VOLTAIRE

VOLTAIRE'S ROMANCES

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Voltaire's Romances, Complete in One Volume:

Содержание

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Voltaire wrote what the people thought, and consequently his writings were universally read. He wittily ridiculed established abuses, and keenly satirized venerable absurdities. For this he was consigned to the Bastile, and this distinction served to increase his popularity and extend his influence. He was thus enabled to cope successfully with the papal hierarchy, and laugh at the murmurs of the Vatican. The struggle commenced in his youth, and continued till his death. It was a struggle of light against darkness – of freedom against tyranny; and it ended in the triumph of truth over error and of toleration over bigotry.

Educated by the Jesuits, he early learned their methods, and his great ability enabled him to circumvent their wiles. The ceremonious presentation of his tragedy of *Mahomet*[1] to Pope

[1] This work, says Prof. F.C. Schlosser in his *History of the Eighteenth Century*, (vol. ii, p. 122.) "was sent to the pope, and very favorably received by him; although it could not possibly escape the notice of the pope, that the piece was indebted for its chief effect upon the public, to the vehement expressions against religious fanaticism which it contained. The pope felt himself flattered by the transmission of the *Mahomet*, and

Benedict XIV., is an example of his daring audacity; – his success with the "head of the church" shows his intellectual superiority – whilst the gracious reply of "his Holiness" fitly illustrates the pontiff's vanity. From priest to bishop, from cardinal to pope, all felt his intellectual power and all dreaded his merciless satire.

He was famous as poet, dramatist, historian, and philosopher. An experienced courtier and polished writer, he gracefully and politely conquered his clerical opponents, and with courteous irony overthrew his literary critics. From his demeanor you could not judge of his thoughts or intentions, and while listening to his compliments, you instinctively dreaded his sarcasms. But venture to approach this grand seigneur, this keen man of the world, this intellectual giant, and plead in favor of human justice – appeal to his magnanimity and love of toleration – and you then had no cause to question his earnestness, no reason to doubt his sincerity. His blood boiled, says Macaulay,[2] at the sight of cruelty and injustice, and in an age of religious persecution, judicial torture, and arbitrary imprisonment, he made manful war, with every faculty he possessed, on what he considered as abuses; and on many signal occasions, placed himself gallantly between the powerful and the oppressed. "When an innocent man was broken on the wheel at Toulouse, when a youth, guilty only of an indiscretion, was beheaded at Abbéville, when a brave officer,

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notified his approbation, of which Voltaire cunningly enough availed himself, for the advantage of his new principles."

[2] *Critical and Historical Essays*, page 553.

borne down by public injustice, was dragged, with a gag in his mouth, to die on the Place de Grêve, a voice instantly went forth from the banks of Lake Leman, which made itself heard from Moscow to Cadiz, and which sentenced the unjust judges to the contempt and detestation of all Europe."

"None can read these stories of the horrible religious bigotry of the day," says Alex. A. Knox, in *The Nineteenth Century*,[3] "without feeling for Voltaire reverence and respect."

The following extract from the above named Review will explain the religious cruelty to which Macaulay refers:

> "Jean Calas, a Protestant, kept a small shop in Toulouse. He had a scape-grace of a son, Marc Antoine by name, who hanged himself in his father's shop. The poor father and mother were up stairs at the time, at supper, in company with the second son. The evidence was so clear that a coroner's jury at a public-house would not have turned round upon it. The priests and the priest party got hold of it, and turned it into a religious crime. The Protestant, or Huguenot parents were charged with murdering their son for fear he should turn Catholic. The body was taken to the Hôtel de Ville, and then escorted by priests to the cathedral. The religious orders – White Penitents and others – held solemn ceremonies for the repose of Marc Antoine's soul. The churches resounded with the exhortations of the priests, informing the people what evidence was required to procure the condemnation of the Calas, and directing

[3] Vol. iv, No. 39.

them to come forward as witnesses. Upon such assumptions as these horrible people could devise, the poor old man was stretched till his limbs were torn out of the sockets. He was then submitted to the *question extraordinaire*. This consisted in pouring water into his mouth from a horn till his body was swollen to twice its size. The man had been drowned a hundred times over, but he was still alive. He was then carried to the scaffold and his limbs were broken with an iron bar, and he was left for two hours to die. He did not then die, and so the executioner strangled him at last; but he died without confessing his crime. The man was innocent; he had no confession to make. The poor creature by his unutterable agony thus saved the lives of his wife and family, all as innocent as himself. Two daughters were thrust into a convent: a son shammed conversion to Catholicism and was released. The servant escaped into a convent. The property of the family was confiscated. The poor mother slipped away unseen. Finally, another son, who had been apprenticed to a watchmaker of Nismes, escaped to Geneva. This is a picture of France in the eighteenth century.

"Voltaire took poor young Calas into his family. He tried at once to interest the Cardinal de Bernis, the Duc de Choiseul, and others in this horrible story. He found for the widow a comfortable retreat at Paris; he employed the best lawyers he could find to give practical form to the business; he sent the daughters to join the mother. He paid all the expenses out of his own pocket. He reached the Chancellor; he made his appeal to Europe. He employed a

clever young advocate M. Elie de Beaumont, to conduct the cast. The Queen of England, Frederick the Great, Catharine of Russia, were induced by Voltaire to help the Calas.

"The case of the Sirvens was well-nigh as bad as that of the Calas. Sirven lived with his wife and three daughters, all Protestants, near Toulouse. The story is so illustrative of the France of the eighteenth century, and of what Voltaire was about, that it deserves a few lines. Sirven's housekeeper, a Roman Catholic, with the assent of the Bishop of Castres, spirited away the youngest daughter, and placed her in a convent of the Black Ladies with a view to her conversion. She returned to her parents in a state of insanity, her body covered with the marks of the whip. She never recovered from the cruelties she had endured at the convent. One day, when her father was absent on his professional duties, she threw herself into a well, at the bottom of which she was found drowned. It was obvious to the authorities that the parents had murdered their child because she wished to become a Roman Catholic. They most wisely did not appear, and were sentenced to be hanged when they could be caught. In their flight the married daughter gave premature birth to a child; and Madame Sirven died in despair. It took Voltaire ten years to get this abominable sentence reversed, and to turn wrong into right.

"A Protestant gentleman, M. Espinasse, had been condemned to the galleys for life and his estate confiscated because he had given supper and lodging to a Protestant clergyman. He served twenty-three years; but in 1763 Voltaire obtained his release, and ultimately obtained back

for the family a portion of their property.

"The Chevalier de la Barre was another victim. Some person or persons unknown had hacked with a knife a wooden crucifix which stood on a bridge at Abbéville over the Somme. The same night a crucifix on one of the cemeteries was bespattered with mud. The bishop of the place set to work to stir up excitement, praying for punishment 'on those who had rendered themselves worthy of the severest punishment known to the world's law.' Young De la Barre was arrested. The evidence against him was that he, with certain companions, had been known to pass within thirty yards of a procession bearing the Sacrament without taking off their hats. It was further proved in evidence that he and his friends had sung certain objectionable songs, and that not only some novels had been found in his rooms, but also two small volumes of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. On this evidence he was sentenced to be subjected to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary; to have his tongue torn out by the roots with pincers of iron, to have his right hand cut off at the door of the principal church at Abbéville, to be drawn in a cart to the market-place, and there to be burned to death by a slow fire. The sentence was mitigated so far that he was allowed to be beheaded before he was burned. This sentence was carried out on the 1st of July, 1766. These are samples of what was occurring in France. Was there not enough to rouse indignation to fever-heat?

"When one reads such stories, even at this distance of time, he understands the French Revolution and Voltaire."

In all his writings Voltaire claimed to be religious, and was as ready to oppose with his sarcasms the agnostic or atheist, as the catholic. In speaking of Tully as a doubter, he makes Pococurante exclaim: "I once had some liking for his philosophical works; but when I found he doubted of everything, I thought I knew as much as himself, and had no need of a guide to learn ignorance."

But while Voltaire was a Theist – as Lord Brougham says,[4] "without any hesitation or any intermission, a Theist" – and was a firm believer in the existence of a Creator and ruler of the universe, – he was also an avowed opponent of Catholicism; and when not engaged in the production of works which have added dignity to the literature of France, his life was passed in open warfare with the church of Rome. To this church he was as sincerely opposed as Martin Luther, and although his methods of attack and opposition differed entirely from that of the great German reformer, who shall say that his efforts have not proved even more successful? Macaulay has shown[5] that no Catholic nation has become Protestant since the period of the Reformation; while on the other hand, no nation once Protestant, has returned to Catholicism. Each party has retained its own territory, and the only gain has been in favor of religious freedom. The sincere and earnest appeals of Luther, which convulsed Germany, produced but little or no effect on the versatile mind of France. But the brilliant writings of Voltaire

[4] *Men of Letters of the time of George III.*

[5] *Critical & Historical Essays*, p. 553.

were welcomed by his countrymen, and have not been without their influence on French civilization. And although France has not been claimed as a protestant nation, yet freethinkers have there attained great power and influence, whilst Germany, once the stronghold of Protestantism, is now the chosen and hospitable home of freethought.

Voltaire in his day was an acknowledged leader of public opinion. His thoughts engrossed the attention of the world. "Whole nations," says Quinet,[6] "emulously repeat every syllable that falls from his pen: " and the lapse of time has but confirmed the verdict of his cotemporaries, that of all the great reformers, his writings are the most useful to mankind.

"If we judge of men by what they have *done*" says Lamartine,[7] "then Voltaire is incontestably the greatest writer of modern Europe. No one has caused, through the powerful influence of his genius alone, and the perseverance of his will, so great a commotion in the minds of men; his pen aroused a world, and has shaken a far mightier empire than that of Charlemagne, the European empire of a theocracy. His genius was not *force* but *light*. Heaven had destined him not to destroy but to illuminate, and wherever he trod light followed him, for reason (which is *light*) had destined him to be first her poet, then her apostle, and lastly her idol."

At seventeen years of age Voltaire wrote *Œdipus*, at eighty-

[6] *Lectures on the Romish Church.*

[7] *History of the Girondists*, vol. i, p. 152.

three he wrote *Irène*. During the intervening years he enriched the world of thought with seventy volumes of irresistible humor – of brilliant and caustic wit, – in truth, a mine of literary gems undimmed with mediocrity's prosy dullness. In fact, it was this quality of humor and mirth that made Voltaire's writings so distasteful to his opponents – so welcome to mankind. Other writers, who went far beyond Voltaire, were not considered dangerous, because they were never read. They were sincere and learned, but tedious and austere. Their disbelief was condoned by its metaphysical obscurity – their skepticism was redeemed by its unmitigated dullness. But with Voltaire the case was very different. His writings were read and appreciated by old or young, grave or gay, sage or sophist, prince or peasant. To answer him was impossible – to abuse him was thought commendable.

"Napoleon, during fifteen years," says Lamartine,[8] "paid writers who degrade, vilify, and deny the genius of Voltaire; he hated his name as *might* must ever *hate intellect*; and so long as men yet cherished the memory of Voltaire – so long he felt his position was not secure." The church voluntarily joined in this work of aspersion. To the priests it was no hardship, – it was a welcome task – a labor of love. They hated the writings they could not answer – the genius they could not destroy.

"The church," says Macaulay,[9] "made no defense, except by acts of power. Censures were pronounced; books were

[8] *History of the Girondists*, vol. i, p. 152.

[9] *Critical and Historical Essays*, p. 553.

seized; insults were offered to the remains of infidel writers but no Bossuet, no Pascal, came forth to encounter Voltaire. There appeared not a single defense of the catholic doctrine which produced any considerable effect, or which is even now remembered."

"His element," says Schlosser,[10] "was the lighter kind of poetry, and his fugitive verses, his sharp wit, his bold opinions, produced effects in his time, like flashes of lightning, for they illuminated at the same time the night of Jesuitical superstition, and struck and shivered to pieces the majestic towers and gothic domes of the middle ages.

"The so-called fugitive pieces alone, if he had written nothing else, would have been sufficient to secure Voltaire's immortality; for in these he is altogether in his sphere; he has only to think of the people whom he calls exclusively the world, and he can direct every spark of his genius to the production of instantaneous effect, delight his reader by his fancy, and surprise him by his wit.

"The chief aim of each one of Voltaire's small novels is the overthrow and refutation of some ruling opinion, and this object is admirably attained by the story itself, and by weaving in sarcasms, because this rendered all reply and refutation impossible. Seriousness could never have reached the readers of these novels, or would immediately weary them; and every attempt to rival Voltaire in a strain of pleasantry and satire, would have been a folly.

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[10] *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i, pp. 263-269.

"In *Zadig* he shows palpably and obviously how entirely devoid of reason and taste the usual moral and edifying considerations upon the way of Providence, upon a God who thinks, counsels, acts, and conducts the affairs of the world as a man, must appear to the bold scoffer. Voltaire, we would say, confined and limited the doctrine of an immediate guidance of human affairs by the hand of Divine Providence, wholly to the church and to the faith of the people; he roofed it out of higher life and out of science by means of his dreadful ridicule. By his narratives he made that obvious, which indeed is easily made palpable enough, because it is undeniable, that the theory of a palpable guidance of human affairs by an ever-manifesting interposing Providence, may be just as easily refuted as proved by history and experience. In *Memnon* is shown, in an admirable manner, how the multitude are enamoured of their prudence, and laugh at nature and its feelings. In the *Ingenu*, the witty man yields himself up wholly to his humor and to accident, and brings forth a rich abundance of wit and flashes of genius with respect to the most various subjects."

"Voltaire had the genius of criticism," says Lamartine,[11] "that power of raillery which withers all it overthrows. He had made human nature laugh at itself, had felled it low in order to raise it, had laid bare before it all errors, prejudices, iniquities, and crimes of ignorance; he had urged it to rebellion against consecrated ideas, not by the ideal but by sheer contempt. Destiny gave him

[11] *History of the Girondists*, vol. i, pp. 15, 154, 155, 156.

eighty years of existence, that he might slowly decompose the decayed age; he had the time to combat against time, and when he fell he was the conqueror.

"Such were the elements of the revolution in religious matters. Voltaire laid hold of them, at the precise moment, with that *coup d'œil* of strong instinct which sees clearer than genius itself. To an age young, fickle, and unreflecting, he did not present reason under the form of an austere philosophy, but beneath the guise of a facile freedom of ideas, and a scoffing irony. He would not have succeeded in making his age think, he did succeed in making it smile. He never attacked it in front, nor with his face uncovered, in order that he might not set the laws in array against him; and to avoid the fate of Servetus, he, the modern Æsop, attacked under imaginary names the tyranny which he wished, to destroy. He concealed his hate in history, the drama, light poetry, romance, and even in jests. His genius was a perpetual allusion, comprehending all his age, but impossible to be seized on by his enemies. He struck, but his hand was concealed. Yet the struggle of a man against a priesthood, an individual against an institution, a life against eighteen centuries, was by no means destitute of courage.

"There is an incalculable power of conviction and devotion of idea, in the daring of one against all. To brave at once, with no other power than individual reason, with no other support than conscience, human consideration, that cowardice of the mind, masked under respect for error; to dare the hatred of earth and

the anathema of heaven, is the heroism of the writer. Voltaire was not a martyr in his body, but he consented to be one in his name, and devoted it during his life and after his death. He condemned his own ashes to be thrown to the winds, and not to have either an asylum or a tomb. He resigned himself even to lengthened exile in exchange for the liberty of a free combat. He isolated himself voluntarily from men, in order that their too close contact might not interfere with his thoughts.

"At eighty years of age, feeble, and feeling his death nearly approaching, he several times made his preparations hastily, in order to go and struggle still, and die at a distance from the roof of his old age. The unwearied activity of his mind was never checked for a moment. He carried his gaiety even to genius, and under that pleasantry of his whole life we may perceive a grave power of perseverance and conviction. Such was the character of this great man. The enlightened serenity of his mind concealed the depth of its workings: under the joke and laugh his constancy of purpose was hardly sufficiently recognized. He suffered all with a laugh, and was willing to endure all, even in absence from his native land, in his lost friendships, in his refused fame, in his blighted name, in his memory accursed. He took all – bore all – for the sake of the triumph of the independence of human reason."

The manners and customs of the eighteenth century differ widely from those of the nineteenth. Certain words and phrases that were then in common use are now wisely suppressed.

Lecky says very truly,[12] that "a Roman of the age of Pliny, an Englishman of the age of Henry VIII., and an Englishman of our own day, would all agree in regarding humanity as a virtue, and its opposite as a vice; but their judgments of the acts which are compatible with a humane disposition would be widely different."

The enemies of freethought have taken advantage of this fact – this change in modes of expression – this refinement in literature – to defame the memory of Voltaire. They denounce *La Pucelle* or *The Maid of Orleans* for language and expressions, formerly popular in court circles and sanctioned by the nobility and ladies of fashion, but which, happily, have now become obsolete. They judge the license of the eighteenth century – the license and profligacy which accompany ecclesiasticism and monasticism – by nineteenth century standards. If the same rule were applied to other writers, none would have cause to complain. But, unfortunately, an exception has been unjustly made in favor of the language employed by historians like Moses and Solomon, by poets like Shakspeare and Pope, by theologians like Rabelais and Swift, by novelists like Fielding and Smollett. In short, immodest language cannot be redeemed by wit, by learning, or by pretended revelation, and should always and invariably be suppressed; but writers should be judged by the manners and customs of their age, and not by modern standards. There are many passages in the old classic authors that were formerly

[12] *History of European Morals*, vol. i, page iii.

considered in good taste, which cannot now be commended. Still, the gold outweighs the dross, and we should remember the laxity and licentiousness of the times in which those books were written.

The romances and tales in this publication have been selected for their graceful and sprightly wit, as well as genial humor and keen satire; and further, because they are free from even a suspicion of impropriety. They each teach a lesson of wisdom and morality – they teach courage, fortitude and resignation, and, what is perhaps of even greater importance, they also tend to free the mind from the baneful errors of priestcraft and superstition.

"The most interesting adventures are related to no sort of purpose," says Voltaire in one of his essays, "if they do not convey, at the same time, a description of manners. And even this is but a frivolous amusement, if that description does not contribute to inspire us with sentiments of virtue. I dare assert that, from the *Henriade* to *Zara* and down to the Chinese tragedy of *The Orphan of Tchao* such was always the aim I proposed, and the principle that conducted me. In the history of the age of Louis the fourteenth, I have celebrated my king and country, without flattering either. In these endeavors have I spent above forty years. But here is the advice of a Chinese philosopher, whose writings are translated into Spanish, by the famous *Navarette*:

"'If you write a book, show it only to your friends. Dread the public and your brother authors. They will embitter your expressions, misrepresent your meaning, and impute to you, what

you never thought of. Calumny, which has an hundred mouths, will open them against you; and truth, which is silent, will remain with you.'"

It has been said of Voltaire that he was "not only just, but generous in his dealings with others. With open purse and open heart, helpful to all who approached him. Collini, his secretary, said he was a miser *only of his time*, which was always usefully employed. But we are also told that there was one person to whom he could not even deny his time – it was Mademoiselle de Varicourt —*Belle-et-Bonne*– whom he had adopted, and who was afterward married to the Marquis de Villette. "She could never disturb him," says A.A. Knox, "not even when he was giving the last touches to *Irène*. If he were in a passion with anybody else, and she appeared in the room, he was at once gentle and calm. There is something very affecting in the old man's love and tenderness for this young girl."

After the success of the French Revolution, to which the writings of Voltaire had so greatly contributed, when the National Assembly ordered the removal of his remains to the Pantheon, to repose between the ashes of Descartes and Mirabeau – when France honored herself in honoring the great philosopher – it was *Belle-et-Bonne*– in the full splendor of her majestic beauty – her heart overflowing with tenderness and gratitude – her eyes dimmed with pathetic tears – who placed with loving hands on the bier of her noble benefactor the wreath of filial affection – the grandest tribute that humanity can bestow.

PETER ECKLER.

New York, Jan. 28, 1885.

TAURUS

The object and significance of ancient Tauric and Phallic worship have been clearly set forth by Dupuis, Payne Knight, and other learned authors, and we have, even at the present day, a survival of the ancient faith, in the Mayday festivals of India and Britain, which were originally instituted to celebrate the entrance of the sun into the zodiacal sign Taurus, at the vernal equinox, when the god Osiris was worshiped in Egypt under the form of a bull called Apis.

"The general devotion of the ancients to the worship of the BULL," says the Rev. Mr. Maurice in his learned work on the *Antiquities of India*, "I have had frequent occasion to remark, and more particularly in the Indian history, by their devotion to it at that period 'when the Bull with his horns opened the Vernal year.' I observed that all nations seem anciently to have vied with each other in celebrating that blissful epoch; and that the moment the sun entered the sign Taurus, were displayed the signals of triumph and the incentives to passion; that memorials of the universal festivity indulged at that season, are to be found in the records and customs of people otherwise the most opposite in manners and most remote in situation;… that the Apis, or Sacred Bull of Egypt, was only the symbol of the sun in the vigor of vernal youth; and that the Bull of Japan, breaking with his horn the mundane egg, was evidently connected

with the same bovine species of superstition, founded on the mixture of astronomy and mythology."

"In many of the most ancient temples or India," says Godfrey Higgins in the *Anacalypsis*, "the Bull, as an object of adoration makes a most conspicuous figure. A gigantic image of one protrudes from the front of the temple of *the Great Creator*, called in the language of the country, Jaggernaut, in Orissa. This is the Bull of the Zodiac, – the emblem of the sun when the equinox took place in the first degree of the sign of the Zodiac, Taurus. In consequence of the precession of the equinoxes, the sun at the vernal equinox left Taurus, and took place in Aries, which it has left also for a great number of years, and it now takes place in Aquarius. Thus it keeps receding about one degree in seventy-two years, and about a whole *sign* in 2,160 years. M. Dupuis has demonstrated that the labors of Hercules are nothing but a history of the passage of the sun through the signs of the zodiac; and that Hercules is the sun in Aries or the Ram, Bacchus the sun in Taurus or the Bull. The adoration of the Bull of the zodiac is to be met with everywhere throughout the world, in the most opposite climes. The examples of it are innumerable and incontrovertable; they admit of no dispute.

"It appears from the book or history of the Exod, that it was on the leaving of Egypt that Moses changed the object of adoration from Taurus to Aries. It appears that the change took place on the mountain of *Sin*, or Nisi, or Bacchus, which was evidently its old name before Moses arrived there. The Israelites were punished for adhering to

the old worship, that of the Calf, in opposition to the paschal Lamb, which Moses had substituted – 'the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world,' – in place of the Bull or Calf which took away the sins of the world.

"The planets were in later times all called by names appropriated to the days of the week, which were dedicated by astrologers to the gods who were typified by the Bull: Monday to the horned *Isis*; Tuesday to Mercury, the same as Hermes and Osiris; Wednesday to Woden, Fo, Buddha, and Surya; Thursday or Thor-day, or *Tur*, or Taurus, or Bull-day, to Jove or Jupiter, who, as a Bull, stole Europa; Friday was dedicated to Venus, Ashteroth or beeve-horned Astarte; Saturday to Saturn, identified by Mr. Faber with Moloch and the *Centaur Cronus* or Taschter; Sunday to the Sun, everywhere typified by Taurus. All these, I think, must have taken their names after the entrance of the Sun into Taurus; and before this date all history and even mythology fails us.

"In ancient collections we often meet with a person in the prime of life killing a young bull. He is generally accompanied with a number of astrological emblems. This Bull was the mediatorial Mithra, slain to make atonement for, and to take away the sins of the world. This was the God Bull, to whom the prayers were addressed which we find in Bryant and Faber, and in which he is expressly called the Mediator. This is the Bull of Persia, which Sir. William Jones and Mr. Faber identify with Buddha or Mahabad. The sacrifice of the Bull, which taketh away the sins of the world, was succeeded by the sacrifice of the Agni or of Fire,

by our Indians in, comparatively speaking, modern times; it was closely connected with the two principles spoken of above. While the sun was in Taurus, the Bull was slain as the vicarious sacrifice; when it got into Aries, the Ram or Lamb was substituted.

"M. Dupuis observes, that the lamb was a symbol or mark of initiation into the Christian mysteries, a sort of proof of admission into the societies of the initiated of the lamb, like the private sign of the free-masons. It follows, then, that the mysteries of Christ are the mysteries of the Lamb, and that the mysteries of the Lamb are mysteries of the same nature as those of the Mithraitic Bull to which they succeeded by the effect of the precession of the equinoxes, which substituted the slain *lamb* for the slain *bull*." – E.

THE WHITE BULL

CHAPTER I.
HOW THE PRINCESS AMASIDIA MEETS A BULL

The princess Amasidia, daughter of Amasis, King of Tanis in Egypt, took a walk upon the highway of Peluaium with the ladies of her train. She was sunk in deep melancholy. Tears gushed from her beautiful eyes. The cause of her grief was known, as well as the fears she entertained lest that grief should displease the king, her father. The old man, Mambres, ancient magician and eunuch of the Pharoahs, was beside her, and seldom left her. He was present at her birth. He had educated her, and taught her all that a fair princess was allowed to know of the sciences of Egypt. The mind of Amasidia equaled her beauty. Her sensibility and tenderness rivaled the charms of her person; and it was this sensibility which cost her so many tears.

The princess was twenty-four years old, the magician, Mambres, about thirteen hundred. It was he, as every one knows, who had that famous dispute with Moses, in which the victory was so long doubtful between these two profound philosophers. If Mambres yielded, it was owing to the visible protection of

the celestial powers, who favored his rival. It required gods to overcome Mambres!

Amasis made him superintendent of his daughter's household, and he acquitted himself in this office with his usual prudence. His compassion was excited by the sighs of the beautiful Amasidia.

"O, my lover!" said she to herself, "my young, my dear lover! O, greatest of conquerors, most accomplished, most beautiful of men! Almost seven years hast thou disappeared from the world. What God hath snatched thee from thy tender Amasidia? Thou art not dead. The wise Egyptian prophets confess this. But thou art dead to me. I am alone in the world. To me it is a desert. By what extraordinary prodigy hast thou abandoned thy throne and thy mistress? – thy throne, which was the first in the world – however, that is a matter of small consequence; but to abandon me, who adores thee! O, my dear Ne – "

She was going on.

"Tremble to pronounce that fatal name," said Mambres, the ancient eunuch and magician of the Pharoahs. "You would perhaps be discovered by some of the ladies of your court. They are all very much devoted to you, and all fair ladies certainly make it a merit to serve the noble passions of fair princesses. But there may be one among them indiscreet, and even treacherous. You know that your father, although he loves you, has sworn to put you to death, should you pronounce the terrible name always ready to escape your lips. This law is severe; but you

have not been educated in Egyptian wisdom to be ignorant of the government of the tongue. Remember that Hippocrates, one of our greatest gods, has always his finger upon his mouth."

The beautiful Amasidia wept, and was silent.

As she pensively advanced toward the banks of the Nile she perceived at a distance, under a thicket watered by the river, an old woman in a tattered gray garment, seated on a hillock. This old woman had beside her a she-ass, a dog, and a he-goat. Opposite to her was a serpent, which was not like the common serpents; for its eyes were mild, its physiognomy noble and engaging, while its skin shone with the liveliest and brightest colors. A huge fish, half immersed in the river, was not the least astonishing figure in the group; and on a neighboring tree were perched a raven and a pigeon. All these creatures seemed to carry on a very animated conversation.

"Alas!" said the princess in a low tone, "these animals undoubtedly speak of their loves, and it is not so much as allowed me to mention the name of mine."

The old woman held in her hand a slender steel chain a hundred fathoms long, to which was fastened a bull who fed in the meadow. This bull was white, perfectly well-made, plump, and at the same time agile, which is a thing seldom to be found. He was indeed the most beautiful specimen that was ever seen of his kind. Neither the bull of Pasiphæ, nor that in whose shape Jupiter appeared when he carried off Europa, could be compared to this noble animal. The charming young heifer into which Isis

was changed, would have scarce been worthy of his company.

As soon as the bull saw the princess he ran toward her with the swiftness of a young Arabian horse, who pricks up his ears and flies over the plains and rivers of the ancient Saana to approach the lovely consort whose image reigns in his heart. The old woman used her utmost efforts to restrain the bull. The serpent wanted to terrify him by its hissing. The dog followed him and bit his beautiful limbs. The she-ass crossed his way and kicked him to make him return. The great fish remounted the Nile and, darting himself out of the water, threatened to devour him. The he-goat remained immovable, apparently struck with fear. The raven fluttered round his head as if it wanted to tear out his eyes. The pigeon alone accompanied him from curiosity, and applauded him by a sweet murmur.

So extraordinary a sight threw Mambres into serious reflections. In the meanwhile, the white bull, dragging after him his chain and the old woman, had already reached the princess, who was struck with astonishment and fear. He threw himself at her feet. He kissed them. He shed tears. He looked upon her with eyes in which there was a strange mixture of grief and joy. He dared not to low, lest he should terrify the beautiful Amasidia. He could not speak. A weak use of the voice, granted by Heaven to certain animals, was denied him; but all his actions were eloquent. The princess was delighted by him. She perceived that a trifling amusement could suspend for some moments even the most poignant grief.

"Here," said she, "is a most amiable animal. I could wish much to have him in my stable."

At these words he bull bent himself on his knees and kissed the ground.

"He understands me," cried the princess. "He shows me that he wants to be mine. Ah, heavenly magician! ah, divine eunuch! Give me this consolation. Purchase this beautiful bovine. Settle the price with the old woman, to whom he no doubt belongs. This animal must be mine. Do not refuse me this innocent comfort."

All the ladies joined their requests to the entreaties of the princess. Mambres yielded to them, and immediately went to speak to the old woman.

CHAPTER II.
HOW THE WISE MAMBRES, FORMERLY MAGICIAN OF PHAROAH, KNEW AGAIN THE OLD WOMAN, AND WAS KNOWN BY HER

"Madam," said Mambres to her, "you know that ladies, and particularly princesses, have need of amusement. The daughter of the king is distractedly fond of your bull. I beg that you will sell him to us. You shall be paid in ready money."

"Sir," answered the old woman, "this precious animal does not belong to me. I am charged, together with all the beasts which you see, to keep him with care, to watch all his motions, and to give an exact account of them. God forbid that I should ever have any inclination to sell this invaluable animal."

Mambres, upon this discourse, began to have a confused remembrance of something which he could not yet properly distinguish. He eyed the old woman in the gray cloak with greater attention.

"Respectable lady," said he to her, "I either mistake, or I have seen you formerly."

"I make no mistake, sir," replied the old woman. "I have seen you seven hundred years ago, in a journey which I made from

Syria into Egypt some months after the destruction of Troy, when Hiram the second reigned at Tyre, and Nephel Keres in ancient Egypt."

"Ah! madam," cried the old man, "you are the remarkable witch of Endor."

"And you, sir," said the sorceress, embracing him, "are the great Mambres of Egypt."

"O, unforeseen meeting! memorable day! eternal decrees!" said Mambres. "It certainly is not without permission of the universal providence that we meet again in this meadow upon the banks of the Nile near the noble city of Tanis. What, is it indeed you," continued Mambres, "who are so famous upon the banks of your little Jordan, and the first person in the world for raising apparitions?"

"What, is it you, sir," replied Miss Endor, "who are so famous for changing rods into serpents, the day into darkness, and rivers into blood?"

"Yes, madam, but my great age has in part deprived me of my knowledge and power. I am ignorant from whence you have this beautiful bull, and who these animals are that, together with you, watch round him."

The old woman, recollecting herself, raised her eyes to heaven, and then replied.

"My dear Mambres. We are of the same profession, but it is expressly forbidden me to tell you who this bull is. I can satisfy you with regard to the other animals. You will easily know them

by the marks which characterize them. The serpent is that which persuaded Eve to eat an apple, and to make her husband partake of it. The ass, that which spoke to your contemporary, Balaam, in a remarkable discourse. The fish, which always carries its head above water, is that which swallowed Jonah a few years ago. The dog is he who followed Raphael and the young Tobit in their journey to Ragusa in Media, in the time of the great Salamanzar. This goat is he who expiates all the sins of your nation. The raven and the pigeon, those which were in the ark of Noah. Great event! universal catastrophe! of which almost all the world is still ignorant. You are now informed. But of the bull you can know nothing."

Mambres, having listened with respect, said:

"The Eternal, O illustrious witch! reveals and conceals what he thinks proper. All these animals who, together with you, are entrusted with the custody of the white bull, are only known to your generous and agreeable nation, which is itself unknown to almost all the world. The miracles which you and yours, I and mine, have performed, shall one day be a great subject of doubt and scandal to inquisitive philosophers. But happily these miracles shall find belief with the devout sages, who shall prove submissive to the enlightened in one corner of the world; and this is all that is necessary."

As he spoke these words, the princess pulled him by the sleeve, and said to him, —

"Mambres, will you not buy my bull?"

The magician, plunged into a deep reverie, made no reply, and Amasidia poured forth her tears.

She then addressed herself to the old woman.

"My good woman," said she, "I conjure you, by all you hold most dear in the world, by your father, by your mother, by your nurse, who are certainly still alive, to sell me not only your bull, but likewise your pigeon, which seems very much attached to him.

"As for the other animals, I do not want them; but I shall catch the vapors if you do not sell me this charming bull, who will be all the happiness of my life."

The old woman respectfully kissed the fringe of her gauze robe, and replied, —

"Princess, my bull is not to be sold. Your illustrious magician is acquainted with this. All that I can do for your service is, to permit him to feed every day near your palace. You may caress him, give him biscuits, and make him dance about at your pleasure; but he must always be under the eyes of all these animals who accompany me, and who are charged with the keeping of him. If he does not endeavor to escape from them, they will prove peaceable; but if he attempt once more to break his chain, as he did upon seeing you, woe be unto him. I would not then answer for his life. This large fish, which you see, will certainly swallow him, and keep him longer than *three* days in his belly; or this serpent, who appears to you so mild, will give him a mortal sting."

The white bull, who understood perfectly the old woman's conversation, but was unable to speak, humbly accepted all the proposals. He laid himself down at her feet; he lowed softly, and, looking tenderly at Amasidia, seemed to say to her,

"Come and see me sometimes upon the lawn."

The serpent now took up the conversation:

"Princess," said he, "I advise you to act implicitly, as mademoiselle of Endor has told you."

The she-ass likewise put in her word, and was of the opinion of the serpent.

Amasidia was afflicted that this serpent and this ass should speak so well; while a beautiful bull, who had such noble and tender sentiments, was unable to express them.

"Alas," said she, in a low voice, "nothing is more common at court. One sees there every day fine lords who cannot converse, and contemptible wretches who speak with assurance."

"This serpent," said Mambres, "is not a contemptible wretch. He is perhaps the personage of the greatest importance."

The day now declined, and the princess was obliged to return home, after having promised to come back next day at the same hour. Her ladies of the palace were astonished, and understood nothing of what they had seen or heard. Mambres made reflections. The princess recollecting that the serpent called the old woman Miss, concluded at random that she was still unmarried, and felt some affliction that such was also her own condition. Respectable affliction! which she concealed, however,

with as much care as the name of her lover.

CHAPTER III.
HOW THE BEAUTIFUL AMASIDIA HAD A SECRET CONVERSATION WITH A BEAUTIFUL SERPENT

The beautiful princess recommended secrecy to her ladies with regard to what they had seen. They all promised it, and kept their promise for a whole day.

We may believe that Amasidia slept little that night. An inexplicable charm continually recalled the idea of her beautiful bull. As soon, therefore, as she was at freedom with her wise Mambres, she said to him:

"O, sage! this animal turns my head."

"He employs mine very much," said Mambres. "I see plainly that this bovine is very much superior to those of his species. I see that there is a great mystery, and I suspect a fatal event. Your father Amasis is suspicious and violent; and this affair requires that you conduct yourself with the greatest precaution."

"Ah!" said the princess, "I have too much curiosity to be prudent. It is the only sentiment which can unite in my heart with that which preys upon me on account of the lover I have lost. Can I not know who this white bull is that gives me such strange disquiet?"

Mambres replied, —

"I have already confessed to you, frankly, that my knowledge declines in proportion as my age advances; but I mistake much if the serpent is not informed of what you are so very desirous of knowing. He does not want sense. He expresses himself with propriety. He has been long accustomed to interfere in the affairs of the ladies."

"Ah! undoubtedly," said Amasidia, "this is the beautiful serpent of Egypt, who, by fixing his tail into his mouth, becomes the emblem of eternity; who enlightens the world when he opens his eyes, and darkens it when he shuts them?"

"No, Miss."

"It is then the serpent of Æsculapius?"

"Still less."

"It is perhaps Jupiter under the figure of a serpent?"

"Not at all."

"Ah, now I see, I see. It is the rod which you formerly changed into a serpent?"

"No, indeed, it is not; but all these serpents are of the same family. This one has a very high character in his own country. He passes there for the most extraordinary serpent that was ever seen. Address yourself to him. However, I warn you it is a dangerous undertaking. Were I in your place, I would hardly trouble myself either with the bull, the she-ass, the he-goat, the serpent, the fish, the raven, or the pigeon. But passion hurries you on; and all I can do is to pity you, and tremble."

The princess conjured him to procure her a tête-à-tête with

the serpent. Mambres, who was obliging, consented, and making profound reflections, he went and communicated to the witch in so insinuating a manner the whim of the princess, that the old woman told him Amasidia might lay her commands upon her; that the serpent was perfectly well bred, and so polite to the ladies, that he wished for nothing more than to oblige them, and would not fail to keep the princess's appointment.

The ancient magician returned to inform the princess of this good news; but he still dreaded some misfortune, and made reflections.

"You desire to speak with the serpent, mademoiselle. This you may accomplish whenever your highness thinks proper. But remember you must flatter him; for every animal has a great deal of self-love, and the serpent in particular. It is said he was formerly driven out of heaven for excessive pride."

"I have never heard of it," replied the princess.

"I believe it," said the old man.

He then informed her of all the reports which had been spread about this famous serpent.

"But, my dear princess, whatever singular adventures may have happened to him, you never can extort these secrets from him but by flattery. Having formerly deceived women, it is equitable that a woman in her turn should deceive him."

"I will do my utmost," said the princess; and departed with her maids of honor. The old woman was feeding the bull at a considerable distance.

Mambres left Amasidia to herself, and went and discoursed with the witch. One lady of honor chatted with the she-ass, the others amused themselves with the goat, the dog, the raven, and the pigeon. As for the large fish that frightened every body, he plunged himself into the Nile by order of the old woman.

The serpent then attended the beautiful Amasidia into the grove, where they had the following conversation.

SERPENT. – You cannot imagine, mademoiselle, how much I am flattered with the honor which your highness deigns to confer upon me.

PRINCESS. – Your great reputation, sir, the beauty of your countenance, and the brilliancy of your eyes, have emboldened me to seek for this conversation. I know by public report (if it be not false) that you were formerly a very great lord in the empyrean heaven.

SERPENT. – It is true, miss, I had there a very distinguished place. It is pretended I am a disgraced favorite. This is a report which once went abroad in India. The Brahmins were the first who gave a history of my adventures. And I doubt not but one day or other the poets of the north will make them the subject of an extravagant epic poem;[13] for in truth it is all that can be made of them. Yet I am not so much fallen, but that I have left in this globe a very extensive dominion. I might venture to assert that the whole earth belongs to me.

PRINCESS. – I believe it; for they tell me that your powers

[13] A prophetic reference by the serpent to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. – E.

of persuasion are irresistible, and to please is to reign.

SERPENT. – I feel, mademoiselle, while I behold and listen to you, that you have over me the same power which you ascribe to me over so many others.

PRINCESS. – You are, I believe, an amiable conqueror. It is said that your conquests among the fair sex have been numerous, and that you began with our common mother, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten.

SERPENT. – They do me injustice. She honored me with her confidence, and I gave her the best advice. I desired that she and her husband should eat heartily of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. I imagined in doing this that I should please the ruler of all things. It seemed to me that a tree so necessary to the human race was not planted to be entirely useless. Would the supreme being have wished to have been served by fools and idiots? Is not the mind formed for the acquisition of knowledge and for improvement? Is not the knowledge of good and evil necessary for doing the one and avoiding the other? I certainly merited their thanks.

PRINCESS. – Yet, they tell me that you have suffered for it. Probably it is since this period that so many ministers have been punished for giving good advice, and so many real philosophers and men of genius persecuted for their writings that were useful to mankind.

SERPENT. – It is my enemies who have told you these stories. They say that I am out of favor at court. But a proof that my

influence there has not declined, is their own confession that I entered into the council when it was in agitation to try the good man Job; and I was again called upon when the resolution was taken to deceive a certain petty king called Ahab. I alone was charged with this honorable commission.

PRINCESS. – Ah, sir! I do not believe that you are formed to deceive. But since you are always in the ministry, may I beg a favor of you? I hope so amiable a lord will not deny me.

SERPENT. – Mademoiselle, your requests are laws; name your commands.

PRINCESS. – I intreat that you will tell me who this white bull is, for whom I feel such extraordinary sentiments, which both affect and alarm me. I am told that you would deign to inform me.

SERPENT. – Curiosity is necessary to human nature, and especially to your amiable sex. Without it they would live in the most shameful ignorance. I have always satisfied, as far as lay in my power, the curiosity of the ladies. I am accused indeed of using this complaisance only to vex the ruler of the world. I swear to you, that I could propose nothing more agreeable to myself than to obey you; but the old woman must have informed you that the revealing of this secret will be attended with some danger to you.

PRINCESS. – Ah! it is that which makes me still more curious.

SERPENT. – In this I discover the sex to whom I have

formerly done service.

PRINCESS. – If you possess any feeling; if rational beings should mutually assist each other; if you have compassion for an unfortunate creature, do not refuse my request.

SERPENT. – You affect me. I must satisfy you; but do not interrupt me.

PRINCESS. – I promise you I will not.

SERPENT. – There was a young king, beautiful, charming, in love, beloved —

PRINCESS. – A young king! beautiful, charming, in love, beloved! And by whom? And who was this king? How old was he? What has become of him? Where is his kingdom? What is his name?

SERPENT. – See, I have scarce begun, and you have already interrupted me. Take care. If you have not more command over yourself, you are undone.

PRINCESS. – Ah, pardon me, sir. I will not repeat my indiscretion. Go on, I beseech you.

SERPENT. – This great king, the most valiant of men, victorious wherever he carried his arms, often dreamed when asleep, and forgot his dreams when awake. He wanted his magicians to remember and inform him what he had dreamed, otherwise he declared he would hang them; for that nothing was more equitable. It is now near seven years since he dreamed a fine dream, which he entirely forgot when he awoke; and a young Jew, full of experience, having revealed it to him, this amiable

king was immediately changed into an ox for —

PRINCESS. – Ah! it is my dear Neb —

She could not finish, she fainted away. Mambres, who listened at a distance, saw her fall, and believed her dead.

CHAPTER IV.
HOW THEY WANTED TO SACRIFICE THE BULL, AND EXORCISE THE PRINCESS

Mambres runs to her weeping. The serpent is affected. He, alas, cannot weep; but he hisses in a mournful tone. He cries out, "She is dead." The ass repeats, "She is dead." The raven tells it over again. All the other animals appeared afflicted, except the fish of Jonah, which has always been merciless. The lady of honor, the ladies of the court, arrive and tear their hair. The white bull, who fed at a distance and heard their cries, ran to the grove dragging the old woman after him, while his loud bellowings made the neighboring echoes resound. To no purpose did the ladies pour upon the expiring Amasidia their bottles of rose-water, of pink, of myrtle, of benzoin, of balm of Gilead, of amomum, of gilly-flower, of nutmeg, of ambergris. She had not as yet given the smallest signs of life. But as soon as she perceived that the beautiful white bull was beside her, she came to herself, more blooming, more beautiful and lively than ever. A thousand times did she kiss this charming animal, who languishingly leaned his head on her snowy bosom. She called him, "My master, my king, my dear, my life!" She throws her fair arms around his neck, which was whiter than the snow. The light

straw does not adhere more closely to the amber, the vine to the elm, nor the ivy to the oak. The sweet murmur of her sighs was heard. Her eyes were seen, now sparkling with a tender flame, and now obscured by those precious tears which love makes us shed.

We may easily judge into what astonishment the lady of honor and ladies of her train were thrown. As soon as they entered the palace, they related to their lovers this extraordinary adventure, and every one with different circumstances, which increased its singularity, and which always contributes to the variety of all histories.

No sooner was Amasis, king of Tanis, informed of these events, than his royal breast was inflamed with just indignation. Such was the wrath of Minos, when he understood that his daughter Pasiphæ lavished her tender favors upon the father of the Minotaur. Thus raged Juno, when she beheld Jupiter caressing the beautiful cow Io, daughter of the river Inachus. Following the dictates of passion, the stern Amasis imprisoned his unhappy daughter, the beautiful Amasidia, in her chamber and placed over her a guard of black eunuchs. He then assembled his privy council.

The grand magician presided there, but had no longer the same influence as formerly. All the ministers of state concluded that this white bull was a sorcerer. It was quite the contrary. He was bewitched. But in delicate affairs they are always mistaken at court.

It was carried by a great majority that the princess should be exorcised, and the old woman and the bull sacrificed.

The wise Mambres contradicted not the opinion of the king and council. The right of exorcising belonged to him. He could delay it under some plausible pretence. The god Apis had lately died at Memphis. A god ox dies just like another ox. And it was not allowed to exorcise any person in Egypt until a new ox was found to replace the deceased.

It was decreed in the council to wait until the nomination should be made of a new god at Memphis.

The good old man, Mambres, perceived to what danger his dear princess was exposed. He knew who her lover was. The syllables NEBU – , which had escaped her, laid open the whole mystery to the eyes of this sage.

The dynasty of Memphis belonged at that time to the Babylonians. They preserved this remainder of the conquests they had gained under the greatest king of the world, to whom Amasis was a mortal enemy. Mambres had occasion for all his wisdom to conduct himself properly in the midst of so many difficulties. If the king Amasis should discover the lover of his daughter, her death would be inevitable. He had sworn it. The great, the young, the beautiful king of whom she was enamored, had dethroned the king her father, and Amasis had only recovered his kingdom about seven years. From that time it was not known what had become of the adorable monarch – the conqueror and idol of the nations – the tender and generous

lover of the charming Amasidia. Sacrificing the white bull would eventually occasion the death of the beautiful princess.

DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.A STRANGE METAMORPHOSIS

In the preceding engraving the artist has pictured the "Cities of the Plain" in flames, ignited by a shower of "fire and brimstone out of heaven." Warned by an angel, Lot and his family are fleeing from the conflagration. The madame has, however, unfortunately changed her mind, and is seen returning toward the doomed locality. She dearly loves her home, and braves danger – even death – in its protection. Her husband and her children heartlessly forsake her. Lot does not look like the coward he is represented to have been, who basely offered to surrender his daughters to the horrible abuse of a Sodomite mob; and the daughters – innocent and beautiful – seem incapable of the depravity with which they are charged in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis.

The comical statement that Madame Lot was transformed into "a pillar of salt" for merely *looking back* toward her old home in Sodom, rests on bible authority, and is believed by all the world excepting intelligent clergymen, scientists, philosophers and reasonable people.

The assertion of Mambres, (page 15), that this estimable "pillar" has become "very sharp tasted," rests on the authority of certain eastern travelers who claim to have examined and tasted the saline remains of this unfortunate

female. But as this last claim is based on a French romance and not on Hebrew revelation, readers may be pardoned for receiving it with the greatest caution. Indeed, all that is absolutely necessary for even the orthodox to believe is that, "once upon a time," a Sodomite matron was chemically changed into pure chloride of sodium, and not that said sodium still retains its sharp and acrid flavor. – E.

What could Mambres do in such critical circumstances? He went, after the council had broken up, to find his dear foster daughter.

"My dear child," he says, "I will serve you; but I repeat it, they will behead you if ever you pronounce the name of your lover."

"Ah! what signifies my neck," replied the beautiful Amasidia, "if I cannot embrace that of Nebu – ? My father is a cruel man. He not only refuses to give me a charming prince whom I adore, but he declares war against him; and after he was conquered by my lover, he has found the secret of changing him into an ox. Did one ever see more frightful malice? If my father were not my father, I do not know what I should do to him."

"It was not your father who played him this cruel trick," said the wise Mambres. "It was a native of Palestine, one of our ancient enemies, an inhabitant of a little country comprehended in that crowd of kingdoms which your lover subdued in order to polish and refine them.

"Such metamorphoses must not surprise you. You know that formerly I performed more extraordinary. Nothing was at that

time more common than those changes which at present astonish philosophers. True history, which we have read together, informs us that Lycaon, king of Arcadia, was changed into a wolf; the beautiful Calista, his daughter, into a bear; Io, the daughter of Inachus, our venerable Isis, into a cow; Daphne into a laurel; Sirinx into a flute; the fair Edith, wife of Lot – the best and most affectionate husband and father ever known in the world – has she not become, in our neighborhood, a pillar of salt, very sharp tasted, which has preserved both her likeness and form, as the great men attest who have seen it? I was witness to this change in my youth. I saw seven powerful cities in the most dry and parched situation in the world, all at once transformed into a beautiful lake. In the early part of my life, the whole world was full of metamorphoses.

"In fine, madam, if examples can soothe your grief, remember that Venus changed Cerastes into an ox."

"I do not know," said the princess, "that examples comfort us. If my lover were dead, could I comfort myself by the idea that all men die?"

"Your pain may at least be alleviated," replied the sage; "and since your lover has become an ox, it is possible from an ox he may become a man. As for me, I should deserve to be changed into a tiger or a crocodile, if I did not employ the little power I have in the service of a princess worthy of the adoration of the world, – if I did not labor for the beautiful Amasidia, whom I have nursed upon my knees, and whom fatal destiny exposes to

such rude trials."

CHAPTER V.
HOW THE WISE MAMBRES CONDUCTED HIMSELF WISELY

The sage Mambres having said every thing he could to comfort the princess, but without succeeding in so doing, ran to the old woman.

"My companion," said he to her, "ours is a charming profession, but a very dangerous one. You run the risk of being hanged, and your ox of being burned, drowned or devoured, I don't know what they will do with your other animals; for, prophet as I am, I know very little; but do you carefully conceal the serpent, and the fish. Let not the one show his head above water, nor the other venture out of his hole. I will place the ox in one of my stables in the country. You shall be there with him, since you say that you are not allowed to abandon him. The good scape-goat may upon this occasion serve as an expiation. We will send him into the desert loaded with the sins of all the rest. He is accustomed to this ceremony, which does him no harm; and every one knows that sin is expiated by means of a he-goat, who walks about for his own amusement. I only beg of you to lend me immediately Tobit's dog, who is a very swift greyhound; Balaam's ass, who runs better than a dromedary; the raven and the pigeon of the ark, who fly with amazing swiftness. I want

to send them on an embassy to Memphis. It is an affair of great consequence."

The old woman replied to the magician:

"You may dispose as you please of Tobit's dog,[14] of Balaam's

[14] "Histories," says Pope, in his *Poetical Works*, vol. 4, p. 245, "are more full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than of friends, but: I will only say for the honor of dogs, that the two most ancient and estimable books, sacred and profane, extant, viz. the Scripture and Homer, have shown a particular regard to these animals. That of Tobit is the most remarkable, because there seemed no manner of reason to take notice of the dog, besides the great humanity of the author. ['And the dog went after them,' *Tobit*, xi: 4.] Homer's account of Ulysses's dog, Argus, is the most pathetic imaginable, all the circumstances considered, and an excellent proof of the old bard's good nature… Plutarch, relating how the Athenians were obliged to abandon Athens in the time of Themistocles, steps back again out of the way of his history, purely to describe the lamentable cries and howlings of the poor dogs they left behind. He makes mention of one that followed his master across the sea to Salamis, where he died, and was honored with a tomb by the Athenians, who gave the name of the Dog's Grave to that part of the island where he was buried. This respect to a dog, in the most polite people of the world, is very observable. A modern instance of gratitude to a dog is, that the chief order of Denmark, (now injuriously called the order of the elephant), was instituted in memory of the fidelity of a dog, named Wildbrat, to one of their kings who had been deserted by his subjects. He gave his order this motto, or to this effect, (which still remains), 'Wildbrat was faithful.' Sir William Trumbull has told me a story, which he heard from one that was present. King Charles I. being with some of his Court, during his troubles, a discourse arose what sort of dogs deserved pre-eminence, and it being on all hands agreed to belong either to the spaniel or greyhound, the King gave his opinion on the part of the greyhound, because (said he) it has all the good-nature of the other without the fawning."This satire upon fawning would no doubt have been as applicable to the court of king Amasis as to that of Charles I., for fawning has ever been the besetting sin of dogs and courtiers.It is indeed a grand testimonial to the value of the greyhound, that his fleetness and fidelity were appreciated by Mambres, the great Egyptian magician, five thousand years before they were endorsed by the unfortunate English king. Miss Endor, Homer, Ulysses, Mambres, Tobit, Plutarch, the

ass, of the raven and the pigeon of the ark, and of the scape-goat; but my ox cannot enter into a stable. It is said, Daniel, v:21, – That he must be always made fast to an iron chain, be always wet with the dew of heaven, and eat the grass of the field, and his portion be with the wild beasts.

"He is entrusted to me, and I must obey. What would Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, think of me, if I trusted my ox to any other than to myself? I see you know the secret of this extraordinary animal, but I have not to reproach myself with having revealed it to you. I am going to conduct him far from this polluted land, toward the lake Sirbon, where he will be sheltered from the cruelties of the king of Tanis. My fish and my serpent will defend me. I fear nobody when I serve my master."

"My good woman," answered the wise Mambres, "let the will of God be done! Provided I can find your white bull again, the lake Sirbon, the lake Maris, or the lake of Sodom, are to me perfectly indifferent. I want to do nothing but good to him and to you. But why have you spoken to me of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah?"

"Ah! sir," answered the old woman, "you know as well as I what concern they have in this important affair. But I have no time to lose. I don't desire to be hanged. I want not that my bull should be burned, drowned, or devoured. I go to the lake Sirbon by Canopus, with my serpent and my fish. Adieu."

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polite Athenians, Charles I., and Alexander Pope are certainly as respectable a list of references as the most aristocratic greyhound could desire. – E.

The bull followed her pensively, after having testified his gratitude to the beneficent Mambres.

The wise Mambres was greatly troubled. He saw that Amasis, king of Tanis, distracted by the strange passion of his daughter for this animal, and believing her bewitched, would pursue everywhere the unfortunate bull, who would infallibly be burned as a sorcerer in the public place of Tanis, or given to the fish of Jonah, or be roasted and served up for food. Mambres wanted at all events to save the princess from this cruel disaster.

He wrote a letter in sacred characters, to his friend, the high priest of Memphis, upon the paper of Egypt, which was not yet in use. Here are the identical words of this letter:

> "Light of the world, lieutenant of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, chief of the circumcised, you whose altar is justly raised above all thrones! I am informed that your god, the ox Apis, is dead. I have one at your service. Come quickly with your priests to acknowledge, to worship him, and to conduct him into the stable of your temple. May Isis, Osiris, and Horus, keep you in their holy and worthy protection, and likewise the priests of Memphis in their holy care.
>
> Your affectionate friend,
>
> *Mambres."*

He made four copies of this letter for fear of accidents, and enclosed them in cases of the hardest ebony. Then calling to him his four couriers, whom he had destined for this employment, (these were the ass, the dog, the raven, and the pigeon,) he said

to the ass:

"I know with what fidelity you served Balaam my brother. Serve me as faithfully. There is not an unicorn who equals you in swiftness. Go, my dear friend, and deliver this letter to the person himself to whom it is directed, and return."

The ass answered:

"Sir, as I served Balaam, I will serve you. I will go, and I will return."

The sage put the box of ebony into her mouth, and she swiftly departed. He then called Tobit's dog.

"Faithful dog," said Mambres, "more speedy in thy course than the nimble-footed Achilles, I know what you performed for Tobit, son of Tobit, when you and the angel Raphael accompanied him from Nineveh to Ragusa in Medea, and from Ragusa to Nineveh, and that he brought back to his father ten talents, which the slave Tobit, the father, had lent to the slave Gabellus; for the slaves at that time were very rich. Carry this letter as it is directed. It is much more valuable than ten talents of silver."

The dog then replied:

"Sir, if I formerly followed the messenger Raphael, I can with equal ease execute your commission."

Mambres put the letter into his mouth.

He next spoke in the same manner to the pigeon, who replied.

"Sir, if I brought back a bough into the ark, I will likewise bring you back an answer."

She took the letter in her bill, and the three messengers were out of sight in a moment. Then Mambres addressed the raven,

"I know that you fed the great prophet Elijah, when he was concealed near the torrent of Cherith, so much celebrated in the world. You brought him every day good bread and fat pullets. I only ask of you to carry this letter to Memphis."

The raven answered in these words:

"It is true, sir, that I carried every day a dinner to the great prophet Elijah the Tishbite. I saw him mount in a chariot of fire drawn by fiery horses, although this is not the usual method of traveling. But I always took care to eat half the dinner myself. I am very well pleased to carry your letter, provided you make me certain of two good meals every day, and that I am paid money in advance for my commission."

Mambres, angry, replied:

"Gluttonous and malicious creature, I am not astonished that Apollo has made you black as a mole, after being white as a swan, as you was formerly before you betrayed in the plains of Thessaly the beautiful Coronis, the unfortunate mother of Æsculapius. Tell me, did you eat ribs of beef and pullets every day when you was ten whole months in the ark?"

"Sir," said the raven, "we had there very good cheer. They served up roast meat twice a day to all the fowls of my species who live upon nothing but flesh, such as the vultures, kites, eagles, buzzards, sparrow-hawks, owls, tarsels, falcons, great owls, and an innumerable crowd of birds of prey. They furnished,

with the most plentiful profusion, the tables of the lions, leopards, tigers, panthers, hyænas, wolves, bears, foxes, polecats, and all sorts of carnivorous quadrupeds. There were in the ark eight persons of distinction, (and the only ones who were then in the world,) continually employed in the care of our table and our wardrobe; Noah and his wife, who were about six hundred years old, their three sons and their three wives. It was charming to see with what care, what dexterity, what cleanliness, our eight domestics served four thousand of the most ravenous guests, without reckoning the amazing trouble which about ten or twelve thousand other animals required, from the elephant and the giraffe, to the silk-worm and fly. What astonishes me is, that our purveyor Noah is unknown to all the nations of whom he is the stem, but I don't much mind it. I had already been present at a similar entertainment with Xesustres king of Thrace. Such things as these happen from time to time for the instruction of ravens. In a word, I want to have good cheer, and to be paid in ready money."

The wise Mambres took care not to give his letter to such a discontented and babbling animal; and they separated very much dissatisfied with each other.

But it is necessary to know what became of the white bull, and not to lose sight of the old woman and the serpent. Mambres ordered his intelligent and faithful domestics to follow them; and as for himself, he advanced in a litter by the side of the Nile, always making reflections.

"How is it possible," said he to himself, "that a serpent should be master of almost all the world, as he boasts, and as so many learned men acknowledge, and that he nevertheless obeys an old woman? How is it, that he is sometimes called to the council of the Most High, while he creeps upon earth? In what manner can he enter by his power alone into the bodies of men, and that so many men pretend to dislodge him by means of words? In short, why does he pass with a small neighboring people, for having ruined the human race? And how is it that the human race are entirely ignorant of this? I am old, I have studied all my life, but I see a crowd of inconsistencies which I cannot reconcile. I cannot account for what has happened to myself, neither for the great things which I long ago performed, nor those of which I have been witness. Every thing well considered, I begin to think that this world subsists by contradictions, *rerum concordia discors*, as my master Zoroaster formerly said."

While he was plunged in this obscure metaphysical reasoning, – obscure like all metaphysics, – a boatman singing a jovial song, made fast a small boat by the side of the river, and three grave personages, half clothed in dirty tattered garments, landed from it; but preserved, under the garb of poverty, the most majestic and august air. These strangers were Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.

CHAPTER VI.
HOW MAMBRES MET THREE PROPHETS, AND GAVE THEM A GOOD DINNER

These three great men who had the prophetic light in their countenance, knew the wise Mambres to be one of their brethren, by some marks of the same light which he had still remaining, and prostrated themselves before his litter. Mambres likewise knew them to be prophets, more by their uncouth dress, than by those gleams of fire which proceeded from their august heads. He conjectured that they came to learn news of the white bull; and conducting himself with his usual propriety, he alighted from his carriage and advanced a few steps toward them, with dignified politeness. He raised them up, caused tents to be erected, and prepared a dinner, of which he rightly judged that the prophets had very great need.

He invited the old woman to it, who was only about five hundred paces from them. She accepted the invitation, and arrived leading her white bull.

Two soups were served up, one *de Bisque*, and the other *a la Reine*. The first course consisted of a carp's tongue pie, livers of eel-pouts, and pikes; fowls dressed with pistachios, pigeons with truffles and olives; two young turkeys with gravy of cray

fish, mushrooms, and morels; and a chipotata. The second course was composed of pheasants, partridges, quails, and ortalons, with four salads; the epergne was in the highest taste; nothing could be more delicious than the side dishes, nothing more brilliant and more ingenious than the dessert. But the wise Mambres took great care to have no boiled beef, nor short ribs, nor tongue, nor palate of an ox, nor cows' udder, lest the unfortunate monarch near at hand should think that they insulted him.

This great and unfortunate prince was feeding near the tent; and never did he feel in a more cruel manner the fatal revolution which had deprived him of his throne for seven long years.

"Alas!" said he, to himself, "this Daniel who has changed me into a bull, and this sorceress my keeper, make the best cheer in the world; while I, the sovereign of Asia, am reduced to the necessity of eating grass, and drinking water."

When they had drank heartily of the wine of Engaddi, of Tadmor, and of Sebiras, the prophets and the witch conversed with more frankness than at the first course.

"I must acknowledge," said Daniel, "that I did not live so well in the lion's den."

"What, sir," said Mambres, "did they put you into a den of lions? How came you not to be devoured?"

"Sir," said Daniel, "you know very well that lions never eat prophets."

"As for me," said Jeremiah, "I have passed my whole life starving of hunger. This is the only day I ever ate a good

meal; and were I to spend my life over again, and had it in my power to choose my condition, I must own I would much rather be comptroller-general or bishop of Babylon, than prophet at Jerusalem."

Ezekiel cried, "I was once ordered to sleep three hundred and ninety days upon my left side, and to eat all that time bread of wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, cooked in the strangest manner. Still I must own that the cookery of Seigneur Mambres is much more delicate. However, the prophetic trade has its advantages, and the proof is, that there are many who follow it."

After they had spoken thus freely, Mambres entered upon business. He asked the three pilgrims the reason of their journey into the dominions of the king of Tanis. Daniel replied, "That the kingdom of Babylon had been all in a flame since Nebuchadnezzar had disappeared: that according to the custom of the court, they had persecuted all the prophets, who passed their lives in sometimes seeing kings humbled at their feet, and sometimes receiving a hundred lashes from them; that at length they had been obliged to take refuge in Egypt for fear of being starved."

Ezekiel and Jeremiah likewise spoke a long time in such fine terms, that it was almost impossible to understand them. As for the witch, she had always a strict eye over her charge. The fish of Jonah continued in the Nile, opposite to the tent, and the serpent sported upon the grass. After drinking coffee, they took a walk by the side of the Nile; and the white bull, perceiving

the three prophets, his enemies, bellowed most dreadfully, ran furiously at them, and gored them with his horns. As prophets never have anything but skin upon their bones, he would certainly have run them through; but the ruler of the world, who sees all and remedies all, changed them immediately into magpies; and they continued to chatter as before. The same thing happened since to the Pierides;[15] so much has fable always imitated sacred history.

This incident caused new reflections in the mind of Mambres.

"Here," said he, "are three great prophets changed into magpies. This ought to teach us never to speak too much, and always to observe a suitable discretion."

He concluded that wisdom was better than eloquence, and thought profoundly as usual; when a great and terrible spectacle presented itself to his eyes.

[15] The nine daughters of Pierus, king of Emathia, were called Pierides. They entered into a contest with the Muses, and being conquered were metamorphosed into birds. – E.

CHAPTER VII.
HOW KING AMASIS WANTED TO GIVE THE WHITE BULL TO BE DEVOURED BY THE FISH OF JONAH, AND DID NOT DO IT

Clouds of dust floated from south to north. The noise of drums, fifes, psalteries, harps, and sackbuts was heard. Several squadrons and battalions advanced, and Amasis, king of Tanis, was at their head upon an Arabian horse caparisoned with scarlet trappings embroidered with gold. The heralds proclaimed that they should seize the white bull, bind him, and throw him into the Nile, to be devoured by the fish of Jonah; "for the king our lord, who is just, wants to revenge himself upon the white bull, who has bewitched his daughter."

The good old man Mambres made more reflections than ever. He saw very plainly that the malicious raven had told all to the king, and that the princess ran a great risk of being beheaded.

"My dear friend," said he to the serpent, "go quickly and comfort the fair Amasidia, my foster daughter. Bid her fear nothing whatever may happen, and tell her stories to alleviate her inquietude; for stories always amuse the ladies, and it is only by interesting them that one can succeed in the world."

Mambres next prostrated himself before Amasis, king of Tanis, and thus addressed him:

"O king, live for ever! The white bull should certainly be sacrificed, for your majesty is always in the right, but the ruler of the world has said, this bull must not be swallowed up by the fish of Jonah till Memphis shall have found a god to supply the place of him who is dead. Then thou shalt be revenged, and thy daughter exorcised, for she is possessed. Your piety is too great not to obey the commands of the ruler of the universe."

Amasis, king of Tanis, remained for some time silent and in deep thought.

"The god Apis," said he, at length, "is dead! God rest his soul! When do you think another ox will be found to reign over the fruitful Egypt?"

"Sire," replied Mambres, "I ask but eight days."

"I grant them to you," replied the king, who was very religious, "and I will remain here the eight days. At the expiration of that time I will sacrifice the enemy of my daughter."

Amasis immediately ordered that his tents, cooks, and musicians should be brought, and remained here eight days, as it is related in Manethon.

The old woman was in despair that the bull she had in charge had but eight days to live. She raised phantoms every night, in order to dissuade the king from his cruel resolution; but Amasis forgot in the morning the phantoms he had seen in the night; similar to Nebuchadnezzar, who had always forgotten his

dreams.

CHAPTER VIII.
HOW THE SERPENT TOLD STORIES TO THE PRINCESS TO COMFORT HER

Meanwhile the serpent told stories to the fair Amasidia to soothe her. He related to her how he had formerly cured a whole nation of the bite of certain little serpents, only by showing himself at the end of a staff. (*Num. xx:9.*) He informed her of the conquests of a hero who made a charming contrast with Amphion, architect of Thebes. Amphion assembled hewn stones by the sound of his violin. To build a city he had only to play a rigadoon and a minuet; but the other hero destroyed them by the sound of rams' horns. He executed thirty-one powerful kings in a country of four leagues in length and four in breadth. He made stones rain down from heaven upon a battalion of routed Amorites; and having thus exterminated them, he stopped the sun and moon at noon-day between Gibeon and Ajalon, in the road to Beth-horon, to exterminate them still more, after the example of Bacchus, who had stopped the sun and the moon in his journey to the Indies.

The prudence which every serpent ought to have, did not allow him to tell the fair Amasidia of the powerful Jephthah, who made a vow and beheaded his daughter, because he had gained a battle.

This would have struck terror into the mind of the fair princess. But he related to her the adventures of the great Sampson, who killed a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, who tied together three hundred foxes by the tail, and who fell into the snares of a lady, less beautiful, less tender, and less faithful than the charming Amasidia.

He related to her the story of the unfortunate Sechem and Dinah, as well as the more celebrated adventures of Ruth and Boaz; those of Judah and Tamar; those even of Lot's two daughters; those of Abraham and Jacob's servant maids; those of Reuben and Bilhah; those of David and Bath-sheba; and those of the great king Solomon. In short, every thing which could dissipate the grief of a fair princess.

CHAPTER IX.
HOW THE SERPENT DID NOT COMFORT THE PRINCESS

"All these stories tire me," said Amasidia, for she had understanding and taste. "They are good for nothing but to be commented upon among the Irish by that madman Abbadie, or among the Welsh by that prattler d'Houteville. Stories which might have amused the great, great, great grandmother of my grandmother, appear insipid to me who have been educated by the wise Mambres, and who have read *Human Understanding* by the Egyptian philosopher named Locke[16] and the *Matron of Ephesus*. I choose that a story should be founded on probability, and not always resemble a dream. I desire to find nothing in it trivial or extravagant; and I desire above all, that under the appearance of fable there may appear some latent truth, obvious to the discerning eye, though it escape the observation of the vulgar."

"I am weary of a sun and of a moon which an old beldam disposes of at her pleasure, of mountains which dance, of rivers which return to their sources, and of dead men who rise again; but I am above measure disgusted when such insipid stories are

[16] The doctrine of metempsychosis must be relied upon to explain this seeming anachronism. – E.

written in a bombastic and unintelligible manner. A lady who expects to see her lover swallowed up by a great fish, and who is apprehensive of being beheaded by her own father, has need of amusement; but suit amusement to my taste."

"You impose a difficult task upon me," replied the serpent. "I could have formerly made you pass a few hours agreeably enough, but for some time past I have lost both my imagination and memory. Alas! what has become of those faculties with which I formerly amused the ladies? Let me try, however, if I can recollect one moral tale for your entertainment.

"Five and twenty thousand years ago king Gnaof and queen Patra reigned in Thebes with its hundred gates. King Gnaof was very handsome, and queen Patra still more beautiful. But their home was unblest with children, and no heirs were born to continue the royal race.

"The members of the faculty of medicine and of the academy of surgery wrote excellent treatises upon this subject. The queen was sent to drink mineral waters; she fasted and prayed; she made magnificent presents to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, but all was to no purpose. At length a – "

"Mon Dieu!" said the princess, "but I see where this leads. This story is too common, and I must likewise tell you that it offends my modesty. Relate some very true and moral story, which I have never yet heard, to complete the improvement of my understanding and my heart, as the Egyptian professor Lenro says."

"Here then, madam," said the beautiful serpent, "is one most incontestably authentic.

"There were three prophets all equally ambitious and discontented with their condition. They had in common the folly to wish to be kings: for there is only one step from the rank of a prophet to that of a monarch, and man always aspires to the highest step in the ladder of fortune. In other respects, their inclinations and their pleasures were totally different. The first preached admirably to his assembled brethren, who applauded him by clapping their hands; the second was distractedly fond of music; and the third was a passionate lover of the fair sex.

"The angel Ithuriel presented himself one day to them when they were at table discoursing on the sweets of royalty.

"'The ruler of the world,' said the angel to them, 'sends me to you to reward your virtue. Not only shall you be kings, but you shall constantly satisfy your ruling passions. Your first prophet, I make king of Egypt, and you shall continually preside in your council, who shall applaud your eloquence and your wisdom; and you, second prophet, I make king over Persia, and you shall continually hear most heavenly music; and you, third prophet, I make king of India, and I give you a charming mistress who shall never forsake you.'

"He to whose lot Egypt fell, began his reign by assembling his council, which was composed only of two hundred sages. He made them a long and eloquent speech, which was very much applauded, and the monarch enjoyed the pleasing satisfaction of

intoxicating himself with praises uncorrupted by flattery.

"The council for foreign affairs succeeded to the privy council. This was much more numerous; and a new speech received still greater encomiums. And it was the same in the other councils. There was not a moment of intermission in the pleasures and glory of the prophet king of Egypt. The fame of his eloquence filled the world.

"The prophet king of Persia began his reign by an Italian opera, whose choruses were sung by fifteen hundred eunuchs. Their voices penetrated his soul even to the very marrow of the bones, where it resides. To this opera succeeded another, and to the second a third, without interruption.

"The king of India shut himself up with his mistress, and enjoyed perfect pleasure in her society. He considered the necessity of always flattering her as the highest felicity, and pitied the wretched situation of his two brethren, of whom one was obliged always to convene his council, and the other to be continually at an opera.

"It happened at the end of a few days, that each of these kings became disgusted with his occupation, and beheld from his window, certain wood-cutters who came from an ale-house, and who were going to work in a neighboring forest. They walked arm in arm with their sweet-hearts, with whom they were happy. The kings begged of the angel Ithuriel, that he would intercede with the ruler of the world, and make them wood-cutters."

"I do not know whether the ruler of the world granted their

request or not," interrupted the tender Amasidia, "and I do not care much about it; but I know very well that I should ask for nothing of any one, were I with my lover, with my dear NEBUCHADNEZZAR!"

The vaults of the palace resounded this mighty name. At first Amasidia had only pronounced Ne – , afterwards Neb – , then Nebu – . At length passion hurried her on, and she pronounced entire the fatal name, notwithstanding the oath she had sworn to the king, her father. All the ladies of the court repeated Nebuchadnezzar, and the malicious raven did not fail to carry the tidings to the king. The countenance of Amasis, king of Tanis, sunk, because his heart was troubled. And thus it was that the serpent, the wisest and most subtle of animals, always beguiled the women, thinking to do them service.

Amasis, in a fury, sent twelve alguazils for his daughter. These men are always ready to execute barbarous orders, because they are paid for it.

CHAPTER X.
HOW THEY WANTED TO BEHEAD THE PRINCESS, AND DID NOT DO IT

No sooner had the princess entered the camp of the king, than he said to her: "My daughter, you know that all princesses who disobey their fathers are put to death; without which it would be impossible that a kingdom could be well governed. I charged you never to mention the name of your lover, Nebuchadnezzar, my mortal enemy, who dethroned me about seven years ago, and disappeared. In his place, you have chosen a white bull, and you have cried Nebuchadnezzar. It is just that I behead you."

The princess replied: "My father, thy will be done: but grant me some time to bewail my sad fate."

"That is reasonable," said King Amasis; "and it is a rule established among the most judicious princes. I give you a whole day to bewail your destiny, since it is your desire. To-morrow, which is the eighth day of my encampment, I will cause the white bull to be swallowed up by the fish, and I will behead you precisely at nine o'clock in the morning."

The beautiful Amasidia then went forth in sorrow, to bewail her father's cruelty, and wandered by the side of the Nile, accompanied with the ladies of her train.

The wise Mambres pondered beside her, and reckoned the

hours and the moments.

"Well! my dear Mambres," said she to him, "you have changed the waters of the Nile into blood, according to custom, and cannot you change the heart of Amasis, king of Tanis, my father? Will you suffer him to behead me to-morrow, at nine o'clock in the morning?"

"That depends," replied the reflecting Mambres, "upon the speed and diligence of my couriers."

The next day, as soon as the shadows of the obelisks and pyramids marked upon the ground the ninth hour of the day, the white bull was securely bound, to be thrown to the fish of Jonah; and they brought to the king his large sabre.

"Alas! alas!" said Nebuchadnezzar to himself, "I, a king, have been a bull for near seven years; and scarcely have I found the mistress I had lost when I am condemned to be devoured by a fish."

Never had the wise Mambres made such profound reflections; and he was quite absorbed in his melancholy thoughts when he saw at a distance all he expected. An innumerable crowd drew nigh. Three figures of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, joined together, advanced, drawn in a carriage of gold and precious stones, by a hundred senators of Memphis, preceded by a hundred girls, playing upon the sacred sistrums. Four thousand priests, with their heads shaved, were each mounted upon a hippopotamus.

At a great distance, appeared with the same pomp, the sheep of Thebes, the dog of Babastes, the cat of Phoebe, the crocodile

of Arsinoe, the goat of Mendez, and all the inferior gods of Egypt, who came to pay homage to the great ox, to the mighty Apis, as powerful as Isis, Osiris, and Horus, united together.

In the midst of the demi-gods, forty priests carried an enormous basket, filled with sacred onions. These were, it is true, gods, but they resembled onions very much.

On both sides of this aisle of gods, followed by an innumerable crowd of people, marched forty thousand warriors, with helmets on their heads, scimitars upon their left thighs, quivers at their shoulders, and bows in their hands.

All the priests sang in chorus, with a harmony which ravished the soul, and which melted it.

> "Alas! alas! our ox is dead —
> We'll have a finer in its stead."

And at every pause was heard the sound of the sistrums, of cymbals, of tabors, of psalteries, of bagpipes, harps, and sackbuts.

Amasis, king of Tanis, astonished at this spectacle, beheaded not his daughter. He sheathed his scimitar.

CHAPTER XI.
APOTHEOSIS OF THE WHITE BULL. TRIUMPH OF THE WISE MAMBRES. THE SEVEN YEARS PROCLAIMED BY DANIEL ARE ACCOMPLISHED. NEBUCHADNEZZAR RESUMES THE HUMAN FORM, MARRIES THE BEAUTIFUL AMASIDIA, AND ASCENDS THE THRONE OF BABYLON

"Great king," said Mambres to him, "the order of things is now changed. Your majesty must set the example. O king! quickly unbind the white bull, and be the first to adore him."

Amasis obeyed, and prostrated himself with all his people. The high priest of Memphis presented to the new god Apis the first handful of hay; the Princess Amasidia tied to his beautiful horse festoons of roses, anemonies, ranunculuses, tulips, pinks, and hyacinths. She took the liberty to kiss him, but with a profound respect. The priests strewed palms and flowers on the road by which they were to conduct him to Memphis. And the

wise Mambres, still making reflections, whispered to his friend, the serpent:

"*Daniel changed this monarch into a bull, and I have changed this bull into a god!*"

They returned to Memphis in the same order, and the king of Tanis, in some confusion, followed the band. Mambres, with a serene and diplomatic air, walked by his side. The old woman came after, much amazed. She was accompanied by the serpent, the dog, the she-ass, the raven, the pigeon, and the scape-goat. The great fish mounted up the Nile. Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, changed into magpies, brought up the rear.

When they had reached the frontiers of the kingdom, which are not far distant, King Amasis took leave of the bull Apis, and said to his daughter:

"My daughter, let us return into my dominions, that I may behead you, as it has been determined in my royal breast, because you have pronounced the name of Nebuchadnezzar, my enemy, who dethroned me seven years ago. When a father has sworn to behead his daughter, he must either fulfill his oath, or sink into hell for ever; and I will not damn myself out of love for you."

The fair princess Amasidia replied to the King Amasis:

"My dear father, whom it pleases you go and behead, but it shall not be me. I am now in the territories of Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Apis. I will never forsake my beautiful white bull, and I will continue to kiss him, till I have seen his apotheosis in his stable in the holy city of Memphis. It is a weakness pardonable in a

young lady of high birth."

Scarce had she spoken these words, when the ox Apis cried out:

"My dear Amasidia, I will love you whilst I live!"

This was the first time that the god Apis had been heard to speak during the forty thousand years that he had been worshiped.

The serpent and the she-ass cried out, "the seven years are accomplished!" And the three magpies repeated, "the seven years are accomplished!"

All the priests of Egypt raised their hands to heaven.

The god on a sudden was seen to lose his two hind legs, his two fore legs were changed into two human legs; two white strong muscular arms grew from his shoulders; his taurine visage was changed to the face of a charming hero; and he once more became the most beautiful of mortals.

"I choose," cried he, "rather to be the lover of the beautiful Amasidia than a god. I am NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF KINGS!"

This metamorphosis astonished all the world, except the wise Mambres. But what surprised nobody was, that Nebuchadnezzar immediately married the fair Amasidia in presence of this assembly.

He left his father-in-law in quiet possession of the kingdom of Tanis; and made noble provision for the she-ass, the serpent, the dog, the pigeon, and even for the raven, the three magpies,

and the large fish; showing to all the world that he knew how to forgive as well as to conquer.

The old woman had a considerable pension placed at her disposal.

The scape-goat was sent for a day into the wilderness, that all past sins might be expiated; and had afterwards twelve sprightly goats for his companions.

The wise Mambres returned to his palace, and made reflections.

Nebuchadnezzar, after having embraced the magician, his benefactor, governed in tranquillity the kingdoms of Memphis, Babylon, Damascus, Balbec, Tyre, Syria, Asia Minor, Scythia, the countries of Thiras, Mosok, Tubal, Madai, Gog, Magog, Javan, Sogdiana, Aroriana, the Indies, and the Isles; and the people of this vast empire cried out aloud every morning at the rising of the sun:

"Long live great Nebuchadnezzar, king of kings, who is no longer an ox!"

Since which time it has been a custom in Babylon, when the sovereign, deceived by his satraps, his magicians, treasurers or wives, at length acknowledges his errors, and amends his conduct, for all the people to cry out at his gate:

Long live our great king, who is no longer an ox.

ZADIG; OR FATE

AN ORIENTAL HISTORY

APPROBATION

I, the underwritten, who have obtained the character of a learned, and even of an ingenious man, have read this manuscript, which, in spite of myself, I have found to be curious, entertaining, moral, philosophical, and capable of affording pleasure even to those who hate romances. I have therefore decried it; and have assured the cadi-lesquier that it is an abominable performance.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY TO THE SULTANA SERAA

The 18th of the month Schewal, in the 837th year of the Hegira.

Delight of the eyes, torment of the heart, and light of the mind, I kiss not the dust of thy feet, because thou never walkest; or walkest only on the carpets of Iran, or in paths

strewn with roses.

I offer thee the translation of a book, written by an ancient sage, who, having the happiness to have nothing to do, amused himself in composing the *History of Zadig*; a work which performs more than it promises.

I beseech thee to read and examine it; for, though thou art in the spring of life, and every pleasure courts thee to its embrace; though thou art beautiful, and thy beauty be embellished by thy admirable talents; though thou art praised from morning to evening, and, on all these accounts, hast a right to be devoid of common sense, yet thou hast a sound judgment and a fine taste; and I have heard thee reason with more accuracy than the old dervises, with their long beards and pointed bonnets.

Thou art discreet without being distrustful; gentle without weakness; and beneficent with discernment. Thou lovest thy friends, and makest thyself no enemies. Thy wit never borrows its charms from the shafts of detraction. Thou neither sayest nor doest any ill, notwithstanding that both are so much in thy power.

In a word, thy soul hath always appeared to me to be as pure and unsullied as thy beauty. Besides, thou hast some little knowledge in philosophy, which makes me believe that thou wilt take more pleasure than others of thy sex in perusing the work of this venerable sage.

It was originally written in the ancient Chaldee, a language which neither thou nor I understand. It was afterward translated into the Arabic, to amuse the famous sultan Oulougbeg, much about the time that the Arabians

and the Persians began to write the *Thousand and One Nights*, the *Thousand and One Days*, *etc.*

Ouloug was fond of reading *Zadig*, but the sultanas were fonder of the *Thousand and One*. "How can you prefer," said the wise Ouloug to them, "those stories which have neither sense nor meaning?" "It is for that very reason," replied the sultanas, "that we prefer them."

I flatter myself that thou wilt not resemble these, thy predecessors; but that thou wilt be a true Ouloug. I even hope, that when thou art tired with those general conversations, which differ from the *Thousand and One* in nothing but in being less agreeable, I shall have the honor to entertain thee for a moment with a rational discourse.

Hadst thou been Thalestris in the time of Scander, the son of Philip; hadst thou been the Queen of Sheba in the time of Solomon; these are the very kings that would have paid thee a visit.

I pray the heavenly powers, that thy pleasures may be unmixed, thy beauty never fading, and thy happiness without end.

SADI.

ZADIG: OR, FATE

I.
THE BLIND OF ONE EYE

There lived at Babylon, in the reign of King Moabdar, a young man, named Zadig, of a good natural disposition, strengthened and improved by education. Though rich and young, he had learned to moderate his passions. He had nothing stiff or affected in his behavior. He did not pretend to examine every action by the strict rules of reason, but was always ready to make proper allowances for the weakness of mankind. It was a matter of surprise, that, notwithstanding his sprightly wit, he never exposed by his raillery those vague, incoherent, and noisy discourses; those rash censures, ignorant decisions, coarse jests, and all that empty jingle of words which at Babylon went by the name of conversation. He had learned, in the first book of Zoroaster, that self-love is a foot-ball swelled with wind, from which, when pierced, the most terrible tempests issue forth. Above all, Zadig never boasted of his conquests among the women, nor affected to entertain a contemptible opinion of the fair sex. He was generous, and was never afraid of obliging the ungrateful; remembering the grand precept of Zoroaster, "When thou eatest, give to the dogs,

should they even bite thee." He was as wise as it is possible for man to be, for he sought to live with the wise. Instructed in the sciences of the ancient Chaldeans, he understood the principles of natural philosophy, such as they were then supposed to be; and knew as much of metaphysics as hath ever been known in any age, that is, little or nothing at all. He was firmly persuaded, notwithstanding the new philosophy of the times, that the year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours, and that the sun was the centre of the solar system. When the principal magi told him, with a haughty and contemptuous air, that his sentiments were of a dangerous tendency, and that it was to be an enemy to the state to believe that the sun revolved round its own axis, and that the year had twelve months, he held his tongue with great modesty and meekness.

Possessed as he was of great riches, and consequently of many friends, blessed with a good constitution, a handsome figure, a mind just and moderate, and a heart noble and sincere, he fondly imagined that he might easily be happy. He was going to be married to Semira, who, in point of beauty, birth, and fortune, was the first match in Babylon. He had a real and virtuous affection for this lady, and she loved him with the most passionate fondness. The happy moment was almost arrived that was to unite them for ever in the bands of wedlock, when happening to take a walk together toward one of the gates of Babylon, under the palm-trees that adorn the banks of the Euphrates, they saw some men approaching, armed with sabres and arrows. These

were the attendants of young Orcan, the minister's nephew, whom his uncle's creatures had flattered into an opinion that he might do everything with impunity. He had none of the graces nor virtues of Zadig; but thinking himself a much more accomplished man, he was enraged to find that the other was preferred before him. This jealousy, which was merely the effect of his vanity, made him imagine that he was desperately in love with Semira; and accordingly he resolved to carry her off. The ravishers seized her; in the violence of the outrage, they wounded her, and made the blood flow from a person, the sight of which would have softened the tigers of mount Imaus. She pierced the heavens with her complaints. She cried out: "My dear husband! they tear me from the man I adore!"

Regardless of her own danger, she was only concerned for the fate of her dear Zadig, who, in the meantime, defended himself with all the strength that courage and love could inspire. Assisted only by two faithful slaves, he put the cowardly ravishers to flight, and carried home Semira, insensible and bloody as she was.

"O Zadig," said she, on opening her eyes, and beholding her deliverer, "I loved thee formerly as my intended husband, I now love thee as the preserver of my honor and my life!"

Never was heart more deeply affected than that of Semira. Never did a more charming mouth express more moving sentiments, in those glowing words inspired by a sense of the greatest of all favors, and by the most tender transports of a lawful passion. Her wound was slight, and was soon cured. Zadig

was more dangerously wounded. An arrow had pierced him near his eye, and penetrated to a considerable depth, Semira wearied heaven with her prayers for the recovery of her lover. Her eyes were constantly bathed in tears; she anxiously waited the happy moment when those of Zadig should be able to meet hers; but an abscess growing on the wounded eye, gave everything to fear. A messenger was immediately dispatched to Memphis, for the great physician Hermes, who came with a numerous retinue. He visited the patient, and declared that he would lose his eye. He even foretold the day and hour when this fatal event would happen.

"Had it been the right eye," said he, "I could easily have cured it; but the wounds of the left eye are incurable."

All Babylon lamented the fate of Zadig, and admired the profound knowledge of Hermes. In two days the abscess broke of its own accord, and Zadig was perfectly cured. Hermes wrote a book, to prove that it ought not to have been cured. Zadig did not read it: but, as soon as he was able to go abroad, he went to pay a visit to her in whom all his hopes of happiness were centered, and for whose sake alone he wished to have eyes. Semira had been in the country for three days past. He learned on the road, that that fine lady, having openly declared that she had an unconquerable aversion to one-eyed men, had the night before given her hand to Orcan. At this news he fell speechless to the ground. His sorrows brought him almost to the brink of the grave. He was long indisposed; but reason at last got the better of

his affliction; and the severity of his fate served even to console him.

"Since," said he, "I have suffered so much from the cruel caprice of a woman educated at court, I must now think of marrying the daughter of a citizen."

He pitched upon Azora, a lady of the greatest prudence, and of the best family in town. He married her, and lived with her for three months in all the delights of the most tender union. He only observed that she had a little levity; and was too apt to find that those young men who had the most handsome persons were likewise possessed of the most wit and virtue.

II.
THE NOSE

One morning Azora returned from a walk in a terrible passion and uttering the most violent exclamations.

"What aileth thee," said he, "my dear spouse? What is it that can thus have disturbed thee?"

"Alas!" said she, "thou wouldst have been as much enraged as I am, hadst thou seen what I have just beheld. I have been to comfort the young widow Cosrou, who, within these two days, hath raised a tomb to her young husband, near the rivulet that washes the skirts of this meadow. She vowed to heaven, in the bitterness of her grief, to remain at this tomb whilst the water of the rivulet should continue to run near it."

"Well," said Zadig, "she is an excellent woman, and loved her husband with the most sincere affection."

"Ah!" replied Azora, "didst thou but know in what she was employed when I went to wait upon her!"

"In what, pray tell me, beautiful Azora? Was she turning the course of the rivulet?"

Azora broke out into such long invectives, and loaded the young widow with such bitter reproaches, that Zadig was far from being pleased with this ostentation of virtue.

Zadig had a friend named Cador; one of those young men in whom his wife discovered more probity and merit than in others.

He made him his confidant, and secured his fidelity as much as possible by a considerable present. Azora, having passed two days with a friend in the country, returned home on the third. The servants told her, with tears in their eyes, that her husband died suddenly the night before; that they were afraid to send her an account of this mournful event; and that they had just been depositing his corpse in the tomb of his ancestors, at the end of the garden. She wept, she tore her hair, and swore she would follow him to the grave. In the evening, Cador begged leave to wait upon her, and joined his tears with hers. Next day they wept less, and dined together. Cador told her, that his friend had left him the greater part of his estate; and that he should think himself extremely happy in sharing his fortune with her. The lady wept, fell into a passion, and at last became more mild and gentle. They sat longer at supper than at dinner. They now talked with greater confidence. Azora praised the deceased; but owned that he had many failings from which Cador was free.

During supper, Cador complained of a violent pain in his side. The lady, greatly concerned, and eager to serve him, caused all kinds of essences to be brought, with which she anointed him, to try if some of them might not possibly ease him of his pain. She lamented that the great Hermes was not still in Babylon. She even condescended to touch the side in which Cador felt such exquisite pain.

"Art thou subject to this cruel disorder?" said she to him, with a compassionate air.

"It sometimes brings me," replied Cador, "to the brink of the grave; and there is but one remedy that can give me relief – and that is, to apply to my side the nose of a man who is lately dead."

"A strange remedy, indeed!" said Azora.

"Not more strange," replied he, "than the satchels of Arnou, against the apoplexy."

This reason, added to the great merit of the young man, at last determined the lady.

"After all," says she, "when my husband shall cross the bridge Tchinavar in his journey to the other world, the angel Asrael will not refuse him a passage because his nose is a little shorter in the second life than it was in the first."

She then took a razor, went to her husband's tomb, bedewed it with her tears, and drew near to cut off the nose of Zadig, whom she found extended at full length in the tomb. Zadig arose, holding his nose with one hand, and putting back the razor with the other.

"Madam," said he, "don't exclaim so violently against the widow Cosrou. The project of cutting off my nose is equal to that of turning the course of a rivulet."

III.
THE DOG AND THE HORSE

Zadig found by experience, that the first month of marriage, as it is written in the book of Zend, is the moon of honey, and that the second is the moon of wormwood. He was some time after obliged to repudiate Azora, who became too difficult to be pleased; and he then sought for happiness in the study of nature.

"No man," said he, "can be happier than a philosopher, who reads in this great book, which God hath placed before our eyes. The truths he discovers are his own; he nourishes and exalts his soul; he lives in peace; he fears nothing from men; and his tender spouse will not come to cut off his nose."

Possessed of these ideas, he retired to a country house on the banks of the Euphrates. There he did not employ himself in calculating how many inches of water flow in a second of time under the arches of a bridge, or whether there fell a cube-line of rain in the month of the mouse more than in the month of the sheep. He never dreamed of making silk of cobwebs, or porcelain of broken bottles: but he chiefly studied the properties of plants and animals; and soon acquired a sagacity that made him discover a thousand differences where other men see nothing but uniformity.

One day, as he was walking near a little wood, he saw one of the queen's eunuchs running toward him, followed by several

officers, who appeared to be in great perplexity, and who ran to and fro like men distracted, eagerly searching for something they had lost of great value.

"Young man," said the first eunuch, "hast thou seen the queen's dog?"

"It is a bitch," replied Zadig, with great modesty, "and not a dog."

"Thou art in the right," returned the first eunuch.

"It is a very small she-spaniel," added Zadig; "she has lately whelped; she limps on the left fore-foot, and has very long ears."

"Thou hast seen her," said the first eunuch, quite out of breath.

"No," replied Zadig, "I have not seen her, nor did I so much as know that the queen had a bitch."

Exactly at the same time, by one of the common freaks of fortune, the finest horse in the king's stable had escaped from the jockey in the plains of Babylon. The principal huntsman, and all the other officers, ran after him with as much eagerness and anxiety as the first eunuch had done after the bitch. The principal huntsman addressed himself to Zadig, and asked him if he had not seen the king's horse passing by.

"He is the fleetest horse in the king's stable," replied Zadig, "he is five feet high, with very small hoofs, and a tail three feet and an half in length; the studs on his bit are gold, of twenty-three carats, and his shoes are silver of eleven penny-weights."

"What way did he take? where is he?" demanded the chief huntsman.

"I have not seen him," replied Zadig, "and never heard talk of him before."

The principal huntsman and the first eunuch never doubted but that Zadig had stolen the king's horse and the queen's bitch. They therefore had him conducted before the assembly of the grand desterham, who condemned him to the knout, and to spend the rest of his days in Siberia. Hardly was the sentence passed, when the horse and the bitch were both found. The judges were reduced to the disagreeable necessity of reversing their sentence; but they condemned Zadig to pay four hundred ounces of gold for having said that he had not seen what he had seen. This fine he was obliged to pay; after which, he was permitted to plead his cause before the counsel of the grand desterham, when he spoke to the following effect.

"Ye stars of justice, abyss of sciences, mirrors of truth, who have the weight of lead, the hardness of iron, the splendor of the diamond, and many of the properties of gold; since I am permitted to speak before this august assembly, I swear to you by Oromazes, that I have never seen the queen's respectable bitch, nor the sacred horse of the king of kings. The truth of the matter is as follows: I was walking toward the little wood, where I afterward met the venerable eunuch, and the most illustrious chief huntsman. I observed on the sand the traces of an animal, and could easily perceive them to be those of a little dog. The light and long furrows impressed on little eminences of sand between the marks of the paws, plainly discovered that it was

a bitch, whose dugs were hanging down, and that therefore she must have whelped a few days before. Other traces of a different kind, that always appeared to have gently brushed the surface of the sand near the marks of the fore-feet, showed me that she had very long ears; and as I remarked that there was always a slighter impression made on the sand by one foot than by the other three, I found that the bitch of our august queen was a little lame, if I may be allowed the expression. With regard to the horse of the king of kings, you will be pleased to know, that walking in the lanes of this wood, I observed the marks of a horse's shoes, all at equal distances. This must be a horse, said I to myself, that gallops excellently. The dust on the trees in a narrow road that was but seven feet wide, was a little brushed off, at the distance of three feet and a half from the middle of the road. This horse, said I, has a tail three feet and a half long, which, being whisked to the right and left, has swept away the dust. I observed under the trees that formed an arbor five feet in height, that the leaves of the branches were newly fallen, from whence I inferred that the horse had touched them, and that he must therefore be five feet high. As to his bit, it must be gold of twenty-three carats, for he had rubbed its bosses against a stone which I knew to be a touchstone, and which I have tried. In a word, from a mark made by his shoes on flints of another kind, I concluded that he was shod with silver eleven deniers fine."

All the judges admired Zadig for his acute and profound discernment. The news of this speech was carried even to the

king and queen. Nothing was talked of but Zadig in the anti-chambers, the chambers, and the cabinet; and though many of the magi were of opinion that he ought to be burnt as a sorcerer, the king ordered his officers to restore him the four hundred ounces of gold which he had been obliged to pay. The register, the attorneys, and bailiffs, went to his house with great formality to carry him back his four hundred ounces. They only retained three hundred and ninety-eight of them to defray the expenses of justice; and then their servants demanded their fees.

Zadig saw how extremely dangerous it sometimes is to appear too knowing, and therefore resolved, that on the next occasion of the like nature he would not tell what he had seen.

Such an opportunity soon offered. A prisoner of state made his escape and passed under the windows of Zadig's house. Zadig was examined and made no answer. But it was proved that he had looked at the prisoner from this window. For this crime he was condemned to pay five hundred ounces of gold; and, according to the polite custom of Babylon, he thanked his judges for their indulgence.

"Great God!" said he to himself, "what a misfortune it is to walk in a wood through which the queen's bitch or the king's horse have passed! how dangerous to look out at a window! and how difficult to be happy in this life!"

IV.
THE ENVIOUS MAN

Zadig resolved to comfort himself by philosophy and friendship for the evils he had suffered from fortune. He had in the suburbs of Babylon a house elegantly furnished, in which he assembled all the arts and all the pleasures worthy the pursuit of a gentleman. In the morning his library was open to the learned. In the evening his table was surrounded by good company. But he soon found what very dangerous guests these men of letters are. A warm dispute arose on one of Zoroaster's laws, which forbids the eating of a griffin.

"Why," said some of them, "prohibit the eating of a griffin, if there is no such animal in nature?"

"There must necessarily be such an animal," said the others, "since Zoroaster forbids us to eat it."

Zadig would fain have reconciled them by saying:

"If there are no griffins, we cannot possibly eat them; and thus either way we shall obey Zoroaster."

A learned man, who had composed thirteen volumes on the properties of the griffin, and was besides the chief theurgite, hasted away to accuse Zadig before one of the principal magi, named Yebor, the greatest blockhead, and therefore the greatest fanatic among the Chaldeans. This man would have empaled Zadig to do honor to the sun, and would then have recited the

breviary of Zoroaster with greater satisfaction. The friend Cador (a friend is better than a hundred priests) went to Yebor, and said to him:

"Long live the sun and the griffins; beware of punishing Zadig; he is a saint; he has griffins in his inner court, and does not eat them; and his accuser is an heretic, who dares to maintain that rabbits have cloven feet, and are not unclean."

"Well," said Yebor, shaking his bald pate, "we must empale Zadig for having thought contemptuously of griffins, and the other party for having spoken disrespectfully of rabbits."

Cador hushed up the affair by appealing to a person who had great interest in the college of the magi. Nobody was empaled. This lenity occasioned a great murmuring among some of the doctors, who from thence predicted the fall of Babylon.

"Upon what does happiness depend?" said Zadig; "I am persecuted by everything in the world, even on account of beings that have no existence."

He cursed those men of learning, and resolved for the future to live with none but good company.

He assembled at his house the most worthy men, and the most beautiful ladies of Babylon. He gave them delicious suppers, often preceded by concerts of music, and always animated by polite conversation, from which he knew how to banish that affectation of wit, which is the surest method of preventing it entirely, and of spoiling the pleasure of the most agreeable society. Neither the choice of his friends, nor that of the dishes,

was made by vanity; for in everything he preferred the substance to the shadow; and by these means he procured that real respect to which he did not aspire.

Opposite to his house lived one Arimazes, a man whose deformed countenance was but a faint picture of his still more deformed mind. His heart was a mixture of malice, pride, and envy. Having never been able to succeed in any of his undertakings, he revenged himself on all around him, by loading them with the blackest calumnies. Rich as he was, he found it difficult to procure a set of flatterers. The rattling of the chariots that entered Zadig's court in the evening, filled him with uneasiness; the sound of his praises enraged him still more. He sometimes went to Zadig's house, and sat down at table without being desired; where he spoiled all the pleasure of the company, as the harpies are said to infect the viands they touch.

It happened that one day he took it in his head to give an entertainment to a lady, who, instead of accepting it, went to sup with Zadig. At another time, as he was talking with Zadig at court, a minister of state came up to them, and invited Zadig to supper, without inviting Arimazes. The most implacable hatred has seldom a more solid foundation. This man, who in Babylon was called the *envious*, resolved to ruin Zadig, because he was called the *happy*. "The opportunity of doing mischief occurs a hundred times in a day, and that of doing good but once a year, as sayeth the wise Zoroaster."

The envious man went to see Zadig, who was walking in his

garden with two friends and a lady, to whom he said many gallant things, without any other intention than that of saying them. The conversation turned upon a war which the king had just brought to a happy conclusion against the prince of Hircania, his vassal. Zadig, who had signalized his courage in this short war, bestowed great praises on the king, but greater still on the lady. He took out his pocket-book, and wrote four lines extempore, which he gave to this amiable person to read. His friends begged they might see them; but modesty, or rather a well-regulated self-love, would not allow him to grant their request. He knew that extemporary verses are never approved by any but by the person in whose honor they are written. He therefore tore in two the leaf on which he had written them, and threw both the pieces into a thicket of rose bushes where the rest of the company sought for them in vain. A slight shower falling soon after, obliged them to return to the house.

The envious man, who remained in the garden, continued to search, till at last he found a piece of the leaf. It had been torn in such a manner, that each half of a line formed a complete sense, and even a verse of a shorter measure; but what was still more surprising, these short verses were found to contain the most injurious reflections on the king. They ran thus:

To flagrant crimes
His crown he owes,
To peaceful times
The worst of foes.

The envious man was now happy for the first time in his life. He had it in his power to ruin a person of virtue and merit. Killed with this fiend-like joy, he found means to convey to the king the satire written by the hand of Zadig, who was immediately thrown into prison, together with the lady and Zadig's two friends.

His trial was soon finished without his being permitted to speak for himself. As he was going to receive his sentence, the envious man threw himself in his way, and told him with a loud voice, that his verses were good for nothing. Zadig did not value himself on being a good poet; but it filled him with inexpressible concern to find that he was condemned for high treason; and that the fair lady and his two friends were confined in prison for a crime of which they were not guilty. He was not allowed to speak, because his writing spoke for him. Such was the law of Babylon. Accordingly he was conducted to the place of execution through an immense crowd of spectators, who durst not venture to express their pity for him, but who carefully examined his countenance to see if he died with a good grace. His relations alone were inconsolable; for they could not succeed to his estate. Three-fourths of his wealth were confiscated into the king's treasury, and the other fourth was given to the envious man.

Just as he was preparing for death, the king's parrot flew from its cage, and alighted on a rose bush in Zadig's garden. A peach had been driven thither by the wind from a neighboring tree, and had fallen on a piece of the written leaf of the pocket-book to

which it stuck. The bird carried off the peach and the paper, and laid them on the king's knee. The king took up the paper with great eagerness, and read the words, which formed no sense, and seemed to be the endings of verses. He loved poetry; and there is always some mercy to be expected from a prince of that disposition. The adventure of the parrot caused him to reflect.

The queen, who remembered what had been written on the piece of Zadig's pocket-book, ordered it to be brought. They compared the two pieces together, and found them to tally exactly. They then read the verses as Zadig had written them.

> Tyrants are prone to flagrant crimes;
> To clemency his crown he owes;
> To concord and to peaceful times
> Love only is the worst of foes.

The king gave immediate orders that Zadig should be brought before him, and that his two friends and the lady should be set at liberty. Zadig fell prostrate on the ground before the king and queen, humbly begged their pardon for having made such bad verses, and spoke with so much propriety, wit, and good sense, that their majesties desired they might see him again. He did himself that honor, and insinuated himself still farther into their good graces. They gave him all the wealth of the envious man; but Zadig restored him back the whole of it; and this instance of generosity gave no other pleasure to the envious man than that of having preserved his estate. The king's esteem for Zadig

increased every day. He admitted him into all his parties of pleasure, and consulted him in all affairs of state. From that time the queen began to regard him with an eye of tenderness, that might one day prove dangerous to herself, to the king her august consort, to Zadig, and to the kingdom in general. Zadig now began to think that happiness was not so unattainable as he had formerly imagined.

V.
THE GENEROUS

The time had now arrived for celebrating a grand festival, which returned every five years. It was a custom in Babylon solemnly to declare, at the end of every five years, which of the citizens had performed the most generous action. The grandees and the magi were the judges. The first satrap, who was charged with the government of the city, published the most noble actions that had passed under his administration. The competition was decided by votes; and the king pronounced the sentence. People came to this solemnity from the extremities of the earth. The conqueror received from the monarch's hands a golden cup adorned with precious stones, his majesty at the same time making him this compliment: "Receive this reward of thy generosity, and may the gods grant me many subjects like to thee."

This memorable day having come, the king appeared on his throne, surrounded by the grandees, the magi, and the deputies of all the nations that came to these games, where glory was acquired not by the swiftness of horses, nor by strength of body, but by virtue. The first satrap recited, with an audible voice, such actions as might entitle the authors of them to this invaluable prize. He did not mention the greatness of soul with which Zadig had restored the envious man his fortune, because it was not

judged to be an action worthy of disputing the prize.

He first presented a judge, who having made a citizen lose a considerable cause by a mistake, for which, after all, he was not accountable, had given him the whole of his own estate, which was just equal to what the other had lost.

He next produced a young man, who being desperately in love with a lady whom he was going to marry, had yielded her up to his friend, whose passion for her had almost brought him to the brink of the grave, and at the same time had given him the lady's fortune.

He afterwards produced a soldier, who, in the wars of Hircania, had given a still more noble instance of generosity. A party of the enemy having seized his mistress, he fought in her defence with great intrepidity. At that very instant he was informed that another party, at the distance of a few paces, were carrying off his mother; he therefore left his mistress with tears in his eyes, and flew to the assistance of his mother. At last he returned to the dear object of his love, and found her expiring. He was just going to plunge his sword in his own bosom; but his mother remonstrating against such a desperate deed, and telling him that he was the only support of her life, he had the courage to endure to live.

The judges were inclined to give the prize to the soldier. But the king took up the discourse, and said:

"The action of the soldier, and those of the other two, are doubtless very great, but they have nothing in them surprising.

Yesterday, Zadig performed an action that filled me with wonder. I had a few days before disgraced Coreb, my minister and favorite. I complained of him in the most violent and bitter terms; all my courtiers assured me that I was too gentle, and seemed to vie with each other in speaking ill of Coreb. I asked Zadig what he thought of him, and he had the courage to commend him. I have read in our histories of many people who have atoned for an error by the surrender of their fortune; who have resigned a mistress; or preferred a mother to the object of their affection, but never before did I hear of a courtier who spoke favorably of a disgraced minister, that labored under the displeasure of his sovereign. I give to each of those whose generous actions have been now recited, twenty thousand pieces of gold; but the cup I give to Zadig."

"May it please your majesty," said Zadig, "thyself alone deservest the cup. Thou hast performed an action of all others the most uncommon and meritorious, since, notwithstanding thy being a powerful king, thou wast not offended at thy slave, when he presumed to oppose thy passion."

The king and Zadig were equally the object of admiration. The judge who had given his estate to his client; the lover who had resigned his mistress to his friend, and the soldier, who had preferred the safety of his mother to that of his mistress, received the king's presents, and saw their names enrolled in the catalogue of generous men. Zadig had the cup, and the king acquired the reputation of a good prince, which he did not long enjoy. The day

was celebrated by feasts that lasted longer than the law enjoined; and the memory of it is still preserved in Asia. Zadig said: "Now I am happy at last." But he found himself fatally deceived.

VI.
THE MINISTER

The king had lost his first minister, and chose Zadig to supply his place. All the ladies in Babylon applauded the choice; for, since the foundation of the empire, there had never been such a young minister. But all the courtiers were filled with jealousy and vexation. The envious man, in particular, was troubled with a spitting of blood, and a prodigious inflammation in his nose. Zadig, having thanked the king and queen for their goodness, went likewise to thank the parrot.

"Beautiful bird," said he, "tis thou that hast saved my life, and made me first minister. The queen's bitch and the king's horse did me a great deal of mischief; but thou hast done me much good. Upon such slender threads as these do the fates of mortals hang! but," added he, "this happiness perhaps will vanish very soon."

"Soon," replied the parrot.

Zadig was somewhat startled at this word. But as he was a good natural philosopher, and did not believe parrots to be prophets, he quickly recovered his spirits, and resolved to execute his duty to the best of his power.

He made every one feel the sacred authority of the laws, but no one felt the weight of his dignity. He never checked the deliberations of the divan; and every vizier might give his opinion

without fear of incurring the minister's displeasure. When he gave judgment, it was not he that gave it; it was the law; the rigor of which, however, whenever it was too severe, he always took care to soften; and when laws were wanting, the equity of his decisions was such as might easily have made them pass for those of Zoroaster.

It is to him that the nations are indebted for this grand principle, to wit, that it is better to run the risk of sparing the guilty than to condemn the innocent. He imagined that laws were made as well to secure the people from the suffering of injuries as to restrain them from the commission of crimes. His chief talent consisted in discovering the truth, which all men seek to obscure. This great talent he put in practice from the very beginning of his administration.

A famous merchant of Babylon, who died in the Indies, divided his estate equally between his two sons, after having disposed of their sister in marriage, and left a present of thirty thousand pieces of gold to that son who should be found to have loved him best. The eldest raised a tomb to his memory; the youngest increased his sister's portion, by giving her a part of his inheritance. Every one said that the eldest son loved his father best, and the youngest his sister; and that the thirty thousand pieces belonged to the eldest.

Zadig sent for both of them, the one after the other. To the eldest he said:

"Thy father is not dead; but has survived his last illness, and

is returning to Babylon."

"God be praised," replied the young man; "but his tomb cost me a considerable sum."

Zadig afterwards repeated the same story to the youngest son.

"God be praised," said he; "I will go and restore to my father all that I have; but I could wish that he would leave my sister what I have given her."

"Thou shalt restore nothing," replied Zadig, "and thou shalt have the thirty thousand pieces, for thou art the son who loves his father best."

A widow, having a young son, and being possessed of a handsome fortune, had given a promise of marriage to two magi; who were both desirous of marrying her.

"I will take for my husband," said she, "the man who can give the best education to my beloved son."

The two magi contended who should bring him up, and the cause was carried before Zadig. Zadig summoned the two magi to attend him.

"What will you teach your pupil?" said he to the first.

"I will teach him," said the doctor, "the eight parts of speech, logic, astrology, pneumatics, what is meant by substance and accident, abstract and concrete, the doctrine of the monades, and the pre-established harmony."

"For my part," said the second, "I will endeavor to give him a sense of justice, and to make him worthy the friendship of good men."

Zadig then cried:

"Whether thou art the child's favorite or not, thou shalt have his mother."

VII.
THE DISPUTES AND THE AUDIENCES

In this manner he daily discovered the subtlety of his genius and the goodness of his heart. The people at once admired and loved him. He passed for the happiest man in the world. The whole empire resounded with his name. All the ladies ogled him. All the men praised him for his justice. The learned regarded him as an oracle; and even the priests confessed that he knew more than the old arch-magi Yebor. They were now so far from prosecuting him on account of the griffins, that they believed nothing but what he thought credible.

There had continued at Babylon, for the space of fifteen hundred years, a violent contest that had divided the empire into two sects. The one pretended that they ought to enter the temple of Mithra with the left foot foremost; the other held this custom in detestation, and always entered with the right foot first. The people waited with great impatience for the day on which the solemn feast of the sacred fire was to be celebrated, to see which sect Zadig would favor. All the world had their eyes fixed on his two feet, and the whole city was in the utmost suspense and perturbation. Zadig jumped into the temple with his feet joined together; and afterward proved, in an eloquent discourse, that the

Sovereign of heaven and earth, who accepteth not the persons of men, maketh no distinction between the right and the left foot. The envious man and his wife alleged that his discourse was not figurative enough, and that he did not make the rocks and mountains dance with sufficient agility.

"He is dry," said they, "and void of genius. He does not make the sea to fly, and stars to fall, nor the sun to melt like wax. He has not the true oriental style."

Zadig contented himself with having the style of reason. All the world favored him, not because he was in the right road, or followed the dictates of reason, or was a man of real merit, but because he was prime vizier.

He terminated with the same happy address the grand dispute between the black and the white magi. The former maintained that it was the height of impiety to pray to God with the face turned toward the east in winter; the latter asserted that God abhorred the prayers of those who turned toward the west in summer. Zadig decreed that every man should be allowed to turn as he pleased.

Thus he found out the happy secret of finishing all affairs, whether of a private or a public nature, in the morning. The rest of the day he employed in superintending and promoting the embellishments of Babylon. He exhibited tragedies that drew tears from the eyes of the spectators, and comedies that shook their sides with laughter, – a custom which had long been disused, and which his good taste now induced him to revive. He never

affected to be more knowing in the polite arts than the artists themselves. He encouraged them by rewards and honors, and was never jealous of their talents. In the evening the king was highly entertained with his conversation, and the queen still more.

"Great minister!" said the king.

"Amiable minister!" said the queen; and both of them added, "It would have been a great loss to the state had such a man been hanged."

Meanwhile Zadig perceived that his thoughts were always distracted, as well when he gave audience as when he sat in judgment. He did not know to what to attribute this absence of mind, and that was his only sorrow.

He had a dream, in which he imagined that he laid himself down upon a heap of dry herbs, among which there were many prickly ones that gave him great uneasiness, and that he afterward reposed himself on a soft bed of roses, from which there sprung a serpent that wounded him to the heart with its sharp venomed fangs. "Alas," said he, "I have long lain on these dry and prickly herbs, I am now on the bed of roses; but what shall be the serpent?"

VIII.
JEALOUSY

Zadig's calamities sprung even from his happiness, and especially from his merit. He every day conversed with the king and his august consort. The charms of Zadig's conversation were greatly heightened by that desire of pleasing which is to the mind what dress is to beauty. His youth and graceful appearance insensibly made an impression on Astarte, which she did not at first perceive. Her passion grew and flourished in the bosom of innocence. Without fear or scruple, she indulged the pleasing satisfaction of seeing and hearing a man who was so dear to her husband, and to the empire in general. She was continually praising him to the king. She talked of him to her women, who were always sure to improve on her praises. And thus everything contributed to pierce her heart with a dart, of which she did not seem to be sensible. She made several presents to Zadig, which discovered a greater spirit of gallantry than she imagined. She intended to speak to him only as a queen satisfied with his services; and her expressions were sometimes those of a woman in love.

Astarte was much more beautiful than that Semira who had such a strong aversion to one-eyed men, or that other woman who had resolved to cut off her husband's nose. Her unreserved familiarity, her tender expressions, at which she began to blush;

and her eyes, which, though she endeavored to divert them to other objects, were always fixed upon his, inspired Zadig with a passion that filled him with astonishment. He struggled hard to get the better of it. He called to his aid the precepts of philosophy, which had always stood him in stead; but from thence, though he could derive the light of knowledge, he could procure no remedy to cure the disorders of his love-sick heart. Duty, gratitude, and violated majesty, presented themselves to his mind, as so many avenging gods. He struggled, he conquered. But this victory, which he was obliged to purchase afresh every moment, cost him many sighs and tears. He no longer dared to speak to the queen with that sweet and charming familiarity which had been so agreeable to them both. His countenance was covered with a cloud. His conversation was constrained and incoherent. His eyes were fixed on the ground; and when, in spite of all his endeavors to the contrary, they encountered those of the queen, they found them bathed in tears, and darting arrows of flame. They seemed to say, We adore each other, and yet are afraid to love; we are consumed with a passion which we both condemn.

Zadig left the royal presence full of perplexity and despair, and having his heart oppressed with a burden which he was no longer able to bear. In the violence of his perturbation he involuntarily betrayed the secret to his friend Cador, in the same manner as a man, who, having long endured a cruel disease, discovers his pain by a cry extorted from him by a more severe attack, and by the cold sweat that covers his brow.

"I have already discovered," said Cador, "the sentiments which thou wouldst fain conceal from thyself. The symptoms by which the passions show themselves are certain and infallible. Judge, my dear Zadig, since I have read thy heart, whether the king will not discover something in it that may give him offence. He has no other fault but that of being the most jealous man in the world. Thou canst resist the violence of thy passion with greater fortitude than the queen, because thou art a philosopher, and because thou art Zadig. Astarte is a woman. She suffers her eyes to speak with so much the more imprudence, as she does not as yet think herself guilty. Conscious of her own innocence, she unhappily neglects those external appearances which are so necessary. I shall tremble for her so long as she has nothing wherewithal to reproach herself. A growing passion which we endeavor to suppress, discovers itself in spite of all our efforts to the contrary.

Meanwhile, the queen mentioned the name of Zadig so frequently, and with such a blushing and downcast look. She was sometimes so lively, and sometimes so perplexed, when she spoke to him in the king's presence, and was seized with such a deep thoughtfulness at his going away, that the king began to be troubled. He believed all that he saw, and imagined all that he did not see. He particularly remarked, that his wife's shoes were blue, and that Zadig's shoes were blue; that his wife's ribbons were yellow, and that Zadig's bonnet was yellow, and these were terrible symptoms to a prince of so much delicacy. In his jealous

mind suspicion was turned into certainty.

All the slaves of kings and queens are so many spies over their hearts. They soon observed that Astarte was tender, and that Moabdar was jealous. The envious man persuaded his wife to send anonymously to the king her garter, which resembled those of the queen; and to complete the misfortune, this garter was blue. The monarch now thought of nothing but in what manner he might best execute his vengeance. He one night resolved to poison the queen, and in the morning to put Zadig to death by the bowstring. The orders were given to a merciless eunuch, who commonly executed his acts of vengeance.

There happened at that time to be in the king's chamber a little dwarf, who, though dumb, was not deaf. He was allowed, on account of his insignificance, to go wherever he pleased; and, as a domestic animal, was a witness of what passed in the most profound secrecy.

This little mute was strongly attached to the queen and Zadig. With equal horror and surprise, he heard the cruel orders given; but how could he prevent the fatal sentence that in a few hours was to be carried into execution? He could not write, but he could paint; and excelled particularly in drawing a striking resemblance. He employed a part of the night in sketching out with his pencil what he meant to impart to the queen. The piece represented the king in one corner, boiling with rage, and giving orders to the eunuch; a blue bowstring, and a bowl on a table, with blue garters and yellow ribbons; the queen in the middle

of the picture, expiring in the arms of her woman, and Zadig strangled at her feet. The horizon represented a rising sun, to express that this shocking execution was to be performed in the morning. As soon as he had finished the picture, he ran to one of Astarte's women, awoke her, and made her understand that she must immediately carry it to the queen.

At midnight a messenger knocks at Zadig's door, awakes him, and gives him a note from the queen. He doubts whether it is not a dream; and opens the letter with a trembling hand. But how great was his surprise, and who can express the consternation and despair into which he was thrown upon reading these words? "Fly, this instant, or thou art a dead man! Fly, Zadig, I conjure thee by our mutual love and my yellow ribbons. I have not been guilty, but I find that I must die like a criminal."

Zadig was hardly able to speak. He sent for Cador, and, without uttering a word, gave him the note. Cador forced him to obey, and forthwith to take the road to Memphis.

"Shouldst thou dare," said he, "to go in search of the queen, thou wilt hasten her death. Shouldst thou speak to the king, thou wilt infallibly ruin her. I will take upon me the charge of her destiny; follow thy own. I will spread a report that thou hast taken the road to India. I will soon follow thee, and inform thee of all that shall have passed in Babylon."

At that instant, Cador caused two of the swiftest dromedaries to be brought to a private gate of the palace. Upon one of these he mounted Zadig, whom he was obliged to carry to the door, and

who was ready to expire with grief. He was accompanied by a single domestic, and Cador, plunged in sorrow and astonishment, soon lost sight of his friend.

This illustrious fugitive arriving on the side of a hill, from whence he could take a view of Babylon, turned his eyes toward the queen's palace, and fainted away at the sight; nor did he recover his senses but to shed a torrent of tears, and to wish for death. At length, after his thoughts had been long engrossed in lamenting the unhappy fate of the loveliest woman and the greatest queen in the world, he for a moment turned his views on himself, and cried:

"What then is human life? O virtue, how hast thou served me? Two women have basely deceived me; and now a third, who is innocent, and more beautiful than both the others, is going to be put to death! Whatever good I have done hath been to me a continual source of calamity and affliction; and I have only been raised to the height of grandeur, to be tumbled down the most horrid precipice of misfortune."

Filled with these gloomy reflections, his eyes overspread with the veil of grief, his countenance covered with the paleness of death, and his soul plunged in an abyss of the blackest despair, he continued his journey toward Egypt.

IX.
THE WOMAN BEATER

Zadig directed his course by the stars. The constellation of Orion, and the splendid Dogstars, guided his steps toward the pole of Canopæa. He admired those vast globes of light which appear to our eyes as so many little sparks, while the earth, which in reality is only an imperceptible point in nature, appears to our fond imaginations as something so grand and noble. He then represented to himself the human species, as it really is, as a parcel of insects devouring one another on a little atom of clay. This true image seemed to annihilate his misfortunes, by making him sensible of the nothingness of his own being, and that of Babylon. His soul launched out into infinity, and detached from the senses, contemplated the immutable order of the universe. But when afterward, returning to himself, and entering into his own heart, he considered that Astarte had perhaps died for him, the universe vanished from his sight, and he beheld nothing in the whole compass of nature but Astarte expiring, and Zadig unhappy.

While he thus alternately gave up his mind to this flux and reflux of sublime philosophy and intolerable grief, he advanced toward the frontiers of Egypt; and his faithful domestic was already in the first village, in search of a lodging.

Meanwhile, as Zadig was walking toward the gardens that

skirted the village, he saw, at a small distance from the highway, a woman bathed in tears and calling heaven and earth to her assistance, and a man in a furious passion pursuing her.

This madman had already overtaken the woman, who embraced his knees, notwithstanding which he loaded her with blows and reproaches. Zadig judged by the frantic behavior of the Egyptian, and by the repeated pardons which the lady asked him, that the one was jealous, and the other unfaithful. But when he surveyed the woman more narrowly, and found her to be a lady of exquisite beauty, and even to have a strong resemblance to the unhappy Astarte, he felt himself inspired with compassion for her, and horror toward the Egyptian.

"Assist me," cried she to Zadig, with the deepest sighs, "deliver me from the hands of the most barbarous man in the world. Save my life."

Moved by these pitiful cries, Zadig ran and threw himself between her and the barbarian. As he had some knowledge of the Egyptian language, he addressed him in that tongue.

"If," said he, "thou hast any humanity, I conjure thee to pay some regard to her beauty and weakness. How canst thou behave in this outrageous manner to one of the masterpieces of nature, who lies at thy feet, and hath no defence but her tears?"

"Ah, ah!" replied the madman, "thou art likewise in love with her. I must be revenged on thee too."

So saying, he left the lady, whom he had hitherto held with his hand twisted in her hair, and taking his lance attempted to

stab the stranger. Zadig, who was in cold blood, easily eluded the blow aimed by the frantic Egyptian. He seized the lance near the iron with which it was armed. The Egyptian strove to draw it back; Zadig to wrest it from the Egyptian; and in the struggle it was broken in two. The Egyptian draws his sword; Zadig does the same. They attack each other. The former gives a hundred blows at random; the latter wards them off with great dexterity. The lady, seated on a turf, re-adjusts her head-dress, and looks at the combatants. The Egyptian excelled in strength: Zadig in address. The one fought like a man whose arm was directed by his judgment; the other like a madman, whose blind rage made him deal his blows at random. Zadig closes with him, and disarms him; and while the Egyptian, now become more furious, endeavors to throw himself upon him, he seizes him, presses him close, and throws him down; and then holding his sword to his breast, offers him his life. The Egyptian, frantic with rage, draws his poniard, and wounds Zadig at the very instant that the conqueror was granting a pardon. Zadig, provoked at such brutal behavior, plunged his sword in the bosom of the Egyptian, who giving a horrible shriek and a violent struggle, instantly expired. Zadig then approached the lady, and said to her with a gentle tone:

"He hath forced me to kill him. I have avenged thy cause. Thou art now delivered from the most violent man I ever saw. What further, madam, wouldest thou have me do for thee?

"Die, villain," replied she, "thou hast killed my lover. O that

I were able to tear out thy heart!"

"Why truly, madam," said Zadig, "thou hadst a strange kind of a man for a lover; he beat thee with all his might, and would have killed thee, because thou hadst entreated me to give thee assistance."

"I wish he were beating me still," replied the lady with tears and lamentation. "I well deserved it; for I had given him cause to be jealous. Would to heaven that he was now beating me, and that thou wast in his place."

Zadig, struck with surprise, and inflamed with a higher degree of resentment than he had ever felt before, said:

"Beautiful as thou art, madam, thou deservest that I should beat thee in my turn for thy perverse and impertinent behavior. But I shall not give myself the trouble."

So saying, he remounted his camel, and advanced toward the town. He had proceeded but a few steps, when he turned back at the noise of four Babylonian couriers, who came riding at full gallop. One of them, upon seeing the woman, cried:

"It is the very same. She resembles the description that was given us."

They gave themselves no concern about the dead Egyptian, but instantly seized the lady. She called out to Zadig:

"Help me once more, generous stranger. I ask pardon for having complained of thy conduct. Deliver me again, and I will be thine for ever."

Zadig was no longer in the humor of fighting for her.

"Apply to another," said he, "thou shalt not again ensnare me in thy wiles."

Besides, he was wounded; his blood was still flowing, and he himself had need of assistance: and the sight of four Babylonians, probably sent by King Moabdar, filled him with apprehension. He therefore hastened toward the village, unable to comprehend why four Babylonian couriers should come and seize this Egyptian woman, but still more astonished at the lady's behavior.

X.
SLAVERY

As he entered the Egyptian village, he saw himself surrounded by the people. Every one said:

"This is the man who carried off the beautiful Missouf, and assassinated Clitofis."

"Gentleman," said he, "God preserve me from carrying off your beautiful Missouf. She is too capricious for me. And with regard to Clitofis, I did not assassinate him, I only fought with him in my own defence. He endeavored to kill me, because I humbly interceded for the beautiful Missouf, whom he beat most unmercifully. I am a stranger, come to seek refuge in Egypt; and it is not likely, that in coming to implore your protection, I should begin by carrying off a woman, and assassinating a man."

The Egyptians were then just and humane. The people conducted Zadig to the town-house. They first of all ordered his wound to be dressed, and then examined him and his servant apart, in order to discover the truth. They found that Zadig was not an assassin; but as he was guilty of having killed a man, the law condemned him to be a slave. His two camels were sold for the benefit of the town: all the gold he had brought with him was distributed among the inhabitants; and his person, as well as that of the companion of his journey, was exposed for sale in the market-place. An Arabian merchant, named Setoc, made the

purchase; but as the servant was fitter for labor than the master, he was sold at a higher price. There was no comparison between the two men. Thus Zadig became a slave subordinate to his own servant. They were linked together by a chain fastened to their feet, and in this condition they followed the Arabian merchant to his house.

By the way Zadig comforted his servant, and exhorted him to patience; but he could not help making, according to his usual custom, some reflections on human life. "I see," said he, "that the unhappiness of my fate hath an influence on thine. Hitherto everything has turned out to me in a most unaccountable manner. I have been condemned to pay a fine for having seen the marks of a bitch's feet. I thought that I should once have been empaled alive on account of a griffin. I have been sent to execution for having made some verses in praise of the king. I have been on the point of being strangled, because the queen had yellow ribbons; and now I am a slave with thee, because a brutal wretch beat his mistress. Come, let us keep a good heart; all this will perhaps have an end. The Arabian merchants must necessarily have slaves; and why not me as well as another, since, as well as another, I am a man? This merchant will not be cruel. He must treat his slaves well if he expects any advantage from them."

But while he spoke thus, his heart was entirely engrossed by the fate of the queen of Babylon.

Two days after, the merchant Setoc set out for Arabia Deserta, with his slaves and his camels. His tribe dwelt near the desert

of Oreb. The journey was long and painful. Setoc set a much greater value on the servant than the master, because the former was more expert in loading the camels, and all the little marks of distinction were shown to him. A camel having died within two days journey of Oreb, his burden was divided and laid on the backs of the servants; and Zadig had his share among the rest. Setoc laughed to see all his slaves walking with their bodies inclined. Zadig took the liberty to explain to him the cause, and inform him of the laws of the balance. The merchant was astonished, and began to regard him with other eyes. Zadig, finding he had raised his curiosity, increased it still further by acquainting him with many things that related to commerce; the specific gravity of metals and commodities under an equal bulk; the properties of several useful animals; and the means of rendering those useful that are not naturally so.

At last Setoc began to consider Zadig as a sage, and preferred him to his companion, whom he had formerly so much esteemed. He treated him well, and had no cause to repent of his kindness.

As soon as Setoc arrived among his own tribe he demanded the payment of five hundred ounces of silver, which he had lent to a Jew in presence of two witnesses; but as the witnesses were dead, and the debt could not be proved, the Hebrew appropriated the merchant's money to himself, and piously thanked God for putting it in his power to cheat an Arabian. Setoc imparted this troublesome affair to Zadig, who had now become his counsel.

"In what place," said Zadig, "didst thou lend the five hundred

ounces to this infidel?"

"Upon a large stone," replied the merchant, "that lies near the mountain of Oreb."

"What is the character of thy debter?" said Zadig.

"That of a knave," returned Setoc.

"But I ask thee, whether he is lively or phlegmatic; cautious or imprudent?"

"He is, of all bad payers," said Setoc, "the most lively fellow I ever knew."

"Well," resumed Zadig, "allow me to plead thy cause."

In effect, Zadig having summoned the Jew to the tribunal, addressed the judge in the following terms:

"Pillow of the throne of equity, I come to demand of this man, in the name of my master, five hundred ounces of silver, which he refuses to repay."

"Hast thou any witnesses?" said the judge.

"No, they are dead; but there remains a large stone upon which the money was counted; and if it please thy grandeur to order the stone to be sought for, I hope that it will bear witness. The Hebrew and I will tarry here till the stone arrives. I will send for it at my master's expense."

"With all my heart," replied the judge, and immediately applied himself to the discussion of other affairs.

When the court was going to break up, the judge said to Zadig:

"Well, friend, hath not thy stone yet arrived?"

The Hebrew replied with a smile:

"Thy grandeur may stay here till to-morrow, and after all not see the stone. It is more than six miles from hence and it would require fifteen men to move it."

"Well," cried Zadig, "did I not say that the stone would bear witness? Since this man knows where it is, he thereby confesses that it was upon it that the money was counted."

The Hebrew was disconcerted, and was soon after obliged to confess the truth. The judge ordered him to be fastened to the stone, without meat or drink, till he should restore the five hundred ounces, which were soon after paid.

The slave Zadig and the stone were held in great repute in Arabia.

XI.
THE FUNERAL PILE

Setoc, charmed with the happy issue of this affair, made his slave his intimate friend. He had now conceived as great an esteem for him as ever the king of Babylon had done; and Zadig was glad that Setoc had no wife. He discovered in his master a good natural disposition, much probity of heart, and a great share of good sense; but he was sorry to see that, according to the ancient custom of Arabia, he adored the host of heaven; that is, the sun, moon, and stars. He sometimes spoke to him on this subject with great prudence and discretion. At last he told him that these bodies were like all other bodies in the universe, and no more deserving of our homage than a tree or a rock.

"But," said Setoc, "they are eternal beings; and it is from them we derive all we enjoy. They animate nature; they regulate the seasons; and, besides, are removed at such an immense distance from us, that we cannot help revering them."

"Thou receivest more advantage," replied Zadig, "from the waters of the Red Sea, which carry thy merchandize to the Indies. Why may not it be as ancient as the stars? and if thou adorest what is placed at a distance from thee, thou shouldest adore the land of the Gangarides, which lies at the extremity of the earth."

"No," said Setoc, "the brightness of the stars commands my adoration."

At night Zadig lighted up a great number of candles in the tent where he was to sup with Setoc; and the moment his patron appeared, he fell on his knees before these lighted tapers, and said:

"Eternal and shining luminaries! be ye always propitious to me."

Having thus said, he sat down at the table, without taking the least notice of Setoc.

"What art thou doing?" said Setoc in amaze.

"I act like thee," replied Zadig, "I adore these candles, and neglect their master and mine."

Setoc comprehended the profound sense of this apologue. The wisdom of his slave sunk deep into his soul. He no longer offered incense to the creatures, but he adored the eternal Being who made them.

There prevailed at that time in Arabia a shocking custom, sprung originally from Scythia, and which, being established in the Indies by the credit of the Brahmins, threatened to over-run all the East. When a married man died, and his beloved wife aspired to the character of a saint, she burned herself publicly on the body of her husband. This was a solemn feast, and was called the Funeral Pile of Widowhood; and that tribe in which most women had been burned was the most respected. An Arabian of Setoc's tribe being dead, his widow, whose name was Almona, and who was very devout, published the day and hour when she intended to throw herself into the fire, amidst the sound of drums

and trumpets.

Zadig remonstrated against this horrible custom. He showed Setoc how inconsistent it was with the happiness of mankind to suffer young widows to burn themselves – widows who were capable of giving children to the state, or at least of educating those they already had; and he convinced him that it was his duty to do all that lay in his power to abolish such a barbarous practice.

"The women," said Setoc, "have possessed the right of burning themselves for more than a thousand years; and who shall dare to abrogate a law which time hath rendered sacred? Is there anything more respectable than ancient abuses?"

"Reason is more ancient," replied Zadig: "meanwhile, speak thou to the chiefs of the tribes, and I will go to wait on the young widow."

Accordingly, he was introduced to her, and after having insinuated himself into her good graces by some compliments on her beauty, and told her what a pity it was to commit so many charms to the flames, he at last praised her for her constancy and courage.

"Thou must surely have loved thy husband," said he to her, "with the most passionate fondness."

"Who, I?" replied the lady, "I loved him not at all. He was a brutal, jealous, and insupportable wretch; but I am firmly resolved to throw myself on his funeral pile."

"It would appear then," said Zadig, "that there must be a very delicious pleasure in being burnt alive."

"Oh! it makes me shudder," replied the lady, "but that must be overlooked. I am a devotee; I should lose my reputation; and all the world would despise me, if I did not burn myself."

Zadig having made her acknowledge that she burned herself to gain the good opinion of others, and to gratify her own vanity, entertained her with a long discourse calculated to make her a little in love with life, and even went so far as to inspire her with some degree of good will for the person who spoke to her.

"And what wilt thou do at last," said he, "if the vanity of burning thyself should not continue?"

"Alas!" said the lady, "I believe I should desire thee to marry me."

Zadig's mind was too much engrossed with the idea of Astarte not to elude this declaration; but he instantly went to the chiefs of the tribes, told them what had passed, and advised them to make a law by which a widow should not be permitted to burn herself, till she had conversed privately with a young man for the space of an hour. Since that time not a single widow hath burned herself in Arabia. They were indebted to Zadig alone for destroying in one day a cruel custom that had lasted for so many ages; and thus he became the benefactor of Arabia.

XII.
THE SUPPER

Setoc, who could not separate himself from this man in whom dwelt wisdom, carried Zadig to the great fair of Balzora, whither the richest merchants of the earth resorted. Zadig was highly pleased to see so many men of different countries united in the same place. He considered the whole universe as one large family assembled at Balzora. The second day he sat at table with an Egyptian, an Indian, an inhabitant of Cathay, a Greek, a Celtic, and several other strangers, who, in their frequent voyages to the Arabian Gulf, had learned enough of the Arabic to make themselves understood.

The Egyptian seemed to be in a violent passion. "What an abominable country," said he, "is Balzora! They refuse me a thousand ounces of gold on the best security in the world."

"How!" said Setoc. "On what security have they refused thee this sum?"

"On the body of my aunt," replied the Egyptian. "She was the most notable woman in Egypt; she always accompanied me in my journeys; she died on the road. I have converted her into one of the nest mummies in the world; and in my own country I could obtain any amount by giving her as a pledge. It is very strange that they will not here lend me a thousand ounces of gold on such a solid security."

Angry as he was, he was going to help himself to a bit of excellent boiled fowl, when the Indian, taking him by the hand, cried out in a sorrowful tone, "Ah! what art thou going to do?"

"To eat a bit of this fowl," replied the man who owned the mummy.

"Take care that thou dost not," replied the Indian. "It is possible that the soul of the deceased may have passed into this fowl; and thou wouldst not, surely, expose thyself to the danger of eating thy aunt? To boil fowls is a manifest outrage on nature."

"What dost thou mean by thy nature and thy fowls?" replied the choleric Egyptian. "We adore a bull, and yet we eat heartily of beef."

"You adore a bull! is it possible?" said the Indian.

"Nothing is more possible," returned the other; "we have done so for these hundred and thirty-five thousand years; and nobody amongst us has ever found fault with it."

"A hundred and thirty-five thousand years!" said the Indian. "This account is a little exaggerated. It is but eighty thousand years since India was first peopled, and we are surely more ancient than you are. Brahma prohibited our eating of ox-flesh before you thought of putting it on your spits or altars."

OANNES – THE FISH AVATAR

"The accompanying engraving of the fish-god is from a drawing by Gentil, given in *Calmet's Dictionary*. The god

was worshiped under the name of Dagon by the Syrians, and Oannes by the Chaldeans. The image represented the body of a fish with the head and arms of a man; and while all figures of the god are not exactly alike, they all combine a human form with that of a fish.

"Owing to the precession of the equinoxes," says the Rev. Mr. Maurice in the *Antiquities of India*, "after the rate of seventy-two years to a degree, a total alteration has taken place through all the signs of the ecliptic, insomuch that those stars which formerly were in Aries have now got into Taurus, and those of Taurus into Gemini. Now the vernal equinox, after the rate of that precession, could not have coincided with the first of May less than 4000 years before Christ."

An Avatar in the form of the celestial *Taurus* (♉) then occurred, and Osiris was worshiped in the form of a bull, by credulous believers. Next in the course of revolving years, we have the celestial *Aries*, (♈) and the god then became incarnate in the form of a lamb, and in that form received the adoration of devout multitudes. Later still the Zodiacal sign had progressed to *Pisces*, (♓) and mankind were then called upon to worship the astrological emblem of the amphibious being called Oannes – the sacred god of the land and the sea – whose representative on earth still claims to be the *Great Fisherman*, and who has entangled in the meshes of his net of faith the intellects and consciences of innumerable devotees.

"In Berosus and other authors," says Godfrey Higgins in the *Anacalypsis*, "the being half man, half fish, called

Oannes, is said to have come out of the Erythræan Sea, and to have taught the Babylonians all kinds of useful knowledge. This is clearly the fish Avatar of India; whether or not it be the I-oannes of Jonas I leave to the reader. I apprehend it is the same as the Dagon of Pegu and the fish sign of the Zodiac. Very little is known about it, but it exactly answers the description of an Avatar.

"The apostles of Jesus, I believe, were most of them fishermen. There are many stories of miraculous draughts of fish, and other matters connected with fishes, in the Gospel histories; and Peter, the son of John, I-oannes or Oannes, the great fisherman, inherited the power of ruling the church from the Lamb of God. The fisherman succeeded to the shepherd. The Pope calls himself the great fisherman, and boasts of the contents of his Poitrine.

"In the Pentateuch, which is the sacred book of the Israelites, we meet with no Dagon, Fish or God. But we do meet with it in the book of Judges. I believe this Dagon to be the fish Avatar of India – the Dagon of Syrian in Pegu; in fact the emblem of the entrance of the sun into Pisces.

"In the earliest time, perhaps, of which we have any history, God the creator was adored under the form or emblem of a Bull. After that, we read of him under the form of a calf or two calves, afterward in the form of the Ram and the Lamb, and the devotees were called lambs: then came the fish or two fishes. It is a fact, not a theory, that he was called a fish, and that the devotees were called Pisciculi or little fishes. I suppose few persons will attribute these appearances of system to accident. As we have *lambs*

and *little fishes* in the followers of the Ram, Aries, and the constellation Pisces, it is only in character to have the followers of the Bull called *calves*, and I am by no means certain that we have not them in the Cyclops.

"At first, no doubt, my reader will be very much surprised at the idea of the devotees having converted Jesus into the *fish* Avatar: but why was he called the lamb? And why were his followers called his flock, and his sheep, and his lambs? Not many circumstances are more striking than that of Jesus Christ being originally worshiped under the form of a Lamb – the actual lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. It does not appear to me to be more extraordinary that his followers, as it is admitted that they did, should call him a *fish* and the believers in him pisciculi, than that they should call him a lamb, and his followers lambs. He was originally represented as a lamb until one of the popes changed his effigy to that of a man on a cross. Applying the astronomical emblem of Pisces (♓) to Jesus, does not s seem more absurd than applying the astronomical symbol of the Lamb (♈). They applied to him the monogram of Bacchus, IHΣ; the astrological and alchymical mark or sign of Aries, or the Ram (♈) and, in short, what was there that was Heathenish that they have not applied to him? They have actually loaded his simple and sublime religion with every absurdity of Gentilism. I know not one absurdity that can be excepted."

In one of the windows of the Magnificent Cathedral of the Incarnation, erected by Mrs. A.T. Stewart, at Garden City, N.Y., is a painting representing the Sea of Tiberias.

The "risen Lord," clothed in rich robes of green, scarlet, and gold, is standing on the seashore, with four of the apostles. Prominent among them is the *great fisherman* St. Peter, who is grasping the end of a seine. In the background is seen the mast and rigging of a fishing boat. At the feet of Christ a fire is burning, and on the coals are *two fishes*, like the two fishes in the Zodiacal sign *Pisces* (♓). The artist has thus reproduced the ancient myth, regardless of its astrological origin, and the mythical fishes of the zodiac, with other ancient Pagan emblems, now symbolize Christian faith in the so-called Cathedral of the Incarnation. – E.

"This Brahma of yours," said the Egyptian, "is a pleasant sort of an animal, truly, to compare with our Apis. What great things hath your Brahma done?"

"It was he," replied the Brahmin, "that taught mankind to read and write, and to whom the world is indebted for the game of chess."

"Thou art mistaken," said a Chaldean who sat near him. "It is to the fish Oannes that we owe these great advantages; and it is just that we should render homage to none but him. All the world will tell thee, that he is a divine being, with a golden tail, and a beautiful human head; and that for three hours every day he left the water to preach on dry land. He had several children, who were kings, as every one knows. I have a picture of him at home, which I worship with becoming reverence. We may eat as much beef as we please; but it is surely a great sin to dress fish for the table. Besides, you are both of an origin too

recent and ignoble to dispute with me. The Egyptians reckon only a hundred and thirty-five thousand years, and the Indians but eighty thousand, while we have almanacs of four thousand ages. Believe me; renounce your follies; and I will give to each of you a beautiful picture of Oannes."

The man of Cathay took up the discourse, and said:

"I have a great respect for the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Greeks, the Celtics, Brahma, the bull Apis, and the beautiful fish Oannes; but I could think that Li, or Tien, as he is commonly called, is superior to all the bulls on the earth, or all the fish in the sea. I shall say nothing of my native country; it is as large as Egypt, Chaldea, and the Indies put together. Neither shall I dispute about the antiquity of our nation; because it is of little consequence whether we are ancient or not; it is enough if we are happy. But were it necessary to speak of almanacs, I could say that all Asia takes ours, and that we had very good ones before arithmetic was known in Chaldea."

"Ignorant men, as ye all are," said the Greek; "do you not know that Chaos is the father of all; and that form and matter have put the world into its present condition?"

The Greek spoke for a long time, but was at last interrupted by the Celtic, who, having drank pretty deeply while the rest were disputing, imagined he was now more knowing than all the others, and said, with an oath, that there were none but Teutat and the mistletoe of the oak that were worth the trouble of a dispute; that, for his own part, he had always some mistletoe in

his pocket, and that the Scythians, his ancestors, were the only men of merit that had ever appeared in the world; that it was true they had sometimes eaten human flesh, but that, notwithstanding this circumstance, his nation deserved to be held in great esteem; and that, in fine, if any one spoke ill of Teutat, he would teach him better manners.

The quarrel had now become warm, and Setoc feared the table would be stained with blood.

Zadig, who had been silent during the whole dispute, arose at last. He first addressed himself to the Celtic, as the most furious of the disputants. He told him that he had reason on his side, and begged a few mistletoes. He then praised the Greek for his eloquence, and softened all their exasperated spirits. He said but little to the man of Cathay, because he had been the most reasonable of them all. At last he said:

"You were going, my friends, to quarrel about nothing; for you are all of one mind."

At this assertion they all cried out in dissent.

"Is it not true," said he to the Celtic, "that you adore not this mistletoe, but him that made both the mistletoe and the oak?"

"Most undoubtedly," replied the Celtic.

"And thou, Mr. Egyptian, dost not thou revere, in a certain bull, him who created the bulls?"

"Yes," said the Egyptian.

"The fish Oannes," continued he, "must yield to him who made the sea and the fishes. The Indian and the Cathaian," added

he, "acknowledge a first principle. I did not fully comprehend the admirable things that were said by the Greek; but I am sure he will admit a superior being on whom form and matter depend."

The Greek, whom they all admired, said that Zadig had exactly taken his meaning.

"You are all then," replied Zadig, "of one opinion and have no cause to quarrel."

All the company embraced him.

Setoc, after having sold his commodities at a very high price, returned to his own tribe with his friend Zadig; who learned, upon his arrival, that he had been tried in his absence and was now going to be burned by a slow fire.

XIII.
THE RENDEZVOUS

During his journey to Balzora the priests of the stars had resolved to punish Zadig. The precious stones and ornaments of the young widows whom they sent to the funeral pile belonged to them of right; and the least they could now do was to burn Zadig for the ill office he had done them. Accordingly they accused him of entertaining erroneous sentiments of the heavenly host. They deposed against him, and swore that they had heard him say that the stars did not set in the sea. This horrid blasphemy made the judges tremble; they were ready to tear their garments upon hearing these impious words; and they would certainly have torn them had Zadig had wherewithal to pay them for new ones. But, in the excess of their zeal and indignation, they contented themselves with condemning him to be burnt by a slow fire. Setoc, filled with despair at this unhappy event, employed all his interest to save his friend, but in vain. He was soon obliged to hold his peace. The young widow, Almona, who had now conceived a great fondness for life, for which she was obliged to Zadig, resolved to deliver him from the funeral pile, of the abuse of which he had fully convinced her. She resolved the scheme in her own mind, without imparting it to any person whatever. Zadig was to be executed the next day. If she could save him at all, she must do it that very night; and the method taken by this charitable

and prudent lady was as follows:

She perfumed herself, she heightened her beauty by the richest and gayest apparel, and went to demand an audience of the chief priest of the stars. As soon as she was introduced to the venerable old man, she addressed him in these terms:

"Eldest son of the great bear, brother of the bull, and cousin of the great dog, (such were the titles of this pontiff,) I come to acquaint thee with my scruples. I am much afraid that I have committed a heinous crime in not burning myself on the funeral pile of my dear husband; for, indeed, what had I worth preserving? Perishable flesh, thou seest, that is already entirely withered." So saying, she drew up her long sleeves of silk, and showed her naked arms, which were of an elegant shape and a dazzling whiteness. "Thou seest," said she, that these are little worth. The priest found in his heart that they were worth a great deal. He swore that he had never in his life seen such beautiful arms. "Alas!" said the widow, "my arms, perhaps, are not so bad as the rest; but thou wilt confess that my neck is not worthy of the least regard." She then discovered the most charming neck that nature had ever formed. Compared to it a rose-bud on an apple of ivory would have appeared like madder on the box-tree, and the whiteness of new-washed lambs would have seemed of a dusky yellow. Her large black eyes, languishing with the gentle lustre of a tender fire; her cheeks animated with the finest pink, mixed with the whiteness of milk; her nose, which had no resemblance to the tower of Mount Lebanon; her lips, like two borders of

coral, inclosing the nest pearls in the Arabian Sea; all conspired to make the old man fancy and believe that he was young again. Almona, seeing his admiration, now entreated him to pardon Zadig. "Alas!" said he, "my charming lady, should I grant thee his pardon, it would be of no service, as it must necessarily be signed by three others, my brethren." "Sign it, however," said Almona. "With all my heart," said the priest. "Be pleased to visit me," said Almona, "when the bright star of Sheat shall appear in the horizon."

Almona then went to the second pontiff. He assured her that the sun, the moon, and all the luminaries of heaven, were but glimmering meteors in comparison to her charms. She asked the same favor of him, and he also granted it readily. She then appointed the second pontiff to meet her at the rising of the star Algenib. From thence she went to the third and fourth priest, always taking their signatures, and making an appointment from star to star. She then sent a message to the judges, entreating them to come to her house on an affair of great importance. They obeyed her summons. She showed them the four names, and told them that the priests had granted the pardon of Zadig. Each of the pontiffs arrived at the hour appointed. Each was surprised at finding his brethren there, but still more at seeing the judges also present. Zadig was saved; and Setoc was so charmed with the skill and address of Almona that he at once made her his wife.

Business affairs now required Setoc's presence in the island of Serendib; but during the first month of his marriage – the month

which is called the honeymoon – he could not permit himself to leave Almona, nor even to think he could ever leave her, and he requested Zadig to make the journey in his place. "Alas!" said Zadig, "must I put a still greater distance between the beautiful Astarte and myself? But it would be ungrateful not to serve my friend, and I will endeavor to do my duty."

Setoc and Zadig now took leave of each other with tears in their eyes, both swearing an eternal friendship, and promising to always share their fortunes with each other. Zadig then, after having thrown himself at the feet of his fair deliverer, set out on his journey to Serendib, still musing on the unhappy Astarte, and meditating on the severity of fortune, which seemed to persistently make him the sport of her cruelty and the object of her persecution.

"What!" said he to himself, "fined four hundred ounces of gold for having observed a bitch! condemned to lose my head for four bad verses in praise of the king! sentenced to be strangled because the queen had shoes the color of my turban! reduced to slavery for having succored a woman who was beaten! and on the point of being burned for having saved the lives of all the young widows of Arabia!"

XIII.(1)
THE DANCE

Arriving in due time at the island of Serendib, Zadig's merits were at once recognized, and he was popularly regarded as an extraordinary man. He became the friend of the wise and learned, the arbitrator of disputes, and the advisor of the small number of those who were willing to take advice. He was duly presented to the king, who was pleased with his affability, and soon chose him for his friend. But this royal favor caused Zadig to tremble; for he well remembered the misfortunes which the kindness of king Moabdar had formerly brought upon him. "I please the king," said he; "shall I not therefore be lost?" Still he could not refuse the king's friendship, for it must be confessed that Nabussan, king of Serendib, son of Nassanab, son of Nabassun, son of Sanbusna, was one of the most amiable princes in Asia.

But this good prince was always flattered, deceived, and robbed. It was a contest who should most pillage the royal treasury. The example set by the receiver-general of Serendib was universally followed by the inferior officers.

This the king knew. He had often changed his treasurers, but had never been able to change the established custom of dividing the revenues into two unequal parts, of which the smaller came to his majesty, and the larger to his officers.

This custom Nabussan explained to Zadig. "You, whose knowledge embraces so many subjects," said he, "can you not tell me how to select a treasurer who will not rob me?" "Assuredly," said Zadig; "I know a sure method for finding you a man who will keep his hands clean."

The king was charmed, and asked, while he embraced him, how this was to be done.

"You have only," said Zadig, "to cause all those who apply for the office of treasurer to dance. He who dances the lightest will surely prove to be the most honest man."

"You jest," said the king. "A strange way, certainly, of choosing a receiver of my revenues. What! do you pretend that he who cuts the neatest caper will be the most just and skillful financier?"

"I will not answer," returned Zadig, "for his being the most skillful, but I assure you he will be the most honest."

Zadig spoke with so much confidence that the king imagined he had some supernatural test for selecting honest financiers.

"I do not like the supernatural," said Zadig: "people and books dealing in prodigies have always displeased me. If your majesty will permit me to make the test, you will be convinced it is the easiest and simplest thing possible."

Nabussan consented, and was more astonished to hear that the test was simple, than if it had been claimed as a miracle.

"Leave all the details to me," said Zadig: "You will gain more by this trial than you imagine."

The same day he made proclamation in the king's name, that all candidates for the office of receiver-in-chief of the revenues of his gracious majesty Nabussan, son of Nussanab, must present themselves in dresses of light silk, on the first day of the month of the crocodile, in the king's anti-chamber. The candidates came, accordingly, to the number of sixty-four. Musicians were placed in an adjoining room, and all was prepared for the dance. As the door of the saloon was closed, it was necessary, in order to enter it, to pass through a small gallery which was slightly darkened. An usher directed each candidate in succession through this obscure passage, in which he was left alone for some moments. The king, being aware of the plan, had temptingly spread out in this gallery many of his choicest treasures. When all the candidates were assembled in the saloon, the king ordered the band to play and the dance to begin. Never had dancers performed more unwillingly or with less grace. Their heads were down, their backs bent, their hands pressed to their sides.

"What rascals!" murmured Zadig.

One alone danced with grace and agility, – his head up, his look assured, his body erect, his arms free, his motions natural.

"Ah, the honest man, the excellent man!" cried Zadig.

The king embraced this upright dancer, appointed him treasurer, and punished all the others with the utmost justice, for each one had, while passing through the gallery, filled his pockets till he could hardly walk. His majesty was distressed at this exhibition of dishonesty, and regretted that among these

sixty-four dancers there should be sixty-three thieves. This dark gallery was then named the Corridor of Temptation.

In Persia these sixty-three lords would have been impaled; in other countries a chamber of justice would have consumed in costs three times the money stolen, replacing nothing in the king's coffers; in yet another kingdom they would have been honorably acquitted, and the light dancer disgraced; in Serendib they were only sentenced to add to the public treasure, for Nabussan was very indulgent.

He was also very grateful, and willingly gave Zadig a larger sum than any treasurer had ever stolen from the revenue. This wealth Zadig used to send a courier to Babylon to learn the fate of queen Astarte. His voice trembled when directing the courier. His blood seemed to stagnate in his veins. His heart almost ceased to beat. His eyes were suffused with tears.

XIII.(2)
BLUE EYES

After the courier had gone, Zadig returned to the palace; and forgetting that he was not in his own room, almost unconsciously uttered the word LOVE.

"Ah! love," exclaimed the king, "that is indeed the cause of my unhappiness. You have divined what it is that causes me pain. You are indeed a great man. I hope you will assist me in my search for a woman, perfect in all respects, and of whose affection I may feel assured. You have proved your ability for this service by selecting for me an honest financier, and I have entire confidence in your success."

Zadig, having recovered his composure, promised to serve the king in love as he had in finance, although the task seemed to him far more difficult.

"The body and the heart," said the king.

At these words Zadig could not refrain from interrupting his majesty: "You show good taste," said he, "by not saying the mind and the heart; for we hear nothing but these words in the talk of Babylon. We see nothing but books which treat of the heart and mind, written by people who have neither the one nor the other: but pardon me, sire, and deign to continue."

"I have in my palace," said the king, "one hundred women who are all called charming, graceful, beautiful, affectionate even, or

pretending to be so when in my company; but I have too often realized that it is to the king of Serendib they pay court, and that they care very little for Nabussan. This pretended affection does not satisfy my desires. I would find a consort that loves me for myself, and who would willingly be all my own. For such a treasure I would joyfully barter the hundred beauties whose forced smiles afford me no delight. Let us see if out of these hundred queens you can select one true woman to bless me with her love."

Zadig replied to him as he had previously done in regard to the finances: "Sire, allow me to make the attempt, and permit me to again use the treasure formerly displayed in the Corridor of Temptation. I will render you a faithful account."

The king willingly acceded to this request, and permitted Zadig to do as he desired. He first chose thirty-three of the ugliest little hunchbacks that could be procured in Serendib, then thirty-three of the handsomest pages to be found, and, lastly, thirty-three bonzes, (priests), the most eloquent and robust he could select. He gave them all liberty to enter the king's private apartments in the palace, and secure a partner if they so desired. Each little hunchback had four thousand gold pieces given to him: and on the first day each had secured a companion. The pages, who had nothing to give but themselves, did not succeed in many cases until the end of two or three days. The priests had still more trouble in obtaining partners, but, finally, thirty-three devotees joined their fortunes with these pious suitors. The

king, through the blinds which opened into his apartments, saw all these trials, and was astounded. Of these hundred women, ninety-nine discarded his protection. There still remained one, however, still quite young, with whom his majesty had never conversed. They sent to her one, two, three hunchbacks, who displayed before her twenty thousand pieces of gold. She still remained firm, and could not refrain from laughing at the idea of these cripples, that wealth could change their appearance. They then presented before her the two most beautiful pages. She said she thought the king was still more beautiful. They attacked her with the most eloquent of the priests, and afterward with the most audacious. She found the first a prattler, and could not perceive any merit in the second.

"The heart," said she, "is everything. I will never yield to the hunchbacks' gold, the pages' vanity, or the pompous prattle of the priests. I love only Nabussan, son of Nussanab, and I will wait until he condescends to love me in return."

The king was transported with joy, astonishment, and love. He took back all the money that had brought success to the hunchbacks, and made a present of it the beautiful Falide, which was the name of this charming lady. He gave her his heart, which she amply deserved, for never were glances from female eyes more brilliant than her own, nor the charms of youthful beauty more enchanting. Envy, it is true, asserted that she courtesied awkwardly; but candor compels the admission that she danced like the fairies, acted like the graces, sang like the sirens, and

that she was in truth the very embodiment of intelligence and virtue. Nabussan loved and adored her; but, alas! she had BLUE EYES, and this apparently trivial fact was the cause of the gravest misfortunes.

There was an old law in Serendib forbidding the kings to marry those to whom the Greeks applied the word *Βοῶπις*. [17] A high-priest had established this law thousands of years ago. He had anathematized blue eyes in order that he might secure for himself the hand of the king's favorite. The various orders of the empire now remonstrated with Nabussan for disregarding this organic law and loving the beautiful Falide. They publicly asserted that the last days of the kingdom had arrived – that this act of royal love was the height of sacrilege – that all nature was threatened with a sinister ending – and all because Nabussan, son of Nussanab, loved two magnificent blue eyes. The cripples, the capitalists, the bonzes and the brunettes filled the kingdom with their complaints.

The barbarians of the northern provinces profited by the general discontent. They invaded the territory of the good Nabussan and demanded a tribute from his subjects. The priests, who possessed half the revenues of the state, contented themselves with raising their hands to heaven, and refused to put them in their coffers to aid the king. They chanted beautiful prayers, and left the state a prey to the invaders.

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[17] Having large, full, finely rounded eyes. In Homer, always applied to females, and most frequently to the goddess Juno, as a point of majestic beauty. – E.

"Oh! my dear Zadig," sadly cried Nabussan, "can you not rescue me from this impending danger?"

"Very willingly," replied Zadig: "you shall have for your defence as much money from the priests as you may desire. Leave, I pray you, without guard the property of the bonzes, and defend only your own possessions."

Nabussan wisely followed this advice. The priests became alarmed, threw themselves at his feet and implored his protection. The king replied with agreeable music, and chanted forth prayers and invocations to heaven with much sweetness and melody; finally, the priests reluctantly contributed the money, and the king brought the war to a happy termination.

Thus Zadig by his sensible advice and judicious services drew upon himself the enmity of the most powerful parties in the state. The bonzes and the brunettes swore to destroy him; the capitalists and the cripples did not spare him. They caused the good Nabussan to suspect him. "Services rendered often remain in the anti-chamber, and distrust enters into the cabinet." So said Zoroaster. Every day there were fresh accusations: the first is repelled; the second is lightly thought of; the third wounds; the fourth kills.

Zadig was dismayed, and having now satisfactorily arranged Setoc's affairs, he only thought of leaving the island in safety.

"But where shall I go?" said he. "If I remain in Serendib the priests will doubtless have me impaled; in Egypt I would probably be enslaved, burnt, according to all appearances, in

Arabia; strangled in Babylon. However, I must learn what has become of Queen Astarte, and will go on and see what sad fate destiny has still in store for me."

XIV.
THE ROBBER

Arriving on the frontiers which divide Arabia Petræa from Syria, he passed by a very strong castle from which a party of armed Arabians sallied forth. They instantly surrounded him and cried:

"All thou hast belongs to us, and thy person is the property of our master."

Zadig replied by drawing his sword; his servant, who was a man of courage, did the same. They killed the first Arabians that presumed to lay hands on them; and though the number was redoubled, they were not dismayed, but resolved to perish in the conflict. Two men defended themselves against a multitude; but such combat could not last long, the master of the castle, whose name was Arbogad, having observed from a window the prodigies of valor performed by Zadig, conceived a high esteem for this heroic stranger. He descended in haste, and went in person to call off his men and deliver the two travelers.

"All that passes over my lands," said he, "belongs to me, as well as what I find upon the lands of others; but thou seemest to be a man of such undaunted courage, that I will exempt thee from the common law."

He then conducted him to his castle, ordering his men to treat him well; and in the evening Arbogad supped with Zadig.

The lord of the castle was one of those Arabians who are commonly called robbers; but he now and then performed some good actions amidst a multitude of bad ones. He robbed with a furious rapacity, and granted favors with great generosity. He was intrepid in action; affable in company; a debauchee at table, but gay in his debauchery; and particularly remarkable for his frank and open behavior. He was highly pleased with Zadig, whose lively conversation lengthened the repast. At last Arbogad said to him:

"I advise thee to enroll thy name in my catalogue. Thou canst not do better. This is not a bad trade, and thou mayest one day become what I am at present."

"May I take the liberty of asking thee," said Zadig, "how long thou hast followed this noble profession?"

"From my most tender youth," replied the lord, "I was servant to a petty, good-natured Arabian, but could not endure the hardships of my situation. I was vexed to find that fate had given me no share of the earth which equally belongs to all men. I imparted the cause of my uneasiness to an old Arabian, who said to me:

"'My son, do not despair; there was once a grain of sand that lamented that it was no more than a neglected atom in the deserts; at the end of a few years it became a diamond, and it is now the brightest ornament in the crown of the king of the Indies.'

"This discourse made a deep impression on my mind. I was the grain of sand, and I resolved to become the diamond. I began

by stealing two horses. I soon got a party of companions. I put myself in a condition to rob small caravans; and thus, by degrees, I destroyed the difference which had formerly subsisted between me and other men. I had my share of the good things of this world; and was even recompensed with usury for the hardships I had suffered. I was greatly respected, and became the captain of a band of robbers. I seized this castle by force. The satrap of Syria had a mind to dispossess me of it; but I was too rich to have any thing to fear. I gave the satrap a handsome present, by which means I preserved my castle, and increased my possessions. He even appointed me treasurer of the tributes which Arabia Petræa pays to the king of kings. I perform my office of receiver with great punctuality; but take the freedom to dispense with that of paymaster.

"The grand Desterham of Babylon sent hither a petty satrap in the name of king Moabdar, to have me strangled. This man arrived with his orders. I was apprised of all. I caused to be strangled in his presence the four persons he had brought with him to draw the noose; after which I asked him how much his commission of strangling me might be worth. He replied, that his fees would amount to above three hundred pieces of gold. I then convinced him that he might gain more by staying with me. I made him an inferior robber; and he is now one of my best and richest officers. If thou wilt take my advice, thy success may be equal to his. Never was there a better season for plunder, since king Moabdar is killed, and all Babylon thrown into confusion."

"Moabdar killed!" said Zadig, "and what has become of queen Astarte?"

"I know not," replied Arbogad. "All I know is, that Moabdar lost his senses and was killed; that Babylon is a scene of disorder and bloodshed; that all the empire is desolated; that there are some fine strokes to be made yet; and that, for my own part, I have struck some that are admirable."

"But the queen," said Zadig; "for heaven's sake, knowest thou nothing of the queen's fate?"

"Yes," replied he, "I have heard something of a prince of Plircania. If she was not killed in the tumult, she is probably one of his concubines. But I am much fonder of booty than news. I have taken several women in my excursions, but I keep none of them. I sell them at a high price when they are beautiful, without enquiring who they are. In commodities of this kind rank makes no difference, and a queen that is ugly will never find a merchant. Perhaps I may have sold queen Astarte; perhaps she is dead; but, be it as it will, it is of little consequence to me, and I should imagine of as little to thee."

So saying, he drank a large draught, which threw all his ideas into such confusion that Zadig could obtain no farther information.

Zadig remained for some time without speech, sense, or motion. Arbogad continued drinking, constantly repeated that he was the happiest man in the world; and exhorted Zadig to put himself in the same condition. At last the soporiferous fume of

the wine lulled him into a gentle repose. Zadig passed the night in the most violent perturbation.

"What," said he, "did the king lose his senses? and is he killed? I cannot help lamenting his fate. The empire is rent in pieces: and this robber is happy. O fortune! O destiny! A robber is happy, and the most beautiful of nature's works hath perhaps perished in a barbarous manner, or lives in a state worse than death. O Astarte! what has become of thee?"

At day break, he questioned all those he met in the castle; but they were all busy and he received no answer. During the night they had made a new capture, and they were now employed in dividing the spoil. All he could obtain in this hurry and confusion was an opportunity of departing, which he immediately embraced, plunged deeper than ever in the most gloomy and mournful reflections.

Zadig proceeded on his journey with a mind full of disquiet and perplexity, and wholly employed on the unhappy Astarte on the king of Babylon, on his faithful friend Cador, on the happy robber Arbogad, on that capricious woman whom the Babylonians had seized on the frontiers of Egypt. In a word, on all the misfortunes and disappointments he had hitherto suffered.

XV.
THE FISHERMAN

At few leagues distance from Arbogad's castle he came to the banks of a small river, still deploring his fate, and considering himself as the most wretched of mankind. He saw a fisherman lying on the bank of the river, scarcely holding in his weak and feeble hand a net which he seemed ready to drop, and lifting up his eyes to heaven.

"I am certainly," said the fisherman, "the most unhappy man in the world. I was universally allowed to be the most famous dealer in cream-cheese in Babylon, and yet I am ruined. I had the most handsome wife that any man in my situation could have; and by her I have been betrayed. I had still left a paltry house, and that I have seen pillaged and destroyed. At last I took refuge in this cottage, where I have no other resource than fishing, and yet I cannot catch a single fish. Oh, my net! no more will I throw thee into the water; I will throw myself in thy place."

So saying, he arose and advanced forward, in the attitude of a man ready to throw himself into the river, and thus to finish his life.

"What," said Zadig, "are there men as wretched as I?"

His eagerness to save the fisherman's life was as sudden as this reflection. He runs to him, stops him, and speaks to him with a tender and compassionate air. It is commonly supposed that

we are less miserable when we have companions in our misery. This, according to Zoroaster, does not proceed from malice, but necessity. We feel ourselves insensibly drawn to an unhappy person as to one like ourselves. The joy of the happy would be an insult; but two men in distress are like two slender trees, which, mutually supporting each other, fortify themselves against the tempest.

"Why," said Zadig to the fisherman, "dost thou sink under thy misfortunes?"

"Because," replied he, "I see no means of relief. I was the most considerable man in the village of Derlback, near Babylon, and with the assistance of my wife I made the best cream-cheese in the empire. Queen Astarte, and the famous minister, Zadig, were extremely fond of them. I had sent them six hundred cheeses, and one day went to the city to receive my money; but, on my arrival at Babylon, was informed that the queen and Zadig had disappeared. I ran to the house of Lord Zadig, whom I had never seen; and found there the inferior officers of the grand Desterham, who being furnished with a royal license, were plundering it with great loyalty and order. From thence I flew to the queen's kitchen, some of the lords of which told me that the queen was dead; some said she was in prison; and others pretended that she had made her escape; but they all agreed in assuring me that I would not be paid for my cheese. I went with my wife to the house of Lord Orcan, who was one of my customers, and begged his protection in my present distress. He

granted it to my wife, but refused it to me. She was whiter than the cream-cheeses that began my misfortune, and the lustre of the Tyrian purple was not more bright than the carnation which animated this whiteness. For this reason Orcan detained her, and drove me from his house. In my despair I wrote a letter to my dear wife. She said to the bearer, 'Ha, ha! I know the writer of this a little. I have heard his name mentioned. They say he I makes excellent cream-cheeses. Desire him to send me some and he shall be paid.'

"In my distress I resolved to apply to justice. I had still six ounces of gold remaining. I was obliged to give two to the lawyer whom I consulted, two to the procurator who undertook my cause, and two to the secretary of the first judge. When all this was done, my business was not begun; and I had already expended more money than my cheese and my wife were worth. I returned to my own village, with an intention to sell my house, in order to enable me to recover my wife.

"My house was well worth sixty ounces of gold; but as my neighbors saw that I was poor and obliged to sell it, the first to whom I applied offered me thirty ounces, the second twenty, and the third ten. Bad as these offers were, I was so blind that I was going to strike a bargain, when a prince of Hircania came to Babylon, and ravaged all in his way. My house was first sacked and then burned.

"Having thus lost my money, my wife, and my house, I retired into this country, where thou now seest me. I have endeavored to

gain a subsistence by fishing; but the fish make a mock of thee as well as the men. I catch none; I die with hunger; and had it not been for thee, august comforter, I should have perished in the river."

The fisherman was not allowed to give this long account without interruption; at every moment, Zadig, moved and transported, said:

"What! knowest thou nothing of the queen's fate?"

"No my lord," replied the fisherman; "but I know that neither the queen nor Zadig have paid me for my cream-cheeses; that I have lost my wife, and am now reduced to despair."

"I flatter myself," said Zadig, "that thou wilt not lose all thy money. I have heard of this Zadig; he is an honest man; and if he return to Babylon, as he expects, he will give thee more than he owes thee. But with regard to thy wife, who is not so honest, I advise thee not to seek to recover her. Believe me, go to Babylon; I shall be there before thee, because I am on horseback, and thou art on foot. Apply to the illustrious Cador. Tell him thou hast met his friend. Wait for me at his house. Go, perhaps thou wilt not always be unhappy.

"O powerful Oromazes!" continued he, "thou employest me to comfort this man. Whom wilt thou employ to give me consolation?"

So saying, he gave the fisherman half the money he had brought from Arabia. The fisherman, struck with surprise and ravished with joy, kissed the feet of the friend of Cador, and said:

"Thou art surely an angel sent from heaven to save me!" Meanwhile Zadig continued to make fresh inquiries and to shed tears. "What! my lord," cried the fisherman, "and art thou then so unhappy, thou who bestowest favors?"

"A hundred times more unhappy than thee," replied Zadig.

"But how is it possible," said the good man, "that the giver can be more wretched than the receiver?"

"Because," replied Zadig, "thy greatest misery arose from poverty, and mine is seated in the heart."

"Did Orcan take thy wife from thee?" said the fisherman.

This word recalled to Zadig's mind the whole of his adventures. He repeated the catalogue of his misfortunes, beginning with the queen's bitch and ending with his arrival at the castle of the robber Arbogad.

"Ah!" said he to the fisherman, "Orcan deserves to be punished: but it is commonly such men as those that are the favorites of fortune. However, go thou to the house of Lord Cador, and there await my arrival."

They then parted: the fisherman walked, thanking heaven for the happiness of his condition; and Zadig rode, accusing fortune for the hardness of his lot.

XVI.
THE BASILISK

Arriving in a beautiful meadow, he there saw several women, who were searching for something with great application. He took the liberty to approach one of them, and to ask if he might have the honor to assist them in their search.

"Take care that thou dost not," replied the Syrian. "What we are searching for can be touched only by women."

"Strange," said Zadig. "May I presume to ask thee what it is that women only are permitted to touch?"

"It is a basilisk," said she.

"A basilisk, madam! and for what purpose, pray, dost thou seek for a basilisk?"

"It is for our lord and master, Ogul, whose castle thou seest on the bank of that river, at the end of that meadow. We are his most humble slaves. The lord Ogul is sick. His physician hath ordered him to eat a basilisk, stewed in rose-water; and as it is a very rare animal, and can only be taken by women, the lord Ogul hath promised to choose for his well-beloved wife the woman that shall bring him a basilisk. Let me go on in my search; for thou seest what I shall lose if I am forestalled by my companions."

THE BASILISK, OR COCKATRICE

The Basilisk, called "Cockatrice" in "holy writ," was first described by certain ancient historians of unquestioned imaginative ability, but of very doubtful veracity; and they have also enriched the popular mythology with minute descriptions of the Phoenix, the Griffin, the Centaur, the Chimera, the Unicorn, and many other fanciful and mythical creations.

The learned and pious naturalist, Charles Owen, D.D., of London, England, (from whose celebrated *Essay Towards a Natural History of Serpents*, published in 1742, the preceding engraving has been copied), tells us that "the Basilisk is a serpent of the Draconick line – the property of Africa; that in shape it resembles a cock, the tail excepted; that the Egyptians say it springs from the egg of the bird Ibis, and others, from eggs of a cock; that it is gross in body, of fiery eyes and sharp head, on which it wears a crest like a cock's comb; that it has the honor to be styled Regulus by the Latins —*the little king of serpents*; that it is terrible to them, and its voice puts them to flight, that, as tradition adds, its eyes and breath are killing; that dreadful things are attributed to it by the poets; and that, according to Pliny, the venom of the Basilisk is said to be so exalted, that if it bites a staff 'twill kill the person that makes use of it; but this," continues the reverend doctor of divinity, "is tradition without a voucher."

The "inspired" prophet Isaiah, whose writings are venerated by both Jews and Christians, and whose prophetic utterances have so long been discussed with more zeal than discretion by the sectarians, tells us, (Isaiah xiv. 29), that "Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a Cockatrice, and his fruit *shall be* a fiery, flying serpent." This somewhat incoherent prediction has never been satisfactorily explained by the learned commentators who are specially educated in our colleges for solving theological enigmas, and who have failed to show, to the confusion of scientists and the admiration of a believing world, how a Cockatrice may emerge from a "serpent's root," and why a Cockatrice's "fiery and flying fruit" should have formed a theme for prophetic inspiration. – E.

Zadig left her and the other Assyrians to search for their basilisk, and continued his journey through the meadow; when coming to the brink of a small rivulet, he found a lady lying on the grass, and who was not searching for any thing. Her person seemed majestic; but her face was covered with a veil. She was inclined toward the rivulet, and profound sighs proceeded from her bosom. In her hand she held a small rod with which she was tracing characters on the fine sand that lay between the turf and the brook.

Zadig had the curiosity to examine what this woman was writing. He drew near. He saw the letter Z, then an A; he was astonished: then appeared a D; he started. But never was surprise equal to his, when he saw the two last letters of his name. He

stood for some time immovable. At last breaking silence with a faltering voice:

"Oh! generous lady!" pardon a stranger, an unfortunate man, for presuming to ask thee by what surprising adventure I here find the name of Zadig traced out by thy divine hand?'

At this voice and these words, the lady lifted up the veil with a trembling hand, looked at Zadig, sent forth a cry of tenderness, surprise, and joy, and sinking under the various emotions which at once assaulted her soul fell speechless into his arms. It was Astarte herself; it was the queen of Babylon; it was she whom Zadig adored, and whom he had reproached himself for adoring; it was she whose misfortunes he had so deeply lamented, and for whose fate he had been so anxiously concerned. He was for a moment deprived of the use of his senses, when he had fixed his eyes on those of Astarte, which now began to open again with a languor mixed with confusion and tenderness:

"O ye immortal powers!" cried he, "who preside over the fates of weak mortals; do ye indeed restore Astarte to me? At what a time, in what a place, and in what a condition do I again behold her?"

He fell on his knees before Astarte, and laid his face in the dust at her feet. The queen of Babylon raised him up, and made him sit by her side on the brink of the rivulet. She frequently wiped her eyes, from which the tears continued to flow afresh. She twenty times resumed her discourse, which her sighs as often interrupted. She asked by what strange accident they were

brought together, and suddenly prevented his answer by other questions. She waived the account of her own misfortunes, and desired to be informed of those of Zadig. At last, both of them having a little composed the tumult of their souls, Zadig acquainted her in a few words by what adventure he was brought into that meadow.

"But, O unhappy and respectable queen! by what means do I find thee in this lonely place, clothed in the habit of a slave, and accompanied by other female slaves, who are searching for a basilisk, which, by order of the physician, is to be stewed in rose-water?"

"While they are searching for their basilisk," said the fair Astarte, "I will inform thee of all I have suffered, for which heaven has sufficiently recompensed me, by restoring thee to my sight. Thou knowest that the king, my husband, was vexed to see thee, the most amiable of mankind; and that for this reason he one night resolved to strangle thee and poison me. Thou knowest how heaven permitted my little mute to inform me of the orders of his sublime majesty. Hardly had the faithful Cador obliged thee to depart, in obedience to my command, when he ventured to enter my apartment at midnight by a secret passage. He carried me off, and conducted me to the temple of Oromazes, where the magi, his brother, shut me up in that huge statue, whose base reaches to the foundation of the temple, and whose top rises to the summit of the dome. I was there buried in a manner; but was served by the magi, and supplied with all

the necessaries of life. At break of day his majesty's apothecary entered my chamber with a potion composed of a mixture of henbane, opium, hemlock, black hellebore, and aconite; and another officer went to thine with a bowstring of blue silk. Neither of us were to be found. Cador, the better to deceive the king, pretended to come and accuse us both. He said that thou hadst taken the road to the Indies, and I that to Memphis; on which the king's guards were immediately dispatched in pursuit of us both.

"The couriers who pursured me did not know me. I had hardly ever shown my face to any but thee, and to thee only in the presence and by the order of my husband. They conducted themselves in the pursuit by the description that had been given of my person. On the frontiers of Egypt they met with a woman of the same stature with me, and possessed perhaps of greater charms. She was weeping and wandering. They made no doubt but that this woman was the queen of Babylon, and accordingly brought her to Moabdar. Their mistake at first threw the king into a violent passion; but having viewed this woman more attentively, he found her extremely handsome, and was comforted. She was called Missouf. I have since been informed that this name in the Egyptian language signifies the capricious fair one. She was so in reality; but she had as much cunning as caprice. She pleased Moabdar, and gained such an ascendency over him as to make him choose her for his wife. Her character then began to appear in its true colors. She gave herself up, without scruple, to all

the freaks of a wanton imagination. She would have obliged the chief of the magi, who was old and gouty, to dance before her; and on his refusal, she persecuted him with the most unrelenting cruelty. She ordered her master of the horse to make her a pie of sweetmeats. In vain did he represent that he was not a pastry-cook. He was obliged to make it, and lost his place because it was baked a little too hard. The post of master of the horse she gave to her dwarf, and that of Chancellor to her page. In this manner did she govern Babylon. Every body regretted the loss of me. The king, who till the moment of his resolving to poison me and strangle thee had been a tolerably good kind of man, seemed now to have drowned all his virtues in his immoderate fondness for this capricious fair one. He came to the temple on the great day of the feast held in honor of the sacred fire. I saw him implore the gods in behalf of Missouf, at the feet of the statue in which I was inclosed. I raised my voice; I cried out:

"'The gods reject the prayers of a king who is now become a tyrant, and who attempted to murder a reasonable wife, in order to marry a woman remarkable for nothing but her folly and extravagance.'

"At these words Moabdar was confounded and his head became disordered. The oracle I had pronounced, and the tyranny of Missouf, conspired to deprive him of his judgment, and in a few days his reason entirely forsook him.

"His madness, which seemed to be the judgment of heaven, was the signal for a revolt. The people rose, and ran to arms;

and Babylon, which had been so long immersed in idleness and effeminacy, became the theatre of a bloody civil war. I was taken from the heart of my statue and placed at the head of a party. Cador flew to Memphis to bring thee back to Babylon. The prince of Hircania, informed of these fatal events, returned with his army and made a third party in Chaldea. He attacked the king, who fled before him with his capricious Egyptian. Moabdar died pierced with wounds. Missouf fell into the hands of the conqueror. I myself had the misfortune to be taken by a party of Hircanians, who conducted me to their prince's tent, at the very moment that Missouf was brought before him. Thou wilt doubtless be pleased to hear that the prince thought me more beautiful than the Egyptian; but thou wilt be sorry to be informed that he designed me for his seraglio. He told me, with a blunt and resolute air, that as soon as he had finished a military expedition, which he was just going to undertake, he would come to me. Judge how great must have been my grief. My ties with Moabdar were already dissolved; I might have been the wife of Zadig; and I was fallen into the hands of a barbarian. I answered him with all the pride which my high rank and noble sentiment could inspire. I had always heard it affirmed that heaven stamped on persons of my condition a mark of grandeur, which, with a single word or glance, could reduce to the lowliness of the most profound respect those rash and forward persons who presume to deviate from the rules of politeness. I spoke like a queen, but was treated like a maid-servant. The Hircanian, without even deigning to

speak to me, told his black eunuch that I was impertinent, but that he thought me handsome. He ordered him to take care of me and to put me under the regimen of favorites, that, so my complexion being improved, I might be the more worthy of his favors when he should be at leisure to honor me with them. I told him, that, rather than submit to his desires, I would put an end to my life. He replied with a smile, that women, he believed, were not so blood-thirsty, and that he was accustomed to such violent expressions; and then left me with the air of a man who had just put another parrot into his aviary. What a state for the first queen in the universe, and, what is more, for a heart devoted to Zadig!"

At these words Zadig threw himself at her feet, and bathed them with his tears. Astarte raised him with great tenderness, and thus continued her story:

"I now saw myself in the power of a barbarian, and rival to the foolish woman with whom I was conned. She gave me an account of her adventures in Egypt. From the description she gave of your person, from the time, from the dromedary on which you were mounted, and from every other circumstance, I inferred that Zadig was the man who had fought for her. I doubted not but that you were at Memphis, and therefore resolved to repair thither. 'Beautiful Missouf,' said I, 'thou art more handsome than I, and will please the prince of Hircania much better. Assist me in contriving the means of my escape. Thou wilt then reign alone. Thou wilt at once make me happy and rid thyself of a rival.'

"Missouf concerted with me the means of my flight; and

I departed secretly with a female slave. As I approached the frontiers of Arabia, a famous robber, named Arbogad, seized me and sold me to some merchants who brought me to this castle where ford Ogul resides. He bought me without knowing who I was. He is a voluptuary, ambitious of nothing but good living, and thinks that God sent him into the world for no other purpose than to sit at table. He is so extremely corpulent, that he is always in danger of suffocation. His physician, who has but little credit with him when he has a good digestion, governs him with a despotic sway when he has eaten too much. He has persuaded him that a basilisk stewed in rose-water will effect a complete cure. The ford Ogul hath promised his hand to the female slave that brings him a basilisk. Thou seest that I leave them to vie with each other in meriting this honor; and never was I less desirous of finding the basilisk than since heaven hath restored thee to my sight."

This account was succeeded by a long conversation between Astarte and Zadig, consisting of every thing that their long suppressed sentiments, their great sufferings, and their mutual love, could inspire into hearts the most noble and tender, and the genii who preside over love carried their words to the sphere of Venus.

The women returned to Ogul without having found the basilisk. Zadig was introduced to this mighty lord, and spoke to him in the following terms:

"May immortal health descend from heaven to bless all thy

days! I am a physician. At the first report of thy indisposition I flew to thy castle, and have now brought thee a basilisk stewed in rose-water. Not that I pretend to marry thee. All I ask is the liberty of a Babylonian slave, who hath been in thy possession for a few days; and, if I should not be so happy as to cure thee, magnificent Lord Ogul, I consent to remain a slave in her place."

The proposal was accepted. Astarte set out for Babylon with Zadig's servant, promising, immediately upon her arrival, to send a courier to inform him of all that had happened. Their parting was as tender as their meeting. The moment of meeting, and that of parting are the two greatest epochs of life as sayeth the great book of Zend. Zadig loved the queen with as much ardor as he professed; and the queen loved Zadig more than she thought proper to acknowledge.

Meanwhile Zadig spoke thus to Ogul:

"My lord, my basilisk is not to be eaten; all its virtues must enter through thy pores. I have inclosed it in a little ball, blown up and covered with a fine skin. Thou must strike this ball with all thy might, and I must strike it back for a considerable time; and by observing this regimen for a few days, thou wilt see the effects of my art."

The first day Ogul was out of breath, and thought he should have died with fatigue. The second, he was less fatigued, and slept better. In eight days he recovered all the strength, all the health, all the agility and cheerfulness of his most agreeable years.

"Thou hast played at ball, and hast been temperate," said

Zadig. "Know that there is no such thing in nature as a basilisk; that temperance and exercise are the two great preservatives of health; and that the art of reconciling intemperance and health is as chimerical as the philosopher's stone, judicial astrology, or the theology of the magi."

Ogul's first physician observing how dangerous this man might prove to the medical art, formed a design, in conjunction with the apothecary, to send Zadig to search for a basilisk in the other world. Thus, after having suffered such a long train of calamities on account of his good actions, he was now upon the point of losing his life for curing a gluttonous lord. He was invited to an excellent dinner, and was to have been poisoned in the second course; but, during the first, he happily received a courier from the fair Astarte.

"When one is beloved by a beautiful woman," says the great Zoroaster, "he hath always the good fortune to extricate himself out of every kind of difficulty and danger."

XVII.
THE COMBATS

The queen was received at Babylon with all those transports of joy which are ever felt on the return of a beautiful princess who hath been involved in calamities. Babylon was now in greater tranquillity. The prince of Hircania had been killed in battle. The victorious Babylonians declared that the queen should marry the man whom they should choose for their sovereign. They were resolved that the first place in the world, that of being husband to Astarte and king of Babylon, should not depend on cabals and intrigues. They swore to acknowledge for king the man who, upon trial, should be found to be possessed of the greatest valor and the greatest wisdom. Accordingly, at the distance of a few leagues from the city, a spacious place was marked out for the list, surrounded with magnificent amphitheatres. Thither the combatants were to repair in complete armor. Each of them had a separate apartment behind the amphitheatres, where they were neither to be seen nor known by any one. Each was to encounter four knights; and those that were so happy as to conquer four, were then to engage with one another: so that he who remained the last master of the field, would be proclaimed conqueror at the games. Four days after he was to return to the same place, and to explain the enigmas proposed by the magi. If he did not explain the enigmas, he was not king; and the running at the lances was

to begin afresh, till a man should be found who was conqueror in both these combats; for they were absolutely determined to have a king possessed of the greatest wisdom and the most invincible courage. The queen was all the while to be strictly guarded. She was only allowed to be present at the games, and even there she was to be covered with a veil; but was not allowed to speak to any of the competitors, that so they might neither receive favor, nor suffer injustice.

These particulars Astarte communicated to her lover, hoping that, in order to obtain her, he would show himself possessed of greater courage and wisdom than any other person.

Zadig set out on his journey, beseeching Venus to fortify his courage and enlighten his understanding. He arrived on the banks of the Euphrates on the eve of this great day. He caused his device to be inscribed among those of the combatants, concealing his face and his name, as the law ordained; and then went to repose himself in the apartment that fell to him by lot. His friend, Cador, who after the fruitless search he had made for him in Egypt, had now returned to Babylon, sent to his tent a complete suit of armor, which was a present from the queen; as also from himself, one of the finest horses in Persia. Zadig presently perceived that these presents were sent by Astarte; and from thence his courage derived fresh strength, and his love the most animating hopes.

Next day, the queen being seated under a canopy of jewels, and the amphitheatres filled with all the gentlemen and ladies of

rank in Babylon, the combatants appeared in the circus. Each of them came and laid his device at the feet of the grand magi. They drew their devices by lot; and that of Zadig was the last. The first who advanced was a certain lord, named Itobad, very rich and very vain, but possessed of little courage, of less address, and scarcely of any judgment at all. His servants had persuaded him that such a man as he ought to be king. He had said in reply, "Such a man as I ought to reign;" and thus they had armed him cap-a-pie. He wore an armor of gold enameled with green, a plume of green feathers, and a lance adorned with green ribbons. It was instantly perceived by the manner in which Itobad managed his horse, that it was not for such a man as him that heaven reserved the sceptre of Babylon. The first knight that ran against him threw him out of his saddle: the second laid him flat on his horse's buttocks, with his legs in the air, and his arms extended. Itobad recovered himself, but with so bad a grace, that the whole amphitheatre burst out a laughing. The third knight disdained to make use of his lance; but, making a pass at him, took him by the right leg, and wheeling him half round, laid him prostrate on the sand. The squires of the games ran to him laughing, and replaced him in his saddle. The fourth combatant took him by the left leg, and tumbled him down on the other side. He was conducted back with scornful shouts to his tent, where, according to the law, he was to pass the night; and as he limped along with great difficulty, he said: "What an adventure for such a man as I!"

The other knights acquitted themselves with greater ability and success. Some of them conquered two combatants; a few of them vanquished three; but none but prince of Otamus conquered four. At last Zadig fought in his turn. He successively threw four knights off their saddles with all the grace imaginable. It then remained to be seen who should be conqueror, of Otamus or Zadig. The arms of the first were gold and blue, with a plume of the same color; those of the last were white. The wishes of all the spectators were divided between the knight in blue and the knight in white. The queen, whose heart was in a violent palpitation, offered prayers to heaven for the success of the white color.

The two champions made their passes and vaults with so much agility, they mutually gave and received such dexterous blows with their lances, and sat so firmly in their saddles, that every body but the queen wished there might be two kings in Babylon. At length, their horses being tired and their lances broken, Zadig had recourse to this stratagem: He passed behind the blue prince; springs upon the buttocks of his horse; seizes him by the middle; throws him on the earth; places himself in the saddle, and wheels around Otamus as he lay extended on the ground. All the amphitheatre cried out, "Victory to the white knight!" Otamus rises in a violent passion, and draws his sword; Zadig leaps from his horse with his sabre in his hand. Both of them are now on the ground, engaged in a new combat, where strength and agility triumph by turns. The plumes of their

helmets, the studs of their bracelets, and the rings of their armor are driven to a great distance by the violence of a thousand furious blows. They strike with the point and the edge; to the right, to the left; on the head, on the breast; they retreat; they advance; they measure swords; they close; they seize each other; they bend like serpents; they attack like lions; and the fire every moment flashes from their blows. At last Zadig, having recovered his spirits, stops; makes a feint; leaps upon Otamus; throws him on the ground and disarms him; and Otamus cries out:

"It is thou alone, O white knight, that oughtest to reign over Babylon!"

The queen was now at the height of her joy. The knight in blue armor, and the knight in white, were conducted each to his own apartment, as well as all the others, according to the intention of the law. Mutes came to wait upon them, and to serve them at table. It may be easily supposed that the queen's little mute waited upon Zadig. They were then left to themselves to enjoy the sweets of repose till next morning, at which time the conqueror was to bring his device to the grand magi, to compare it with that which he had left, and make himself known.

Zadig, though deeply in love, was so much fatigued that he could not help sleeping. Itobad, who lay near him, never closed his eyes. He arose in the night, entered his apartment, took the white arms and the device of Zadig, and put his green armor in their place. At break of day, he went boldly to the grand magi, to declare that so great a man as he was conqueror. This was

little expected; however, he was proclaimed while Zadig was still asleep. Astarte, surprised and filled with despair, returned to Babylon. The amphitheatre was almost empty when Zadig awoke; he sought for his arms but could find none but the green armor. With this he was obliged to cover himself, having nothing else near him. Astonished and enraged, he put it on in a furious passion and advanced in this equipage.

The people that still remained in the amphitheatre and the circus received him with hoofs and hisses. They surrounded him, and insulted him to his face. Never did man suffer such cruel mortifications. He lost his patience; with his sabre he dispersed such of the populace as dared to affront him; but he knew not what course to take. He could not see the queen; he could not claim the white armor she had sent him without exposing her; and thus, while she was plunged in grief, he was filled with fury and distraction. He walked on the banks of the Euphrates, fully persuaded that his star had destined him to inevitable misery; and revolving in his mind all his misfortunes, from the adventure of the woman who hated one-eyed men, to that of his armor:

"This," said he, "is the consequence of my having slept too long. Had I slept less, I should now have been king of Babylon, and in possession of Astarte. Knowledge, virtue, and courage, have hitherto served only to make me miserable."

He then let fall some secret murmurings against providence, and was tempted to believe that the world was governed by a cruel destiny, which oppressed the good, and prospered knights

in green armor.

XVIII.
THE HERMIT

One of Zadig's greatest mortifications was his being obliged to wear that green armor which had exposed him to such contumelious treatment. A merchant happening to pass by, he sold it to him for a trifle, and bought a gown and a long bonnet. In this garb he proceeded along the banks of the Euphrates, filled with despair, and secretly accusing providence, which thus continued to persecute him with unremitting severity.

While he was thus sauntering along, he met a hermit whose white and venerable beard hung down to his girdle. He held a book in his hand, which he read with great attention. Zadig stopped, and made him a profound obeisance. The hermit returned the compliment with such a noble and engaging air, that Zadig had the curiosity to enter into conversation with him. He asked him what book it was that he had been reading.

"It is the book of destinies," said the hermit. "Wouldst thou choose to look into it?"

He put the book into the hands of Zadig, who, thoroughly versed as he was in several languages, could not decipher a single character of it. This only redoubled his curiosity.

"Thou seemest," said the good father, "to be in great distress."

"Alas!" replied Zadig, "I have but too much reason."

"If thou wilt permit me to accompany thee," resumed the old

man, "perhaps I may be of some service to thee. I have often poured the balm of consolation into the bleeding heart of the unhappy."

Zadig felt himself inspired with respect for the dignity, the beard, and the book of the hermit. He found, in the course of the conversation, that he was possessed of superior degrees of knowledge. The hermit talked of fate, of justice, of morals, of the chief good, of human weakness, and of virtue and vice, with such a spirited and moving eloquence, that Zadig felt himself drawn toward him by an irresistible charm. He earnestly entreated the favor of his company till their return to Babylon.

"I ask the same favor of thee," said the old man. "Swear to me by Oromazes that, whatever I do, thou wilt not leave me for some days."

Zadig swore, and they set out together. In the evening the two travelers arrived at a superb castle. The hermit entreated a hospitable reception for himself and the young man who accompanied him. The porter, whom one might have mistaken for a great lord, introduced them with a kind of disdainful civility. He presented them to a principal domestic, who showed them his master's magnificent apartments. They were admitted to the lower end of the table, without being honored with the least mark of regard by the lord of the castle; but they were served, like the rest, with delicacy and profusion. They were then presented, in a golden basin adorned with emeralds and rubies, with water to wash their hands. At last they were conducted to bed in a

beautiful apartment; and in the morning a domestic brought each of them a piece of gold, after which they took their leave and departed.

"The master of the house," said Zadig, as they were proceeding on the journey, "appears to be a generous man, though somewhat too proud. He nobly performs the duties of hospitality."

At that instant he observed that a kind of large pocket, which the hermit had, was filled and distended; and upon looking more narrowly, he found that it contained the golden basin adorned with precious stones, which the hermit had stolen. He durst not then take any notice of it; but he was filled with a strange surprise.

About noon the hermit came to the door of a paltry house, inhabited by a rich miser, and begged the favor of an hospitable reception for a few hours. An old servant, in a tattered garb, received them with a blunt and rude air, and led them into the stable, where he gave them some rotten olives, sour wine, and mouldy bread. The hermit ate and drank with as much seeming satisfaction as he had done the evening before, and then addressing himself to the old servant who watched them both to prevent them stealing anything, and had rudely pressed them to depart, he gave him the two pieces of gold he had received in the morning, and thanked him for his great civility.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.