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THE BROWN FAIRY BOOK

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The stories in this Fairy Book come from all quarters of the world. For example, the adventures of 'Ball-Carrier and the Bad One' are told by Red Indian grandmothers to Red Indian children who never go to school, nor see pen and ink. 'The Bunyip' is known to even more uneducated little ones, running about with no clothes at all in the bush, in Australia. You may see photographs of these merry little black fellows before their troubles begin, in 'Northern Races of Central Australia,' by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. They have no lessons except in tracking and catching birds, beasts, fishes, lizards, and snakes, all of which they eat. But when they grow up to be big boys and girls, they are cruelly cut about with stone knives and frightened with sham bogies – 'all for their good' their parents say – and I think they would rather go to school, if they had their choice, and take their chance of being birched and bullied. However, many boys might think it better fun to begin to learn hunting as soon as they can walk. Other stories, like 'The Sacred Milk of Koumongoé,' come from the Kaffirs in Africa, whose dear papas are not so poor as those in Australia, but have plenty of cattle and milk, and good mealies to eat, and live in houses like very big bee-hives, and wear clothes of a sort, though not very like our own. 'Pivi and Kabo' is a tale from the brown people in the island of New Caledonia, where a boy is never allowed to speak to or even look at his own sisters; nobody knows why, so curious are the manners of this remote island. The story shows the advantages of good manners and pleasant behaviour; and the natives do not now cook and eat each other, but live on fish, vegetables, pork, and chickens, and dwell in houses. 'What the Rose did to the Cypress' is a story from Persia, where the people, of course, are civilised, and much like those of whom you read in 'The Arabian Nights.' Then there are tales like 'The Fox and the Lapp' from the very north of Europe, where it is dark for half the year and daylight for the other half. The Lapps are a people not fond of soap and water, and very much given to art magic. Then there are tales from India, told to Major Campbell, who wrote them out, by Hindoos; these stories are 'Wali Dâd the Simple-hearted,' and 'The King who would be Stronger than Fate,' but was not so clever as his daughter. From Brazil, in South America, comes 'The Tortoise and the Mischievous Monkey,' with the adventures of other animals. Other tales are told in various parts of Europe, and in many languages; but all people, black, white, brown, red, and yellow, are like each other when they tell stories; for these are meant for children, who like the same sort of thing, whether they go to school and wear clothes, or, on the other hand, wear skins of beasts, or even nothing at all, and live on grubs and lizards and hawks and crows and serpents, like the little Australian blacks.

The tale of 'What the Rose did to the Cypress,' is translated out of a Persian manuscript by Mrs. Beveridge. 'Pivi and Kabo' is translated by the Editor from a French version; 'Asmund and Signy' by Miss Blackley; the Indian stories by Major Campbell, and all the rest are told by Mrs. Lang, who does not give them exactly as they are told by all sorts of outlandish natives, but makes them up in the hope white people will like them, skipping the pieces which they will not like. That is how this Fairy Book was made up for your entertainment.

WHAT THE ROSE DID TO THE CYPRESS [1]

Once upon a time a great king of the East, named Saman-lāl-pōsh,[2] had three brave and clever sons – Tahmāsp, Qamās, and Almās-ruh-bakhsh.[3] One day, when the king was sitting in his hall of audience, his eldest son, Prince Tahmāsp, came before him, and after greeting his father with due respect, said: 'O my royal father! I am tired of the town; if you will give me leave, I will take my servants to-morrow and will go into the country and hunt on the hill-skirts; and when I have taken some game I will come back, at evening-prayer time.' His father consented, and sent with him some of his own trusted servants, and also hawks, and falcons, hunting dogs, cheetahs and leopards.

At the place where the prince intended to hunt he saw a most beautiful deer. He ordered that it should not be killed, but trapped or captured with a noose. The deer looked about for a place where he might escape from the ring of the beaters, and spied one unwatched close to the prince himself. It bounded high and leaped right over his head, got out of the ring, and tore like the eastern wind into the waste. The prince put spurs to his horse and pursued it; and was soon lost to the sight of his followers. Until the world-lighting sun stood above his head in the zenith he did not take his eyes off the deer; suddenly it disappeared behind some rising ground, and with all his search he could not find any further trace of it. He was now drenched in sweat, and he breathed with pain; and his horse's tongue hung from its mouth with thirst. He dismounted and toiled on, with bridle on arm, praying and casting himself on the mercy of heaven. Then his horse fell and surrendered its life to God. On and on he went across the sandy waste, weeping and with burning breast, till at length a hill rose into sight. He mustered his strength and climbed to the top, and there he found a giant tree whose foot kept firm the wrinkled earth, and whose crest touched the very heaven. Its branches had put forth a glory of leaves, and there were grass and a spring underneath it, and flowers of many colours.

Gladdened by this sight, he dragged himself to the water's edge, drank his fill, and returned thanks for his deliverance from thirst.

He looked about him and, to his amazement, saw close by a royal seat. While he was pondering what could have brought this into the merciless desert, a man drew near who was dressed like a faqīr, and had bare head and feet, but walked with the free carriage of a person of rank. His face was kind, and wise and thoughtful, and he came on and spoke to the prince.

'O good youth! how did you come here? Who are you? Where do you come from?'

The prince told everything just as it had happened to him, and then respectfully added: 'I have made known my own circumstances to you, and now I venture to beg you to tell me your own. Who are you? How did you come to make your dwelling in this wilderness?'

To this the faqīr replied: 'O youth! it would be best for you to have nothing to do with me and to know nothing of my fortunes, for my story is fit neither for telling nor for hearing.' The prince, however, pleaded so hard to be told, that at last there was nothing to be done but to let him hear.

'Learn and know, O young man! that I am King Janāngīr[4] of Babylon, and that once I had army and servants, family and treasure; untold wealth and belongings. The Most High God gave me seven sons who grew up well versed in all princely arts. My eldest son heard from travellers that in Turkīstān, on the Chinese frontier, there is a king named Quimūs, the son of Tīmūs, and that he has an only child, a daughter named Mihr-afrūz,[5] who, under all the azure heaven, is unrivalled for

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[1] Translated from two Persian MSS. in the possession of the British Museum and the India Office, and adapted, with some reservations, by Annette S. Beveridge.

[2] Jessamine, ruby-decked.

[3] Life-giving diamond.

[4] World-gripper.

[5] Love-enkindler.

beauty. Princes come from all quarters to ask her hand, and on one and all she imposes a condition. She says to them: “I know a riddle; and I will marry anyone who answers it, and will bestow on him all my possessions. But if a suitor cannot answer my question I cut off his head and hang it on the battlements of the citadel.” The riddle she asks is, “What did the rose do to the cypress?”

‘Now, when my son heard this tale, he fell in love with that unseen girl, and he came to me lamenting and bewailing himself. Nothing that I could say had the slightest effect on him. I said: “Oh my son! if there must be fruit of this fancy of yours, I will lead forth a great army against King Quimūs. If he will give you his daughter freely, well and good; and if not, I will ravage his kingdom and bring her away by force.” This plan did not please him; he said: “It is not right to lay a kingdom waste and to destroy a palace so that I may attain my desire. I will go alone; I will answer the riddle, and win her in this way.” At last, out of pity for him, I let him go. He reached the city of King Quimūs. He was asked the riddle and could not give the true answer; and his head was cut off and hung upon the battlements. Then I mourned him in black raiment for forty days.

‘After this another and another of my sons were seized by the same desire, and in the end all my seven sons went, and all were killed. In grief for their death I have abandoned my throne, and I abide here in this desert, withholding my hand from all State business and wearing myself away in sorrow.’

Prince Tahmāsp listened to this tale, and then the arrow of love for that unseen girl struck his heart also. Just at this moment of his ill-fate his people came up, and gathered round him like moths round a light. They brought him a horse, fleet as the breeze of the dawn; he set his willing foot in the stirrup of safety and rode off. As the days went by the thorn of love rankled in his heart, and he became the very example of lovers, and grew faint and feeble. At last his confidants searched his heart and lifted the veil from the face of his love, and then set the matter before his father, King Saman-lāl-pōsh. ‘Your son, Prince Tahmāsp, loves distractedly the Princess Mihr-afrūz, daughter of King Quimūs, son of Tīmūs.’ Then they told the king all about her and her doings. A mist of sadness clouded the king’s mind, and he said to his son: ‘If this thing is so, I will in the first place send a courier with friendly letters to King Quimūs, and will ask the hand of his daughter for you. I will send an abundance of gifts, and a string of camels laden with flashing stones and rubies of Badakhshān. In this way I will bring her and her suite, and I will give her to you to be your solace. But if King Quimūs is unwilling to give her to you, I will pour a whirlwind of soldiers upon him, and I will bring to you, in this way, that most consequential of girls.’ But the prince said that this plan would not be right, and that he would go himself, and would answer the riddle. Then the king’s wise men said: ‘This is a very weighty matter; it would be best to allow the prince to set out accompanied by some persons in whom you have confidence. Maybe he will repent and come back.’ So King Saman ordered all preparations for the journey to be made, and then Prince Tahmāsp took his leave and set out, accompanied by some of the courtiers, and taking with him a string of two-humped and raven-eyed camels laden with jewels, and gold, and costly stuffs.

By stage after stage, and after many days’ journeying, he arrived at the city of King Quimūs. What did he see? A towering citadel whose foot kept firm the wrinkled earth, and whose battlements touched the blue heaven. He saw hanging from its battlements many heads, but it had not the least effect upon him that these were heads of men of rank; he listened to no advice about laying aside his fancy, but rode up to the gate and on into the heart of the city. The place was so splendid that the eyes of the ages have never seen its like, and there, in an open square, he found a tent of crimson satin set up, and beneath it two jewelled drums with jewelled sticks. These drums were put there so that the suitors of the princess might announce their arrival by beating on them, after which some one would come and take them to the king’s presence. The sight of the drums stirred the fire of Prince Tahmāsp’s love. He dismounted, and moved towards them; but his companions hurried after and begged him first to let them go and announce him to the king, and said that then, when they had put their possessions in a place of security, they would enter into the all-important matter of the princess. The prince, however, replied that he was there for one thing only; that his first duty was

to beat the drums and announce himself as a suitor, when he would be taken, as such, to the king, who would then give him proper lodgment. So he struck upon the drums, and at once summoned an officer who took him to King Quimūs.

When the king saw how very young the prince looked, and that he was still drinking of the fountain of wonder, he said: 'O youth! leave aside this fancy which my daughter has conceived in the pride of her beauty. No one can answer her riddle, and she has done to death many men who had had no pleasure in life nor tasted its charms. God forbid that your spring also should be ravaged by the autumn winds of martyrdom.' All his urgency, however, had no effect in making the prince withdraw. At length it was settled between them that three days should be given to pleasant hospitality and that then should follow what had to be said and done. Then the prince went to his own quarters and was treated as became his station.

King Quimūs now sent for his daughter and for her mother, Gul-rukh,[6] and talked to them. He said to Mihr-afrūz: 'Listen to me, you cruel flirt! Why do you persist in this folly? Now there has come to ask your hand a prince of the east, so handsome that the very sun grows modest before the splendour of his face; he is rich, and he has brought gold and jewels, all for you, if you will marry him. A better husband you will not find.'

But all the arguments of father and mother were wasted, for her only answer was: 'O my father! I have sworn to myself that I will not marry, even if a thousand years go by, unless someone answers my riddle, and that I will give myself to that man only who does answer it.'

The three days passed; then the riddle was asked: 'What did the rose do to the cypress?' The prince had an eloquent tongue, which could split a hair, and without hesitation he replied to her with a verse: 'Only the Omnipotent has knowledge of secrets; if any man says, "I know" do not believe him.'

Then a servant fetched in the polluted, blue-eyed headsman, who asked: 'Whose sun of life has come near its setting?' took the prince by the arm, placed him upon the cloth of execution, and then, all merciless and stony-hearted, cut his head from his body and hung it on the battlements.

The news of the death of Prince Tahmāsp plunged his father into despair and stupefaction. He mourned for him in black raiment for forty days; and then, a few days later, his second son, Prince Qamās, extracted from him leave to go too; and he, also, was put to death. One son only now remained, the brave, eloquent, happy-natured Prince Almās-ruh-bakhsh. One day, when his father sat brooding over his lost children, Almās came before him and said: 'O father mine! the daughter of King Quimūs has done my two brothers to death; I wish to avenge them upon her.' These words brought his father to tears. 'O light of your father!' he cried, 'I have no one left but you, and now you ask me to let you go to your death.'

'Dear father!' pleaded the prince, 'until I have lowered the pride of that beauty, and have set her here before you, I cannot settle down or indeed sit down off my feet.'

In the end he, too, got leave to go; but he went without a following and alone. Like his brothers, he made the long journey to the city of Quimūs the son of Tīmūs; like them he saw the citadel, but he saw there the heads of Tahmāsp and Qamās. He went about in the city, saw the tent and the drums, and then went out again to a village not far off. Here he found out a very old man who had a wife 120 years old, or rather more. Their lives were coming to their end, but they had never beheld face of child of their own. They were glad when the prince came to their house, and they dealt with him as with a son. He put all his belongings into their charge, and fastened his horse in their out-house. Then he asked them not to speak of him to anyone, and to keep his affairs secret. He exchanged his royal dress for another, and next morning, just as the sun looked forth from its eastern oratory, he went again into the city. He turned over in his mind without ceasing how he was to find out the meaning of the riddle, and to give them a right answer, and who could help him, and how to avenge his brothers.

[6] Rose-cheek.

He wandered about the city, but heard nothing of service, for there was no one in all that land who understood the riddle of Princess Mihr-afrūz.

One day he thought he would go to her own palace and see if he could learn anything there, so he went out to her garden-house. It was a very splendid place, with a wonderful gateway, and walls like Alexander's ramparts. Many gate-keepers were on guard, and there was no chance of passing them. His heart was full of bitterness, but he said to himself: 'All will be well! it is here I shall get what I want.' He went round outside the garden wall hoping to find a gap, and he made supplication in the Court of Supplications and prayed, 'O Holder of the hand of the helpless! show me my way.'

While he prayed he bethought himself that he could get into the garden with a stream of inflowing water. He looked carefully round, fearing to be seen, stripped, slid into the stream and was carried within the great walls. There he hid himself till his loin cloth was dry. The garden was a very Eden, with running water amongst its lawns, with flowers and the lament of doves and the jug-jug of nightingales. It was a place to steal the senses from the brain, and he wandered about and saw the house, but there seemed to be no one there. In the forecourt was a royal seat of polished jasper, and in the middle of the platform was a basin of purest water that flashed like a mirror. He pleased himself with these sights for a while, and then went back to the garden and hid himself from the gardeners and passed the night. Next morning he put on the appearance of a madman and wandered about till he came to a lawn where several perī-faced girls were amusing themselves. On a throne, jewelled and overspread with silken stuffs, sat a girl the splendour of whose beauty lighted up the place, and whose ambergris and attar perfumed the whole air. 'That must be Mihr-afrūz,' he thought, 'she is indeed lovely.' Just then one of the attendants came to the water's edge to fill a cup, and though the prince was in hiding, his face was reflected in the water. When she saw this image she was frightened, and let her cup fall into the stream, and thought, 'Is it an angel, or a perī, or a man?' Fear and trembling took hold of her, and she screamed as women scream. Then some of the other girls came and took her to the princess who asked: 'What is the matter, pretty one?'

'O princess! I went for water, and I saw an image, and I was afraid.' So another girl went to the water and saw the same thing, and came back with the same story. The princess wished to see for herself; she rose and paced to the spot with the march of a prancing peacock. When she saw the image she said to her nurse: 'Find out who is reflected in the water, and where he lives.' Her words reached the prince's ear, he lifted up his head; she saw him and beheld beauty such as she had never seen before. She lost a hundred hearts to him, and signed to her nurse to bring him to her presence. The prince let himself be persuaded to go with the nurse, but when the princess questioned him as to who he was and how he had got into her garden, he behaved like a man out of his mind – sometimes smiling, sometimes crying, and saying: 'I am hungry,' or words misplaced and random, civil mixed with the rude.

'What a pity!' said the princess, 'he is mad!' As she liked him she said: 'He is my mad man; let no one hurt him.' She took him to her house and told him not to go away, for that she would provide for all his wants. The prince thought, 'It would be excellent if here, in her very house, I could get the answer to her riddle; but I must be silent, on pain of death.'

Now in the princess's household there was a girl called Dil-arām[7]; she it was who had first seen the image of the prince. She came to love him very much, and she spent day and night thinking how she could make her affection known to him. One day she escaped from the princess's notice and went to the prince, and laid her head on his feet and said: 'Heaven has bestowed on you beauty and charm. Tell me your secret; who are you, and how did you come here? I love you very much, and if you would like to leave this place I will go with you. I have wealth equal to the treasure of the miserly Qarūn.' But the prince only made answer like a man distraught, and told her nothing. He said to himself, 'God

[7] Heartsease.

forbid that the veil should be taken in vain from my secret; that would indeed disgrace me.' So, with streaming eyes and burning breast, Dil-arām arose and went to her house and lamented and fretted.

Now whenever the princess commanded the prince's attendance, Dil-arām, of all the girls, paid him attention and waited on him best. The princess noticed this, and said: 'O Dil-arām! you must take my madman into your charge and give him whatever he wants.' This was the very thing Dil-arām had prayed for. A little later she took the prince into a private place and she made him take an oath of secrecy, and she herself took one and swore, 'By Heaven! I will not tell your secret. Tell me all about yourself so that I may help you to get what you want.' The prince now recognised in her words the perfume of true love, and he made compact with her. 'O lovely girl! I want to know what the rose did to the cypress. Your mistress cuts off men's heads because of this riddle; what is at the bottom of it, and why does she do it?' Then Dil-arām answered: 'If you will promise to marry me and to keep me always amongst those you favour, I will tell you all I know, and I will keep watch about the riddle.'

'O lovely girl,' rejoined he, 'if I accomplish my purpose, so that I need no longer strive for it, I will keep my compact with you. When I have this woman in my power and have avenged my brothers, I will make you my solace.'

'O wealth of my life and source of my joy!' responded Dil-arām, 'I do not know what the rose did to the cypress; but so much I know that the person who told Mihr-afrūz about it is a negro whom she hides under her throne. He fled here from Wāq of the Caucasus – it is there you must make inquiry; there is no other way of getting at the truth.' On hearing these words, the prince said to his heart, 'O my heart! your task will yet wear away much of your life.'

He fell into long and far thought, and Dil-arām looked at him and said: 'O my life and my soul! do not be sad. If you would like this woman killed, I will put poison into her cup so that she will never lift her head from her drugged sleep again.'

'O Dil-arām! such a vengeance is not manly. I shall not rest till I have gone to Wāq of the Caucasus and have cleared up the matter.' Then they repeated the agreement about their marriage, and bade one another good-bye.

The prince now went back to the village, and told the old man that he was setting out on a long journey, and begged him not to be anxious, and to keep safe the goods which had been entrusted to him.

The prince had not the least knowledge of the way to Wāq of the Caucasus, and was cast down by the sense of his helplessness. He was walking along by his horse's side when there appeared before him an old man of serene countenance, dressed in green and carrying a staff, who resembled Khizr[8]. The prince thanked heaven, laid the hands of reverence on his breast and salaamed. The old man returned the greeting graciously, and asked: 'How fare you? Whither are you bound? You look like a traveller.'

'O revered saint! I am in this difficulty: I do not know the way to Wāq of the Caucasus.' The old man of good counsel looked at the young prince and said: 'Turn back from this dangerous undertaking. Do not go; choose some other task! If you had a hundred lives you would not bring one out safe from this journey.' But his words had no effect on the prince's resolve. 'What object have you,' the old man asked, 'in thus consuming your life?'

'I have an important piece of business to do, and only this journey makes it possible. I must go; I pray you, in God's name, tell me the way.'

When the saint saw that the prince was not to be moved, he said: 'Learn and know, O youth! that Wāq of Qāf is in the Caucasus and is a dependency of it. In it there are jins, demons, and perīs. You must go on along this road till it forks into three; take neither the right hand nor the left, but the middle path. Follow this for a day and a night. Then you will come to a column on which is a marble slab inscribed with Cufic characters. Do what is written there; beware of disobedience.' Then

[8] Elias.

he gave his good wishes for the journey and his blessing, and the prince kissed his feet, said good-bye, and, with thanks to the Causer of Causes, took the road.

After a day and a night he saw the column rise in silent beauty to the heavens. Everything was as the wise old man had said it would be, and the prince, who was skilled in all tongues, read the following Cufic inscription: 'O travellers! be it known to you that this column has been set up with its tablet to give true directions about these roads. If a man would pass his life in ease and pleasantness, let him take the right-hand path. If he take the left, he will have some trouble, but he will reach his goal without much delay. Woe to him who chooses the middle path! if he had a thousand lives he would not save one; it is very hazardous; it leads to the Caucasus, and is an endless road. Beware of it!'

The prince read and bared his head and lifted his hands in supplication to Him who has no needs, and prayed, 'O Friend of the traveller! I, Thy servant, come to Thee for succour. My purpose lies in the land of Qāf and my road is full of peril. Lead me by it.' Then he took a handful of earth and cast it on his collar, and said: 'O earth! be thou my grave; and O vest! be thou my winding-sheet!' Then he took the middle road and went along it, day after day, with many a silent prayer, till he saw trees rise from the weary waste of sand. They grew in a garden, and he went up to the gate and found it a slab of beautifully worked marble, and that near it there lay sleeping, with his head on a stone, a negro whose face was so black that it made darkness round him. His upper lip, arched like an eyebrow, curved upwards to his nostrils and his lower hung down like a camel's. Four millstones formed his shield, and on a box-tree close by hung his giant sword. His loin-cloth was fashioned of twelve skins of beasts, and was bound round his waist by a chain of which each link was as big as an elephant's thigh.

The prince approached and tied up his horse near the negro's head. Then he let fall the Bismillāh from his lips, entered the garden and walked through it till he came to the private part, delighting in the great trees, the lovely verdure, and the flowery borders. In the inner garden there were very many deer. These signed to him with eye and foot to go back, for that this was enchanted ground; but he did not understand them, and thought their pretty gestures were a welcome. After a while he reached a palace which had a porch more splendid than Cæsar's, and was built of gold and silver bricks. In its midst was a high seat, overlaid with fine carpets, and into it opened eight doors, each having opposite to it a marble basin.

Banishing care, Prince Almās walked on through the garden, when suddenly a window opened and a girl, who was lovely enough to make the moon writhe with jealousy, put out her head. She lost her heart to the good looks of the prince, and sent her nurse to fetch him so that she might learn where he came from and how he had got into her private garden where even lions and wolves did not venture. The nurse went, and was struck with amazement at the sun-like radiance of his face; she salaamed and said: 'O youth! welcome! the lady of the garden calls you; come!' He went with her and into a palace which was like a house in Paradise, and saw seated on the royal carpets of the throne a girl whose brilliance shamed the shining sun. He salaamed; she rose, took him by the hand and placed him near her. 'O young man! who are you? where do you come from? How did you get into this garden?' He told her his story from beginning to end, and Lady Latīfa[9] replied: 'This is folly! It will make you a vagabond of the earth, and lead you to destruction. Come, cease such talk! No one can go to the Caucasus. Stay with me and be thankful, for here is a throne which you can share with me, and in my society you can enjoy my wealth. I will do whatever you wish; I will bring here King Quimūs and his daughter, and you can deal with them as you will.'

'O Lady Latīfa,' he said, 'I have made a compact with heaven not to sit down off my feet till I have been to Wāq of Qāf and have cleared up this matter, and have taken Mihr-afrūz from her father, as brave men take, and have put her in prison. When I have done all this I will come back to you in state and with a great following, and I will marry you according to the law.' Lady Latīfa argued and

[9] Pleasure.

urged her wishes, but in vain; the prince was not to be moved. Then she called to the cupbearers for new wine, for she thought that when his head was hot with it he might consent to stay. The pure, clear wine was brought; she filled a cup and gave to him. He said: 'O most enchanting sweetheart! it is the rule for the host to drink first and then the guest.' So to make him lose his head, she drained the cup; then filled it again and gave him. He drank it off, and she took a lute from one of the singers and played upon it with skill which witched away the sense of all who heard. But it was all in vain; three days passed in such festivities, and on the fourth the prince said: 'O joy of my eyes! I beg now that you will bid me farewell, for my way is long and the fire of your love darts flame into the harvest of my heart. By heaven's grace I may accomplish my purpose, and, if so, I will come back to you.'

Now she saw that she could not in any way change his resolve, she told her nurse to bring a certain casket which contained, she said, something exhilarating which would help the prince on his journey. The box was brought, and she divided off a portion of what was within and gave it to the prince to eat. Then, and while he was all unaware, she put forth her hand to a stick fashioned like a snake; she said some words over it and struck him so sharply on the shoulder that he cried out; then he made a pirouette and found that he was a deer.

When he knew what had been done to him he thought, 'All the threads of affliction are gathered together; I have lost my last chance!' He tried to escape, but the magician sent for her goldsmith, who, coming, overlaid the deer-horns with gold and jewels. The kerchief which that day she had had in her hand was then tied round its neck, and this freed it from her attentions.

The prince-deer now bounded into the garden and at once sought some way of escape. It found none, and it joined the other deer, which soon made it their leader. Now, although the prince had been transformed into the form of a deer, he kept his man's heart and mind. He said to himself, 'Thank heaven that the Lady Latīfa has changed me into this shape, for at least deer are beautiful.' He remained for some time living as a deer amongst the rest, but at length resolved that an end to such a life must be put in some way. He looked again for some place by which he could get out of the magic garden. Following round the wall he reached a lower part; he remembered the Divine Names and flung himself over, saying, 'Whatever happens is by the will of God.' When he looked about he found that he was in the very same place he had jumped from; there was the palace, there the garden and the deer! Eight times he leaped over the wall and eight times found himself where he had started from; but after the ninth leap there was a change, there was a palace and there was a garden, but the deer were gone.

Presently a girl of such moon-like beauty opened a window that the prince lost to her a hundred hearts. She was delighted with the beautiful deer, and cried to her nurse: 'Catch it! if you will I will give you this necklace, every pearl of which is worth a kingdom.' The nurse coveted the pearls, but as she was three hundred years old she did not know how she could catch a deer. However, she went down into the garden and held out some grass, but when she went near the creature ran away. The girl watched with great excitement from the palace window, and called: 'O nurse, if you don't catch it, I will kill you!' 'I am killing myself,' shouted back the old woman. The girl saw that nurse tottering along and went down to help, marching with the gait of a prancing peacock. When she saw the gilded horns and the kerchief she said: 'It must be accustomed to the hand, and be some royal pet!' The prince had it in mind that this might be another magician who could give him some other shape, but still it seemed best to allow himself to be caught. So he played about the girl and let her catch him by the neck. A leash was brought, fruits were given, and it was caressed with delight. It was taken to the palace and tied at the foot of the Lady Jamīla's raised seat, but she ordered a longer cord to be brought so that it might be able to jump up beside her.

When the nurse went to fix the cord she saw tears falling from its eyes, and that it was dejected and sorrowful. 'O Lady Jamīla! this is a wonderful deer, it is crying; I never saw a deer cry before.' Jamīla darted down like a flash of lightning, and saw that it was so. It rubbed its head on her feet and then shook it so sadly that the girl cried for sympathy. She patted it and said: 'Why are you sad, my

heart? Why do you cry, my soul? Is it because I have caught you? I love you better than my own life.' But, spite of her comforting, it cried the more. Then Jamīla said: 'Unless I am mistaken, this is the work of my wicked sister Latīfa, who by magic art turns servants of God into beasts of the field.' At these words the deer uttered sounds, and laid its head on her feet. Then Jamīla was sure it was a man, and said: 'Be comforted, I will restore you to your own shape.' She bathed herself and ordered the deer to be bathed, put on clean raiment, called for a box which stood in an alcove, opened it and gave a portion of what was in it to the deer to eat. Then she slipped her hand under her carpet and produced a stick to which she said something. She struck the deer hard, it pirouetted and became Prince Almās.

The broidered kerchief and the jewels lay upon the ground. The prince prostrated himself in thanks to heaven and Jamīla, and said: 'O delicious person! O Chinese Venus! how shall I excuse myself for giving you so much trouble? With what words can I thank you?' Then she called for a clothes-wallet and chose out a royal dress of honour. Her attendants dressed him in it, and brought him again before the tender-hearted lady. She turned to him a hundred hearts, took his hand and seated him beside her, and said: 'O youth! tell me truly who you are and where you come from, and how you fell into the power of my sister.'

Even when he was a deer the prince had much admired Jamīla; now he thought her a thousand times more lovely than before. He judged that in truth alone was safety, and so told her his whole story. Then she asked: 'O Prince Almās-ruh-bakhsh, do you still wish so much to make this journey to Wāq of Qāf? What hope is there in it? The road is dangerous even near here, and this is not yet the borderland of the Caucasus. Come, give it up! It is a great risk, and to go is not wise. It would be a pity for a man like you to fall into the hands of jins and demons. Stay with me, and I will do whatever you wish.'

'O most delicious person!' he answered, 'you are very generous, and the choice of my life lies in truth in your hands; but I beg one favour of you. If you love me, so do I too love you. If you really love me, do not forbid me to make this journey, but help me as far as you can. Then it may be that I shall succeed, and if I return with my purpose fulfilled I will marry you according to the law, and take you to my own country, and we will spend the rest of our lives together in pleasure and good companionship. Help me, if you can, and give me your counsel.'

'O very stuff of my life,' replied Jamīla, 'I will give you things that are not in kings' treasuries, and which will be of the greatest use to you. First, there are the bow and arrows of his Reverence the Prophet Salih. Secondly, there is the Scorpion of Solomon (on whom be peace), which is a sword such as no king has; steel and stone are one to it; if you bring it down on a rock it will not be injured, and it will cleave whatever you strike. Thirdly, there is the dagger which the sage Tīmūs himself made; this is most useful, and the man who wears it would not bend under seven camels' loads. What you have to do first is to get to the home of the Sīmurgh[10], and to make friends with him. If he favours you, he will take you to Wāq of Qāf; if not, you will never get there, for seven seas are on the way, and they are such seas that if all the kings of the earth, and all their vazīrs, and all their wise men considered for a thousand years, they would not be able to cross them.'

'O most delicious person! where is the Sīmurgh's home? How shall I get there?'

'O new fruit of life! you must just do what I tell you, and you must use your eyes and your brains, for if you don't you will find yourself at the place of the negroes, who are a bloodthirsty set; and God forbid they should lay hands on your precious person.'

Then she took the bow and quiver of arrows, the sword, and the dagger out of a box, and the prince let fall a *Bismillāh*, and girt them all on. Then Jamīla of the houri-face, produced two saddle-bags of ruby-red silk, one filled with roasted fowl and little cakes, and the other with stones of price. Next she gave him a horse as swift as the breeze of the morning, and she said: 'Accept all these things from me; ride till you come to a rising ground, at no great distance from here, where there is a spring.

[10] Thirty-birds.

It is called the Place of Gifts, and you must stay there one night. There you will see many wild beasts – lions, tigers, leopards, apes, and so on. Before you get there you must capture some game. On the long road beyond there dwells a lion-king, and if other beasts did not fear him they would ravage the whole country and let no one pass. The lion is a red transgressor, so when he comes rise and do him reverence; take a cloth and rub the dust and earth from his face, then set the game you have taken before him, well cleansed, and lay the hands of respect on your breast. When he wishes to eat, take your knife and cut pieces of the meat and set them before him with a bow. In this way you will enfold that lion-king in perfect friendship, and he will be most useful to you, and you will be safe from molestation by the negroes. When you go on from the Place of Gifts, be sure you do not take the right-hand road; take the left, for the other leads by the negro castle, which is known as the Place of Clashing Swords, and where there are forty negro captains each over three thousand or four thousand more. Their chief is Taram-tāq.[11] Further on than this is the home of the Sīmurgh.'

Having stored these things in the prince's memory, she said: 'You will see everything happen just as I have said.' Then she escorted him a little way; they parted, and she went home to mourn his absence.

Prince Almās, relying on the Causer of Causes, rode on to the Place of Gifts and dismounted at the platform. Everything happened just as Jamīla had foretold; when one or two watches of the night had passed, he saw that the open ground around him was full of such stately and splendid animals as he had never seen before. By-and-by, they made way for a wonderfully big lion, which was eighty yards from nose to tail-tip, and was a magnificent creature. The prince advanced and saluted it; it proudly drooped its head and forelocks and paced to the platform. Seventy or eighty others were with it, and now encircled it at a little distance. It laid its right paw over its left, and the prince took the kerchief Jamīla had given him for the purpose, and rubbed the dust and earth from its face; then brought forward the game he had prepared, and crossing his hands respectfully on his breast stood waiting before it. When it wished for food he cut off pieces of the meat and put them in its mouth. The serving lions also came near and the prince would have stayed his hand, but the king-lion signed to him to feed them too. This he did, laying the meat on the platform. Then the king-lion beckoned the prince to come near and said: 'Sleep at ease; my guards will watch.' So, surrounded by the lion-guard, he slept till dawn, when the king-lion said good-bye, and gave him a few of his own hairs and said: 'When you are in any difficulty, burn one of these and I will be there.' Then it went off into the jungle.

Prince Almās immediately started; he rode till he came to the parting of the ways. He remembered quite well that the right-hand way was short and dangerous, but he bethought himself too that whatever was written on his forehead would happen, and took the forbidden road. By-and-by he saw a castle, and knew from what Jamīla had told him that it was the Place of Clashing Swords. He would have liked to go back by the way he had come, but courage forbade, and he said, 'What has been preordained from eternity will happen to me,' and went on towards the castle. He was thinking of tying his horse to a tree which grew near the gate when a negro came out and spied him. 'Ha!' said the wretch to himself, 'this is good; Taram-tāq has not eaten man-meat for a long time, and is craving for some. I will take this creature to him.' He took hold of the prince's reins, and said: 'Dismount, man-child! Come to my master. He has wanted to eat man-meat this long time back.' 'What nonsense are you saying?' said the prince, and other such words. When the negro understood that he was being abused, he cried: 'Come along! I will put you into such a state that the birds of the air will weep for you.' Then the prince drew the Scorpion of Solomon and struck him – struck him on the leathern belt and shore him through so that the sword came out on the other side. He stood upright for a little while, muttered some words, put out his hand to seize the prince, then fell in two and surrendered his life.

There was water close at hand, and the prince made his ablution, and then said: 'O my heart! a wonderful task lies upon you.' A second negro came out of the fort, and seeing what had been

[11] Pomp and Pride.

done, went back and told his chief. Others wished to be doubled, and went out, and of every one the Scorpion of Solomon made two. Then Taram-tāq sent for a giant negro named Chil-māq, who in the day of battle was worth three hundred, and said to him: 'I shall thank you to fetch me that man.'

Chil-māq went out, tall as a tower, and bearing a shield of eight millstones, and as he walked he shouted: 'Ho! blunder-head! by what right do you come to our country and kill our people? Come! make two of me.' As the prince was despicable in his eyes, he tossed aside his club and rushed to grip him with his hands. He caught him by the collar, tucked him under his arm and set off with him to Taram-tāq. But the prince drew the dagger of Tīmūs and thrust it upwards through the giant's arm-pit, for its full length. This made Chil-māq drop him and try to pick up his club; but when he stooped the mighty sword shore him through at the waist.

When news of his champion's death reached Taram-tāq he put himself at the head of an army of his negroes and led them forth. Many fell before the magic sword, and the prince laboured on in spite of weakness and fatigue till he was almost worn out. In a moment of respite from attack he struck his fire-steel and burned a hair of the king-lion; and he had just succeeded in this when the negroes charged again and all but took him prisoner. Suddenly from behind the distant veil of the desert appeared an army of lions led by their king. 'What brings these scourges of heaven here?' cried the negroes. They came roaring up, and put fresh life into the prince. He fought on, and when he struck on a belt the wearer fell in two, and when on a head he cleft to the waist. Then the ten thousand mighty lions joined the fray and tore in pieces man and horse.

Taram-tāq was left alone; he would have retired into his fort, but the prince shouted: 'Whither away, accursed one? Are you fleeing before me?' At these defiant words the chief shouted back, 'Welcome, man! Come here and I will soften you to wax beneath my club.' Then he hurled his club at the prince's head, but it fell harmless because the prince had quickly spurred his horse forward. The chief, believing he had hit him, was looking down for him, when all at once he came up behind and cleft him to the waist and sent him straight to hell.

The king-lion greatly praised the dashing courage of Prince Almās. They went together into the Castle of Clashing Swords and found it adorned and fitted in princely fashion. In it was a daughter of Taram-tāq, still a child. She sent a message to Prince Almās saying, 'O king of the world! choose this slave to be your handmaid. Keep her with you; where you go, there she will go!' He sent for her and she kissed his feet and received the Mussulman faith at his hands. He told her he was going a long journey on important business, and that when he came back he would take her and her possessions to his own country, but that for the present she must stay in the castle. Then he made over the fort and all that was in it to the care of the lion, saying: 'Guard them, brother! let no one lay a hand on them.' He said good-bye, chose a fresh horse from the chief's stable and once again took the road.

After travelling many stages and for many days, he reached a plain of marvellous beauty and refreshment. It was carpeted with flowers – roses, tulips, and clover; it had lovely lawns, and amongst them running water. This choicest place of earth filled him with wonder. There was a tree such as he had never seen before; its branches were alike, but it bore flowers and fruit of a thousand kinds. Near it a reservoir had been fashioned of four sorts of stone – touchstone, pure stone, marble, and loadstone. In and out of it flowed water like attar. The prince felt sure this must be the place of the Sīmurgh; he dismounted, turned his horse loose to graze, ate some of the food Jamīla had given him, drank of the stream and lay down to sleep.

He was still dozing when he was aroused by the neighing and pawing of his horse. When he could see clearly he made out a mountain-like dragon whose heavy breast crushed the stones beneath it into putty. He remembered the Thousand Names of God and took the bow of Salih from its case and three arrows from their quiver. He bound the dagger of Tīmūs firmly to his waist and hung the Scorpion of Solomon round his neck. Then he set an arrow on the string and released it with such force that it went in at the monster's eye right up to the notch. The dragon writhed on itself, and belched forth an evil vapour, and beat the ground with its head till the earth quaked. Then the prince

took a second arrow and shot into its throat. It drew in its breath and would have sucked the prince into its maw, but when he was within striking distance he drew his sword and, having committed himself to God, struck a mighty blow which cut the creature's neck down to the gullet. The foul vapour of the beast and horror at its strangeness now overcame the prince, and he fainted. When he came to himself he found that he was drenched in the gore of the dead monster. He rose and thanked God for his deliverance.

The nest of the Sīmurgh was in the wonderful tree above him, and in it were young birds; the parents were away searching for food. They always told the children, before they left them, not to put their heads out of the nest; but, to-day, at the noise of the fight below, they looked down and so saw the whole affair. By the time the dragon had been killed they were very hungry and set up a clamour for food. The prince therefore cut up the dragon and fed them with it, bit by bit, till they had eaten the whole. He then washed himself and lay down to rest, and he was still asleep when the Sīmurgh came home. As a rule, the young birds raised a clamour of welcome when their parents came near, but on this day they were so full of dragon-meat that they had no choice, they had to go to sleep.

As they flew nearer, the old birds saw the prince lying under the tree and no sign of life in the nest. They thought that the misfortune which for so many earlier years had befallen them had again happened and that their nestlings had disappeared. They had never been able to find out the murderer, and now suspected the prince. 'He has eaten our children and sleeps after it; he must die,' said the father-bird, and flew back to the hills and clawed up a huge stone which he meant to let fall on the prince's head. But his mate said, 'Let us look into the nest first for to kill an innocent person would condemn us at the Day of Resurrection.' They flew nearer, and presently the young birds woke and cried, 'Mother, what have you brought for us?' and they told the whole story of the fight, and of how they were alive only by the favour of the young man under the tree, and of his cutting up the dragon and of their eating it. The mother-bird then remarked, 'Truly, father! you were about to do a strange thing, and a terrible sin has been averted from you.' Then the Sīmurgh flew off to a distance with the great stone and dropped it. It sank down to the very middle of the earth.

Coming back, the Sīmurgh saw that a little sunshine fell upon the prince through the leaves, and it spread its wings and shaded him till he woke. When he got up he salaamed to it, who returned his greeting with joy and gratitude, and caressed him and said: 'O youth, tell me true! who are you, and where are you going? And how did you cross that pitiless desert where never yet foot of man had trod?' The prince told his story from beginning to end, and finished by saying: 'Now it is my heart's wish that you should help me to get to Wāq of the Caucasus. Perhaps, by your favour, I shall accomplish my task and avenge my brothers.' In reply the Sīmurgh first blessed the deliverer of his children, and then went on: 'What you have done no child of man has ever done before; you assuredly have a claim on all my help, for every year up till now that dragon has come here and has destroyed my nestlings, and I have never been able to find who was the murderer and to avenge myself. By God's grace you have removed my children's powerful foe. I regard you as a child of my own. Stay with me; I will give you everything you desire, and I will establish a city here for you, and will furnish it with every requisite; I will give you the land of the Caucasus, and will make its princes subject to you. Give up the journey to Wāq, it is full of risk, and the jins there will certainly kill you.' But nothing could move the prince, and seeing this the bird went on: 'Well, so be it! When you wish to set forth you must go into the plain and take seven head of deer, and must make water-tight bags of their hides and keep their flesh in seven portions. Seven seas lie on our way – I will carry you over them; but if I have not food and drink we shall fall into the sea and be drowned. When I ask for it you must put food and water into my mouth. So we shall make the journey safely.'

The prince did all as he was told, then they took flight; they crossed the seven seas, and at each one the prince fed the Sīmurgh. When they alighted on the shore of the last sea, it said: 'O my son! there lies your road; follow it to the city. Take thee three feathers of mine, and, if you are in a difficulty, burn one and I will be with you in the twinkling of an eye.'

The prince walked on in solitude till he reached the city. He went in and wandered about through all quarters, and through bazaars and lanes and squares, in the least knowing from whom he could ask information about the riddle of Mihr-afrūz. He spent seven days thinking it over in silence. From the first day of his coming he had made friends with a young cloth-merchant, and a great liking had sprung up between them. One day he said abruptly to his companion: 'O dear friend! I wish you would tell me what the rose did to the cypress, and what the sense of the riddle is.' The merchant started, and exclaimed: 'If there were not brotherly affection between us, I would cut off your head for asking me this!' 'If you meant to kill me,' retorted the prince, 'you would still have first to tell me what I want to know.' When the merchant saw that the prince was in deadly earnest, he said: 'If you wish to hear the truth of the matter you must wait upon our king. There is no other way; no one else will tell you. I have a well-wisher at the Court, named Farrūkh-fāl,[12] and will introduce you to him.' 'That would be excellent,' cried the prince. A meeting was arranged between Farrūkh-fāl and Almās, and then the amīr took him to the king's presence and introduced him as a stranger and traveller who had come from afar to sit in the shadow of King Sinaubar.

Now the Sīmurgh had given the prince a diamond weighing thirty misqāls, and he offered this to the king, who at once recognised its value, and asked where it had been obtained. 'I, your slave, once had riches and state and power; there are many such stones in my country. On my way here I was plundered at the Castle of Clashing Swords, and I saved this one thing only, hidden in my bathing-cloth.' In return for the diamond, King Sinaubar showered gifts of much greater value, for he remembered that it was the last possession of the prince. He showed the utmost kindness and hospitality, and gave his vazīr orders to instal the prince in the royal guest-house. He took much pleasure in his visitor's society; they were together every day and spent the time most pleasantly. Several times the king said: 'Ask me for something, that I may give it you.' One day he so pressed to know what would pleasure the prince, that the latter said: 'I have only one wish, and that I will name to you in private.' The king at once commanded every one to withdraw, and then Prince Almās said: 'The desire of my life is to know what the rose did to the cypress, and what meaning there is in the words.' The king was astounded. 'In God's name! if anyone else had said that to me I should have cut off his head instantly.' The prince heard this in silence, and presently so beguiled the king with pleasant talk that to kill him was impossible.

Time flew by, the king again and again begged the prince to ask some gift of him, and always received this same reply: 'I wish for your Majesty's welfare, what more can I desire?' One night there was a banquet, and cupbearers carried round gold and silver cups of sparkling wine, and singers with sweetest voices contended for the prize. The prince drank from the king's own cup, and when his head was hot with wine he took a lute from one of the musicians and placed himself on the carpet-border and sang and sang till he witched away the sense of all who listened. Applause and compliments rang from every side. The king filled his cup and called the prince and gave it to him and said: 'Name your wish! it is yours.' The prince drained off the wine and answered: 'O king of the world! learn and know that I have only one aim in life, and this is to know what the rose did to the cypress.'

'Never yet,' replied the king, 'has any man come out from that question alive. If this is your only wish, so be it; I will tell you. But I will do this on one condition only, namely, that when you have heard you will submit yourself to death.' To this the prince agreed, and said: 'I set my foot firmly on this compact.'

The king then gave an order to an attendant; a costly carpet overlaid with European velvet was placed near him, and a dog was led in by a golden and jewelled chain and set upon the splendid stuffs. A band of fair girls came in and stood round it in waiting.

Then, with ill words, twelve negroes dragged in a lovely woman, fettered on hands and feet and meanly dressed, and they set her down on the bare floor. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and

[12] Of happy omen.

shamed the glorious sun. The king ordered a hundred stripes to be laid on her tender body; she sighed a long sigh. Food was called for and table-cloths were spread. Delicate meats were set before the dog, and water given it in a royal cup of Chinese crystal. When it had eaten its fill, its leavings were placed before the lovely woman and she was made to eat of them. She wept and her tears were pearls; she smiled and her lips shed roses. Pearls and flowers were gathered up and taken to the treasury.

'Now,' said the king, 'you have seen these things and your purpose is fulfilled.' 'Truly,' said the prince, 'I have seen things which I have not understood; what do they mean, and what is the story of them? Tell me and kill me.'

Then said the king: 'The woman you see there in chains is my wife; she is called Gul, the Rose, and I am Sinaubar, the Cypress. One day I was hunting and became very thirsty. After great search I discovered a well in a place so secret that neither bird nor beast nor man could find it without labour. I was alone, I took my turban for a rope and my cap for a bucket. There was a good deal of water, but when I let down my rope, something caught it, and I could not in any way draw it back. I shouted down into the well: "O! servant of God! whoever you are, why do you deal unfairly with me? I am dying of thirst, let go! in God's name." A cry came up in answer, "O servant of God! we have been in the well a long time; in God's name get us out!" After trying a thousand schemes, I drew up two blind women. They said they were perīs, and that their king had blinded them in his anger and had left them in the well alone.

"'Now," they said, "if you will get us the cure for our blindness we will devote ourselves to your service, and will do whatever you wish."

"'What is the cure for your blindness?"

"'Not far from this place," they said, "a cow comes up from the great sea to graze; a little of her dung would cure us. We should be eternally your debtors. Do not let the cow see you, or she will assuredly kill you."

'With renewed strength and spirit I went to the shore. There I watched the cow come up from the sea, graze, and go back. Then I came out of my hiding, took a little of her dung and conveyed it to the perīs. They rubbed it on their eyes, and by the Divine might saw again.

'They thanked heaven and me, and then considered what they could do to show their gratitude to me. "Our perī-king," they said, "has a daughter whom he keeps under his own eye and thinks the most lovely girl on earth. In good sooth, she has not her equal! Now we will get you into her house and you must win her heart, and if she has an inclination for another, you must drive it out and win her for yourself. Her mother loves her so dearly that she has no ease but in her presence, and she will give her to no one in marriage. Teach her to love you so that she cannot exist without you. But if the matter becomes known to her mother she will have you burned in the fire. Then you must beg, as a last favour, that your body may be anointed with oil so that you may burn the more quickly and be spared torture. If the perī-king allows this favour, we two will manage to be your anointers, and we will put an oil on you such that if you were a thousand years in the fire not a trace of burning would remain."

'In the end the two perīs took me to the girl's house. I saw her sleeping daintily. She was most lovely, and I was so amazed at the perfection of her beauty that I stood with senses lost, and did not know if she were real or a dream. When at last I saw that she was a real girl, I returned thanks that I, the runner, had come to my goal, and that I, the seeker, had found my treasure.

'When the perī opened her eyes she asked in affright: "Who are you? Have you come to steal? How did you get here? Be quick! save yourself from this whirlpool of destruction, for the demons and perīs who guard me will wake and seize you."

'But love's arrow had struck me deep, and the girl, too, looked kindly on me. I could not go away. For some months I remained hidden in her house. We did not dare to let her mother know of our love. Sometimes the girl was very sad and fearful lest her mother should come to know. One day her father said to her: "Sweetheart, for some time I have noticed that your beauty is not what it was. How is this? Has sickness touched you? Tell me that I may seek a cure." Alas! there was now no way

of concealing the mingled delight and anguish of our love; from secret it became known. I was put in prison and the world grew dark to my rose, bereft of her lover.

'The perī-king ordered me to be burnt, and said: "Why have you, a man, done this perfidious thing in my house?" His demons and perīs collected ambar-wood and made a pile, and would have set me on it, when I remembered the word of life which the two perīs I had rescued had breathed into my ear, and I asked that my body might be rubbed with oil to release me the sooner from torture. This was allowed, and those two contrived to be the anointers. I was put into the fire and it was kept up for seven days and nights. By the will of the Great King it left no trace upon me. At the end of a week the perī-king ordered the ashes to be cast upon the dust-heap, and I was found alive and unharmed.

'Perīs who had seen Gul consumed by her love for me now interceded with the king, and said: "It is clear that your daughter's fortunes are bound up with his, for the fire has not hurt him. It is best to give him the girl, for they love one another. He is King of Wāq of Qāf, and you will find none better."

'To this the king agreed, and made formal marriage between Gul and me. You now know the price I paid for this faithless creature. O prince! remember our compact.'

'I remember,' said the prince; 'but tell me what brought Queen Gul to her present pass?'

'One night,' continued King Sinaubar, 'I was aroused by feeling Gul's hands and feet, deadly cold, against my body. I asked her where she had been to get so cold, and she said she had had to go out. Next morning, when I went to my stable I saw that two of my horses, Windfoot and Tiger, were thin and worn out. I reprimanded the groom and beat him. He asked where his fault lay, and said that every night my wife took one or other of these horses and rode away, and came back only just before dawn. A flame kindled in my heart, and I asked myself where she could go and what she could do. I told the groom to be silent, and when next Gul took a horse from the stable to saddle another quickly and bring it to me. That day I did not hunt, but stayed at home to follow the matter up. I lay down as usual at night and pretended to fall asleep. When I seemed safely off, Gul got up and went to the stable as her custom was. That night it was Tiger's turn. She rode off on him, and I took Windfoot and followed. With me went that dog you see, a faithful friend who never left me.

'When I came to the foot of those hills which lie outside the city I saw Gul dismount and go towards a house which some negroes have built there. Over against the door was a high seat, and on it lay a giant negro, before whom she salaamed. He got up and beat her till she was marked with weals, but she uttered no complaint. I was dumfounded, for once when I had struck her with a rose-stalk she had complained and fretted for three days! Then the negro said to her: "How now, ugly one and shaven head! Why are you so late, and why are you not wearing wedding garments?" She answered him: "That person did not go to sleep quickly, and he stayed at home all day, so that I was not able to adorn myself. I came as soon as I could." In a little while he called her to sit beside him; but this was more than I could bear. I lost control of myself and rushed upon him. He clutched my collar and we grappled in a death struggle. Suddenly she came behind me, caught my feet and threw me. While he held me on the ground, she drew out my own knife and gave it to him. I should have been killed but for that faithful dog which seized his throat and pulled him down and pinned him to the ground. Then I got up and despatched the wretch. There were four other negroes at the place; three I killed and the fourth got away, and has taken refuge beneath the throne of Mihr-afrūz, daughter of King Quimūs. I took Gul back to my palace, and from that time till now I have treated her as a dog is treated, and I have cared for my dog as though it were my wife. Now you know what the rose did to the cypress; and now you must keep compact with me.'

'I shall keep my word,' said the prince; 'but may a little water be taken to the roof so that I may make my last ablution?'

To this request the king consented. The prince mounted to the roof, and, getting into a corner, struck his fire-steel and burned one of the Sīmurgh's feathers in the flame. Straightway it appeared, and by the majesty of its presence made the city quake. It took the prince on its back and soared away to the zenith.

After a time King Sinaubar said: ‘That young man is a long time on the roof; go and bring him here.’ But there was no sign of the prince upon the roof; only, far away in the sky, the Sīmurgh was seen carrying him off. When the king heard of his escape he thanked heaven that his hands were clean of this blood.

Up and up flew the Sīmurgh, till earth looked like an egg resting on an ocean. At length it dropped straight down to its own place, where the kind prince was welcomed by the young birds and most hospitably entertained. He told the whole story of the rose and the cypress, and then, laden with gifts which the Sīmurgh had gathered from cities far and near, he set his face for the Castle of Clashing Swords. The king-lion came out to meet him; he took the negro chief’s daughter – whose name was also Gul – in lawful marriage, and then marched with her and her possessions and her attendants to the Place of Gifts. Here they halted for a night, and at dawn said good-bye to the king-lion and set out for Jamīla’s country.

When the Lady Jamīla heard that Prince Almās was near, she went out, with many a fair handmaid, to give him loving reception. Their meeting was joyful, and they went together to the garden-palace. Jamīla summoned all her notables, and in their presence her marriage with the prince was solemnised. A few days later she entrusted her affairs to her vazīr, and made preparation to go with the prince to his own country. Before she started she restored all the men whom her sister, Latīfa, had bewitched, to their own forms, and received their blessings, and set them forward to their homes. The wicked Latīfa herself she left quite alone in her garden-house. When all was ready they set out with all her servants and slaves, all her treasure and goods, and journeyed at ease to the city of King Quimūs.

When King Quimūs heard of the approach of such a great company, he sent out his vazīr to give the prince honourable meeting, and to ask what had procured him the favour of the visit. The prince sent back word that he had no thought of war, but he wrote: ‘Learn and know, King Quimūs, that I am here to end the crimes of your insolent daughter who has tyrannously done to death many kings and kings’ sons, and has hung their heads on your citadel. I am here to give her the answer to her riddle.’ Later on he entered the city, beat boldly on the drums, and was conducted to the presence.

The king entreated him to have nothing to do with the riddle, for that no man had come out of it alive. ‘O king!’ replied the prince, ‘it is to answer it that I am here; I will not withdraw.’

Mihr-afrūz was told that one man more had staked his head on her question, and that this was one who said he knew the answer. At the request of the prince, all the officers and notables of the land were summoned to hear his reply to the princess. All assembled, and the king and his queen Gul-rukh, and the girl and the prince were there.

The prince addressed Mihr-afrūz: ‘What is the question you ask?’

‘What did the rose do to the cypress?’ she rejoined.

The prince smiled, and turned and addressed the assembly.

‘You who are experienced men and versed in affairs, did you ever know or hear and see anything of this matter?’

‘No!’ they answered, ‘no one has ever known or heard or seen aught about it; it is an empty fancy.’

‘From whom, then, did the princess hear of it? This empty fancy it is that has done many a servant of God to death!’

All saw the good sense of his words and showed their approval. Then he turned to the princess: ‘Tell us the truth, princess; who told you of this thing? I know it hair by hair, and in and out; but if I tell you what I know, who is there that can say I speak the truth? You must produce the person who can confirm my words.’

Her heart sank, for she feared that her long-kept secret was now to be noised abroad. But she said merely: ‘Explain yourself.’

‘I shall explain myself fully when you bring here the negro whom you hide beneath your throne.’

Here the king shouted in wonderment: ‘Explain yourself, young man! What negro does my daughter hide beneath her throne?’

‘That,’ said the prince, ‘you will see if you order to be brought here the negro who will be found beneath the throne of the princess.’

Messengers were forthwith despatched to the garden-house, and after awhile they returned bringing a negro whom they had discovered in a secret chamber underneath the throne of Mihr-afrūz, dressed in a dress of honour, and surrounded with luxury. The king was overwhelmed with astonishment, but the girl had taken heart again. She had had time to think that perhaps the prince had heard of the presence of the negro, and knew no more. So she said haughtily: ‘Prince! you have not answered my riddle.’

‘O most amazingly impudent person,’ cried he, ‘do you not yet repent?’

Then he turned to the people, and told them the whole story of the rose and the cypress, of King Sinaubar and Queen Gul. When he came to the killing of the negroes, he said to the one who stood before them: ‘You, too, were present.’

‘That is so; all happened as you have told it!’

There was great rejoicing in the court and all through the country over the solving of the riddle, and because now no more kings and princes would be killed. King Quimūs made over his daughter to Prince Almās, but the latter refused to marry her, and took her as his captive. He then asked that the heads should be removed from the battlements and given decent burial. This was done. He received from the king everything that belonged to Mihr-afrūz; her treasure of gold and silver; her costly stuffs and carpets; her household plenishing; her horses and camels; her servants and slaves.

Then he returned to his camp and sent for Dil-arām, who came bringing her goods and chattels, her gold and her jewels. When all was ready, Prince Almās set out for home, taking with him Jamīla, and Dil-arām and Gul, daughter of Taram-tāq, and the wicked Mihr-afrūz, and all the belongings of the four, packed on horses and camels, and in carts without number.

As he approached the borders of his father’s country word of his coming went before him, and all the city came forth to give him welcome. King Saman-lāl-pōsh – Jessamine, wearer of rubies – had so bewept the loss of his sons that he was now blind. When the prince had kissed his feet and received his blessing, he took from a casket a little collyrium of Solomon, which the Sīmurgh had given him, and which reveals the hidden things of earth, and rubbed it on his father’s eyes. Light came, and the king saw his son.

Mihr-afrūz was brought before the king, and the prince said: ‘This is the murderer of your sons; do with her as you will.’ The king fancied that the prince might care for the girl’s beauty, and replied: ‘You have humbled her; do with her as you will.’

Upon this the prince sent for four swift and strong horses, and had the negro bound to each one of them; then each was driven to one of the four quarters, and he tore in pieces like muslin.

This frightened Mihr-afrūz horribly, for she thought the same thing might be done to herself. She cried out to the prince: ‘O Prince Almās! what is hardest to get is most valued. Up till now I have been subject to no man, and no man had had my love. The many kings and kings’ sons who have died at my hands have died because it was their fate to die like this. In this matter I have not sinned. That was their fate from eternity; and from the beginning it was predestined that my fate should be bound up with yours.’

The prince gave ear to the argument from preordainment, and as she was a very lovely maiden he took her too in lawful marriage. She and Jamīla set up house together, and Dil-arām and Gul set up theirs; and the prince passed the rest of his life with the four in perfect happiness, and in pleasant and sociable entertainment.

Now has been told what the rose did to the cypress.

Finished, finished, finished!

BALL-CARRIER AND THE BAD ONE

Far, far in the forest there were two little huts, and in each of them lived a man who was a famous hunter, his wife, and three or four children. Now the children were forbidden to play more than a short distance from the door, as it was known that, away on the other side of the wood near the great river, there dwelt a witch who had a magic ball that she used as a means of stealing children.

Her plan was a very simple one, and had never yet failed. When she wanted a child she just flung her ball in the direction of the child's home, and however far off it might be, the ball was sure to reach it. Then, as soon as the child saw it, the ball would begin rolling slowly back to the witch, just keeping a little ahead of the child, so that he always thought that he could catch it the next minute. But he never did, and, what was more, his parents never saw him again.

Of course you must not suppose that all the fathers and mothers who had lost children made no attempts to find them, but the forest was so large, and the witch was so cunning in knowing exactly where they were going to search, that it was very easy for her to keep out of the way. Besides, there was always the chance that the children might have been eaten by wolves, of which large herds roamed about in winter.

One day the old witch happened to want a little boy, so she threw her ball in the direction of the hunters' huts. A child was standing outside, shooting at a mark with his bow and arrows, but the moment he saw the ball, which was made of glass whose blues and greens and whites, all frosted over, kept changing one into the other, he flung down his bow, and stooped to pick the ball up. But as he did so it began to roll very gently downhill. The boy could not let it roll away, when it was so close to him, so he gave chase. The ball seemed always within his grasp, yet he could never catch it; it went quicker and quicker, and the boy grew more and more excited. That time he almost touched it – no, he missed it by a hair's breadth! Now, surely, if he gave a spring he could get in front of it! He sprang forward, tripped and fell, and found himself in the witch's house!

'Welcome! welcome! grandson!' said she; 'get up and rest yourself, for you have had a long walk, and I am sure you must be tired!' So the boy sat down, and ate some food which she gave him in a bowl. It was quite different from anything he had tasted before, and he thought it was delicious. When he had eaten up every bit, the witch asked him if he had ever fasted.

'No,' replied the boy, 'at least I have been obliged to sometimes, but never if there was any food to be had.'

'You will have to fast if you want the spirits to make you strong and wise, and the sooner you begin the better.'

'Very well,' said the boy, 'what do I do first?'

'Lie down on those buffalo skins by the door of the hut,' answered she; and the boy lay down, and the squirrels and little bears and the birds came and talked to him.

At the end of ten days the old woman came to him with a bowl of the same food that he had eaten before.

'Get up, my grandson, you have fasted long enough. Have the good spirits visited you, and granted you the strength and wisdom that you desire?'

'Some of them have come, and have given me a portion of both,' answered the boy, 'but many have stayed away from me.'

'Then,' said she, 'you must fast ten days more.'

So the boy lay down again on the buffalo skins, and fasted for ten days, and at the end of that time he turned his face to the wall, and fasted for twenty days longer. At length the witch called to him, and said:

'Come and eat something, my grandson.' At the sound of her voice the boy got up and ate the food she gave him. When he had finished every scrap she spoke as before: 'Tell me, my grandson, have not the good spirits visited you all these many days that you have fasted?'

'Not all, grandmother,' answered he; 'there are still some who keep away from me and say that I have not fasted long enough.'

'Then you must fast again,' replied the old woman, 'and go on fasting till you receive the gifts of *all* the good spirits. Not one must be missing.'

The boy said nothing, but lay down for the third time on the buffalo skins, and fasted for twenty days more. And at the end of that time the witch thought he was dead, his face was so white and his body so still. But when she had fed him out of the bowl he grew stronger, and soon was able to sit up.

'You have fasted a long time,' said she, 'longer than anyone ever fasted before. Surely the good spirits must be satisfied *now*?'

'Yes, grandmother,' answered the boy, 'they have all come, and have given me their gifts.'

This pleased the old woman so much that she brought him another basin of food, and while he was eating it she talked to him, and this is what she said: 'Far away, on the other side of the great river, is the home of the Bad One. In his house is much gold, and what is more precious even than the gold, a little bridge, which lengthens out when the Bad One waves his hand, so that there is no river or sea that he cannot cross. Now I want that bridge and some of the gold for myself, and that is the reason that I have stolen so many boys by means of my ball. I have tried to teach them how to gain the gifts of the good spirits, but none of them would fast long enough, and at last I had to send them away to perform simple, easy little tasks. But you have been strong and faithful, and you can do this thing if you listen to what I tell you! When you reach the river tie this ball to your foot, and it will take you across – you cannot manage it in any other way. But do not be afraid; trust to the ball, and you will be quite safe!'

The boy took the ball and put it in a bag. Then he made himself a club and a bow, and some arrows which would fly further than anyone else's arrows, because of the strength the good spirits had given him. They had also bestowed on him the power of changing his shape, and had increased the quickness of his eyes and ears so that nothing escaped him. And in some way or other they made him understand that if he needed more help they would give it to him.

When all these things were ready the boy bade farewell to the witch and set out. He walked through the forest for several days without seeing anyone but his friends the squirrels and the bears and the birds, but though he stopped and spoke to them all, he was careful not to let them know where he was going.

At last, after many days, he came to the river, and beyond it he noticed a small hut standing on a hill which he guessed to be the home of the Bad One. But the stream flowed so quickly that he could not see how he was ever to cross it, and in order to test how swift the current really was, he broke a branch from a tree and threw it in. It seemed hardly to touch the water before it was carried away, and even his magic sight could not follow it. He could not help feeling frightened, but he hated giving up anything that he had once undertaken, and, fastening the ball on his right foot, he ventured on the river. To his surprise he was able to stand up; then a panic seized him, and he scrambled up the bank again. In a minute or two he plucked up courage to go a little further into the river, but again its width frightened him, and a second time he turned back. However, he felt rather ashamed of his cowardice, as it was quite clear that his ball *could* support him, and on his third trial he got safely to the other side.

Once there he replaced the ball in the bag, and looked carefully round him. The door of the Bad One's hut was open, and he saw that the ceiling was supported by great wooden beams, from which hung the bags of gold and the little bridge. He saw, too, the Bad One sitting in the midst of his treasures eating his dinner, and drinking something out of a horn. It was plain to the boy that he must invent some plan of getting the Bad One out of the way, or else he would never be able to steal the gold or the bridge.

What should he do? Give horrible shrieks as if he were in pain? But the Bad One would not care whether he were murdered or not! Call him by his name? But the Bad One was very cunning, and would suspect some trick. He must try something better than that! Then suddenly an idea came to him, and he gave a little jump of joy. 'Oh, how stupid of me not to think of that before!' said he, and he wished with all his might that the Bad One should become very hungry – so hungry that he could not wait a moment for fresh food to be brought to him. And sure enough at that instant the Bad One called out to his servant, 'You did not bring food that would satisfy a sparrow. Fetch some more at once, for I am perfectly starving.' Then, without giving the woman time to go to the larder, he got up from his chair, and rolled, staggering from hunger, towards the kitchen.

Directly the door had closed on the Bad One the boy ran in, pulled down a bag of gold from the beam, and tucked it under his left arm. Next he unhooked the little bridge and put it under his right. He did not try to escape, as most boys of his age would have done, for the wisdom put into his mind by the good spirits taught him that before he could reach the river and make use of the bridge the Bad One would have tracked him by his footsteps and been upon him. So, making himself very small and thin, he hid himself behind a pile of buffalo skins in the corner, first tearing a slit through one of them, so that he could see what was going on.

He had hardly settled himself when the servant entered the room, and, as she did so, the last bag of gold on the beam fell to the ground – for they had begun to fall directly the boy had taken the first one. She cried to her master that someone had stolen both the bag and the bridge, and the Bad One rushed in, mad with anger, and bade her go and seek for footsteps outside, that they might find out where the thief had gone. In a few minutes she returned, saying that he must be in the house, as she could not see any footsteps leading to the river, and began to move all the furniture in the room, without discovering Ball-Carrier.

'But he *must* be here somewhere,' she said to herself, examining for the second time the pile of buffalo skins; and Ball-Carrier, knowing that he could not possibly escape now, hastily wished that the Bad One should be unable to eat any more food at present.

'Ah, there is a slit in this one,' cried the servant, shaking the skin; 'and here he is.' And she pulled out Ball-Carrier, looking so lean and small that he would hardly have made a mouthful for a sparrow.

'Was it you who took my gold and bridge?' asked the Bad One.

'Yes,' answered Ball-Carrier, 'it was I who took them.'

The Bad One made a sign to the woman, who inquired where he had hidden them. He lifted his left arm where the gold was, and she picked up a knife and scraped his skin so that no gold should be left sticking to it.

'What have you done with the bridge?' said she. And he lifted his right arm, from which she took the bridge, while the Bad One looked on, well pleased. 'Be sure that he does not run away,' chuckled he. 'Boil some water, and get him ready for cooking, while I go and invite my friends the water-demons to the feast.'

The woman seized Ball-Carrier between her finger and thumb, and was going to carry him to the kitchen, when the boy spoke:

'I am very lean and small now,' he said, 'hardly worth the trouble of cooking; but if you were to keep me two days, and gave me plenty of food, I should get big and fat. As it is, your friends the water-demons would think you meant to laugh at them, when they found that *I* was the feast.'

'Well, perhaps you are right,' answered the Bad One; 'I will keep you for two days.' And he went out to visit the water-demons.

Meanwhile the servant, whose name was Lung-Woman, led him into a little shed, and chained him up to a ring in the wall. But food was given him every hour, and at the end of two days he was as fat and big as a Christmas turkey, and could hardly move his head from one side to the other.

'He will do now,' said the Bad One, who came constantly to see how he was getting on. 'I shall go and tell the water-demons that we expect them to dinner to-night. Put the kettle on the fire, but be sure on no account to taste the broth.'

Lung-Woman lost no time in obeying her orders. She built up the fire, which had got very low, filled the kettle with water, and passing a rope which hung from the ceiling through the handle, swung it over the flames. Then she brought in Ball-Carrier, who, seeing all these preparations, wished that as long as *he* was in the kettle the water might not really boil, though it would hiss and bubble, and also, that the spirits would turn the water into fat.

The kettle soon began to sing and bubble, and Ball-Carrier was lifted in. Very soon the fat which was to make the sauce rose to the surface, and Ball-Carrier, who was bobbing about from one side to the other, called out that Lung-Woman had better taste the broth, as he thought that some salt should be added to it. The servant knew quite well that her master had forbidden her to do anything of the kind, but when once the idea was put into her head, she found the smell from the kettle so delicious that she unhooked a long ladle from the wall and plunged it into the kettle.

'You will spill it all, if you stand so far off,' said the boy; 'why don't you come a little nearer?' And as she did so he cried to the spirits to give him back his usual size and strength and to make the water scalding hot. Then he gave the kettle a kick, which upset all the boiling water upon her, and jumping over her body he seized once more the gold and the bridge, picked up his club and bow and arrows, and after setting fire to the Bad One's hut, ran down to the river, which he crossed safely by the help of the bridge.

The hut, which was made of wood, was burned to the ground before the Bad One came back with a large crowd of water-demons. There was not a sign of anyone or anything, so he started for the river, where he saw Ball-Carrier sitting quietly on the other side. Then the Bad One knew what had happened, and after telling the water-demons that there would be no feast after all, he called to Ball-Carrier, who was eating an apple.

'I know your name now,' he said, 'and as you have ruined me, and I am not rich any more, will you take me as your servant?'

'Yes, I will, though you have tried to kill me,' answered Ball-Carrier, throwing the bridge across the water as he spoke. But when the Bad One was in the midst of the stream, the boy wished it to become small; and the Bad One fell into the water and was drowned, and the world was rid of him.

[U.S. Bureau of Ethnology.]

HOW BALL-CARRIER FINISHED HIS TASK

After Ball-Carrier had managed to drown the Bad One so that he could not do any more mischief, he forgot the way to his grandmother's house, and could not find it again, though he searched everywhere. During this time he wandered into many strange places, and had many adventures; and one day he came to a hut where a young girl lived. He was tired and hungry and begged her to let him in and rest, and he stayed a long while, and the girl became his wife. One morning he saw two children playing in front of the hut, and went out to speak to them. But as soon as they saw him they set up cries of horror and ran away. 'They are the children of my sister who has been on a long journey,' replied his wife, 'and now that she knows you are my husband she wants to kill you.'

'Oh, well, let her try,' replied Ball-Carrier. 'It is not the first time people have wished to do that. And here I am still, you see!'

'Be careful,' said the wife, 'she is very cunning.' But at this moment the sister-in-law came up.

'How do you do, brother-in-law? I have heard of you so often that I am very glad to meet you. I am told that you are more powerful than any man on earth, and as I am powerful too, let us try which is the strongest.'

'That will be delightful,' answered he. 'Suppose we begin with a short race, and then we will go on to other things.'

'That will suit me very well,' replied the woman, who was a witch. 'And let us agree that the one who wins shall have the right to kill the other.'

'Oh, certainly,' said Ball-Carrier; 'and I don't think we shall find a flatter course than the prairie itself – no one knows how many miles it stretches. We will run to the end and back again.'

This being settled they both made ready for the race, and Ball-Carrier silently begged the good spirits to help him, and not to let him fall into the hands of this wicked witch.

'When the sun touches the trunk of that tree we will start,' said she, as they both stood side by side. But with the first step Ball-Carrier changed himself into a wolf and for a long way kept ahead. Then gradually he heard her creeping up behind him, and soon she was in front. So Ball-Carrier took the shape of a pigeon and flew rapidly past her, but in a little while she was in front again, and the end of the prairie was in sight. 'A crow can fly faster than a pigeon,' thought he, and as a crow he managed to pass her and held his ground so long that he fancied she was quite beaten. The witch began to be afraid of it too, and putting out all her strength slipped past him. Next he put on the shape of a hawk, and in this form he reached the bounds of the prairie, he and the witch turning homewards at the moment.

Bird after bird he tried, but every time the witch gained on him and took the lead. At length the goal was in sight, and Ball-Carrier knew that unless he could get ahead now he would be killed before his own door, under the eyes of his wife. His eyes had grown dim from fatigue, his wings flapped wearily and hardly bore him along, while the witch seemed as fresh as ever. What bird was there whose flight was swifter than his? Would not the good spirits tell him? Ah, of course he knew; why had he not thought of it at first and spared himself all that fatigue? And the next instant a humming bird, dressed in green and blue, flashed past the woman and entered the house. The witch came panting up, furious at having lost the race which she felt certain of winning; and Ball-Carrier, who had by this time changed back into his own shape, struck her on the head and killed her.

For a long while Ball-Carrier was content to stay quietly at home with his wife and children, for he was tired of adventures, and only did enough hunting to supply the house with food. But one day he happened to eat some poisonous berries that he had found in the forest, and grew so ill that he felt he was going to die.

'When I am dead do not bury me in the earth,' he said, 'but put me over there, among that clump of trees.' So his wife and her three children watched by him as long as he was alive, and after he

was dead they took him up and laid the body on a platform of stakes which they had prepared in the grove. And as they returned weeping to the hut they caught a glimpse of the ball rolling away down the path back to the old grandmother. One of the sons sprang forward to stop it, for Ball-Carrier had often told them the tale of how it had helped him to cross the river, but it was too quick for him, and they had to content themselves with the war club and bow and arrows, which were put carefully away.

By-and-by some travellers came past, and the chief among them asked leave to marry Ball-Carrier's daughter. The mother said she must have a little time to think over it, as her daughter was still very young; so it was settled that the man should go away for a month with his friends, and then come back to see if the girl was willing.

Now ever since Ball-Carrier's death the family had been very poor, and often could not get enough to eat. One morning the girl, who had had no supper and no breakfast, wandered off to look for cranberries, and though she was quite near home was astonished at noticing a large hut, which certainly had not been there when last she had come that way. No one was about, so she ventured to peep in, and her surprise was increased at seeing, heaped up in one corner, a quantity of food of all sorts, while a little robin redbreast stood perched on a beam looking down upon her.

'It is my father, I am sure,' she cried; and the bird piped in answer.

From that day, whenever they wanted food they went to the hut, and though the robin could not speak, he would hop on their shoulders and let them feed him with the food they knew he liked best.

When the man came back he found the girl looking so much prettier and fatter than when he had left her, that he insisted that they should be married on the spot. And the mother, who did not know how to get rid of him, gave in.

The husband spent all his time in hunting, and the family had never had so much meat before; but the man, who had seen for himself how poor they were, noticed with amazement that they did not seem to care about it, or to be hungry. 'They must get food from somewhere,' he thought, and one morning, when he pretended to be going out to hunt, he hid in a thicket to watch. Very soon they all left the house together, and walked to the other hut, which the girl's husband saw for the first time, as it was hid in a hollow. He followed, and noticed that each one went up to the redbreast, and shook him by the claw; and he then entered boldly and shook the bird's claw too. The whole party afterwards sat down to dinner, after which they all returned to their own hut.

The next day the husband declared that he was very ill, and could not eat anything; but this was only a pretence so that he might get what he wanted. The family were all much distressed, and begged him to tell them what food he fancied.

'Oh! I could not eat any food,' he answered every time, and at each answer his voice grew fainter and fainter, till they thought he would die from weakness before their eyes.

'There must be *some* thing you could take, if you would only say what it is,' implored his wife.

'No, nothing, nothing; except, perhaps – but of course that is impossible!'

'No, I am sure it is not,' replied she; 'you shall have it, I promise – only tell me what it is.'

'I think – but I could not ask you to do such a thing. Leave me alone, and let me die quietly.'

'You shall *not* die,' cried the girl, who was very fond of her husband, for he did not beat her as most girls' husbands did. 'Whatever it is, I will manage to get it for you.'

'Well, then, I *think*, if I had that – redbreast, nicely roasted, I could eat a little bit of his wing!'

The wife started back in horror at such a request; but the man turned his face to the wall, and took no notice, as he thought it was better to leave her to herself for a little.

Weeping and wringing her hands, the girl went down to her mother. The brothers were very angry when they heard the story, and declared that, if any one were to die, it certainly should not be the robin. But all that night the man seemed getting weaker and weaker, and at last, quite early, the wife crept out, and stealing to the hut, killed the bird, and brought him home to her husband.

Just as she was going to cook it her two brothers came in. They cried out in horror at the sight, and, rushing out of the hut, declared they would never see her any more. And the poor girl, with a heavy heart, took the body of the redbreast up to her husband.

But directly she entered the room the man told her that he felt a great deal better, and that he would rather have a piece of bear's flesh, well boiled, than any bird, however tender. His wife felt very miserable to think that their beloved redbreast had been sacrificed for nothing, and begged him to try a little bit.

'You felt so sure that it would do you good before,' said she, 'that I can't help thinking it would quite cure you now.' But the man only flew into a rage, and flung the bird out of the window. Then he got up and went out.

Now all this while the ball had been rolling, rolling, rolling to the old grandmother's hut on the other side of the world, and directly it rolled into her hut she knew that her grandson must be dead. Without wasting any time she took a fox skin and tied it round her forehead, and fastened another round her waist, as witches always do when they leave their own homes. When she was ready she said to the ball: 'Go back the way you came, and lead me to my grandson.' And the ball started with the old woman following.

It was a long journey, even for a witch, but, like other things, it ended at last; and the old woman stood before the platform of stakes, where the body of Ball-Carrier lay.

'Wake up, my grandson, it is time to go home,' the witch said. And Ball-Carrier stepped down off the platform, and brought his club and bow and arrows out of the hut, and set out, for the other side of the world, behind the old woman.

When they reached the hut where Ball-Carrier had fasted so many years ago, the old woman spoke for the first time since they had started on their way.

'My grandson, did you ever manage to get that gold from the Bad One?'

'Yes, grandmother, I got it.'

'Where is it?' she asked.

'Here, in my left arm-pit,' answered he.

So she picked up a knife and scraped away all the gold which had stuck to his skin, and which had been sticking there ever since he first stole it. After she had finished she asked again:

'My grandson, did you manage to get that bridge from the Bad One?'

'Yes, grandmother, I got that too,' answered he.

'Where is it?' she asked, and Ball-Carrier lifted his right arm, and pointed to his arm-pit.

'Here is the bridge, grandmother,' said he.

Then the witch did something that nobody in the world could have guessed that she would do. First, she took the gold and said to Ball-Carrier:

'My grandson, this gold must be hidden in the earth, for if people think they can get it when they choose, they will become lazy and stupid. But if we take it and bury it in different parts of the world they will have to work for it if they want it, and then will only find a little at a time.' And as she spoke, she pulled up one of the poles of the hut, and Ball-Carrier saw that underneath was a deep, deep hole, which seemed to have no bottom. Down this hole she poured all the gold, and when it was out of sight it ran about all over the world, where people that dig hard sometimes find it. And after that was done she put the pole back again.

Next she lifted down a spade from a high shelf, where it had grown quite rusty, and dug a very small hole on the opposite side of the hut – very small, but very deep.

'Give me the bridge,' said she, 'for I am going to bury it here. If anyone was to get hold of it, and find that they could cross rivers and seas without any trouble, they would never discover how to cross them for themselves. I am a witch, and if I had chosen I could easily have cast my spells over the Bad One, and have made him deliver them to you the first day you came into my hut. But then you would never have fasted, and never have planned how to get what you wanted, and never have

known the good spirits, and would have been fat and idle to the end of your days. And now go; in that hut, which you can just see far away, live your father and mother, who are old people now, and need a son to hunt for them. You have done what you were set to do, and I need you no more.'

Then Ball-Carrier remembered his parents and went back to them.

[From *Bureau of Ethnology*. 'Indian Folklore.']

THE BUNYIP

Long, long ago, far, far away on the other side of the world, some young men left the camp where they lived to get some food for their wives and children. The sun was hot, but they liked heat, and as they went they ran races and tried who could hurl his spear the farthest, or was cleverest in throwing a strange weapon called a boomerang, which always returns to the thrower. They did not get on very fast at this rate, but presently they reached a flat place that in time of flood was full of water, but was now, in the height of summer, only a set of pools, each surrounded with a fringe of plants, with bulrushes standing in the inside of all. In that country the people are fond of the roots of bulrushes, which they think as good as onions, and one of the young men said that they had better collect some of the roots and carry them back to the camp. It did not take them long to weave the tops of the willows into a basket, and they were just going to wade into the water and pull up the bulrush roots when a youth suddenly called out: 'After all, why should we waste our time in doing work that is only fit for women and children? Let them come and get the roots for themselves; but we will fish for eels and anything else we can get.'

This delighted the rest of the party, and they all began to arrange their fishing lines, made from the bark of the yellow mimosa, and to search for bait for their hooks. Most of them used worms, but one, who had put a piece of raw meat for dinner into his skin wallet, cut off a little bit and baited his line with it, unseen by his companions.

For a long time they cast patiently, without receiving a single bite; the sun had grown low in the sky, and it seemed as if they would have to go home empty-handed, not even with a basket of roots to show; when the youth, who had baited his hook with raw meat, suddenly saw his line disappear under the water. Something, a very heavy fish he supposed, was pulling so hard that he could hardly keep his feet, and for a few minutes it seemed either as if he must let go or be dragged into the pool. He cried to his friends to help him, and at last, trembling with fright at what they were going to see, they managed between them to land on the bank a creature that was neither a calf nor a seal, but something of both, with a long, broad tail. They looked at each other with horror, cold shivers running down their spines; for though they had never beheld it, there was not a man amongst them who did not know what it was – the cub of the awful Bunyip!

All of a sudden the silence was broken by a low wail, answered by another from the other side of the pool, as the mother rose up from her den and came towards them, rage flashing from her horrible yellow eyes. 'Let it go! let it go!' whispered the young men to each other; but the captor declared that he had caught it, and was going to keep it. 'He had promised his sweetheart,' he said, 'that he would bring back enough meat for her father's house to feast on for three days, and though they could not eat the little Bunyip, her brothers and sisters should have it to play with.' So, flinging his spear at the mother to keep her back, he threw the little Bunyip on to his shoulders, and set out for the camp, never heeding the poor mother's cries of distress.

By this time it was getting near sunset, and the plain was in shadow, though the tops of the mountains were still quite bright. The youths had all ceased to be afraid, when they were startled by a low rushing sound behind them, and, looking round, saw that the pool was slowly rising, and the spot where they had landed the Bunyip was quite covered. 'What could it be?' they asked one of another; 'there was not a cloud in the sky, yet the water had risen higher already than they had ever known it do before.' For an instant they stood watching as if they were frozen, then they turned and ran with all their might, the man with the Bunyip running faster than all. When he reached a high peak overlooking all the plain he stopped to take breath, and turned to see if he was safe yet. Safe! why only the tops of the trees remained above that sea of water, and these were fast disappearing. They must run fast indeed if they were to escape. So on they flew, scarcely feeling the ground as they went, till they flung themselves on the ground before the holes scooped out of the earth where

they had all been born. The old men were sitting in front, the children were playing, and the women chattering together, when the little Bunyip fell into their midst, and there was scarcely a child among them who did not know that something terrible was upon them. 'The water! the water!' gasped one of the young men; and there it was, slowly but steadily mounting the ridge itself. Parents and children clung together, as if by that means they could drive back the advancing flood; and the youth who had caused all this terrible catastrophe, seized his sweetheart, and cried: 'I will climb with you to the top of that tree, and there no waters can reach us.' But, as he spoke, something cold touched him, and quickly he glanced down at his feet. Then with a shudder he saw that they were feet no longer, but bird's claws. He looked at the girl he was clasping, and beheld a great black bird standing at his side; he turned to his friends, but a flock of great awkward flapping creatures stood in their place. He put up his hands to cover his face, but they were no more hands, only the ends of wings; and when he tried to speak, a noise such as he had never heard before seemed to come from his throat, which had suddenly become narrow and slender. Already the water had risen to his waist, and he found himself sitting easily upon it, while its surface reflected back the image of a black swan, one of many.

Never again did the swans become men; but they are still different from other swans, for in the night-time those who listen can hear them talk in a language that is certainly not swan's language; and there are even sounds of laughing and talking, unlike any noise made by the swans whom we know.

The little Bunyip was carried home by its mother, and after that the waters sank back to their own channels. The side of the pool where she lives is always shunned by everyone, as nobody knows when she may suddenly put out her head and draw him into her mighty jaws. But people say that underneath the black waters of the pool she has a house filled with beautiful things, such as mortals who dwell on the earth have no idea of. Though how they know I cannot tell you, as nobody has ever seen it.

[From *Journal of Anthropological Institute*.]

FATHER GRUMBLER

Once upon a time there lived a man who had nearly as many children as there were sparrows in the garden. He had to work very hard all day to get them enough to eat, and was often tired and cross, and abused everything and everybody, so that people called him 'Father Grumbler.'

By-and-by he grew weary of always working, and on Sundays he lay a long while in bed, instead of going to church. Then after a time he found it dull to sit so many hours by himself, thinking of nothing but how to pay the rent that was owing, and as the tavern across the road looked bright and cheerful, he walked in one day and sat down with his friends. 'It was just to chase away Care,' he said; but when he came out, hours and hours after, Care came out with him.

Father Grumbler entered his house feeling more dismal than when he left it, for he knew that he had wasted both his time and money.

'I will go and see the Holy Man in the cave near the well,' he said to himself, 'and perhaps he can tell me why all the luck is for other people, and only misfortunes happen to me.' And he set out at once for the cave.

It was a long way off, and the road led over mountains and through valleys; but at last he reached the cave where the Holy Man dwelt, and knocked at the door.

'Who is there?' asked a voice from within.

'It is I, Holy Man, Father Grumbler, you know, who has as many children as sparrows in the garden.'

'Well, and what is it that you want?'

'I want to know why other people have all the luck, and only misfortunes happen to me!'

The Holy Man did not answer, but went into an inner cave, from which he came out bearing something in his hand. 'Do you see this basket?' said he. 'It is a magical basket, and if you are hungry you have only got to say: "Little basket, little basket, do your duty," and you will eat the best dinner you ever had in your life. But when you have had enough, be sure you don't forget to cry out: "That will do for to-day." Oh! – and one thing more – you need not show it to everybody and declare that I have given it to you. Do you understand?'

Father Grumbler was always accustomed to think of himself as so unlucky that he did not know whether the Holy Man was not playing a trick upon him; but he took the basket without being polite enough to say either 'Thank you,' or 'Good-morning,' and went away. However, he only waited till he was out of sight of the cave before he stooped down and whispered: 'Little basket, little basket, do your duty.'

Now the basket had a lid, so that he could not see what was inside, but he heard quite clearly strange noises, as if a sort of scuffling was going on. Then the lid burst open, and a quantity of delicious little white rolls came tumbling out one after the other, followed by a stream of small fishes all ready cooked. What a quantity there were to be sure! The whole road was covered with them, and the banks on each side were beginning to disappear. Father Grumbler felt quite frightened at the torrent, but at last he remembered what the Holy Man had told him, and cried at the top of his voice: 'Enough! enough! That will do for to-day!' And the lid of the basket closed with a snap.

Father Grumbler sighed with relief and happiness as he looked around him, and sitting down on a heap of stones, he ate till he could eat no more. Trout, salmon, turbot, soles, and a hundred other fishes whose names he did not know, lay boiled, fried, and grilled within reach of his hands. As the Holy Man had said, he had never eaten such a dinner; still, when he had done, he shook his head, and grumbled; 'Yes, there is plenty to eat, of course, but it only makes me thirsty, and there is not a drop to drink anywhere.'

Yet, somehow, he could never tell why, he looked up and saw the tavern in front of him, which he thought was miles, and miles, and miles away.

'Bring the best wine you have got, and two glasses, good mother,' he said as he entered, 'and if you are fond of fish there is enough here to feed the house. Only there is no need to chatter about it all over the place. You understand? Eh?' And without waiting for an answer he whispered to the basket: 'Little basket, little basket, do your duty.' The innkeeper and his wife thought that their customer had gone suddenly mad, and watched him closely, ready to spring on him if he became violent; but both instinctively jumped backwards, nearly into the fire, as rolls and fishes of every kind came tumbling out of the basket, covering the tables and chairs and the floor, and even overflowing into the street.

'Be quick, be quick, and pick them up,' cried the man. 'And if these are not enough, there are plenty more to be had for the asking.'

The innkeeper and his wife did not need telling twice. Down they went on their knees and gathered up everything they could lay hands on. But busy though they seemed, they found time to whisper to each other:

'If we can only get hold of that basket it will make our fortune!'

So they began by inviting Father Grumbler to sit down to the table, and brought out the best wine in the cellar, hoping it might loosen his tongue. But Father Grumbler was wiser than they gave him credit for, and though they tried in all manner of ways to find out who had given him the basket, he put them off, and kept his secret to himself. Unluckily, though he did not *speak*, he did drink, and it was not long before he fell fast asleep. Then the woman fetched from her kitchen a basket, so like the magic one that no one, without looking very closely, could tell the difference, and placed it in Father Grumbler's hand, while she hid the other carefully away.

It was dinner time when the man awoke, and, jumping up hastily, he set out for home, where he found all the children gathered round a basin of thin soup, and pushing their wooden bowls forward, hoping to have the first spoonful. Their father burst into the midst of them, bearing his basket, and crying:

'Don't spoil your appetites, children, with that stuff. Do you see this basket? Well, I have only got to say, "Little basket, little basket, do your duty," and you will see what will happen. Now you shall say it instead of me, for a treat.'

The children, wondering and delighted, repeated the words, but nothing happened. Again and again they tried, but the basket was only a basket, with a few scales of fish sticking to the bottom, for the innkeeper's wife had taken it to market the day before.

'What is the matter with the thing?' cried the father at last, snatching the basket from them, and turning it all over, grumbling and swearing while he did so, under the eyes of his astonished wife and children, who did not know whether to cry or to laugh.

'It certainly smells of fish,' he said, and then he stopped, for a sudden thought had come to him.

'Suppose it is not mine at all; supposing – Ah, the scoundrels!'

And without listening to his wife and children, who were frightened at his strange conduct and begged him to stay at home, he ran across to the tavern and burst open the door.

'Can I do anything for you, Father Grumbler?' asked the innkeeper's wife in her softest voice.

'I have taken the wrong basket – by mistake, of course,' said he. 'Here is yours, will you give me back my own?'

'Why, what are you talking about?' answered she. 'You can see for yourself that there is no basket here.'

And though Father Grumbler *did* look, it was quite true that none was to be seen.

'Come, take a glass to warm you this cold day,' said the woman, who was anxious to keep him in a good temper, and as this was an invitation Father Grumbler never refused, he tossed it off and left the house.

He took the road that led to the Holy Man's cave, and made such haste that it was not long before he reached it.

'Who is there?' said a voice in answer to his knock.

'It is me, it is me, Holy Man. You know quite well. Father Grumbler, who has as many children as sparrows in the garden.'

'But, my good man, it was only yesterday that I gave you a handsome present.'

'Yes, Holy Man, and here it is. But something has happened, I don't know what, and it won't work any more.'

'Well, put it down. I will go and see if I can find anything for you.'

In a few minutes the Holy Man returned with a cock under his arm.

'Listen to me,' he said, 'whenever you want money, you have only to say: "Show me what you can do, cock," and you will see some wonderful things. But, remember, it is not necessary to let all the world into the secret.'

'Oh no, Holy Man, I am not so foolish as that.'

'Nor to tell everybody that I gave it to you,' went on the Holy Man. 'I have not got these treasures by the dozen.'

And without waiting for an answer he shut the door.

As before, the distance seemed to have wonderfully shortened, and in a moment the tavern rose up in front of Father Grumbler. Without stopping to think, he went straight in, and found the innkeeper's wife in the kitchen making a cake.

'Where have you come from, with that fine red cock in your basket,' asked she, for the bird was so big that the lid would not shut down properly.

'Oh, I come from a place where they don't keep these things by the dozen,' he replied, sitting down in front of the table.

The woman said no more, but set before him a bottle of his favourite wine, and soon he began to wish to display his prize.

'Show me what you can do, cock,' cried he. And the cock stood up and flapped his wings three times, crowing 'coquerico' with a voice like a trumpet, and at each crow there fell from his beak golden drops, and diamonds as large as peas.

This time Father Grumbler did not invite the innkeeper's wife to pick up his treasures, but put his own hat under the cock's beak, so as to catch everything he let fall; and he did not see the husband and wife exchanging glances with each other which said, 'That would be a splendid cock to put with our basket.'

'Have another glass of wine?' suggested the innkeeper, when they had finished admiring the beauty of the cock, for they pretended not to have seen the gold or the diamonds. And Father Grumbler, nothing loth, drank one glass after another, till his head fell forward on the table, and once more he was sound asleep. Then the woman gently coaxed the cock from the basket and carried it off to her own poultry yard, from which she brought one exactly like it, and popped it in its place.

Night was falling when the man awoke, and throwing proudly some grains of gold on the table to pay for the wine he had drunk, he tucked the cock comfortably into his basket and set out for home.

His wife and all the children were waiting for him at the door, and as soon as she caught sight of him she broke out:

'You are a nice man to go wasting your time and your money drinking in that tavern, and leaving us to starve! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?'

'You don't know what you are talking of,' he answered. 'Money? Why, I have gold and diamonds now, as much as I want. Do you see that cock? Well, you have only to say to him, "Show what you can do, cock," and something splendid will happen.'

Neither wife nor children were inclined to put much faith in him after their last experience; however, they thought it was worth trying, and did as he told them. The cock flew round the room like a mad thing, and crowed till their heads nearly split with the noise; but no gold or diamonds dropped on the brick floor – not the tiniest grain of either.

Father Grumbler stared in silence for an instant, and then he began to swear so loudly that even his family, accustomed as they were to his language, wondered at him.

At last he grew a little quieter, but remained as puzzled as ever.

'Can I have forgotten the words? But I *know* that was what he said! And I saw the diamonds with my own eyes!' Then suddenly he seized the cock, shut it into the basket, and rushed out of the house.

His heavy wooden shoes clattered as he ran along the road, and he made such haste that the stars were only just beginning to come out when he reached the cave of the Holy Man.

'Who is that knocking?' asked a voice from within.

'It is me! It is me! Holy Man! you know! Father – '

'But, my good fellow, you really should give some one else a chance. This is the third time you have been – and at such an hour, too!'

'Oh, yes, Holy Man, I know it is very late, but you will forgive me! It is your cock – there is something the matter. It is like the basket. Look!'

'*That* my cock? *That* my basket? Somebody has played you a trick, my good man!'

'A trick?' repeated Father Grumbler, who began to understand what had happened. 'Then it must have been those two – '

'I warned you not to show them to anybody,' said the Holy Man. 'You deserve – but I will give you one more chance.' And, turning, he unhooked something from the wall.

'When you wish to dust your own jacket or those of your friends,' he said, 'you have only got to say, "Flack, flick, switch, be quick," and you will see what happens. That is all I have to tell you.' And, smiling to himself, the Holy Man pushed Father Grumbler out of the cave.

'Ah, I understand now,' muttered the good man, as he took the road home; 'but I think I have got you two rascals!' and he hurried on to the tavern with his basket under his arm, and the cock and the switch both inside.

'Good evening, friends!' he said, as he entered the inn. 'I am very hungry, and should be glad if you would roast this cock for me as soon as possible. *This* cock and no other – mind what I say,' he went on. 'Oh, and another thing! You can light the fire with this basket. When you have done that I will show you something I have in my bag,' and, as he spoke, he tried to imitate the smile that the Holy Man had given *him*.

These directions made the innkeeper's wife very uneasy. However, she said nothing, and began to roast the cock, while her husband did his best to make the man sleepy with wine, but all in vain.

After dinner, which he did not eat without grumbling, for the cock was very tough, the man struck his hand on the table, and said: 'Now listen to me. Go and fetch my cock and my basket, at once. Do you hear?'

'Your cock, and your basket, Father Grumbler? But you have just – '

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.