

НЕИЗВЕСТНЫЙ АВТОР

**THE ARABIAN
NIGHTS: THEIR BEST-
KNOWN TALES**

Неизвестный автор

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Their Best-known Tales**

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The Arabian Nights: Their Best-known Tales

PREFACE

Little excuse is needed, perhaps, for any fresh selection from the famous "Tales of a Thousand and One Nights," provided it be representative enough, and worthy enough, to enlist a new army of youthful readers. Of the two hundred and sixty-four bewildering, unparalleled stories, the true lover can hardly spare one, yet there must always be favourites, even among these. We have chosen some of the most delightful, in our opinion; some, too, that chanced to appeal particularly to the genius of the artist. If, enticed by our choice and the beauty of the pictures, we manage to attract a few thousand more true lovers to the fountain-book, we shall have served our humble turn. The only real danger lies in neglecting it, in rearing a child who does not know it and has never fallen under its spell.

You remember Maimoune, in the story of Prince Camaralzaman, and what she said to Danhasch, the genie who had just arrived from the farthest limits of China? "Be sure thou tellest me nothing but what is true or I shall clip thy wings!" This is what the modern child sometimes says to the genies of literature, and his own wings are too often clipped in consequence.

"The Empire of the Fairies is no more.
Reason has banished them from ev'ry shore;
Steam has outstripped their dragons and their cars,
Gas has eclipsed their glow-worms and their stars."

Édouard Laboulaye says in his introduction to Nouveaux Contes Bleus: "Mothers who love your children, do not set them too soon to the study of history; let them dream while they are young. Do not close the soul to the first breath of poetry. Nothing affrights me so much as the reasonable, practical child who believes in nothing that he cannot touch. These sages of ten years are, at twenty, dullards, or what is still worse, egoists."

When a child has once read of Prince Agib, of Gulnare or Periezade, Sinbad or Codadad, in this or any other volume of its kind, the magic will have been instilled into the blood, for the Oriental flavour in the Arab tales is like nothing so much as magic. True enough they are a vast storehouse of information concerning the manners and the customs, the spirit and the life of the Moslem East (and the youthful reader does not have to study Lane's learned foot-notes to imbibe all this), but beyond and above the knowledge of history and geography thus gained, there comes something finer and subtler as well as something more vital. The scene is Indian, Egyptian, Arabian, Persian; but Bagdad and Balsora, Grand Cairo, the silver Tigris, and the blooming gardens of Damascus, though they can be found indeed on the map, live much more truly in that enchanted realm that rises o'er "the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn." What craft can sail those perilous seas like the book that has been called a great three-decker to carry tired people to Islands of the Blest? "The immortal fragment," says Sir Richard Burton, who perhaps knew the Arabian Nights as did no other European, "will never be superseded in the infallible judgment of childhood. The marvellous imaginativeness of the Tales produces an insensible brightness of mind and an increase of fancy-power, making one dream that behind them lies the new and unseen, the strange and unexpected—in fact, all the glamour of the unknown."

It would be a delightful task to any boy or girl to begin at the beginning and read the first English version of these famous stories, made from the collection of M. Galland, Professor of Arabic in the Royal College of Paris. The fact that they had passed from Arabic into French and from French into

English did not prevent their instantaneous popularity. This was in 1704 or thereabouts, and the world was not so busy as it is nowadays, or young men would not have gathered in the middle of the night under M. Galland's window and cried: "O vous, qui savez de si jolis contes, et qui les racontez si bien, racontez nous en un!"

You can also read them in Scott's edition or in Lane's (both of which, but chiefly the former, we have used as the foundation of our text), while your elders—philologists or Orientalists—are studying the complete versions of John Payne or Sir Richard Burton. You may leave the wiseacres to wonder which were told in China or India, Arabia or Persia, and whether the first manuscript dates back to 1450 or earlier.

We, like many other editors, have shortened the stories here and there, omitting some of the tedious repetitions that crept in from time to time when Arabian story-tellers were adding to the text to suit their purposes.

Mr. Andrew Lang says amusingly that he has left out of his special versions "all the pieces that are suitable only for Arabs and old gentlemen," and we have done the same; but we have taken no undue liberties. We have removed no genies nor magicians, however terrible; have cut out no base deed of Vizier nor noble deed of Sultan; have diminished the size of no roc's egg, nor omitted any single allusion to the great and only Haroun Al-raschid, Caliph of Bagdad, Commander of the Faithful, who must have been a great inspirer of good stories.

Enter into this "treasure house of pleasant things," then, and make yourself at home in the golden palaces, the gem-studded caves, the bewildering gardens. Sit by its mysterious fountains, hear the splash of its gleaming cascades, unearth its magic lamps and talismans, behold its ensorcelled princes and princesses.

Nowhere in the whole realm of literature will you find such a Marvel, such a Wonder, such a Nonesuch of a book; nowhere will you find impossibilities so real and so convincing; nowhere but in what Henley calls:

*"... that blessed brief
Of what is gallantest and best
In all the full-shelved Libraries of Romance.
The Book of rocs,
Sandalwood, ivory, turbans, ambergris,
Cream-tarts, and lettered apes, and Calenders,
And ghouls, and genies—O so huge
They might have overed the tall Minster Tower,
Hands down, as schoolboys take a post;
In truth the Book of Camaralzaman,
Schemselnihar and Sinbad, Scheherezade
The peerless, Bedreddin, Badroulbador,
Cairo and Serendib and Candahar,
And Caspian, and the dim, terrific bulk—
Ice-ribbed, fiend-visited, isled in spells and storms—
Of Kaf ... That centre of miracles
The sole, unparalleled Arabian Nights."*

Kate Douglas Wiggin.

August, 1909.

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

"When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing time of time;
And many a sheeny summer morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

"Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomèd foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

THE TALKING BIRD, THE SINGING TREE, AND THE GOLDEN WATER

There was an emperor of Persia named Kosrouschah, who, when he first came to his crown, in order to obtain a knowledge of affairs, took great pleasure in night excursions, attended by a trusty minister. He often walked in disguise through the city, and met with many adventures, one of the most remarkable of which happened to him upon his first ramble, which was not long after his accession to the throne of his father.

After the ceremonies of his father's funeral rites and his own inauguration were over, the new sultan, as well from inclination as from duty, went out one evening attended by his grand vizier, disguised like himself, to observe what was transacting in the city. As he was passing through a street in that part of the town inhabited only by the meaner sort, he heard some people talking very loud; and going close to the house whence the noise proceeded, and looking through a crack in the door, perceived a light, and three sisters sitting on a sofa, conversing together after supper. By what the eldest said he presently understood the subject of their conversation was wishes: "for," said she, "since we are talking about wishes, mine shall be to have the sultan's baker for my husband, for then I shall eat my fill of that bread, which by way of excellence is called the sultan's; let us see if your tastes are as good as mine." "For my part," replied the second sister, "I wish I was wife to the sultan's chief cook, for then I should eat of the most excellent dishes; and as I am persuaded that the sultan's bread is common in the palace, I should not want any of that; therefore you see," addressing herself to her eldest sister, "that I have a better taste than you." The youngest sister, who was very beautiful, and had more charms and wit than the two elder, spoke in her turn: "For my part, sisters," said she, "I shall not limit my desires to such trifles, but take a higher flight; and since we are upon wishing, I wish to be the emperor's queen-consort. I would make him father of a prince, whose hair should be gold on one side of his head, and silver on the other; when he cried, the tears from his eyes should be pearls; and when he smiled, his vermilion lips should look like a rosebud fresh-blown."

The three sisters' wishes, particularly that of the youngest, seemed so singular to the sultan, that he resolved to gratify them in their desires; but without communicating his design to his grand vizier, he charged him only to take notice of the house, and bring the three sisters before him the following day.

The grand vizier, in executing the emperor's orders, would but just give the sisters time to dress themselves to appear before his majesty, without telling them the reason. He brought them to the palace, and presented them to the emperor, who said to them, "Do you remember the wishes you expressed last night, when you were all in so pleasant a mood? Speak the truth; I must know what they were." At these unexpected words of the emperor, the three sisters were much confounded. They cast down their eyes and blushed, and the colour which rose in the cheeks of the youngest quite captivated the emperor's heart. Modesty, and fear lest they might have offended by their conversation, kept them silent. The emperor, perceiving their confusion, said to encourage them, "Fear nothing, I did not send for you to distress you; and since I see that without my intending it, this is the effect of the question I asked, as I know the wish of each, I will relieve you from your fears. You," added he, "who wished to be my wife, shall have your desire this day; and you," continued he, addressing himself to the two elder sisters, "shall also be married to my chief baker and cook."

As soon as the sultan had declared his pleasure, the youngest sister, setting her elders an example, threw herself at the emperor's feet to express her gratitude. "Sir," said she, "my wish, since it is come to your majesty's knowledge, was expressed only in the way of conversation and amusement. I am unworthy of the honour you do me, and supplicate your pardon for my presumption." The other two sisters would have excused themselves also, but the emperor, interrupting them, said, "No, no; it

shall be as I have declared; the wishes of all shall be fulfilled." The nuptials were all celebrated that day, as the emperor had resolved, but in a different manner. The youngest sister's were solemnized with all the rejoicings usual at the marriages of the emperors of Persia; and those of the other two sisters according to the quality and distinction of their husbands; the one as the sultan's chief baker, and the other as head cook.

The two elder felt strongly the disproportion of their marriages to that of their younger sister. This consideration made them far from being content, though they were arrived at the utmost height of their late wishes, and much beyond their hopes. They gave themselves up to an excess of jealousy, which not only disturbed their joy, but was the cause of great trouble and affliction to the queen-consort, their younger sister. They had not an opportunity to communicate their thoughts to each other on the preference the emperor had given her, but were altogether employed in preparing themselves for the celebration of their marriages. Some days afterward, when they had an opportunity of seeing each other at the public baths, the eldest said to the other: "Well, what say you to our sister's great fortune? Is not she a fine person to be a queen!" "I must own," said the other sister, "I cannot conceive what charms the emperor could discover to be so bewitched by her. Was it a reason sufficient for him not to cast his eyes on you, because she was somewhat younger? You were as worthy of his throne, and in justice he ought to have preferred you."

"Sister," said the elder, "I should not have regretted if his majesty had but pitched upon you; but that he should choose that little simpleton really grieves me. But I will revenge myself; and you, I think, are as much concerned as I; therefore, I propose that we should contrive measures and act in concert: communicate to me what you think the likeliest way to mortify her, while I, on my side, will inform you what my desire of revenge shall suggest to me." After this wicked agreement, the two sisters saw each other frequently, and consulted how they might disturb and interrupt the happiness of the queen. They proposed a great many ways, but in deliberating about the manner of executing them, found so many difficulties that they durst not attempt them. In the meantime, with a detestable dissimulation, they often went together to make her visits, and every time showed her all the marks of affection they could devise, to persuade her how overjoyed they were to have a sister raised to so high a fortune. The queen, on her part, constantly received them with all the demonstrations of esteem they could expect from so near a relative. Some time after her marriage, the expected birth of an heir gave great joy to the queen and emperor, which was communicated to all the court, and spread throughout the empire. Upon this news the two sisters came to pay their compliments, and proffered their services, desiring her, if not provided with nurses, to accept of them.

The queen said to them most obligingly: "Sisters, I should desire nothing more, if it were in my power to make the choice. I am, however, obliged to you for your goodwill, but must submit to what the emperor shall order on this occasion. Let your husbands employ their friends to make interest, and get some courtier to ask this favour of his majesty, and if he speaks to me about it, be assured that I shall not only express the pleasure he does me but thank him for making choice of you."

The two husbands applied themselves to some courtiers, their patrons, and begged of them to use their interest to procure their wives the honour they aspired to. Those patrons exerted themselves so much in their behalf that the emperor promised them to consider of the matter, and was as good as his word; for in conversation with the queen he told her that he thought her sisters were the most proper persons to be about her, but would not name them before he had asked her consent. The queen, sensible of the deference the emperor so obligingly paid her, said to him, "Sir, I was prepared to do as your majesty might please to command. But since you have been so kind as to think of my sisters, I thank you for the regard you have shown them for my sake, and therefore I shall not dissemble that I had rather have them than strangers." The emperor therefore named the queen's two sisters to be her attendants; and from that time they went frequently to the palace, overjoyed at the opportunity they would have of executing the detestable wickedness they had meditated against the queen.

Shortly afterward a young prince, as bright as the day, was born to the queen; but neither his innocence nor beauty could move the cruel hearts of the merciless sisters. They wrapped him up carelessly in his cloths and put him into a basket, which they abandoned to the stream of a small canal that ran under the queen's apartment, and declared that she had given birth to a puppy. This dreadful intelligence was announced to the emperor, who became so angry at the circumstance, that he was likely to have occasioned the queen's death, if his grand vizier had not represented to him that he could not, without injustice, make her answerable for the misfortune.

In the meantime, the basket in which the little prince was exposed was carried by the stream beyond a wall which bounded the prospect of the queen's apartment, and from thence floated with the current down the gardens. By chance the intendant of the emperor's gardens, one of the principal officers of the kingdom, was walking in the garden by the side of this canal, and, perceiving a basket floating, called to a gardener who was not far off, to bring it to shore that he might see what it contained. The gardener, with a rake which he had in his hand, drew the basket to the side of the canal, took it up, and gave it to him. The intendant of the gardens was extremely surprised to see in the basket a child, which, though he knew it could be but just born, had very fine features. This officer had been married several years, but though he had always been desirous of having children, Heaven had never blessed him with any. This accident interrupted his walk: he made the gardener follow him with the child, and when he came to his own house, which was situated at the entrance to the gardens of the palace, went into his wife's apartment. "Wife," said he, "as we have no children of our own, God has sent us one. I recommend him to you; provide him a nurse, and take as much care of him as if he were our own son; for, from this moment, I acknowledge him as such." The intendant's wife received the child with great joy, and took particular pleasure in the care of him. The intendant himself would not inquire too narrowly whence the infant came. He saw plainly it came not far off from the queen's apartment, but it was not his business to examine too closely into what had passed, nor to create disturbances in a place where peace was so necessary.

The following year another prince was born, on whom the unnatural sisters had no more compassion than on his brother, but exposed him likewise in a basket and set him adrift in the canal, pretending, this time, that the sultana had given birth to a cat. It was happy also for this child that the intendant of the gardens was walking by the canal side, for he had it carried to his wife, and charged her to take as much care of it as of the former, which was as agreeable to her inclination as it was to his own.

The emperor of Persia was more enraged this time against the queen than before, and she had felt the effects of his anger if the grand vizier's remonstrances had not prevailed. The third year the queen gave birth to a princess, which innocent babe underwent the same fate as her brothers, for the two sisters, being determined not to desist from their detestable schemes till they had seen the queen cast off and humbled, claimed that a log of wood had been born and exposed this infant also on the canal. But the princess, as well as her brothers, was preserved from death by the compassion and charity of the intendant of the gardens.

Kosrouschah could no longer contain himself, when he was informed of the new misfortune. He pronounced sentence of death upon the wretched queen and ordered the grand vizier to see it executed.

The grand vizier and the courtiers who were present cast themselves at the emperor's feet, to beg of him to revoke the sentence. "Your majesty, I hope, will give me leave," said the grand vizier, "to represent to you, that the laws which condemn persons to death were made to punish crimes; the three extraordinary misfortunes of the queen are not crimes, for in what can she be said to have contributed toward them? Your majesty may abstain from seeing her, but let her live. The affliction in which she will spend the rest of her life, after the loss of your favour, will be a punishment sufficiently distressing."

The emperor of Persia considered with himself, and, reflecting that it was unjust to condemn the queen to death for what had happened, said: "Let her live then; I will spare her life, but it shall be on this condition: that she shall desire to die more than once every day. Let a wooden shed be built for her at the gate of the principal mosque, with iron bars to the windows, and let her be put into it, in the coarsest habit; and every Mussulman that shall go into the mosque to prayers shall heap scorn upon her. If any one fail, I will have him exposed to the same punishment; and that I may be punctually obeyed, I charge you, vizier, to appoint persons to see this done." The emperor pronounced his sentence in such a tone that the grand vizier durst not further remonstrate; and it was executed, to the great satisfaction of the two envious sisters. A shed was built, and the queen, truly worthy of compassion, was put into it and exposed ignominiously to the contempt of the people, which usage she bore with a patient resignation that excited the compassion of those who were discriminating and judged of things better than the vulgar.

The two princes and the princess were, in the meantime, nursed and brought up by the intendant of the gardens and his wife with the tenderness of a father and mother; and as they advanced in age, they all showed marks of superior dignity, which discovered itself every day by a certain air which could only belong to exalted birth. All this increased the affections of the intendant and his wife, who called the eldest prince Bahman, and the second Perviz, both of them names of the most ancient emperors of Persia, and the princess, Periezade, which name also had been borne by several queens and princesses of the kingdom.

As soon as the two princes were old enough, the intendant provided proper masters to teach them to read and write; and the princess, their sister, who was often with them, showing a great desire to learn, the intendant, pleased with her quickness, employed the same master to teach her also. Her vivacity and piercing wit made her, in a little time, as great a proficient as her brothers. From that time the brothers and sister had the same masters in geography, poetry, history, and even the secret sciences, and made so wonderful a progress that their tutors were amazed, and frankly owned that they could teach them nothing more. At the hours of recreation, the princess learned to sing and play upon all sorts of instruments; and when the princes were learning to ride she would not permit them to have that advantage over her, but went through all the exercises with them, learning to ride also, to bend the bow, and dart the reed or javelin, and oftentimes outdid them in the race and other contests of agility.

The intendant of the gardens was so overjoyed to find his adopted children so accomplished in all the perfections of body and mind, and that they so well requited the expense he had been at in their education, that he resolved to be at a still greater; for, as he had until then been content simply with his lodge at the entrance of the garden, and kept no country-house, he purchased a mansion at a short distance from the city, surrounded by a large tract of arable land, meadows, and woods. As the house was not sufficiently handsome nor convenient, he pulled it down, and spared no expense in building a more magnificent residence. He went every day to hasten, by his presence, the great number of workmen he employed, and as soon as there was an apartment ready to receive him, passed several days together there when his presence was not necessary at court; and by the same exertions, the interior was furnished in the richest manner, in consonance with the magnificence of the edifice. Afterward he made gardens, according to a plan drawn by himself. He took in a large extent of ground, which he walled around, and stocked with fallow deer, that the princes and princess might divert themselves with hunting when they chose.

When this country seat was finished and fit for habitation, the intendant of the gardens went and cast himself at the emperor's feet, and, after representing how long he had served, and the infirmities of age which he found growing upon him, begged that he might be permitted to resign his charge into his majesty's disposal and retire. The emperor gave him leave, with the more pleasure, because he was satisfied with his long services, both in his father's reign and his own, and when he granted it, asked what he should do to recompense him. "Sir," replied the intendant of the gardens, "I have

received so many obligations from your majesty and the late emperor, your father, of happy memory, that I desire no more than the honour of dying in your favour." He took his leave of the emperor and retired with the two princes and the princess to the country retreat he had built. His wife had been dead some years, and he himself had not lived above six months with his charges before he was surprised by so sudden a death that he had not time to give them the least account of the manner in which he had discovered them. The Princes Bahman and Perviz, and the Princess Periezade, who knew no other father than the intendant of the emperor's gardens, regretted and bewailed him as such, and paid all the honours in his funeral obsequies which love and filial gratitude required of them. Satisfied with the plentiful fortune he had left them, they lived together in perfect union, free from the ambition of distinguishing themselves at court, or aspiring to places of honour and dignity, which they might easily have obtained.

One day when the two princes were hunting, and the princess had remained at home, a religious old woman came to the gate, and desired leave to go in to say her prayers, it being then the hour. The servants asked the princess's permission, who ordered them to show her into the oratory, which the intendant of the emperor's gardens had taken care to fit up in his house, for want of a mosque in the neighbourhood. She bade them, also, after the good woman had finished her prayers, to show her the house and gardens and then bring her to the hall.

The old woman went into the oratory, said her prayers, and when she came out two of the princess's women invited her to see the residence, which civility she accepted, followed them from one apartment to another, and observed, like a person who understood what belonged to furniture, the nice arrangement of everything. They conducted her also into the garden, the disposition of which she found so well planned, that she admired it, observing that the person who had formed it must have been an excellent master of his art. Afterward she was brought before the princess, who waited for her in the great hall, which in beauty and richness exceeded all that she had admired in the other apartments.

As soon as the princess saw the devout woman, she said to her: "My good mother, come near and sit down by me. I am overjoyed at the happiness of having the opportunity of profiting for some moments by the example and conversation of such a person as you, who have taken the right way by dedicating yourself to the service of God. I wish every one were as wise."

The devout woman, instead of sitting on a sofa, would only sit upon the edge of one. The princess would not permit her to do so, but rising from her seat and taking her by the hand, obliged her to come and sit by her. The good woman, sensible of the civility, said: "Madam, I ought not to have so much respect shown me; but since you command, and are mistress of your own house, I will obey you." When she had seated herself, before they entered into any conversation, one of the princess's women brought a low stand of mother-of-pearl and ebony, with a china dish full of cakes upon it, and many others set round it full of fruits in season, and wet and dry sweetmeats.

The princess took up one of the cakes, and presenting her with it, said: "Eat, good mother, and make choice of what you like best; you had need to eat after coming so far." "Madam," replied the good woman, "I am not used to eat such delicacies, but will not refuse what God has sent me by so liberal a hand as yours."

While the devout woman was eating, the princess ate a little too, to bear her company, and asked her many questions upon the exercise of devotion which she practised and how she lived; all of which she answered with great modesty. Talking of various things, at last the princess asked her what she thought of the house, and how she liked it.

"Madam," answered the devout woman, "I must certainly have very bad taste to disapprove anything in it, since it is beautiful, regular, and magnificently furnished with exactness and judgment, and all its ornaments adjusted in the best manner. Its situation is an agreeable spot, and no garden can be more delightful; but yet, if you will give me leave to speak my mind freely, I will take the liberty to tell you that this house would be incomparable if it had three things which are wanting to

complete it." "My good mother," replied the Princess Periezade, "what are those? I entreat you to tell me what they are; I will spare nothing to get them."

"Madam," replied the devout woman, "the first of these three things is the Talking Bird, so singular a creature, that it draws round it all the songsters of the neighbourhood which come to accompany its voice. The second is the Singing Tree, the leaves of which are so many mouths which form an harmonious concert of different voices and never cease. The third is the Golden Water, a single drop of which being poured into a vessel properly prepared, it increases so as to fill it immediately, and rises up in the middle like a fountain, which continually plays, and yet the basin never overflows."

"Ah! my good mother," cried the princess, "how much am I obliged to you for the knowledge of these curiosities! I never before heard there were such rarities in the world; but as I am persuaded that you know, I expect that you should do me the favour to inform me where they are to be found."

"Madam," replied the good woman, "I should be unworthy the hospitality you have shown me if I should refuse to satisfy your curiosity on that point, and am glad to have the honour to tell you that these curiosities are all to be met with in the same spot on the confines of this kingdom, toward India. The road lies before your house, and whoever you send needs but follow it for twenty days, and on the twentieth only let him ask the first person he meets where the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water are, and he will be informed." After saying this, she rose from her seat, took her leave, and went her way.

The Princess Periezade's thoughts were so taken up with the Talking Bird, Singing Tree, and Golden Water, that she never perceived the devout woman's departure, till she wanted to ask her some question for her better information; for she thought that what she had been told was not a sufficient reason for exposing herself by undertaking a long journey. However, she would not send after her visitor, but endeavoured to remember all the directions, and when she thought she had recollected every word, took real pleasure in thinking of the satisfaction she should have if she could get these curiosities into her possession; but the difficulties she apprehended and the fear of not succeeding made her very uneasy.

She was absorbed in these thoughts when her brothers returned from hunting, who, when they entered the great hall, instead of finding her lively and gay, as she was wont to be, were amazed to see her so pensive and hanging down her head as if something troubled her.

"Sister," said Prince Bahman, "what is become of all your mirth and gaiety? Are you not well? or has some misfortune befallen you? Tell us, that we may know how to act, and give you some relief. If any one has affronted you, we will resent his insolence."

The princess remained in the same posture some time without answering, but at last lifted up her eyes to look at her brothers, and then held them down again, telling them nothing disturbed her.

"Sister," said Prince Bahman, "you conceal the truth from us; there must be something of consequence. It is impossible we could observe so sudden a change if nothing was the matter with you. You would not have us satisfied with the evasive answer you have given; do not conceal anything, unless you would have us suspect that you renounce the strict union which has hitherto subsisted between us."

The princess, who had not the smallest intention to offend her brothers, would not suffer them to entertain such a thought, but said: "When I told you nothing disturbed me, I meant nothing that was of importance to you, but to me it is of some consequence; and since you press me to tell you by our strict union and friendship, which are so dear to me, I will. You think, and I always believed so too, that this house was so complete that nothing was wanting. But this day I have learned that it lacks three rarities which would render it so perfect that no country seat in the world could be compared with it. These three things are the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water." After she had informed them wherein consisted the excellency of these rarities, "A devout woman," added she, "has made this discovery to me, told me the place where they are to be found, and the way thither.

Perhaps you may imagine these things of little consequence; that without these additions our house will always be thought sufficiently elegant, and that we can do without them. You may think as you please, but I cannot help telling you that I am persuaded they are absolutely necessary, and I shall not be easy without them. Therefore, whether you value them or not, I desire you to consider what person you may think proper for me to send in search of the curiosities I have mentioned."

"Sister," replied Prince Bahman, "nothing can concern you in which we have not an equal interest. It is enough that you desire these things to oblige us to take the same interest; but if you had not, we feel ourselves inclined of our own accord and for our own individual satisfaction. I am persuaded my brother is of the same opinion, and therefore we ought to undertake this conquest, for the importance and singularity of the undertaking deserve that name. I will take the charge upon myself; only tell me the place and the way to it, and I will defer my journey no longer than till tomorrow."

"Brother," said Prince Perviz, "it is not proper that you, who are the head of our family, should be absent. I desire my sister should join with me to oblige you to abandon your design, and allow me to undertake it. I hope to acquit myself as well as you, and it will be a more regular proceeding." "I am persuaded of your goodwill, brother," replied Prince Bahman, "and that you would succeed as well as myself in this journey; but I have resolved and will undertake it. You shall stay at home with our sister, and I need not recommend her to you."

The next morning Bahman mounted his horse, and Perviz and the princess embraced and wished him a good journey. But in the midst of their adieus, the princess recollected what she had not thought of before. "Brother," said she, "I had quite forgotten the accidents which attend travellers. Who knows whether I shall ever see you again? Alight, I beseech you, and give up this journey. I would rather be deprived of the sight and possession of the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water, than run the risk of never seeing you more."

"Sister," replied Bahman, smiling at her sudden fears, "my resolution is fixed. The accidents you speak of befall only those who are unfortunate; but there are more who are not so. However, as events are uncertain, and I may fail in this undertaking, all I can do is to leave you this knife."

Bahman pulling a knife from his vestband, and presenting it to the princess in the sheath, said: "Take this knife, sister, and give yourself the trouble sometimes to pull it out of the sheath; while you see it clean as it is now, it will be a sign that I am alive; but if you find it stained with blood, then you may believe me dead and indulge me with your prayers."

The princess could obtain nothing more of Bahman. He bade adieu to her and Prince Perviz for the last time and rode away. When he got into the road, he never turned to the right hand nor to the left, but went directly forward toward India. The twentieth day he perceived on the roadside a hideous old man, who sat under a tree near a thatched house, which was his retreat from the weather.

His eyebrows were as white as snow, as was also the hair of his head; his whiskers covered his mouth, and his beard and hair reached down to his feet. The nails of his hands and feet were grown to an extensive length, while a flat, broad umbrella covered his head. He had no clothes, but only a mat thrown round his body. This old man was a dervish for so many years retired from the world to give himself up entirely to the service of God that at last he had become what we have described.

Prince Bahman, who had been all that morning very attentive, to see if he could meet with anybody who could give him information of the place he was in search of, stopped when he came near the dervish, alighted, in conformity to the directions which the devout woman had given the Princess Periezade, and leading his horse by the bridle, advanced toward him and saluting him, said: "God prolong your days, good father, and grant you the accomplishment of your desires."

The dervish returned the prince's salutation, but so unintelligibly that he could not understand one word he said and Prince Bahman, perceiving that this difficulty proceeded from the dervish's whiskers hanging over his mouth, and unwilling to go any further without the instructions he wanted, pulled out a pair of scissors he had about him, and having tied his horse to a branch of the tree,

said: "Good dervish, I want to have some talk with you, but your whiskers prevent my understanding what you say; and if you will consent, I will cut off some part of them and of your eyebrows, which disfigure you so much that you look more like a bear than a man."

The dervish did not oppose the offer, and when the prince had cut off as much hair as he thought fit, he perceived that the dervish had a good complexion, and that he was not as old as he seemed. "Good dervish," said he, "if I had a glass I would show you how young you look: you are now a man, but before, nobody could tell what you were."

The kind behaviour of Prince Bahman made the dervish smile and return his compliment. "Sir," said he, "whoever you are, I am obliged by the good office you have performed, and am ready to show my gratitude by doing anything in my power for you. You must have alighted here upon some account or other. Tell me what it is, and I will endeavour to serve you."

"Good dervish," replied Prince Bahman, "I am in search of the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water; I know these three rarities are not far from hence, but cannot tell exactly the place where they are to be found; if you know, I conjure you to show me the way, that I may not lose my labour after so long a journey."

The prince, while he spoke, observed that the dervish changed countenance, held down his eyes, looked very serious, and remained silent, which obliged him to say to him again: "Good father, tell me whether you know what I ask you, that I may not lose my time, but inform myself somewhere else."

At last the dervish broke silence. "Sir," said he to Prince Bahman, "I know the way you ask of me; but the regard which I conceived for you the first moment I saw you, and which is grown stronger by the service you have done me, kept me in suspense as to whether I should give you the satisfaction you desire." "What motive can hinder you?" replied the prince; "and what difficulties do you find in so doing?" "I will tell you," replied the dervish; "the danger to which you are going to expose yourself is greater than you may suppose. A number of gentlemen of as much bravery as you can possibly possess have passed this way, and asked me the same question. When I had used all my endeavours to persuade them to desist, they would not believe me; at last I yielded to their importunities; I was compelled to show them the way, and I can assure you they have all perished, for I have not seen one come back. Therefore, if you have any regard for your life, take my advice, go no farther, but return home."

Prince Bahman persisted in his resolution. "I will not suppose," said he to the dervish, "but that your advice is sincere. I am obliged to you for the friendship you express for me; but whatever may be the danger, nothing shall make me change my intention: whoever attacks me, I am well armed, and can say I am as brave as any one." "But they who will attack you are not to be seen," replied the dervish; "how will you defend yourself against invisible persons?" "It is no matter," answered the prince, "all you say shall not persuade me to do anything contrary to my duty. Since you know the way, I conjure you once more to inform me."

When the dervish found he could not prevail upon Prince Bahman, and that he was obstinately bent to pursue his journey, notwithstanding his friendly remonstrance, he put his hand into a bag that lay by him and pulled out a bowl, which he presented to him. "Since I cannot prevail on you to attend to my advice," said he, "take this bowl and when you are on horseback throw it before you, and follow it to the foot of a mountain, where it will stop. As soon as the bowl stops, alight, leave your horse with the bridle over his neck, and he will stand in the same place till you return. As you ascend you will see on your right and left a great number of large black stones, and will hear on all sides a confusion of voices, which will utter a thousand abuses to discourage you, and prevent your reaching the summit of the mountain. Be not afraid; but, above all things, do not turn your head to look behind you, for in that instant you will be changed into such a black stone as those you see, which are all youths who have failed in this enterprise. If you escape the danger of which I give you but a faint idea, and get to the top of the mountain, you will see a cage, and in that cage is the bird you seek; ask him which are the Singing Tree and the Golden Water, and he will tell you. I have nothing more to say; this is what

you have to do, and if you are prudent you will take my advice and not expose your life. Consider once more while you have time that the difficulties are almost insuperable."

"I am obliged to you for your advice," replied Prince Bahman, after he had received the bowl, "but cannot follow it. However, I will endeavour to conform myself to that part of it which bids me not to look behind me, and I hope to come and thank you when I have obtained what I am seeking." After these words, to which the dervish made no other answer than that he should be overjoyed to see him again, the prince mounted his horse, took leave of the dervish with a respectful salute, and threw the bowl before him.

The bowl rolled away with as much swiftness as when Prince Bahman first hurled it from his hand, which obliged him to put his horse to the same pace to avoid losing sight of it, and when it had reached the foot of the mountain it stopped. The prince alighted from his horse, laid the bridle on his neck, and having first surveyed the mountain and seen the black stones, began to ascend, but had not gone four steps before he heard the voices mentioned by the dervish, though he could see nobody. Some said: "Where is that fool going? Where is he going? What would he have? Do not let him pass." Others: "Stop him, catch him, kill him:" and others with a voice like thunder: "Thief! assassin! murderer!" while some in a gibing tone cried: "No, no, do not hurt him; let the pretty fellow pass, the cage and bird are kept for him."

Notwithstanding all these troublesome voices, Prince Bahman ascended with resolution for some time, but the voices redoubled with so loud a din, both behind and before, that at last he was seized with dread, his legs trembled under him, he staggered, and finding that his strength failed him, he forgot the dervish's advice, turned about to run down the hill, and was that instant changed into a black stone; a metamorphosis which had happened to many before him who had attempted the ascent. His horse, likewise, underwent the same change.

From the time of Prince Bahman's departure, the Princess Periezade always wore the knife and sheath in her girdle, and pulled it out several times in a day, to know whether her brother was alive. She had the consolation to understand he was in perfect health and to talk of him frequently with Prince Perviz. On the fatal day that Prince Bahman was transformed into a stone, as Prince Perviz and the princess were talking together in the evening, as usual, the prince desired his sister to pull out the knife to know how their brother did. The princess readily complied, and seeing the blood run down the point was seized with so much horror that she threw it down. "Ah! my dear brother," cried she, "I have been the cause of your death, and shall never see you more! Why did I tell you of the Talking Bird, Singing Tree, and Golden Water; or rather, of what importance was it to me to know whether the devout woman thought this house ugly or handsome, or complete or not? I wish to Heaven she had never addressed herself to me!"

Prince Perviz was as much afflicted at the death of Prince Bahman as the princess, but not to waste time in needless regret, as he knew that she still passionately desired possession of the marvellous treasures, he interrupted her, saying: "Sister, our regret for our brother is vain; our lamentations cannot restore him to life; it is the will of God; we must submit and adore the decrees of the Almighty without searching into them. Why should you now doubt of the truth of what the holy woman told you? Do you think she spoke to you of three things that were not in being, and that she invented them to deceive you who had received her with so much goodness and civility? Let us rather believe that our brother's death is owing to some error on his part, or some accident which we cannot conceive. It ought not therefore to prevent us from pursuing our object. I offered to go this journey, and am now more resolved than ever; his example has no effect upon my resolution; to-morrow I will depart."

The princess did all she could to dissuade Prince Perviz, conjuring him not to expose her to the danger of losing two brothers; but he was obstinate, and all the remonstrances she could urge had no effect upon him. Before he went, that she might know what success he had, he left her a string of a hundred pearls, telling her that if they would not run when she should count them upon the string,

but remain fixed, that would be a certain sign he had undergone the same fate as his brother; but at the same time told her he hoped it would never happen, but that he should have the delight of seeing her again.

Prince Perviz, on the twentieth day after his departure, met the same dervish in the same place as his brother Bahman had done before him. He went directly up to him, and after he had saluted, asked him if he could tell him where to find the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water. The dervish urged the same remonstrances as he had done to Prince Bahman, telling him that a young gentleman, who very much resembled him, was with him a short time before; that, overcome by his importunity, he had shown him the way, given him a guide, and told him how he should act to succeed, but that he had not seen him since, and doubted not but he had shared the same fate as all other adventurers.

"Good dervish," answered Prince Perviz, "I know whom you speak of; he was my elder brother, and I am informed of the certainty of his death, but know not the cause." "I can tell you," replied the dervish; "he was changed into a black stone, as all I speak of have been; and you must expect the same transformation, unless you observe more exactly than he has done the advice I gave him, in case you persist in your resolution, which I once more entreat you to renounce."

"Dervish," said Prince Perviz, "I cannot sufficiently express how much I am obliged for the concern you take in my life, who am a stranger to you, and have done nothing to deserve your kindness; but I thoroughly considered this enterprise before I undertook it; therefore I beg of you to do me the same favour you have done my brother. Perhaps I may have better success in following your directions." "Since I cannot prevail with you," said the dervish, "to give up your obstinate resolution, if my age did not prevent me, and I could stand, I would get up to reach you a bowl I have here, which will show you the way."

Without giving the dervish time to say more, the prince alighted from his horse and went to the dervish, who had taken a bowl out of his bag, in which he had a great many, and gave it him, with the same directions he had given Prince Bahman; and after warning him not to be discouraged by the voices he should hear, however threatening they might be, but to continue his way up the hill till he saw the cage and bird, he let him depart.

Prince Perviz thanked the dervish, and when he had remounted and taken leave, threw the bowl before his horse, and spurring him at the same time, followed it. When the bowl came to the bottom of the hill it stopped, the prince alighted, and stood some time to recollect the dervish's directions. He encouraged himself, and began to walk up with a resolution to reach the summit; but before he had gone above six steps, he heard a voice, which seemed to be near, as of a man behind him, say in an insulting tone: "Stay, rash youth, that I may punish you for your presumption."

Upon this affront the prince, forgetting the dervish's advice, clapped his hand upon his sword, drew it, and turned about to revenge himself; but had scarcely time to see that nobody followed him before he and his horse were changed into black stones.

In the meantime the Princess Periezade, several times a day after her brother's departure, counted her chaplet. She did not omit it at night, but when she went to bed put it about her neck, and in the morning when she awoke counted over the pearls again to see if they would slide.

The day that Prince Perviz was transformed into a stone she was counting over the pearls as she used to do, when all at once they became immovably fixed, a certain token that the prince, her brother, was dead. As she had determined what to do in case it should so happen, she lost no time in outward demonstrations of grief, which she concealed as much as possible, but having disguised herself in man's apparel, she mounted her horse the next morning, armed and equipped, having told her servants she should return in two or three days, and took the same road that her brothers had done.

The princess, who had been used to ride on horseback in hunting, supported the fatigue of so long a journey better than most ladies could have done; and as she made the same stages as her brothers, she also met with the dervish on the twentieth day. When she came near him, she alighted

from her horse, leading him by the bridle, went and sat down by the dervish, and after she had saluted him, said: "Good dervish, give me leave to rest myself; and do me the favour to tell me if you have not heard that there are somewhere in this neighbourhood a Talking Bird, a Singing Tree, and Golden Water."

"Princess," answered the dervish, "for so I must call you, since by your voice I know you to be a woman disguised in man's apparel, I know the place well where these things are to be found; but what makes you ask me this question?"

"Good dervish," replied the princess, "I have had such a flattering relation of them given me, that I have a great desire to possess them." "Madam," replied the dervish, "you have been told the truth. These curiosities are more singular than they have been represented, but you have not been made acquainted with the difficulties which must be surmounted in order to obtain them. If you had been fully informed of these, you would not have undertaken so dangerous an enterprise. Take my advice, return, and do not urge me to contribute toward your ruin."

"Good father," said the princess, "I have travelled a great way, and should be sorry to return without executing my design. You talk of difficulties and danger of life, but you do not tell me what those difficulties are, and wherein the danger consists. This is what I desire to know, that I may consider and judge whether I can trust my courage and strength to brave them."

The dervish repeated to the princess what he had said to the Princes Bahman and Perviz, exaggerating the difficulties of climbing up to the top of the mountain, where she was to make herself mistress of the Bird, which would inform her of the Singing Tree and Golden Water. He magnified the din of the terrible threatening voices which she would hear on all sides of her, and the great number of black stones alone sufficient to strike terror. He entreated her to reflect that those stones were so many brave gentlemen, so metamorphosed for having omitted to observe the principal condition of success in the perilous undertaking, which was not to look behind them before they had got possession of the cage.

When the dervish had done, the princess replied: "By what I comprehend from your discourse, the difficulties of succeeding in this affair are, first, the getting up to the cage without being frightened at the terrible din of voices I shall hear; and, secondly, not to look behind me. For this last, I hope I shall be mistress enough of myself to observe it; as to the first, I own that voices, such as you represent them to be, are capable of striking terror into the most undaunted; but as in all enterprises and dangers every one may use stratagem, I desire to know of you if I may use any in one of so great importance." "And what stratagem is it you would employ?" said the dervish. "To stop my ears with cotton," answered the princess, "that the voices, however terrible, may make the less impression upon my imagination, and my mind remain free from that disturbance which might cause me to lose the use of my reason."

"Princess," replied the dervish, "of all the persons who have addressed themselves to me for information, I do not know that ever one made use of the contrivance you propose. All I know is that they all perished. If you persist in your design, you may make the experiment. You will be fortunate if it succeeds, but I would advise you not to expose yourself to the danger."

"My good father," replied the princess, "I am sure my precaution will succeed, and am resolved to try the experiment. Nothing remains for me but to know which way I must go, and I conjure you not to deny me that information." The dervish exhorted her again to consider well what she was going to do; but finding her resolute, he took out a bowl, and presenting it to her, said: "Take this bowl, mount your horse again, and when you have thrown it before you, follow it through all its windings, till it stops at the bottom of the mountain; there alight and ascend the hill. Go, you know the rest."

After the princess had thanked the dervish, and taken her leave of him, she mounted her horse, threw the bowl before her, and followed it till it stopped at the foot of the mountain.

She then alighted, stopped her ears with cotton, and after she had well examined the path leading to the summit began with a moderate pace and walked up with intrepidity. She heard the

voices and perceived the great service the cotton was to her. The higher she went, the louder and more numerous the voices seemed, but they were not capable of making any impression upon her. She heard a great many affronting speeches and raillery very disagreeable to a woman, which she only laughed at. "I mind not," said she to herself, "all that can be said, were it worse; I only laugh at them and shall pursue my way." At last, she climbed so high that she could perceive the cage and the Bird which endeavoured, in company with the voices, to frighten her, crying in a thundering tone, notwithstanding the smallness of its size: "Retire, fool, and approach no nearer."

The princess, encouraged by this sight, redoubled her speed, and by effort gained the summit of the mountain, where the ground was level; then running directly to the cage and clapping her hand upon it, cried: "Bird, I have you, and you shall not escape me."

While Periezade was pulling the cotton out of her ears the Bird said to her: "Heroic princess, be not angry with me for joining with those who exerted themselves to preserve my liberty. Though in a cage, I was content with my condition; but since I am destined to be a slave, I would rather be yours than any other person's, since you have obtained me so courageously. From this instant, I swear entire submission to all your commands. I know who you are. You do not; but the time will come when I shall do you essential service, for which I hope you will think yourself obliged to me. As a proof of my sincerity, tell me what you desire and I am ready to obey you."

The princess's joy was the more inexpressible, because the conquest she had made had cost her the lives of two beloved brothers, and given her more trouble and danger than she could have imagined. "Bird," said she, "it was my intention to have told you that I wish for many things which are of importance, but I am overjoyed that you have shown your goodwill and prevented me. I have been told that there is not far off a Golden Water, the property of which is very wonderful; before all things, I ask you to tell me where it is." The Bird showed her the place, which was just by, and she went and filled a little silver flagon which she had brought with her. She returned at once and said: "Bird, this is not enough; I want also the Singing Tree; tell me where it is." "Turn about," said the Bird, "and you will see behind you a wood where you will find the tree." The princess went into the wood, and by the harmonious concert she heard, soon knew the tree among many others, but it was very large and high. She came back again and said: "Bird, I have found the Singing Tree, but I can neither pull it up by the roots nor carry it." The Bird replied: "It is not necessary that you should take it up; it will be sufficient to break off a branch and carry it to plant in your garden; it will take root as soon as it is put into the earth, and in a little time will grow to as fine a tree as that you have seen."

When the princess had obtained possession of the three things for which she had conceived so great a desire, she said again: "Bird, what you have yet done for me is not sufficient. You have been the cause of the death of my two brothers, who must be among the black stones I saw as I ascended the mountain. I wish to take the princes home with me."

The Bird seemed reluctant to satisfy the princess in this point, and indeed made some difficulty to comply. "Bird," said the princess, "remember you told me that you were my slave. You are so; and your life is in my disposal." "That I cannot deny," answered the bird; "but although what you now ask is more difficult than all the rest, yet I will do it for you. Cast your eyes around," added he, "and look if you can see a little pitcher." "I see it already," said the princess. "Take it then," said he, "and as you descend the mountain, sprinkle a little of the water that is in it upon every black stone."

The princess took up the pitcher accordingly, carried with her the cage and Bird, the flagon of Golden Water, and the branch of the Singing Tree, and as she descended the mountain, threw a little of the water on every black stone, which was changed immediately into a man; and as she did not miss one stone, all the horses, both of her brothers and of the other gentlemen, resumed their natural forms also. She instantly recognised Bahman and Perviz, as they did her, and ran to embrace her. She returned their embraces and expressed her amazement. "What do you here, my dear brothers?" said she, and they told her they had been asleep. "Yes," replied she, "and if it had not been for me, perhaps you might have slept till the day of judgment. Do not you remember that you came to fetch

the Talking Bird, the Singing Tree, and the Golden Water, and did not you see, as you came along, the place covered with black stones? Look and see if there be any now. The gentlemen and their horses who surround us, and you yourselves, were these black stones. If you desire to know how this wonder was performed," continued she, showing the pitcher, which she set down at the foot of the mountain, "it was done by virtue of the water which was in this pitcher, with which I sprinkled every stone. After I had made the Talking Bird (which you see in this cage) my slave, by his directions I found out the Singing Tree, a branch of which I have now in my hand; and the Golden Water, with which this flagon is filled; but being still unwilling to return without taking you with me, I constrained the Bird, by the power I had over him, to afford me the means. He told me where to find this pitcher, and the use I was to make of it."

The Princes Bahman and Perviz learned by this relation the obligation they had to their sister, as did all the other gentlemen, who expressed to her that, far from envying her happiness in the conquest she had made, and which they all had aspired to, they thought they could not better express their gratitude for restoring them to life again, than by declaring themselves her slaves, and that they were ready to obey her in whatever she should command.

"Gentlemen," replied the princess, "if you had given any attention to my words, you might have observed that I had no other intention in what I have done than to recover my brothers; therefore, if you have received any benefit, you owe me no obligation, and I have no further share in your compliment than your politeness toward me, for which I return you my thanks. In other respects, I regard each of you as quite as free as you were before your misfortunes, and I rejoice with you at the happiness which has accrued to you by my means. Let us, however, stay no longer in a place where we have nothing to detain us, but mount our horses and return to our respective homes."

The princess took her horse, which stood in the place where she had left him. Before she mounted, Prince Bahman desired her to give him the cage to carry. "Brother," replied the princess, "the Bird is my slave and I will carry him myself; if you will take the pains to carry the branch of the Singing Tree, there it is; only hold the cage while I get on horseback." When she had mounted her horse, and Prince Bahman had given her the cage, she turned about and said to Prince Perviz: "I leave the flagon of Golden Water to your care, if it will not be too much trouble for you to carry it," and Prince Perviz accordingly took charge of it with pleasure.

When Bahman, Perviz, and all the gentlemen had mounted their horses, the princess waited for some of them to lead the way. The two princes paid that compliment to the gentlemen, and they again to the princess, who, finding that none of them would accept the honour, but that it was reserved for her, addressed herself to them and said: "Gentlemen, I expect that some of you should lead the way:" to which one who was nearest to her, in the name of the rest, replied: "Madam, were we ignorant of the respect due to your sex, yet after what you have done for us there is no deference we would not willingly pay you, notwithstanding your modesty; we entreat you no longer to deprive us of the happiness of following you."

"Gentlemen," said the princess, "I do not deserve the honour you do me, and accept it only because you desire it." At the same time she led the way, and the two princes and the gentlemen followed.

This illustrious company called upon the dervish as they passed, to thank him for his reception and wholesome advice, which they had all found to be sincere. He was dead, however; whether of old age, or because he was no longer necessary to show the way to obtaining the three rarities, did not appear. They pursued their route, but lessened in their numbers every day. The gentlemen who, as we said before, had come from different countries, after severally repeating their obligations to the princess and her brothers, took leave of them one after another as they approached the road by which they had come.

As soon as the princess reached home, she placed the cage in the garden, and the Bird no sooner began to warble than he was surrounded by nightingales, chaffinches, larks, linnets, goldfinches, and

every species of birds of the country. The branch of the Singing Tree was no sooner set in the midst of the parterre, a little distance from the house, than it took root and in a short time became a large tree, the leaves of which gave as harmonious a concert as those of the parent from which it was gathered. A large basin of beautiful marble was placed in the garden, and when it was finished, the princess poured into it all the Golden Water from the flagon, which instantly increased and swelled so much that it soon reached up to the edges of the basin, and afterward formed in the middle a fountain twenty feet high, which fell again into the basin perpetually, without running over.

The report of these wonders was presently spread abroad, and as the gates of the house and those of the gardens were shut to nobody, a great number of people came to admire them.

Some days after, when the Princes Bahman and Perviz had recovered from the fatigue of their journey, they resumed their former way of living; and as their usual diversion was hunting, they mounted their horses and went for the first time since their return, not to their own demesne, but two or three leagues from their house. As they pursued their sport, the emperor of Persia came in pursuit of game upon the same ground. When they perceived, by the number of horsemen in different places, that he would soon be up, they resolved to discontinue their chase, and retire to avoid encountering him; but in the very road they took they chanced to meet him in so narrow a way that they could not retreat without being seen. In their surprise they had only time to alight and prostrate themselves before the emperor, without lifting up their heads to look at him. The emperor, who saw they were as well mounted and dressed as if they had belonged to his court, had a curiosity to see their faces. He stopped and commanded them to rise. The princes rose up and stood before him with an easy and graceful air, accompanied with modest countenances. The emperor took some time to view them before he spoke, and after he had admired their good air and mien, asked them who they were and where they lived.

"Sir," said Prince Bahman, "we are the sons of the late intendant of your majesty's gardens, and live in a house which he built a little before he died, till we should be fit to serve your majesty and ask of you some employ when opportunity offered."

"By what I perceive," replied the emperor, "you love hunting." "Sir," replied Prince Bahman, "it is our common exercise, and what none of your majesty's subjects who intend to bear arms in your armies, ought, according to the ancient custom of the kingdom, to neglect." The emperor, charmed with so prudent an answer, said: "Since it is so, I should be glad to see your expertness in the chase; choose your own game."

The princes mounted their horses again and followed the emperor, but had not gone far before they saw many wild beasts together. Prince Bahman chose a lion and Prince Perviz a bear, and pursued them with so much intrepidity that the emperor was surprised. They came up with their game nearly at the same time, and darted their javelins with so much skill and address that they pierced the one the lion and the other the bear so effectually that the emperor saw them fall one after the other. Immediately afterward Prince Bahman pursued another bear, and Prince Perviz another lion, and killed them in a short time, and would have beaten out for fresh game, but the emperor would not let them, and sent to them to come to him. When they approached he said: "If I had given you leave, you would soon have destroyed all my game; but it is not that which I would preserve, but your persons; for I am so well assured your bravery may one time or other be serviceable to me, that from this moment your lives will be always dear to me."

The emperor, in short, conceived so great a kindness for the two princes, that he invited them immediately to make him a visit, to which Prince Bahman replied: "Your majesty does us an honour we do not deserve, and we beg you will excuse us."

The emperor, who could not comprehend what reason the princes could have to refuse this token of his favour, pressed them to tell him why they excused themselves. "Sir," said Prince Bahman, "we have a sister younger than ourselves, with whom we live in such perfect union, that we undertake nothing before we consult her, nor she anything without asking our advice." "I commend your

brotherly affection," answered the emperor. "Consult your sister, meet me to-morrow, and give me an answer."

The princes went home, but neglected to speak of their adventure in meeting the emperor and hunting with him, and also of the honour he had done them, yet did not the next morning fail to meet him at the place appointed. "Well," said the emperor, "have you spoken to your sister, and has she consented to the pleasure I expect of seeing you?" The two princes looked at each other and blushed. "Sir," said Prince Bahman, "we beg your majesty to excuse us, for both my brother and I forgot." "Then remember to-day," replied the emperor, "and be sure to bring me an answer to-morrow."

The princes were guilty of the same fault a second time, and the emperor was so good-natured as to forgive their negligence; but to prevent their forgetfulness the third time, he pulled three little golden balls out of a purse, and put them into Prince Bahman's bosom. "These balls," said he, smiling, "will prevent your forgetting a third time what I wish you to do for my sake; since the noise they will make by falling on the floor when you undress will remind you, if you do not recollect it before." The event happened just as the emperor foresaw; and without these balls the princes had not thought of speaking to their sister of this affair, for as Prince Bahman unloosed his girdle to go to bed the balls dropped on the floor, upon which he ran into Prince Perviz's chamber, when both went into the Princess Periezade's apartment, and after they had asked her pardon for coming at so unseasonable a time, they told her all the circumstances of their meeting the emperor.

The princess was somewhat surprised at this intelligence. "Your meeting with the emperor," said she, "is happy and honourable and may in the end be highly advantageous to you, but it places me in an awkward position. It was on my account, I know, you refused the emperor, and I am infinitely obliged to you for doing so. I know by this that you would rather be guilty of incivility toward the emperor than violate the union we have sworn to each other. You judge right, for if you had once gone you would insensibly have been engaged to devote yourselves to him. But do you think it an easy matter absolutely to refuse the emperor what he seems so earnestly to desire? Monarchs will be obeyed in their desires, and it may be dangerous to oppose them; therefore, if to follow my inclination I should dissuade you from obeying him, it may expose you to his resentment, and may render myself and you miserable. These are my sentiments; but before we conclude upon anything let us consult the Talking Bird and hear what he says; he is penetrating, and has promised his assistance in all difficulties."

The princess sent for the cage, and after she had related the circumstances to the Bird in the presence of her brothers, asked him what they should do in this perplexity. The Bird answered: "The princes, your brothers, must conform to the emperor's pleasure, and in their turn invite him to come and see your house."

"But, Bird," replied the princess, "my brothers and I love one another, and our friendship is yet undisturbed. Will not this step be injurious to that friendship?" "Not at all," replied the Bird; "it will tend rather to cement it." "Then," answered the princess, "the emperor will see me." The Bird told her it was necessary he should, and that everything would go better afterward.

Next morning the princes met the emperor hunting, who asked them if they had remembered to speak to their sister. Prince Bahman approached and answered: "Sir, we are ready to obey you, for we have not only obtained our sister's consent with great ease, but she took it amiss that we should pay her that deference in a matter wherein our duty to your majesty was concerned. If we have offended, we hope you will pardon us." "Do not be uneasy," replied the emperor. "I highly approve of your conduct, and hope you will have the same deference and attachment to my person, if I have ever so little share in your friendship." The princes, confounded at the emperor's goodness, returned no other answer but a low obeisance.

The emperor, contrary to his usual custom, did not hunt long that day. Presuming that the princes possessed wit equal to their courage and bravery, he longed with impatience to converse with

them more at liberty. He made them ride on each side of him, an honour which was envied by the grand vizier, who was much mortified to see them preferred before him.

When the emperor entered his capital, the eyes of the people, who stood in crowds in the streets, were fixed upon the two Princes Bahman and Perviz; and they were earnest to know who they might be.

All, however, agreed in wishing that the emperor had been blessed with two such handsome princes, and said that his children would have been about the same age, if the queen had not been so unfortunate as to lose them.

The first thing the emperor did when he arrived at his palace was to conduct the princes into the principal apartments, who praised without affectation the beauty and symmetry of the rooms, and the richness of the furniture and ornaments. Afterward a magnificent repast was served up, and the emperor made them sit with him, which they at first refused; but finding it was his pleasure, they obeyed.

The emperor, who had himself much learning, particularly in history, foresaw that the princes, out of modesty and respect, would not take the liberty of beginning any conversation. Therefore, to give them an opportunity, he furnished them with subjects all dinner-time. But whatever subject he introduced, they shewed so much wit, judgment, and discernment, that he was struck with admiration. "Were these my own children," said he to himself, "and I had improved their talents by suitable education, they could not have been more accomplished or better informed." In short, he took such great pleasure in their conversation, that, after having sat longer than usual, he led them into his closet, where he pursued his conversation with them, and at last said: "I never supposed that there were among my subjects in the country youths so well brought up, so lively, so capable; and I never was better pleased with any conversation than yours; but it is time now we should relax our minds with some diversion; and as nothing is more capable of enlivening the mind than music, you shall hear a vocal and instrumental concert which may not be disagreeable to you."

The emperor had no sooner spoken than the musicians, who had orders to attend, entered, and answered fully the expectations the princes had been led to entertain of their abilities. After the concerts, an excellent farce was acted, and the entertainment was concluded by dancers of both sexes.

The two princes, seeing night approach, prostrated themselves at the emperor's feet; and having first thanked him for the favours and honours he had heaped upon them, asked his permission to retire; which was granted by the emperor, who, in dismissing them, said: "I give you leave to go; but remember, you will be always welcome, and the oftener you come the greater pleasure you will do me."

Before they went out of the emperor's presence, Prince Bahman said: "Sir, may we presume to request that your majesty will do us and our sister the honour to pass by our house, and refresh yourself after your fatigue, the first time you take the diversion of hunting in that neighbourhood? It is not worthy of your presence; but monarchs sometimes have vouchsafed to take shelter in a cottage." "My children," replied the emperor, "your house cannot be otherwise than beautiful and worthy of its owners. I will call and see it with pleasure, which will be the greater for having for my hosts you and your sister, who is already dear to me from the account you give me of the rare qualities with which she is endowed: and this satisfaction I will defer no longer than to-morrow. Early in the morning I will be at the place where I shall never forget that I first saw you. Meet me, and you shall be my guides."

When the Princes Bahman and Perviz had returned home, they gave the princess an account of the distinguished reception the emperor had given them, and told her that they had invited him to do them the honour, as he passed by, to call at their house, and that he had appointed the next day.

"If it be so," replied the princess, "we must think of preparing a repast fit for his majesty; and for that purpose I think it would be proper we should consult the Talking Bird, who will tell us, perhaps, what meats the emperor likes best." The princes approved of her plan, and after they had retired she consulted the Bird alone. "Bird," said she, "the emperor will do us the honour to-morrow

to come and see our house, and we are to entertain him; tell us what we shall do to acquit ourselves to his satisfaction."

"Good mistress," replied the Bird, "you have excellent cooks, let them do the best they can; but above all things, let them prepare a dish of cucumbers stuffed full of pearls, which must be set before the emperor in the first course before all the other dishes."

"Cucumbers stuffed full of pearls!" cried Princess Periezade with amazement; "surely, Bird, you do not know what you say; it is an unheard of dish. The emperor may admire it as a piece of magnificence, but he will sit down to eat, and not to admire pearls; besides, all the pearls I possess are not enough for such a dish."

"Mistress," said the Bird, "do what I say, and be not uneasy about what may happen. Nothing but good will follow. As for the pearls, go early to-morrow morning to the foot of the first tree on your right hand in the park, dig under it, and you will find more than you want."

That night the princess ordered a gardener to be ready to attend her, and the next morning early, led him to the tree which the Bird had told her of, and bade him dig at its foot. When the gardener came to a certain depth, he found some resistance to the spade, and presently discovered a gold box about a foot square, which he showed the princess. "This," said she, "is what I brought you for; take care not to injure it with the spade."

When the gardener took up the box, he gave it into the princess's hands, who, as it was only fastened with neat little hasps, soon opened it, and found it full of pearls of a moderate size, but equal and fit for the use that was to be made of them. Very well satisfied with having found this treasure, after she had shut the box again, she put it under her arm and went back to the house, while the gardener threw the earth into the hole at the foot of the tree as it had been before.

The Princes Bahman and Perviz, who, as they were dressing themselves in their own apartments, saw their sister in the garden earlier than usual, as soon as they could get out went to her, and met her as she was returning with a gold box under her arm, which much surprised them. "Sister," said Bahman, "you carried nothing with you when we saw you before with the gardener, and now we see you have a golden box; is this some treasure found by the gardener, and did he come and tell you of it?"

"No, brother," answered the princess, "I took the gardener to the place where this casket was concealed, and showed him where to dig; but you will be more amazed when you see what it contains."

The princess opened the box, and when the princes saw that it was full of pearls, which, though small, were of great value, they asked her how she came to the knowledge of this treasure. "Brothers," said she, "come with me and I will tell you." The princess, as they returned to the house, gave them an account of her having consulted the Bird, as they had agreed she should, and the answer he had given her; the objection she had raised to preparing a dish of cucumbers stuffed full of pearls, and how he had told her where to find this box. The sister and brothers formed many conjectures to penetrate into what the Bird could mean by ordering them to prepare such a dish; but after much conversation, they agreed to follow his advice exactly.

As soon as the princess entered the house, she called for the head cook; and after she had given him directions about the entertainment for the emperor, said to him: "Besides all this, you must dress an extraordinary dish for the emperor's own eating, which nobody else must have anything to do with besides yourself. This dish must be of cucumbers stuffed with these pearls:" and at the same time she opened him the box, and showed him the jewels.

The chief cook, who had never heard of such a dish, started back, and showed his thoughts by his looks; which the princess penetrating, said: "I see you take me to be mad to order such a dish, which one may say with certainty was never made. I know this as well as you; but I am not mad, and give you these orders with the most perfect recollection. You must invent and do the best you can, and bring me back what pearls are left." The cook could make no reply, but took the box and retired;

and afterward the princess gave directions to all the domestics to have everything in order, both in the house and gardens, to receive the emperor.

Next day the two princes went to the place appointed, and as soon as the emperor of Persia arrived the chase began and lasted till the heat of the sun obliged him to leave off. While Prince Bahman stayed to conduct the emperor to their house, Prince Perviz rode before to show the way, and when he came in sight of the house, spurred his horse, to inform the princess that the emperor was approaching; but she had been told by some servants whom she had placed to give notice, and the prince found her waiting ready to receive him.

When the emperor had entered the court-yard and alighted at the portico, the princess came and threw herself at his feet, and the two princes informed him she was their sister, and besought him to accept her respects.

The emperor stooped to raise her, and after he had gazed some time on her beauty, struck with her fine person and dignified air, he said: "The brothers are worthy of the sister, and she worthy of them; since, if I may judge of her understanding by her person, I am not amazed that the brothers would do nothing without their sister's consent; but," added he, "I hope to be better acquainted with you, my daughter, after I have seen the house."

"Sir," said the princess, "it is only a plain country residence, fit for such people as we are, who live retired from the great world. It is not to be compared with the magnificent palaces of emperors." "I cannot perfectly agree with you in opinion," said the emperor very obligingly, "for its first appearance makes me suspect you; however, I will not pass my judgment upon it till I have seen it all; therefore be pleased to conduct me through the apartments."

The princess led the emperor through all the rooms except the hall; and, after he had considered them very attentively, and admired their variety, "My daughter," said he to the princess, "do you call this a country house? The finest and largest cities would soon be deserted if all country houses were like yours. I am no longer surprised that you despise the town. Now let me see the garden, which I doubt not is answerable to the house."

The princess opened a door which led into the garden, and the first object which presented itself to the emperor's view was the golden fountain. Surprised at so rare an object, he asked from whence that wonderful water, which gave so much pleasure to behold, had been procured; where was its source, and by what art it was made to play so high. He said he would presently take a nearer view of it.

The princess then led him to the spot where the harmonious tree was planted; and there the emperor heard a concert, different from all he had ever heard before; and stopping to see where the musicians were, he could discern nobody far or near, but still distinctly heard the music which ravished his senses. "My daughter," said he to the princess, "where are the musicians whom I hear? Are they under ground, or invisible in the air? Such excellent performers will hazard nothing by being seen; on the contrary, they would please the more."

"Sir," answered the princess, smiling, "they are not musicians, but the leaves of the tree your majesty sees before you, which form this concert; and if you will give yourself the trouble to go a little nearer, you will be convinced, and the voices will be the more distinct."

The emperor went nearer and was so charmed with the sweet harmony that he would never have been tired with hearing it, but that his desire to have a nearer view of the fountain of golden water forced him away. "Daughter," said he, "tell me, I pray you, whether this wonderful tree was found in your garden by chance, or was a present made to you, or have you procured it from some foreign country? It must certainly have come from a great distance, otherwise curious as I am after natural rarities I should have heard of it. What name do you call it by?"

"Sir," replied the princess, "this tree has no other name than that of the Singing Tree, and is not a native of this country. It would at present take up too much time to tell your majesty by what adventures it came here; its history is connected with the Golden Water and the Talking Bird, which

came to me at the same time, and which your majesty may presently see. But if it be agreeable to your majesty, after you have rested yourself and recovered the fatigue of hunting, which must be the greater because of the sun's intense heat, I will do myself the honour of relating it to you."

"My daughter," replied the emperor, "my fatigue is so well recompensed by the wonderful things you have shown me, that I do not feel it in the least. Let me see the Golden Water, for I am impatient to see and admire afterward the Talking Bird."

When the emperor came to the Golden Water, his eyes were fixed so steadfastly upon the fountain, that he could not take them off. At last, addressing himself to the princess, he said: "As you tell me, daughter, that this water has no spring or communication, I conclude that it is foreign, as well as the Singing Tree."

"Sir," replied the princess, "it is as your majesty conjectures; and to let you know that this water has no communication with any spring, I must inform you that the basin is one entire stone, so that the water cannot come in at the sides or underneath. But what your majesty will think most wonderful is that all this water proceeded but from one small flagon, emptied into this basin, which increased to the quantity you see, by a property peculiar to itself, and formed this fountain." "Well," said the emperor, going from the fountain, "this is enough for one time. I promise myself the pleasure to come and visit it often; but now let us go and see the Talking Bird."

As he went toward the hall, the emperor perceived a prodigious number of singing birds in the trees around, filling the air with their songs and warblings, and asked why there were so many there and none on the other trees in the garden. "The reason, sir," answered the princess, "is because they come from all parts to accompany the song of the Talking Bird, which your majesty may see in a cage in one of the windows of the hall we are approaching; and if you attend, you will perceive that his notes are sweeter than those of any of the other birds, even the nightingale's."

The emperor went into the hall; and as the Bird continued singing, the princess raised her voice, and said, "My slave, here is the emperor, pay your compliments to him." The Bird left off singing that instant, when all the other birds ceased also, and said: "The emperor is welcome; God prosper him and prolong his life!" As the entertainment was served on the sofa near the window where the Bird was placed, the sultan replied, as he was taking his seat: "Bird, I thank you, and am overjoyed to find in you the sultan and king of birds."

As soon as the emperor saw the dish of cucumbers set before him, thinking they were prepared in the best manner, he reached out his hand and took one; but when he cut it, was in extreme surprise to find it stuffed with pearls. "What novelty is this?" said he; "and with what design were these cucumbers stuffed thus with pearls, since pearls are not to be eaten?" He looked at his hosts to ask them the meaning when the Bird interrupting him, said: "Can your majesty be in such great astonishment at cucumbers stuffed with pearls, which you see with your own eyes, and yet so easily believe that the queen, your wife, gave birth to a dog, a cat, and a piece of wood?" "I believed those things," replied the emperor, "because the attendants assured me of the facts." "Those attendants, sir," replied the Bird, "were the queen's two sisters, who, envious of her happiness in being preferred by your majesty before them, to satisfy their envy and revenge, have abused your majesty's credulity. If you interrogate them, they will confess their crime. The two brothers and the sister whom you see before you are your own children, whom they exposed, and who were taken in by the intendant of your gardens, who provided nurses for them, and took care of their education."

This speech presently cleared up the emperor's understanding. "Bird," cried he, "I believe the truth which you discover to me. The inclination which drew me to them told me plainly they must be of my own blood. Come then, my sons, come, my daughter, let me embrace you, and give you the first marks of a father's love and tenderness." The emperor then rose, and after having embraced the two princes and the princess, and mingled his tears with theirs, said: "It is not enough, my children; you must embrace each other, not as the children of the intendant of my gardens, to whom I have

been so much obliged for preserving your lives, but as my own children, of the royal blood of the monarchs of Persia, whose glory, I am persuaded you will maintain."

After the two princes and princess had embraced mutually with new satisfaction, the emperor sat down again with them, and finished his meal in haste; and when he had done, said: "My children, you see in me your father; to-morrow I will bring the queen, your mother, therefore prepare to receive her."

The emperor afterward mounted his horse, and returned with expedition to his capitol. The first thing he did, as soon as he had alighted and entered his palace, was to command the grand vizier to seize the queen's two sisters. They were taken from their houses separately, convicted, and condemned to death; which sentence was put in execution within an hour.

In the meantime, the Emperor Kosrouschah, followed by all the lords of his court who were then present, went on foot to the door of the great mosque; and after he had taken the queen out of the strict confinement she had languished under for so many years, embracing her in the miserable condition to which she was then reduced, said to her with tears in his eyes: "I come to entreat your pardon for the injustice I have done you, and to make you the reparation I ought; which I have begun, by punishing the unnatural wretches who put the abominable cheat upon me; and I hope you will look upon it as complete, when I present to you two accomplished princes and a lovely princess, our children. Come and resume your former rank, with all the honours which are your due." All this was done and said before great crowds of people who flocked from all parts at the first news of what was passing, and immediately spread the joyful intelligence through the city.

Next morning early the emperor and queen, whose mournful humiliating dress was changed for magnificent robes, went with all their court to the house built by the intendant of the gardens, where the emperor presented the Princes Bahman and Perviz, and the Princess Periezade to their enraptured mother. "These, much injured wife," said he, "are the two princes your sons, and the princess your daughter; embrace them with the same tenderness I have done, since they are worthy both of me and you." The tears flowed plentifully down their cheeks at these tender embraces, especially the queen's, from the comfort and joy of having two such princes for her sons, and such a princess for her daughter, on whose account she had so long endured the severest afflictions.

The two princes and the princess had prepared a magnificent repast for the emperor and queen and their court. As soon as that was over, the emperor led the queen into the garden, and shewed her the Harmonious Tree and the beautiful effect of the Golden Fountain. She had seen the Bird in his cage, and the emperor had spared no panegyric in his praise during the repast.

When there was nothing to detain the emperor any longer, he took horse, and with the Princes Bahman and Perviz on his right hand, and the queen consort and the princess at his left, preceded and followed by all the officers of his court, according to their rank, returned to his capital. Crowds of people came out to meet them, and with acclamations of joy ushered them into the city, where all eyes were fixed not only upon the queen, and her royal children, but also upon the Bird, which the princess carried before her in his cage, admiring his sweet notes, which had drawn all the other birds about him, and followed him flying from tree to tree in the country, and from one house top to another in the city. The Princes Bahman and Perviz and the Princess Periezade were at length brought to the palace with pomp, and nothing was to be seen or heard all that night but illuminations and rejoicings both in the palace and in the utmost parts of the city, which lasted many days, and were continued throughout the empire of Persia, as intelligence of the joyful event reached the several provinces.

THE STORY OF THE FISHERMAN AND THE GENIE

There was once an aged fisherman who was so poor that he could scarcely earn as much as would maintain himself, his wife, and three children. He went every day to fish betimes in the morning, and imposed it as a law upon himself not to cast his nets above four times a day. He went one morning by moonlight, and coming to the seaside, undressed himself, and cast in his nets. As he drew them toward the shore, he found them very heavy, and thought he had a good draught of fish, at which he rejoiced; but a moment after, perceiving that instead of fish his net contained nothing but the carcass of an ass, he was much vexed.

When he had mended his nets, which the carcass of the ass had broken in several places, he threw them in a second time; and when he drew them, found a great deal of resistance, which made him think he had taken abundance of fish; but he found nothing except a basket full of gravel and slime, which grieved him extremely. "O Fortune!" cried he, with a lamentable tone, "be not angry with me, nor persecute a wretch who prays thee to spare him. I came hither from my house to seek for my livelihood, and thou pronoucest against me a sentence of death. I have no other trade but this to subsist by, and, notwithstanding all my care, I can scarcely provide what is necessary for my family. But I am to blame to complain of thee; thou takest pleasure to persecute honest people, and advancest those who have no virtue to recommend them."

Having finished this complaint, he fretfully threw away the basket, and, washing his nets from the slime, cast them a third time, but brought up nothing except stones, shells, and mud. No language can express his disappointment; he was almost distracted. However, when day began to appear, he did not forget to say his prayers like a good Mussulman, and he added to them this petition: "Lord, thou knowest that I cast my nets only four times a day; I have already drawn them three times, without the least reward for my labour: I am only to cast them once more; I pray thee to render the sea favourable to me, as thou didst to Moses."

The fisherman, having finished this prayer, cast his nets the fourth time; and when he thought it was proper, drew them as formerly with great difficulty; but instead of fish found nothing in them but a vessel of yellow copper, which, from its weight, seemed not to be empty; and he observed that it was fastened and closed with lead, having the impression of a seal upon it. This turn of fortune rejoiced him: "I will sell it," said he, "to the founder, and with the money buy a measure of corn." He examined the vessel on all sides, and shook it to see if its contents made any noise, but heard nothing. This circumstance, with the impression of the seal upon the cover, made him think it enclosed something precious. To try this, he took a knife and opened it with very little labour. He turned the mouth downward, but nothing came out, which surprised him extremely. He placed it before him, but while he viewed it attentively, there burst forth a very thick smoke, which obliged him to retire two or three paces back.

The smoke ascended to the clouds, and, extending itself along the sea and upon the shore, formed a great mist, which filled the fisherman with astonishment. When the smoke was all out of the vessel, it reunited, and became a solid body, of which was formed a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants. At the sight of such a monster the fisherman would fain have fled, but was so frightened that he could not move.

"Solomon," cried the genie immediately, "Solomon, the great prophet, pardon, pardon; I will never more oppose your will, I will obey all your commands."

The fisherman, when he heard these words of the genie, recovered his courage and said to him: "Thou proud spirit, what is it you say? It is above eighteen hundred years since the prophet Solomon died, and we are now at the end of time. Tell me your history, and how you came to be shut up in this vessel."

The genie, turning to the fisherman with a fierce look, said: "Thou must address me with more courtesy; thou art a presumptuous fellow to call me a proud spirit; speak to me more respectfully, or I will kill thee." "Ah!" replied the fisherman, "why should you kill me? Did I not just now set you at liberty, and have you already forgotten my services?"

"No, I remember it," said the genie, "but that shall not save thy life: I have only one favour to grant thee." "And what is that?" asked the fisherman. "It is," answered the genie, "to give thee thy choice in what manner thou wouldst have me put thee to death." "But wherein have I offended you?" demanded the fisherman. "Is that your reward for the service I have rendered you?" "I cannot treat thee otherwise," said the genie; "and that thou mayest know the reason, hearken to my story."

"I am one of those rebellious spirits that opposed the will of Solomon, the son of David, and to avenge himself, that monarch sent Asaph, the son of Barakhia, his chief minister, to apprehend me. Asaph seized my person, and brought me by force before his master's throne.

"Solomon commanded me to acknowledge his power, and to submit to his commands. I bravely refused, and told him I would rather expose myself to his resentment, than swear fealty as he required. To punish me, he shut me up in this copper vessel; and that I might not break my prison, he himself stamped upon this leaden cover his seal with the great name of God engraven upon it. He then gave the vessel to one of the genies who had submitted, with orders to throw me into the sea.

"During the first hundred years of my imprisonment, I swore that if any one should deliver me before the expiration of that period, I would make him rich, even after his death; but that century ran out, and nobody did me the good office. During the second, I made an oath that I would open all the treasures of the earth to any one that might set me at liberty; but with no better success. In the third, I promised to make my deliverer a potent monarch, and to grant him every day three requests, of what nature soever they might be; but this century passed as well as the two former, and I continued in prison. At last, being angry to find myself a prisoner so long, I swore that if afterward any one should deliver me, I would kill him without mercy, and grant him no favour but to choose the manner of his death; and, therefore, since thou hast delivered me to-day, I give thee that choice."

This discourse afflicted the fisherman extremely: "I am very unfortunate," cried he, "to come hither to do such a kindness to one that is so ungrateful. I beg you to consider your injustice, and revoke such an unreasonable oath; pardon me, and Heaven will pardon you; if you grant me my life, Heaven will protect you from all attempts against your own." "No, thy death is resolved on," said the genie, "only choose in what manner thou wilt die." The fisherman, perceiving the genie to be resolute, was extremely grieved, not so much for himself, as on account of his three children, and bewailed the misery they must be reduced to by his death. He endeavoured still to appease the genie, and said, "Alas! be pleased to take pity on me, in consideration of the service I have done you." "I have told thee already," replied the genie, "it is for that very reason I must kill thee." "That is strange," said the fisherman, "are you resolved to reward good with evil? The proverb truly says, 'He who does good to one who deserves it not, is always ill rewarded.'" "Do not lose time," interrupted the genie; "all thy chattering shall not divert me from my purpose; make haste, and tell me what kind of death thou preferrest?"

Necessity is the mother of invention. The fisherman bethought himself of a stratagem. "Since I must die then," said he to the genie, "I submit to the will of Heaven; but before I choose the manner of my death, I conjure you, by the great name which was engraven upon the seal of the prophet Solomon, to answer me truly the question I am going to ask you."

The genie finding himself obliged to a positive answer by this adjuration, trembled, and replied to the fisherman: "Ask what thou wilt, but make haste."

The genie having thus promised to speak the truth, the fisherman said to him: "I wish to know if you were actually in this vessel: dare you swear it by the name of the great God?" "Yes," replied the genie, "I do swear by His great name that I was." "In good faith," answered the fisherman, "I cannot believe you; the vessel is not capable of holding one of your size, and how should it be possible that

your whole body could lie in it?" "I swear to thee, notwithstanding," replied the genie, "that I was there just as you see me here. Is it possible that thou dost not believe me after the solemn oath I have taken?" "Truly not I," said the fisherman; "nor will I believe you, unless you go into the vessel again."

Upon this the body of the genie dissolved and changed itself into smoke, extending as before upon the seashore; and at last being collected, it began to re-enter the vessel, which it continued to do by a slow and equal motion, till no part remained out; when immediately a voice came forth, which said to the fisherman: "Well, incredulous fellow, dost thou not believe me now?"

The fisherman, instead of answering the genie, took the cover of lead, and having speedily replaced it on the vessel, "Genie," cried he, "now it is your turn to beg my favour, and to choose which way I shall put you to death; but it is better that I should throw you into the sea, whence I took you: and then I will build a house upon the shore, where I will reside and give notice to all fishermen who come to throw in their nets, to beware of such a wicked genie as you are, who have made an oath to kill him that shall set you at liberty."

The genie, enraged at these expressions, struggled to free himself; but it was impossible, for the impression of Solomon's seal prevented him. Perceiving that the fisherman had the advantage of him, he thought fit to dissemble his anger; "Fisherman," said he, "take heed you do not what you threaten; for what I spoke to you was only by way of jest." "O genie!" replied the fisherman, "thou who wast but a moment ago the greatest of all genies, and now art the least of them, thy crafty discourse will signify nothing, to the sea thou shalt return. If thou hast been there already so long as thou hast told me, thou mayest very well stay there till the day of judgment. I begged of thee, in God's name, not to take away my life, and thou didst reject my prayers; I am obliged to treat thee in the same manner."

The genie omitted nothing that he thought likely to prevail with the fisherman: "Open the vessel," said he, "give me my liberty, and I promise to satisfy you to your own content." "Thou art a traitor," replied the fisherman, "I should deserve to lose my life, if I were such a fool as to trust thee."

"My good fisherman," replied the genie, "I conjure you once more not to be guilty of such cruelty; consider that it is not good to avenge one's self, and that, on the other hand, it is commendable to do good for evil; do not treat me as Imama formerly treated Ateca." "And what did Imama do to Ateca?" inquired the fisherman. "Ho!" cried the genie, "if you have a mind to be informed, open the vessel: do you think that I can be in a humour to relate stories in so strait a prison? I will tell you as many as you please, when you have let me out." "No," said the fisherman, "I will not let thee out; it is in vain to talk of it; I am just going to throw thee into the bottom of the sea." "Hear me one word more," cried the genie; "I promise to do you no hurt; nay, far from that, I will show you a way to become exceedingly rich."

The hope of delivering himself from poverty prevailed with the fisherman. "I could listen to thee," said he, "were there any credit to be given to thy word; swear to me, by the great name of God, that thou wilt faithfully perform what thou promisest, and I will open the vessel; I do not believe thou wilt dare to break such an oath."

The genie swore to him, upon which the fisherman immediately took off the covering of the vessel. At that instant the smoke ascended, and the genie, having resumed his form, the first thing he did was to kick the vessel into the sea. This action alarmed the fisherman. "Genie," said he, "will not you keep the oath you just now made?"

The genie laughed at his fear, and answered: "Fisherman, be not afraid, I only did it to divert myself, and to see if you would be alarmed at it; but to convince you that I am in earnest, take your nets and follow me." As he spoke these words, he walked before the fisherman, who having taken up his nets, followed him, but with some distrust. They passed by the town, and came to the top of a mountain, from whence they descended into a vast plain, which brought them to a lake that lay betwixt four hills.

When they reached the side of the lake, the genie said to the fisherman: "Cast in your nets and catch fish." The fisherman did not doubt of taking some, because he saw a great number in the water;

but he was extremely surprised when he found they were of four colours; white, red, blue, and yellow. He threw in his nets and brought out one of each colour. Having never seen the like before, he could not but admire them, and, judging that he might get a considerable sum for them, he was very joyful. "Carry those fish," said the genie to him, "and present them to your sultan; he will give you more money for them. You may come daily to fish in this lake; but I give you warning not to throw in your nets above once a day, otherwise you will repent." Having spoken thus, he struck his foot upon the ground, which opened, and after it had swallowed him up, closed again.

The fisherman, being resolved to follow the genie's advice, forbore casting in his nets a second time, and returned to the town very well satisfied, and making a thousand reflections upon his adventure. He went immediately to the sultan's palace to offer his fish, and his majesty was much surprised when he saw the wonders which the fisherman presented. He took them up one after another, and viewed them with attention; and after having admired them a long time, "Take those fish," said he to his vizier, "and carry them to the cook whom the emperor of the Greeks has sent me. I cannot imagine but that they must be as good as they are beautiful."

The vizier carried them as he was directed, and delivering them to the cook, said: "Here are four fish just brought to the sultan; he orders you to dress them." He then returned to the sultan, who commanded him to give the fisherman four hundred pieces of gold, which he did accordingly.

The fisherman, who had never seen so much money, could scarcely believe his good fortune, but thought the whole must be a dream, until he found it otherwise, by being able to provide necessaries for his family with the produce of his nets.

As soon as the sultan's cook had cleaned the fish, she put them upon the fire in a frying-pan, with oil, and when she thought them fried enough on one side, she turned them upon the other; but, O monstrous prodigy! scarcely were they turned, when the wall of the kitchen divided, and a young lady of wonderful beauty entered from the opening. She held a rod in her hand and was clad in flowered satin, with pendants in her ears, a necklace of large pearls, and bracelets of gold set with rubies. She moved toward the frying-pan, to the great amazement of the cook, and striking one of the fish with the end of the rod, said: "Fish, fish, are you in your duty?" The fish having answered nothing, she repeated these words, and then the four fish lifted up their heads, and replied: "Yes, yes: if you reckon, we reckon; if you pay your debts, we pay ours; if you fly, we overcome, and are content." As soon as they had finished these words, the lady overturned the frying-pan, and returned into the open part of the wall, which closed immediately, and became as it was before.

The cook was greatly frightened at what had happened, and coming a little to herself went to take up the fish that had fallen on the hearth, but found them blacker than coal and not fit to be carried to the sultan. This grievously troubled her, and she fell to weeping most bitterly. "Alas!" said she, "what will become of me? If I tell the sultan what I have seen, I am sure he will not believe me, but will be enraged against me."

While she was thus bewailing herself, the grand vizier entered, and asked her if the fish were ready. She told him all that had occurred, which we may easily imagine astonished him; but without speaking a word of it to the sultan he invented an excuse that satisfied him, and sending immediately for the fisherman bid him bring four more such fish, for a misfortune had befallen the others, so that they were not fit to be carried to the royal table. The fisherman, without saying anything of what the genie had told him, told the vizier he had a great way to go for them, in order to excuse himself from bringing them that day, but said that he would certainly bring them on the morrow.

Accordingly the fisherman went away by night, and coming to the lake, threw in his nets betimes next morning, took four fish like the former, and brought them to the vizier at the hour appointed. The minister took them himself, carried them to the kitchen, and shutting himself up with the cook, she cleaned them and put them on the fire. When they were fried on one side, and she had turned them upon the other, the kitchen wall again opened, and the same lady came in with the rod in her hand, struck one of the fish, spoke to it as before, and all four gave her the same answer.

After they had spoken to the young lady, she overturned the frying-pan with her rod, and retired into the wall. The grand vizier being witness to what had passed, "This is too wonderful and extraordinary," said he, "to be concealed from the sultan; I will inform him of this prodigy."

The sultan, being much surprised, sent immediately for the fisherman, and said to him: "Friend, cannot you bring me four more such fish?" The fisherman replied: "If your majesty will be pleased to allow me three days, I will do it." Having obtained his time, he went to the lake immediately, and at the first throwing in of his net he caught four fish, and brought them directly to the sultan, who was so much the more rejoiced, as he did not expect them so soon, and ordered him four hundred pieces of gold. As soon as the sultan had the fish, he ordered them to be carried into his closet, with all that was necessary for frying them; and having shut himself up with the vizier, the minister cleaned them, put them into the pan, and when they were fried on one side, turned them upon the other; then the wall of the closet opened, but instead of the young lady, there came out a black, in the habit of a slave, and of a gigantic stature, with a great green staff in his hand. He advanced toward the pan, and touching one of the fish with his staff, said, with a terrible voice: "Fish, are you in your duty?" At these words the fish raised up their heads, and answered: "Yes, yes; we are; if you reckon, we reckon; if you pay your debts, we pay ours; if you fly, we overcome and are content."

The fish had no sooner finished these words, than the black threw the pan into the middle of the closet, and reduced them to a coal. Having done this, he retired fiercely, and entering again into the aperture, it closed, and the wall appeared just as it did before.

"After what I have seen," said the sultan to the vizier, "it will not be possible for me to be easy; these fish, without doubt, signify something extraordinary." He sent for the fisherman, and when he came, said to him: "Fisherman, the fish you have brought us make me very uneasy; where did you catch them?" "Sir," answered he, "I fished for them in a lake situated betwixt four hills, beyond the mountain that we see from hence." "Know'st thou not that lake?" said the sultan to the vizier. "No," replied the vizier, "I never so much as heard of it, although I have for sixty years hunted beyond that mountain." The sultan asked the fisherman how far the lake might be from the palace. The fisherman answered it was not above three hours' journey; upon this assurance the sultan commanded all his court to take horse, and the fisherman served them for a guide. They all ascended the mountain, and at the foot of it they saw, to their great surprise, a vast plain that nobody had observed till then, and at last they came to the lake, which they found to be situated betwixt four hills, as the fisherman had described. The water was so transparent that they observed all the fish to be like those which the fisherman had brought to the palace.

The sultan stood upon the bank of the lake, and after beholding the fish with admiration, demanded of his courtiers if it were possible they had never seen this lake which was within so short a distance of the town. They all answered that they had never so much as heard of it.

"Since you all agree that you never heard of it," said the sultan, "and as I am no less astonished than you are at this novelty, I am resolved not to return to my palace till I learn how this lake came here, and why all the fish in it are of four colours." Having spoken thus, he ordered his court to encamp; and immediately his pavilion and the tents of his household were planted upon the banks of the lake.

When night came the sultan retired under his pavilion, and spoke to the grand vizier thus: "Vizier, my mind is uneasy; this lake transported hither, the black that appeared to us in my closet, and the fish that we heard speak; all these things so much excite my curiosity that I cannot resist my impatient desire to have it satisfied. To this end I am resolved to withdraw alone from the camp, and I order you to keep my absence secret: stay in my pavilion, and to-morrow morning, when the emirs and courtiers come to attend my levee, send them away and tell them that I am somewhat indisposed and wish to be alone; and the following days tell them the same thing, till I return."

The grand vizier endeavoured to divert the sultan from this design; he represented to him the danger to which he might be exposed, and that all his labour might perhaps be in vain; but it was to

no purpose; the sultan was resolved. He put on a suit fit for walking and took his cimeter; and as soon as he found that all was quiet in the camp, went out alone, and passed over one of the hills without much difficulty; he found the descent still more easy, and when he came to the plain, walked on till the sun arose, and then he saw before him, at a considerable distance, a vast building. He rejoiced at the sight, in hopes of receiving there the information he sought. When he drew near, he found it was a magnificent palace, or rather a strong castle, of black polished marble, and covered with fine steel, as smooth as glass. Being highly pleased that he had so speedily met with something worthy his curiosity, he stopped before the front of the castle, and considered it with attention.

He then advanced toward the gate, which had two leaves, one of them open; though he might immediately have entered, yet he thought it best to knock. This he did at first softly, and waited for some time; but seeing no one, and supposing he had not been heard, he knocked harder the second time, and after that he knocked again and again, but no one yet appearing, he was exceedingly surprised; for he could not think that a castle in such repair was without inhabitants. "If there be no one in it," said he to himself, "I have nothing to fear; and if it be inhabited, I have wherewith to defend myself."

At last he entered, and when he came within the porch, he cried: "Is there no one here to receive a stranger who comes in for some refreshment as he passes by?" He repeated the same words two or three times; but though he spoke very loud, he was not answered. The silence increased his astonishment: he came into a spacious court, and looked on every side for inhabitants, but discovered none.

Perceiving nobody in the court, he entered the grand halls, which were hung with silk tapestry, the alcoves and sofas covered with stuffs of Mecca, and the porches with the richest stuffs of India. He came afterward into a superb saloon, in the middle of which was a fountain, with a lion of massy gold at each angle: water issued from the mouths of the four lions, and as it fell, formed diamonds and pearls resembling a jet d'eau, which, springing from the middle of the fountain, rose nearly to the top of a cupola painted in Arabesque.

The castle, on three sides, was encompassed by a garden, with parterres of flowers and shrubbery; and to complete the beauty of the place, an infinite number of birds filled the air with their harmonious notes, and always remained there, nets being spread over the garden, and fastened to the palace to confine them. The sultan walked from apartment to apartment, where he found everything rich and magnificent. Being tired with walking, he sat down in a veranda, which had a view over the garden, reflecting upon what he had seen, when suddenly he heard the voice of one complaining, in lamentable tones. He listened with attention, and heard distinctly these words: "O fortune! thou who wouldst not suffer me longer to enjoy a happy lot, forbear to persecute me, and by a speedy death put an end to my sorrows. Alas! is it possible that I am still alive, after so many torments as I have suffered!"

The sultan rose up, advanced toward the place whence he heard the voice, and coming to the door of a great hall, opened it, and saw a handsome young man, richly habited, seated upon a throne raised a little above the ground. Melancholy was painted on his countenance. The sultan drew near and saluted him; the young man returned his salutation, by an inclination of his head, not being able to rise, at the same time saying: "My lord, I should rise to receive you, but am hindered by sad necessity, and therefore hope you will not be offended." "My lord," replied the sultan, "I am much obliged to you for having so good an opinion of me: as to the reason of your not rising, whatever your apology be, I heartily accept it. Being drawn hither by your complaints, and afflicted by your grief, I come to offer you my help. I flatter myself that you will relate to me the history of your misfortunes; but inform me first of the meaning of the lake near the palace, where the fish are of four colours; whose castle is this; how you came to be here; and why you are alone."

Instead of answering these questions, the young man began to weep bitterly. "How inconstant is fortune!" cried he; "she takes pleasure to pull down those she has raised. Where are they who enjoy quietly the happiness which they hold of her, and whose day is always clear and serene?"

The sultan, moved with compassion to see him in such a condition, prayed him to relate the cause of his excessive grief. "Alas! my lord," replied the young man, "how is it possible but I should grieve, and my eyes be inexhaustible fountains of tears?" At these words, lifting up his robe, he showed the sultan that he was a man only from the head to the girdle, and that the other half of his body was black marble.

The sultan was much surprised when he saw the deplorable condition of the young man. "That which you show me," said he, "while it fills me with horror, excites my curiosity, so that I am impatient to hear your history, which, no doubt, must be extraordinary, and I am persuaded that the lake and the fish make some part of it; therefore I conjure you to relate it. You will find some comfort in so doing, since it is certain that the unfortunate find relief in making known their distress." "I will not refuse your request," replied the young man, "though I cannot comply without renewing my grief. But I give you notice beforehand, to prepare your ears, your mind, and even your eyes, for things which surpass all that the imagination can conceive."

THE HISTORY OF THE YOUNG KING OF THE BLACK ISLES

"You must know, my lord," said the wretched prisoner, "that my father, named Mahmoud, was monarch of this country. This is the kingdom of the Black Isles, which takes its name from the four small neighbouring mountains; for those mountains were formerly isles, and the capital where the king, my father, resided was situated on the spot now occupied by the lake you have seen. The sequel of my history will inform you of the reason for those changes.

"The king, my father, died when he was seventy years of age; I had no sooner succeeded him than I married, and the lady I chose to share the royal dignity with me was my cousin. I had so much reason to be satisfied with her affection, and, on my part, loved her with so much tenderness, that nothing could surpass the harmony of our union. This lasted five years, at the end of which time I perceived the queen ceased to delight in my attentions.

"One day, after dinner, while she was at the bath, I found myself inclined to repose, and lay down upon a sofa. Two of her ladies, who were then in my chamber, came and sat down, one at my head and the other at my feet, with fans in their hands to moderate the heat, and to prevent the flies from disturbing me. They thought I was asleep, and spoke in whispers; but as I only closed my eyes, I heard all their conversation.

"One of them said to the other, 'Is not the queen wrong, not to love so amiable a prince?' 'Certainly,' replied her companion; 'I do not understand the reason, neither can I conceive why she goes out every night, and leaves him alone! Is it possible that he does not perceive it?' 'Alas!' said the first, 'how should he? She mixes every evening in his liquor the juice of a certain herb, which makes him sleep so sound all night that she has time to go where she pleases, and as day begins to appear she comes and wakes him by the smell of something she puts under his nostrils.'

"You may guess, my lord, how much I was surprised at this conversation, and with what sentiments it inspired me; yet whatever emotion it excited I had sufficient self-command to dissemble, and feigned to awake without having heard a word.

"The queen returned from the bath, we supped together, and she presented me with a cup full of such liquid as I was accustomed to drink; but instead of putting it to my mouth, I went to a window that was open, threw out the water so quickly that she did not perceive it, and returned.

"Soon after, believing that I was asleep, she arose with so little precaution, that she whispered loud enough for me to hear her distinctly, 'Sleep on, and may you never wake again!' and so saying, she dressed herself, and went out of the chamber.

"As soon as the queen, my wife, was gone, I arose in haste, took my cimeter, and followed her so quickly that I soon heard the sound of her feet before me, and then walked softly after her. She passed through several gates, which opened upon her pronouncing some magical words, and the last she opened was that of the garden, which she entered. I stopped at this gate, that she might not perceive me as she passed along a parterre; then looking after her as far as the darkness of the night permitted, I saw her enter a little wood, whose walks were guarded by thick palisadoes. I went thither by another way, and concealing myself, I saw her walking there with a man.

"I did not fail to lend the most attentive ear to their discourse, and heard her address herself thus to her gallant: 'I do not deserve,' she said, 'to be reproached by you for want of diligence. You well know the reason; but if all the proofs of affection I have already given you be not sufficient to convince you of my sincerity, I am ready to give you others more decisive: you need but command me, you know my power; I will, if you desire it, before sunrise convert this great city, and this superb palace, into frightful ruins, inhabited only by wolves, owls, and ravens. If you would have me transport

all the stones of those walls so solidly built, beyond Mount Caucasus, the bounds of the habitable world, speak but the word, and all shall be changed.'

"As the queen finished this speech she and her companion came to the end of the walk, turned to enter another, and passed before me. I had already drawn my cimeter, and the man being next me, I struck him on the neck, and brought him to the ground. I concluded I had killed him, and therefore retired speedily without making myself known to the queen, whom I chose to spare, because she was my kinswoman.

"The wound I had given her companion was mortal; but by her enchantments she preserved him in an existence in which he could not be said to be either dead or alive. As I crossed the garden to return to the palace, I heard the queen loudly lamenting, and judging by her cries how much she was grieved, I was pleased that I had spared her life.

"As soon as I had reached my apartment, I went to bed, and being satisfied with having punished the villain who had injured me, fell asleep.

"Next morning I arose, went to my closet, and dressed myself. I afterward held my council. At my return, the queen, clad in mourning, her hair dishevelled, and part of it torn off, presented herself before me, and said: 'I come to beg your majesty not to be surprised to see me in this condition. My heavy affliction is occasioned by intelligence of three distressing events which I have just received.' 'Alas! what are they, madam?' said I. 'The death of the queen, my dear mother,' she replied, 'that of the king, my father, killed in battle, and of one of my brothers, who has fallen down a precipice.'

"I was not displeased that she used these pretexts to conceal the true cause of her grief. 'Madam,' said I, 'so far from blaming, I assure you I heartily commiserate your sorrow. I should feel surprise if you were insensible to such heavy calamities: weep on; your tears are so many proofs of your tenderness; but I hope that time and reflection will moderate your grief.'

"She retired into her apartment, where, giving herself wholly up to sorrow, she spent a whole year in mourning and lamentation. At the end of that period, she begged permission to erect a burying-place for herself, within the bounds of the palace, where she would continue, she told me, to the end of her days: I consented, and she built a stately edifice, and called it the Palace of Tears. When it was finished, she caused the object of her care to be conveyed thither; she had hitherto prevented his dying, by potions which she had administered to him; and she continued to convey them to him herself every day after he came to the Palace of Tears.

"Yet, with all her enchantments, she could not cure the wretch; he was not only unable to walk or support himself, but had also lost the use of his speech, and exhibited no sign of life except in his looks.

"Every day the queen made him two long visits. I was well apprised of this, but pretended ignorance. One day my curiosity induced me to go to the Palace of Tears, to observe how my consort employed herself, and from a place where she could not see me, I heard her thus address the wounded ruffian: 'I am afflicted to the highest degree to behold you in this condition,' she cried, 'I am as sensible as yourself of the tormenting pain you endure; but, dear soul, I am continually speaking to you, and you do not answer me: how long will you remain silent? Speak only one word: alas! the sweetest moments of my life are these I spend here in partaking of your grief.'

"At these words, which were several times interrupted by her sighs, I lost all patience: and discovering myself, came up to her, and said, 'Madam, you have wept enough, it is time to give over this sorrow, which dishonours us both; you have too much forgotten what you owe to me and to yourself.' 'Sire,' said she, 'if you have any kindness or compassion for me left, I beseech you to put no restraint upon me; allow me to indulge my grief, which it is impossible for time to assuage.'

"When I perceived that my remonstrance, instead of restoring her to a sense of duty, served only to increase her anguish, I ceased speaking and retired. She continued every day to visit her charge, and for two whole years abandoned herself to grief and despair.

"I went a second time to the Palace of Tears, while she was there. I concealed myself again, and heard her thus cry out: 'It is now three years since you spoke one word to me; you answer not the proofs I give you of my devotion by my sighs and lamentations. Is it from insensibility, or contempt? O tomb! tell me by what miracle thou becamest the depository of the rarest treasure the world ever contained.'

"I must confess, my lord, I was enraged at these expressions; for, in truth, this adored mortal was by no means what you would imagine him to have been. He was a black Indian, one of the original natives of this country. I was so enraged at the language addressed to him, that I discovered myself, and apostrophising the tomb in my turn, I cried, 'O tomb! why dost thou not swallow up that monster so revolting to human nature, or rather why dost thou not swallow up this pair of monsters?'

"I had scarcely uttered these words, when the queen, who sat by the black, rose up like a fury: 'Miscreant!' said she, 'thou art the cause of my grief; do not think I am ignorant of this, I have dissembled too long. It was thy barbarous hand that brought the object of my fondness into this lamentable condition; and thou hast the cruelty to come and insult me.' 'Yes,' said I, in a rage, 'it was I who chastised that monster, according to his desert; I ought to have treated thee in the same manner; I now repent that I did not; thou hast too long abused my goodness.' As I spoke these words, I drew out my cimeter, and lifted up my hand to punish her; but regarding me steadfastly, she said with a jeering smile, 'Moderate thine anger.' At the same time she pronounced words I did not understand; and afterward added, 'By virtue of my enchantments, I command thee to become half marble and half man.' Immediately, my lord, I became what you see, a dead man among the living, and a living man among the dead. After this cruel sorceress, unworthy of the name of queen, had metamorphosed me thus, and brought me into this hall, by another enchantment she destroyed my capital, which was very flourishing and populous; she annihilated the houses, the public places and markets, and reduced the site of the whole to the lake and desert plain you have seen; the fishes of four colours in the waters are the four kinds of inhabitants, of different religions, which the city contained. The white are the Mussulmans; the red, the Persians, who worship fire; the blue, the Christians; and the yellow, the Jews. The four little hills were the four islands that gave name to this kingdom. I learned all this from the enchantress, who, to add to my affliction, related to me these effects of her rage. But this is not all; her revenge not being satisfied with the destruction of my dominions, and the metamorphosis of my person, she comes every day, and gives me over my naked shoulders a hundred lashes with a whip until I am covered with blood. When she has finished this part of my punishment, she throws over me a coarse stuff of goat's hair, and over that this robe of brocade, not to honour, but to mock me."

When he came to this part of his narrative, the young king could not restrain his tears; and the sultan was himself so affected by the relation, that he could not find utterance for any words of consolation. Shortly after, the young king, lifting up his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Mighty creator of all things, I submit myself to Thy judgments, and to the decrees of Thy providence: I endure my calamities with patience, since it is Thy will that things should be as they are; but I hope that Thy infinite goodness will ultimately reward me."

The sultan, greatly moved by the recital of this affecting story, and anxious to avenge the sufferings of the unfortunate prince, said to him: "Inform me whither this perfidious sorceress retires, and where may be found the vile wretch, who is entombed before his death." "My lord," replied the prince, "the Indian, as I have already told you, is lodged in the Palace of Tears, in a superb tomb constructed in the form of a dome: this palace joins the castle on the side in which the gate is placed. As to the queen, I cannot tell you precisely whither she retires, but every day at sunrise she goes to visit her charge, after having executed her bloody vengeance upon me; and you see I am not in a condition to defend myself. She carries to him the potion with which she has hitherto prevented his dying, and always complains of his never having spoken to her since he was wounded."

"Prince," said the sultan, "your condition can never be sufficiently deplored: no one can be more sensibly affected by your misfortune than I am. Never did anything so extraordinary befall any

man! One thing only is wanting; the revenge to which you are entitled, and I will omit nothing in my power to effect it."

In his subsequent conversation with the young prince the sultan told him who he was, and for what purpose he had entered the castle; and afterward informed him of a mode of revenge which he had devised. They agreed upon the measures they were to take for accomplishing their design, but deferred the execution of it till the following day. In the meantime, the night being far spent, the sultan took some rest; but the young prince passed the night as usual, without sleep, never having slept since he was enchanted.

Next morning the sultan arose with the dawn, and prepared to execute his design, by proceeding to the Palace of Tears. He found it lighted up with an infinite number of flambeaux of white wax, and perfumed by a delicious scent issuing from several censers of fine gold of admirable workmanship. As soon as he perceived the bed where the Indian lay, he drew his cimeter and deprived him of his wretched life, dragged his corpse into the court of the castle, and threw it into a well. After this he went and lay down in the black's bed, placed his cimeter under the covering, and waited to complete his design.

The queen arrived shortly after. She first went into the chamber of her husband, the king of the Black Islands, stripped him, and with unexampled barbarity gave him a hundred stripes. The unfortunate prince filled the palace with his lamentations, and conjured her in the most affecting tone to take pity on him; but the cruel wretch ceased not till she had given the usual number of blows. "You had no compassion," said she, "and you are to expect none from me."

After the enchantress had given her husband a hundred blows with the whip, she put on again his covering of goat's hair, and his brocade gown over all; she went afterward to the Palace of Tears, and as she entered renewed her tears and lamentations; then approaching the bed, where she thought the Indian lay: "Alas!" said she, addressing herself to the sultan, conceiving him to be the black, "My sun, my life, will you always be silent? Are you resolved to let me die without affording me the comfort of hearing your voice?"

The sultan, as if he had awaked out of a deep sleep, and counterfeiting the pronunciation of the blacks, answered the queen with a grave tone: "There is no strength or power but in God alone, who is almighty." At these words the enchantress, who did not expect them, uttered a loud exclamation of joy. "My dear lord," cried she, "do I not deceive myself; is it certain that I hear you, and that you speak to me?" "Unhappy woman," said the sultan, "art thou worthy that I should answer thee?" "Alas!" replied the queen, "why do you reproach me thus?" "The cries," returned the sultan, "the groans and tears of thy husband, whom thou treatest every day with so much indignity and barbarity, prevent my sleeping night or day. Hadst thou disenchanted him, I should long since have been cured, and have recovered the use of my speech. This is the cause of my silence, of which you complain." "Well," said the enchantress, "to pacify you, I am ready to execute your commands; would you have me restore him?" "Yes," replied the sultan; "make haste to set him at liberty, that I be no longer disturbed by his lamentations." The enchantress went immediately out of the Palace of Tears; she took a cup of water, and pronounced some words over it, which caused it to boil, as if it had been on the fire. She afterward proceeded to the young king, and threw the water upon him, saying: "If the Creator of all things did form thee as thou art at present, or if He be angry with thee, do not change; but if thou art in that condition merely by virtue of my enchantments, resume thy natural shape, and become what thou wast before." She had scarcely spoken these words when the prince, finding himself restored to his former condition, rose up and returned thanks to God. The enchantress then said to him, "Get thee from this castle, and never return on pain of death." The young king, yielding to necessity, went away without replying a word, and retired to a remote place, where he patiently awaited the event of the design which the sultan had so happily begun. Meanwhile the enchantress returned to the Palace of Tears, and supposing that she still spoke to the black, said, "Dear love,

I have done what you required; nothing now prevents your rising and giving me the satisfaction of which I have so long been deprived."

The sultan, still counterfeiting the pronunciation of the black, said: "What you have now done is by no means sufficient for my cure; you have only removed a part of the evil; you must cut it up by the root." "My lovely black," resumed the queen, "what do you mean by the root?" "Wretched woman," replied the sultan, "understand you not that I allude to the town and its inhabitants, and the four islands, destroyed by thy enchantments? The fish every night at midnight raise their heads out of the lake, and cry for vengeance against thee and me. This is the true cause of the delay of my cure. Go speedily, restore things to their former state, and at thy return I will give thee my hand, and thou shalt help me to arise."

The enchantress, inspired with hope from these words, cried out in a transport of joy, "My heart, my soul, you shall soon be restored to your health, for I will immediately do as you command me." Accordingly she went that instant, and when she came to the brink of the lake she took a little water in her hand, and sprinkling it, she pronounced some words over the fish and the lake, and the city was immediately restored. The fish became men, women, and children; Mohammedans, Christians, Persians, or Jews; freemen or slaves, as they were before: every one having recovered his natural form. The houses and shops were immediately filled with their inhabitants, who found all things as they were before the enchantment. The sultan's numerous retinue, who found themselves encamped in the largest square, were astonished to see themselves in an instant in the middle of a large, handsome, well-peopled city.

To return to the enchantress: As soon as she had effected this wonderful change, she returned with all expedition to the Palace of Tears, that she might receive her reward. "My dear lord," cried she, as she entered, "I have done all that you required of me, then pray rise and give me your hand." "Come near," said the sultan, still counterfeiting the pronunciation of the black. She did so. "You are not near enough," he continued; "approach nearer." She obeyed. He then rose up, and seizing her by the arm so suddenly that she had not time to discover him, he with a blow of his cimeter cut her in two, so that one half fell one way and the other another. This done, he left the body on the spot, and going out of the Palace of Tears, went to seek the young king of the Black Isles, who waited for him with great impatience. When he found him, "Prince," said he, embracing him, "rejoice; you have now nothing to fear; your cruel enemy is dead."

The young prince returned thanks to the sultan in a manner that sufficiently evinced his gratitude, and in return wished him long life and happiness. "You may henceforward," said the sultan, "dwell peaceably in your capital, unless you will accompany me to mine, which is near: you shall there be welcome, and have as much honour shown you as if you were in your own kingdom." "Potent monarch, to whom I am so much indebted," replied the king, "you think, then, that you are near your capital." "Yes," said the sultan, "I know it is not above four or five hours' journey." "It will take you a whole year to return," said the prince. "I do indeed believe that you came hither from your capital in the time you mention, because mine was enchanted; but since the enchantment is taken off, things are changed: however, this shall not prevent my following you, were it to the utmost corners of the earth. You are my deliverer, and that I may give you proofs of my acknowledgment of this during my whole life, I am willing to accompany you, and to leave my kingdom without regret."

The sultan was extremely surprised to understand that he was so far from his dominions, and could not imagine how it could be, but the young king of the Black Islands convinced him beyond a possibility of doubt. Then the sultan replied: "It is no matter; the trouble of returning to my own country is sufficiently recompensed by the satisfaction of having obliged you, and by acquiring you for a son; for since you will do me the honour to accompany me, as I have no child, I look upon you as such, and from this moment appoint you my heir and successor."

The young prince then employed himself in making preparations for his journey, which were finished in three weeks, to the great regret of his court and subjects, who agreed to receive at his hands one of his nearest kindred for their monarch.

At length the sultan and the young prince began their journey, with a hundred camels laden with inestimable riches from the treasury, followed by fifty handsome gentlemen on horseback, perfectly well mounted and dressed. They had a pleasant journey; and when the sultan, who had sent couriers to give advice of his delay, and of the adventure which had occasioned it, approached his capital, the principal officers came to receive him, and to assure him that his long absence had occasioned no alteration in his empire. The inhabitants also came out in great crowds, received him with acclamations, and made public rejoicings for several days.

The day after his arrival the sultan acquainted his courtiers with his adoption of the king of the Four Black Islands, who was willing to leave a great kingdom to accompany and live with him; and in reward for their loyalty, he made each of them presents according to their rank.

As for the fisherman, as he was the first cause of the deliverance of the young prince, the sultan gave him a plentiful fortune, which made him and his family happy the rest of his days.

THE STORY OF GULNARE OF THE SEA

There was, in olden time, and in an ancient age and period, in the land of the Persians, a king named Shahzeman, and the place of his residence was Khorassan. He had not been blest, during his whole life, with a male child nor a female; and he reflected upon this, one day, and lamented that the greater portion of his life had passed, and he had no heir to take the kingdom after him as he had inherited it from his fathers and forefathers. So the utmost grief befell him on this account.

Now while he was sitting one day, one of his mamelukes came in to him, and said to him: "O my lord, at the door is a slave-girl with a merchant: none more beautiful than she hath been seen." And he replied: "Bring to me the merchant and the slave-girl." The merchant and the slave-girl therefore came to him; and when he saw her, he found her to resemble the lance in straightness and slenderness. She was wrapped in a garment of silk embroidered with gold, and the merchant uncovered her face, whereupon the place was illuminated by her beauty, and there hung down from her forehead seven locks of hair reaching to her anklets. The King, therefore, wondered at the sight of her, and at her beauty, and her stature and justness of form; and he said to the merchant: "O sheikh, for how much is this damsel to be sold?" The merchant answered: "O my lord, I purchased her for two thousand pieces of gold of the merchant who owned her before me, and I have been for three years travelling with her, and she hath cost, to the period of her arrival at this place, three thousand pieces of gold; and she is a present from me unto thee." Upon this, the king conferred upon him a magnificent robe of honour, and gave orders to present him with ten thousand pieces of gold. So he took them, and kissed the hands of the king, thanking him for his beneficence, and departed. Then the king committed the damsel to the tirewomen, saying to them: "Amend the state of this damsel, and deck her, and furnish for her a private chamber, and take her into it." He also gave orders to his chamberlains that everything which she required should be conveyed to her. The seat of government where he resided was on the shore of the sea, and his city was called the White City. And they conducted the damsel into a private chamber, which chamber had windows overlooking the sea; and the king commanded his chamberlains to close all the doors upon her after taking to her all that she required.

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