowing as bloweth the hungry bull over his beans and bruised straw. Presently up came a sailor and said to the barber, "O craftsman, the captain biddeth thee come to supper and bring thy comrade." Quoth the barber to the dyer, "Wilt thou come with us?" but quoth he, "I cannot walk." So the barber went by himself and found the captain sitting before a tray whereon were a score or more of dishes, and all the company were awaiting him and his mate.

When the captain saw him, he asked, "Where is thy friend?" and Abu Sir answered, "O my lord, he is seasick." Said the skipper, "That will do him no harm, his sickness will soon pass off, but do thou carry him his supper and come back, for we tarry for thee." Then he set apart a porringer of kababs and putting therein some of each dish, till there was enough for ten, gave it to Abu Sir, saying, "Take this to thy chum." He took it and carried it to the dyer, whom he found grinding away with his dog teeth at the food which was before him, as he were a camel, and heaping mouthful on mouthful in his hurry. Quoth Abu Sir, "Did, I not say to thee, 'Eat not of this'? Indeed the captain is a kindly man. See what he hath sent thee, for that I told him thou wast seasick." "Give it here," cried the dyer. So the barber gave him the platter, and he snatched it from him and fell upon his food, ravening for it and resembling a grinning dog or a raging lion or a roc pouncing on a pigeon or one well-nigh dead for hunger who, seeing meat, falls ravenously to eat.

Then Abu Sir left him, and going back to the captain, supped and enjoyed himself and drank coffee with him, after which he returned to Abu Kir and found that he had eaten all that was in the porringer and thrown it aside, empty. So he took it up and gave it to one of the captain's servants, then went back to Abu Kir and slept till the morning. On the morrow he continued to shave, and all he got by way of meat and drink he gave to his shipmate, who ate and drank and sat still, rising not save to do what none could do for him, and every night the barber brought him a full porringer from the captain's table.

They fared thus twenty days until the galleon cast anchor in the harbor of a city, whereupon they took leave of the skipper, and landing, entered the town and hired them a closet in a khan. Abu Sir furnished it, and buying a cooking pot and a platter and spoons and what else they needed, fetched meat and cooked it. But Abu Kir fell asleep the moment he entered the caravanserai and awoke not till Abu Sir aroused him and set the tray of food before him. When he awoke, he ate, and saying to Abu Sir, "Blame me not, for I am giddy," fell asleep again. Thus he did forty days, whilst every day the barber took his gear, and making the round of the city, wrought for that which fell to his lot, and returning, found the dyer asleep and aroused him. The moment he awoke he fell ravenously upon the food, eating as one who cannot have his fill nor be satisfied, after which he went asleep again.

On this wise he passed other forty days, and whenever the barber said to him, "Sit up and be comfortable and go forth and take an airing in the city, for 'tis a gay place and a pleasant and hath not its equal among the cities," he would reply, "Blame me not, for I am giddy."

Abu Sir cared not to hurt his feelings nor give him hard words, but on the forty-first day, he himself fell sick and could not go abroad, so he engaged the porter of the khan to serve them both, and he did the needful for them and brought them meat and drink whilst Abu Kir would do nothing but eat and sleep. The man ceased not to wait upon them on this wise for four days, at the end of which time the barbees malady redoubled on him, till he lost his senses for stress of sickness; and Abu Kir, feeling the sharp pangs of hunger, arose and sought in his comrade's clothes, where he found a thousand silver bits. He took them and, shutting the door of the closet upon Abu Sir, fared forth without telling any, and the doorkeeper was then at market and thus saw him not go out.

Presently Abu Kir betook himself to the bazaar and clad himself in costly clothes, at a price of five hundred half-dirhams. Then he proceeded to walk about the streets and divert himself by viewing the city, which he found to be one whose like was not among cities. But he noted that all its citizens were clad in clothes of white and blue, without other color. Presently he came to a dyer's, and seeing naught but blue in his shop, pulled out to him a kerchief and said, "O master, take this and dye it and win thy wage." Quoth the dyer, "The cost of dyeing this will be twenty dirhams," and quoth Abu Kir, "In our country we dye it for two." "Then go and dye it in your own country! As for me, my price is twenty dirhams and I will not bate a tittle thereof." "What color wilt thou dye it?" "I will dye it blue." "But I want it dyed red." "I know not how to dye red." "Then dye it green." "I know not how to dye it green." "Yellow." "Nor yet yellow." Thereupon Abu Kir went on to name the different tints to him, one after other, till the dyer said: "We are here in this city forty master dyers, not one more nor one less, and when one of us dieth, we teach his son the craft. If he leave no son, we abide lacking one, and if he leave two sons, we teach one of them the craft, and if he die, we teach his brother. This our craft is strictly ordered, and we know how to dye but blue and no other tint whatsoever."

Then said Abu Kir: "Know that I too am a dyer, and wot how to dye all colors, and I would have thee take me into thy service on hire, and I will teach thee everything of my art, so thou mayst glory therein over all the company of dyers." But the dyer answered, "We never admit a stranger into our craft." Asked Abu Kir, "And what if I open a dyery for myself?" whereto the other answered, "We will not suffer thee to do that on any wise." Whereupon he left him, and going to a second dyer, made him the like proposal, but he returned him the same answer as the first. And he ceased not to go from one to other till he had made the round of the whole forty masters, but they would not accept him either to master or apprentice. Then he repaired to the Sheikh of the dyers and told what had passed, and he said, "We admit no strangers into our craft."

Hereupon Abu Kir became exceeding wroth, and going up to the King of that city, made complaint to him, saying, "O King of the Age, I am a stranger and a dyer by trade," and he told him whatso had passed between himself and the dyers of the town, adding: "I can dye various kinds of red, such as rose-color and jujubel-color and various kinds of green, such as grass-green and pistachio-green and olive and parrot's wing, and various kinds of black, such as coal-black and kohl-black, and various shades of yellow, such as orange and lemon-color," and went on to name to him the rest of the colors. Then said he, "O King of the Age, all the dyers in thy city cannot turn out of hand any one of these tints, for they know not how to dye aught but blue. Yet they will not admit me amongst them, either to master or apprentice." Answered the King: "Thou sayst sooth for that matter, but I will open to thee a dyery and give thee capital, and have thou no care anent them; for whoso offereth to do thee let or hindrance, I will hang him over his shop door."

Then he sent for builders and said to them, "Go round about the city with this master dyer, and whatsoever place pleaseth him, be it shop or khan or what not, turn out its occupier and build him a dyery after his wish. Whatsoever he biddeth you, that do ye, and oppose him not in aught." And he clad him in a handsome suit and gave him two white slaves to serve him, and a horse with housings of brocade and a thousand dinars, saying, "Expend this upon thyself against the building be completed." Accordingly Abu Kir donned the dress, and mounting the horse, became as he were an emir. Moreover the King assigned him a house, and bade furnish it, so they furnished it for him and he took up his abode therein. On the morrow he mounted and rode through the city, whilst the architects went before him, and he looked about him till he saw a place which pleased him and said, "This stead is seemly," whereupon they turned out the owner and carried him to the King, who gave him as the price of his holding, what contented him and more.

Then the builders fell to work, whilst Abu Kir said to them, "Build thus and thus and do this and that," till they built him a dyery that had not its like. Whereupon he presented himself before the King and informed him that they had done building the dyery and that there needed but the price of the dyestuffs and gear to set it going. Quoth the King, "Take these four thousand dinars to thy capital and let me see the first fruits of thy dyery." So he took the money and went to the market where, finding dyestuffs plentiful and well-nigh worthless, he bought all he needed of materials for dyeing; and the King sent him five hundred pieces of stuff, which he set himself to dye of all colors, and then he spread them before the door of his dyery.

When the folk passed by the shop, they saw a wonder sight whose like they had never in their lives seen, so they crowded about the entrance, enjoying the spectacle and questioning the dyer and saying, "O master, what are the names of these colors?" Quoth he, "This is red and that yellow and the other green," and so on, naming the rest of the colors. And they fell to bringing him longcloth and saying to him, "Dye it for us like this and that, and take what hire thou seekest." When he had made an end of dyeing the King's stuffs, he took them and went up with them to the Divan, and when the King saw them he rejoiced in them and bestowed abundant bounty on the dyer. Furthermore, all the troops brought him stuffs, saying, "Dye for us thus and thus," and he dyed for them to their liking, and they threw him gold and silver. After this his fame spread abroad, and his shop was called the Sultan's Dyery. Good came in to him at every door and none of the other dyers could say a word to him, but they used to come to him kissing his hands and excusing themselves to him for past affronts they had offered him and saying, "Take us to thine apprentices." But he would none of them, for he had become the owner of black slaves and handmaids and had amassed store of wealth.

On this wise fared it with Abu Kir, but as regards Abu Sir, after closet door had been locked on him and his money had been stolen, he abode prostrate and unconscious for three successive days, at the end of which the concierge of the khan, chancing to look at the door, observed that it was locked, and bethought himself that he had not seen and heard aught of the two companions for some time. So he said in his mind: "Haply they have made off without paying rent, or perhaps they are dead, or what is to do with them?" And he waited till sunset, when he went up to the door and heard the barber groaning within. He saw the key in the lock, so he opened the door, and entering, found Abu Sir lying groaning, and said to him: "No harm to thee. Where is thy friend?" Replied Abu Sir: "By Allah, I came to my senses only this day and called out, but none answered my call. Allah upon thee, O my brother, look for the purse under my head and take from it five half-dirhams and buy me

somewhat nourishing, for I am sore a-hungered." The porter put out his hand, and taking the purse, found it empty and said to the barber, "The purse is empty, there is nothing in it." Whereupon Abu Sir knew that Abu Kir had taken that which was therein and had fled, and he asked the porter, "Hast thou not seen my friend?" Answered the doorkeeper, "I have not seen him for these three days, and indeed methought you had departed, thou and he." The barber cried, "Not so, but he coveted my money and took it and fled, seeing me sick."

Then he fell a-weeping and a-wailing, but the doorkeeper said to him, "No harm shall befall thee, and Allah will requite him his deed." So he went away and cooked him some broth, whereof he ladled out a plateful and brought it to him. Nor did he cease to tend him and maintain him with his own moneys for two months' space, when the barber sweated and the Almighty made him whole of his sickness. Then he stood up and said to the porter: "An ever the Most High Lord enable me, I will surely requite thee thy kindness to me. But none requiteth save the Lord of His bounty!" Answered the porter: "Praised be He for thy recovery! I dealt not thus with am but of desire for the face of Allah the Bountiful."

Then the barber went forth of the khan and threaded the market streets of the town till Destiny brought him to the bazaar wherein was Abu Kir's dyery, and he saw the varicolored stuffs dispread before the shop and a jostle of folk crowding to look upon them. So he questioned one of the townsmen and asked him, "What place is this, and how cometh it that I see the folk crowding together?" whereto the man answered, saying: "This is the Sultan's Dyery, which he set up for a foreigner, Abu Kir high! And whenever he dyeth new stuff, we all flock to him and divert ourselves by gazing upon his handiwork, for we have no dyers in our land who know how to stain with these colors. And indeed there befell him with the dyers who are in the city that which befell." And he went on to tell him all that had passed between Abu Kir and the master dyers and how he had complained of them to the Sultan, who took him by the hand and built him that dyery and gave him this and that- brief, he, recounted to him all that had occurred.

At this the barber rejoiced and said in himself: "Praised be Allah Who hath prospered him, so that he is become a master of his craft! And the man is excusable, for of a surety he hath been diverted from thee by his work and hath forgotten thee; but thou actedst kindly by him and entreatedst him generously what time he was out of work, so when he seeth thee, he will rejoice in thee and entreat thee generously, even as thou entreatedst him." According he made for the door of the dyery, and saw Abu Kir seated on a high mattress spread upon a bench beside the doorway, clad in royal apparel and attended by four blackamoor slaves and four white Mamelukes all robed in the richest of raiment. Moreover, he saw the workmen, ten Negro slaves, standing at work; for when Abu Kir bought them, he taught them the craft of dyeing, and he himself sat amongst his cushions as he were a grand wazir or a mighty monarch, putting his hand to naught but only saying to the men, "Do this and do that." So the barber went up to him and stood before him, deeming he would rejoice in him when he saw him and salute him and entreat him with honor and make much of him. But when eye fell upon eye, the dyer said to him: "O scoundrel how many a time have I bidden thee stand not at the door of the workshop? Hast thou a mind to disgrace me with the folk, thief that thou art? Seize him."

So the blackamoors ran at him and laid hold of him, and the dyer rose up from his seat and said, "Throw him." Accordingly they threw him down and Abu Kir took a stick and dealt him a hundred strokes on the back, after which they turned him over and he beat him other hundred blows on his belly. Then he said to him: "O scoundrel, O villain, if ever again I see thee standing at the door of this dyery, I will forthwith send thee to the King, and he will

commit thee to the Chief of Police, that he may strike thy neck. Begone, may Allah not bless thee!" So Abu Sir departed from him, brokenhearted by reason of the beating and shame that had betided him, whilst the bystanders asked Abu Kir, "What hath this man done?" He answered: "The fellow is a thief, who stealeth the stuffs of folk. He hath robbed me of cloth, how many a time! And I still said to myself, 'Allah forgive him!' He is a poor man, and I cared not to deal roughly with him, so I used to give my customers the worth of their goods and forbid him gently, but he would not be forbidden. And if he come again, I will send him to the King, who will put him to death and rid the people of his mischief." And the bystanders fell to abusing the barber after his back was turned.

Such was the behavior of Abu Kir, but as regards Abu Sir, he returned to the khan, where he sat pondering that which the dyer had done by him, and he remained seated till the burning of the beating subsided, when he went out and walked about the markets of the city. Presently he bethought him to go to the hammam bath, so he said to one of the townsfolk, "O my brother, which is the way to the baths?" Quoth the man, "And what manner of thing may the baths be?" and quoth Abu Sir, "'Tis a place where people wash themselves and do away their dirt and defilements, and it is of the best of the good things of the world." Replied the townsman, "Get thee to the sea," but the barber rejoined, "I want the hammam baths." Cried the other: "We know not what manner of thing is the hammam, for we all resort to the sea. Even the King, when he would wash, betaketh himself to the sea."

When Abu Sir was assured that there was no bath in the city and that the folk knew not the baths nor the fashion thereof, he betook himself to the King's Divan and, kissing ground between his hands, called down blessings on him and said: "I am a stranger and a bathman by trade, and I entered thy city and thought to go to the hammam, but found not one therein. How cometh a city of this comely quality to lack a hammam, seeing that the bath is of the highest of the delights of this world?" Quoth the King, "What manner of thing is the hammam?" So Abu Sir proceeded to set forth to him the quality of the bath, saying, "Thy capital will not be a perfect city till there be a hammam therein." "Welcome to thee!" said the King and clad him in a dress that had not its like and gave him a horse and two blackamoor slaves, presently adding four handmaids and as many white Mamelukes. He also appointed him a furnished house and honored him yet more abundantly than he had honored the dyer.

After this he sent builders with him, saying to them, "Build him a hammam in what place soever shall please him." So he took them and went with them through the midst of the city till he saw a stead that suited him. He pointed it out to the builders and they set to work, whilst he directed them, and they wrought till they builded him a hammam that had not its like. Then he bade them paint it, and they painted it rarely, so that it was a delight to the beholders. After which Abu Sir went up to the King and told him that they had made an end of building and decorating the hammam, adding, "There lacketh naught save the furniture." The King gave him ten thousand dinars wherewith he furnished the bath and ranged the napkins on the ropes, and all who passed by the door stared at it and their mind was confounded at its decorations. So the people crowded to this spectacle, whose like they had never in their lives seen, and solaced themselves by staring at it and saying, "What is this thing?" To which Abu Sir replied, "This is a hammam," and they marveled thereat. Then he heated water and set the bath a-working, and he made a jetting fountain in the great basin, which ravished the wit of an who saw it of the people of the city.

Furthermore, he sought of the King ten Mamelukes not yet come to manhood, and he gave him ten boys like moons, whereupon Abu Sir proceeded to shampoo them, saying, "Do in

this wise with the bathers." Then he burnt perfumes and sent out a crier to cry aloud in the city, saying, "O creatures of Allah, get ye to the baths which be called the Sultan's Hammam!" So the lieges came thither and Abu Sir bade the slave boys wash their bodies. The folk went down into the tank and coming forth, seated themselves on the raised pavement whilst the boys shampooed them, even as Abu Sir had taught them. And they continued to enter the hammam and do their need therein gratis and go out, without paying, for the space of three days.

On the fourth day the barber invited the King, who took horse with his grandees and rode to the baths, where he put off his clothes and entered. Then Abu Sir came in to him and rubbed his body with the bag gloves, peeling from his skin dirt rolls like lampwicks and showing them to the King, who rejoiced therein, and clapping his hand upon his limbs, heard them ring again for very smoothness and cleanliness. After which thorough washing Abu Sir mingled rosewater with the water of the tank and the King went down therein. When he came forth, his body was refreshed and he felt a lightness and liveliness such as he had never known in his life. Then the barber made him sit on the dais and the boys proceeded to shampoo him, whilst the censers fumed with the finest lign aloes.

Then said the King, "O master, is this the hammam?" and Abu Sir said, "Yes." Quoth the King; "As my head liveth, my city is not become a city indeed but by this bath," presently adding, "But what pay takest thou for each person?" Quoth Abu Sir, "That which thou biddest will I take," whereupon the King cried, "Take a thousand gold pieces for everyone who washeth in thy hammam." Abu Sir, however, said: "Pardon, O King of the Age! All men are not alike, but there are amongst them rich and poor, and if I take of each a thousand dinars, the hammam will stand empty, for the poor man cannot pay this price." Asked the King, "How then wilt thou do for the price?" and the barber answered: "I will leave it to their generosity. Each who can afford aught shall pay that which his soul grudgeth not to give, and we will take from every man after the measure of his means. On this wise will the folk come to us, and he who is wealthy shall give according to his station and he who is wealthless shall give what he can afford. Under such condition the hammam will still be at work and prosper exceedingly. But a thousand dinars is a monarch's gift, and not every man can avail to this."

The lords of the realm confirmed Abu Sir's words, saying: "This is the truth, O King of the Age! Thinkest thou that all folk are like unto thee, O glorious King?" The King replied: "Ye say sooth, but this man is a stranger and poor, and 'tis incumbent on us to deal generously with him, for that he hath made in our city this hammam whose like we have never in our lives seen and without which our city were not adorned nor hath gotten importance. Wherefore, an we favor him with increase of fee, 'twill not be much." But the grandees said: "An thou wilt guerdon him, be generous with thine own moneys, and let the King's bounty be extended to the poor by means of the low price of the hammam, so the lieges may bless thee. But as for the thousand dinars, we are the lords of thy land, yet do our souls grudge to pay it, and how then should the poor be pleased to afford it?" Quoth the King: "O my Grandees, for this time let each of you give him a hundred dinars and a Mameluke, a slave girl, and a blackamoor," and quoth they: "'Tis well. We will give it, but after today whoso entereth shall give him only what he can afford, without grudging." "No harm in that," said the King, and they gave him the thousand gold pieces and three chattels.

Now the number of the nobles who were washed with the King that day was four hundred souls, so that the total of that which they gave him was forty thousand dinars, besides four hundred Mamelukes and a like number of Negroes and slave girls. Moreover, the King gave

him ten thousand dinars, besides ten white slaves and ten handmaidens and a like number of blackamoors, whereupon, coming forward, Abu Sir kissed the ground before him and said: "O auspicious Sovereign, lord of justice, what place will contain me all these women and slaves?" Quoth the King: "O weak o' wit, I bade not my nobles deal thus with thee but that we might gather together unto thee wealth galore; for maybe thou wilt bethink thee of thy country and family and repine for them and be minded to return to thy mother land- so shalt thou take from our country muchel of money to maintain thyself withal, what while thou livest in thine own country." And quoth Abu Sir: "O King of the Age (Allah advance thee!), these white slaves and women and Negroes befit only kings, and hadst thou ordered me ready money, it were more profitable to me than this army; for they must eat and drink and dress, and whatever betideth me of wealth, it will not suffice for their support."

The King laughed and said: "By Allah, thou speaketh sooth! They are indeed a mighty host, and thou hast not the wherewithal to maintain them; but wilt thou sell them to me for a hundred dinars a head?" Said Abu Sir, "I sell them to thee at that price." So the King sent to his treasurer for the coin and he brought it and gave Abu Sir the whole of the price without abatement and in full tale, after which the King restored the slaves to their owners, saying, "Let each of you who knoweth his slaves take them, for they are a gift from me to you." So they obeyed his bidding and took each what belonged to him, whilst Abu Sir said to the King: "Allah ease thee, O King of the Age, even as thou hast eased me of these Ghuls, whose bellies none may fill save Allah!" The King laughed, and said he spake sooth. Then, taking the grandees of his realm from the hammam, returned to his palace. But the barber passed the night in counting out his gold and laying it up in bags and sealing them, and he had with him twenty black slaves and a like number of Mamelukes and four slave girls to serve him.

Now when morning morrowed, he opened the hammam and sent out a crier to cry, saying: "Whoso entereth the baths and washeth shall give that which he can afford and which his generosity requireth him to give." Then he seated himself by the pay chest and customers flocked in upon him, each putting down that which was easy to him, nor had eventide evened ere the chest was full of the good gifts of Allah the Most High. Presently the Queen desired to go to the hammam, and when this came to Abu Sir's knowledge, he divided the day on her account into two parts, appointing that between dawn and noon to men and that between midday and sundown to women. As soon as the Queen came, he stationed a handmaid behind the pay chest, for he had taught four slave girls the service of the hammam, so that they were become expert bathwomen and tirewomen. When the Queen entered, this pleased her, and her breast waxed broad, and she laid down a thousand dinars.

Thus his report was noised abroad in the city, and all who entered the bath he entreated with honor, were they rich or poor. Good came in upon him at every door, and he made acquaintance with the royal guards and got him friends and intimates. The King himself used to come to him one day in every week, leaving with him a thousand dinars, and the other days were for rich and poor alike; and he was wont to deal courteously with the folk and use them with the utmost respect. It chanced that the King's sea captain came in to him one day in the bath, so Abu Sir did off his dress and going in with him, proceeded to shampoo him, and entreated him with exceeding courtesy. When he came forth, he made him sherbet and coffee, and when he would have given him somewhat, he swore that he would not accept from him aught. So the captain was under obligation to him, by reason of his exceeding kindness and courtesy, and was perplexed how to requite the bathman his generous dealing.

Thus fared it with Abu Sir, but as regards Abu Kir, hearing an the people recounting wonders of the baths and saying, "Verily, this hammam is the Paradise of this world! Inshallah, O Such-a-one, thou shalt go with us tomorrow to this delightful bath," he said to himself, "Needs must I fare like the rest of the world, and see this bath that hath taken folk's wits." So he donned his richest dress, and mounting a she-mule and bidding the attendance of four white slaves and four blacks, walking before and behind him, he rode to the hammam. When he alighted at the door, he smelt the scent of burning aloes wood and found people going in and out and the benches full of great and small. So he entered the vestibule, and saw Abu Sir, who rose to him and rejoiced in him, but the dyer said to him: "Is this the way of well-born men? I have opened me a dyery and am become master dyer of the city and acquainted with the King and have risen to prosperity and authority, yet camest thou not to me nor askest of me nor saidst, 'Where's my comrade?' For my part, I sought thee in vain and sent my slaves and servants to make search for thee in all the khans and other places, but they knew not whither thou hadst gone, nor could anyone give me tidings of thee."

Said Abu Sir, "Did I not come to thee, and didst thou not make me out a thief and bastinado me and dishonor me before the world?" At this Abu Kir made a show of concern and asked: "What manner of talk is this? Was it thou whom I beat?" and Abu Sir answered, "Yes, 'twas I." Whereupon Abu Kir swore to him a thousand oaths that he knew him not and said: "There was a fellow like thee, who used to come every day and steal the people's stuff, and I took thee for him." And he went on to pretend penitence, beating hand upon hand and saying: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great. Indeed we have sinned against thee, but would that thou hadst discovered thyself to and said, 'I am Such-a-one!' Indeed the fault is with thee, for that thou madest not thyself known unto me, more especially seeing that I was distracted for much business." Replied Abu Sir: "Allah pardon thee, O my comrade! This was foreordained in the secret purpose, and reparation is with Allah. Enter and put off thy clothes and bathe at thine ease." Said the dyer, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O my brother, forgive me!" and said Abu Sir: "Allah acquit thee of blame and forgive thee! Indeed this thing was decreed to me from an eternity."

Then asked Abu Kir, "Whence gottest thou this high degree?" and answered Abu Sir: "He who prospered thee prospered me, for I went up to the King and described to him the fashion of the hammam, and he bade me build one." And the dyer said: "Even as thou art beknown of the King, so also am I, and, Inshallah- God willing- I will make him love and favor thee more than ever, for my sake. He knoweth not that thou art my comrade, but I will acquaint him of this and commend thee to him." But Abu Sir said: "There needeth no commendation, for He who moveth man's heart to love still liveth, and indeed the King and all his Court affect me and have given me this and that." And he told him the whole tale, and said to him: "Put off thy clothes behind the chest and enter the hammam, and I will go in with thee and rub thee down with the glove." So he doffed his dress, and Abu Sir, entering the bath with him, soaped him and gloved him and then dressed him and busied himself with his service till he came forth, when he brought him dinner and sherbets, whilst all the folk marveled at the honor he did him.

Then Abu Kir would have given him somewhat, but he swore that he would not accept aught from him, and said to him: "Shame upon such doing! Thou art my comrade, and there is no difference between us." Then Abu Kir observed: "By Allah, O my comrade, this is a mighty fine hammam of thine, but there lacketh somewhat in its ordinance." Asked Abu Sir, "And what is that?" and Abu Kir answered: "It is the depilatory, to wit, the paste

compounded of yellow arsenic and quicklime which removeth the hair with comfort. Do thou prepare it, and next time the King cometh, present it to him, teaching him how he shall cause the hair to fall off by such means, and he will love thee with exceeding love and honor thee." Quoth Abu Sir, "Thou speaketh sooth, and Inshallah, I will at once make it."

Then Abu Kir left him and mounted his mule, and going to the King, said to him, "I have a warning to give thee, O King of the Age!" "And what is thy warning?" asked the King, and Abu Kir answered, "I hear that thou hast built a hammam." Quoth the King: "Yes. There came to me a stranger and I builded the baths for even as I builded the dyery for thee, and indeed 'tis a mighty fine hammam and an ornament to my city," and he went on to describe to him the virtues of the bath. Quoth the dyer, "Hast thou entered therein?" and quoth the King, "Yes." Thereupon cried Abu Kir: "Alhamdolillah- praised be God- who saved thee from the mischief of yonder villian and foe of the Faith- I mean the bathkeeper!" The King inquired, "And what of him?" and Abu Kir replied: "Know, O King of the Age, that an thou enter the hammam again after this day, thou wilt surely perish." "How so?" said the King, and the dyer said: "This bathkeeper is thy foe and the foe of the Faith, and he induced thee not to stablish this bath but because he designed therein to poison thee. He hath made for thee somewhat, and he will present it to thee when thou enterest the hammam, saying, 'This is a drug which, if one apply to his parts below the waist, will remove the hair with comfort.' Now it is no drug, but a drastic dreg and a deadly poison, for the Sultan of the Christians hath promised this obscene fellow to release to him his wife and children an he will kill thee. For they are prisoners in the hands of that Sultan. I myself was captive with him in their land, but I opened a dyery and dyed for them various colors, so that they conciliated the King's heart to me and he bade me ask a boon of him. I sought of him freedom and he set me at liberty, whereupon I made my way to this city, and seeing yonder man in the hammam, said to him, 'How didst thou effect thine escape and win free with thy wife and children?' Quoth he: 'We ceased not to be in captivity, I and my wife and children, till one day the King of the Nazarenes held a Court whereat I was present, amongst a number of others. And as I stood amongst the folk, I heard them open out on the kings and name them, one after other, till they came to the name of the King of this city, whereupon the King of the Christians cried out "Alas!" and said, "None vexeth me in the world, but the King of such a city! Whosoever will contrive me his slaughter I will give him all. he shall ask." So I went up to him and said, "An I compass for thee his slaughter, wilt thou set me free, me and my wife and my children?" The King replied, "Yes, and I will give thee to boot whatso thou shalt desire." So we agreed upon this, and he sent me in a galleon to this city, where I presented myself to the King and he built me this hammam.

"Now, therefore, I have naught to do but to slay him and return to the King of the Nazarenes, that I may redeem my children and my wife and ask a boon of him." Quoth I: "And how wilt thou go about to kill him?" and quoth he, "By the simplest of all devices, for I have compounded him somewhat wherein is poison, so when he cometh to the bath, I shall say to him "Take this paste and anoint therewith thy parts below the waist for it will cause the hair to drop off." So he will take it and apply it to himself, and the poison will work in him a day and a night, till it reacheth his heart and destroyeth him. And meanwhile I shall have made off and none will know that it was I slew him." When I heard this," added Abu Kir, "I feared for thee, my benefactor, wherefore I have told thee of what is doing.

As soon as the King heard the dyer's story, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and said to him, "Keep this secret." Then he resolved to visit the hammam, that he might dispel doubt by supplying certainty, and when he entered, Abu Sir doffed his dress, and betaking himself as of wont to the service of the King, proceeded to glove him, after which he said to him, "O

King of the Age, I have made a drug which assisteth in plucking out the lower hair." Cried the King, "Bring it to me." So the barber brought it to him and the King, finding it nauseous of smell, was assured that it was poison, wherefore he was incensed and called out to his guards, saying, "Seize him!" Accordingly they seized him, and the King donned his dress and returned to his palace; boiling with fury, whilst none knew the cause of his indignation, for, of the excess of his wrath he had acquainted no one therewith and none dared ask him.

Then he repaired to the audience chamber, and causing Abu Sir to be brought before him with his elbows pinioned, sent for his sea captain and said to him: "Take this villian and set him in a sack with two quintals of lime unslaked and tie its mouth over his head. Then lay him in a cockboat and row out with him in front of my palace, where thou wilt see me sitting at the lattice. Do thou say to me, 'Shall I cast him in?' and if I answer, 'Cast him!' throw the sack into the sea, so the quicklime may be slacked on him to the intent that he shall die drowned and burnt." "Hearkening and obeying," quoth the captain, and taking Abu Sir from the presence, carried him to an island facing the King's palace, where he said to him: "Ho, thou, I once visited thy hammam and thou entreatedst me with honor and accomplishedst all my needs and I had great pleasure of thee. Moreover, thou swarest that thou wouldst take no pay of me, and I love thee with a great love. So tell me how the case standeth between thee and the King, and what abominable deed thou hast done with him that he is wroth with thee and hath commanded me that thou shouldst die this foul death."

Answered Abu Sir, "I have done nothing, nor weet I of any crime I have committed against him which merited this!" Rejoined the captain: "Verily, thou wast high in rank with the King, such as none ever won before thee, and all who are prosperous are envied. Haply someone was jealous of thy good fortune and threw out certain hints concerning thee to the King, by reason whereof he is become enraged against thee with rage so violent. But be of good cheer, no harm shall befall thee. For even as thou entreatedst me generously, without acquaintanceship between me and thee, so now I will deliver thee. But an I release thee, thou must abide with me on this island till some galleon sail from our city to thy native land, when I will send thee thither therein."

Abu Sir kissed his hand and thanked him for that, after which the captain fetched the quicklime and set it in a sack, together with a great stone, the size of a man, saying, "I put my trust in Allah!" Then he gave the barber a net, saying: "Cast this net into the sea, so haply thou mayest take somewhat of fish. For I am bound to supply the King's kitchen with fish every day, but today I have been distracted from fishing by this calamity which hath befallen thee, and I fear lest the cook's boys come to me in quest of fish and find none. So, an thou take aught, they will find it and thou wilt veil my face, whilst I go and play off my practice in front of the palace and feign to cast thee into the sea." Answered Abu Sir: "I will fish the while. Go thou, and God help thee!" So the captain set the sack in the boat and paddled till it came under the palace, where he saw the King seated at the lattice and said to him, "O King of the Age, shall I cast him in?" "Cast him!" cried the King, and signed to him with his hand, when lo and behold! something flashed like levin and fell into the sea. Now that which had fallen into the water was the King's seal ring, and the same was enchanted in such way that when the King was wroth with anyone and was minded to slay him, he had but to sign to him with his right hand, whereon was the signet ring, and therefrom issued a flash of lightning, which smote the object, and thereupon his head fell from between his shoulders. And the troops obeyed him not, nor did he overcome the men of might, save by means of the ring. So when it dropped from his finger, he concealed the matter and kept silence, for that he dared not say, "My ring is fallen into the sea," for fear of the troops, lest they rise against him and slay him.

On this wise it befell the King. But as regards Abu Sir, after the captain had left him on the island he took the net and casting it into the sea, presently drew it up full of fish, nor did he cease to throw it and pull it up full till there was a great mound of fish before him. So he said in himself, "By Allah, this long while I have not eaten fish!" and chose himself a large fat fish, saying, "When the captain cometh back, I will bid him fry it for me, so I may dine on it." Then he cut its throat with a knife he had with him, but the knife stuck in its gills, and there he saw the King's signet ring, for the fish had swallowed it and Destiny had driven it to that island, where it had fallen into the net. He took the ring and drew it on his little finger, not knowing its peculiar properties. Presently up came two of the cook's boys in quest of fish, and seeing Abu Sir, said to him, "O man, whither is the captain gone?" "I know not," said he, and signed to them with his right hand, when, behold, the heads of both underlings dropped off from between their shoulders. At this Abu Sir was amazed and said, "Would I wot who slew them!"

And their case was grievous to him, and he was still pondering it when the captain suddenly returned, and seeing the mound of fishes and two men lying dead and the seal ring on Abu Sir's finger, said to him: "O my brother, move not thy hand whereon is the signet ring, else thou wilt kill me." Abu Sir wondered at this speech and kept his hand motionless, whereupon the captain came up to him and said, "Who slew these two men?" "By Allah, O my brother, I wot not!" "Thou sayest sooth, but tell me, whence hadst thou that ring?" "I found it in this fish's gills." "True," said the captain, "for I saw it fall flashing from the King's palace and disappear in the sea, what time he signed toward thee, saying, 'Cast him in.' So I cast the sack into the water, and it was then that the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the sea, where this fish swallowed it, and Allah drave it to thee, so that thou madest it thy prey, for this ring was thy lot. But kennest thou its property?"

Said Abu Sir, "I knew not that it had any properties peculiar to it," and the captain said: "Learn, then, that the King's troops obey him not save for fear of this signet ring, because it is spelled, and when he was wroth with anyone and had a mind to kill he would sign at him therewith and his head would drop from between his shoulders, for there issued a flash of lightning from the ring and its ray smote the object of his wrath, who died forthright." At this, Abu Sir rejoiced with exceeding joy and said to the captain, "Carry me back to the city," and he said, "That will I, now that I no longer fear for thee from the King, for wert thou to sip at him with thy hand, purposing to kill him, his head would fall down between thy hands. And if thou be minded to slay him and all his host, thou mayst slaughter them without let or hindrance."

So saying, he embarked him in the boat and bore him back to the city, so Abu Sir landed, and going up to the palace, entered the council chamber, where he found the King seated facing his officers, in sore cark and care by reason of the seal ring and daring not tell any of his folk anent its loss. When he saw Abu Sir, he said to him: "Did we not cast thee into the sea? How hast thou contrived to come forth of it?" Abu Sir replied: "O King of the Age, whenas thou badest throw me into the sea, thy captain carried me to an island and asked me of the cause of thy wrath against me, saying, 'What hast thou done with the King, that he should decree thy death?' I answered, 'By Allah, I know not that I have wrought him any wrong!' Quoth he: 'Thou wast high in rank with the King, and haply someone envied thee and threw out certain hints concerning thee to him, so that he is become incensed against thee. But when I visited thee in thy hammam, thou entreatedst me honorably, and I will requite thee thy hospitality to me by setting thee free and sending thee back to thine own land.' Then he set a great stone in the sack in my stead and cast it into the seat, but when

thou signedst to him to throw me in, thy seal ring dropped from thy finger into the main, and a fish swallowed it.

"Now I was on the island a-fishing, and this fish came up in the net with others, whereupon I took it, intending to broil it. But when I opened its belly, I found the signet ring therein, so I took it and put it on my finger. Presently up came two of the servants of the kitchen, questing fish, and I signed to them with my hand, knowing not the property of the seal ring, and their heads fell off. Then the captain came back, and seeing the ring on my finger, acquainted me with its spell. And, behold, I have brought it back to thee, for that thou dealtest kindly by me and entreatedst me with the utmost honor, nor is that which thou hast done me of kindness lost upon me. Here is thy ring, take it! But an I have done with thee aught deserving of death, tell me my crime and slay me and thou shalt be absolved of sin in shedding my blood."

So saying, he pulled the ring from his finger and gave it to the King, who, seeing Abu Sir's noble conduct, took the ring and put it on and felt life return to him afresh. Then he rose to his feet, and embracing the barber, said to him: "O man, thou art indeed of the flower of the well-born! Blame me not, but forgive me the wrong I have done thee. Had any but thou gotten hold of this ring, he had never restored it to me." Answered Abu Sir: "O King of the Age, an thou wouldst have me forgive thee, tell me what was my fault which drew down thine anger upon me, so that thou commandedst to do me die." Rejoined the King: "By Allah, 'tis clear to me that thou art free and guiltless in all things of offense, since thou hast done this good deed. Only the dyer denounced thee to me in such and such words," and he told him all that Abu Kir had said. Abu Sir replied: "By Allah, O King of the Age, I know no King of the Nazarenes, nor during my days have ever journeyed to a Christian country, nor did it ever come into my mind to kill thee. But this dyer was my comrade and neighbor in the city of Alexandria, where life was straitened upon us. Therefore we departed thence, to seek our fortunes, by reason of the narrowness of our means at home, after we had recited the opening chapter of the Koran together, pledging ourselves that he who got work should feed him who lacked work. And there befell me with him such-and-such things."

Then he went on to relate to the King all that had betided him with Abu Kir the dyer: how he had robbed him of his dirhams and had left him alone and sick in the khan closet, and how the door keeper had fed him of his own moneys till Allah recovered him of his sickness, when he went forth and walked about the city with his budget, as was his wont, till his espied a dyery, about which the folk were crowding; so he looked at the door, and seeing Abu Kir seated on a bench there, went in to salute him, whereupon he accused him of being a thief and beat him a grievous beating- brief, he told him his whole tale, from first to last, and added: "O King of the Age, 'twas he who counseled me to make the depilatory and present it to thee, saying: 'The hammam is perfect in all things but that it lacketh this.' And know, O King of the Age, that this drug is harmless and we use it in our land, where 'tis one of the requisites bath, but I had forgotten it. So when the dyer visited the hammam, I entreated him with honor and he reminded me of it, and enjoined me to make it forthwith. But do thou send after the porter of such a khan and the workmen of the dyery and question them all of that which I have told thee."

Accordingly the King sent for them and questioned them one and all and they acquainted him with the truth of the matter. Then he summoned the dyer, saying, "Bring him barefooted, bareheaded, and with elbows pinioned!" Now he was sitting in his house, rejoicing in Abu Sir's death, but ere he could be ware, the King's guards rushed in upon him and cuffed him on the nape, after which they bound him and bore him into the presence,

where he saw Abu Sir seated by the King's side and the doorkeeper of the khan and workmen of the dyery standing before him. Quoth the doorkeeper to him: "Is not this thy comrade whom thou robbedst of his silvers and leftest with me sick in the closet doing such-and-such by him?" And the workmen said to him, "Is not this he whom thou badest us seize and beat?" Therewith Abu Kir's baseness was made manifest to the King, and he was certified that he merited torture yet sorer than the torments of Munkar and Nakir. So he said to his guards: "Take him and parade him about the city and the markets; then set him in a sack and cast him into the sea." Whereupon quoth Abu Sir: "O King of the Age, accept my intercession for him, for I pardon him all he hath done with me." But quoth the King: "An thou pardon him all his offenses against thee, I cannot pardon him his offenses against me." And he cried out, saying, "Take him."

So they took him and paraded him about the city, after which they set him in a sack with quicklime and cast him into the sea, and he died, drowned and burnt. Then said the King to the barber, "O Abu Sir, ask of me what thou wilt and it shall be given thee." And he answered, saying, "I ask of thee to send me back to my own country, for I care no longer to tarry here." Then the King gifted him great store of gifts, over and above that which he had whilom bestowed on him, and amongst the rest a galleon freighted with goods. And the crew of this galleon were Mamelukes, so he gave him these also, after offering to make him his Wazir, whereto the barber consented not. Presently he farewelled the King and set sail in his own ship manned by his own crew, nor did he cast anchor till he reached Alexandria and made fast to the shore there. They landed, and one of his Mamelukes, seeing a sack on the beach, said to Abu Sir: "O my lord, there is a great heavy sack on the seashore, with the mouth tied up, and I know not what therein."

So Abu Sir came up, and opening the sack, found therein the remains of Abu Kir, which the sea had borne thither. He took it forth, and burying it near Alexandria, built over the grave a place of visitation. After this Abu Sir abode awhile, till Allah took him to Himself, and they buried him hard by the tomb of his comrade Abu Kir, wherefore that place was called Abu Kir and Abu Sir, but it is now known as Abu Kir only. This, then, is that which hath reached us of their history, and glory be to Him Who endureth forever and aye and by Whose will enterchange the night and the day. And of the stories they tell is one anent The Sleeper And The Waker.

The Sleeper And The Waker

IT hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was once at Baghdad, in the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid, a man and a merchant who had a son Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a by name. The merchant died leaving great store of wealth to his heir, who divided it into two equal parts, whereof he laid up one and spent of the other half. And he fell to companying with Persians and with the sons of the merchants, and he gave himself up to good drinking and good eating till all the wealth he had with him was wasted and wantoned. Whereupon he betook himself to his friends and comrades and cup companions and expounded to them his case, discovering to them the failure of that which was in his hand of wealth. But not one of them took heed of him or even deigned answer him.

So he returned to his mother (and indeed his spirit was broken) and related to her that which had happened to him and what had befallen him from his friends, how they had neither shared with him nor requited him with speech. Quoth she: "O Abu al-Hasan, on this wise are the sons of this time: And thou have aught, they draw thee near to them, and if

thou have naught, they put thee away from them." And she went on to condole with him, what while he bewailed himself and his tears flowed and he repeated these lines:

"An wane my wealth, no man will succor me,
When my wealth waxeth all men friendly show.
How many a friend for wealth showed friendliness
Who, when my wealth departed, turned to foe!"

Then he sprang up, and going to the place wherein was the other half of his goods, took it and lived with it well. And he swore that he would never again consort with a single one of those he had known, but would company only with the stranger, nor entertain even him but one night, and that when it morrowed, he would never know him more. Accordingly he fell to sitting every eventide on the bridge over Tigris and looking at each one who passed by him. And if he saw him to be a stranger, he made friends with him and carried him to his house, where he conversed and caroused with him all night till morning. Then he dismissed him, and would never more salute him with the salaam nor ever more drew near unto him, neither invited him again.

Thus he continued to do for the space of a full year, till one day while he sat on the bridge, as was his wont, expecting who should come to him so he might take him and pass the night with him, behold, up came the Caliph and Masrur, the Sword of his vengeance, disguised in merchants' dress, according to their custom. So Abu al-Hasan looked at them, and rising, because he knew them not, asked them: "What say ye? Will ye go with me to my dwelling place, so ye may eat what is ready and drink what is at hand; to wit, platter bread and meat cooked and wine strained?" The Caliph refused this, but he conjured him and said to him: "Allah upon thee, O my lord. Go with me, for thou art my guest this night, and balk not my hopes of thee!" And he ceased not to press him till he consented, whereat Abu al-Hasan rejoiced, and walking on before him, gave not over talking with him till they came to his house and he carried the Caliph into the saloon.

Al-Rashid entered a hall such as an thou sawest it and gazedst upon its walls, thou hadst beheld marvels, and hadst thou looked narrowly at its water conduits, thou wouldst have seen a fountain cased with gold. The Caliph made his man abide at the door, and as soon as he was seated, the host brought him somewhat to eat. So he ate, and Abu al-Hasan ate with him, that eating might be grateful to him. Then he removed the tray and they washed their hands and the Commander of the Faithful sat down again. Whereupon Abu al-Hasan set on the drinking vessels, and seating himself by his side, fell to filling and giving him to drink and entertaining him with discourse. And when they had drunk their sufficiency the host called for a slave girl like a branch of ban, who took a lute and sang to it these two couplets:

"O thou aye dwelling in my heart,
Whileas thy form is far from sight,
Thou art my sprite by me unseen,
Yet nearest near art thou, my sprite."

His hospitality pleased the Caliph, and the goodliness of his manners, and he said to him: "O youth, who art thou? Make me acquainted with thyself, so I may requite thee thy kindness." But Abu al-Hasan smiled and said: 'O my lord, far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass and that I company with thee at other time than this time!" The Prince of True Believers asked: "Why so? And why wilt thou not acquaint me with thy

case?" and Abu al-Hasan answered, "Know, O my lord, that my story is strange and that there is a cause for this affair." Quoth Al-Rashid, "And what is the cause?" and quoth he, "The cause hath a tail." The Caliph laughed at his words and Abu al-Hasan said, "I will explain to thee this saying by the tale of the larrikin and the cook. So hear thou, O my lord, the Story Of The Larrikin And The Cook.

Story Of The Larrikin And The Cook

ONE of the ne'er do-wells found himself one fine morning without aught, and the world was straitened upon him and patience failed him. So he lay down to sleep, and ceased not slumbering till the sun stang him and the foam came out upon his mouth, whereupon he arose, and he was penniless and had not even so much as a single dirham. Presently he arrived at the shop of a cook, who had set his pots and pans over the fire and washed his saucers and wiped his scales and swept his shop and sprinkled it. And indeed his fats and oils were clear and clarified and his spices fragrant, and he himself stood behind his cooking pots ready to serve customers. So the larrikin, whose wits had been sharpened by hunger, went in to him and saluting him, said to him, "Weigh me half a dirham's worth of meat and a quarter of a dirham's worth of boiled grain, and the like of bread." So the kitchener weighed it out to him and the good-for-naught entered the shop, whereupon the man set the food before him and he ate till he had gobbled up the whole and licked the saucers and sat perplexed, knowing not how he should do with the cook concerning the price of that he had eaten, and turning his eyes about upon everything in the shop.

And as he looked, behold, he caught sight of an earthen pan lying arsy-versy upon its mouth, so he raised it from the ground and found under it a horse's tail, freshly cut off and the blood oozing from it, whereby he knew that the cook adulterated his meat with horseflesh. When he discovered this default, he rejoiced therein, and washing his hands, bowed his head and went out. And when the kitchener saw that he went and gave him naught, he cried out, saying, "Stay, O pest, O burglar!" So the larrikin stopped and said to him, "Dost thou cry out upon me and call to me with these words, O comute?" Whereat the cook was angry, and coming down from the shop, cried: "What meanest thou by thy speech, O low fellow, thou that devourest meat and millet and bread and kitchen and goest forth with 'the peace be on thee!' as it were the thing had not been and down naught for it?" Quoth the lackpenny, "Thou liest, O accursed son of a cuckold!" Whereupon the cook cried out, and laying hold of his debtor's collar, said, "O Moslems, this fellow is my first customer this day, and he hath eaten my food and given me naught."

So the folk gathered about them and blamed the ne'er-do-well and said to him, "Give him the price of that which thou hast eaten." Quoth he, "I gave him a dirham before I entered the shop," and quoth the cook: "Be everything I sell this day forbidden to me, if he gave me so much as the name of a coin! By Allah, he gave me naught, but ate my food and went out and would have made off, without aught said." Answered the larrikin, "I gave thee a dirham," and he reviled the kitchener, who returned his abuse, whereupon he dealt him a buffet and they gripped and grappled and throttled each other. When the folk saw them fighting, they came up to them and asked them, "What is this strife between you, and no cause for it?" and the lackpenny answered, "Ay, by Allah, but there is a cause for it, and the cause hath a tail!" Whereupon cried the cook: "Yea, by Allah, now thou mindest me of thyself and thy dirham! Yes, he gave me a dirham, and but a quarter of the coin is spent. Come back and take the rest of the price of thy dirham." For he understood what was to do, at the mention of the tail.

"And I, O my brother," added Abu al-Hasan, "my story hath a cause, which I will tell thee." The Caliph laughed at his speech and said: "By Allah, this is none other than a pleasant tale! Tell me thy story and the cause."

Replied the host: "With love and goodly gree! Know, O my lord, that my name is Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a and that my father died and left me abundant wealth, of which I made two parts. One I laid up, and with the other I betook myself to enjoying the pleasures of friendship and conviviality and consorting with intimates and boon companions and the sons of the merchants, nor did I leave one but I caroused with him and he with me. And I lavished all my money on comrades and good cheer, till there remained with me naught. Whereupon I betook myself to the friends and fellow toppers upon whom I wasted my wealth, so perhaps they might provide for my case, but when I visited them and went round about to them all, I found no vantage in one of them, nor would any so much as break a bittock of bread in my face. So I wept for myself, and repairing to my mother, complained to her of my case. Quoth she: 'Such are friends. An thou have aught, they frequent thee and devour thee, but an thou have naught, they cast thee off and chase thee away.' Then I brought out the other half of my money and bound myself by an oath that I would never more entertain any save one single night, after which I would never again salute him nor notice him. Hence my saying to thee: 'Far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass, for I will never again company with thee after this night.'"

When the Commander of the Faithful heard this, he laughed a loud laugh and said: "By Allah, O my brother, thou art indeed excused in this matter, now that I know the cause and that the cause hath a tail. Nevertheless, Inshallah, I will not sever myself from thee." Replied Abu al-Hasan: "O my guest, did I not say to thee, 'Far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass?' For indeed I will never again forgather with any!" Then the Caliph rose and the host set before him a dish of roast goose and a bannock of first bread, and sitting down, fell to cutting off morsels and morseling the Caliph therewith. They gave not over eating till they were filled, when Abu al-Hasan brought basin and ewer and potash and they washed their hands. Then he lighted three wax candles and three lamps, and spreading the drinking cloth, brought strained wine, clear, old, and fragrant, whose scent was as that of virgin musk. He filled the first cup and saying, "O my boon companion, be ceremony laid aside between us by thy leave! Thy slave is by thee, may I not be afflicted with thy loss!" drank it off and filled a second cup, which he handed to the Caliph with due reverence.

His fashion pleased the Commander of the Faithful, and the goodliness of his speech, and he said to himself, "By Allah, I will assuredly requite him for this!" Then Abu al-Hasan filled the cup again and handed it to the Caliph, reciting these two couplets:

"Had we thy coming known, we would for sacrifice
Have poured thee out heart's blood or blackness of the eyes.
Ay, and we would have spread our bosoms in thy way,
That so thy feet might fare on eyelids, carpet-wise."

When the Caliph heard his verses, he took the cup from his hand and kissed it and drank it off and returned it to Abu al-Hasan, who made him an obeisance and filled and drank. Then he filled again, and kissing the cup thrice, recited these lines:

"Your presence honoreth the base,

And we confess the deed of grace.
An you absent yourself from us,
No freke we find to fill your place."

Then he gave the cup to the Caliph, saying: "Drink it in health and soundness! It doeth away malady and bringeth remedy and setteth the runnels of health to flow free." So they ceased not carousing and conversing till middle night, when the Caliph said to his host, "O my brother, hast thou in thy heart a concupiscence thou wouldst have accomplished, or a contingency thou wouldst avert?" Said he: "By Allah, there is no regret in my heart save that I am not empowered with bidding and forbidding, so I might manage what is in my mind!" Quoth the Commander of the Faithful, "By Allah, and again by Allah, O my brother, tell me what is in thy mind!" And quoth Abu al-Hasan: "Would Heaven I might be Caliph for one day and avenge myself on my neighbors, for that in my vicinity is a mosque, and therein four sheikhs, who hold it a grievance when there cometh a guest to me, and they trouble me with talk and worry me in words and menace me that they will complain of me to the Prince of True Believers, and indeed they oppress me exceedingly. And I crave of Allah the Most High power for one day, that I may beat each and every of them with four hundred lashes, as well as the imam of the mosque, and parade them round about the city of Baghdad and bid cry before them: 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso exceedeth in talk and vexeth the folk and turneth their joy to annoy.' This is what I wish, and no more."

Said the Caliph: "Allah grant thee that thou seekest! Let us crack one last cup and rise ere the dawn draw near, and, tomorrow night I will be with thee again." Said Abu al-Hasan, "Far be it!" Then the Caliph crowned a cup, and putting therein a piece of Cretan bhang, gave it to his host and said to him, "My life on thee, O my brother, drink this cup from my hand!" and Abu al-Hasan answered, "Ay, by thy life, I will drink it from thy hand." So he took it and drank it off, but hardly had it settled in his stomach when his head forewent his heels and he fell to the ground like one slain. Whereupon the Caliph went out and said to his slave Masrur: "Go in to yonder young man, the housemaster, and take him up and bring him to me at the palace. And when thou goest out, shut the door." So saying, he went away, whilst Masrur entered, and taking up Abu al-Hasan, shut the door behind him, and made after his master till he reached with him the palace what while the night drew to an end and the cocks began crowing, and set him down before the Commander of the Faithful, who laughed at him.

Then he sent for Ja'afar the Barmecide and when he came before him, said to him, "Note thou yonder young man," pointing to Abu al-Hasan, "and when thou shalt see him tomorrow seated in my place of estate and on the throne of my caliphate and clad in my royal clothing, stand thou in attendance upon him, and enjoin the emirs and grandees and the folk of my household and the officers of my realm to be upon their feet, as in his service, and obey him in whatso he shall bid them do. And thou, if he speak to thee of aught, do it, and hearken unto his say and gainsay him not in anything during this coming day." Ja'afar acknowledged the order with "Hearkening and obedience" and withdrew, whilst the Prince of True Believers went in to the palace women, who came up to him, and he said to them: "When this sleeper shall awake tomorrow, kiss ye the ground between his hands, and do ye wait upon him and gather round about him and clothe him in the royal clothing and serve him with the service of the caliphate, and deny not aught of his estate, but say to him, 'Thou art the Caliph.'" Then he taught them what they should say to him and how they should do with him, and withdrawing to a retired room, let down a curtain before himself and slept.

Thus fared it with the Caliph, but as regards Abu al-Hasan, he gave not over snoring in his

sleep till the day brake clear and the rising of the sun drew near, when a woman in waiting came up to him and said to him, "O our lord, the morning prayer!" Hearing these words, he laughed, and opening his eyes, turned them about the palace and found himself in an apartment whose walls were Painted with gold and lapis lazuli and its ceiling dotted and starred with red gold. Around it were sleeping chambers with curtains of gold-embroidered silk let down over their doors, and all about vessels of gold and porcelain and crystal and furniture and carpets dispread and lamps burning before the niche wherein men prayed, and slave girls and eunuchs and Mamelukes and black slaves and boys and pages and attendants.

When he saw this, he was bewildered in his wit and said: "By Allah either I am dreaming a dream, or this is Paradise and the Abode of Peace!" And he shut his eyes and would have slept again. Quoth one of the eunuchs, "O my lord, this is not of thy wont, O Commander of the Faithful!" Then the rest of the handmaids of the palace came up to him and lifted him into a sitting posture, when he found himself upon a mattress raised a cubit's height from the ground and all stuffed with floss silk. So they seated him upon it and propped his elbow with a pillow, and he looked at the apartment and its vastness and saw those eunuchs and slave girls in attendance upon him and standing about his head, whereupon he laughed at himself and said, "By Allah, 'tis not as I were on wake, yet I am not asleep!" And in his perplexity he bowed his chin upon his bosom, and then opened his eyes, little by little, smiling, and saying, "What is this state wherein I find myself?" Then he arose and sat up, whilst the damsels laughed at him privily, and he was bewildered in his wit, and bit his finger, and as the bite pained him, he cried "Oh!" and was vexed. And the Caliph watched him whence he saw him not, and laughed.

Presently Abu al-Hasan turned to a damsel and called to her, whereupon she answered, "At thy service, O Prince of True Believers!" Quoth he, "What is thy name?" and quoth she, "Shajarat al-Durr." Then he said to her, "By the protection of Allah, O damsel, am I Commander of the Faithful?" She replied, "Yes, indeed, by the protection of Allah thou in this time art Commander of the Faithful." Quoth he, "By Allah, thou liest, O thousandfold whore!" Then he glanced at the chief eunuch and called to him, whereupon he came to him and kissing the ground before him, said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." Asked Abu al-Hasan, "Who is Commander of the Faithful?" and the eunuch answered "Thou." And Abu al-Hasan said, "Thou Hest, thousandfold he-whore that thou art!" Then he turned to another eunuch and said to him, "O my chief, by the protection of Allah, am I Prince of the True Believers?" Said he: "Ay, by Allah, O my lord, thou art in this time Commander of the Faithful and Viceregent of the Lord of the Three Worlds."

Abu al-Hasan laughed at himself and doubted of his reason and was bewildered at what he beheld, and said: "In one night do I become Caliph? Yesterday I was Abu al-Hasan the Wag, and today I am Commander of the Faithful." Then the Chief Eunuch came up to him and said: "O Prince of True Believers (the name of Allah encompass thee!), thou art indeed Commander of the Faithful and Viceregent of the Lord of the Three Worlds!" And the slave girls and eunuchs flocked round about him, till he arose and abode wondering at his case. Hereupon the eunuch brought him a pair of sandals wrought with raw silk and green silk and purfled with red gold, and he took them and after examining them, set them in his sleeve. Whereat the castrato cried out and said: "Allah! Allah! O my lord, these are sandals for the treading of thy feet, so thou mayst wend to the wardrobe." Abu al-Hasan was confounded, and shaking the sandals from his sleeve, put them on his feet, whilst the Caliph died of laughter at him. The slave forewent him to the chapel of ease, where he entered, and doing his job, came out into the chamber, whereupon the slave girls brought

him a basin of gold and a ewer of silver and poured water on his hands, and he made the wuzu ablution. Then they spread him a prayer carpet and he prayed.

Now he knew not how to pray, and gave not over bowing and prostrating for twenty inclinations, pondering in himself the while and saying: "By Allah, I am none other than the Commander of the Faithful in very truth! This is assuredly no dream, for all these things happen not in a dream." And he was convinced and determined in himself that he was Prince of True Believers, so he pronounced the salaam and finished his prayers, whereupon the Mamelukes and slave girls came round about him with bundled suits of silken and linen stuffs and clad him in the costume of the caliphate and gave the royal dagger in his hand.

Then the chief eunuch came in and said, "O Prince of True Believers, the Chamberlain is at the door craving permission to enter." Said he, "Let him enter!" whereupon he came in, and after kissing ground, offered the salutation, "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" At this Abu al-Hasan rose and descended from the couch to the floor, whereupon the official exclaimed: "Allah! Allah! O Prince of True Believers, wottest thou not that all men are thy lieges and under thy rule and that it is not meet for the Caliph to rise to any man?" Presently the eunuch went out before him, and the little white slaves behind him, and they ceased not going till they raised the curtain and brought him into the hall of judgment and the throne room of the caliphate. There he saw all curtains and the forty doors and Al-'Ijli and Al-Rakashi the poet, and 'Ibdan and Jadim and Abu Ishak the cup companion, and beheld swords drawn and the lions compassing the throne as the white of the eye encircleth the black, and gilded glaives and death-dealing bows and Ajams and Arabs and Turks and Daylamites and folk and peoples and emirs and wazirs and captains and grandees and lords of the land and men of war in band, and in very sooth there appeared the might of the House of Abbas and the majesty of the Prophet's family.

So he sat down upon the throne of the caliphate and set the dagger on his lap, whereupon all present came up to kiss ground between his hands and called down on him length of life and continuance of weal. Then came forward Ja'afar the Barmecide and, kissing the ground, said: "Be the wide world of Allah the treading of thy feet, and may Paradise be thy dwelling place and the fire the home of thy foes! Never may neighbor defy thee, nor the lights of fire die out for thee, O Caliph of all cities and ruler of all countries!" Therewithal Abu al-Hasan cried out at him and said, "O dog of the sons of Barmak, go down forthright, thou and the chief of the city police, to such a place in such a street, and deliver a hundred dinars of gold to the mother of Abu al-Hasan the Wag, and bear her my salutation. Then go to such a mosque and take the four Sheikhs and the imam and scourge each of them with a thousand lashes and mount them on beasts, face to tail, and parade them round about all the city and banish them to a place other than this city. And bid the crier make cry before them, saying: 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso multiplieth words and molesteth his neighbors and damageth their delights and stinteth their eating and drinking!'"

Ja'afar received the command and answered "With obedience," after which he went down from before Abu al-Hasan to the city and did all he had ordered him to do. Meanwhile, Abu al-Hasan abode in the caliphate, taking and giving, bidding and forbidding and carrying out his command till the end of the day, when he gave leave and permission to withdraw, and the emirs and officers of state departed to their several occupations and he looked toward the Chamberlain and the rest of the attendants and said, "Begone!" Then the eunuchs came to him, and calling down on him length of life and continuance of weal, walked in attendance upon him and raised the curtain, and he entered the pavilion of the harem,

where he found candles lighted and lamps burning and singing women smiting on instruments, and ten slave girls, high-bosomed maids. When he saw this, he was confounded in his wit and said to himself, "By Allah, I am in truth Commander of the Faithful!" presently adding: "Or haply these are of the Jann, and he who was my guest yesternight was one of their kings who saw no way to requite my favors save by commanding his Ifrits to address me as Prince of True Believers. But an these be of the Jann, may Allah deliver me in safety from their mischief!"

As soon as he appeared, the slave girls rose to him, and carrying him up on to the dais, brought him a great tray bespread with the richest viands. So he ate thereof with all his might and main, till he had gotten his fill, when he called one of the handmaids and said to her, "What is thy name?" Replied she, "My name is Miskah," and he said to another, "What is thy name?" Quoth she, "My name is Tarkah." Then he asked a third, "What is thy name?" who answered, "My name is Tohfah." And he went on to question the damsels of their names, one after other, till he had learned the ten, when he rose from that place and removed to the wine chamber. He found it every way complete, and saw therein ten great trays, covered with all fruits and cates and every sort of sweetmeats. So he sat down and ate thereof after the measure of his competency, and finding there three troops of singing girls, was amazed, and made the girls eat.

Then he sat and the singers also seated themselves, whilst the black slaves and the white slaves and the eunuchs and pages and boys stood, and of the slave girls some sat and others stood. The damsels sang and warbled all varieties of melodies and the place rang with the sweetness of the songs, whilst the pipes cried out and the lutes with them wailed, till it seemed to Abu al-Hasan that he was in Paradise, and his heart was heartened and his breast broadened. So he sported, and joyaunce grew on him and he bestowed robes of honor on the damsels and gave and bestowed, challenging this girl and kissing that and toying with a third, plying one with wine and morseling another with meat, till nightfall.

All this while the Commander of the Faithful was diverting himself with watching him and laughing, and when night fell he bade one of the slave girls drop a piece of bhang in the cup and give it to Abu al-Hasan to drink. So she did his bidding and gave him the cup, which no sooner had he drunk than his head forewent his feet. Therewith the Caliph came forth from behind the curtain laughing, and calling to the attendant who had brought Abu al-Hasan to the palace, said to him, "Carry this man to his own place." So Masrur took him up, and carrying him to his own house, set him down in the saloon. Then he went forth from him, and shutting the saloon door upon him, returned to the Caliph, who slept till the morrow.

As for Abu al-Hasan, he gave not over slumbering till Almighty Allah brought on the morning, when he recovered from the drug and awoke, crying out and saying: "Ho, Tuffahah! Ho, Rahat al-Kulub! Ho, Miskah! Ho, Tohfah!" And he ceased not calling upon the palace handmaids till his mother heard him summoning strange damsels, and rising, came to him and said: "Allah's name encompass thee! Up with thee, O my son, O Abu al-Hasan! Thou dreamest." So he opened his eyes, and finding an old woman at his head, raised his eyes and said to her, "Who art thou?" Quoth she, "I am thy mother," and quoth he: "Thou liest! I am the Commander of the Faithful the Viceregent of Allah." Whereupon his mother shrieked aloud and said to him: "Heaven preserve thy reason! Be silent, O my son, and cause not the loss of our lives and the wasting of thy wealth, which will assuredly befall us if any hear this talk and carry it to the Caliph."

So he rose from his sleep, and finding himself in his own saloon and his mother by him, had

doubts of his wit, and said to her: "By Allah, O my mother, I saw myself in a dream in a palace, with slave girls and Mamelukes about me and in attendance upon me, and I sat upon the throne of the Caliphate and ruled. By Allah, O my mother, this is what I saw, and in very sooth it was no dream!" Then he bethought himself awhile and said: "Assuredly, I am Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, and this that I saw was only a dream when I was made Caliph and bade and forbade." Then he bethought himself again and said: "Nay, but 'twas not a dream, and I am none other than the Caliph, and indeed I gave gifts and bestowed honor robes." Quoth his mother to him: "O my son, thou sportest with thy reason. Thou wilt go to the madhouse and become a gazingstock. Indeed, that which thou hast seen is only from the Foul Fiend, and it was an imbroglio of dreams, for at times Satan sporteth with men's wits in all manner of ways."

Then said she to him, "O my son, was there anyone with thee yesternight?" And he reflected and said: "Yes, one lay the night with me and I acquainted him with my case and told him my tale. Doubtless, he was of the devils, and I, O my mother, even as thou sayst truly, am Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a." She rejoined: "O my son, rejoice in tidings of all good, for yesterday's record is that there came the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide and his many, and beat the Sheikhs of the mosque and the imam, each a thousand lashes, after which they paraded them round about the city, making proclamation before them and saying, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso faileth in goodwill to his neighbors and troubleth on them their lives!' And he banished them from Baghdad. Moreover, the Caliph sent me a hundred dinars and sent to salute me."

Whereupon Abu al-Hasan cried out and said to her: "O ill-omened crone, wilt thou contradict me and tell me that I am not the Prince of True Believers? 'Twas I who commanded Ja'afar the Barmecide to beat the Sheikhs and parade them about the city and make proclamation before them, and 'twas I, very I, who sent thee the hundred dinars and sent to salute thee, and I, O beldam of ill luck, am in very deed the Commander of the Faithful, and thou art a liar, who would make me out an idiot." So saying, he rose up and fell upon her and beat her with a staff of almond wood, till she cried out "Help, O Moslems!" And he increased the beating upon her till the folk heard her cries, and coming to her, found Abu al-Hasan bashing his mother and saying to her: "Old woman of ill omen, am I not the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast ensorcelled me!" When the folk heard his words, they said, "This man raveth," and doubted not of his madness.

So they came in upon him, and seizing him, pinioned his elbows, and bore him to the bedlam. Quoth the superintendent, "What aileth this youth?" and quoth they, "This is a madman, afflicted of the Jinn." "By Allah," cried Abu al-Hasan, "they lie against me! I am no madman, but the Commander of the Faithful." And the superintendent answered him, saying, "None lieth but thou, O foulest of the Jinn-maddened!" Then he stripped him of his clothes, and clapping on his neck a heavy chain, bound him to a high lattice and fell to beating him two bouts a day and two a-nights, and he ceased not abiding on this wise the space of ten days. Then his mother came to him and said: "O my son, O Abu al-Hasan, return to thy right reason, for this is the Devil's doing." Quoth he: "Thou sayest sooth, O my mother, and bear thou witness of me that I repeat me of that talk and turn me from my madness. So do thou deliver me, for I am nigh upon death." Accordingly his mother went out to the superintendent and procured his release, and he returned to his own house.

Now this was at the beginning of the month, and when it ended, Abu al-Hasan longed to drink liquor and, returning to his former habit, furnished his saloon and made ready food and bade bring wine. Then, going forth to the bridge, he sat there, expecting one whom he

should converse and carouse with, according to his custom. As he sat thus, behold, up came the Caliph and Masrur to him, but Abu al-Hasan saluted them not and said to Al-Rashid, "No friendly welcome to thee, O King of the Jann!" Quoth Al-Rashid, "What have I done to thee?" and quoth Abu al-Hasan, "What more couldst thou do than what thou hast done to me, O foulest of the Jann? I have been beaten and thrown into bedlam, where all said I was Jinn-mad, and this was caused by none save thyself. I brought thee to my house and fed thee with my best, after which thou didst empower thy Satans and Marids to disport themselves with my wits from morning to evening. So avaunt and aroynt thee and wend thy ways!"

The Caliph smiled and, seating himself by his side, said to him, "O my brother, did I not tell thee that I would return to thee?" Quoth Abu al-Hasan, "I have no need of thee, and as the byword sayeth in verse:

"Fro' my friend, 'twere meeter and wiser to part,
For what eye sees not born shall ne'er sorrow heart."

And indeed, O my brother, the night thou camest to me and we conversed and caroused together, I and thou, 'twas as if the Devil came to me and troubled me that night." Asked the Caliph, "And who is he, the Devil?" and answered Abu al-Hasan, "He is none other than thou." Whereat the Caliph laughed and coaxed him and spake him fair, saying: "O my brother, when I went out from thee, I forgot the door and left it open, and perhaps Satan came in to thee." Quoth Abu al-Hasan: "Ask me not of that which hath betided me. What possessed thee to leave the door open, so that the Devil came in to me and there befell me with him this and that?" And he related to him all that had betided him, first and last (and in repetition is no fruition), what while the Caliph laughed and hid his laughter.

Then said he to Abu al-Hasan: "Praised be Allah who hath done away from thee whatso irked thee, and that I see thee once more in weal!" And Abu al-Hasan said: "Never again will I take thee to cup companion or sitting comrade, for the proverb saith, 'Whoso stumbleth on a stone and thereto returneth, upon him be blame and reproach.' And thou, O my brother, nevermore will I entertain thee nor company with thee, for that I have not found thy heel propitious to me." But the Caliph coaxed him and said, "I have been the means of thy winning to thy wish anent the imam and the Sheikhs." Abu al-Hasan replied, "Thou hast," and Al-Rashid continued, "And haply somewhat may betide which shall gladden thy heart yet more." Abu al-Hasan asked, "What dost thou require of me?" and the Commander of the Faithful answered: "Verily, I am thy guest. Reject not the guest." Quoth Abu al-Hasan: "On condition that thou swear to me by the characts on the seal of Solomon, David's son (on the twain be the peace!) that thou wilt not suffer thine Ifrits to make fun of me." He replied, "To hear is to obey!"

Whereupon the wag took him and brought him into the saloon and set food before him and entreated him with friendly speech. Then he told him all that had befallen him, whilst the Caliph was like to die of stifled laughter. After which Abu al-Hasan removed the tray of food, and bringing the wine service, filled a cup and cracked it three times, then gave it to the Caliph, saying: "O boon companion mine, I am thy slave, and let not that which I am about to say offend thee, and be thou not vexed, neither do thou vex me." And he recited these verses:

"Hear one that wills thee well! Lips none shall bless
Save those who drink for drunk and all transgress.

Ne'er will I cease to swill while night falls dark
Till I put my forehead low upon my tass.
In wine like liquid sun is my delight
Which clears all care and gladdens allegresse."

When the Caliph heard these his verses and saw how apt he was at couplets, he was delighted with exceeding delight, and taking the cup, drank it off, and the twain ceased not to converse and carouse till the wine rose to their heads. Then quoth Abu al-Hasan to the Caliph: "O boon companion mine, of a truth I am perplexed concerning my affair, for meseemed I was Commander of the Faithful and ruled and gave gifts and largess, and in very deed, O my brother, it was not a dream." Quoth the Caliph, "These were the imbroglios of sleep," and crumbling a bit of bhang into the cup, said to him, "By my life, do thou drink this cup," and said Abu al-Hasan, "Surely I will drink it from thy hand." Then he took the cup and drank it off, and no sooner had it settled in his stomach than his head fell to the ground before his feet. Now his manners and fashions pleased the Caliph, and the excellence of his composition and his frankness, and he said in himself, "I will assuredly make him my cup companion and sitting comrade." So he rose forthright, and saying to Masrur, "Take him up," returned to the palace.

Accordingly, the eunuch took up Abu al-Hasan, and carrying him to the palace of the caliphate, set him down before Al-Rashid, who bade the slaves and slave girls compass him about, whilst he himself hid in a place where Abu al-Hasan could not see him. Then he commanded one of the handmaidens to take the lute and strike it over the wag's head, whilst the rest smote upon their instruments. So they played and sang, till Abu al-Hasan awoke at the last of the night and heard the symphony of lutes and tambourines and the sound of the flutes and the singing of the slave girls, whereupon he opened eyes, and finding himself in the palace, with the handmaids and eunuchs about him, exclaimed: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Come to my help this night, which meseems more unlucky than the former! Verily, I am fearful of the madhouse and of that which I suffered therein the first time, and I doubt not but the Devil is come to me again, as before. O Allah, my Lord, put thou Satan to shame!" Then he shut his eyes and laid his head in his sleeve, and fell to laughing softly and raising his head betimes, but still found the apartment lighted and the girls singing.

Presently one of the eunuchs sat down at his head and said to him, "Sit up, O Prince of True Believers, and look on thy palace and thy slave girls." Said Abu al-Hasan: "Under the veil of Allah, am I in truth Commander of the Faithful, and dost thou not lie? Yesterday I rode not forth, neither ruled, but drank and slept, and this eunuch cometh to make me rise." Then he sat up and recalled to thought that which had betided him with his mother and how he had beaten her and entered the bedlam, and he saw the marks of the beating wherewith the superintendant had beaten him, and was perplexed concerning his affair and pondered in himself, saying, "By Allah, I know not how my case is nor what is this that betideth me!" Then, gazing at the scene around him, he said privily, "All these are of the Jann in human shape, and I commit my case to Allah."

Presently he turned to one of the damsels and said to her, "Who am I?" Quoth she, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful," and quoth he: "Thou liest, O calamity! If I be indeed the Commander of the Faithful, bite my finger." So she came to him and bit it with all her might, and he said to her, "It doth suffice." Then he asked the chief eunuch, "Who am I?" and he answered, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful." So he left him and returned to his wonderment. Then, turning to a little white slave, said to him, "Bite my ear," and he bent his

head low down to him and put his ear to his mouth. Now the Mameluke was young and lacked sense, so he closed his teeth upon Abu al-Hasan's ear with all his might, till he came near to sever it. And he knew not Arabic, so as often as the wag said to him, "It doth suffice," he concluded that he said, "Bite like a vice," and redoubled his bite and made his teeth meet in the ear, whilst the damsels were diverted from him with hearkening to the singing girls, and Abu al-Hasan cried out for succor from the boy and the Caliph lost his senses for laughter.

Then he dealt the boy a cuff, and he let go his ear, whereupon all present fell down with laughter and said to the little Mameluke, "Art mad that thou bitest the Caliph's ear on this wise?" And Abu al-Hasan cried to them: "Sufficeth ye not, O ye wretched Jinns, that which hath befallen me? But the fault is not yours. The fault is of your chief, who transmewed you from Jinn shape to mortal shape. I seek refuge against you this night by the Throne Verse and the Chapter of Sincerity and the Two Preventives!" So saying, the wag put off his clothes till he was naked, with prickle and breech exposed, and danced among the slave girls. They bound his hands and he wantoned among them, while they died of laughing at him and the Caliph swooned away for excess of laughter.

Then he came to himself, and going forth the curtain to Abu al-Hasan, said to him: "Out on thee, O Abu al-Hasan! Thou slayest me with laughter." So he turned to him, and knowing him, said to him, "By Allah, 'tis thou slayest me and slayest my mother and slewest the Sheikhs and the imam of the mosque!" After which he kissed ground before him and prayed for the permanence of his prosperity and the endurance of his days. The Caliph at once robed him in a rich robe and gave him a thousand dinars, and presently he took the wag into especial favor and married him and bestowed largess on him and lodged him with himself in the palace and made him of the chief of his cup companions, and indeed he was preferred with him above them, and the Caliph advanced him over them all, so that he sat with him and the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, whose treasuress, Nuzhat al-Fuad hight, was given to him in marriage.

After this Abu al-Hasan the wag abode with his wife in eating and drinking and all delight of life, till whatso was with them went the way of money, when he said to her, "Harkye, O Nuzhat al-Fuad!" Said she, "At thy service," and he continued, "I have it in mind to play a trick on the Caliph, and thou shalt do the like with the Lady Zubaydah, and we will take of them at once, to begin with, two hundred dinars and two pieces of silk." She rejoined, "As thou wilt, but what thinkest thou to do?" And he said: "We will feign ourselves dead, and this is the trick. I will die before thee and lay myself out, and do thou spread over me a silken napkin and loose my turban over me and tie my toes and lay on my stomach a knife and a little salt. Then let down thy hair and betake thyself to thy mistress Zubaydah, tearing thy dress and slapping thy face and crying out. She will ask thee, 'What aileth thee?' and do thou answer her, 'May thy head outlive Abu al-Hasan the wag, for he is dead.' She will mourn for me and weep and bid her new treasuress give thee a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and will say to thee, 'Go, lay him out and carry him forth.' So do thou take of her the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and come back, and when thou returnest to me, I will rise up and thou shalt lie down in my place, and I will go to the Caliph and say to him, 'May thy head outlive Nuzhat al-Fuad,' and rend my raiment and pluck out my beard. He will mourn for thee and say to his treasurer, 'Give Abu al-Hasan a hundred dinars and a piece of silk.' Then he will say to me, 'Go, lay her out and carry her forth,' and I will come back to thee."

Therewith Nuzhat al-Fuad rejoiced and said, "Indeed, this is an excellent device." Then Abu

al-Hasan stretched himself out forthright and she shut his eyes and tied his feet and covered him with the napkin and did whatso her lord had bidden her. After which she tare her gear and bared her head and letting down her hair, went in to the Lady Zubaydah, crying out and weeping. When the Princess saw her in this state, she cried: "What plight is this? What is thy story, and what maketh thee weep?" And Nuzhatal-Fuad answered, weeping and loud-wailing the while: "O my lady, may thy head live and mayst thou survive Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, for he is dead!" The Lady Zubaydah mourned for him and said, "Alas, poor Abu al-Hasan the wag!" and she shed tears for him awhile. Then she bade her treasurers give Nuzhat al-Fuad a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said to her, "O Nuzhat al-Fuad, go, lay him out and carry him forth."

So she took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and returned to her dwelling, rejoicing, and went in to her spouse and acquainted him what had befallen, whereupon he arose and rejoiced and girdled his middle and danced and took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and laid them up. Then he laid out Nuzhat al-Fuad and did with her as she had done with him, after which he rent his raiment and plucked out his beard and disordered his turban and ran out, nor ceased running till he came in to the Caliph, who was sitting in the judgment hall, and he in this plight, beating his breast. The Caliph asked him, "What aileth thee, O Abu al-Hasan?" and he wept and answered, "Would Heaven thy cup companion had never been, and would his hour had never come!" Quoth the Caliph, "Tell me thy case," and quoth Abu al-Hasan, "O my lord, may thy head outlive Nuzhat al-Fuad!" The Caliph exclaimed, "There is no god but God," and smote hand upon hand. Then he comforted Abu al-Hasan and said to him, "Grieve not, for we will bestow upon thee a bedfellow other than she." And he ordered the treasurer to give him a hundred dinars and a piece of silk. Accordingly the treasurer did what the Caliph bade him, and Al-Rashid said to him, "Go, lay her out and carry her forth and make her a handsome funeral."

So Abu al-Hasan took that which he had given him and returning to his house, rejoicing, went in to Nuzhat al-Fuad and said to her, "Arise, for our wish" is won." Hereat she arose and he laid before her the hundred ducats and the piece of silk, whereat she rejoiced, and they added the gold to the gold and the silk to the silk and sat talking and laughing each to other.

Meanwhile, when Abu al-Hasan fared forth the presence of the Caliph and went to lay out Nuzhat al-Fuad, the Commander of the Faithful mourned for her, and dismissing the Divan, arose and betook himself, leaning upon Masrur, the Sword of his vengeance, to the Lady Zubaydah, that he might condole with her for her handmaid. He found her sitting weeping and awaiting his coming, so she might condole with him for his boon companion Abu al-Hasan the wag. So he said to her, "May thy head outlive thy slave girl Nuzhat al-Fuad!" and said she: "O my lord, Allah preserve my slave girl! Mayst thou live and long survive thy boon companion Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, for he is dead." The Caliph smiled and said to his eunuch: "O Masrur, verily women are little of wit. Allah upon thee, say, was not Abu al-Hasan with me but now?" Quoth the Lady Zubaydah, laughing from a heart full of wrath: "Wilt thou not leave thy jesting? Sufficeth thee not that Abu al-Hasan is dead, but thou must put to death my slave girl also and bereave us of the twain, and style me little of wit?" The Caliph answered, "Indeed, 'tis Nuzhat al-Fuad who is dead." And the Lady Zubaydah said: "Indeed he hath not been with thee, nor hast thou seen him, and none was with me but now save Nuzhat al-Fuad, and she sorrowful, weeping, with her clothes torn to tatters. I exhorted her to patience and gave her a hundred dinars and a piece of silk, and indeed I was awaiting thy coming, so I might console thee for thy cup companion Abu al-Hasan al-

Khali'a, and was about to send for thee." The Caliph laughed and said, "None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad," and she, "No, no, good my lord; none is dead but Abu al-Hasan the wag."

With this the Caliph waxed wroth, and the hashimi vein started out from between his eyes and throbbed, and he cried out to Masrur and said to him, "Fare thee forth to the house of Abu al-Hasan the wag, and see which of them is dead." So Masrur went out, running, and the Caliph said to the Lady Zubaydah, "Wilt thou lay me a wager?" And said she, "Yes, I will wager, and I say that Abu al-Hasan is dead." Rejoined the Caliph: "And I wager and say that none is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad, and the stake between me and thee shall be the Garden of Pleasance against thy palace and the Pavilion of Pictures." So they agreed upon this and sat awaiting Masrur's return with the news.

As for the eunuch, he ceased not running till he came to the by-street wherein was the stead of Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a. Now the wag was comfortably seated and leaning back against the lattice, and chancing to look round, saw Masrur running along the street and said to Nuzhat al-Fuad, "Meseemeth the Caliph, when I went forth from him, dismissed the Divan and went in to the Lady Zubaydah to condole with her, whereupon she arose and condoled with him, saying, 'Allah increase thy recompense for the loss of Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a!' And he said to her, 'None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad, may thy head outlive her!' Quoth she, 'Tis not she who is dead, but Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, thy boon companion.' And quoth he, 'None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad.' And they waxed so obstinate that the Caliph became wroth and they laid a wager, and he hath sent Masrur the Swarder to see who is dead. Now, therefore, 'twere best that thou lie down, so he may sight thee and go and acquaint the Caliph and confirm my saying."

So Nuzhat al-Fuad stretched herself out and Abu al-Hasan covered her with her mantilla and sat weeping at her head. Presently, Masrur, the eunuch, suddenly came in to him and saluted him, and seeing Nuzhat al-Fuad stretched out, uncovered her face and said: "There is no god but God! Our sister Nuzhat al-Fuad is dead indeed. How sudden was the stroke of Destiny! Allah have ruth on thee and acquit thee of all charge!" Then he returned and related what had passed before the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah, and he laughing as he spoke. "O accursed one," cried the Caliph: "this is no time for laughter! Tell us which is dead of them." Masrur replied: "By Allah, O my lord, Abu al-Hasan is well, and none is dead but Nuzhat al-Fuad." Quoth the Caliph to Zubaydah, "Thou hast lost thy pavilion in thy play," and he jeered at her. and said, "O Masrur, tell her what thou sawest."

Quoth the eunuch: "Verily, O my lady, I ran without ceasing till I came in to Abu al-Hasan in his house, and found Nuzhat al-Fuad lying dead and Abu al-Hasan sitting tearful at her head. I saluted him and condoled with him and sat down by his side and uncovered the face of Nuzhat al-Fuad and saw her dead and her face swollen. So I said to him, 'Carry her out forthwith, so we may pray over her.' He replied, 'Tis well,' and I left him to lay her out and came hither, that I might tell you the news." The Prince of True Believers laughed and said, "Tell it again and again to thy lady Little-wits." When the Lady Zubaydah heard Masrur's words and those of the Caliph she was wroth and said, "None is little of wit save he who believeth a black slave." And she abused Masrur, whilst the Commander of the Faithful laughed; and the eunuch, vexed at this, said to the Caliph, "He spake sooth who said, 'Women are little of wits and lack religion.'"

Then said the Lady Zubaydah to the Caliph: "O Commander of the Faithful, thou sportest and jestest with me, and this slave hoodwinketh me, the better to please thee. But I will send and see which of them be dead." And he answered, saying, "Send one who shall see

which of them is dead." So the Lady Zubaydah cried out to an old duenna, and said to her: "Hie thee to the house of Nuzhat al-Fuad in haste and see who is dead, and loiter not." And she used hard words to her. So the old woman went out running, whilst the Prince of True Believers and Masrur laughed, and she ceased not running till she came into the street. Abu al-Hasan saw her, and knowing her, said to his wife: "O Nuzhat al-Fuad, meseemeth the Lady Zubaydah hath sent to us to see who is dead and hath not given credit to Masrur's report of thy death. Accordingly she hath dispatched the old crone, her duenna, to discover the truth. So it behooveth me to be dead in my turn for the sake of thy credit with the Lady Zubaydah."

Hereat he lay down and stretched himself out, and she covered him and bound his eyes and feet and sat in tears at his head. Presently the old woman came in to her and saw her sitting at Abu al-Hasan's head, weeping and recounting his fine qualities; and when she saw the old trot, she cried out and said to her: "See what hath befallen me! Indeed Abu al-Hasan is dead and hath left me lone and lorn!" Then she shrieked out and rent her raiment and said to the crone, "O my mother, how very good he was to me!" Quoth the other, "Indeed thou art excused, for thou wast used to him and he to thee."

Then she considered what Masrur had reported to the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah and said to her, "Indeed, Masrur goeth about to cast discord between the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah." Asked Nuzhat al-Fuad, "And what is the cause of discord, O my mother?" and the other replied: "O my daughter, Masrur came to the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah and gave them news of thee that thou wast dead and that Abu al-Hasan was well." Nuzhat al-Fuad said to her: "O nauntty mine, I was with my lady just now and she gave me a hundred dinars and a piece of silk, and now see my case and that which hath befallen me! Indeed I am bewildered, and how shall I do, and I lone and lorn? Would Heaven I had died and he had lived!" Then she wept and with her wept the old woman, who, going up to Abu al-Hasan and uncovering his face, saw his eyes bound and swollen for the swathing. So she covered him again and said, "Indeed, O Nuzhat al-Fuad, thou art afflicted in Abu al-Hasan!" Then she condoled with her, and going out from her, ran along the street till she came into the Lady Zubaydah and related to her the story, and the Princess said to her, laughing: "Tell it over again to the Caliph, who maketh me out little of wit, and lacking of religion, and who made this ill-omened liar of a slave presume to contradict me." Quoth Masrur, "This old woman lieth, for I saw Abu al-Hasan well and Nuzhat al-Fuad it was who lay dead." Quoth the duenna, "'Tis thou that liest, and wouldst fain cast discord-between the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah." And Masrur cried, "None lieth but thou, O old woman of ill omen, and thy lady believeth thee, and she must be in her dotage." Whereupon the Lady Zubaydah cried out at him, and in very sooth she was enraged with him and with his speech and shed tears.

Then said the Caliph to her: "I lie and my eunuch lieth, and thou liest and thy waiting-woman lieth, so 'tis my rede we go, all four of us together, that we may see which of us telleth the truth." Masrur said: "Come, let us go, that I may do to this ill-omened old woman evil deeds and deal her a sound drubbing for her lying." And the duenna answered him: "O dotard, is thy wit like into my wit? Indeed thy wit is as the hen's wit." Masrur was incensed at her words and would have laid violent hands on her, but the Lady Zubaydah pushed him away from her and said to him, "Her truthspeaking will presently be distinguished from thy truth-speaking and her leasing from thy leasing." Then they all four arose, laying wagers one with other, and went forth afoot from the palace gate and hied on till they came in at the gate of the street where Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a dwelt.

He saw them, and said to his wife, Nuzhat al-Fuad: "Verily, all that is sticky is not a pancake they cook, nor every time shall the crock escape the shock. It seemeth the old woman hath gone and told her lady and acquainted her with our case and she hath disputed with Masrur, the eunuch, and they have laid wagers each with other about our death and are come to us, all four, the Caliph and the eunuch and the Lady Zubaydah and the old trot." When Nuzhat al-Fuad heard this, she started up from her outstretched posture and asked, "How shall we do?" whereto he answered, "We will both feign ourselves dead together and stretch ourselves out and hold out breath." So she hearkened unto him and they both lay down on the place where they usually slept the siesta and bound their feet and shut their eyes and covered themselves with the veil and held their breath.

Presently up came the Caliph, Zubaydah, Masrur, and the old woman, and entering, found Abu al-Hasan the wag and wife both stretched out as dead, which when the Lady saw, she wept and said: "They ceased not to bring ill news of my slave girl till she died. Methinketh Abu al-Hasan's death was grievous to her and that she died after him." Quoth the Caliph: "Thou shalt not prevent me with thy prattle and prate. She certainly died before Abu al-Hasan, for he came to me with his raiment rent and his beard plucked out, beating his breast with two bits of unbaked brick, and I gave him a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said too him, 'Go, bear her forth, and I will give thee a bedfellow other than she and handsomer, and she shall be instead of her.' But it would appear that her death was no light matter to him and he died after her, so it is I who have beaten thee and gotten thy stake." The Lady Zubaydah answered him in words galore, and the dispute between them waxed sore.

At last the Caliph sat down at the heads of the pair and said: "By the tomb of the Apostle of Allah (whom may He save and assain!) and the sepulchers of my fathers and forefathers, whoso will tell me which of them died before the other, I will willingly give him a thousand dinars!" When Abu al-Hasan heard the Caliph's words, he sprang up in haste and said: "I died first, O Commander of the Faithful! Here with the thousand dinars, and acquit thee of thine oath and the swear thou swore." Nuzhat al-Fuad rose also and stood up before the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah, who both rejoiced in this and in their safety, and the Princess chid her slave girl. Then the Caliph and Zubaydah gave them joy of their well-being and knew that this death was a trick to get the gold, and the Lady said to Nuzhat al-Fuad: "Thou shouldst have sought of me that which thou neededst, without this fashion, and not have burned my heart for thee." And she, "Verily, I was ashamed, O my lady." As for the Caliph, he swooned away for laughing and said, "O Abu al-Hasan, thou wilt never cease to be a wag and do peregrine things and prodigious!" Quoth he: "O Commander of the Faithful, this trick I played off for that the money which thou gavest me was exhausted, and I was ashamed to ask of thee again. When I was single, I could never keep money in hand, but since thou marriedst me to this damsel, if I possessed even thy wealth, I should lay it waste. Wherefore when all that was in my hand was spent, I wrought this sleight so I might get of thee the hundred dinars and the piece of silk, and all this is an alms from our lord. But now make haste to give me the thousand dinars and acquit thee of thine oath." The Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah laughed and returned to the palace, and he gave Abu al-Hasan the thousand dinars saying, "Take them as a *douceur* for thy perservation from death," whilst her mistress did the like with Nuzhat al-Fuad, honoring her with the same words. Moreover, the Caliph increased the wag in his solde and supplies, and he and his wife ceased not to live in joy and contentment till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Severer of societies, the Plunderer of palaces, and the Gamerer of graves. And among tales they tell is one touching Aladdin; Or, The Wonderful Lamp.

Continue. , read part 4.