

# **Tales from the Arabic, V3**

John Payne



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# **Tales from the Arabic, V3**

## John Payne

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- VOLUME THE THIRD.

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Tales from the Arabic, V3

## **VOLUME THE THIRD.**

## NOUREDDIN ALI OF DAMASCUS AND THE DAMSEL SITT EL MILAH.[FN#1]

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a merchant of the merchants of Damascus, by name Aboulhusn, who had money and riches and slaves and slave-girls and lands and houses and baths; but he was not blessed with a child and indeed his years waxed great; wherefore he addressed himself to supplicate God the Most High in private and in public and in his inclining and his prostration and at the season of the call to prayer, beseeching Him to vouchsafe him, before his admittance [to His mercy], a son who should inherit his wealth and possessions; and God answered his prayer. So his wife conceived and the days of her pregnancy were accomplished and her months and her nights and the pangs of her travail came upon her and she gave birth to a male child, as he were a piece of the moon. He had not his match for beauty and he put to shame the sun and the resplendent moon; for he had a shining face and black eyes of Babylonian witchery[FN#2] and aquiline nose and ruby lips; brief, he was perfect of attributes, the loveliest of the folk of his time, without doubt or gainsaying.

His father rejoiced in him with the utmost joy and his heart was solaced and he was glad; and he made banquets to the folk and clad the poor and the widows. He named the boy Sidi[FN#3] Nouredin Ali and reared him in fondness and delight among the slaves and servants. When he came to seven years of age, his father put him to school, where he learned the sublime Koran and the arts of writing and reckoning: and when he reached his tenth year, he learned horsemanship and archery and to occupy himself with arts and sciences of all kinds, part and parts.[FN#4] He grew up pleasant and subtle and goodly and lovesome, ravishing all who beheld him, and inclined to companying with brethren and comrades and mixing with merchants and travellers. From these latter he heard tell of that which they had seen of the marvels of the cities in their travels and heard them say, "He who leaveth not his native land diverteth not himself [with the sight of the marvels of the world,] and especially of the city of Baghdad."

So he was concerned with an exceeding concern for his lack of travel and discovered this to his father, who said to him, "O my son, why do I see thee chagrined?" And he answered, "I would fain travel." Quoth Aboulhusn, "O my son, none travelleth save those whose occasion is urgent and those who are compelled thereunto [by need]. As for thee, O my son, thou enjoyest ample fortune; so do thou content thyself with that which God hath given thee and be bounteous [unto others], even as He hath been bounteous unto thee; and afflict not thyself with the toil and hardship of travel, for indeed it is said that travel is a piece of torment." [FN#5] But the youth said, "Needs must I travel to Baghdad, the abode of peace."

When his father saw the strength of his determination to travel, he fell in with his wishes and equipped him with five thousand dinars in cash and the like in merchandise and sent with him two serving-men. So the youth set out, trusting in the blessing of God the Most High, and his father went out with him, to take leave of him, and returned [to Damascus]. As for Nouredin Ali, he gave not over travelling days and nights till he entered the city of Baghdad and laying up his loads in the caravanserai, made for the bath, where he did away that which was upon him of the dirt of the road and putting off his travelling clothes, donned a costly suit of Yemen stuff, worth an hundred dinars. Then he put in his sleeve[FN#6] a thousand mithcals[FN#7] of gold and sallied forth a-walking and swaying gracefully as he went. His gait confounded all those who beheld him, as he shamed the branches with his shape and belittled the rose with the redness of his cheeks and his black eyes of Babylonian witchcraft; indeed, thou wouldst deem that whoso looked on him would surely be preserved from calamity; [for he was] even as saith of him one of his describers in the following verses:

Thy haters say and those who malice to thee bear A true word,  
profiting its hearers everywhere; "The glory's not in those whom raiment rich makes fair, But those  
who still adorn the raiment that they wear."

So he went walking in the thoroughfares of the city and viewing its ordinance and its markets and thoroughfares and gazing on its folk. Presently, Abou Nuwas met him. (Now he was of those of whom it is said, "They love the fair,"[FN#8] and indeed there is said what is said concerning him.[FN#9] When he saw Nouredin Ali, he stared at him in amazement and exclaimed, "Say, I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak!"[FN#10] Then he accosted the young Damascene and saluting him, said to him, "Why do I see my lord alone and forlorn?"

Meseemeth thou art a stranger and knowest not this country; so, with my lord's permission, I will put myself at his service and acquaint him with the streets, for that I know this city." Quoth Noureddin, "This will be of thy favour, O uncle." Whereat Abou Nuwas rejoiced and fared on with him, showing him the markets and thoroughfares, till they came to the house of a slave-dealer, where he stopped and said to the youth, "From what city art thou?" "From Damascus," answered Noureddin; and Abou Nuwas said, "By Allah, thou art from a blessed city, even as saith of it the poet in the following verses:

Damascus is all gardens decked for the pleasure of the eyes; For  
the seeker there are black-eyed girls and boys of Paradise."

Noureddin thanked him and they entered the slave-merchant's house. When the people of the house saw Abou Nuwas, they rose to do him worship, for that which they knew of his station with the Commander of the Faithful. Moreover, the slave-dealer himself came up to them with two chairs, and they seated themselves thereon. Then the slave-merchant went into the house and returning with the slave-girl, as she were a willow-wand or a bamboo-cane, clad in a vest of damask silk and tired with a black and white turban, the ends whereof fell down over her face, seated her on a chair of ebony; after which quoth he to those who were present, "I will discover to you a face as it were a full moon breaking forth from under a cloud." And they said, "Do so." So he unveiled the damsel's face and behold, she was like the shining sun, with comely shape and day-bright face and slender [waist and heavy] hips; brief, she was endowed with elegance, the description whereof existeth not, [and was] even as saith of her the poet:

A fair one, to idolaters if she herself should show, They'd leave  
their idols and her face for only Lord would know; And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit,  
Assuredly  
the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

The dealer stood at her head and one of the merchants said, "I bid a thousand dinars for her." Quoth another, "I bid eleven hundred dinars;" [and a third, "I bid twelve hundred"]. Then said a fourth merchant, "Be she mine for fourteen hundred dinars." And the biddings stood still at that sum. Quoth her owner, "I will not sell her save with her consent. If she desire to be sold, I will sell her to whom she willeth." And the slave-dealer said to him, "What is her name?" "Her name is Sitt el Milah," [FN#11] answered the other; whereupon the dealer said to her, "By thy leave, I will sell thee to yonder merchant for this price of fourteen hundred dinars." Quoth she, "Come hither to me." So he came up to her and when he drew near, she gave him a kick with her foot and cast him to the ground, saying, "I will not have that old man." The slave-dealer arose, shaking the dust from his clothes and head, and said, "Who biddeth more? Who is desirous [of buying?]" Quoth one of the merchants, "I," and the dealer said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, shall I sell thee to this merchant?" "Come hither to me," answered she; but he said "Nay; speak and I will hearken to thee from my place, for I will not trust myself to thee," And she said, "I will not have him."

Then he looked at her and seeing her eyes fixed on the young Damascene, for that in very deed he had ravished her with his beauty and grace, went up to the latter and said to him, "O my lord, art thou a looker-on or a buyer? Tell me." Quoth Noureddin, "I am both looker-on and buyer. Wilt thou sell me yonder slave-girl for sixteen hundred dinars?" And he pulled out the purse of gold. So the dealer returned, dancing and clapping his hands and saying, "So be it, so be it, or not [at all]!" Then he came to the damsel and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, shall I sell thee to yonder young Damascene for sixteen hundred dinars?" But she answered, "No," of shamefastness before her master and the bystanders; whereupon the people of the bazaar and the slave-merchant departed, and Abou Nuwas and Ali Noureddin arose and went each his own way, whilst the damsel returned to her master's house, full of love for the young Damascene.

When the night darkened on her, she called him to mind and her heart clave to him and sleep visited her not; and on this wise she abode days and nights, till she sickened and abstained from food. So her lord went in to her and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, how findest thou thyself?" "O my lord," answered she, "I am dead without recourse and I beseech thee to bring me my shroud, so I may look on it before my death." Therewithal he went out from her, sore concerned for her, and betook himself to a friend of his, a draper, who had been present on the day when the damsel was cried [for sale]. Quoth his friend to him, "Why do I see thee troubled?" And he answered, "Sitt el Milah is at the point of death and these three days she hath neither eaten nor drunken. I questioned her to-day of her case and she said, 'O my lord, buy me a shroud, so I may look on it before my death.'" Quoth the



draper, "Methinks nought ails her but that she is enamoured of the young Damascene and I counsel thee to mention his name to her and avouch to her that he hath foregathered with thee on her account and is desirous of coming to thy house, so he may hear somewhat of her singing. If she say, 'I reckon not of him, for there is that to do with me which distracteth me from the Damascene and from other than he,' know that she saith sooth concerning her sickness; but, if she say to thee other than this, acquaint me therewith."

So the man returned to his lodging and going in to his slave-girl, said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, I went out on thine occasion and there met me the young man of Damascus, and he saluted me and saluteth thee. Indeed, he seeketh to win thy favour and would fain be a guest in our dwelling, so thou mayst let him hear somewhat of thy singing." When she heard speak of the young Damascene, she gave a sob, that her soul was like to depart her body, and answered, saying, "He knoweth my plight and is ware that these three days past I have eaten not nor drunken, and I beseech thee, O my lord, by the Great God, to accomplish the stranger his due and bring him to my lodging and make excuse to him for me."

When her master heard this, his reason fled for joy and he went to his friend the draper and said to him, "Thou wast right in the matter of the damsel, for that she is enamoured of the young Damascene; so how shall I do?" Quoth the other, "Go to the bazaar and when thou seest him, salute him and say to him, 'Indeed, thy departure the other day, without accomplishing thine occasion, was grievous to me; so, if thou be still minded to buy the girl, I will abate thee an hundred dinars of that which thou badest for her, by way of hospitable entreatment of thee and making myself agreeable to thee; for that thou art a stranger in our land.' If he say to thee, 'I have no desire for her' and hold off from thee, know that he will not buy; in which case, let me know, so I may contrive thee another device; and if he say to thee other than this, conceal not from me aught."

So the girl's owner betook himself to the bazaar, where he found the youth seated at the upper end of the merchants' place of session, selling and buying and taking and giving, as he were the moon on the night of its full, and saluted him. The young man returned his salutation and he said to him, "O my lord, be not thou vexed at the girl's speech the other day, for her price shall be less than that [which thou badest], to the intent that I may propitiate thy favour. If thou desire her for nought, I will send her to thee, or if thou wouldst have me abate thee of her price, I will well, for I desire nought but what shall content thee; for that thou art a stranger in our land and it behoveth us to entreat thee hospitably and have consideration for thee." "By Allah," answered the youth, "I will not take her from thee but at an advance on that which I bade thee for her aforetime; so wilt thou now sell her to me for seventeen hundred dinars?" And the other answered, "O my lord, I sell her to thee, may God bless thee in her."

So the young man went to his lodging and fetching a purse, returned to the girl's owner and counted out to him the price aforesaid, whilst the draper was between them. Then said he, "Bring her forth;" but the other answered, "She cannot come forth at this present; but be thou my guest the rest of this day and night, and on the morrow thou shalt take thy slave-girl and go in the protection of God." The youth fell in with him of this and he carried him to his house, where, after a little, he let bring meat and wine, and they [ate and] drank. Then said Nouraddin to the girl's owner, "I beseech thee bring me the damsel, for that I bought her not but for the like of this time." So he arose and [going in to the girl], said to her, "O Sitt el Milan, the young man hath paid down thy price and we have bidden him hither; so he hath come to our dwelling and we have entertained him, and he would fain have thee be present with him."

Therewithal the damsel rose briskly and putting off her clothes, washed and donned sumptuous apparel and perfumed herself and went out to him, as she were a willow-wand or a bamboo-cane, followed by a black slave girl, bearing the lute. When she came to the young man, she saluted him and sat down by his side. Then she took the lute from the slave-girl and tuning it, smote thereon in four-and-twenty modes, after which she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Unto me the world's whole gladness is thy nearness and thy sight;

All incumbent thy possession and thy love a law of right. In my tears I have a witness; when I call thee to my mind, Down

my cheeks they run like torrents, and I cannot stay their

flight. None, by Allah, 'mongst all creatures, none I love save thee

alone! Yea, for I am grown thy bondman, by the troth betwixt

us plight. Peace upon thee! Ah, how bitter were the severance from thee! Be

not this thy troth—plight's ending nor the last of our  
delight!

Therewithal the young man was moved to delight and exclaimed, "By Allah, thou sayest well, O Sitt el Milan! Let me hear more." Then he handselled her with fifty dinars and they drank and the cups went round among them; and her seller said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, this is the season of leave-taking; so let us hear somewhat on the subject." Accordingly she struck the lute and avouching that which was in her heart, sang the following verses:

I am filled full of longing pain and memory and dole, That from  
the wasted body's wounds distract the anguished soul. Think not, my lords, that I forget: the case is still the same.

When such a fever fills the heart, what leach can make it  
whole? And if a creature in his tears could swim, as in a sea, I to do  
this of all that breathe were surely first and sole. O skinker of the wine of woe, turn from a love-sick maid,  
Who

drinks her tears still, night and morn, thy bitter-flavoured  
bowl. I had not left you, had I known that severance would prove My  
death; but what is past is past, Fate stoops to no control.

As they were thus in the enjoyment of all that in most delicious of easance and delight, and indeed the wine was sweet to them and the talk pleasant, behold, there came a knocking at the door. So the master of the house went out, that he might see what was to do, and found ten men of the Khalif's eunuchs at the door. When he saw this, he was amazed and said to them, "What is to do?" Quoth they, "The Commander of the Faithful saluteth thee and requireth of thee the slave-girl whom thou hast for sale and whose name is Sitt el Milah." By Allah," answered the other, "I have sold her." And they said, "Swear by the head of the Commander of the Faithful that she is not in thy dwelling." He made oath that he had sold her and that she was no longer at his disposal; but they paid no \*need to his word and forcing their way into the house, found the damsel and the young Damascene in the sitting-chamber. So they laid hands upon her, and the youth said, "This is my slave-girl, whom I have bought with my money." But they hearkened not to his speech and taking her, carried her off to the Commander of the Faithful.

Therewithal Noureddin's life was troubled; so he arose and donned his clothes, and his host said, "Whither away this night, O my lord?" Quoth Noureddin, "I mean to go to my lodging, and to-morrow I will betake myself to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and demand my slave-girl." "Sleep till the morning," said the other, "and go not forth at the like of this hour." But he answered, "Needs must I go;" and the host said to him, "[Go] in the safeguard of God." So Noureddin went forth, and drunkenness had got the mastery of him, wherefore he threw himself down on [a bench before one of] the shops. Now the watch were at that hour making their round and they smelt the sweet scent [of essences] and wine that exhaled from him; so they made for it and found the youth lying on the bench, without sense or motion. They poured water upon him, and he awoke, whereupon they carried him to the house of the Chief of the Police and he questioned him of his affair. "O my lord," answered Noureddin, "I am a stranger in this town and have been with one of my friends. So I came forth from his house and drunkenness overcame me."

The prefect bade carry him to his lodging; but one of those in attendance upon him, by name El Muradi, said to him, "What wilt thou do? This man is clad in rich clothes and on his finger is a ring of gold, the beazel whereof is a ruby of great price; so we will carry him away and slay him and take that which is upon him of raiment [and what not else] and bring it to thee; for that thou wilt not [often] see profit the like thereof, more by token that this fellow is a stranger and there is none to enquire concerning him." Quoth the prefect, "This fellow is a thief and that which he saith is leasing." And Noureddin said, "God forbid that I should be a thief!" But the prefect answered, "Thou liest." So they stripped him of his clothes and taking the ring from his finger, beat him grievously, what while he cried out for succour, but none succoured him, and besought protection, but none protected him. Then said he to them, "O folk, ye are quit of[FN#12] that which ye have taken from me; but now restore me to my lodging." But they answered, saying, "Leave this knavery, O cheat! Thine intent is to sue us for thy clothes on the morrow." "By Allah, the One, the Eternal," exclaimed he, "I will not sue any for them!" But they said, "We can nowise do this." And the prefect bade them carry him to the Tigris and there slay him and cast him into the river.

So they dragged him away, what while he wept and spoke the words which whoso saith shall nowise be confounded, to wit, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Sublime!" When they came to the Tigris, one of them drew the sword upon him and El Muradi said to the swordbearer, "Smite off his head." But one of them, Ahmed by name, said, "O folk, deal gently with this poor wretch and slay him not unjustly and wickedly, for I stand in fear of God the Most High, lest He burn me with his fire." Quoth El Muradi, "A truce to this talk!" And Ahmed said, "If ye do with him aught, I will acquaint the Commander of the Faithful." "How, then, shall we do with him?" asked they; and he answered, "Let us deposit him in prison and I will be answerable to you for his provision; so shall we be quit of his blood, for indeed he is wrongfully used." So they took him up and casting him into the Prison of Blood,[FN#13]went away.

Meanwhile, they carried the damsel into the Commander of the Faithful and she pleased him; so he assigned her a lodging of the apartments of choice. She abode in the palace, eating not neither drinking and ceasing not from weeping night nor day, till, one night, the Khalif sent for her to his sitting-chamber and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, be of good heart and cheerful eye, for I will make thy rank higher than [any of] the concubines and thou shall see that which shall rejoice thee." She kissed the earth and wept; whereupon the Khalif called for her lute and bade her sing. So she improvised and sang the following verses, in accordance with that which was in her heart:

Say, by the lightnings of thy teeth and thy soul's pure desire,  
Moan'st thou as moan the doves and is thy heart for doubt on  
fire? How many a victim of the pangs of love—liking hath died! Tired is  
my patience, but of blame my censors never tire.

When she had made an end of her song, she cast the lute from her hand and wept till she swooned away, whereupon the Khalif bade carry her to her chamber. Now he was ravished with her and loved her with an exceeding love; so, after awhile, he again commanded to bring her to his presence, and when she came, he bade her sing. Accordingly, she took the lute and spoke forth that which was in her heart and sang the following verses:

What strength have I solicitude and long desire to bear? Why art  
thou purposed to depart and leave me to despair? Why to estrangement and despite inclin'st thou with the spy?  
Yet

that a bough[FN#14] from side to side incline[FN#15] small  
wonder 'twere. Thou layst on me a load too great to bear, and thus thou dost But  
that my burdens I may bind and so towards thee fare.

Then she cast the lute from her hand and swooned away; so she was carried to her chamber and indeed passion waxed upon her. After a long while, the Commander of the Faithful sent for her a third time and bade her sing. So she took the lute and sang the following verses:

O hills of the sands and the rugged piebald plain, Shall the  
bondman of love win ever free from pain! I wonder, shall I and the friend who's far from me Once more be  
granted of Fate to meet, we twain! Bravo for a fawn with a houri's eye of black, Like the sun or the  
shining moon midst the starry train! To lovers, "What see ye?" he saith, and to hearts of stone, "What  
love ye," quoth he, "[if to love me ye disdain?"] I supplicate Him, who parted us and doomed Our separation,  
that  
we may meet again.

When she had made an end of her song, the Commander of the Faithful said to her, "O damsel, thou art in love." "Yes," answered she. And he said, "With whom?" Quoth she, "With my lord and my master, my love for whom is as the love of the earth for rain, or as the love of the female for the male; and indeed the love of him is mingled with my flesh and my blood and hath entered into the channels of my bones. O Commander of the Faithful, whenas I call him to mind, mine entrails are consumed, for that I have not accomplished my desire of him, and but that I fear to die, without seeing him, I would assuredly kill myself." And he said, "Art thou in my presence and bespeakest me with the like of these words? I will assuredly make thee forget thy lord."

Then he bade take her away; so she was carried to her chamber and he sent her a black slave-girl, with a casket, wherein were three thousand dinars and a carcanet of gold, set with pearls, great and small, and jewels, worth other three thousand, saying to her, "The slave-girl and that which is with her are a gift from me to thee." When she heard this, she said, "God forbid that I should be consoled for the love of my lord and my master,

though with the earth full of gold!" And she improvised and recited the following verses:

I swear by his life, yea, I swear by the life of my love without  
peer, To please him or save him from hurt, I'd enter the  
fire without fear! "Console thou thyself for his love," quoth they, "with another  
than he;" But, "Nay, by his life," answered I, "I'll never  
forget him my dear!" A moon is my love, in a robe of loveliness proudly arrayed, And  
the splendours of new-broken day from his cheeks and his  
forehead shine clear.

Then the Khalif summoned her to his presence a fourth time and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, sing." So she improvised and sang the following verses:

To his beloved one the lover's heart's inclined; His soul's a  
captive slave, in sickness' hands confined. "What is the taste of love?" quoth one, and I replied, "Sweet  
water 'tis at first; but torment lurks behind." Love's slave, I keep my troth with them; but, when they vowed,  
Fate made itself Urcoub,[FN#16] whom never oath could bind. What is there in the tents? Their burdens are  
become A lover's,

whose belov'd is in the litters' shrined. In every halting-place like Joseph[FN#17] she appears And he in  
every stead with Jacob's grief[FN#18] is pined.

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept till she swooned away. So  
they sprinkled on her rose-water, mingled with musk, and willow-flower water; and when she came to herself, Er  
Reshid said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, this is not fair dealing in thee. We love thee and thou lovest another." "O  
Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "there is no help for it." Therewithal he was wroth with her and said,  
"By the virtue of Hemzeh[FN#19] and Akil[FN#20] and Mohammed, Prince of the Apostles, if thou name one  
other than I in my presence, I will bid strike off thy head!" Then he bade return her to her chamber, whilst she  
wept and recited the following verses:

If I must die, then welcome death to heal My woes; 'twere lighter  
than the pangs I feel. What if the sabre cut me limb from limb! No torment 'twere for  
lovers true and leal.

Then the Khalif went in to the Lady Zubeideh, pale with anger, and she noted this in him and said to him,  
"How cometh it that I see the Commander of the Faithful changed of colour?" "O daughter of my uncle,"  
answered he, "I have a beautiful slave-girl, who reciteth verses and telleth stories, and she hath taken my whole  
heart; but she loveth other than I and avoucheth that she loveth her [former] master; wherefore I have sworn a  
great oath that, if she come again to my sitting-chamber and sing for other than I, I will assuredly take a span  
from her highest part." [FN#21] Quoth Zubeideh, "Let the Commander of the Faithful favour me with her presence,  
so I may look on her and hear her singing." So he bade fetch her and she came, whereupon the Lady Zubeideh  
withdrew behind the curtain, whereas she saw her not, and Er Reshid said to her, "Sing to us." So she took the lute  
and tuning it, sang the following verses:

Lo, since the day I left you, O my masters, Life is not sweet, no  
aye my heart is light. Yea, in the night the thought of you still slays me; Hidden are  
my traces from the wise men's sight, All for a wild deer's love, whose looks have snared me And on  
whose brows the morning glitters bright I am become, for severance from my loved one, Like a left hand,  
forsaken of the right. Beauty on his cheek hath written, "Blest be Allah, He who created  
this enchanting wight!" Him I beseech our loves who hath dissevered, Us of his grace once  
more to reunite.

When Er Reshid heard this, he waxed exceeding wroth and said, "May God not reunite you twain in  
gladness!" Then he summoned the headsman, and when he presented himself, he said to him, "Strike off the head  
of this accursed slave-girl." So Mesrour took her by the hand and [led her away; but], when she came to the door,  
she turned and said to the Khalif, "O Commander of the Faithful, I conjure thee, by thy fathers and forefathers,  
give ear unto that I shall say!" Then she improvised and recited the following verses:

O Amir of justice, be kind to thy subjects; For justice, indeed,  
of thy nature's a trait. O thou my inclining to love him that blamest, Shall lovers be  
blamed for the errors of Fate? Then spare me, by Him who vouchsafed thee the kingship; For a

gift in this world is the regal estate.

Then Mesrour carried her to the other end of the sitting-chamber and bound her eyes and making her sit, stood awaiting a second commandment; whereupon quoth the Lady Zubeideh, "O Commander of the Faithful, with thy permission, wilt thou not vouchsafe this damsel a share of thy clemency? Indeed, if thou slay her, it were injustice." Quoth he, "What is to be done with her?" And she said, "Forbear to slay her and send for her lord. If he be as she describeth him in grace and goodliness, she is excused, and if he be not on this wise, then slay her, and this shall be thy justification against her." [FN#22]

"Be it as thou deemest," answered Er Reshid and caused return the damsel to her chamber, saying to her, "The Lady Zubeideh saith thus and thus." Quoth she, "God requite her for me with good! Indeed, thou dealest equitably, O Commander of the Faithful, in this judgment." And he answered, "Go now to thy place, and to-morrow we will let bring thy lord." So she kissed the earth and recited the following verses:

I am content, for him I love, to all abide; So, who will, let him  
blame, and who will, let him chide. At their appointed terms souls die; but for despair My soul is  
like to die, or ere its term betide. O thou with love of whom I'm smitten, yet content, I prithee come  
to me and hasten to my side.

Then she arose and returned to her chamber.

On the morrow, the Commander of the Faithful sat [in his hall of audience] and his Vizier Jaafer ben Yehya the Barmecide came in to him; whereupon he called to him, saying, "I would have thee bring me a youth who is lately come to Baghdad, hight [Sidi Nouredin Ali] the Damascene." Quoth Jaafer, "Harkening and obedience," and going forth in quest of the youth, sent to the markets and khans and caravanserais three days' space, but found no trace of him, neither lit upon tidings of him. So on the fourth day he presented himself before the Khalif and said to him, "O our lord, I have sought him these three days, but have not found him." Quoth Er Reshid, "Make ready letters to Damascus. Belike he hath returned to his own land." So Jaafer wrote a letter and despatched it by a dromedary-courier to the city of Damascus; and they sought him there and found him not.

Meanwhile, news was brought that Khorassan had been conquered; [FN#23] whereupon Er Reshid rejoiced and bade decorate Baghdad and release all who were in the prisons, giving each of them a dinar and a dress. So Jaafer addressed himself to the decoration of the city and bade his brother El Fezl ride to the prison and clothe and release the prisoners. El Fezl did his brother's bidding and released all but the young Damascene, who abode still in the Prison of Blood, saying, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Sublime! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return." Then said El Fezl to the gaoler, "Is there any prisoner left in the prison?" "No," answered he, and El Fezl was about to depart, when Nouredin called out to him from within the prison, saying, "O my lord, tarry, for there remaineth none in the prison other than I and indeed I am oppressed. This is a day of clemency and there is no disputing concerning it." El Fezl bade release him; so they set him free and he gave him a dress and a dinar. So the young man went out, bewildered and knowing not whither he should go, for that he had abidden in the prison nigh a year and indeed his condition was changed and his favour faded, and he abode walking and turning round, lest El Muradi should come upon him and cast him into another calamity.

When El Muradi heard of his release, he betook himself to the chief of the police and said to him, "O our lord, we are not assured from yonder youth, [the Damascene], for that he hath been released from prison and we fear lest he complain of us." Quoth the prefect, "How shall we do?" And El Muradi answered, saying, "I will cast him into a calamity for thee." Then he ceased not to follow the young Damascene from place to place till he came up with him in a strait place and a by-street without an issue; whereupon he accosted him and putting a rope about his neck, cried out, saying, "A thief!" The folk flocked to him from all sides and fell to beating and reviling Nouredin, whilst he cried out for succour, but none succoured him, and El Muradi still said to him, "But yesterday the Commander of the Faithful released thee and to-day thou stealest!" So the hearts of the folk were hardened against him and El Muradi carried him to the master of police, who bade cut off his hand.

Accordingly, the hangman took him and bringing out the knife, offered to cut off his hand, what while El Muradi said to him, "Cut and sever the bone and sear [FN#24] it not for him, so he may lose his blood and we be rid of him." But Ahmed, he who had aforetime been the means of his deliverance, sprang up to him and said, "O folk, fear God in [your dealings with] this youth, for that I know his affair from first to last and he is void of offence and guiltless. Moreover, he is of the folk of condition, [FN#25] and except ye desist from him, I will go up to the Commander of the Faithful and acquaint him with the case from first to last and that the youth is guiltless of

crime or offence." Quoth El Muradi, "Indeed, we are not assured from his mischief." And Ahmed answered, "Release him and commit him to me and I will warrant you against his affair, for ye shall never see him again after this." So they delivered Nouredin to him and he took him from their hands and said to him, "O youth, have compassion on thyself, for indeed thou hast fallen into the hands of these folk twice and if they lay hold of thee a third time, they will make an end of thee; and [in dealing thus with thee], I aim at reward and recompense for thee[FN#26] and answered prayer."[FN#27]

Nouredin fell to kissing his hand and calling down blessings on him and said to him, "Know that I am a stranger in this your city and the completion of kindness is better than the beginning thereof; wherefore I beseech thee of thy favour that thou complete to me thy good offices and kindness and bring me to the gate of the city. So will thy beneficence be accomplished unto me and may God the Most High requite thee for me with good!" ["Fear not,"] answered Ahmed; "no harm shall betide thee. Go; I will bear thee company till thou come to thy place of assurance." And he left him not till he brought him to the gate of the city and said to him, "O youth, go in the safeguard of God and return not to the city; for, if they fall in with thee [again], they will make an end of thee." Nouredin kissed his hand and going forth the city, gave not over walking till he came to a mosque that stood in one of the suburbs of Baghdad and entered therein with the night.

Now he had with him nought wherewithal he might cover himself; so he wrapped himself up in one of the rugs of the mosque [and abode thus till daybreak], when the Muezzins came and finding him sitting in that case, said to him, "O youth, what is this plight?" Quoth he, "I cast myself on your hospitality, imploring your protection from a company of folk who seek to kill me unjustly and oppressively, without cause." And [one of] the Muezzin[s] said, "Be of good heart and cheerful eye." Then he brought him old clothes and covered him withal; moreover, he set before him somewhat of meat and seeing upon him signs of gentle breeding, said to him, "O my son, I grow old and desire thee of help, [in return for which] I will do away thy necessity." "Hearkening and obedience," answered Nouredin and abode with the old man, who rested and took his ease, what while the youth [did his service in the mosque], celebrating the praises of God and calling the faithful to prayer and lighting the lamps and filling the ewers[FN#28] and sweeping and cleaning out the place.

Meanwhile, the Lady Zubeideh, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, made a banquet in her palace and assembled her slave-girls. As for Sitt el Milah, she came, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, and those who were present blamed her for this, whereupon she recited the following verses:

Ye chide at one who weepeth for troubles ever new; Needs must th'  
afflicted warble the woes that make him rue. Except I be appointed a day [to end my pain], I'll weep until  
mine eyelids with blood their tears ensue.

When she had made an end of her verses, the Lady Zubeideh bade each damsel sing a song, till the turn came round to Sitt el Milah, whereupon she took the lute and tuning it, sang thereto four-and-twenty songs in four-and-twenty modes; then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Fortune its arrows all, through him I love, let fly At me and  
parted me from him for whom I sigh. Lo, in my heart the heat of every heart burns high And in mine  
eyes unite the tears of every eye.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept till she made the bystanders weep and the Lady Zubeideh condoled with her and said to her, "God on thee, O Sitt el Milah, sing us somewhat, so we may hearken to thee." "Hearkening and obedience," answered the damsel and sang the following verses:

Assemble, ye people of passion, I pray; For the hour of our  
torment hath sounded to-day. The raven of parting croaks loud at our door; Alas, for our raven  
cleaves fast to us aye! For those whom we cherish are parted and gone; They have left us  
in torment to pine for dismay. So arise, by your lives I conjure you, arise And come let us fare  
to our loved ones away.

Then she cast the lute from her hand and wept till she made the Lady Zubeideh weep, and she said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, methinks he whom thou lovest is not in this world, for that the Commander of the Faithful hath sought him in every place, but hath not found him." Whereupon the damsel arose and kissing the Lady Zubeideh's hands, said to her, "O my lady, if thou wouldst have him found, I have a request to make to thee, wherein thou mayst accomplish my occasion with the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth the princess, "And what is it?" "It is," answered Sitt el Milah, "that thou get me leave to go forth by myself and go round about in quest of him three

days, for the adage saith, 'She who mourneth for herself is not the like of her who is hired to mourn.' [FN#29] If I find him, I will bring him before the Commander of the Faithful, so he may do with us what he will; and if I find him not, I shall be cut off from hope of him and that which is with me will be assuaged." Quoth the Lady Zubeideh, "I will not get thee leave from him but for a whole month; so be of good heart and cheerful eye." Whereupon Sitt el Milah was glad and rising, kissed the earth before her once more and went away to her own place, rejoicing.

As for Zubeideh, she went in to the Khalif and talked with him awhile; then she fell to kissing him between the eyes and on his hand and asked him that which she had promised Sitt el Milah, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, I doubt me her lord is not found in this world; but, if she go about in quest of him and find him not, her hopes will be cut off and her mind will be set at rest and she will sport and laugh; for that, what while she abideth in hope, she will never cease from her frowardness." And she gave not over cajoling him till he gave Sitt el Milah leave to go forth and make search for her lord a month's space and ordered her an eunuch to attend her and bade the paymaster [of the household] give her all she needed, were it a thousand dirhems a day or more. So the Lady Zubeideh arose and returning to her palace, sent for Sitt el Milah and acquainted her with that which had passed [between herself and the Khalif]; whereupon she kissed her hand and thanked her and called down blessings on her.

Then she took leave of the princess and veiling her face, disguised herself; [FN#30] after which she mounted the mule and sallying forth, went round about seeking her lord in the thoroughfares of Baghdad three days' space, but lit on no tidings of him; and on the fourth day, she rode forth without the city. Now it was the noontide hour and great was the heat, and she was aweary and thirst waxed upon her. Presently, she came to the mosque, wherein the young Damascene had taken shelter, and lighting down at the door, said to the old man, [the Muezzin], "O elder, hast thou a draught of cold water? Indeed, I am overcome with heat and thirst." Quoth he, "[Come up] with me into my house." So he carried her up into his lodging and spreading her [a carpet and cushions], seated her [thereon]; after which he brought her cold water and she drank and said to the eunuch, "Go thy ways with the mule and on the morrow come back to me here." [So he went away] and she slept and rested herself.

When she awoke, she said to the old man, "O elder, hast thou aught of food?" And he answered, "O my lady, I have bread and olives." Quoth she, "That is food fit but for the like of thee. As for me, I will have nought but roast lamb and broths and fat rissoled fowls and stuffed ducks and all manner meats dressed with [pounded nuts and almond-]kernels and sugar." "O my lady," replied the Muezzin, "I never heard of this chapter in the Koran, nor was it revealed unto our lord Mohammed, whom God bless and keep!" [FN#31] She laughed and said, "O elder, the matter is even as thou sayest; but bring me inkhorn and paper." So he brought her what she sought and she wrote a letter and gave it to him, together with a seal-ring from her finger, saying, "Go into the city and enquire for such an one the money-changer and give him this my letter."

The old man betook himself to the city, as she bade him, and enquired for the money-changer, to whom they directed him. So he gave him the ring and the letter, which when he saw, he kissed the letter and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its purport. Then he repaired to the market and buying all that she bade him, laid it in a porter's basket and bade him go with the old man. So the latter took him and went with him to the mosque, where he relieved him of his burden and carried the meats in to Sitt el Milah. She seated him by her side and they ate, he and she, of those rich meats, till they were satisfied, when the old man rose and removed the food from before her.

She passed the night in his lodging and when she arose in the morning, she said to him, "O elder, may I not lack thy kind offices for the morning-meal! Go to the money-changer and fetch me from him the like of yesterday's food." So he arose and betaking himself to the money-changer, acquainted him with that which she had bidden him. The money-changer brought him all that she required and set it on the heads of porters; and the old man took them and returned with them to Sitt el Milah. So she sat down with him and they ate their sufficiency, after which he removed the rest of the food. Then she took the fruits and the flowers and setting them over against herself, wrought them into rings and knots and letters, whilst the old man looked on at a thing whose like he had never in his life seen and rejoiced therein.

Then said she to him, "O elder, I would fain drink." So he arose and brought her a gugglet of water; but she said to him, "Who bade thee fetch that?" Quoth he, "Saidst thou not to me, 'I would fain drink'?" And she answered, "I want not this; nay, I want wine, the delight of the soul, so haply, O elder, I may solace myself

therewith." "God forbid," exclaimed the old man, "that wine should be drunk in my house, and I a stranger in the land and a Muezzin and an imam,[FN#32] who prayeth with the true-believers, and a servant of the house of the Lord of the Worlds! "Quoth she, "Why wilt thou forbid me to drink thereof in thy house?" "Because," answered he, "it is unlawful." "O elder," rejoined she, "God hath forbidden [the eating of] blood and carrion and hog's flesh. Tell me, are grapes and honey lawful or unlawful?" Quoth he, "They are lawful;" and she said, "This is the juice of grapes and the water of honey." But he answered, "Leave this thy talk, for thou shall never drink wine in my house." "O Sheikh," rejoined she, "folk eat and drink and enjoy themselves and we are of the number of the folk and God is very forgiving, clement." [FN#33] Quoth he, "This is a thing that may not be." And she said, "Hast thou not heard what the poet saith ... ?" And she recited the following verses:

O son of Simeon, give no ear to other than my say. How bitter  
from the convent 'twas to part and fare away! Ay, and the monks, for on the Day of Palms a fawn there was  
Among  
the servants of the church, a loveling blithe and gay. By God, how pleasant was the night we passed, with him  
for third!

Muslim and Jew and Nazarene, we sported till the day. The wine was sweet to us to drink in pleasance and  
repose, And in

a garden of the garths of Paradise we lay, Whose streams beneath the myrtle's shade and cassia's welled  
amain And birds made carol jubilant from every blossomed  
spray. Quoth he, what while from out his hair the morning glimmered  
white, "This, this is life indeed, except, alas! it doth not  
stay."

"O elder," added she, "if Muslims and Jews and Nazarenes drink wine, who are we [that we should abstain from it]?" "By Allah, O my lady," answered he, "spare thine endeavour, for this is a thing to which I will not hearken." When she knew that he would not consent to her desire, she said to him, "O elder, I am of the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful and the food waxeth on me[FN#34] and if I drink not, I shall perish,[FN#35] nor wilt thou be assured against the issue of my affair. As for me, I am quit of blame towards thee, for that I have made myself known to thee and have bidden thee beware of the wrath of the Commander of the Faithful."

When the old man heard her words and that wherewith she menaced him, he arose and went out, perplexed and knowing not what he should do, and there met him a Jew, who was his neighbour, and said to him, "O Sheikh, how cometh it that I see thee strait of breast? Moreover, I hear in thy house a noise of talk, such as I use not to hear with thee." Quoth the Muezzin, "Yonder is a damsel who avoucheth that she is of the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid; and she hath eaten food and now would fain drink wine in my house, but I forbade her. However she avoucheth that except she drink thereof, she will perish, and indeed I am bewildered concerning my affair." "Know, O my neighbour," answered the Jew, "that the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful are used to drink wine, and whenas they eat and drink not, they perish; and I fear lest some mishap betide her, in which case thou wouldst not be safe from the Khalifs wrath." "What is to be done?" asked the Sheikh; and the Jew replied, "I have old wine that will suit her." Quoth the old man, "[I conjure thee] by the right of neighbourhood, deliver me from this calamity and let me have that which is with thee!" "In the name of God," answered the Jew and going to his house, brought out a flagon of wine, with which the Sheikh returned to Sitt el Milah. This pleased her and she said to him, "Whence hadst thou this?" "I got it from my neighbour the Jew," answered he. "I set out to him my case with thee and he gave me this."

Sitt el Milah filled a cup and emptied it; after which she drank a second and a third. Then she filled the cup a fourth time and handed it to the old man, but he would not accept it from her. However, she conjured him, by her own head and that of the Commander of the Faithful, that he should take it from her, till he took the cup from her hand and kissed it and would have set it down; but she conjured him by her life to smell it. So he smelt it and she said to him, "How deemest thou?" "Its smell is sweet," replied he; and she conjured him, by the life of the Commander of the Faithful, to taste it. So he put it to his mouth and she rose to him and made him drink; whereupon, "O princess of the fair," said he, "this is none other than good." Quoth she, "So deem I. Hath not our Lord promised us wine in Paradise?" And he answered, "Yes. Quoth the Most High, 'And rivers of wine, a delight to the drinkers.' [FN#36] And we will drink it in this world and the world to come." She laughed and emptying the



cup, gave him to drink, and he said, "O princess of the fair, indeed thou art excusable in thy love for this." Then he took from her another and another, till he became drunken and his talk waxed great and his prate.

The folk of the quarter heard him and assembled under the window; and when he was ware of them, he opened the window and said to them, "Are ye not ashamed, O pimps? Every one in his own house doth what he will and none hindereth him; but we drink one poor day and ye assemble and come, cuckoldy varlets that ye are! To-day, wine, and to-morrow [another] matter; and from hour to hour [cometh] relief." So they laughed and dispersed. Then the girl drank till she was intoxicated, when she called to mind her lord and wept, and the old man said to her, "What maketh thee weep, O my lady?" "O elder," replied she, "I am a lover and separated [from him I love]." Quoth he, "O my lady, what is this love?" "And thou," asked she, "hast thou never been in love?" "By Allah, O my lady," answered he, "never in all my life heard I of this thing, nor have I ever known it! Is it of the sons of Adam or of the Jinn?" She laughed and said, "Verily, thou art even as those of whom the poet speaketh, when as he saith ..." And she repeated the following verses:

How long will ye admonished be, without avail or heed? The  
shepherd still his flocks forbids, and they obey his rede. I see yon like unto mankind in favour and in form; But  
oxen,[FN#37] verily, ye are in fashion and in deed.

The old man laughed at her speech and her verses pleased him. Then said she to him, "I desire of thee a lute." [FN#38] So he arose and brought her a piece of firewood. Quoth she, "What is that?" And he said, "Didst thou not bid me bring thee wood?" "I do not want this," answered she, and he rejoined, "What then is it that is called wood, other than this?" She laughed and said, "The lute is an instrument of music, whereunto I sing." Quoth he, "Where is this thing found and of whom shall I get it for thee?" And she said, "Of him who gave thee the wine." So he arose and betaking himself to his neighbour the Jew, said to him, "Thou favouredst us aforetime with the wine; so now complete thy favours and look me out a thing called a lute, to wit, an instrument for singing; for that she seeketh this of me and I know it not" "Hearkening and obedience," replied the Jew and going into his house, brought him a lute. [The old man took it and carried it to Sitt el Milah,] whilst the Jew took his drink and sat by a window adjoining the other's house, so he might hear the singing.

The damsel rejoiced, when the old man returned to her with the lute, and taking it from him, tuned its strings and sang the following verses:

After your loss, nor trace of me nor vestige would remain, Did  
not the hope of union some whit my strength sustain. Ye're gone and desolated by your absence is the world:  
Requital,  
ay, or substitute to seek for you 'twere vain. Ye, of your strength, have burdened me, upon my weakness,  
With  
burdens not to be endured of mountain nor of plain. When from your land the breeze I scent that cometh, as I  
were A  
reveller bemused with wine, to lose my wits I'm fain. Love no light matter is, O folk, nor are the woe and care  
And  
blame a little thing to brook that unto it pertain. I wander seeking East and West for you, and every time Unto  
a  
camp I come, I'm told, "They've fared away again." My friends have not accustomed me to rigour; for, of old,  
When I  
forsook them, they to seek accord did not disdain.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept sore, till presently sleep overcame her and she slept.

On the morrow, she said to the old man, "Get thee to the money-changer and fetch me the ordinary." So he repaired to the money-changer and delivered him the message, whereupon he made ready meat and drink, as of his wont, [with which the old man returned to the damsel and they ate till they had enough. When she had eaten,] she sought of him wine and he went to the Jew and fetched it. Then they sat down and drank; and when she grew drunken, she took the lute and smiting it, fell a-singing and chanted the following verses:

How long shall I thus question my heart that's drowned in woe?

I'm mute for my complaining; but tears speak, as they flow. They have forbid their image to visit me in sleep;  
So even my

nightly phantom forsaketh me, heigho!

And when she had made an end of her song, she wept sore.

All this time, the young Damascene was hearkening, and whiles he likened her voice to that of his slave-girl and whiles he put away from him this thought, and the damsel had no whit of knowledge of him. Then she broke out again into song and chanted the following verses:

"Forget him," quoth my censurers, "forget him; what is he?" "If I

forget him, ne'er may God," quoth I, "remember me!" Now God forbid a slave forget his liege lord's love! And how Of

all things in the world should I forget the love of thee? Pardon of God for everything I crave, except thy love, For on the

day of meeting Him, that will my good deed be.

Then she drank three cups and filling the old man other three, sang the following verses:

His love he'd have hid, but his tears denounced him to the spy,

For the heat of a red-hot coal that 'twixt his ribs did lie. Suppose for distraction he seek in the Spring and its blooms one

day, The face of his loved one holds the only Spring for his

eye. O blamer of me for the love of him who denieth his grace, Which

be the delightsome of things, but those which the people

deny? A sun [is my love;] but his heat in mine entrails still rageth,

concealed; A moon, in the hearts of the folk he riseth, and

not in the sky.

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept, whilst the old man wept for her weeping. Then she fell down in a swoon and presently coming to herself, filled the cup and drinking it off, gave the old man to drink, after which she took the lute and breaking out into song, chanted the following verses:

Thy loss is the fairest of all my heart's woes; My case it hath

altered and banished repose. The world is upon me all desolate grown. Alack, my long grief and

forlornness! Who knows But the Merciful yet may incline thee to me And unite us again,

in despite of our foes!

Then she wept till her voice rose high and her lamentation was discovered [to those without]; after which she again began to drink and plying the old man with wine, sang the following verses:

They have shut out thy person from my sight; They cannot shut thy

memory from my spright. Favour or flout me, still my soul shall be Thy ransom, in

contentment or despite. My outward of my inward testifies And this bears witness that that tells aright.[FN#39]

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept and lamented. Then she slept awhile and presently awaking, said, "O elder, hast thou what we may eat?" "O my lady," answered the old man, "there is the rest of the food;" but she said, "I will not eat of a thing I have left. Go down to the market and fetch us what we may eat." Quoth he, "Excuse me, O my lady; I cannot stand up, for that I am overcome with wine; but with me is the servant of the mosque, who is a sharp youth and an intelligent. I will call him, so he may buy thee that which thou desirest." "Whence hast thou this servant?" asked she; and he replied, "He is of the people of Damascus." When she heard him speak of the people of Damascus, she gave a sob, that she swooned away; and when she came to herself, she said, "Woe's me for the people of Damascus and for those who are therein! Call him, O elder, that he may do our occasions."

So the old man put his head forth of the window and called the youth, who came to him from the mosque and sought leave [to enter]. The Muezzin bade him enter, and when he came in to the damsel, he knew her and she knew him; whereupon he turned back in bewilderment and would have fled; but she sprang up to him and seized him, and they embraced and wept together, till they fell down on the ground in a swoon. When the old man saw them in this plight, he feared for himself and fled forth, seeing not the way for drunkenness. His neighbour the Jew met him and said to him, "How comes it that I see thee confounded?" "How should I not be confounded," answered the old man, "seeing that the damsel who is with me is fallen in love with the servant of the mosque and they have embraced and fallen down in a swoon? Indeed, I fear lest the Khalif come to know of this and be wroth with me; so tell me thou what is to be done in this wherewith I am afflicted of the affair of this damsel." Quoth the Jew, "For the nonce, take this casting-bottle of rose-water and go forth-right and sprinkle them therewith. If they

be aswoon for this their foregathering and embracement, they will come to themselves, and if otherwise, do thou flee."

The old man took the casting-bottle from the Jew and going up to Nouredin and the damsel, sprinkled their faces, whereupon they came to themselves and fell to relating to each other that which they had suffered, since their separation, for the anguish of severance. Moreover, Nouredin acquainted Sitt el Milah with that which he had endured from the folk who would have slain him and made away with him; and she said to him, "O my lord, let us presently give over this talk and praise God for reunion of loves, and all this shall cease from us." Then she gave him the cup and he said, "By Allah, I will nowise drink it, whilst I am in this plight!" So she drank it off before him and taking the lute, swept the strings and sang the following verses:

Thou that wast absent from my stead, yet still with me didst  
bide, Thou wast removed from mine eye, yet still wast by my  
side. Thou left'st unto me, after thee, languor and carefulness; I  
lived a life wherein no jot of sweetness I espied. For thy sweet sake, as 'twere, indeed, an exile I had been,  
Lone  
and deserted I became, lamenting, weeping-eyed. Alack, my grief! Thou wast, indeed, grown absent from my  
view,

Yet art the apple of mine eye nor couldst from me divide.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept and Nouredin wept also. Then she took the lute and improvised and sang the following verses:

God knows I ne'er recalled thy memory to my thought, But still  
with brimming tears straightway mine eyes were fraught; Yea, passion raged in me and love-longing was like  
To slay me;  
yet my heart to solace still it wrought. Light of mine eyes, my hope, my wish, my thirsting eyes With  
looking on thy face can never sate their drought.

When Nouredin heard these his slave-girl's verses, he fell a-weeping, what while she strained him to her bosom and wiped away his tears with her sleeve and questioned him and comforted his mind. Then she took the lute and sweeping its strings, played thereon, after such a wise as would move the phlegmatic to delight, and sang the following verses:

Whenas mine eyes behold thee not, that day As of my life I do not  
reckon aye; And when I long to look upon thy face, My life is perished with  
desire straightway.

On this wise they abode till the morning, tasting not the savour of sleep; and when the day lightened, behold, the eunuch came with the mule and said to Sitt el Milah, "The Commander of the Faithful calleth for thee." So she arose and taking her lord by the hand, committed him to the old man, saying, "I commend him to thy care, under God,[FN#40] till this eunuch cometh to thee; and indeed, O elder, I owe thee favour and largesse such as filleth the interspace betwixt heaven and earth."

Then she mounted the mule and repairing to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, went in to him and kissed the earth before him. Quoth he to her, as who should make mock of her, "I doubt not but thou hast found thy lord." "By thy felicity and the length of thy continuance [on life,]" answered she, "I have indeed found him!" Now Er Reshid was leaning back; but, when he heard this, he sat up and said to her, "By my life, [is this thou sayest] true?" "Ay, by thy life!" answered she; and he said, "Bring him into my presence, so I may see him." But she replied, "O my lord, there have betided him many stresses and his charms are changed and his favour faded; and indeed the Commander of the Faithful vouchsafed me a month; wherefore I will tend him the rest of the month and then bring him to do his service to the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth Er Reshid, "True; the condition was for a month; but tell me what hath betided him." "O my lord," answered she, "may God prolong thy continuance and make Paradise thy place of returning and thy harbourage and the fire the abiding-place of thine enemies, when he presenteth himself to pay his respects to thee, he will expound to thee his case and will name unto thee those who have wronged him; and indeed this is an arrear that is due to the Commander of the Faithful, in[FN#41] whom may God fortify the Faith and vouchsafe him the mastery over the rebel and the froward!"

Therewithal he ordered her a handsome house and bade furnish it with carpets and other furniture and vessels of choice and commanded that all she needed should be given her. This was done during the rest of the day, and

when the night came, she despatched the eunuch with the mule and a suit of clothes, to fetch Nouredin from the Muezzin's lodging. So the young man donned the clothes and mounting; rode to the house, where he abode in luxury and delight a full-told month, what while she solaced him with four things, to wit, the eating of fowls and the drinking of wine and the lying upon brocade and the entering the bath after copulation. Moreover, she brought him six suits of clothes and fell to changing his apparel day by day; nor was the appointed time accomplished ere his beauty returned to him and his goodliness; nay, his charms waxed tenfold and he became a ravishment to all who looked on him.

One day the Commander of the Faithful bade bring him to the presence; so his slave-girl changed his raiment and clothing him in sumptuous apparel, mounted him on the mule. Then he rode to the palace and presenting himself before the Khalif, saluted him with the goodliest of salutations and bespoke him with eloquent and deep-thoughted speech. When Er Reshid saw him, he marvelled at the goodliness of his favour and his eloquence and the readiness of his speech and enquiring of him, was told that he was Sitt el Milah's lord; whereupon quoth he, "Indeed, she is excusable in her love for him, and if we had put her to death unrighteously, as we were minded to do, her blood would have been upon our heads." Then he turned to the young man and entering into discourse with him, found him well bred, intelligent, quick of wit and apprehension, generous, pleasant, elegant, erudite. So he loved him with an exceeding love and questioned him of his native city and of his father and of the manner of his journey to Baghdad. Nouredin acquainted him with that which he would know in the goodliest of words and with the concisest of expressions; and the Khalif said to him, "And where hast thou been absent all this while? Indeed, we sent after thee to Damascus and Mosul and other the towns, but lit on no tidings of thee." "O my lord," answered the young man, "there betided thy slave in thy city that which never yet betided any." And he acquainted him with his case from first to last and told him that which had befallen him of evil [from El Muradi and his crew].

When Er Reshid heard this, he was sore chagrined and waxed exceeding wroth and said, "Shall this happen in a city wherein I am?" And the Hashimi vein[FN#42] started out between his eyes. Then he bade fetch Jaafer, and when he came before him, he acquainted him with the matter and said to him, "Shall this come to pass in my city and I have no news of it?" Then he bade Jaafer fetch all whom the young Damascene had named [as having maltreated him], and when they came, he let smite off their heads. Moreover, he summoned him whom they called Ahmed and who had been the means of the young man's deliverance a first time and a second, and thanked him and showed him favour and bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour and invested him with the governance over his city.[FN#43]

Then he sent for the old man, the Muezzin, and when the messenger came to him and told him that the Commander of the Faithful sought him, he feared the denunciation of the damsel and accompanied him to the palace, walking and letting wind[FN#44] as he went, whilst all who passed him by laughed at him. When he came into the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, he fell a-trembling and his tongue was embarrassed, [so that he could not speak]. The Khalif laughed at him and said to him, "O elder, thou hast done no offence; so [why] fearest thou?" "O my lord," answered the old man (and indeed he was in the sorest of that which may be of fear,) "by the virtue of thy pure forefathers, indeed I have done nought, and do thou enquire of my conduct." The Khalif laughed at him and ordering him a thousand dinars, bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour and made him chief of the Muezzins in his mosque.

Then he called Sitt el Milah and said to her, "The house [wherein thou lodgest] and that which is therein Is a guerdon [from me] to thy lord. So do thou take him and depart with him in the safeguard of God the Most High; but absent not yourselves from our presence." [So she went forth with Nouredin and] when she came to the house, she found that the Commander of the Faithful had sent them gifts galore and abundance of good things. As for Nouredin, he sent for his father and mother and appointed him agents and factors in the city of Damascus, to take the rent of the houses and gardens and khans and baths; and they occupied themselves with collecting that which accrued to him and sending it to him every year. Meanwhile, his father and mother came to him, with that which they had of monies and treasures and merchandise, and foregathering with their son, saw that he was become of the chief officers of the Commander of the Faithful and of the number of his session-mates and entertainers, wherefore they rejoiced in reunion with him and he also rejoiced in them.

The Khalif assigned them pensions and allowances and as for Nouredin, his father brought him those riches and his wealth waxed and his case was goodly, till he became the richest of the folk of his time in Baghdad and

left not the presence of the Commander of the Faithful night or day. Moreover, he was vouchsafed children by Sitt el Milah, and he ceased not to live the most delightful of lives, he and she and his father and mother, a while of time, till Aboulhusn sickened of a sore sickness and was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High. After awhile, his mother died also and he carried them forth and shrouded them and buried and made them expiations and nativities.[FN#45] Then his children grew up and became like unto moons, and he reared them in splendour and fondness, what while his wealth waxed and his case flourished. He ceased not to pay frequent visits to the Commander of the Faithful, he and his children and his slave-girl Sitt el Milah, and they abode, he and they, in all solace of life and prosperity till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of the Abiding One, the Eternal! This is all that hath come down to us of their story.

## EL ABBAS AND THE KING'S DAUGHTER OF BAGHDAD.[FN#46]

There was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, a king mighty of estate, lord of understanding and beneficence and liberality and generosity, and he was strong of sultanate and endowed with might and majesty and magnificence. His name was Ins ben Cais ben Rebiya es Sheibani,[FN#47] and when he took horse, there rode unto him [warriors] from the farthest parts of the two Iraks.[FN#48] God the Most High decreed that he should take to wife a woman hight Afifeh, daughter of Ased es Sundusi, who was endowed with beauty and grace and brightness and perfection and justness of shape and symmetry; her face was like unto the new moon and she had eyes as they were gazelle's eyes and an aquiline nose like the crescent moon. She had learned horsemanship and the use of arms and had thoroughly studied the sciences of the Arabs; moreover, she had gotten by heart all the dragomanish[FN#49] tongues and indeed she was a ravishment to mankind.

She abode with Ins ben Cais twelve years, during which time he was blessed with no children by her; wherefore his breast was straitened, by reason of the failure of lineage, and he besought his Lord to vouchsafe him a child. Accordingly the queen conceived, by permission of God the Most High; and when the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, she gave birth to a maid-child, than whom never saw eyes a goodlier, for that her face was as it were a pure pearl or a shining lamp or a golden[FN#50] candle or a full moon breaking forth of a cloud, extolled be the perfection of Him who created her from vile water[FN#51] and made her a delight to the beholders! When her father saw her on this wise of loveliness, his reason fled for joy, and when she grew up, he taught her the art of writing and polite letters[FN#52] and philosophy and all manner of tongues. So she excelled the folk of her time and overpassed her peers;[FN#53] and the sons of the kings heard of her and all of them desired to look upon her.

The first who sought her in marriage was King Nebhan of Mosul, who came to her with a great company, bringing with him an hundred she-camels laden with musk and aloes-wood and ambergris and as many laden with camphor and jewels and other hundred laden with silver money and yet other hundred laden with raiment of silken and other stuffs and brocade, besides an hundred slave-girls and an hundred magnificent horses of swift and generous breeds, completely housed and accoutred, as they were brides; and all this he laid before her father, demanding her of him in marriage. Now King Ins ben Cais had bound himself by an oath that he would not marry his daughter but to him whom she should choose; so, when King Nebhan sought her in marriage, her father went in to her and consulted her concerning his affair. She consented not and he repeated to Nebhan that which she said, whereupon he departed from him. After this came King Behram, lord of the White Island, with riches more than the first; but she accepted not of him and he returned, disappointed; nor did the kings give over coming to her father, on her account, one after other, from the farthest of the lands and the climes, each glorying in more[FN#54] than those who forewent him; but she paid no heed unto any of one them.

Presently, El Abbas, son of King El Aziz, lord of the land of Yemen and Zebidoun[FN#55] and Mecca (which God increase in honour and brightness and beauty!), heard of her; and he was of the great ones of Mecca and the Hejaz[FN#56] and was a youth without hair on his cheeks. So he presented himself one day in his father's sitting-chamber,[FN#57] whereupon the folk made way for him and the king seated him on a chair of red gold, set with pearls and jewels. The prince sat, with his head bowed to the ground, and spoke not to any; whereby his father knew that his breast was straitened and bade the boon-companions and men of wit relate marvellous histories, such as beseem the assemblies of kings; nor was there one of them but spoke forth the goodliest of that which was with him; but El Abbas still abode with his head bowed down. Then the king bade his session-mates withdraw, and when the chamber was void, he looked at his son and said to him, "By Allah, thou rejoicest me with thy coming in to me and chagrinest me for that thou payest no heed to any of the session-mates nor of the boon-companions. What is the cause of this?"

"O father mine," answered the prince, "I have heard tell that in the land of Irak is a woman of the daughters of the kings, and her father is called King Ins ben Cais, lord of Baghdad; she is renowned for beauty and grace and brightness and perfection, and indeed many folk have sought her in marriage of the kings; but her soul consented

not unto any one of them. Wherefore I am minded to travel to her, for that my heart cleaveth unto her, and I beseech thee suffer me to go to her." "O my son," answered his father, "thou knowest that I have none other than thyself of children and thou art the solace of mine eyes and the fruit of mine entrails; nay, I cannot brook to be parted from thee an instant and I purpose to set thee on the throne of the kingship and marry thee to one of the daughters of the kings, who shall be fairer than she." El Abbas gave ear to his father's word and dared not gainsay him; so he abode with him awhile, whilst the fire raged in his entrails.

Then the king took counsel with himself to build his son a bath and adorn it with various paintings, so he might show it to him and divert him with the sight thereof, to the intent that his body might be solaced thereby and that the obsession of travel might cease from him and he be turned from [his purpose of] removal from his parents. So he addressed himself to the building of the bath and assembling architects and builders and artisans from all the towns and citadels and islands [of his dominions], assigned them a site and marked out its boundaries. Then the workmen occupied themselves with the making of the bath and the setting out and adornment of its cabinets and roofs. They used paints and precious stones of all kinds, according to the variousness of their hues, red and green and blue and yellow and what not else of all manner colours; and each artisan wrought at his handicraft and each painter at his art, whilst the rest of the folk busied themselves with transporting thither varicoloured stones.

One day, as the [chief] painter wrought at his work, there came in to him a poor man, who looked long upon him and observed his handicraft; whereupon quoth the painter to him, "Knowest thou aught of painting?" "Yes," answered the stranger; so he gave him tools and paints and said to him, "Make us a rare piece of work." So the stranger entered one of the chambers of the bath and drew [on the walls thereof] a double border, which he adorned on both sides, after a fashion than which never saw eyes a fairer. Moreover, [amiddleward the chamber] he drew a picture to which there lacked but the breath, and it was the portraiture of Mariyeh, the king's daughter of Baghdad. Then, when he had made an end of the portrait, he went his way [and told none of what he had done], nor knew any the chambers and doors of the bath and the adornment and ordinance thereof.

Presently, the chief workman came to the palace and sought an audience of the king, who bade admit him. So he entered and kissing the earth, saluted him with a salutation beseeming kings and said, "O king of the time and lord of the age and the day, may felicity endure unto thee and acceptance and be thy rank exalted over all the kings both morning and evening!"[FN#58] The work of the bath is accomplished, by the king's fair fortune and the eminence of his magnanimity,[FN#59] and indeed we have done all that behoved us and there remaineth but that which behoveth the king." El Aziz ordered him a sumptuous dress of honour and expended monies galore, giving unto each who had wroughten, after the measure of his work. Then he assembled in the bath all the grandees of his state, amirs and viziers and chamberlains and lieutenants, and the chief officers of his realm and household, and sending for his son El Abbas, said to him, "O my son, I have builded thee a bath, wherein thou mayst take thy pleasure; so enter thou therein, that thou mayst see it and divert thyself by gazing upon it and viewing the goodness of its ordinance and decoration." "With all my heart," replied the prince and entered the bath, he and the king and the folk about them, so they might divert themselves with viewing that which the workmen's hands had wroughten.

El Abbas went in and passed from place to place and chamber to chamber, till he came to the chamber aforesaid and espied the portrait of Mariyeh, whereupon he fell down in a swoon and the workmen went to his father and said to him, "Thy son El Abbas hath swooned away." So the king came and finding the prince cast down, seated himself at his head and bathed his face with rose-water. After awhile he revived and the king said to him, "God keep thee,[FN#60] O my son! What hath befallen thee?" "O my father," answered the prince, "I did but look on yonder picture and it bequeathed me a thousand regrets and there befell me that which thou seest." Therewithal the king bade fetch the [chief] painter, and when he stood before him, he said to him, "Tell me of yonder portrait and what girl is this of the daughters of the kings; else will I take thy head." "By Allah, O king," answered the painter, "I limned it not, neither know I who she is; but there came to me a poor man and looked at me. So I said to him, 'Knowest thou the art of painting?' And he replied, 'Yes.' Whereupon I gave him the gear and said to him, 'Make us a rare piece of work.' So he wrought yonder portrait and went away and I know him not neither have I ever set eyes on him save that day."

Therewithal the king bade all his officers go round about in the thoroughfares and colleges [of the town] and bring before him all strangers whom they found there. So they went forth and brought him much people, amongst

whom was the man who had painted the portrait. When they came into the presence, the Sultan bade the crier make proclamation that whoso wrought the portrait should discover himself and have whatsoever he desired. So the poor man came forward and kissing the earth before the king, said to him, "O king of the age, I am he who painted yonder portrait." Quoth El Aziz, "And knowest thou who she is?" "Yes," answered the other; "this is the portrait of Mariyeh, daughter of the king of Baghdad." The king ordered him a dress of honour and a slave-girl [and he went his way]. Then said El Abbas, "O father mine, give me leave to go to her, so I may look upon her; else shall I depart the world, without fail." The king his father wept and answered, saying, "O my son, I builded thee a bath, that it might divert thee from leaving me, and behold it hath been the cause of thy going forth; but the commandment of God is a foreordained[FN#61] decree." [FN#62]

Then he wept again and El Abbas said to him, "Fear not for me, for thou knowest my prowess and my puissance in returning answers in the assemblies of the land and my good breeding[FN#63] and skill in rhetoric; and indeed he whose father thou art and whom thou hast reared and bred and in whom thou hast united praiseworthy qualities, the repute whereof hath traversed the East and the West, thou needest not fear for him, more by token that I purpose but to seek diversion[FN#64] and return to thee, if it be the will of God the Most High." Quoth the king, "Whom wilt thou take with thee of attendants and [what] of good?" "O father mine," replied El Abbas, "I have no need of horses or camels or arms, for I purpose not battle, and I will have none go forth with me save my servant Aamir and no more."

As he and his father were thus engaged in talk, in came his mother and caught hold of him; and he said to her, "God on thee, let me go my gait and strive not to turn me from my purpose, for that needs must I go." "O my son," answered she, "if it must be so and there is no help for it, swear to me that them wilt not be absent from me more than a year." And he swore to her. Then he entered his father's treasuries and took therefrom what he would of jewels and jacinths and everything heavy of worth and light of carriage. Moreover, he bade his servant Aamir saddle him two horses and the like for himself, and whenas the night darkened behind him,[FN#65] he rose from his couch and mounting his horse, set out for Baghdad, he and Aamir, whilst the latter knew not whither he intended.

He gave not over going and the journey was pleasant to him, till they came to a goodly land, abounding in birds and wild beasts, whereupon El Abbas started a gazelle and shot it with an arrow. Then he dismounted and cutting its throat, said to his servant, "Alight thou and skin it and carry it to the water." Aamir answered him [with "Hearkening and obedience"] and going down to the water, kindled a fire and roasted the gazelle's flesh. Then they ate their fill and drank of the water, after which they mounted again and fared on diligently, and Aamir still unknowing whither El Abbas was minded to go. So he said to him, "O my lord, I conjure thee by God the Great, wilt thou not tell me whither thou intendest?" El Abbas looked at him and made answer with the following verses:

In my soul the fire of yearning and affliction rageth aye; Lo, I  
burn with love and longing; nought in answer can I say. To Baghdad upon a matter of all moment do I fare,  
For the love of

one whose beauties have my reason led astray. Under me's a slender camel, a devourer of the waste; Those  
who

pass a cloudlet deem it, as it flitteth o'er the way. So, O Aamir, haste thy going, e'en as I do, so may I Heal my  
sickness and the draining of the cup of love essay; For the longing that abideth in my heart is hard to bear. Fare  
with me, then, to my loved one. Answer nothing, but obey.

When Aamir heard his lord's verses, he knew that he was a slave of love [and that she of whom he was enamoured abode] in Baghdad. Then they fared on night and day, traversing plains and stony wastes, till they came in sight of Baghdad and lighted down in its suburbs[FN#66] and lay the night there. When they arose in the morning, they removed to the bank of the Tigris and there they encamped and sojourned three days.

As they abode thus on the fourth day, behold, a company of folk giving their beasts the rein and crying aloud and saying, "Quick! Quick! Haste to our rescue, O King!" Therewithal the king's chamberlains and officers accosted them and said to them, "What is behind you and what hath befallen you?" Quoth they, "Bring us before the king." [So they carried them to Ins ben Cais;] and when they saw him, they said to him, "O king, except thou succour us, we are dead men; for that we are a folk of the Benou Sheiban,[FN#67] who have taken up our abode in the parts of Bassora, and Hudheifeh the Arab[FN#68] hath come down on us with his horses and his men and hath slain our horsemen and carried off our women and children; nor was one saved of the tribe but he who fled;



wherefore we crave help [first] by God the Most High, then by thy life."

When the king heard their speech, he bade the crier make proclamation in the thoroughfares of the city that the troops should prepare [for the march] and that the horsemen should mount and the footmen come forth; nor was it but the twinkling of the eye ere the drums beat and the trumpets sounded; and scarce was the forenoon of the day passed when the city was blocked with horse and foot. So the king passed them in review and behold, they were four-and-twenty thousand in number, horsemen and footmen. He bade them go forth to the enemy and gave the commandment over them to Said ibn el Wakidi, a doughty cavalier and a valiant man of war. So the horsemen set out and fared on along the bank of the Tigris.

El Abbas looked at them and saw the ensigns displayed and the standards loosed and heard the drums beating; so he bade his servant saddle him a charger and look to the girths and bring him his harness of war. Quoth Aamir, "And indeed I saw El Abbas his eyes flash and the hair of his hands stood on end, for that indeed horsemanship[FN#69] abode [rooted in his heart]." So he mounted his charger, whilst Aamir also bestrode a war-horse, and they went forth with the troops and fared on two days. On the third day, after the hour of the mid-afternoon prayer, they came in sight of the enemy and the two armies met and the ranks joined battle. The strife raged amain and sore was the smiting, whilst the dust rose in clouds and hung vaulted [over them], so that all eyes were blinded; and they ceased not from the battle till the night overtook them, when the two hosts drew off from the mellay and passed the night, perplexed concerning themselves [and the issue of their affair].

When God caused the morning morrow, the two armies drew out in battle array and the troops stood looking at one another. Then came forth El Harith ibn Saad between the two lines and played with his lance and cried out and recited the following verses:

Algates ye are our prey become; this many a day and night Right  
instantly of God we've craved to be vouchsafed your sight. So hath the Merciful towards Hudheifeh driven  
you, A champion

ruling over all, a lion of great might. Is there a man of you will come, that I may heal his paint With  
blows right profitable for him who's sick for lust of fight?

By Allah, come ye forth to me, for lo, I'm come to you I May he who's wronged the victory get and God  
defend the right![FN#70]

Thereupon there sallied forth to him Zuheir ben Hebib, and they wheeled about and feinted awhile, then came to dose quarters and exchanged strokes. El Harith forewent his adversary in smiting and stretched him weltering in his gore; whereupon Hudheifeh cried out to him, saying, "Gifted of God art thou, O Harith! Call another of them." So he cried out, saying, "Is there a comer-forth [to battle?]" But they of Baghdad held back from him; and when it appeared to El Harith that confusion was amongst them, he fell upon them and overthrew the first of them upon their last and slew of them twelve men. Then the evening overtook him and the Baghdadis addressed themselves to flight.

When the morning morrowed, they found themselves reduced to a fourth part of their number and there was not one of them had dismounted from his horse. So they made sure of destruction and Hudheifeh came out between the ranks (now he was reckoned for a thousand cavaliers) and cried out, saying, "Harkye, my masters of Baghdad! Let none come forth to me but your Amir, so I may talk with him and he with me; and he shall meet me in single combat and I will meet him, and may he who is void of offence come off safe!" Then he repeated his speech and said, "Why do I not hear your Amir return me an answer?" But Saad, the amir of the army of Baghdad, [replied not to him], and indeed his teeth chattered in his head, whenas he heard him summon him to single combat.

When El Abbas heard Hudheifeh's challenge and saw Saad in this case, he came up to the latter and said to him, "Wilt thou give me leave to reply to him and I will stand thee in stead in the answering of him and the going forth to battle with him and will make myself thy sacrifice?" Saad looked at him and seeing valour shining from between his eyes, said to him, "O youth, by the virtue of the Chosen [Prophet,] (whom God bless and keep,) tell me [who thou art and] whence thou comest to our succour." "This is no place for questioning," answered the prince; and Saad said to him, "O champion, up and at Hudheifeh! Yet, if his devil prove too strong for thee, afflict not thyself in thy youth." [FN#71] Quoth El Abbas, "It is of Allah that help is to be sought," [FN#72] and taking his arms, fortified his resolution and went down [into the field], as he were a castle of the castles or a piece of a mountain.

[When] Hudheifeh [saw him], he cried out to him, saying, "Haste thee not, O youth! Who art thou of the folk?" And he answered, "I am Saad [ibn] el Wakidi, commander of the host of King Ins, and but that thou vauntedst thyself in challenging me, I had not come forth to thee; for that thou art not of my peers neither art counted equal to me in prowess and canst not avail against my onslaught. Wherefore prepare thee for departure,[FN#73] seeing that there abideth but a little of thy life." When Hudheifeh heard this his speech, he threw himself backward,[FN#74] as if in mockery of him, whereat El Abbas was wroth and called out to him, saying, "O Hudheifeh, guard thyself against me." Then he rushed upon him, as he were a swooper of the Jinn,[FN#75] and Hudheifeh met him and they wheeled about a long while.

Presently, El Abbas cried out at Hudheifeh a cry that astonished him and dealt him a blow, saying, "Take this from the hand of a champion who feareth not the like of thee." Hudheifeh met the stroke with his shield, thinking to ward it off from him; but the sword shore the target in sunder and descending upon his shoulder, came forth gleaming from the tendons of his throat and severed his arm at the armpit; whereupon he fell down, wallowing in his blood, and El Abbas turned upon his host; nor had the sun departed the pavilion of the heavens ere Hudheifeh's army was in full flight before El Abbas and the saddles were empty of men. Quoth Saad, "By the virtue of the Chosen [Prophet], whom God bless and keep, I saw El Abbas with the blood upon his saddle pads, [in gouts] like camels' livers, smiting with the sword right and left, till he scattered them abroad in every mountain-pass and desert; and when he turned [back to the camp], the men of Baghdad were fearful of him."

When the Baghdadis saw this succour that had betided them against their enemies [and the victory that El Abbas had gotten them], they turned back and gathering together the spoils [of the defeated host], arms and treasures and horses, returned to Baghdad, victorious, and all by the valour of El Abbas. As for Saad, he foregathered with the prince, and they fared on in company till they came to the place where El Abbas had taken horse, whereupon the latter dismounted from his charger and Saad said to him, "O youth, wherefore alightest thou in other than thy place? Indeed, thy due is incumbent upon us and upon our Sultan; so go thou with us to the dwellings, that we may ransom thee with our souls." "O Amir Saad," replied El Abbas, "from this place I took horse with thee and herein is my lodging. So, God on thee, name me not to the king, but make as if thou hadst never seen me, for that I am a stranger in the land."

So saying, he turned away from him and Saad fared on to the palace, where he found all the suite in attendance on the king and recounting to him that which had betided them with El Abbas. Quoth the king, "Where is he?" And they answered, "He is with the Amir Saad." [So, when the latter entered], the king [looked, but] found none with him; and Saad, seeing that he hankered after the youth, cried out to him, saying, "God prolong the king's days! Indeed, he refuseth to present himself before thee, without leave or commandment." "O Saad," asked the king, "whence cometh this man?" And the Amir answered, "O my lord, I know not; but he is a youth fair of favour, lovesome of aspect, accomplished in discourse, goodly of repartee, and valour shineth from between his eyes."

Quoth the king, "O Saad, fetch him to me, for indeed thou describest to me a masterful man."[FN#76] And he answered, saying, "By Allah, O my lord, hadst thou but seen our case with Hudheifeh, what while he challenged me to the field of war and the stead of thrusting and smiting and I held back from doing battle with him! Then, whenas I thought to go forth to him, behold, a cavalier gave loose to his bridle-rein and called out to me, saying, 'O Saad, wilt thou suffer me to fill thy room in waging war with him and I will ransom thee with myself?' And I said, 'By Allah, O youth, whence cometh thou?' Quoth he, 'This is no time for thy questions.'" Then he recounted to the king all that had passed between himself and El Abbas from first to last; whereupon quoth Ins ben Cais, "Bring him to me in haste, so we may learn his tidings and question him of his case." "It is well," answered Saad, and going forth of the king's presence, repaired to his own house, where he put off his harness of war and took rest for himself.

To return to El Abbas, when he alighted from his charger, he put off his harness of war and rested awhile; after which he brought out a shirt of Venetian silk and a gown of green damask and donning them, covered himself with a turban of Damietta stuff and girt his middle with a handkerchief. Then he went out a-walking in the thoroughfares of Baghdad and fared on till he came to the bazaar of the merchants. There he found a merchant, with chess before him; so he stood watching him and presently the other looked up at him and said to him, "O youth, what wilt thou stake upon the game?" And he answered, "Be it thine to decide." "Then be it a hundred dinars," said the merchant, and El Abbas consented to him, whereupon quoth he, "O youth, produce the

money, so the game may be fairly stablished." So El Abbas brought out a satin purse, wherein were a thousand dinars, and laid down an hundred dinars therefrom on the edge of the carpet, whilst the merchant did the like, and indeed his reason fled for joy, whenas he saw the gold in El Abbas his possession.

The folk flocked about them, to divert themselves with watching the play, and they called the bystanders to witness of the wager and fell a-playing. El Abbas forbore the merchant, so he might lead him on, and procrastinated with him awhile; and the merchant won and took of him the hundred dinars. Then said the prince, "Wilt thou play another game?" And the other answered, "O youth, I will not play again, except it be for a thousand dinars." Quoth the prince, "Whatsoever thou stakest, I will match thy stake with the like thereof." So the merchant brought out a thousand dinars and the prince covered them with other thousand. Then they fell a-playing, but El Abbas was not long with him ere he beat him in the square of the elephant,[FN#77] nor did he leave to do thus till he had beaten him four times and won of him four thousand dinars.

This was all the merchant's good; so he said, "O youth, I will play thee another game for the shop." Now the value of the shop was four thousand dinars; so they played and El Abbas beat him and won his shop, with that which was therein; whereupon the other arose, shaking his clothes, and said to him, "Up, O youth, and take thy shop." So El Abbas arose and repairing to the shop, took possession thereof, after which he returned to [the place where he had left] his servant [Aamir] and found there the Amir Saad, who was come to bid him to the presence of the king. El Abbas consented to this and accompanied him till they came before King Ins ben Cais, whereupon he kissed the earth and saluted him and exceeded[FN#78] in the salutation. Quoth the king to him, "Whence comest thou, O youth?" and he answered, "I come from Yemen."

Then said the king, "Hast thou a need we may accomplish unto thee? For indeed we are exceeding beholden to thee for that which thou didst in the matter of Hudheifeh and his folk." And he let cast over him a mantle of Egyptian satin, worth an hundred dinars. Moreover, he bade his treasurer give him a thousand dinars and said to him, "O youth, take this in part of that which thou deserves! of us; and if thou prolong thy sojourn with us, we will give thee slaves and servants." El Abbas kissed the earth and said, "O king, may grant thee abiding prosperity, I deserve not all this." Then he put his hand to his poke and pulling out two caskets of gold, in each of which were rubies, whose value none could tell, gave them to the king, saying, "O king, God cause thy prosperity to endure, I conjure thee by that which God hath vouchsafed thee, heal my heart by accepting these two caskets, even as I have accepted thy present." So the king accepted the two caskets and El Abbas took his leave and went away to the bazaar.

When the merchants saw him, they accosted him and said, "O youth, wilt thou not open thy shop?" As they were bespeaking him, up came a woman, having with her a boy, bareheaded, and [stood] looking at El Abbas, till he turned to her, when she said to him, "O youth, I conjure thee by Allah, look at this boy and have pity on him, for that his father hath forgotten his cap in the shop [he lost to thee]; so if thou will well to give it to him, thy reward be with God! For indeed the child maketh our hearts ache with his much weeping, and God be witness for us that, were there left us aught wherewithal to buy him a cap in its stead, we had not sought it of thee." "O adornment of womankind," replied El Abbas, "indeed, thou bespeakest me with thy fair speech and supplicatest me with thy goodly words ...But bring me thy husband." So she went and fetched the merchant, whilst the folk assembled to see what El Abbas would do. When the man came, he returned him the gold he had won of him, all and part, and delivered him the keys of the shop, saying, "Requite us with thy pious prayers." Therewithal the woman came up to him and kissed his feet, and on like wise did the merchant her husband; and all who were present blessed him, and there was no talk but of El Abbas.

As for the merchant, he bought him a sheep and slaughtering it, roasted it and dressed birds and [other] meats of various kinds and colours and bought dessert and sweetmeats and fresh fruits. Then he repaired to El Abbas and conjured him to accept of his hospitality and enter his house and eat of his victual. The prince consented to his wishes and went with him till they came to his house, when the merchant bade him enter. So El Abbas entered and saw a goodly house, wherein was a handsome saloon, with a vaulted estrade. When he entered the saloon, he found that the merchant had made ready food and dessert and perfumes, such as overpass description; and indeed he had adorned the table with sweet-scented flowers and sprinkled musk and rose-water upon the food. Moreover, he had smeared the walls of the saloon with ambergris and set [the smoke of burning] aloes-wood abroad therein.

Presently, El Abbas looked out of the window of the saloon and saw thereby a house of goodly ordinance,

lofty of building and abounding in chambers, with two upper stories; but therein was no sign of inhabitants. So he said to the merchant, "Indeed, thou exceedest in doing us honour; but, by Allah, I will not eat of thy victual till thou tell me what is the reason of the emptiness of yonder house." "O my lord," answered the other, "that was El Ghitrif's house and he was admitted to the mercy of God[FN#79] and left none other heir than myself; so it became mine, and by Allah, if thou hast a mind to sojourn in Baghdad, do thou take up thine abode in this house, so thou mayst be in my neighbourhood; for that indeed my heart inclineth unto thee with love and I would have thee never absent from my sight, so I may still have my fill of thee and hearken to thy speech." El Abbas thanked him and said to him, "Indeed, thou art friendly in thy speech and exceedest [in courtesy] in thy discourse, and needs must I sojourn in Baghdad. As for the house, if it like thee, I will abide therein; so take of me its price."

So saying, he put his hand to his poke and bringing out therefrom three hundred dinars, gave them to the merchant, who said in himself, "Except I take the money, he will not abide in the house." So he pouched the money and sold him the house, taking the folk to witness against himself of the sale. Then he arose and set food before El Abbas and they ate of the good things which he had provided; after which he brought him dessert and sweetmeats. They ate thereof till they had enough, when the tables were removed and they washed their hands with rose-water and willow-flower-water. Then the merchant brought El Abbas a napkin perfumed with the fragrant smoke of aloes-wood, on which he wiped his hand,[FN#80] and said to him, "O my lord, the house is become thy house; so bid thy servant transport thither the horses and arms and stuffs." El Abbas did this and the merchant rejoiced in his neighbourhood and left him not night nor day, so that the prince said to him, "By Allah, I distract thee from thy livelihood." "God on thee, O my lord," replied the merchant, "name not to me aught of this, or thou wilt break my heart, for the best of traffic is thy company and thou art the best of livelihood." So there befell strait friendship between them and ceremony was laid aside from between them.

Meanwhile the king said to his vizier, "How shall we do in the matter of yonder youth, the Yemani, on whom we thought to confer largesse, but he hath largessed us with tenfold [our gift] and more, and we know not if he be a sojourner with us or no?" Then he went into the harem and gave the rubies to his wife Afifeh, who said to him, "What is the worth of these with thee and with [other] the kings?" And he answered, "They are not to be found save with the greatest of kings and none may avail to price them with money." Quoth she, "Whence gottest thou them?" So he recounted to her the story of El Abbas from first to last, and she said, "By Allah, the claims of honour are imperative on us and the king hath fallen short of his due; for that we have not seen him bid him to his assembly, nor hath he seated him on his left hand."

[When the king heard his wife's words], it was as if he had been asleep and awoke; so he went forth of the harem and bade slaughter fowls and dress meats of all kinds and colours. Moreover, he assembled all his retainers and let bring sweetmeats and dessert and all that beseemeth unto kings' tables. Then he adorned his palace and despatched after El Abbas a man of the chief officers of his household, who found him coming forth of the bath, clad in a doublet of fine goats' hair and over it a Baghdadi scarf; his waist was girt with a Rustec[FN#81] kerchief and on his head he wore a light turban of Damietta make.

The messenger wished him joy of the bath and exceeded in doing him worship. Then he said to him, "The king biddeth thee in weal." [FN#82] "Hearkening and obedience," answered El Abbas and accompanied the messenger to the king's palace.

Now Afifeh and her daughter Mariyeh were behind the curtain, looking at him; and when he came before the king, he saluted him and greeted him with the greeting of kings, whilst all who were present stared at him and at his beauty and grace and perfection. The king seated him at the head of the table; and when Afifeh saw him and straitly considered him, she said, "By the virtue of Mohammed, prince of the Apostles, this youth is of the sons of the kings and cometh not to these parts but for some high purpose!" Then she looked at Mariyeh and saw that her face was changed, and indeed her eyes were dead in her face and she turned not her gaze from El Abbas a glance of the eyes, for that the love of him had gotten hold upon her heart. When the queen saw what had befallen her daughter, she feared for her from reproach concerning El Abbas; so she shut the wicket of the lattice and suffered her not to look upon him more. Now there was a pavilion set apart for Mariyeh, and therein were privy chambers and balconies and lattices, and she had with her a nurse, who served her, after the fashion of kings' daughters.

When the banquet was ended and the folk had dispersed, the king said to El Abbas, "I would fain have thee [abide] with me and I will buy thee a house, so haply we may requite thee the high services for which we are beholden to thee; for indeed thy due is imperative [upon us] and thy worth is magnified in our eyes; and indeed

we have fallen short of thy due in the matter of distance." [FN#83] When the prince heard the king's speech, he rose and sat down [FN#84] and kissing the earth, returned thanks for his bounty and said, "I am the king's servant, wheresoever I may be, and under his eye." Then he recounted to him the story of the merchant and the manner of the buying of the house, and the king said, "Indeed, I would fain have had thee with me and in my neighbourhood."

Then El Abbas took leave of the king and went away to his own house. Now it befell that he passed under the palace of Mariyeh the king's daughter, and she was sitting at a window. He chanced to look round and his eyes met those of the princess, whereupon his wit departed and he was like to swoon away, whilst his colour changed and he said, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!" But he feared for himself lest estrangement betide him; so he concealed his secret and discovered not his case to any of the creatures of God the Most High. When he reached his house, his servant Aamir said to him, "O my lord, I seek refuge for thee with God from change of colour! Hath there betided thee a pain from God the Most High or hath aught of vexation befallen thee? Verily, sickness hath an end and patience doth away vexation." But the prince returned him no answer. Then he brought out inkhorn [and pen] and paper and wrote the following verses:

Quoth I (and mine a body is of passion all forslain, Ay, and a  
heart that's all athirst for love and longing pain And eye that knoweth not the sweet of sleep; yet she, who  
caused  
My dole, may Fortune's perfidies for aye from her abstain! Yea, for the perfidies of Fate and sev'rance I'm  
become Even as  
was Bishr [FN#85] of old time with Hind, [FN#86] a fearful  
swain; A talking-stock among the folk for ever I abide; Life and the  
days pass by, yet ne'er my wishes I attain), "Knoweth my loved one when I see her at the lattice high Shine as  
the sun that flameth forth in heaven's blue demesne?" Her eye is sharper than a sword; the soul with ecstasy It  
takes  
and longing leaves behind, that nothing may assain. As at the casement high she sat, her charms I might espy,  
For  
from her cheeks the envious veil that hid them she had  
ta'en. She shot at me a shaft that reached my heart and I became The  
bond— man of despair, worn out with effort all in vain. Fawn of the palace, knowst thou not that I, to look on  
thee, The  
world have traversed, far and wide, o'er many a hill and  
plain? Read then my writ and pity thou the blackness of my fate, Sick,  
love— distraught, without a friend to whom I may complain.

Now the merchant's wife aforesaid, who was the nurse of the king's daughter, was watching him from a window, unknown of him, and [when she heard his verses], she knew that there hung some rare story by him; so she went in to him and said, "Peace be on thee, O afflicted one, who acquaintest not physician with thy case! Verily, thou exposest thyself unto grievous peril! I conjure thee by the virtue of Him who hath afflicted thee and stricken thee with the constraint of love—liking, that thou acquaint me with thine affair and discover to me the truth of thy secret; for that indeed I have heard from thee verses that trouble the wit and dissolve the body." So he acquainted her with his case and enjoined her to secrecy, whereof she consented unto him, saying, "What shall be the recompense of whoso goeth with thy letter and bringeth thee an answer thereto?" He bowed his head for shamefastness before her [and was silent]; and she said to him, "Raise thy head and give me thy letter." So he gave her the letter and she took it and carrying it to the princess, said to her, "Read this letter and give me the answer thereto."

Now the liefest of all things to Mariyeh was the recitation of poems and verses and linked rhymes and the twanging [of the strings of the lute], and she was versed in all tongues; so she took the letter and opening it, read that which was therein and apprehended its purport. Then she cast it on the ground and said, "O nurse, I have no answer to make to this letter." Quoth the nurse, "Indeed, this is weakness in thee and a reproach unto thee, for that the people of the world have heard of thee and still praise thee for keenness of wit and apprehension; so do thou return him an answer, such as shall delude his heart and weary his soul." "O nurse," rejoined the princess, "who is this that presumeth upon me with this letter? Belike he is the stranger youth who gave my father the rubies." "It is

himself," answered the woman, and Mariyeh said, "I will answer his letter on such a wise that thou shalt not bring me other than it [from him]." Quoth the nurse, "So be it." So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

O'erbold art thou in that to me, a stranger, thou hast sent These  
verses; 'twill but add to thee unease and discontent. Now God forbid thou shouldst attain thy wishes! What  
care I If  
thou have looked on me a look that caused thee languishment? Who art thou, wretch, that thou shouldst hope  
to win me? With thy  
rhymes What wouldst of me? Thy reason, sure, with passion is  
forspent. If to my favours thou aspire and covet me, good lack! What leach  
such madness can assain or what medicament? Leave rhyming, madman that thou art, lest, bound upon the  
cross,  
Thou thy presumption in the stead of abjectness repent. Deem not, O youth, that I to thee incline; indeed, no  
part Have I  
in those who walk the ways, the children of the tent.[FN#87] In the wide world no house thou hast, a homeless  
wanderer thou:  
To thine own place thou shall be borne, an object for  
lament.[FN#88] Forbear thy verse-making, O thou that harbourest in the camp,  
Lest to the gleemen thou become a name of wonderment. How many a lover, who aspires to union with his  
love, For all his  
hopes seem near, is baulked of that whereon he's bent! Then get thee gone nor covet that which thou shall ne'er  
obtain;  
So shall it be, although the time seem near and the event. Thus unto thee have I set forth my case; consider  
well My words,  
so thou mayst guided be aright by their intent.  
When she had made an end of her verses, she folded the letter and delivered it to the nurse, who took it and  
went with it to El Abbas. When she gave it to him, he took it and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its  
purport; and when he came to the end of it, he swooned away. After awhile, he came to himself and said, "Praised  
be God who hath caused her return an answer to my letter! Canst thou carry her another letter, and with God the  
Most High be thy requital?" Quoth she, "And what shall letters profit thee, seeing she answereth on this wise?"  
But he said, "Belike, she may yet be softened." Then he took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:  
Thy letter reached me; when the words thou wrot'st therein I  
read, My longing waxed and pain and woe redoubled on my  
head. Yea, wonder-words I read therein, my trouble that increased And  
caused emaciation wear my body to a shred. Would God thou knewst what I endure for love of thee and how  
My  
vitals for thy cruelty are all forspent and dead! Fain, fain would I forget thy love. Alack, my heart denies To be  
consoled, and 'gainst thy wrath nought standeth me in stead. An thou'dst vouchsafe to favour me, 'twould  
lighten my despair,  
Though but in dreams thine image 'twere that visited my bed. Persist not on my weakness with thy disdain  
nor be Treason and  
breach of love its troth to thee attributed; For know that hither have I fared and come to this thy land, By  
hopes of union with thee and near fruition led. How oft I've waked, whilst over me my comrades kept the  
watch!  
How many a stony waste I've crossed, how many a desert  
dread! From mine own land, to visit thee, I came at love's command, For  
all the distance did forbid, 'twixt me and thee that spread. Wherefore, by Him who letteth waste my frame, have  
ruth on me And  
quench my yearning and the fires by passion in me fed. In glory's raiment clad, by thee the stars of heaven are  
shamed  
And in amaze the full moon stares to see thy goodlihead. All charms, indeed, thou dost comprise; so who shall

vie with

thee And who shall blame me if for love of such a fair I'm  
sped?

When he had made an end of his verses, he folded the letter and delivering it to the nurse, charged her keep the secret. So she took it and carrying it to Mariyeh, gave it to her. The princess broke it open and read it and apprehended its purport. Then said she, "By Allah, O nurse, my heart is burdened with an exceeding chagrin, never knew I a dourer, because of this correspondence and of these verses." And the muse made answer to her, saying, "O my lady, thou art in thy dwelling and thy place and thy heart is void of care; so return him an answer and reckon thou not" Accordingly, the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thou that the dupe of yearning art, how many a melting wight In  
waiting for the unkept tryst doth watch the weary night! If in night's blackness thou hast plunged into the  
desert's heart

And hast denied thine eyes the taste of sleep and its  
delight, If near and far thy toiling feet have trod the ways and thou

Devils and Marids hast ensued nor wouldst be led aright, And dar'dst, O dweller in the tents, to lift thine eyes  
to me,

Hoping by stress to win of me the amorous delight, Get thee to patience fair, if thou remember thee of that  
Whose

issues (quothe the Merciful) are ever benedight.[FN#89] How many a king for my sweet sake with other kings  
hath vied,

Still craving union with me and suing for my sight! Whenas En Nebhan strove to win my grace, himself to me  
With

camel— loads he did commend of musk and camphor white, And aloes—wood, to boot, he brought and caskets  
full of pearls

And priceless rubies and the like of costly gems and bright; Yea, and black slaves he proffered me and  
slave—girls big with

child And steeds of price, with splendid arms and trappings  
rich bedight. Raiment of silk and sendal, too, he brought to us for gift, And

me in marriage sought therewith; yet, all his pains despite, Of me he got not what he sought and brideless did  
return, For

that estrangement and disdain were pleasing in my sight. Wherefore, O stranger, dare thou not approach me  
with desire,

Lest ruin quick and pitiless thy hardihood requite.

When she had made an end of her verses, she folded the letter and delivered it to the nurse, who took it and carried it to El Abbas. He broke it open and read it and apprehended its purport; then took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Indeed, thou'st told the tale of kings and men of might, Each one  
a lion fierce, impetuous in the fight, Whose wits (like mine, alack!) thou stalest and whose hearts With  
shafts from out thine eyes bewitching thou didst smite. Yea, and how slaves and steeds and good and virgin  
girls Were

proffered thee to gift, thou hast not failed to cite, How presents in great store thou didst refuse and eke The  
givers,

great and small, with flouting didst requite. Then came I after them, desiring thee, with me No second save my  
sword, my falchion keen and bright. No slaves with me have I nor camels swift of foot, Nor  
slave—girls have I brought in curtained litters dight. Yet, an thou wilt vouchsafe thy favours unto me, My sabre  
thou

shalt see the foemen put to flight; Ay, and around Baghdad the horsemen shalt behold, Like clouds  
that wall the world, full many a doughty knight, All hearkening to my word, obeying my command, In  
whatsoever

thing is pleasing to my sight. If slaves thou fain wouldst have by thousands every day Or,

kneeling at thy feet, see kings of mickle might, And horses eke wouldst have led to thee day by day And girls,

high-breasted maids, and damsels black and white, Lo under my command the land of Yemen is And trenchant is my

sword against the foe in fight. Whenas the couriers came with news of thee, how fair Thou wast and sweet and how thy visage shone with light, All, all, for thy sweet sake, I left; ay, I forsook Aziz, my sire, and those akin to me that hight And unto Irak fared, my way to thee to make, And crossed the stony wastes i' the darkness of the night. Then sent I speech to thee in verses such as burn The heart; reproach therein was none nor yet unright; Yet with perfidiousness (sure Fortune's self as thou Ne'er so perfidious was) my love thou didst requite And deemedst me a waif, a homeless good-for-nought, A slave-begotten brat, a wanton, witless wight.

Then he folded the letter and committed it to the nurse and gave her five hundred dinars, saying, "Accept this from me, for that indeed thou hast wearied thyself between us." "By Allah, O my lord," answered she, "my desire is to bring about union between you, though I lose that which my right hand possesseth." And he said, "May God the Most High requite thee with good!" Then she carried the letter to Mariyeh and said to her, "Take this letter; belike it may be the end of the correspondence." So she took it and breaking it open, read it, and when she had made an end of it, she turned to the nurse and said to her, "This fellow putteth off lies upon me and avoucheth unto me that he hath cities and horsemen and footmen at his command and submitting to his allegiance; and he seeketh of me that which he shall not obtain; for thou knowest, O nurse, that kings' sons have sought me in marriage, with presents and rarities; but I have paid no heed unto aught of this; so how shall I accept of this fellow, who is the fool[FN#90] of his time and possesseth nought but two caskets of rubies, which he gave to my father, and indeed he hath taken up his abode in the house of El Ghitrif and abideth without silver or gold? Wherefore, I conjure thee by Allah, O nurse, return to him and cut off his hope of me."

Accordingly the nurse returned to El Abbas, without letter or answer; and when she came in to him, he saw that she was troubled and noted the marks of chagrin on her face; so he said to her, "What is this plight?" Quoth she, "I cannot set out to thee that which Mariyeh said; for indeed she charged me return to thee without letter or answer." "O nurse of kings," rejoined El Abbas, "I would have thee carry her this letter and return not to her without it." Then he took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

My secret is disclosed, the which I strove to hide; Of thee and of thy love enough have I abyed. My kinsmen and my friends for thee I did forsake And left them weeping tears that poured as 'twere a tide. Yea, to Baghdad I came, where rigour gave me chase And I was overthrown of cruelty and pride. Repression's draught, by cups, from the beloved's hand I've quaffed; with colocynth for wine she hath me plied. Oft as I strove to make her keep the troth of love, Unto concealment's ways still would she turn aside. My body is dissolved with sufferance in vain; Relenting, ay, and grace I hoped should yet betide; But rigour still hath waxed on me and changed my case And love hath left me bound, afflicted, weeping-eyed. How long shall I anights distracted be for love Of thee? How long

th' assaults of grief and woes abide? Thou, thou enjoy'st repose and comfortable sleep, Nor of the mis'ries reckst by which my heart is wried. I watch the stars for wake and pray that the belov'd May yet to me relent and bid my tears be dried. The pains of long desire have wasted me away; Estrangement and disdain my body sore have tried. "Be thou not hard of heart," quoth I. Had ye but deigned To visit me in dreams, I had been satisfied. But when ye saw my writ, the standard ye o'erthrew Of faith, your favours grudged and aught of grace denied. Nay, though ye read therein discourse that sure should speak To heart and soul, no word thereunto ye replied, But deemed yourself secure from every changing chance Nor recked

the ebb and flow of Fortune's treacherous tide. Were my affliction thine, love's anguish hadst thou dreed And in

the flaming hell of long estrangement sighed. Yet shall thou suffer that which I from thee have borne And with love's woes thy heart shall yet be mortified. The bitterness of false accusing shall thou taste And eke the thing reveal that thou art fain to hide; Yea, he thou lov'st shall be hard-hearted, recking not Of fortune's turns or fate's caprices, in his pride. Wherewith farewell, quoth I, and peace be on thee aye, What while

the branches bend, what while the stars abide.



When he had made an end of his verses, he folded the letter and gave it to the nurse, who took it and carried it to Mariyeh. When she came into the princess's presence, she saluted her; but Mariyeh returned not her salutation and she said, "O my lady, how hard is thy heart that thou grudgest to return the salutation! Take this letter, for that it is the last of that which shall come to thee from him." Quoth Mariyeh, "Take my warning and never again enter my palace, or it will be the cause of thy destruction; for I am certified that thou purposest my dishonour. So get thee gone from me." And she commanded to beat the nurse; whereupon the latter went forth fleeing from her presence, changed of colour and absent of wits, and gave not over going till she came to the house of El Abbas.

When the prince saw her in this plight, he was as a sleeper awakened and said to her, "What hath befallen thee? Set out to me thy case." "God on thee," answered she, "nevermore send me to Mariyeh, and do thou protect me, so may God protect thee from the fires of hell!" Then she related to him that which had bedded her with Mariyeh; which when he heard, there took him the shamefastness of the generous and this was grievous unto him. The love of Mariyeh fled forth of his heart and he said to the nurse, "How much hadst thou of Mariyeh every month?" "Ten dinars," answered she, and he said, "Be not concerned." Then he put his hand to his poke and bringing out two hundred dinars, gave them to her and said, "Take this for a whole year's wage and turn not again to serve any one. When the year is out, I will give thee two years' wage, for that thou hast wearied thyself with us and on account of the cutting off of thy dependence upon Mariyeh."

Moreover, he gave her a complete suit of clothes and raising his head to her, said, "When thou toldest me that which Mariyeh had done with thee, God rooted out the love of her from my heart, and never again will she occur to my mind; so extolled be the perfection of Him who turneth hearts and eyes! It was she who was the cause of my coming out from Yemen, and now the time is past for which I engaged with my people and I fear lest my father levy his troops and come forth in quest of me, for that he hath no child other than myself and cannot brook to be parted from me; and on like wise is it with my mother." When the nurse heard his words, she said to him, "O my lord, and which of the kings is thy father?" "My father is El Aziz, lord of Yemen and Nubia and the Islands[FN#91] of the Benou Kehtan and the Two Noble Sanctuaries[FN#92] (God the Most High have them in His keeping!)," answered El Abbas; "and whenas he taketh horse, there mount with him an hundred and twenty and four thousand horsemen, all smiters with the sword, let alone attendants and servants and followers, all of whom give ear unto my word and obey my commandment." "Why, then, O my lord," asked the nurse, "didst thou conceal the secret of thy rank and lineage and passedst thyself off for a wayfarer? Alas for our disgrace before thee by reason of our shortcoming in rendering thee thy due! What shall be our excuse with thee, and thou of the sons of the kings?" But he rejoined, "By Allah, thou hast not fallen short! Nay, it is incumbent on me to requite thee, what while I live, though I be far distant from thee."

Then he called his servant Aamir and said to him, "Saddle the horses." When the nurse heard his words and indeed [she saw that] Aamir brought him the horses and they were resolved upon departure, the tears ran down upon her cheeks and she said to him, "By Allah, thy separation is grievous to me, O solace of the eye!" Then said she, "Where is the goal of thine intent, so we may know thy news and solace ourselves with thy report?" Quoth he, "I go hence to visit Akil, the son of my father's brother, for that he hath his sojourn in the camp of Kundeh ben Hisham, and these twenty years have I not seen him nor he me; wherefore I purpose to repair to him and discover his news and return hither. Then will I go hence to Yemen, if it be the will of God the Most High."

So saying, he took leave of the woman and her husband and set out, intending for Akil, his father's brother's son. Now there was between Baghdad and Akil's abiding-place forty days' journey; so El Abbas settled himself on the back of his courser and his servant Aamir mounted also and they fared forth on their way. Presently, El Abbas turned right and left and recited the following verses:

I am the champion-slayer, the warrior without peer; My foes I  
slay, destroying the hosts, when I appear. Tow'rds El Akil my journey I take; to visit him, The wastes in  
praise and safety I traverse, without fear, And all the desert spaces devour, whilst to my rede, Or if in  
sport or earnest,[FN#93] still Aamir giveth ear. Who letteth us or hind'reth our way, I spring on him, As  
springeth lynx or panther upon the frightened deer; With ruin I o'erwhelm him and abjectness and woe And cause  
him

quaff the goblet of death and distance drear. Well-ground my polished sword is and thin and keen of edge And  
trenchant, eke, for smiting and long my steel-barbed spear. So fell and fierce my stroke is, if on a mountain  
high It lit,

though all of granite, right through its midst 'twould  
 shear. Nor troops have I nor henchmen nor one to lend me aid Save God,  
 to whom, my Maker, my voice in praise I rear. 'Tis He who pardoneth errors alike to slave and free; On Him is  
 my reliance in good and evil cheer.

Then they fell to journeying night and day, and as they went, behold, they sighted a camp of the camps of the  
 Arabs. So El Abbas enquired thereof and was told that it was the camp of the Benou Zuhreh. Now there were  
 around them sheep and cattle, such as filled the earth, and they were enemies to El Akil, the cousin of El Abbas,  
 upon whom they still made raids and took his cattle; wherefore he used to pay them tribute every year, for that he  
 availed not to cope with them. When El Abbas came near the camp, he dismounted from his courser and his  
 servant Aamir also dismounted; and they set down the victual and ate their sufficiency and rested awhile of the  
 day. Then said the prince to Aamir, "Fetch water and give the horses to drink and draw water for us in thy  
 water-bag, by way of provision for the road."

So Aamir took the water-skin and made for the water; but, when he came to the well, behold, two young men  
 with gazelles, and when they saw him, they said to him, "Whither wilt thou, O youth, and of which of the Arabs  
 art thou?" "Harkye, lads," answered he, "fill me my water-skin, for that I am a stranger man and a wayfarer and I  
 have a comrade who awaiteth me." Quoth they, "Thou art no wayfarer, but a spy from El Akil's camp." Then they  
 took him and carried him to [their king] Zuheir ben Shebib; and when he came before him, he said to him, "Of  
 which of the Arabs art thou?" Quoth Aamir, "I am a wayfarer." And Zuheir said, "Whence comest thou and  
 whither wilt thou?" "I am on my way to Akil," answered Aamir. When he named Akil, those who were present  
 were agitated; but Zuheir signed to them with his eyes and said to him, "What is thine errand with Akil?" Quoth  
 he, "We would fain see him, my friend and I."

When Zuheir heard his words, he bade smite off his head; but his Vizier said to him, "Slay him not, till his  
 friend be present." So he commanded the two slaves to fetch his friend; whereupon they repaired to El Abbas and  
 called to him, saying, "O youth, answer the summons of King Zuheir." "What would the king with me?" asked he,  
 and they answered, "We know not." Quoth he, "Who gave the king news of me?" "We went to draw water,"  
 answered they, "and found a man by the water. So we questioned him of his case, but he would not acquaint us  
 therewith; wherefore we carried him perforce to King Zuheir, who questioned him of his case and he told him that  
 he was going to Akil. Now Akil is the king's enemy and he purposeth to betake himself to his camp and make  
 prize of his offspring and cut off his traces." "And what," asked El Abbas, "hath Akil done with King Zuheir?"  
 And they replied, "He engaged for himself that he would bring the king every year a thousand dinars and a  
 thousand she-camels, besides a thousand head of thoroughbred horses and two hundred black slaves and fifty  
 slave-girls; but it hath reached the king that Akil purposeth to give nought of this; wherefore he is minded to go  
 to him. So hasten thou with us, ere the king be wroth with thee and with us."

Then said El Abbas to them, "O youths, sit by my arms and my horse till I return." But they answered, saying,  
 "By Allah, thou prolongest discourse with that which beseemeth not of words! Make haste, or we will go with thy  
 head, for indeed the king purposeth to slay thee and to slay thy comrade and take that which is with you." When  
 the prince heard this, his skin quaked and he cried out at them with a cry that made them tremble. Then he sprang  
 upon his horse and settling himself in the saddle, galloped till he came to the king's assembly, when he cried out at  
 the top of his voice, saying ["To horse,] cavaliers!" And levelled his spear at the pavilion wherein was Zuheir.  
 Now there were about him a thousand smiters with the sword; but El Abbas fell in upon them and dispersed them  
 from around him, and there abode none in the tent save Zuheir and his vizier.

Then came up El Abbas to the door of the tent, and therein were four-and-twenty golden doves; so he took  
 them, after he had beaten them down with the end of his lance. Then he called out, saying, "Harkye, Zuheir! Doth  
 it not suffice thee that thou hast quelled El Akil's repute, but thou art minded to quell that of those who sojourn  
 round about him? Knowest thou not that he is of the lieutenants of Kundeh ben [Hisham of the Benou] Sheiban, a  
 man renowned for prowess? Indeed, covetise of him hath entered into thee and jealousy of him hath gotten  
 possession of thee. Doth it not suffice thee that thou hast orphaned his children[FN#94] and slain his men? By the  
 virtue of the Chosen Prophet, I will make thee drink the cup of death!" So saying, he drew his sword and smiting  
 Zuheir on his shoulder, caused the steel issue, gleaming, from the tendons of his throat. Then he smote the vizier  
 and clove his head in sunder.

As he was thus, behold, Aamir called out to him and said, "O my lord, come to my help, or I am a dead man!"

So El Abbas went up to him and found him cast down on his back and chained with four chains to four pickets of iron. He loosed his bonds and said to him, "Go before me, O Aamir." So he fared on before him a little, and presently they looked, and behold, horsemen making to Zuheir's succour, to wit, twelve thousand cavaliers, with Sehl ben Kaab in their van, mounted upon a jet-black steed. He charged upon Aamir, who fled from him, then upon El Abbas, who said, "O Aamir, cleave fast to my horse and guard my back." Aamir did as he bade him, whereupon El Abbas cried out at the folk and falling upon them, overthrew their braves and slew of them nigh two thousand cavaliers, whilst not one of them knew what was to do nor with whom he fought. Then said one of them to other, "Verily, the king is slain; so with whom do we wage war? Indeed ye flee from him; so do ye enter under his banners, or not one of you will be saved."

Thereupon they all dismounted and putting off that which was upon them of harness of war, came before El Abbas and tendered him allegiance and sued for his protection. So he held his hand from them and bade them gather together the spoils. Then he took the riches and the slaves and the camels, and they all became his liege-men and his retainers, to the number (according to that which is said) of fifty thousand horse. Moreover, the folk heard of him and flocked to him from all sides; whereupon he divided [the spoil amongst them] and gave gifts and abode thus three days, and there came presents to him. Then he bade set out for Akil's abiding-place; so they fared on six days and on the seventh day they came in sight of the camp. El Abbas bade his man Aamir forego him and give Akil the glad news of his cousin's coming. So he rode on to the camp and going in to Akil, gave him the glad news of Zuheir's slaughter and the conquest of his tribe.

Akil rejoiced in the coming of El Abbas and the slaughter of his enemy and all in his camp rejoiced also and cast dresses of honour upon Aamir. Moreover, Akil bade go forth to meet El Abbas, and commanded that none, great or small, freeman or slave, should tarry behind. So they did his bidding and going forth all, met El Abbas at three parasangs' distance from the camp. When they met him, they all dismounted from their horses and Akil and he embraced and clapped hands.[FN#95] Then they returned, rejoicing in the coming of El Abbas and the slaughter of their enemy, to the camp, where tents were pitched for the new-comers and carpets spread and game killed and beasts slaughtered and royal guest-meals spread; and on this wise they abode twenty days, in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life.

To return to King El Aziz. When his son El Abbas left him, he was desolated for him with an exceeding desolation, he and his mother; and when tidings of him tarried long and the appointed time passed [and the prince returned not], the king caused public proclamation to be made, commanding all his troops to make ready to mount and go forth in quest of his son El Abbas at the end of three days, after which time no cause of hindrance nor excuse should be admitted unto any. So on the fourth day, the king bade number the troops, and behold, they were four-and-twenty thousand horse, besides servants and followers. Accordingly, they reared the standards and the drums beat to departure and the king set out [with his army], intending for Baghdad; nor did he cease to fare on with all diligence, till he came within half a day's journey of the city and bade his troops encamp in [a place there called] the Green Meadow. So they pitched the tents there, till the country was straitened with them, and set up for the king a pavilion of green brocade, broidered with pearls and jewels.

When El Aziz had sat awhile, he summoned the mamelukes of his son El Abbas, and they were five-and-twenty in number, besides half a score slave-girls, as they were moons, five of whom the king had brought with him and other five he had left with the prince's mother. When the mamelukes came before him, he cast over each of them a mantle of green brocade and bade them mount like horses of one and the same fashion and enter Baghdad and enquire concerning their lord El Abbas. So they entered the city and passed through the [streets and] markets, and there abode in Baghdad nor old man nor boy but came forth to gaze on them and divert himself with the sight of their beauty and grace and the goodliness of their aspect and of their clothes and horses, for that they were even as moons. They gave not over going till they came to the royal palace, where they halted, and the king looked at them and seeing their beauty and the goodliness of their apparel and the brightness of their faces, said, "Would I knew of which of the tribes these are!" And he bade the eunuch bring him news of them.

So he went out to them and questioned them of their case, whereupon, "Return to thy lord," answered they, "and question him of Prince El Abbas, if he have come unto him, for that he left his father King El Aziz a full-told year ago, and indeed longing for him troubleth the king and he hath levied a part of his army and his guards and is come forth in quest of his son, so haply he may light upon tidings of him." Quoth the eunuch, "Is there amongst you a brother of his or a son?" "Nay, by Allah!" answered they. "But we are all his mamelukes and

the boughten of his money, and his father El Aziz hath despatched us to make enquiry of him. So go thou to thy lord and question him of the prince and return to us with that which he shall answer you." "And where is King El Aziz?" asked the eunuch; and they replied, "He is encamped in the Green Meadow." [FN#96]

The eunuch returned and told the king, who said, "Indeed, we have been neglectful with regard to El Abbas. What shall be our excuse with the king? By Allah, my soul misdoubted me that the youth was of the sons of the kings!" The Lady Afifeh, his wife, saw him lamenting for [his usage of] El Abbas and said to him, "O king, what is it thou regrettest with this exceeding regret?" Quoth he, "Thou knowest the stranger youth, who gave us the rubies?" "Assuredly," answered she; and he said, "Yonder youths, who have halted in the palace court, are his mamelukes, and his father King El Aziz, lord of Yemen, hath pitched his camp in the Green Meadow; for he is come with his army to seek him, and the number of his troops is [four-and-] twenty thousand men." [Then he went out from her], and when she heard his words, she wept sore for him and had compassion on his case and sent after him, counselling him to send for the mamelukes and lodge them [in the palace] and entertain them.

The king gave ear to her counsel and despatching the eunuch for the mamelukes, assigned them a lodging and said to them, "Have patience, till the king give you tidings of your lord El Abbas." When they heard his words, their eyes ran over with plenteous tears, of their much longing for the sight of their lord. Then the king bade the queen enter the privy chamber [FN#97] and let down the curtain [FN#98] [before the door thereof]. So she did this and he summoned them to his presence. When they stood before him, they kissed the earth, to do him worship, and showed forth their breeding [FN#99] and magnified his dignity. He bade them sit, but they refused, till he conjured them by their lord El Abbas. So they sat down and he caused set before them food of various kinds and fruits and sweetmeats. Now within the Lady Afifeh's palace was an underground way communicating with the palace of the princess Mariyeh. So the queen sent after her and she came to her, whereupon she made her stand behind the curtain and gave her to know that El Abbas was the king's son of Yemen and that these were his mamelukes. Moreover, she told her that the prince's father had levied his troops and was come with his army in quest of him and that he had pitched his camp in the Green Meadow and despatched these mamelukes to make enquiry of their lord. So Mariyeh abode looking upon them and upon their beauty and grace and the goodliness of their apparel, till they had eaten their fill of food and the tables were removed; whereupon the king recounted to them the story of El Abbas and they took leave of him and went away.

As for the princess Mariyeh, when she returned to her palace, she bethought herself concerning the affair of El Abbas, repenting her of that which she had done, and the love of him took root in her heart. So, when the night darkened upon her, she dismissed all her women and bringing out the letters, to wit, those which El Abbas had written, fell to reading them and weeping. She gave not over weeping her night long, and when she arose in the morning, she called a damsel of her slave-girls, Shefikeh by name, and said to her, "O damsel, I purpose to discover to thee mine affair, and I charge thee keep my secret; to wit, I would have thee betake thyself to the house of the nurse, who used to serve me, and fetch her to me, for that I have grave occasion for her."

Accordingly, Shefikeh went out and repairing to the nurse's house, found her clad in apparel other [FN#100] than that which she had been wont to wear aforetime. So she saluted her and said to her, "Whence hadst thou this dress, than which there is no goodlier?" "O Shefikeh," answered the nurse, "thou deemest that I have gotten [FN#101] no good save of thy mistress; but, by Allah, had I endeavoured for her destruction, I had done [that which was my right], for that she did with me what thou knowest [FN#102] and bade the eunuch beat me, without offence of me committed; wherefore do thou tell her that he, on whose behalf I bestirred myself with her, hath made me quit of her and her humours, for that he hath clad me in this habit and given me two hundred and fifty dinars and promised me the like thereof every year and charged me serve none of the folk."

Quoth Shefikeh, "My mistress hath occasion for thee; so come thou with me and I will engage to restore thee to thy dwelling in weal and safety." But the nurse answered, saying, "Indeed, her palace is become forbidden [FN#103] to me and never again will I enter therein, for that God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) of His favour and bounty hath rendered me independent of her." So Shefikeh returned to her mistress and acquainted her with the nurse's words and that wherein she was of affluence; whereupon Mariyeh confessed the unseemliness of her dealing with her and repented, whenas repentance profited her not; and she abode in that her case days and nights, whilst the fire of longing flamed in her heart.

Meanwhile, El Abbas abode with his cousin Akil twenty days, after which he made ready for the journey to Baghdad and letting bring the booty he had gotten of King Zuheir, divided it between himself and his cousin.

Then he set out for Baghdad, and when he came within two days' journey of the city, he called his servant Aamir and bade him mount his charger and forego him with the baggage—train and the cattle. So Aamir [took horse and] fared on till he came to Baghdad, and the season of his entering was the first of the day; nor was there little child or hoary old man in the city but came forth to divert himself with gazing on those flocks and herds and upon the goodliness of those slave—girls, and their wits were amazed at what they saw. Presently the news reached the king that the young man El Abbas, who had gone forth from him, was come back with herds and rarities and slaves and a mighty host and had taken up his sojourn without the city, whilst his servant Aamir was presently come to Baghdad, so he might make ready dwelling— places for his lord, wherein he should take up his abode.

When the king heard these tidings of Aamir, he sent for him and let bring him before him; and when he entered his presence, he kissed the earth and saluted and showed forth his breeding and greeted him with the goodliest of compliments. The king bade him raise his head and questioned him of his lord El Abbas; whereupon he acquainted him with his tidings and told him that which had betided him with King Zuheir and of the army that was become at his commandment and of the spoil that he had gotten. Moreover, he gave him to know that El Abbas was coming on the morrow, and with him more than fifty thousand cavaliers, obedient to his commandment. When the king heard his speech, he bade decorate Baghdad and commanded [the inhabitants] to equip themselves with the richest of their apparel, in honour of the coming of El Abbas. Moreover, he sent to give King El Aziz the glad tidings of his son's return and acquainted him with that which he had heard from the prince's servant.

When the news reached El Aziz, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the coming of his son and straightway took horse, he and all his army, what while the trumpets sounded and the musicians played, that the earth quaked and Baghdad also trembled, and it was a notable day. When Mariyeh beheld all this, she repented with the uttermost of repentance of that which she had wroughten against El Abbas his due and the fires still raged in her vitals. Meanwhile, the troops[FN#104] sallied forth of Baghdad and went out to meet those of El Abbas, who had halted in a meadow called the Green Island. When he espied the approaching host, he knew not what they were; so he strained his sight and seeing horsemen coming and troops and footmen, said to those about him, "Among yonder troops are ensigns and banners of various kinds; but, as for the great green standard that ye see, it is the standard of my father, the which is reserved [unto him and never displayed save] over his head, and [by this] I know that he himself is come out in quest of me." And he was certified of this, he and his troops.

[So he fared on towards them] and when he drew near unto them, he knew them and they knew him; whereupon they lighted down from their horses and saluting him, gave him joy of his safety and the folk flocked to him. When he came to his father, they embraced and greeted each other a long time, whilst neither of them availed unto speech, for the greatness of that which betided them of joy in reunion. Then El Abbas bade the folk mount; so they mounted and his mamelukes surrounded him and they entered Baghdad on the most magnificent wise and in the highest worship and glory.

The wife of the shopkeeper, to wit, the nurse, came out, with the rest of those who came out, to divert herself with gazing upon the show, and when she saw El Abbas and beheld his beauty and the goodliness of his army and that which he had brought back with him of herds and slaves and slave—girls and mamelukes, she improvised and recited the following verses:

El Abbas from Akil his stead is come again; Prize hath he made of  
steeds and many a baggage—train; Yea, horses hath he brought, full fair of shape and hue, Whose  
collars, anklet—like, ring to the bridle—rein. Taper of hoofs and straight of stature, in the dust They prance,  
as like a flood they pour across the plain; And on their saddles perched are warriors richly clad, That with  
their hands do smite on kettle—drums amain. Couched are their limber spears, right long and lithe of point,  
Keen— ground and polished sheer, amazing wit and brain. Who dares with them to cope draws death upon  
himself; Yea, of the  
deadly lance incontinent he's slain. Come, then, companions mine, rejoice with me and say, "All hail  
to thee, O friend, and welcome fair and fain!" For whoso doth rejoice in meeting him shall have Largesse and  
gifts galore at his dismounting gain.

When the troops entered Baghdad, each of them alighted in his pavilion, whilst El Abbas encamped apart in a place near the Tigris and commanded to slaughter for the troops, each day, that which should suffice them of oxen and sheep and bake them bread and spread the tables. So the folk ceased not to come to him and eat of his

banquet. Moreover, all the people of the country came to him with presents and rarities and he requited them many times the like of their gifts, so that the lands were filled with his tidings and the report of him was bruited abroad among the folk of the deserts and the cities.

Then, when he rode to his house that he had bought, the shopkeeper and his wife came to him and gave him joy of his safety; whereupon he ordered them three swift thoroughbred horses and ten dromedaries and an hundred head of sheep and clad them both in sumptuous dresses of honour. Then he chose out ten slave-girls and ten black slaves and fifty horses and the like number of she-camels and three hundred head of sheep, together with twenty ounces of musk and as many of camphor, and sent all this to the King of Baghdad. When this came to Ins ben Cais, his wit fled for joy and he was perplexed wherewithal to requite him. Moreover, El Abbas gave gifts and largesse and bestowed dresses of honour upon great and small, each after the measure of his station, save only Mariyeh; for unto her he sent nothing.

This was grievous to the princess and it irked her sore that he should not remember her; so she called her slave-girl Shefikeh and said to her, "Go to El Abbas and salute him and say to him, 'What hindereth thee from sending my lady Mariyeh her part of thy booty?'" So Shefikeh betook herself to him and when she came to his door, the chamberlains refused her admission, until they should have gotten her leave and permission. When she entered, El Abbas knew her and knew that she had somewhat of speech [with him]; so he dismissed his mamelukes and said to her, "What is thine errand, O handmaid of good?" "O my lord," answered she, "I am a slave-girl of the Princess Mariyeh, who kisseth thy hands and commendeth her salutation to thee. Indeed, she rejoiceth in thy safety and reproacheth thee for that thou breakest her heart, alone of all the folk, for that thy largesse embraceth great and small, yet hast thou not remembered her with aught of thy booty. Indeed, it is as if thou hadst hardened thy heart against her." Quoth he, "Extolled be the perfection of him who turneth hearts! By Allah, my vitals were consumed with the love of her [aforetime] and of my longing after her, I came forth to her from my native land and left my people and my home and my wealth, and it was with her that began the hardheartedness and the cruelty. Nevertheless, for all this, I bear her no malice and needs must I send her somewhat whereby she may remember me; for that I abide in her land but a few days, after which I set out for the land of Yemen."

Then he called for a chest and bringing out thence a necklace of Greek handiwork, worth a thousand dinars, wrapped it in a mantle of green silk, set with pearls and jewels and inwrought with red gold, and joined thereto two caskets of musk and ambergris. Moreover, he put off upon the girl a mantle of Greek silk, striped with gold, wherein were divers figures and semblants depicted, never saw eyes its like. Therewithal the girl's wit fled for joy and she went forth from his presence and returned to her mistress. When she came in to her, she acquainted her with that which she had seen of El Abbas and that which was with him of servants and attendants and [set out to her] the loftiness of his station and gave her that which was with her.

Mariyeh opened the mantle, and when she saw that necklace, and indeed the place was illumined with the lustre thereof, she looked at her slave-girl and said to her, "By Allah, O Shefikeh, one look at him were liefer to me than all that my hand possesseth! Would I knew what I shall do, whenas Baghdad is empty of him and I hear no tidings of him!" Then she wept and calling for inkhorn\* and paper and pen of brass, wrote the following verses:

Still do I yearn, whilst passion's fire flames in my liver aye;  
 For parting's shafts have smitten me and done my strength  
 away. Oft for thy love as I would be consoled, my yearning turns  
 To-thee-ward still and my desires my reason still gainsay. My transports I conceal for fear of those thereon  
 that spy; Yet  
 down my cheeks the tears course still and still my case  
 bewray. No rest is there for me, no life wherein I may delight, Nor  
 pleasant meat nor drink avails to please me, night or day. To whom save thee shall I complain, of whom relief  
 implore, Whose  
 image came to visit me, what while in dreams I lay? Reproach me not for what I did, but be thou kind to one  
 Who's  
 sick of body and whose heart is wasted all away. The fire of love-longing I hide; severance consumeth me, A  
 thrall

of care, for long desire to wakefulness a prey. Midmost the watches of the night I see thee, in a dream; A lying dream, for he I love my love doth not repay. Would God thou knewest that for love of thee which I endure! It hath indeed brought down on me estrangement and dismay. Read thou my writ and apprehend its purport, for my case This is

and fate hath stricken me with sorrows past allay. Know, then, the woes that have befall'n a lover, neither grudge

Her secret to conceal, but keep her counsel still, I pray.

Then she folded the letter and giving it to her slave-girl, bade her carry it to El Abbas and bring back his answer thereto. Accordingly, Shefikeh took the letter and carried it to the prince, after the doorkeeper had sought leave of him to admit her. When she came in to him, she found with him five damsels, as they were moons, clad in [rich] apparel and ornaments; and when he saw her, he said to her, "What is thine occasion, O handmaid of good?" So she put out her hand to him with the letter, after she had kissed it, and he bade one of his slave-girls receive it from her. Then he took it from the girl and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its purport; whereupon "We are God's and to Him we return!" exclaimed he and calling for ink-horn and paper, wrote the following verses:

I marvel for that to my love I see thee now incline, What time my heart, indeed, is fain to turn away from thine. Whilere, the verses that I made it was thy wont to flout, Saying, "No passer by the way[FN#105] hath part in me or mine. How many a king to me hath come, of troops and guards ensued, And

Bactrian camels brought with him, in many a laden line, And dromedaries, too, of price and goodly steeds and swift Of

many a noble breed, yet found no favour in my eyne!" Then, after them came I to thee and union did entreat And unto

thee set forth at length my case and my design; Yea, all my passion and desire and love-longing in verse, As pearls in goodly order strung it were, I did enshrine. Yet thou repaidst me with constraint, rigour and perfidy, To

which no lover might himself on any wise resign. How many a bidder unto love, a secret-craving wight, How many a

swain, complaining, saith of destiny malign, "How many a cup with bitterness o'erflowing have I quaffed! I make my moan of woes, whereat it boots not to repine." Quoth thou, "The goodliest of things is patience and its use: Its

practice still mankind doth guide to all that's fair and fine." Wherefore fair patience look thou use, for sure 'tis praiseworthy; Yea, and its issues evermore are blessed and benign; And hope thou not for aught from me, who reck not with a folk To mix, who may with abjectness infect my royal line. This is my saying; apprehend its purport, then, and know I may in

no wise yield consent to that thou dost opine.

Then he folded the letter and sealing it, delivered it to the damsel, who took it and carried it to her mistress. When the princess read the letter and apprehended its contents, she said, "Meseemeth he recalleth to me that which I did aforetime." Then she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Me, till I stricken was therewith, to love thou didst excite, And with estrangement now, alas! heap'st sorrows on my spright. The sweet of slumber after thee I have forsworn; indeed The loss

of thee hath smitten me with trouble and affright. How long shall I, in weariness, for this estrangement pine, What

while the spies of severance[FN#106] do watch me all the night? My royal couch have I forsworn, sequestering myself From all, and have mine eyes forbid the taste of sleep's delight. Thou taught'st me what I cannot bear; afflicted sore am I; Yea,

thou hast wasted me away with rigour and despite. Yet, I conjure thee, blame me not for passion and desire,

Me whom

estrangement long hath brought to sick and sorry plight. Sore, sore doth rigour me beset, its onslaughts bring me near

Unto the straitness of the grave, ere in the shroud I'm  
dight. So be thou kind to me, for love my body wasteth sore, The thrall  
of passion I'm become its fires consume me quite.

Mariyeh folded the letter and gave it to Shefikeh, bidding her carry it to El Abbas. So she took it and going with it to his door, would have entered; but the chamberlains and serving-men forbade her, till they had gotten her leave from the prince. When she went in to him, she found him sitting in the midst of the five damsels aforesaid, whom his father had brought him. So she gave him the letter and he took it and read it. Then he bade one of the damsels, whose name was Khefifeh and who came from the land of China, tune her lute and sing upon the subject of separation. So she came forward and tuning the lute, played thereon in four-and-twenty modes; after which she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Upon the parting day our loves from us did fare And left us to  
endure estrangement and despair. Whenas the burdens all were bounden on and shrill The  
camel-leader's call rang out across the air, Fast flowed my tears; despair gat hold upon my soul And needs  
mine eyelids must the sweet of sleep forbear. I wept, but those who spied to part us had no ruth On me nor on  
the fires that in my vitals flare. Woe's me for one who burns for love and longing pain! Alas for  
the regrets my heart that rend and tear! To whom shall I complain of what is in my soul, Now thou art gone  
and I my pillow must forswear? The flames of long desire wax on me day by day And far away are  
pitched the tent-poles of my fair. O breeze of heaven, from me a charge I prithee take And do not  
thou betray the troth of my despair; Whenas thou passest by the dwellings of my love, Greet him for me  
with peace, a greeting debonair, And scatter musk on him and ambergris, so long As time endures;  
for this is all my wish and care.

When the damsel had made an end of her song, El Abbas swooned away and they sprinkled on him rose-water, mingled with musk, till he came to himself, when he called another damsel (now there was on her of linen and clothes and ornaments that which beggareth description, and she was endowed with brightness and loveliness and symmetry and perfection, such as shamed the crescent moon, and she was a Turkish girl from the land of the Greeks and her name was Hafizeh) and said to her, "O Hafizeh, close thine eyes and tune thy lute and sing to us upon the days of separation." She answered him with "Hearkening and obedience" and taking the lute, tuned its strings and cried out from her head,[FN#107] in a plaintive voice, and sang the following verses:

O friends, the tears flow ever, in mockery of my pain; My heart  
is sick for sev'rance and love-longing in vain. All wasted is my body and bowels tortured sore; Love's fire on me

still waxeth, mine eyes with tears still rain. Whenas the fire of passion flamed in my breast, with tears, Upon  
the day of wailing, to quench it I was fain. Desire hath left me wasted, afflicted, sore afraid, For the spy  
knows the secret whereof I do complain. When I recall the season of love-delight with them, The sweet of  
sleep forsakes me, my body wastes amain. Those who our parting plotted our sev'rance still delights; The  
spies, for fearful prudence, their wish of us attain. I fear me for my body from sickness and unrest, Lest of the  
fear

of sev'rance it be betrayed and slain.

When Hafizeh had made an end of her song, El Abbas said to her, "Well done! Indeed, thou quickenest hearts from sorrows." Then he called another damsel of the daughters of the Medes, by name Merjaneh, and said to her, "O Merjaneh, sing to me upon the days of separation." "Hearkening and obedience," answered she and improvising, sang the following verses:

"Fair patience practise, for thereon still followeth content." So  
runs the rede 'mongst all that dwell in city or in tent. How oft of dole have I made moan for love and longing  
pain, What  
while my body for desire in mortal peril went! How oft I've waked, how many a cup of sorrow have I drained,  
Watching the stars of night go by, for sleepless  
languishment! It had sufficed me, had thy grace with verses come to me; My



expectation still on thee in the foredawns was bent. Then was my heart by that which caused my agitation seared, And  
from mine eyelids still the tears poured down without  
relent. Yea, nevermore I ceased from that wherewith I stricken was; My  
night with wakefulness was filled, my heart with dreariment. But now hath Allah from my heart blotted the  
love of thee, After  
for constancy I'd grown a name of wonderment. Hence on the morrow forth I fare and leave your land behind;  
So

take your leave of us nor fear mishap or ill event. Whenas in body ye from us are far removed, would God I  
knew who  
shall to us himself with news of you present! And who can tell if ever house shall us together bring In union  
of life serene and undisturbed content?

When Merjaneh had made an end of her song, the prince said to her, "Well done, O damsel! Indeed, thou  
sayest a thing that had occurred to my mind and my tongue was like to speak it." Then he signed to the fourth  
damsel, who was a Cairene, by name Sitt el Husn, and bade her tune her lute and sing to him upon the [same]  
subject. So she tuned her lute and sang the following verses:

Fair patience use, for ease still followeth after stress And all  
things have their time and ordinance no less. Though Fortune whiles to thee belike may be unjust, Her seasons  
change and man's excused if he transgress. In her revolving scheme, to bitter sweetness still Succeeds and  
things become straight, after crookedness. Thine honour, therefore, guard and eke thy secret keep, Nor save  
to one free-born and true thy case confess. The Lord's alternatives are these, wherewith He's wont The needy  
wretch to ply and those in sore duress.

When El Abbas heard her verses, they pleased him and he said to her, "Well done, O Sitt el Husn! Indeed,  
thou hast done away trouble from my heart and [banished] the things that had occurred to my mind." Then he  
heaved a sigh and signing to the fifth damsel, who was from the land of the Persians and whose name was  
Merziyeh (now she was the fairest of them all and the sweetest of speech and she was like unto a splendid star,  
endowed with beauty and loveliness and brightness and perfection and justness of shape and symmetry and had a  
face like the new moon and eyes as they were gazelle's eyes) and said to her, "O Merziyeh, come forward and  
tune thy lute and sing to us on the [same] subject, for indeed we are resolved upon departure to the land of  
Yemen." Now this damsel had met many kings and had consorted with the great; so she tuned her lute and sang  
the following verses:

May the place of my session ne'er lack thee I Oh, why, My heart's  
love, hast thou saddened my mind and mine eye?[FN#108] By thy ransom,[FN#109] who dwellest alone in my  
heart, In despair

for the loss of the loved one am I. So, by Allah, O richest of all men in charms, Vouchsafe to a  
lover, who's bankrupt well-nigh Of patience, thy whilom endearments again, That I never to any  
divulged, nor deny The approof of my lord, so my stress and unease I may ban and  
mine enemies' malice defy, Thine approof which shall clothe me in noblest attire And my rank  
in the eyes of the people raise high.

When she had made an end of her song, all who were in the assembly wept for the daintiness of her speech  
and the sweetness of her voice and El Abbas said to her, "Well done, O Merziyeh I Indeed, thou confoundest the  
wits with the goodliness of thy verses and the elegance of thy speech." All this while Shefikeh abode gazing upon  
her, and when she beheld El Abbas his slave-girls and considered the goodliness of their apparel and the  
nimbleness of their wits and the elegance of their speech, her reason was confounded. Then she sought leave of El  
Abbas and returning to her mistress Mariyeh, without letter or answer, acquainted her with his case and that  
wherein he was of puissance and delight and majesty and veneration and loftiness of rank. Moreover, she told her  
what she had seen of the slave-girls and their circumstance and that which they had said and how they had made  
El Abbas desirous of returning to his own country by the recitation of verses to the sound of the strings.

When the princess heard this her slave-girl's report, she wept and lamented and was like to depart the world.  
Then she clave to her pillow and said, "O Shefikeh, I will instruct thee of somewhat that is not hidden from God  
the Most High, and it is that thou watch over me till God the Most High decree the accomplishment of His

commandment, and when my days are ended, take thou the necklace and the mantle that El Abbas gave me and return them to him. Indeed, I deem not he will live after me, and if God the Most High decree against him and his days come to an end, do thou give one charge to shroud us and bury us both in one grave."

Then her case changed and her colour paled; and when Shefikeh saw her mistress in this plight, she repaired to her mother and told her that the lady Mariyeh refused meat and drink. "Since when hath this befallen her?" asked the queen, and Shefikeh answered, "Since yesterday;" whereat the queen was confounded and betaking herself to her daughter, that she might enquire into her case, found her as one dead. So she sat down at her head and Mariyeh opened her eyes and seeing her mother sitting by her, sat up for shamefastness before her. The queen questioned her of her case and she said, "I entered the bath and it stupefied me and weakened me and left an exceeding pain in my head; but I trust in God the Most High that it will cease."

When her mother went out from her, Mariyeh fell to chiding the damsel for that which she had done and said to her, "Verily, death were leifer to me than this; so look thou discover not my affair to any and I charge thee return not to the like of this fashion." Then she swooned away and lay awhile without life, and when she came to herself, she saw Shefikeh weeping over her; whereupon she took the necklace from her neck and the mantle from her body and said to the damsel, "Lay them in a napkin of damask and carry them to El Abbas and acquaint him with that wherein I am for the persistence of estrangement and the effects of forbiddance." So Shefikeh took them and carried them to El Abbas, whom she found in act to depart, for that he was about to take horse for Yemen. She went in to him and gave him the napkin and that which was therein, and when he opened it and saw what it contained, to wit, the mantle and the necklace, his vexation was excessive and his eyes were distorted, [so that the whites thereof appeared] and his rage was manifest in them.

When Shefikeh saw that which betided him, she came forward and said to him, "O bountiful lord, indeed my mistress returneth not the mantle and the necklace despitefully; but she is about to depart the world and thou hast the best right to them." "And what is the cause of this?" asked he. Quoth Shefikeh, "Thou knowest. By Allah, never among the Arabs nor the barbarians nor among the sons of the kings saw I a harder of heart than thou! Is it a light matter to thee that thou troublest Mariyeh's life and causest her mourn for herself and depart the world on account of[FN#110] thy youth? Indeed, thou wast the cause of her acquaintance with thee and now she departeth the world on thine account, she whose like God the Most High hath not created among the daughters of the kings."

When El Abbas heard these words from the damsel, his heart irked him for Mariyeh and her case was grievous to him; so he said to Shefikeh, "Canst thou avail to bring me in company with her, so haply I may discover her affair and allay that which aileth her?" "Yes," answered the damsel, "I can do that, and thine will be the bounty and the favour." So he arose and followed her, and she forewent him, till they came to the palace. Then she [opened and] locked behind them four-and-twenty doors and made them fast with bolts; and when he came to Mariyeh, he found her as she were the setting sun, cast down upon a rug of Taifi leather,[FN#111] among cushions stuffed with ostrich down, and not a limb of her quivered. When her maid saw her in this plight, she offered to cry out; but El Abbas said to her, "Do it not, but have patience till we discover her affair; and if God the Most High have decreed the ending of her days, wait till thou have opened the doors to me and I have gone forth. Then do what seemeth good to thee."

So saying, he went up to the princess and laying his hand upon her heart, found it fluttering like a doveling and the life yet clinging to[FN#112] her bosom. So he laid his hand upon her cheek, whereupon she opened her eyes and beckoning to her maid, signed to her, as who should say, "Who is this that treadeth my carpet and transgresseth against me?"[FN#113] "O my lady," answered Shefikeh, "this is Prince El Abbas, for whose sake thou departest the world." When Mariyeh heard speak of El Abbas, she raised her hand from under the coverlet and laying it upon his neck, inhaled his odour awhile. Then she sat up and her colour returned to her and they sat talking till a third part of the night was past.

Presently, the princess turned to her maid and bade her fetch them somewhat of food and sweetmeats and dessert and fruits. So Shefikeh brought what she desired and they ate and drank [and abode on this wise] without lewdness, till the night departed and the day came. Then said El Abbas, "Indeed, the day is come. Shall I go to my father and bid him go to thy father and seek thee of him in marriage for me, in accordance with the Book of God the Most High and the Institutes of His Apostle (whom may He bless and keep!) so we may not enter into transgression?" And Mariyeh answered, saying, "By Allah, it is well counselled of thee!" So he went away to his

lodging and nought befell between them; and when the day lightened, she improvised and recited the following verses:

O friends, the East wind waxes, the morning draweth near; A  
plaintive voice[FN#114] bespeaks me and I rejoice to hear. Up, to our comrade's convent, that we may visit  
him And drink of  
wine more subtle than dust;[FN#115] our trusty fere Hath spent thereon his substance, withouten stint; indeed,  
In his  
own cloak he wrapped it, he tendered it so dear.[FN#116] Whenas its jar was opened, the singers prostrate fell  
In worship  
of its brightness, it shone so wonder-clear. The priests from all the convent came flocking onto it: With  
cries of joy and welcome their voices they did rear. We spent the night in passing the cup, my mates and I, Till  
in  
the Eastward heaven the day-star did appear. No sin is there in drinking of wine, for it affords All that's  
foretold[FN#117] of union and love and happy cheer. O morn, our loves that sunder'st, a sweet and easeful life  
Thou  
dost for me prohibit, with thy regard austere. Be gracious, so our gladness may be fulfilled with wine And we  
of  
our beloved have easance, without fear. The best of all religions your love is, for in you Are love and  
life made easeful, untroubled and sincere.

Meanwhile, El Abbas betook himself to his father's camp, which was pitched in the Green Meadow, by the  
side of the Tigris, and none might make his way between the tents, for the much interlacement of the tent-ropes.  
When the prince reached the first of the tents, the guards and servants came out to meet him from all sides and  
escorted him till he drew near the sitting-place of his father, who knew of his coming. So he issued forth of his  
pavilion and coming to meet his son, kissed him and made much of him. Then they returned together to the royal  
pavilion and when they had seated themselves and the guards had taken up their station in attendance on them, the  
king said to El Abbas, "O my son, make ready thine affair, so we may go to our own land, for that the folk in our  
absence are become as they were sheep without a shepherd." El Abbas looked at his father and wept till he  
swooned away, and when he recovered from his swoon, he improvised and recited the following verses:

I clipped her[FN#118] in mine arms and straight grew drunken with  
the scent Of a fresh branch that had been reared in  
affluence and content. 'Twas not of wine that I had drunk; her mouth's sweet honeyed  
dews It was intoxicated me with bliss and ravishment. Upon the table of her cheek beauty hath writ, "Alack,  
Her charms!

'Twere well thou refuge sought'st with God  
incontinent."[FN#119] Since thou hast looked on her, mine eye, be easy, for by God Nor  
mote nor ailment needst thou fear nor evil accident. Beauty her appanage is grown in its entirety, And for this  
cause

all hearts must bow to her arbitrament. If with her cheek and lustre thou thyself adorn,[FN#120] thou'lt  
find But chrysolites and gold, with nought of baser metal  
blent. When love-longing for her sweet sake I took upon myself, The  
railers flocked to me anon, on blame and chiding bent; But on no wise was I affrayed nor turned from love of  
her; So let

the railer rave of her henceforth his heart's content. By God, forgetfulness of her shall never cross my mind,  
What

while I wear the bonds of life nor when of death they're  
rent An if I live, in love of her I'll live, and if I die Of love and  
longing for her sight, O rare! O excellent!

When El Abbas had made an end of his verses, his father said to him, "I seek refuge for thee with God, O my  
son! Hast thou any want unto which thou availest not, so I may endeavour for thee therein and lavish my treasures  
in quest thereof?" "O father mine," answered El Abbas, "I have, indeed, an urgent want, on account whereof I  
came forth of my native land and left my people and my home and exposed myself to perils and stresses and

became an exile from my country, and I trust in God that it may be accomplished by thine august endeavour." "And what is thy want?" asked the king. Quoth El Abbas, "I would have thee go and demand me in marriage Mariyeh, daughter of the King of Baghdad, for that my heart is distraught with love of her." And he recounted to his father his story from first to last.

When the king heard this from his son, he rose to his feet and calling for his charger of state, took horse with four-and-twenty amirs of the chief officers of his empire. Then he betook himself to the palace of the King of Baghdad, who, when he saw him coming, bade his chamberlains open the doors to him and going down himself to meet him, received him with all worship and hospitality and entreated him with the utmost honour. Moreover, he carried him [and his suite] into the palace and causing make ready for them carpets and cushions, sat down upon a chair of gold, with traverses of juniper- wood, set with pearls and jewels. Then he bade bring sweetmeats and confections and odoriferous flowers and commanded to slaughter four-and-twenty head of sheep and the like of oxen and make ready geese and fowls, stuffed and roasted, and pigeons and spread the tables; nor was it long before the meats were set on in dishes of gold and silver. So they ate till they had enough and when they had eaten their fill, the tables were removed and the wine-service set on and the cups and flagons ranged in order, whilst the mamelukes and the fair slave- girls sat down, with girdles of gold about their middles, inlaid with all manner pearls and diamonds and emeralds and rubies and other jewels. Moreover, the king bade fetch the musicians; so there presented themselves before him a score of damsels, with lutes and psalteries and rebecks, and smote upon instruments of music, on such wise that they moved the assembly to delight.

Then said El Aziz to the King of Baghdad, "I would fain speak a word to thee; but do thou not exclude from us those who are present. If thou consent unto my wish, that which is ours shall be thine and that which is incumbent on thee shall be incumbent on us,[FN#121] and we will be to thee a mighty aid against all enemies and opposites." Quoth Ins ben Cais, "Say what thou wilt, O King, for indeed thou excellest in speech and attainest [the mark] in that which them sayest" So El Aziz said to him, "I desire that thou give thy daughter Mariyeh in marriage to my son El Abbas, for thou knowest that wherewithal he is gifted of beauty and loveliness and brightness and perfection and how he beareth himself in the frequentation of the valiant and his constancy in the stead of smiting and thrusting." "By Allah, O king," answered Ins ben Cais, "of my love for Mariyeh, I have appointed her disposal to be in her own hand; wherefore, whomsoever she chooseth of the folk, I will marry her to him."

Then he arose and going in to his daughter, found her mother with her; so he set out to them the case and Mariyeh said, "O father mine, my wish is subject unto[FN#122] thy commandment and my will ensueth thy will; so whatsoever thou chooseth, I am still obedient unto thee and under thy dominion." Therewithal the King knew that Mariyeh inclined unto El Abbas; so he returned forthright to King El Aziz and said to him, "May God amend the King! Verily, the occasion is accomplished and there is no opposition unto that which thou commandest" Quoth El Aziz, "By God's leave are occasions accomplished. How deemest thou, O King, of fetching El Abbas and drawing up the contract of marriage between Mariyeh and him?" And Ins ben Cais answered, saying, "Thine be it to decide."

So El Aziz sent after his son and acquainted him with that which had passed; whereupon El Abbas called for four-and-twenty males and half a score horses [and as many camels] and loaded the mules with pieces of silk and rags of leather and boxes of camphor and musk and the camels [and horses] with chests of gold and silver. Moreover, he took the richest of the stuffs and wrapping them in pieces of gold-striped silk, laid them on the heads of porters, and they fared on with the treasures till they reached the King of Baghdad's palace, whereupon all who were present dismounted in honour of El Abbas and escorting him to the presence of King Ins ben Cais, displayed unto the latter all that they had with them of things of price. The king bade carry all this into the harem and sent for the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the contract and married Mariyeh to Prince El Abbas, whereupon the latter commanded to [slaughter] a thousand head of sheep and five hundred buffaloes. So they made the bride-feast and bade thereto all the tribes of the Arabs, Bedouins and townsfolk, and the tables abode spread for the space of ten days.

Then El Abbas went in to Mariyeh in a happy and praiseworthy hour[FN#123] and found her an unpierced pearl and a goodly filly that had never been mounted; wherefore he rejoiced and was glad and made merry, and care and sorrow ceased from him and his life was pleasant and trouble departed and he abode with her in the gladsomest of case and in the most easeful of life, till seven days were past, when King El Aziz determined to set

out and return to his kingdom and bade his son seek leave of his father-in-law to depart with his wife to his own country. [So El Abbas bespoke King Ins of this] and he granted him the leave he sought; whereupon he chose out a red camel, taller[FN#124] than the [other] camels, and mounting Mariyeh in a litter thereon, loaded it with apparel and ornaments.

Then they spread the ensigns and the standards, whilst the drums beat and the trumpets sounded, and set out upon the homeward journey. The King of Baghdad rode forth with them and brought them three days' journey on their way, after which he took leave of them and returned with his troops to Baghdad. As for King El Aziz and his son, they fared on night and day and gave not over going till there abode but three days' journey between them and Yemen, when they despatched three men of the couriers to the prince's mother [to acquaint her with their return], safe and laden with spoil, bringing with them Mariyeh, the king's daughter of Baghdad. When the queen-mother heard this, her wit fled for joy and she adorned El Abbas his slave-girls after the goodliest fashion. Now he had ten slave-girls, as they were moons, whereof his father had carried five with him to Baghdad, as hath aforetime been set out, and other five abode with his mother. When the dromedary-posts[FN#125] came, they were certified of the approach of El Abbas, and when the sun rose and their standards appeared, the prince's mother came out to meet her son; nor was there great or small, old man or infant, but went forth that day to meet the king.

The drums of glad tidings beat and they entered in the utmost of worship and magnificence. Moreover, the tribes heard of them and the people of the towns and brought them the richest of presents and the costliest of rarities and the prince's mother rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then they slaughtered beasts and made mighty bride-feasts to the people and kindled fires, that it might be visible afar to townsman [and Bedouin] that this was the house of the guest-meal and the wedding, festival, to the intent that, if any passed them by, [without partaking of their hospitality], it should be of his own fault[FN#126] So the folk came to them from all parts and quarters and on this wise they abode days and months.

Then the prince's mother bade fetch the five slave-girls to that assembly; whereupon they came and the ten damsels foregathered. The queen seated five of them on her son's right hand and other five on his left and the folk assembled about them. Then she bade the five who had remained with her speak forth somewhat of verse, so they might entertain therewith the assembly and that El Abbas might rejoice therein. Now she had clad them in the richest of raiment and adorned them with trinkets and ornaments and wroughten work of gold and silver and collars of gold, set with pearls and jewels. So they came forward, with harps and lutes and psalteries and recorders and other instruments of music before them, and one of them, a damsel who came from the land of China and whose name was Baoutheh, advanced and tightened the strings of her lute. Then she cried out from the top of her head[FN#127] and improvising, sang the following verses:

Unto its pristine lustre your land returned and more, Whenas ye  
came, dispelling the gloom that whiles it wore. Our stead, that late was desert, grew green and eke our trees,  
That barren were, grew loaded with ripened fruits galore. Yea, to the earth that languished for lack of rain, the  
clouds

Were bounteous; so it flourished and plenteous harvests  
bore; And troubles, too, forsook us, who tears like dragons' blood, O  
lordings, for your absence had wept at every pore. Indeed, your long estrangement hath caused my bowels  
yearn. Would

God I were a servant in waiting at your door!

When she had made an end of her song, all who were present were moved to delight and El Abbas rejoiced in this. Then he bade the second damsel sing somewhat on the like subject. So she came forward and tuning the strings of her harp, which was of balass ruby,[FN#128] warbled a plaintive air and improvising, sang the following verses;

The absent ones' harbinger came us unto With tidings of those  
who[FN#129] had caused us to rue. "My soul be thy ransom," quoth I, "for thy grace! Indeed, to the  
oath that thou swor'st thou wast true." On the dear nights of union, in you was our joy, But afflicted  
were we since ye bade us adieu. You swore you'd be faithful to us and our love, And true to your  
oath and your troth-plight were you; And I to you swore that a lover I was; God forbid that with  
treason mine oath I ensue! Yea, "Welcome! Fair welcome to those who draw near!" I called out

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aloud, as to meet you I flew. The dwellings, indeed, one and all, I adorned, Bewildered and dazed with delight at your view; For death in your absence to us was decreed; But, when ye came back, we were quickened anew.

When she had made an end of her verses, El Abbas bade the third damsel, who came from Samarcand of the Persians and whose name was Rummaneh, sing, and she answered with "Hearkening and obedience." Then she took the psaltery and crying out from the midst of her bead[FN#130] improvised and sang the following verses:

My watering lips, that cull the rose of thy soft cheek, declare

My basil,[FN#131] lily mine, to be the myrtles of thy hair. Sandhill[FN#132] and down[FN#133] betwixt there blooms a yellow

willow-flower,[FN#134] Pomegranate-blossoms[FN#135] and for

fruits pomegranates[FN#136] that doth bear. His eyelids' sorcery from mine eyes hath banished sleep; since he

From me departed, nought see I except a drowsy fair.[FN#137] He shot me with the shafts of looks launched from an

eyebrow's[FN#138] bow; A chamberlain[FN#139] betwixt his

eyes hath driven me to despair. My heart belike shall his infect with softness, even as me His

body with disease infects, of its seductive air. Yet, if with him forgotten be the troth-plight of our loves, I

have a king who of his grace will not forget me e'er. His sides the tamarisk's slenderness deride, so lithe they are,

Whence for conceit in his own charms still drunken doth he

fare. Whenas he runs, his feet still show like wings,[FN#140] and for

the wind When was a rider found, except King Solomon it

were?[FN#141]

Therewithal El Abbas smiled and her verses pleased him. Then he bade the fourth damsel come forward and sing. Now she was from the land of Morocco and her name was Belekshsha. So she came forward and taking the lute and the psaltery, tightened the strings thereof and smote thereon in many modes; then returned to the first mode and improvising, sang the following verses:

When in the sitting-chamber we for merry-making sate, With thine

eyes' radiance the place thou didst illuminate And pliedst us with cups of wine, whilst from the necklace

pearls[FN#142] A strange intoxicating bliss withal did

circulate, Whose subtleness might well infect the understanding folk; And

secrets didst thou, in thy cheer, to us communicate. Whenas we saw the cup, forthright we signed to past it round And

sun and moon unto our eyes shone sparkling from it straight. The curtain of delight, perforce, we've lifted through the

friend,[FN#143] For tidings of great joy, indeed, there came

to us of late. The camel-leader singing came with the belov'd; our wish

Accomplished was and we were quit of all the railers' prate. When clear'd my sky was by the sweet of our foregathering And not

a helper there remained to disuniting Fate, I shut myself up with my love; no spy betwixt us was; We feared

no enemies' despite, no envious neighbour's hate. Life with our loves was grown serene, estrangement was at end:

Our dear ones all delight of love vouchsafed to us elate, Saying, "Thy fill of union take; no spy is there on us, Whom we

should fear, nor yet reproach our gladness may abate." Our loves are joined and cruelty at last is done away; Ay, and

the cup of love-delight 'twixt us doth circulate. Upon yon be the peace of God! May all prosperity, For what's decreed of years and lives, upon you ever wait!

When Belekshsha had made an end of her verses, all present were moved to delight and El Abbas said to her, "Well done, O damsel!" Then he bade the fifth damsel come forward and sing. Now she was from the land of Syria and her name was Rihaneh; she was surpassing of voice and when she appeared in an assembly, all eyes were fixed upon her. So she came forward and taking the rebeck (for that she was used to play upon [all manner]

instruments) improvised and sang the following verses:

Your coming to-me-ward, indeed, with "Welcome! fair welcome!" I hail. Your sight to me gladness doth bring and banisheth sorrow and bale; For love with your presence grows sweet, untroubled and life is serene And the star of our fortune burns bright, that clouds in your absence did veil. Yea, by Allah, my longing for you ne'er waneth nor passeth away; For your like among creatures is rare and sought for in mountain and vale. Ask mine eyes whether slumber hath lit on their lids since the hour of your loss Or if aye on a lover they've looked. Nay, an ye believe not their tale, My heart, since the leave-taking day afflicted, will tell of my case, And my body, for love and desire grown wasted and feeble and frail. Could they who reproach me but see my sufferings, their hearts would relent; They'd marvel, indeed, at my case and the loss of my loved ones bewail. Yea, they'd join me in pouring forth tears and help me my woes to lament, And like unto me they'd become all wasted and tortured and pale. How long did the heart for thy love that languished with longing endure A burden of passion, 'neath which e'en mountains might totter and fail! By Allah, what sorrows and woes to my soul for thy sake were decreed! My heart is grown hoar, ere eld's snows have left on my tresses their trail. The fires in my vitals that rage if I did but discover to view, Their ardour the world to consume, from the East to the West, might avail. But now unto me of my loves accomplished are joyance and cheer And those whom I cherish my soul with the wine of contentment regale. Our Lord, after sev'rance, with them hath conjoined us, for he who doth good Shall ne'er disappointed abide and kindnesses kindness entail.

When King El Aziz heard the damsel's song, her speech and her verses pleased him and he said to El Abbas, "O my son, verily, these damsels are weary with long versifying, and indeed they make us yearn after the dwellings and the homesteads with the goodliness of their songs. Indeed, these five have adorned our assembly with the excellence of their melodies and have done well in that which they have said before those who are present; wherefore we counsel thee to enfranchise them for the love of God the Most High." Quoth El Abbas, "There is no commandment but thy commandment;" and he enfranchised the ten damsels in the assembly; whereupon they kissed the hands of the king and his son and prostrated themselves in thanksgiving to God the Most High. Then they put off that which was upon them of ornaments and laying aside the lutes [and other] instruments of music, clave to their houses, veiled, and went not forth.[FN#144]

As for King El Aziz, he lived after this seven years and was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High; whereupon his son El Abbas carried him forth to burial on such wise as beseemeth unto kings and let make recitations and readings of the Koran, in whole or in part, over his tomb. He kept up the mourning for his father a full-told month, at the end of which time he sat down on the throne of the kingship and judged and did justice and distributed silver and gold. Moreover, he loosed all who were in the prisons and abolished grievances and customs dues and did the oppressed justice of the oppressor; wherefore the people prayed for him and loved him and invoked on him endurance of glory and kingship and length of continuance [on life] and eternity of prosperity and happiness. Moreover, the troops submitted to him and the hosts from all parts of the kingdom, and there came to him presents from all the lands. The kings obeyed him and many were his troops and his grandees, and his subjects lived with him the most easeful and prosperous of lives.

Meanwhile, he ceased not, he and his beloved, Queen Mariyeh, in the most delightful of life and the pleasantest thereof, and he was vouchsafed by her children; and indeed there befell friendship and love between them and the longer their companionship was prolonged, the more their love waxed, so that they became unable to endure from each other a single hour, save the time of his going forth to the Divan, when he would return to her in the utterest that might be of longing. And on this wise they abode in all solace and delight of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies. So extolled be the perfection of Him

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whose kingdom endureth for ever, who is never heedless neither dieth nor sleepeth! This is all that hath come down to us of their story, and so peace [be on you!]



## **SHEHRZAD AND SHEHRIYAR.[FN#145]**

King Shehriyar marvelled [at this story[FN#146]] and said "By Allah, verily, injustice slayeth its folk!"[FN#147] And he was edified by that wherewith Shehrzad bespoke him and sought help of God the Most High. Then said he to her, "Tell me another of thy stories, O Shehrzad; let it be a pleasant one and this shall be the completion of the story—telling." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "It hath reached me, O august King, that a man once said to his fellows, 'I will set forth to you a means[FN#148] of security[FN#149] against vexation.[FN#150] A friend of mine once related to me and said, 'We attained [whiles] to security[FN#151] against vexation,[FN#152]and the origin of it was other than this; to wit, it was as follows.[FN#153]

## THE TWO KINGS AND THE VIZIER'S DAUGHTERS.[FN#154]

[Aforetime] I journeyed in [many] lands and climes and towns and visited the great cities and traversed the ways and [exposed myself to] dangers and hardships. Towards the last of my life, I entered a city [of the cities of China],[FN#155] wherein was a king of the Chosroes and the Tubbas[FN#156] and the Caesars.[FN#157] Now that city had been peopled with its inhabitants by means of justice and equitable dealing; but its [then] king was a tyrant, who despoiled souls and [did away] lives; there was no wanning oneself at his fire,[FN#158] for that indeed he oppressed the true believers and wasted the lands. Now he had a younger brother, who was [king] in Samarcand of the Persians, and the two kings abode a while of time, each in his own city and place, till they yearned unto each other and the elder king despatched his vizier in quest of his younger brother.

When the vizier came to the King of Samarcand [and acquainted him with his errand], he submitted himself to the commandment [of his brother and made answer] with 'Hearkening and obedience.' Then he equipped himself and made ready for the journey and brought forth his tents and pavilions. A while after midnight, he went in to his wife, that he might take leave of her, and found with her a strange man, sleeping with her in one bed. So he slew them both and dragging them out by the feet, cast them away and set forth incontinent on his journey. When he came to his brother's court, the latter rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and lodged him in the pavilion of entertainment, [to wit, the guest-house,] beside his own palace. Now this pavilion overlooked a garden belonging to the elder king and there the younger brother abode with him some days. Then he called to mind that which his wife had done with him and remembered him of her slaughter and bethought him how he was a king, yet was not exempt from the vicissitudes of fortune; and this wrought upon him with an exceeding despire, so that it caused him abstain from meat and drink, or, if he ate anything, it profited him not.

When his brother saw him on this wise, he doubted not but that this had betided him by reason of severance from his people and family and said to him, 'Come, let us go forth a-hunting.' But he refused to go with him; so the elder brother went forth to the chase, whilst the younger abode in the pavilion aforesaid. As he was diverting himself by looking out upon the garden from the window of the palace, behold, he saw his brother's wife and with her ten black slaves and as many slave-girls. Each slave laid hold of a damsel [and swived her] and another slave [came forth and] did the like with the queen; and when they had done their occasions, they all returned whence they came. Therewithal there betided the King of Samarcand exceeding wonder and solacement and he was made whole of his malady, little by little.

After a few days, his brother returned and finding him healed of his sickness, said to him, 'Tell me, O my brother, what was the cause of thy sickness and thy pallor, and what is the cause of the return of health to thee and of rosiness to thy face after this?' So he acquainted him with the whole case and this was grievous to him; but they concealed their affair and agreed to leave the kingship and fare forth pilgrim-wise, wandering at a venture, for they deemed that there had befallen none the like of this which had befallen them. [So they went forth and wandered on at hazard] and as they journeyed, they saw by the way a woman imprisoned in seven chests, whereon were five locks, and sunken in the midst of the salt sea, under the guardianship of an Afrit; yet for all this that woman issued forth of the sea and opened those locks and coming forth of those chests, did what she would with the two brothers, after she had circumvented the Afrit.

When the two kings saw that woman's fashion and how she circumvented the Afrit, who had lodged her at the bottom of the sea, they turned back to their kingdoms and the younger betook himself to Samarcand, whilst the elder returned to China and established unto himself a custom in the slaughter of women, to wit, his vizier used to bring him a girl every night, with whom he lay that night, and when he arose in the morning, he gave her to the vizier and bade him put her to death. On this wise he abode a great while, whilst the people murmured and the creatures [of God] were destroyed and the commons cried out by reason of that grievous affair whereinto they were fallen and feared the wrath of God the Most High, dreading lest He should destroy them by means of this. Still the king persisted in that fashion and in that his blameworthy intent of the killing of women and the despoilment of the curtailed ones,[FN#159] wherefore the girls sought succour of God the Most High and complained to Him of the tyranny of the king and of his oppressive dealing with them.

Now the king's vizier had two daughters, own sisters, the elder of whom had read books and made herself mistress of [all] sciences and studied the writings of the sages and the histories of the boon-companions,[FN#160] and she was possessed of abundant wit and knowledge galore and surpassing apprehension. She heard that which the folk suffered from the king and his despicable usage of their children; whereupon compassion gat hold upon her for them and jealousy and she besought God the Most High that He would bring the king to renounce that his heresy,[FN#161] and God answered her prayer. Then she took counsel with her younger sister and said to her, 'I mean to contrive somewhat for the liberation of the people's children; and it is that I will go up to the king [and offer myself to him], and when I come to his presence, I will seek thee. When thou comest in to me and the king hath done his occasion [of me], do thou say to me, 'O my sister, let me hear and let the king hear a story of thy goodly stories, wherewithal we may beguile the waking hours of our night, till we take leave of each other.' 'It is well,' answered the other. 'Surely this contrivance will deter the king from his heresy and thou shalt be requited with exceeding favour and abounding recompense in the world to come, for that indeed thou adventarest thyself and wilt either perish or attain to thy desire.'

So she did this and fair fortune aided her and the Divine favour was vouchsafed unto her and she discovered her intent to her father, who forbade her therefrom, fearing her slaughter. However, she repeated her speech to him a second and a third time, but he consented not. Then he cited unto her a parable, that should deter her, and she cited him a parable in answer to his, and the talk was prolonged between them and the adducing of instances, till her father saw that he availed not to turn her from her purpose and she said to him, 'Needs must I marry the king, so haply I may be a sacrifice for the children of the Muslims; either I shall turn him from this his heresy or I shall die.' When the vizier despaired of dissuading her, he went up to the king and acquainted him with the case, saying, 'I have a daughter and she desireth to give herself to the king.' Quoth the king, 'How can thy soul consent unto this, seeing that thou knowest I lie but one night with a girl and when I arise on the morrow, I put her to death, and it is thou who slayest her, and thou hast done this again and again?' 'Know, O king,' answered the vizier, 'that I have set forth all this to her, yet consented she not unto aught, but needs must she have thy company and still chooseth to come to thee and present herself before thee, notwithstanding that I have cited to her the sayings of the sages; but she hath answered me to the contrary thereof with more than that which I said to her.' And the king said, 'Bring her to me this night and to-morrow morning come thou and take her and put her to death; and by Allah, an thou slay her not, I will slay thee and her also!'

The vizier obeyed the king's commandment and going out from before him, [returned to his own house. When it was night, he took his elder daughter and carried her up to the king; and when she came into his presence,] she wept; whereupon quoth he to her, 'What causeth thee weep? Indeed, it was thou who willedst this.' And she answered, saying, 'I weep not but for longing after my little sister; for that, since we grew up, I and she, I have never been parted from her till this day; so, if it please the king to send for her, that I may look on her and take my fill of her till the morning, this were bounty and kindness of the king.'

Accordingly, the king bade fetch the girl [and she came]. Then there befell that which befell of his foregathering with the elder sister, and when he went up to his couch, that he might sleep, the younger sister said to the elder, 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us a story of thy goodly stories, wherewithal we may beguile the watches of our night, against morning come and parting.' 'With all my heart,' answered she and fell to relating to her, whilst the king listened. Her story was goodly and delightful, and whilst she was in the midst of telling it, the dawn broke. Now the king's heart clave to the hearing of the rest of the story; so he respited her till the morrow, and when it was the next night, she told him a story concerning the marvels of the lands and the extraordinary chances of the folk, that was yet stranger and rarer than the first. In the midst of the story, the day appeared and she was silent from the permitted speech. So he let her live till the ensuing night, so he might hear the completion of the story and after put her to death.

Meanwhile, the people of the city rejoiced and were glad and blessed the vizier's daughter, marvelling for that three days had passed and that the king had not put her to death and exulting in that, [as they deemed,] he had turned [from his purpose] and would never again burden himself with blood-guiltiness against any of the maidens of the city. Then, on the fourth night, she related to him a still more extraordinary story, and on the fifth night she told him anecdotes of kings and viziers and notables. On this wise she ceased not [to do] with him [many] days and nights, what while the king still said in himself, 'When I have heard the end of the story, I will put her to death,' and the people waxed ever in wonder and admiration. Moreover, the folk of the provinces and cities heard

of this thing, to wit, that the king had turned from his custom and from that which he had imposed upon himself and had renounced his heresy, wherefore they rejoiced and the folk returned to the capital and took up their abode therein, after they had departed thence; yea, they were constant in prayer to God the Most High that He would stablish the king in that his present case; and this," said Shehrzad, "is the end of that which my friend related to me."

"O Shehrzad," quoth Shehriyar, "finish unto us the story that thy friend told thee, for that it resembleth the story of a king whom I knew; but fain would I hear that which betided the people of this city and what they said of the affair of the king, so I may return from that wherein I was." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "Know, O august king and lord of just judgment and praiseworthy excellence and exceeding prowess, that, when the folk heard that the king had put away from him his custom and returned from that which had been his wont, they rejoiced in this with an exceeding joy and offered up prayers for him. Then they talked with one another of the cause of the slaughter of the girls, and the wise said, 'They[FN#162] are not all alike, nor are the fingers of the hand alike.'"

## SHEHRZAD AND SHEHRIYAR.[FN#163] Conclusion)

When King Shehriyar heard this story, he came to himself and awaking from his drunkenness,[FN#164] said, "By Allah, this story is my story and this case is my case, for that indeed I was in wrath[FN#165] and [danger of] punishment till thou turnedst me back from this into the right way, extolled be the perfection of the Causer of causes and the Liberator of necks! Indeed, O Shehrzad," continued he, "thou hast awakened me unto many things and hast aroused me from mine ignorance."

Then said she to him, "O chief of the kings, the wise say, 'The kingship is a building, whereof the troops are the foundation,' and whenas the foundation is strong, the building endureth; wherefore it behoveth the king to strengthen the foundation, for that they say, 'Whenas the foundation is weak, the building falleth.' On like wise it behoveth the king to care for his troops and do justice among his subjects, even as the owner of the garden careth for his trees and cutteth away the weeds that have no profit in them; and so it behoveth the king to look into the affairs of his subjects and fend off oppression from them. As for thee, O king," continued Shehrzad, "it behoveth thee that thy vizier be virtuous and versed in the knowledge of the affairs of the folk and the common people; and indeed God the Most High hath named his name[FN#166] in the history of Moses (on whom be peace!) whenas He saith, [Quoth Moses] 'And make me a vizier of my people, Aaron [my brother].'[FN#167] Could a vizier have been dispensed withal, Moses ben Imran had been worthier [than any of this dispensation].'[FN#168]

As for the vizier, the sultan discovereth unto him his affairs, private and public; and know, O king, that the similitude of thee with the people is that of the physician with the sick man; and the condition[FN#169] of the vizier is that he be truthful in his sayings, trustworthy in all his relations, abounding in compassion for the folk and in tender solicitude over them. Indeed, it is said, O king, that good troops[FN#170] are like the druggist; if his perfumes reach thee not, thou still smellst the sweet scent of them; and ill troops are like the black-smith; if his sparks burn thee not, thou smellst his nauseous smell. So it behoveth thee take unto thyself a virtuous vizier, a man of good counsel, even as thou takest unto thee a wife displayed before thy face, for that thou hast need of the man's righteousness for thine own amendment.[FN#171] seeing that, if thou do righteously, the commons will do likewise, and if thou do evil, they also will do evil."

When the king heard this, drowsiness overcame him and he slept and presently awaking, called for the candles. So they were lighted and he sat down on his couch and seating Shehrzad by him, smiled in her face. She kissed the earth before him and said, "O king of the age and lord of the time and the day, extolled be the perfection of [God] the Forgiving One, the Bountiful Giver, who hath sent me unto thee, of His favour and beneficence, so I have informed thee with longing after Paradise; for that this which thou wast used to do was never done of any of the kings before thee. As for women, God the Most High [in His Holy Book] maketh mention of them, [whenas He saith, 'Verily, men who submit [themselves unto God] and women who submit] and true-believing men and true-believing women and obedient men and obedient women and soothfast men and soothfast women [and long-suffering men and long-suffering women and men who order themselves humbly and women who order themselves humbly and charitable men and charitable women and men who fast and women who fast] and men who guard their privities and women who guard their privities [and men who are constantly mindful of God and women who are constantly mindful, God hath prepared unto them forgiveness and a mighty recompense].'[FN#172]

As for that which hath befallen thee, verily, it hath befallen [many] kings before thee and their women have played them false, for all they were greater of puissance than thou, yea, and mightier of kingship and more abounding in troops. If I would, I could relate unto thee, O king, concerning the wiles of women, that whereof I could not make an end all my life long; and indeed, aforetime, in all these my nights that I have passed before thee, I have told thee [many stories and anecdotes] of the artifices of women and of their craft and perfidy; but indeed the things abound on me;[FN#173] wherefore, if it like thee, O king, I will relate unto thee [somewhat] of that which befell kings of old time of the perfidy of their women and of the calamities which overtook them by reason of these latter." "How so?" asked the king. "Tell on." "Harkening and obedience," answered Shehrzad. "It hath been told me, O king, that a man once related to a company and spoke as follows:

## THE FAVOURITE AND HER LOVER.[FN#174]

One day, a day of excessive heat, as I stood at the door of my house, I saw a fair woman approaching, and with her a slave-girl carrying a parcel. They gave not over going till they came up to me, when the woman stopped and said to me, 'Hast thou a draught of water?' 'Yes,' answered I. 'Enter the vestibule, O my lady, so thou mayst drink.' Accordingly, she entered and I went up into the house and fetched two mugs of earthenware, perfumed with musk[FN#175] and full of cold water. She took one of them and discovered her face, [that she might drink]; whereupon I saw that she was as the shining sun or the rising moon and said to her, 'O my lady, wilt thou not come up into the house, so thou mayst rest thyself till the air grow cool and after go away to thine own place?' Quoth she, 'Is there none with thee?' 'Indeed,' answered I, 'I am a [stranger] and a bachelor and have none belonging to me, nor is there a living soul in the house.' And she said, 'An thou be a stranger, thou art he in quest of whom I was going about.'

Then she went up into the house and put off her [walking] clothes and I found her as she were the full moon. I brought her what I had by me of meat and drink and said to her, 'O my lady, excuse me: this is that which is ready.' Quoth she, 'This is abundant kindness and indeed it is what I sought' And she ate and gave the slave-girl that which was left; after which I brought her a casting-bottle of rose-water, mingled with musk, and she washed her hands and abode with me till the season of afternoon-prayer, when she brought out of the parcel that she had with her a shirt and trousers and an upper garment[FN#176] and a kerchief wroughten with gold and gave them to me; saying, 'Know that I am one of the favourites of the Khalif, and we are forty favourites, each one of whom hath a lover who cometh to her as often as she would have him; and none is without a lover save myself, wherefore I came forth to-day to find me a gallant and behold, I have found thee. Thou must know that the Khalif lieth each night with one of us, whilst the other nine-and-thirty favourites take their ease with the nine-and-thirty men, and I would have thee be with me on such a day, when do thou come up to the palace of the Khalif and wait for me in such a place, till a little eunuch come out to thee and say to thee a [certain] word, to wit, "Art thou Sendel?" And do thou answer, "Yes," and go with him.'

Then she took leave of me and I of her, after I had strained her to my bosom and embraced her and we had kissed awhile. So she went away and I abode expecting the appointed day, till it came, when I arose and went forth, intending for the trysting-place; but a friend of mine met me by the way [and would have me go home with him. So I accompanied him to his house] and when I came up [into his sitting-chamber] he locked the door on me and went forth to fetch what we might eat and drink. He was absent till mid-day, then till the hour of afternoon-prayer, whereat I was sore disquieted. Then he was absent till sundown, and I was like to die of chagrin and impatience; [and indeed he returned not] and I passed my night on wake, nigh upon death, for that the door was locked on me, and my soul was like to depart my body on account of the tryst.

At daybreak, my friend returned and opening the door, came in, bringing with him meat-pottage[FN#177] and fritters and bees' honey,[FN#178] and said to me, 'By Allah, thou must needs excuse me, for that I was with a company and they locked the door on me and have but now let me go.' But I returned him no answer. Then he set before me that which was with him and I ate a single mouthful and went out, running, so haply I might overtake that which had escaped me.[FN#179] When I came to the palace, I saw over against it eight-and-thirty gibbets set up, whereon were eight-and-thirty men crucified, and under them eight-and-thirty concubines as they were moons. So I enquired of the reason of the crucifixion of the men and concerning the women in question, and it was said unto me, 'The men [whom thou seest] crucified the Khalif found with yonder damsels, who are his favourites.' When I heard this, I prostrated myself in thanksgiving to God and said, 'God requite thee with good, O my friend!' For that, had he not invited me [and kept me perforce in his house] that night, I had been crucified with these men, wherefore praise be to God!

Thus," continued Shehrzad, "none is safe from the calamities of fortune and the vicissitudes of time, and [in proof of this], I will relate unto thee yet another story still rarer and more extraordinary than this. Know, O King, that one said to me, 'A friend of mine, a merchant, told me the following story. Quoth he,

## THE MERCHANT OF CAIRO AND THE FAVOURITE OF THE KHALIF EL MAMOUN EL HAKIM BI AMRILLAH.[FN#180]

As I sat one day in my shop, there came up to me a fair woman, as she were the moon at its rising, and with her a slave-girl. Now I was a handsome man in my time; so the lady sat down on [the bench before] my shop and buying stuffs of me, paid down the price and went away. I questioned the girl of her and she said, "I know not her name." Quoth I, "Where is her abode?" "In heaven," answered the slave-girl; and I said, "She is presently on the earth; so when doth she ascend to heaven and where is the ladder by which she goeth up?" Quoth the girl, "She hath her lodging in a palace between two rivers,[FN#181] to wit, the palace of El Mamoun el Hakim bi Amrillah." [FN#182] Then said I, "I am a dead man, without recourse; but she replied, "Have patience, for needs must she return unto thee and buy stuffs of thee yet again." "And how cometh it," asked I, "that the Commander of the Faithful trusteth her to go out?" "He loveth her with an exceeding love," answered she, "and is wrapped up in her and gainsayeth her not."

Then the girl went away, running, after her mistress, whereupon I left the shop and set out after them, so I might see her abiding-place. I followed after them all the way, till she disappeared from mine eyes, when I returned to my place, with a heart on fire. Some days after, she came to me again and bought stuffs of me. I refused to take the price and she said, "We have no need of thy goods." Quoth I, "O my lady, accept them from me as a gift;" but she said, "[Wait] till I try thee and make proof of thee." Then she brought out of her pocket a purse and gave me therefrom a thousand dinars, saying, "Trade with this till I return to thee." So I took the purse and she went away [and returned not to me] till six months had passed by. Meanwhile, I traded with the money and sold and bought and made other thousand dinars profit [on it].

Presently, she came to me again and I said to her, "Here is thy money and I have gained [with it] other thousand dinars." Quoth she, "Keep it by thee and take these other thousand dinars. As soon as I have departed from thee, go thou to Er Rauzeh[FN#183] and build there a goodly pavilion, and when the building thereof is accomplished, give me to know thereof." So saying, she left me and went away. As soon as she was gone, I betook myself to Er Rauzeh and addressed myself to the building of the pavilion, and when it was finished, I furnished it with the goodliest of furniture and sent to the lady to tell her that I had made an end of its building; whereupon she sent back to me, saying, "Let him meet me to-morrow at daybreak at the Zuweyleh gate and bring with him a good ass." So I got me an ass and betaking myself to the Zuweyleh gate, at the appointed time, found there a young man on horse-back, awaiting her, even as I awaited her.

As we stood, behold, up came the lady, and with her a slave-girl. When she saw the young man, she said to him, "Art thou here?" And he answered, "Yes, O my lady." Quoth she, "To-day I am bidden by this man. Wilt thou go with us?" And he replied, "Yes." Then said she, "Thou hast brought me [hither] against my will and perforce. Wilt thou go with us in any event?" [FN#184] "Yes, yes," answered he and we fared on, [all three,] till we came to Er Rauzeh and entered the pavilion. The lady diverted herself awhile with viewing its ordinance and furniture, after which she put off her [walking-]clothes and sat down [with the young man] in the goodliest and chiefest place. Then I went forth and brought them what they should eat at the first of the day; moreover, I went out also and fetched them what they should eat at the last of the day and brought them wine and dessert and fruits and flowers. On this wise I abode in their service, standing on my feet, and she said not unto me, "Sit," nor "Take, eat" nor "Take, drink," what while she and the young man sat toying and laughing, and he fell to kissing her and pinching her and hopping about upon the ground and laughing.

They abode thus awhile and presently she said, "Up to now we have not become drunken; let me pour out." So she took the cup and gave him to drink and plied him with liquor, till he became drunken, when she took him and carried him into a closet. Then she came out, with his head in her hand, what while I stood silent, fixing not mine eyes on hers neither questioning her of this; and she said to me, "What is this?" "I know not," answered I; and she said, "Take it and cast it into the river." I obeyed her commandment and she arose and stripping herself of her clothes, took a knife and cut the dead man's body in pieces, which she laid in three baskets, and said to me, "Throw them into the river."

I did as she bade me and when I returned, she said to me, "Sit, so I may relate to thee yonder fellow's case, lest thou be affrighted at that which hath befallen him. Thou must know that I am the Khalif's favourite, nor is there any more in honour with him than I; and I am allowed six nights in each month, wherein I go down [into the city and take up my abode] with my [former] mistress, who reared me; and when I go down thus, I dispose of myself as I will. Now this young man was the son of neighbours of my mistress, when I was a virgin girl. One day, my mistress was [engaged] with the chief [officers] of the palace and I was alone in the house. When the night came on, I went up to the roof, so I might sleep there, and before I was aware, this youth came up from the street and falling upon me, knelt on my breast. He was armed with a poniard and I could not win free of him till he had done away my maidenhead by force; and this sufficed him not, but he must needs disgrace me with all the folk, for, as often as I came down from the palace, he would lie in wait for me by the way and swive me against my will and follow me whithersoever I went. This, then, is my story, and as for thee, thou pleasest me and thy patience pleaseth me and thy good faith and loyal service, and there abideth with me none dearer than thou." Then I lay with her that night and there befell what befell between us till the morning, when she gave me wealth galore and fell to coming to the pavilion six days in every month.

On this wise we abode a whole year, at the end of which time she was absent[FN#185] from me a month's space, wherefore fire raged in my heart on her account. When it was the next month, behold, a little eunuch presented himself to me and said, "I am a messenger to thee from such an one," [naming my mistress], "who giveth thee to know that the Commander of the Faithful hath sentenced her to be drowned, her and those who are with her, six-and-twenty slave-girls, on such a day at Deir et Tin,[FN#186] for that they have confessed against one another of lewdness, and she biddeth thee look how thou mayst do with her and how thou mayst contrive to deliver her, even if thou gather together all her money and spend it upon her, for that this is the time of manhood." [FN#187] Quoth I, "I know not this woman; belike it is other than I [to whom this message is addressed]; so beware, O eunuch, lest thou cast me into stress." Quoth he, "Behold, I have told thee [that which I had to say,]" and went away, leaving me in concern [on her account].

[When the appointed day arrived], I arose and changing my clothes and favour, donned sailor's apparel; then I took with me a purse full of gold and buying good [victual for the] morning-meal, accosted a boatman [at Deir et Tin] and sat down and ate with him; after which said I to him, "Wilt thou hire me thy boat?" Quoth he, "The Commander of the Faithful hath commanded me to be here;" and he told me the story of the concubines and how the Khalif purposed to drown them that day. When I heard this from him, I brought out to him half a score dinars and discovered to him my case, whereupon quoth he to me, "O my brother, get thee empty calabashes, and when thy mistress cometh, give me to know of her and I will contrive the trick."

I kissed his hand and thanked him, and as I was walking about, [waiting,] up came the guards and eunuchs with the women, who were weeping and crying out and taking leave of one another. The eunuchs cried out to us, whereupon we came with the boat, and they said to the boatman, "Who is this?" "This is my mate," answered he, "[whom I have brought,] to help me, so one of us may keep the boat, whilst another doth your service." Then they brought out to us the women, one by one, saying, "Throw them [in] by the Island;" and we answered, "It is well." Now each of them was shackled and they had made a jar of sand fast about her neck. We did as the eunuchs bade us and ceased not to take the women, one after another, and cast them in, till they gave us my mistress and I winked to my comrade. So we took her and carried her out into mid-stream, where I gave her the empty calabashes[FN#188] and said to her, "Wait for me at the mouth of the canal." Then we cast her in, after we had loosed the jar of sand from her neck and done off her fetters, and returned.

Now there remained one after her; so we took her and drowned her and the eunuchs went away, whilst we dropped down the river with the boat till we came to the mouth of the canal, where I saw my mistress awaiting me. So we took her up into the boat and returned to our pavilion on Er Rauzeh. Then I rewarded the boatman and he took his boat and went away; whereupon quoth she to me, "Thou art indeed a friend in need." [FN#189] And I abode with her some days; but the shock wrought upon her so that she sickened and fell to wasting away and redoubled in languishment and weakness till she died. I mourned for her with an exceeding mourning and buried her; after which I removed all that was in the pavilion to my own house [and abandoned the former].

Now she had brought to the pavilion aforetime a little brass coffer and laid it in a place whereof I knew not; so, when the inspector of inheritances[FN#190] came, he searched the pavilion and found the coffer, with the key in the lock. So he opened it and finding it full of jewels and jacinths and earrings and seal-rings and precious



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stones, such as are not found save with kings and sultans, took it, and me with it, and ceased not to put me to the question with beating and torment till I confessed to them the whole affair from beginning to end, whereupon they carried me to the Khalif and I told him all that had passed between me and her; and he said to me, "O man, depart from this city, for I acquit thee for thy valiance sake and because of thy [constancy in] keeping thy secret and thy daring in exposing thyself to death." So I arose forthright and departed his city; and this is what befell me."

## SHEHRZAD AND SHEHRIYAR.

King Shehriyar marvelled at these things and Shehrzad said to him, "Thou marvelledst at that which befell thee on the part of women; yet hath there befallen the kings of the Chosroes before thee what was more grievous than that which befell thee, and indeed I have set forth unto thee that which betided khalifs and kings and others than they with their women, but the exposition is long and hearkening groweth tedious, and in this [that I have already told thee] is sufficiency for the man of understanding and admonishment for the wise."

Then she was silent, and when the king heard her speech and profited by that which she said, he summoned up his reasoning faculties and cleansed his heart and caused his understanding revert [to the right way] and turned [with repentance] to God the Most High and said in himself, "Since there befell the kings of the Chosroes more than that which hath befallen me, never, whilst I abide [on life], shall I cease to blame myself [for that which I did in the slaughter of the daughters of the folk]. As for this Shehrzad, her like is not found in the lands; so extolled be the perfection of Him who appointed her a means for the deliverance of His creatures from slaughter and oppression!" Then he arose from his session and kissed her head, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy, she and her sister Dinarzad.

When the morning morrowed, the king went forth and sitting down on the throne of the kingship, summoned the grandees of his empire; whereupon the chamberlains and deputies and captains of the host went in to him and kissed the earth before him. He distinguished the vizier with his especial favour and bestowed on him a dress of honour and entreated him with the utmost kindness, after which he set forth briefly to his chief officers that which had betided him with Shehrzad and how he had turned from that his former usance and repented him of what he had done aforetime and purposed to take the vizier's daughter Shehrzad to wife and let draw up the contract of marriage with her.

When those who were present heard this, they kissed the earth before him and offered up prayers for him and for the damsel Shehrzad, and the vizier thanked her. Then Shehriyar made an end of the session in all weal, whereupon the folk dispersed to their dwelling-places and the news was bruited abroad that the king purposed to marry the vizier's daughter Shehrzad. Then he proceeded to make ready the wedding gear, and [when he had made an end of his preparations], he sent after his brother King Shahzeman, who came, and King Shehriyar went forth to meet him with the troops. Moreover, they decorated the city after the goodliest fashion and diffused perfumes [from the censuring-vessels] and [burnt] aloes-wood and other perfumes in all the markets and thoroughfares and rubbed themselves with saffron, what while the drums beat and the flutes and hautboys sounded and it was a notable day.

When they came to the palace, King Shehriyar commanded to spread the tables with beasts roasted [whole] and sweetmeats and all manner viands and bade the crier make proclamation to the folk that they should come up to the Divan and eat and drink and that this should be a means of reconciliation between him and them. So great and small came up unto him and they abode on that wise, eating and drinking, seven days with their nights. Then the king shut himself up with his brother and acquainted him with that which had betided him with the vizier's daughter [Shehrzad] in those three years [which were past] and told him what he had heard from her of saws and parables and chronicles and pleasant traits and jests and stories and anecdotes and dialogues and histories and odes and verses; whereat King Shahzeman marvelled with the utterest of marvel and said, "Fain would I take her younger sister to wife, so we may be two own brothers to two own sisters, and they on likewise be sisters unto us; for that the calamity which befell me was the means of the discovering of that which befell thee and all this time of three years past I have taken no delight in woman, save that I lie each night with a damsel of my kingdom, and when I arise in the morning, I put her to death; but now I desire to marry thy wife's sister Dinarzad."

When King Shehriyar heard his brother's words he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and arising forthright, went in to his wife Shehrzad and gave her to know of that which his brother purposed, to wit, that he sought her sister Dinarzad in marriage; whereupon, "O king of the age," answered she, "we seek of him one condition, to wit, that he take up his abode with us, for that I cannot brook to be parted from my sister an hour, because we were brought up together and may not brook severance from each other. If he accept this condition, she is his handmaid." King

Shehriyar returned to his brother and acquainted him with that which Shehrzad had said; and he answered, saying, "Indeed, this is what was in my mind, for that I desire nevermore to be parted from thee. As for the kingdom, God the Most High shall send unto it whom He chooseth, for that there abideth to me no desire for the kingship."

When King Shehriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, "Verily, this is what I had wished, O my brother. So praised be God who hath brought about union between us!" Then he sent after the Cadis and learned men and captains and notables, and they married the two brothers to the two sisters. The contracts were drawn up and the two kings bestowed dresses of honour of silk and satin on those who were present, whilst the city was decorated and the festivities were renewed. The king commanded each amir and vizier and chamberlain and deputy to decorate his palace and the folk of the city rejoiced in the presage of happiness and content. Moreover, King Shehriyar bade slaughter sheep and get up kitchens and made bride-feasts and fed all comers, high and low.

Then the eunuchs went forth, that they might perfume the bath [for the use of the brides]; so they essenced it with rose-water and willow-flower-water and bladders of musk and fumigated it with Cakili[FN#191] aloes-wood and ambergris. Then Shehrzad entered, she and her sister Dinarzad, and they cleansed their heads and clipped their hair. When they came forth of the bath, they donned raiment and ornaments, [such as were] prepared for the kings of the Chosroes; and among Shehrzad's apparel was a dress charactered with red gold and wroughten with semblants of birds and beasts. Moreover, they both encircled their necks with necklaces of jewels of price, in the like whereof Iskender[FN#192] rejoiced not, for therein were great jewels such as amazed the wit and the eye, and the thought was bewildered at their charms, for indeed, each of them was brighter than the sun and the moon. Before them they kindled lighted flambeaux in torch-holders of gold, but their faces outshone the flambeaux, for that they had eyes sharper than drawn swords and the lashes of their eyelids ensorcelled all hearts. Their cheeks were rosy and their necks and shapes swayed gracefully and their eyes wantoned. And the slave-girls came to meet them with instruments of music.

Then the two kings entered the bath, and when they came forth, they sat down on a couch, inlaid with pearls and jewels, whereupon the two sisters came up to them and stood before them, as they were moons, swaying gracefully from side to side in their beauty and grace. Presently they brought forward Shehrzad and displayed her, for the first dress, in a red suit; whereupon King Shehriyar rose to look upon her and the wits of all present, men and women, were confounded, for that she was even as saith of her one of her describers:

Like a sun at the end of a cane in a hill of sand, She shines in  
a dress of the hue of pomegranate flower. She gives me to drink of her cheeks and her honeyed lips And  
quenches the worst of the fires that my heart devour.

Then they attired Dinarzad in a dress of blue brocade and she became as she were the full moon, whenas it shineth forth. So they displayed her in this, for the first dress, before King Shahzeman, who rejoiced in her and well-nigh took leave of his wits for longing and amorous desire; yea, he was distraught with love for her, whenas he saw her, for, indeed, she was as saith of her one of her describers in the following verses:

She comes in a robe the colour of ultramarine, Blue as the  
stainless sky, unflecked with white; I view her with yearning eyes and she seems to me A moon of the  
summer, set in a winter's night.

Then they returned to Shehrzad and displayed her in the second dress. They clad her in a dress of surpassing goodliness, and veiled her face to the eyes with her hair. Moreover, they let down her side locks and she was even as saith of her one of her describers in the following verses:

Bravo for her whose loosened locks her cheeks do overcloud! She  
slays me with her cruelty, so fair she is and proud. Quoth I, "Thou overcurtainest the morning with the night;"  
And  
she, "Not so; it is the moon that with the dark I shroud."

Then they displayed Dinarzad in a second and a third and a fourth dress and she came forward, as she were the rising sun, and swayed coquettishly to and fro; and indeed she was even as saith the poet of her in the following verses:

A sun of beauty she appears to all who look on her, Glorious in  
arch and amorous grace, with coyness beautified; And when the sun of morning sees her visage and her smile,  
O'ercome. he hasteneth his face behind the clouds to hide.

Then they displayed Shehrzad in the third dress and the fourth and the fifth, and she became as she were a willow–wand or a thirsting gazelle, goodly of grace and perfect of attributes, even as saith of her one in the following verses:

Like the full moon she shows upon a night of fortune fair,  
Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air. She hath an eye, whose glances pierce the hearts of all mankind,  
Nor can cornelian with her cheeks for ruddiness compare. The sable torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips; Beware  
the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee, beware! Indeed her glance, her sides are soft; but none the less, alas!  
Her heart is harder than the rock; there is no mercy there. The starry arrows of her looks she darts above her veil; They hit  
and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.

Then they returned to Dinarzad and displayed her in the fifth dress and in the sixth, which was green. Indeed, she overpassed with her loveliness the fair of the four quarters of the world and outshone, with the brightness of her countenance, the full moon at its rising; for she was even as saith of her the poet in the following verses:

A damsel made for love and decked with subtle grace; Thou'dst  
deem the very sun had borrowed from her face. She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf That the pomegranate's flower doth in the bud encase. "How call'st thou this thy dress?" quoth we, and she replied A word wherein the wise a lesson well might trace; "Breaker of hearts," quoth she, "I call it, for therewith I've broken many a heart among the amorous race."

Then they displayed Shehrzad in the sixth and seventh dresses and clad her in youths' apparel, whereupon she came forward, swaying coquettishly from side to side; and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled with her glances [all who looked on her]. She shook her sides and wagged her hips, then put her hair on the hilt of her sword and went up to King Shehriyar, who embraced her, as the hospitable man embraces the guest, and threatened her in her ear with the taking of the sword; and indeed she was even as saith of her the poet in these verses:

Were not the darkness[FN#193] still in gender masculine, As  
ofttimes is the case with she–things passing fine, Tirewomen to the bride, who whiskers, ay, and beard Upon her face  
produce, they never would assign.[FN#194]

On this wise they did with her sister Dinarzad, and when they had made an end of displaying the two brides, the king bestowed dresses of honour on all who were present and dismissed them to their own places. Then Shehrzad went in to King Shehriyar and Dinarzad to King Shahzeman and each of them solaced himself with the company of his beloved and the hearts of the folk were comforted. When the morning morrowed, the vizier came in to the two kings and kissed the ground before them; wherefore they thanked him and were bountiful to him. Then they went forth and sat down upon couches of estate, whilst all the viziers and amirs and grandees and the chief officers of the realm and the household presented themselves before them and kissed the earth. King Shehriyar ordered them dresses of honour and largesse and they offered up prayers for the abiding continuance [on life] of the king and his brother.

Then the two kings appointed their father–in–law the vizier to be viceroy in Samarcand and assigned him five of the chief amirs to accompany him, charging them attend him and do him service. The vizier kissed the earth and prayed that they might be vouchsafed length of life. Then he went in to his daughters, whilst the eunuchs and ushers walked before him, and saluted them and bade them farewell. They kissed his hands and gave him joy of the kingship and bestowed on him treasures galore. Then he took leave of them and setting out, journeyed days and nights till he came within three days' journey of Samarcand, where the townspeople met him and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. So he entered Samarcand and they decorated the city, and it was a notable day. He sat down on the throne of his kingship and the viziers did him homage and the grandees and amirs of Samarcand and prayed that he might be vouchsafed justice and victory and length of continuance [on life]. So he bestowed on them dresses of honour and entreated them with worship and they made him Sultan over them.

As soon as his father–in–law had departed for Samarcand, King Shehriyar summoned the grandees of his realm and made them a magnificent banquet of all manner rich meats and exquisite sweetmeats. Moreover, he

bestowed on them dresses of honour and guerdoned them and divided the kingdoms between himself and his brother in their presence, whereat the folk rejoiced. Then the two kings abode, ruling each a day in turn and they accorded with each other, what while their wives continued in the love of God the Most High and in thanksgiving to Him; and the subjects and the provinces were at peace and the preachers prayed for them from the pulpits, and their report was bruited abroad and the travellers bore tidings of them [to all countries].

Moreover, King Shehriyar summoned chroniclers and copyists and bade them write all that had betided him with his wife, first and last; so they wrote this and named it "The Stories of the Thousand Nights and One Night." The book came to[FN#195] thirty volumes and these the king laid up in his treasury. Then the two kings abode with their wives in all delight and solace of life, for that indeed God the Most High had changed their mourning into joyance; and on this wise they continued till there took them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, he who maketh void the dwelling-places and peopleth the tombs, and they were translated to the mercy of God the Most High; their houses were laid waste and their palaces ruined and the kings inherited their riches.

Then there reigned after them an understanding king, who was just, keen-witted and accomplished and loved stories, especially those which chronicle the doings of kings and sultans, and he found [in the treasuries of the kings who had foregone him] these marvellous and rare and delightful stories, [written] in the thirty volumes aforesaid. So he read in them a first book and a second and a third and [so on] to the last of them, and each book pleased him more than that which forewent it, till he came to the end of them. Then he marvelled at that which he had read [therein] of stories and discourse and witty traits and anecdotes and moral instances and reminiscences and bade the folk copy them and publish them in all lands and climes; wherefore their report was bruited abroad and the people named them "The marvels and rarities of the Thousand Nights and One Night." This is all that hath come down to us of [the history of] this book, and God is All-Knowing.[FN#196]

**Calcutta (1814–18) Text. 183 Sindbad the Sailor and Hindbad the Porter**

**NOTE.**

As the version of the sixth and seventh voyages of Sindbad the Sailor contained in[FN#197] the Calcutta Edition (1814–18) of the first two hundred Nights and in the text of the Voyages published by M. Langles (Paris, 1814) differs very materially from that of the complete Calcutta (1839–42) Edition[FN#198] (which is, in this case, practically identical with those of Boulac and Breslau), adopted by me as my standard text in the translation of "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," the story of the seventh voyage in particular turning upon an altogether different set of incidents, related nearly as in the old version of M. Galland, I now give a translation of the text of the two voyages in question afforded by the Calcutta (1814–18) Edition, corrected and completed by collation with that of M. Langles, from which it differs only in being slightly less full. It will be observed that in this version of the story the name Sindbad is reserved for the Sailor, the porter being called Hindbad.

## **SINDBAD THE SAILOR AND HINDBAD THE PORTER.**

On the morrow they[FN#199] returned to their place, as of their wont, and betook themselves to eating and drinking and merry-making and sporting till the last of the day, when Sindbad bade them hearken to his relation concerning his sixth voyage, the which (quoth he) is of the most extraordinary of pleasant stories and the most startling [for that which it compriseth] of tribulations and disasters. Then said he,



## THE SIXTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

"When I returned from my fifth voyage, I gave myself up to eating and drinking and passed my time in solace and delight and forgot that which I had suffered of stresses and afflictions, nor was it long before the thought of travel again presented itself to my mind and my soul hankered after the sea. So I brought out the goods and binding up the bales, departed from Baghdad, [intending] for certain of the lands, and came to the sea-coast, where I embarked in a stout ship, in company with a number of other merchants of like mind with myself, and we [set out and] sailed till we came among certain distant islands and found ourselves in difficult and dangerous case.

[One day], as the ship was sailing along, and we unknowing where we were, behold, the captain came down [from the mast] and casting his turban from his head, fell to buffeting his face and plucking at his beard and weeping and supplicating [God for deliverance]. We asked him what ailed him, and he answered, saying, 'Know, O my masters, that the ship is fallen among shallows and drifteth upon a sand-bank of the sea. Another moment [and we shall be upon it]. If we clear the bank, [well and good]; else, we are all dead men and not one of us will be saved; wherefore pray ye to God the Most High, so haply He may deliver us from these deadly perils, or we shall lose our lives.' So saying, he mounted [the mast] and set the sail, but at that moment a contrary wind smote the ship, and it rose upon the crest of the waves and sank down again into the trough of the sea.

Now there was before us a high mountain,[FN#200] rising [abruptly] from the sea, and the ship fell off into an eddy,[FN#201] which bore it on till presently it struck upon the skirt[FN#202] of the mountain and broke in sunder; whereupon the captain came down [from the mast], weeping, and said, 'God's will be done! Take leave of one another and look yourselves out graves from to-day, for we have fallen into a predicament[FN#203] from which there is no escape, and never yet hath any been cast away here and come off alive.' So all the folk fell a-weeping and gave themselves up for lost, despairing of deliverance; friend took leave of friend and sore was the mourning and lamentation; for that hope was cut off and they were left without guide or pilot.[FN#204] Then all who were in the ship landed on the skirt of the mountain and found themselves on a long island, whose shores were strewn with [wrecks], beyond count or reckoning, [of] ships that had been cast away [there] and whose crews had perished; and there also were dry bones and dead bodies, heaped upon one another, and goods without number and riches past count So we abode confounded, drunken, amazed, humbling ourselves [in supplication to God] and repenting us [of having exposed ourselves to the perils of travel]; but repentance availed not in that place.

In this island is a river of very sweet water, issuing from the shore of the sea and entering in at a wide cavern in the skirt of an inaccessible mountain, and the stones of the island are all limpid sparkling crystal and jacinths of price. Therein also is a spring of liquid, welling up like [molten] pitch, and when it cometh to the shore of the island, the fish swallow it, then return and cast it up, and it becometh changed from its condition and that which it was aforetime; and it is crude ambergris. Moreover, the trees of the island are all of the most precious aloes-wood, both Chinese and Comorin; but there is no way of issue from the place, for it is as an abyss midmost the sea; the steepness of its shore forbiddeth the drawing up of ships, and if any approach the mountain, they fall into the eddy aforesaid; nor is there any resource[FN#205] in that island.

So we abode there, daily expecting death, and whoso of us had with him a day's victual ate it in five days, and after this he died; and whoso had with him a month's victual ate it in five months and died also. As for me, I had with me great plenty of victual; so I buried it in a certain place and brought it out, [little by little,] and fed on it; and we ceased not to be thus, burying one the other, till all died but myself and I abode alone, having buried the last of my companions, and but little victual remained to me. So I said in myself, 'Who will bury me in this place?' And I dug me a grave and abode in expectation of death, for that I was in a state of exhaustion. Then, of the excess of my repentance, I blamed and reproached myself for my much [love of] travel and said, 'How long wilt thou thus imperil thyself?' And I abode as I were a madman, unable to rest; but, as I was thus melancholy and distracted, God the Most High inspired me with an idea, and it was that I looked at the river aforesaid, as it entered in at the mouth of the cavern in the skirt of the mountain, and said in myself, 'Needs must this water have issue in some place.'

So I arose and gathering wood and planks from the wrecks, wrought of them the semblance of a boat [to wit, a raft,] and bound it fast with ropes, saying, 'I will embark thereon and fare with this water into the inward of the mountain. If it bring me to the mainland or to a place where I may find relief and safety, [well and good]; else I shall [but] perish, even as my companions have perished.' Then I collected of the riches and gold and precious stuffs, cast up there, whose owners had perished, a great matter, and of jacinths and crude ambergris and emeralds somewhat past count, and laid all this on the raft [together with what was left me of victual]. Then I launched it on the river and seating myself upon it, put my trust in God the Most High and committed myself to the stream.

The raft fared on with me, running along the surface of the river, and entered into the inward of the mountain, where the light of day forsook me and I abode dazed and stupefied, unknowing whither I went. Whenas I hungered, I ate a little of the victual I had with me, till it was all spent and I abode expecting the mercy of the Lord of all creatures.[FN#206] Presently I found myself in a strait [channel] in the darkness and my head rubbed against the roof of the cave; and in this case I abode awhile, knowing not night from day, whilst anon the channel grew straiter and anon widened out; and whenas my breast was straitened and I was confounded at my case, sleep took me and I knew neither little nor much.

When I awoke and opened my eyes, I found myself [in the open air] and the raft moored to the bank of the stream, whilst about me were folk of the blacks of Hind. When they saw that I was awake, they came up to me, to question me; so I rose to them and saluted them. They bespoke me in a tongue I knew not, whilst I deemed myself in a dream, and for the excess of my joy, I was like to fly and my reason refused to obey me. Then there came to my mind the verses of the poet and I recited, saying:

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

When they heard me speak in Arabic, one of them came up to me and saluting me [in that language], questioned me of my case. Quoth I, 'What [manner of men] are ye and what country is this?' 'O my brother,' answered he, 'we are husbandmen and come to this river, to draw water, wherewithal to water our fields; and whilst we were thus engaged to-day, as of wont, this boat appeared to us on the surface of the water, issuing from the inward of yonder mountain. So we came to it and finding thee asleep therein, moored it to the shore, against thou shouldst awake. Acquaint us, therefore, with thy history and tell us how thou camest hither and whence thou enteredst this river and what land is behind yonder mountain, for that we have never till now known any make his way thence to us.' But I said to them, 'Give me somewhat to eat and after question me.' So they brought me food and I ate and my spirits revived and I was refreshed. Then I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they were amazed and confounded and said, 'By Allah, this is none other than a marvellous story, and needs must we carry thee to our king, that thou mayst acquaint him therewith.' So they carried me before their king, and I kissed his hand and saluted him.

Now he was the king of the land of Serendib,[FN#207] and he welcomed me and entreated me with kindness, bidding me be seated and admitting me to his table and converse. So I talked with him and called down blessings upon him and he took pleasure in my discourse and showed me satisfaction and said to me, 'What is thy name?' 'O my lord,' answered I, 'my name is Sindbad the Sailor;' and he said, 'And what countryman art thou?' Quoth I, 'I am of Baghdad.' 'And how earnest thou hither?' asked he. So I told him my story and he marvelled mightily thereat and said, 'By Allah, O Sindbad, this thy story is marvellous and it behoveth that it be written in characters of gold.'

Then they brought the raft before him and I said to him, 'O my lord, I am in thy hands, I and all my good.' He looked at the raft and seeing therein jacinths and emeralds and crude ambergris, the like whereof was not in his treasures, marvelled and was amazed at this. Then said he, 'O Sindbad, God forbid that we should covet that which God the Most High hath vouchsafed unto thee! Nay, it behoveth us rather to further thee on thy return to thine own country.' So I called down blessings on him and thanked him. Then he signed to one of his attendants, who took me and established me in a goodly lodging, and the king assigned me a daily allowance and pages to wait on me. And every day I used to go in to him and he entertained me and entreated me friendly and delighted in my converse; and as often as our assembly broke up, I went out and walked about the town and the island, diverting myself by viewing them.

Now this island is under the Equinoctial line; its night is still twelve hours and its day the like. Its length is fourscore parasangs and its breadth thirty, and it is a great island, stretching between a lofty mountain and a deep valley. This mountain is visible at a distance of three days' journey and therein are various kinds of jacinths and other precious stones and metals of all kinds and all manner spice-trees, and its soil is of emery, wherewith jewels are wrought. In its streams are diamonds, and pearls are in its rivers.[FN#208] I ascended to its summit and diverted myself by viewing all the marvels therein, which are such as beggar description; after which I returned to the king and sought of him permission to return to my own country. He gave me leave, after great pressure, and bestowed on me abundant largesse from his treasuries. Moreover, he gave me a present and a sealed letter and said to me, 'Carry this to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and salute him for us with abundant salutation.' And I said, 'I hear and obey.'

Now this letter was written with ultramarine upon the skin of the hog-deer, the which is goodlier than parchment or paper and inclineth unto yellow, and was to the following effect: 'From the King of Hind, before whom are a thousand elephants and on the battlements of his palace a thousand jewels, [to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, greeting]. To proceed:[FN#209] we send thee some small matter of presents, which do thou accept and be to us as a brother and a friend, for that the love of thee aboundeth in our heart and we would have thee to know that we look to thee for an answer. Indeed, we are sharers with thee in love and fear, ceasing[FN#210] never to do thee honour; and for a beginning, we send thee the Book of the Quintessence of Balms and a present after the measure of that which is fallen to our lot. Indeed, this is unworthy of thy rank, but we beseech thee, O brother, to favour us by accepting it, and peace be on thee!'

Now this present was a cup of ruby, a span high and a finger's length broad, full of fine pearls, each a mithcal[FN#211] in weight and a bed covered with the skin of the serpent that swalloweth the elephant, marked with spots, each the bigness of a dinar, whereon whoso sitteth shall never sicken; also an hundred thousand mithcals of Indian aloes-wood and thirty grains of camphor, each the bigness of a pistachio-nut, and a slave-girl with her paraphernalia, a charming creature, as she were the resplendent moon. Then the king took leave of me, commending me to the merchants and the captain of the ship, and I set out, with that which was entrusted to my charge and my own good, and we ceased not to pass from island to island and from country to country, till we came to Baghdad, when I entered my house and foregathered with my family and brethren.

Then I took the present and a token of service from myself to the Khalif and [presenting myself before him], kissed his hands and laid the whole before him, together with the King of Hind's letter. He read the letter and taking the present, rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and entreated me with the utmost honour. Then said he to me, 'O Sindbad, is this king, indeed, such as he avoucheth in this letter?' I kissed the earth and answered, saying, 'O my lord, I myself have seen the greatness of his kingship to be manifold that which he avoucheth in his letter. On the day of his audience,[FN#212] there is set up for him a throne on the back of a huge elephant, eleven cubits high, whereon he sitteth and with him are his officers and pages and session-mates, standing in two ranks on his right hand and on his left. At his head standeth a man, having in his hand a golden javelin, and behind him another, bearing a mace of the same metal, tipped with an emerald, a span long and an inch thick. When he mounteth, a thousand riders take horse with him, arrayed in gold and silk; and whenas he rideth forth, he who is before him proclaimeth and saith, "This is the king, mighty of estate and high of dominion!" And he proceedeth to praise him on this wise and endeth by saying, "This is the king, lord of the crown the like whereof nor Solomon[FN#213] nor Mihraj[FN#214] possessed!" Then is he silent, whilst he who is behind the king proclaimeth and saith, "He shall die! He shall die! And again I say, he shall die!" And the other rejoineth, saying, "Extolled be the perfection of the Living One who dieth not!" And by reason of his justice and judgment[FN#215] and understanding, there is no Cadi in his [capital] city; but all the people of his realm distinguish truth from falsehood and know [and practise] truth and right for themselves.'

The Khalif marvelled at my speech and said, 'How great is this king! Indeed, his letter testifieth of him; and as for the magnificence of his dominion, thou hast acquainted us with that which thou hast seen; so, by Allah, he hath been given both wisdom and dominion.' Then he bestowed on me largesse and dismissed me, so I returned to my house and paid the poor-rate[FN#216] and gave alms and abode in my former easy and pleasant case, forgetting the grievous stresses I had suffered. Yea, I cast out from my heart the cares of travel and traffic and put away travail from my thought and gave myself up to eating and drinking and pleasure and delight."

## **SINDBAD THE SAILOR AND HINDBAD THE PORTER.**

When Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, all who were present marvelled at that which had befallen him. Then he bade his treasurer give the porter an hundred mithcals of gold and dismissed him, charging him return on the morrow, with the rest of the folk, to hear the history of his seventh voyage. So the porter went away to his house, rejoicing; and on the morrow he presented himself with the rest of the guests, who sat down, as of their wont, and occupied themselves with eating and drinking and merry-making till the end of the day, when their host bade them hearken to the story of his seventh voyage. Quoth Sindbad the Sailor,

## THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SAILOR.

"When I [returned from my sixth voyage, I] forswore travel and renounced commerce, saying in myself, 'What hath befallen me sufficeth me.' So I abode at home and passed my time in pleasance and delight, till, one day, as I sat at mine ease, plying the wine-cup [with my friends], there came a knocking at the door. The doorkeeper opened and found without one of the Khalif's pages, who came in to me and said, 'The Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee to him.' So I accompanied him to the presence of the Khalif and kissing the earth before him, saluted him. He bade me welcome and entreated me with honour and said to me, 'O Sindbad, I have an occasion with thee, which I would have thee accomplish for me.' So I kissed his hand and said, 'O my lord, what is the lord's occasion with the slave?' Quoth he, 'I would have thee go to the King of Serendib and carry him our letter and our present, even as he sent us a present and a letter.'

At this I trembled and replied, 'By the Most Great God, O my lord, I have taken a loathing to travel, and whenas any maketh mention to me of travel by sea or otherwise, I am like to swoon for affright, by reason of that which hath befallen me and what I have suffered of hardships and perils. Indeed, I have no jot of inclination left for this, and I have sworn never again to leave Baghdad.' And I related to him all that had befallen me, first and last; whereat he marvelled exceedingly and said, 'By the Most Great God, O Sindbad, never was heard from time immemorial of one whom there betided that which hath betided thee and well may it behove thee never again to mention travel! But for my sake go thou this once and carry my letter to the King of Serendib and return in haste, if it be the will of God the Most High, so we may not remain indebted to the king for favour and courtesy.' And I answered him with 'Hearkening and obedience,' for that I dared not gainsay his commandment

Then he gave me the present and letter and money for my expenses. So I kissed his hand and going out from before him, repaired to the sea-coast, where I took ship with many other merchants and we sailed days and nights, till, after a prosperous voyage, God vouchsafed us a safe arrival at the island of Serendib. We landed and went up to the city, where I carried the letter and present to the king and kissing the earth fell [prostrate before him], invoking blessings on him. When he saw me, 'Welcome to thee, O Sindbad!' quoth he. 'By the Most Great God, we have longed for thy sight and the day is blessed on which we behold thee once more.' Then he took my hand and seating me by his side, welcomed me and entreated me friendly and rejoiced in me with an exceeding joy; after which he fell to conversing with me and caressing me and said, 'What brings thee to us, O Sindbad?' I kissed his hand and thanking him, said, 'O my lord, I bring thee a present and a letter from my lord the Khalif Haroun er Reshid.' Then I brought out to him the present and the letter and he read the latter and accepted the former, rejoicing therein with an exceeding joy.

Now this present was a horse worth ten thousand dinars and all its housings and trappings of gold set with jewels, and a book and five different kinds of suits of apparel and an hundred pieces of fine white linen cloths of Egypt and silks of Suez and Cufa and Alexandria and a crimson carpet and another of Tebaristan[FN#217] make and an hundred pieces of cloth of silk and flax mingled and a goblet of glass of the time of the Pharaohs, a finger-breadth thick and a span wide, amiddleward which was the figure of a lion and before him an archer kneeling, with his arrow drawn to the head, and the table of Solomon son of David,[FN#218] on whom be peace; and the contents of the letter were as follows: 'From the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, unto whom and to his forefathers (on whom be peace) God hath vouchsafed the rank of the noble and exceeding glory, to the august, God-aided Sultan, greeting. Thy letter hath reached us and we rejoiced therein and have sent thee the book [called] "The Divan of Hearts and the Garden of Wits," of the translation whereof when thou hast taken cognizance, its excellence will be established in thine eyes; and the superscription of this book we have made unto thee. Moreover, we send thee divers other kingly presents;[FN#219] so do thou favour us by accepting them, and peace be on thee!'

When the king had read this letter, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bestowed on me great store of presents and entreated me with the utmost honour. Some days after this, I sought of him leave to depart, but he granted it not to me save after much pressing. So I took leave of him and shipped with divers merchants and others, intending for my own country and having no desire for travel or traffic. We sailed on, without ceasing, till

we had passed many islands; but, one day, as we fared on over a certain tract of the sea, there came forth upon us a multitude of boats full of men like devils, clad in chain-mail and armed with swords and daggers and bows and arrows, and surrounded us on every side. They entreated us after the cruellest fashion, smiting and wounding and slaying those who made head against them, and taking the ship, with the crew and all that were therein, carried us to an island, where they sold us all for a low price. A rich man bought me and taking me into his house, gave me to eat and drink and clothed me and entreated me kindly, till my heart was comforted and I was somewhat restored.

One day my master said to me, 'Knowest thou not some art or handicraft?' And I answered, saying, 'O my lord, I am a merchant and know nought but traffic.' Quoth he, 'Knowest thou how to shoot with a bow and arrows?' And I replied, 'Yes, I know that.' So he brought me a bow and arrows and mounting me behind him on an elephant, set out with me, at the last of the night, and fared on till we came to a forest of great trees; whereupon he made me climb a high and stout tree and giving me the bow and arrows, said to me, 'Sit here, and when the elephants come hither by day, shoot at them, so haply thou shalt hit one of them; and if any of them fall, come at nightfall and tell me.' Then he went away and left me trembling and fearful. I abode hidden in the tree till the sun rose, when the elephants came out and fared hither and thither among the trees, and I gave not over shooting at them with arrows, till I brought down one of them. So, at eventide, I went and told my master, who rejoiced in me and rewarded me; then he came and carried away the dead elephant.

On this wise I abode a while of time, every day shooting an elephant, whereupon my master came and carried it away, till, one day, as I sat hidden in the tree, there came up elephants without number, roaring and trumpeting, so that meseemed the earth trembled for the din. They all made for the tree whereon I was and the girth whereof was fifty cubits, and compassed it about. Then a huge elephant came up to the tree and winding his trunk about it, tugged at it, till he plucked it up by the roots and cast it to the ground. I fell among the elephants, and the great elephant, coming up to me, as I lay aswoon for affright, wound his trunk about me and tossing me on to his back, made off with me, accompanied by the others; nor did he leave faring on with me, and I absent from the world, till he brought me to a certain place and casting me down from off his back, went away, followed by the rest. I lay there awhile, till my trouble subsided and my senses returned to me, when I sat up, deeming myself in a dream, and found myself on a great hill, stretching far and wide and all of elephants' bones. So I knew that this was their burial-place and that they had brought me thither on account of the bones.

Then I arose and fared on a day and a night, till I came to the house of my master, who saw me pale and disfeatured for fear and hunger. He rejoiced in my return and said to me, 'By Allah, thou hast made my heart ache on thine account; for I went and finding the tree torn up by the roots, doubted not but the elephants had destroyed thee. Tell me then how it was with thee.' So I told him what had befallen me and he marvelled exceedingly and rejoiced, saying, 'Knowst thou where this hill is?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered I. So he took me up with him on an elephant and we rode till we came to the elephants' burial-place.

When he saw those many bones, he rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and carried away what he had a mind to thereof. Then we returned to his house and he entreated me with increased favour and said to me, 'Verily, O my son, thou hast directed us to a passing great gain, may God requite thee with all good! Thou art free for the sake of God the Most High. Every year these elephants used to kill of us much people on account of these bones; but God delivered thee from them and thou hast done us good service in the matter of these bones, of which thou hast given us to know; wherefore thou meritest a great recompense, and thou art free.' 'O my lord,' answered I, 'may God free thy neck from the fire! I desire of thee that thou give me leave to return to my own country.' 'So be it,' replied he; 'but we have a fair, on occasion whereof the merchants come hither to us and take of us these elephants' bones. The time of the fair is now at hand, and when they come to us, I will send thee with them and give thee somewhat to bring thee to thine own country.'

I blessed him and thanked him and abode with him in all honour and consideration, till, after a little, the merchants came, even as he had said, and bought and sold and bartered; and when they were about to depart, my master came to me and said, 'The merchants are about to depart; arise, that thou mayst go with them to thy country.' So I betook myself to the folk, and behold, they had bought great store of elephants' bones and bound up their loads and embarked in the ship; and my master took passage for me with them and paid my hire and all that was chargeable upon me.[FN#220] Moreover, he gave me great store of goods and we set sail and passed from island to island, till we traversed the sea and arrived at the port of our destination; whereupon the merchants

brought out their goods and sold; and I also brought out that which was with me and sold it at a good profit.

Then I bought of the best and finest of the produce and rarities of the country and all I had a mind to and a good hackney[FN#221] and we set out again and traversed the deserts from country to country till we came to Baghdad. Then I went in to the Khalif and saluted him and kissed his hand; after which I acquainted him with all that had passed and that which had befallen me. He rejoiced in my deliverance and thanked God the Most High; then he caused write my story in letters of gold and I betook myself to my house and foregathered with my brethren and family. This, then," added Sindbad, "is the last of that which befell me in my travels, and praise be to God, the One, the Creator, the Maker!"

When Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, he bade his servant give the porter an hundred mithcals of gold and said to him, "How now, my brother! Hast ever in the world heard of one whom such calamities have betided as have betided me and hath any suffered that which I have suffered of afflictions or undergone that which I have undergone of hardships? Wherefore it behoveth that I have these pleasures in requital of that which I have undergone of travail and humiliations." So the porter came forward and kissing the merchant's hands, said to him, "O my lord, thou hast indeed suffered grievous perils and hast well deserved these bounteous favours [that God hath vouchsafed thee]. Abide, then, O my lord, in thy delights and put away from thee [the remembrance of] thy troubles; and may God the Most High crown thine enjoyments with perfection and accomplish thy days in pleasance until the hour of thine admission [to His mercy]!"

Therewithal Sindbad the Sailor bestowed largesse upon him and made him his boon-companion, and he abode, leaving him not night or day, to the last of their lives. Praise be to God the Glorious, the Omnipotent, the Strong, the Exalted of estate, Creator of heaven and earth and land and sea, to whom belongeth glorification! Amen. Amen. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds! Amen.

## NOTE.

As stated In the Prefatory Note to my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," four printed Editions (of which three are more or less complete) exist of the Arabic text of the original work, namely those of Calcutta (1839–42), Boulac (Cairo), Breslau (Tunis) and Calcutta (1814–18). The first two are, for purposes of tabulation, practically identical, one whole story only,[FN#222] of those that occur in the Calcutta (1839–42) Edition, (which is the most complete of all,) being omitted from that of Boulac; and I have, therefore, given but one Table of Contents for these two Editions. The Breslau Edition, though differing widely from those of Calcutta (1839–42) and Boulac in contents, resembles them in containing the full number (a thousand and one) of Nights, whilst that of Calcutta (1814–18) is but a fragment, comprising only the first two hundred Nights and the Voyages of Sindbad, as a separate Tale.

The subscribers to my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night" and the present "Tales from the Arabic" have now before them a complete English rendering (the first ever made) of all the tales contained in the four printed (Arabic) Texts of the original work and I have, therefore, thought it well to add to this, the last Volume of my Translation, full Tables of Contents of these latter, a comparison of which will show the exact composition of the different Editions and the particulars in which they differ from one another, together with the manner in which the various stories that make up the respective collections are distributed over the Nights. In each Table, the titles of the stories occurring only in the Edition of which it gives the contents are printed in Italics and each Tale is referred to the number of the Night on which it is begun.

The Breslau Edition, which was printed from a Manuscript of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night alleged to have been furnished to the Editor by a learned Arab of Tunis, whom he styles "Herr M. Annaggar" (Quære En Nejjar, the Carpenter), the lacunes found in which were supplemented from various other MS. sources indicated by Silvestre de Sacy and other eminent Orientalists, is edited with a perfection of badness to which only German scholars (at once the best and worst editors in the world) can attain. The original Editor, Dr. Maximilian Habicht, was during the period (1825–1839) of publication of the first eight Volumes, engaged in continual and somewhat acrimonious[FN#223] controversy concerning the details of his editorship with Prof. H. L. Fleischer, who, after his death, undertook the completion of his task and approved himself a worthy successor of his whilom adversary, his laches and shortcomings in the matter of revision and collation of the text being at least equal in extent and gravity to those of his predecessor, whilst he omitted the one valuable feature of the latter's work, namely, the glossary of Arabic words, not occurring in the dictionaries, appended to the earlier volumes.

As an instance of the extreme looseness with which the book was edited, I may observe that the first four Vols. were published without tables of contents, which were afterwards appended en bloc to the fifth Volume. The state of corruption and incoherence in which the printed Text was placed before the public by the two learned Editors, who were responsible for its production, is such as might well drive a translator to despair: the uncorrected errors of the press would alone fill a volume and the verse especially is so corrupt that one of the most laborious of English Arabic scholars pronounced its translation a hopeless task. I have not, however, in any single instance, allowed myself to be discouraged by the difficulties presented by the condition of the text, but have, to the best of my ability, rendered into English, without abridgment or retrenchment, the whole of the tales, prose and verse, contained in the Breslau Edition, which are not found in those of Calcutta (1839–42) and Boulac. In this somewhat ungrateful task, I have again had the cordial assistance of Captain Burton, who has (as in the case of my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night") been kind enough to look over the proofs of my translation and to whom I beg once more to tender my warmest thanks.

Some misconception seems to exist as to the story of Seif dhoul Yezen, a fragment of which was translated by Dr. Habicht and included, with a number of tales from the Breslau Text, in the fourteenth Vol. of the extraordinary gallimaufry published by him in 1824–5 as a complete translation of the 1001 Nights[FN#224] and it has, under the mistaken impression that this long but interesting Romance forms part of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, been suggested that a complete translation of it should be included in the present



publication. The Romance in question does not, however, in any way, belong to my original and forms no part of the Breslau Text, as will be at once apparent from an examination of the Table of Contents of the latter (see post, p. 261), by which all the Nights are accounted for. Dr. Habicht himself tells us, in his preface to the first Vol. of the Arabic Text, that he found the fragment (undivided into Nights) at the end of the fifth Volume of his MS., into which other detached tales, having no connection with the Nights, appear to have also found their way. This being the case, it is evident that the Romance of Seif dhoul Yezen in no way comes within the scope of the present work and would (apart from the fact that its length would far overpass my limits) be a manifestly improper addition to it. It is, however, possible that, should I come across a suitable text of the work, I may make it the subject of a separate publication; but this is, of course, a matter for future consideration.

## Tales from the Arabic, Volume 3 Endnotes

- [FN#1] Breslau Text, vol. xii. pp. 50–116, Nights dcccclviii–dcccclxv.
- [FN#2] Babylon, according to the Muslims, is the head-quarters of sorcery and it is there that the two fallen angels, Harout and Marout, who are appointed to tempt mankind by teaching them the art of magic, are supposed to be confined.
- [FN#3] i.e. "my lord," a title generally prefixed to the names of saints. It is probable, therefore, that the boy was named after some saint or other, whose title, as well as name, was somewhat ignorantly appropriated to him.
- [FN#4] i.e. one and all?
- [FN#5] i.e. a foretaste of hell.
- [FN#6] Lit. he loaded his sleeve with.
- [FN#7] A mithcal is the same as a dinar, i.e. about ten shillings.
- [FN#8] Masculine.
- [FN#9] He was a noted debauchee, as well as the greatest poet of his day See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IV. p. 205, and Vol. IX. p. 332.
- [FN#10] See ante, Vol. II. p. 240. note.
- [FN#11] Princess of the Fair.
- [FN#12] i.e. Ye are welcome to.
- [FN#13] i.e. the place in which those accused or convicted of crimes of violence were confined.
- [FN#14] i.e. a youth slender and flexile as a bough.
- [FN#15] i.e. sway gracefully. A swimming gait is the ideal of elegance to the Arab.
- [FN#16] An Arab of Medina, proverbial for faithlessness.
- [FN#17] Joseph is the Mohammedan prototype of beauty.
- [FN#18] For the loss of Joseph. Jacob, in like manner, is the Muslim type of inconsolable grief.
- [FN#19] Uncle of the Prophet.
- [FN#20] First cousin of the Prophet.
- [FN#21] i.e. cut off her head.
- [FN#22] When asked, on the Day of Judgment, why he had slain her.
- [FN#23] i.e. that some one of the many risings in Khorassan (which was in a chronic state of rebellion during Er Reshid's reign) had been put down.
- [FN#24] Lit. fry. The custom is to sear the stump by plunging it into boiling oil.
- [FN#25] Lit. of those having houses.
- [FN#26] i.e. from God in the world to come.
- [FN#27] I look to get God's favour in consequence of thy fervent prayers for me.
- [FN#28] Provided for ablution.
- [FN#29] i.e. if you want a thing done, do it yourself.
- [FN#30] i.e. put on the ordinary walking dress of the Eastern lady, which completely hides the person.
- [FN#31] This is apparently said in jest; but the Muslim Puritan (such as the strict Wehhabi) is often exceedingly punctilious in refusing to eat or use anything that is not sanctified by mention in the Koran or the Traditions of the Prophet, in the same spirit as the old Calvinist Scotchwoman of popular tradition, who refused to eat muffins, because they "warna mentioned in the Bible."
- [FN#32] i.e. a leader (lit. foreman, antistes) of the people at prayer.
- [FN#33] Koran ii. 168.
- [FN#34] i.e. I have eaten largely and the food lies heavy on my stomach.
- [FN#35] Wine is considered by the Arabs a sovereign digestive. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IV. p. 357.
- [FN#36] "The similitude of Paradise, the which is promised unto those who fear [God]. Therein are rivers of

water incorruptible and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not, and rivers of wine, a delight to the drinkers, and rivers of clarified honey."—Koran xlvii. 16, 17.

[FN#37] The ox is the Arab type of stupidity, as with us the ass.

[FN#38] Syn. wood (oud).

[FN#39] i.e. my pallor and emaciation testify to the affliction of my heart and the latter bears witness that the external symptoms correctly indicate the internal malady.

[FN#40] Lit. he is [first] the deposit of God, then thy deposit.

[FN#41] Or "by."

[FN#42] See supra, Vol. I. p. 35, note.

[FN#43] i.e. made him Chief of the Police of Baghdad, in place of the former Prefect, whom he had put to death with the rest of Nouredin's oppressors.

[FN#44] For affright.

[FN#45] i.e. religious ceremonies so called. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IX. p. 113, note.

[FN#46] Breslau Text, vol. xii. pp. 116–237, Nights dcccclxvi–dcccclxxix.

[FN#47] i.e. A member of the tribe of Sheiban. No such King of Baghdad (which was not founded till the eighth century) as Ins ben Cais is, I believe, known to history.

[FN#48] The cities and provinces of Bassora and Cufa are generally known as "The Two Iraks"; but the name is here in all probability used in its wider meaning of Irak Arabi (Chaldaea) and Irak Farsi (Persian Irak).

[FN#49] i.e. all those languages the knowledge whereof is necessary to an interpreter or dragoman (properly *terjeman*). Or *quaere* is the word *terjemaniyeh* (dragomanish) here a mistranscription for *turkumaniyeh* (Turcoman).

[FN#50] i.e. gilded?

[FN#51] i.e. *sperma hominis*.

[FN#52] Syn. good breeding.

[FN#53] i.e. those women of equal age and rank with herself.

[FN#54] i.e. vaunting himself of offering richer presents.

[FN#55] Apparently Zebid, the ancient capital of the province of Tehameh in Yemen, a town on the Red Sea, about sixty miles north of Mocha. The copyist of the Tunis MS. appears to have written the name with the addition of the characteristic desinence (*oun*) of the nominative case, which is dropped except in the Koran and in poetry.

[FN#56] Name of the province in which Mecca is situated.

[FN#57] Syn. assembly.

[FN#58] i.e. day and night, to wit, for ever.

[FN#59] Syn. the loftiness of his purpose.

[FN#60] Lit "I charm thee by invoking the aid of God for thee against evil" or "I seek refuge with God for thee."

[FN#61] Or "determinate."

[FN#62] Koran xxxiii. 38.

[FN#63] Or "accomplishments."

[FN#64] i.e. to make a pleasure—excursion.

[FN#65] Lit. beset his back.

[FN#66] Lit. in its earth.

[FN#67] The king's own tribe.

[FN#68] i.e. the Arab of the desert or Bedouin (*el Aarabi*), the nomad.

[FN#69] i.e. the martial instinct.

[FN#70] Lit. "And he who is oppressed shall become oppressor."

[FN#71] i.e. be not ashamed to flee rather than perish in thy youth, if his prowess (attributed to diabolical aid or possession) prove too much for thee.

[FN#72] A periphrastic way of saying, "I look to God for help."

[FN#73] i.e. from the world.

- [FN#74] In laughter.
- [FN#75] i.e. as he were a flying genie, swooping down upon a mortal from the air, hawk-fashion.
- [FN#76] Syn. "Thou settest out to me a mighty matter."
- [FN#77] i.e. the castle.
- [FN#78] i.e. was eloquent and courtly to the utmost.
- [FN#79] i.e. died.
- [FN#80] The Arabs use the right hand only in eating.
- [FN#81] Name of a quarter of Baghdad.
- [FN#82] i.e. he summoneth thee to his presence by way of kindness and not because he is wroth with thee.
- [FN#83] i.e. in allowing thee hitherto to remain at a distance from as and not inviting thee to attach thyself to our person.
- [FN#84] An Arab idiom, meaning "he showed agitation."
- [FN#85] Apparently two well-known lovers.
- [FN#86] Apparently two well-known lovers.
- [FN#87] i.e. the wandering Arabs.
- [FN#88] i.e. slain.
- [FN#89] "O ye who believe, seek aid of patience and prayer; verily, God is with the patient."—Koran ii. 148.
- [FN#90] Lit. "ignorant one" (jahil).
- [FN#91] i.e. Peninsula. Jezireh (sing, of jezair, islands) is constantly used by the Arabs in this sense; hence much apparent confusion in topographical passages.
- [FN#92] i.e. Mecca and Medina.
- [FN#93] i.e. whether on a matter of sport, such as the chase, or a grave matter, such as war, etc.
- [FN#94] i.e. the children of his fighting—men whom thou slewest.
- [FN#95] Arab fashion of shaking hands. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IX p. 171, note.
- [FN#96] Lit. a cleft meadow (merj selia). This is probably a mistranscription for merj sselia, a treeless campaign.
- [FN#97] i.e. one of the small rooms opening upon the hall of audience at saloon of estate.
- [FN#98] So she might hear and see what passed, herself unseen.
- [FN#99] Or knowledge of court etiquette.
- [FN#100] i.e. richer.
- [FN#101] Lit. seen.
- [FN#102] Lit. what she did.
- [FN#103] i.e. tabooed or unlawful in a religious sense (heram).
- [FN#104] i.e. those of El Aziz, who had apparently entered the city or passed through it on their way to the camp of El Abbas.
- [FN#105] Lit. none of the sons of the road.
- [FN#106] i.e. the stars.
- [FN#107] i.e. in falsetto?
- [FN#108] by thine absence.
- [FN#109] Common abbreviation for "May I be thy ransom!"
- [FN#110] i.e. for love of and longing for.
- [FN#111] i.e. leather from Et Taif, a town of the Hejaz, renowned for the manufacture of scented goats' leather.
- [FN#112] Or "suspended in."
- [FN#113] i.e. violateth my privacy.
- [FN#114] i.e. the plaintive song of a nightingale or turtle-dove.
- [FN#115] This curious comparison appears to be founded upon the extreme tenuity of the particles of fine dust, so minutely divided as to seem almost fluid.
- [FN#116] i.e. he carried it into the convent, hidden under his cloak.
- [FN#117] i.e. all the delights of Paradise, as promised to the believer by the Koran.

[FN#118] "Him" in the text and so on throughout the piece; but Mariyeh is evidently the person alluded to, according to the common practice of Muslim poets of a certain class, who consider it indecent openly to mention a woman as an object of love.

[FN#119] i.e. from the witchery of her beauty. See Vol. II. p. 240, note.

[FN#120] Lit "if thou kohl thyself" i.e. use them as a cosmetic for the eye.

[FN#121] i.e. we will assume thy debts and responsibilities.

[FN#122] Lit "behind."

[FN#123] i.e. a specially auspicious hour, as ascertained by astrological calculations. Eastern peoples have always laid great stress upon the necessity of commencing all important undertakings at an (astrologically) favourable time.

[FN#124] Or "more valuable." Red camels are considered better than those of other colours by some of the Arabs.

[FN#125] i.e. couriers mounted on dromedaries, which animals are commonly used for this purpose, being (for long distances) swifter and more enduring than horses.

[FN#126] Lit. he sinned against himself.

[FN#127] i.e. in falsetto?

[FN#128] i.e. of gold or rare wood, set with balass rubies.

[FN#129] i.e. whose absence.

[FN#130] i.e. in a throat voice?

[FN#131] Koranic synonym, victual (rihan). See Vol. II. p. 247, note.

[FN#132] Apparently, the apple of the throat.

[FN#133] Apparently, the belly.

[FN#134] Apparently, the bosom.

[FN#135] Cf. Fletcher's well-known song in *The Bloody Brother*;

"Hide, O hide those hills of snow,  
That thy frozen bosom bears,  
On Whose Tops the Pinks That Grow  
Are of those that April wears."

[FN#136] i.e. the breasts themselves.

[FN#137] i.e. your languishing beauties are alone present to my mind's eye. A drowsy voluptuous air of languishment is considered by the Arabs an especial charm.

[FN#138] Syn. chamberlain (hajib).

[FN#139] Syn. eyebrow (hajib). The usual trifling play of words is of course intended.

[FN#140] Lit. feathers.

[FN#141] Solomon is fabled by the Muslims to have compelled the wind to bear his throne when placed upon his famous magic carpet. See my *"Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night,"* Vol. V. pp. 235–6.

[FN#142] Quære the teeth.

[FN#143] i.e. the return of our beloved hath enabled us to remove the barriers that stood between us and delight.

[FN#144] Singing (as I have before pointed out) is not, in the eyes of the strict Muslim, a reputable occupation and it is, therefore, generally the first idea of the "repentant" professional songstress or (as in this case) enfranchised slave-girl, who has been wont to entertain her master with the display of her musical talents, to free herself from all signs of her former profession and identify herself as closely as possible with the ordinary "respectable" bourgeoisie of the harem, from whom she has been distinguished hitherto by unveiled face and freedom of ingress and egress; and with this aim in view she would naturally be inclined to exaggerate the rigour of Muslim custom, as applied to herself.

[FN#145] Breslau Text, vol. xii. pp. 383–4 (Night mi).

[FN#146] i.e. that of the king, his seven viziers, his son and his favourite, which in the Breslau Edition immediately follows the Story of El Abbas and Mariyeh and occupies pp. 237–383 of vol. xii. (Nights dccccxxix–m). It will be found translated in my *"Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night,"* Vol. V. pp.

260–346, under the name of "The Malice of Women."

[FN#147] i.e. those who practise it.

[FN#148] Or "cause" (sebeb).

[FN#149] Or "preservation" (selameh).

[FN#150] Or "turpitude, anything that is hateful or vexatious" (keraheh).

[FN#151] Or "preservation" (selameh).

[FN#152] Or "turpitude, anything that is hateful or vexatious" (keraheh).

[FN#153] These preliminary words of Shehrzad have no apparent connection with the story that immediately follows and which is only her own told in the third person, and it is difficult to understand why they should be here introduced. The author may have intended to connect them with the story by means of a further development of the latter and with the characteristic carelessness of the Eastern story-teller, forgotten or neglected to carry out his intention; or, again, it is possible that the words in question may have been intended as an introduction to the Story of the Favourite and her Lover (see post, p. 165), to which they seem more suitable, and have been misplaced by an error of transcription. In any case, the text is probably (as usual) corrupt.

[FN#154] Breslau Text, vol. xii. pp. 384–394.

[FN#155] The kingdom of the elder brother is afterwards referred to as situate in China. See post, p. 150.

[FN#156] Tubba was the dynastic title of the ancient Himyerite Kings of Yemen, even as Chosroës and Cæsar of the Kings of Persia and the Emperors of Constantinople respectively.

[FN#157] i.e. a king similar in magnificence and dominion to the monarchs of the three dynasties aforesaid, whose names are in Arab literature synonyms for regal greatness.

[FN#158] i.e. his rage was ungovernable, so that none dared approach him in his heat of passion.

[FN#159] i.e. maidens cloistered or concealed behind curtains and veiled in the harem.

[FN#160] i.e. those whose business it is to compose or compile stories, verses, etc., for the entertainment of kings and grandees.

[FN#161] i.e. that his new and damnable custom. The literal meaning of bidah is "an innovation or invention, anything new;" but the word is commonly used in the sense of "heresy" or "heterodox innovation," anything new being naturally heretical in the eyes of the orthodox religionist.

[FN#162] i.e. women.

[FN#163] Breslau Text, vol. xii. pp. 394–398.

[FN#164] i.e. his apathy or indifference to the principles of right and wrong and the consequences of his wicked behaviour.

[FN#165] i.e. in a state of reprobation, having incurred the wrath of God.

[FN#166] hath mentioned the office of vizier.

[FN#167] Koran xx. 30.

[FN#168] i.e. none had been better qualified to dispense with a vizier than he.

[FN#169] i.e. the essential qualification.

[FN#170] The word jeish (troops) is here apparently used in the sense of officials, ministers of government.

[FN#171] Or "rectification."

[FN#172] Koran xxxiii. 35.

[FN#173] i.e. I know not which to choose of the superabundant material at my command in the way of instances of women's craft.

[FN#174] Breslau Text, vol xii. pp. 398–402.

[FN#175] i.e. incensed with the smoke of burning musk. It is a common practice in the East to fumigate drinking-vessels with the fragrant smoke of aloes-wood and other perfumes, for the purpose of giving a pleasant flavour to the water, etc., drunk from them.

[FN#176] Huneini foucanyeh. Foucanyeh means "upper" (fem.); but the meaning of huneini is unknown to me.

[FN#177] Heriseh. See supra, Vol. II. p. 26, note 4.

[FN#178] The Arabs distinguish three kinds of honey, i.e. bees' honey, cane honey (treacle or syrup of sugar) and drip-honey (date-syrup).

[FN#179] i.e. yet arrive in time for the rendezvous.

[FN#180] Breslau Text, pp. 402–412.

[FN#181] i.e. on an island between two branches of the Nile.

[FN#182] It is not plain what Khalif is here meant, though it is evident, from the context, that an Egyptian prince is referred to, unless the story is told of the Abbaside Khalif El Mamoun, son of Er Reshid (A.D. 813–33), during his temporary residence in Egypt, which he is said to have visited. This is, however, unlikely, as his character was the reverse of sanguinary; besides, El Mamoun was not his name, but his title (Aboulabbas Abdallah El Mamoun Billah). Two Khalifs of Egypt assumed the title of El Hakim bi Amrillah (He who rules or decrees by or in accordance with the commandment of God), i.e. the Fatimite Abou Ali El Mensour (A.D. 995–1021), and the faineant Abbaside Aboulabbas Ahmed (A.D. 1261–1301); but neither of these was named El Mamoun. It is probable, however, that the first named is the prince referred to in the story, the latter having neither the power nor the inclination for such wholesale massacres as that described in the text, which are perfectly in character with the brutal and fantastic nature of the founder of the Druse religion.

[FN#183] i.e. the well-known island of that name (The Garden).

[FN#184] i.e. "whatever may betide" or "will I, nill I"?

[FN#185] Lit. she was cut off or cut herself off.

[FN#186] Lit. "The convent of Clay."

[FN#187] i.e. this is the time to approve thyself a man.

[FN#188] To keep her afloat.

[FN#189] Lit "Thou art the friend who is found (or present) (or the vicissitudes of Time (or Fortune)."

[FN#190] i.e. the officer whose duty it is to search out the estates of intestates and lay hands upon such property as escheats to the Crown for want of heirs.

[FN#191] i.e. Sumatran.

[FN#192] i.e. Alexander.

[FN#193] i.e. the blackness of the hair.

[FN#194] The ingenuity of the bride's attendants, on the occasion of a wedding, is strained to the utmost to vary her attire and the manner in which the hair is dressed on the occasion of her being displayed to her husband, and one favourite trick consists in fastening her tresses about her chin and cheeks, so as to produce a sort of imitation of beard and whiskers.

[FN#195] Literal.

[FN#196] i.e. God only knows if it be true or not.

[FN#197] Or rather appended to. The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor form no part of the scheme of Nights in this edition, but are divided into "Voyages" only and form a sort of appendix, following the Two hundredth Night. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IX. pp. 307–8.

[FN#198] See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. V. pp. 202 and 210.

[FN#199] i.e. the porter and the other guests.

[FN#200] i.e. a mountainous island.

[FN#201] Kherabeh, lit. a hole. Syn. ruin or destruction.

[FN#202] i.e. an outlying spur or reef.

[FN#203] Syn. perilous place.

[FN#204] Lit. their guide was disappointed.

[FN#205] i.e. means (hileh) of sustaining life.

[FN#206] i.e. death.

[FN#207] i.e. Ceylon.

[FN#208] Audiyeh (plural of wadi, a valley). The use of the word in this sense points to an African origin of this version of the story. The Moors of Africa and Spain commonly called a river "a valley," by a natural figure of metonymy substituting the container for the contained; e.g. Guadalquivir (Wadi el Kebir, the Great River), Guadiana, etc.

[FN#209] i.e. after the usual compliments, the letter proceeded thus.

[FN#210] i.e. we are thine allies in peace and war, for offence and defence. Those whom thou lovest we love, and those whom thou hatest we hate.

[FN#211] About seventy–two grains.

[FN#212] Or public appearance.

[FN#213] Solomon was the dynastic name of the kings of the prae-Adamite Jinn and is here used in a generic sense, as Chosroes for the ancient Kings of Persia, Caesar for the Emperors of Constantinople, Tubba for the Himyerite Kings of Yemen, etc., etc.

[FN#214] i.e. Maharajah.

[FN#215] Or "government."

[FN#216] Every Muslim is bound by law to give alms to the extent of two and half per cent. of his property.

[FN#217] In North-east Persia.

[FN#218] Alleged to have been found by the Arab conquerors of Spain on the occasion of the sack of Toledo and presented by them to the Ommiade Khalif El Welid ben Abdulmelik (A.D. 705-716). See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. III. p. 331.

[FN#219] i.e. such as are fit to be sent from king to king.

[FN#220] i.e. the price of his victual and other necessities for the voyage.

[FN#221] Lit. riding-beast (French monture, no exact English equivalent), whether camel, mule or horse does not appear.

[FN#222] The Envier and the Envied.

[FN#223] After the manner of Orientalists, a far more irritable folk than any poets.

[FN#224] By the by, apropos of this soi-disant complete translation of the great Arabian collection of romantic fiction, it is difficult to understand how an Orientalist of repute, such as Dr. Habicht, can have put forth publication of this kind, which so swarms with blunders of every description as to throw the mistakes of all other translators completely into the shade and to render it utterly useless to the Arabic scholar as a book of reference. We can only conjecture that he must have left the main portion of the work to be executed, without efficient supervision, by incapable collaborators or that he undertook and executed the translation in such haste as to preclude the possibility of any preliminary examination and revision, worthy of the name, of the original MS.; and this latter supposition appears to be borne out by the fact that the translation was entirely published before the appearance of any portion of the Arabic Text, as printed from the Tunis Manuscript. Whilst on the subject of German translations, it may be well to correct an idea, which appears to prevail among non-Arabic scholars, to the effect that complete translations of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night exist in the language of Hoffmann and Heine, and which is (as far, at least, as my own knowledge extends) a completely erroneous one. I have, I believe, examined all the German translations in existence and have found not one of them worthy of serious consideration; the best, that of Hammer-Purgstall, to which I had looked for help in the elucidation of doubtful and corrupt passages, being so loose and unfaithful, so disfigured by ruthless retrenchments and abridgments, no less than by gross errors of all kinds, that I found myself compelled to lay it aside as useless. It is but fair, however, to the memory of the celebrated Austrian Orientalist, to state that the only form in which Von Hammer's translation is procurable is that of the German rendering of Prof. Zinserling (1823-4), executed from the original (French) manuscript, which latter was unfortunately lost before publication.

[FN#225] The Boulac Edition omits this story altogether.

[FN#226] Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac 134b. "The Merchant's Wife and the Parrot."

[FN#227] This will be found translated in my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. VII. p. 307, as an Appendix to the Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac version of the story, from which it differs in detail.

[FN#228] Called "Bekhit" in Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac Editions.

[FN#229] Yehya ben Khalid (Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac).

[FN#230] "Shar" (Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac).

[FN#231] "Jelyaad" (Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac).

[FN#232] Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac, No. 63. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IV. p. 211.

[FN#233] Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac, "Jaafer the Barmecide."

[FN#234] Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac, "The Thief turned Merchant and the other Thief," No. 88.

[FN#235] This story will be found translated in my "Book at the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. V. p. 345.

[FN#236] The Third Old Man's Story is wanting.



### Tales from the Arabic, V3

[FN#237] The Story of the Portress is wanting.

[FN#238] Calcutta (1839–42), Boulac and Breslan, "The Controller's Story."

[FN#239] Calcutta (1839–42) and Boulac, "Sindbad the Sailor and Sindbad the Porter."

[FN#240] Tuhfeh.