

# RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

A plain and literal translation of the  
Arabian nights entertainments, now  
entitled The Book of the Thousand  
Nights and a Night, Volume 2 (of  
17)

**Richard Burton**

**A plain and literal translation of  
the Arabian nights entertainments,  
now entituled The Book of  
the Thousand Nights and  
a Night, Volume 2 (of 17)**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=24170524](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24170524)*

*A plain and literal translation of the Arabian nights entertainments, now  
entituled The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, Volume 2 (of 17):*

# Содержание

NUR AL-DIN ALI AND THE DAMSEL ANIS AL-JALIS	5
TALE OF GHANIM BIN AYYUB 79 , THE DISTRAUGHT, THE THRALL O' LOVE	75
TALE OF THE FIRST EUNUCH BUKHAYT	82
TALE OF THE SECOND EUNUCH, KAFUR	85
TALE OF KING OMAR BIN AL-NU'UMAN AND HIS SONS SHARRKAN AND ZAU AL- MAKAN, AND WHAT BEFEL THEM OF THINGS SELD-SEEN AND PEREGRINE. 138	126
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	159

**Richard Francis Burton**  
**A plain and literal translation**  
**of the Arabian nights**  
**entertainments, now**  
**entitled The Book of the**  
**Thousand Nights and a**  
**Night, Volume 2 (of 17)**

My dear Sir,

Allow me, thus publicly to express my admiration of your magnum opus, "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night;" and to offer you my cordial thanks for honouring me with the dedication of that scholar-like and admirable version.

Ever yours sincerely,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

Queen's College, Oxford

*August 1, 1885.*

# NUR AL-DIN ALI AND THE DAMSEL ANIS AL-JALIS

Quoth Shahrazad<sup>1</sup>: – It hath reached me, O auspicious King of intelligence penetrating, that there was, amongst the Kings of Bassorah,<sup>2</sup> a King who loved the poor and needy and cherished his lieges, and gave of his wealth to all who believed in Mohammed (whom Allah bless and assain!), and he was even as one of the poets described him: —

---

<sup>1</sup> Supplementary to note 2, p. 2, and note 2, p. 14, vol. i., I may add that "Shahrazad," in the *Shams al-Loghat*, is the P.N. of a King. L. Langlès (*Les Voyages de Sindibâd Le Marin et La Ruse des Femmes*, first appended to Savary's *Grammar* and reprinted 12mo. pp. 161 + 113, Imprimerie Royale, Paris, M.D.CCC.XIV) explains it by *Le cyprès, la beauté de la ville*; and he is followed by (A. de Biberstein) Kazimirski (*Enis el-Djelis*, Paris, Barrois, 1847). Ouseley (*Orient. Collect.*) makes *Shahrzâd*=town-born; and others an Arabisation of *Chehr-âzâd* (free of face, ingenuous of countenance) the *petit nom* of Queen Humay, for whom see the terminal Essay. The name of the sister, whom the *Fihrist* converts into a *Kahramânah*, or nurse, vulgarly written *Dínâr-zâd*, would=child of gold pieces, freed by gold pieces, or one who has no need of gold pieces: *Dinzâd*=child of faith and *Daynâzâd*, proposed by Langlès, "free from debt(!)" I have adopted Macnaghten's *Dunyazad*. "Shahryar," which Scott hideously writes "Shier-ear," is translated by the *Shams*, King of the world, absolute monarch and the court of Anushirwan while the *Burhân-i-Kâti'a* renders it a King of Kings, and P.N. of a town. *Shahr-bâz* is also the P.N. of a town in Samarcand.

<sup>2</sup> Arab. "Malik," here used as in our story-books: "Pompey was a wise and powerful King" says the *Gesta Romanorum*. This King is, as will appear, a Regent or Governor under Harun al-Rashid. In the next tale he is Viceroy of Damascus, where he is also called "Sultan."

A King who when hosts of the foe invade, ❀ Receives them  
with lance-lunge and sabre-sway;  
Writes his name on bosoms in thin red lines, ❀ And scatters  
the horsemen in wild dismay.<sup>3</sup>

His name was King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, and he had two Wazirs, one called Al-Mu'in, son of Sawi and the other Al-Fazl son of Khákán. Now Al-Fazl was the most generous of the people of his age, upright of life, so that all hearts united in loving him and the wise flocked to him for counsel; whilst the subjects used to pray for his long life, because he was a compendium of the best qualities, encouraging the good and lief, and preventing evil and mischief. But the Wazir Mu'in bin Sawi on the contrary hated folk<sup>4</sup> and loved not the good and was

---

<sup>3</sup> The Bul. Edit. gives the lines as follows: —The lance was his pen, and the hearts of his foes ❀ His paper, and dipped he in blood for ink; Hence our sires entitled the spear Khattíyah, ❀ Meaning that withal man shall write, I think. The pun is in "Khattíyah" which may mean a writer (feminine) and also a spear, from Khatt-Hajar, a tract in the province Al-Bahrayn (Persian Gulf), and Oman, where the best Indian bamboos were landed and fashioned into lances. Imr al-Kays (Mu'allakah v. 4.) sings of "our dark spears firmly wrought of Khattiyah cane;" Al-Busíri of "the brown lances of Khatt;" also see Lebid v. 50 and Hamásah pp. 26, 231: Antar notes the "Spears of Khatt" and "Rudaynian lances." Rudaynah is said to have been the wife of one Samhár, the Ferrara of lances; others make her the wife of Al-Ka'azab and hold Samhár to be a town in Abyssinia where the best weapons were manufactured. The pen is the Calamus or Kalam (reed cut for pen) of which the finest and hardest are brought from Java: they require the least nibbing. The rhetorical figure in the text is called Husn al-Ta'alíl, our ætiology; and is as admirable to the Arabs as it appears silly to us.

<sup>4</sup> "He loves folk" is high praise, meaning something more than benevolence and

a mere compound of ill; even as was said of him: —

Hold to nobles, sons of nobles! 'tis ever Nature's test ❀ That nobles born of nobles shall excel in noble deed:

And shun the mean of soul, meanly bred, for 'tis the law, ❀ Mean deeds come of men who are mean of blood and breed.

And as much as the people loved and fondly loved Al-Fazl bin Khakan, so they hated and thoroughly hated the mean and miserly Mu'in bin Sawi. It befel one day by the decree of the Decree, that King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, being seated on his throne with his officers of state about him, summoned his Wazir Al-Fazl and said to him, "I wish to have a slave-girl of passing beauty, perfect in loveliness, exquisite in symmetry and endowed with all praiseworthy gifts." Said the courtiers, "Such a girl is not to be bought for less than ten thousand gold pieces: " whereupon the Sultan called out to his treasurer and said, "Carry ten thousand dinars to the house of Al-Fazl bin Khakan." The treasurer did the King's bidding; and the Minister went away, after receiving the royal charge to repair to the slave-bazar every day, and entrust to brokers the matter aforesaid. Moreover the King issued orders that girls worth above a thousand gold pieces should not be bought or sold without being first displayed to the Wazir. Accordingly no broker purchased a slave-girl ere she had been paraded before the minister; but none pleased him, till one day a dealer came to the house and found

---

beneficence. Like charity it covers a host of sins.

him taking horse and intending for the palace. So he caught hold of his stirrup saying: —

O thou, who givest to royal state sweet savour, ❀ Thou'rt a Wazir shalt never fail of favour!

Dead Bounty thou hast raised to life for men; ❀ Ne'er fail of Allah's grace such high endeavour!

Then quoth he, "O my lord, that surpassing object for whom the gracious mandate was issued is at last found;<sup>5</sup>" and quoth the Wazir, "Here with her to me!" So he went away and returned after a little, bringing a damsel in richest raiment robed, a maid spear-straight of stature and five feet tall; budding of bosom with eyes large and black as by Kohl traced, and dewy lips sweeter than syrup or the sherbet one sips, a virginette smooth cheeked and shapely faced, whose slender waist with massive hips was engraced; a form more pleasing than branchlet waving upon the topmost trees, and a voice softer and gentler than the morning breeze, even as saith one of those who have described her: —

Strange is the charm which dights her brows like Luna's disk that shine; ❀ O sweeter taste than sweetest Robb<sup>6</sup> or raisins of the vine.

A throne th' Empyrean keeps for her in high and glorious state, ❀ For wit and wisdom, wandlike form and graceful

---

<sup>5</sup> The sentence is euphuistic.

<sup>6</sup> Arab. "Rubb"=syrup a word Europeanised by the "Rob Laffecteur."



bending line:

She in the Heaven of her face<sup>7</sup> the seven-fold stars displays,  
❁ That guard her cheeks as satellites against the spy's design:  
If man should cast a furtive glance or steal far look at her, ❁  
His heart is burnt by devil-bolts shot by those piercing eyne.

When the Wazir saw her she made him marvel with excess of admiration, so he turned, perfectly pleased, to the broker and asked, "What is the price of this girl?"; whereto he answered, "Her market-value stands at ten thousand dinars, but her owner swears that this sum will not cover the cost of the chickens she hath eaten, the wine she hath drunken and the dresses of honour bestowed upon her instructor: for she hath learned calligraphy and syntax and etymology; the commentaries of the Koran; the principles of law and religion; the canons of medicine, and the calendar and the art of playing on musical instruments."<sup>8</sup> Said the Wazir, "Bring me her master." So the broker brought him at once and, behold, he was a Persian of whom there was left only what the days had left; for he was as a vulture bald and scald and a wall trembling to its fall. Time had buffeted him with sore smart, yet was he not willing this world to depart; even as said the poet: —

Time hath shattered all my frame, ❁ Oh! how time hath shattered me.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Septentriones or four oxen and their wain.

<sup>8</sup> The list fatally reminds us of "astronomy and the use of the globes" ... "Shakespeare and the musical glasses."

Time with lordly might can tame ❀ Manly strength and vigour free.

Time was in my youth, that none ❀ Sped their way more fleet and fast:

Time is and my strength is gone, ❀ Youth is sped, and speed is past.<sup>9</sup>

The Wazir asked him, "Art thou content to sell this slave-girl to the Sultan for ten thousand dinars?"; and the Persian answered, "By Allah, if I offered her to the King for naught, it were but my devoir,"<sup>10</sup> So the Minister bade bring the monies and saw them weighed out to the Persian, who stood up before him and said, "By the leave of our lord the Wazir, I have somewhat to say;" and the Wazir replied, "Out with all thou hast!" "It is my opinion," continued the slave-dealer, "that thou shouldst not carry the maid to the King this day; for she is newly off a journey; the change of air<sup>11</sup> hath affected her and the toils of trouble have fretted her. But keep her quiet in thy palace some ten days, that she may recover her looks and become again as she was. Then send her to the Hammam and clothe her in the richest of clothes and go up with her to the Sultan: this will be more to thy profit." The Wazir pondered the Persian's words and approved of their wisdom; so he carried her to his palace, where he appointed her

---

<sup>9</sup> The octave occurs in Night xv. I quote Torrens (p. 360) by way of variety.

<sup>10</sup> A courteous formula of closing with the offer.

<sup>11</sup> To express our "change of climate" Easterns say, "change of water and air," water coming first.

private rooms, and allowed her every day whatever she wanted of meat and drink and so forth. And on this wise she abode a while. Now the Wazir Al-Fazl had a son like the full moon when sheeniest dight, with face radiant in light, cheeks ruddy bright, and a mole like a dot of ambergris on a downy site; as said of him the poet and said full right: —

A moon which blights you<sup>12</sup> if you dare behold; ❀ A branch which folds you in its waving fold:

Locks of the Zanj<sup>13</sup> and golden glint of hair; ❀ Sweet gait and form a spear to have and hold:

Ah! hard of heart with softest slenderest waist, ❀ That evil to this weal why not remould?<sup>14</sup>

Were thy form's softness placed in thy heart, ❀ Ne'er would thy lover find thee harsh and cold:

Oh thou accuser! be my love's excuser, ❀ Nor chide if love-pangs deal me woes untold!

I bear no blame; 'tis all my heart and eyne; ❀ So leave thy blaming, let me yearn and pine.

---

<sup>12</sup> "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night" (Psalm cxxi. 6). Easterns still believe in the blighting effect of the moon's rays, which the Northerners of Europe, who view it under different conditions, are pleased to deny. I have seen a hale and hearty Arab, after sitting an hour in the moonlight, look like a man fresh from a sick bed; and I knew an Englishman in India whose face was temporarily paralysed by sleeping with it exposed to the moon.

<sup>13</sup> The negroids and negroes of Zanzibar.

<sup>14</sup> *i. e.* Why not make thy heart as soft as thy sides! The converse of this was reported at Paris during the Empire, when a man had by mistake pinched a very high personage: "Ah, Madame! if your heart be as hard as (what he had pinched) I am a lost man."

Now the handsome youth knew not the affair of the damsel; and his father had enjoined her closely, saying, "Know, O my daughter, that I have bought thee as a bedfellow for our King, Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni; and I have a son who is a Satan for girls and leaves no maid in the neighbourhood without taking her maidenhead; so be on thy guard against him and beware of letting him see thy face or hear thy voice." "Harkening and obedience," said the girl; and he left her and fared forth. Some days after this it happened by decree of Destiny, that the damsel repaired to the baths in the house, where some of the slave women bathed her; after which she arrayed herself in sumptuous raiment; and her beauty and loveliness were thereby redoubled. Then she went in to the Wazir's wife and kissed her hand; and the dame said to her, "Naiman! May it benefit thee,<sup>15</sup> O Anis al-Jalis!<sup>16</sup> Are not our baths handsome?"

---

<sup>15</sup> "Na'íman" is said to one after bathing or head-shaving: the proper reply, for in the East every sign of ceremony has its countersign, is "Allah benefit thee!" (Pilgrimage i. II, iii. 285; Lane M. E. chapt. viii.; Caussin de Perceval's Arabic Grammar, etc., etc.). I have given a specimen (Pilgrimage i., 122) not only of sign and countersign, but also of the rhyming repartee which rakes love. Hanien! (pleasant to thee! said when a man drinks). Allah pleasure thee (Allah yuhanník which Arnauts and other ruffians perverted to Allah yaník, Allah copulate with thee); thou drinkest for *ten*! – I am the cock and thou art the *hen*! (*i. e.* a passive catamite) – Nay, I am the thick one (the penis which gives pleasure) and thou art the *thin*! And so forth with most unpleasant pleasantries.

<sup>16</sup> In the old version she is called "The Fair Persian," probably from the owner: her name means "The Cheerer of the Companion."

"O my mistress," she replied, "I lacked naught there save thy gracious presence." Thereupon the lady said to her slave-women, "Come with us to the Hammam, for it is some days since we went there: " they answered, "To hear is to obey!" and rose and all accompanied her. Now she had set two little slave-girls to keep the door of the private chamber wherein was Anis al-Jalis and had said to them, "Suffer none go in to the damsel." Presently, as the beautiful maiden sat resting in her rooms, suddenly came in the Wazir's son whose name was Nur al-Din Ali,<sup>17</sup> and asked after his mother and her women, to which the two little slave-girls replied, "They are in the Hammam." But the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, had heard from within Nur al-Din Ali's voice and had said to herself, "O would Heaven I saw what like is this youth against whom the Wazir warned me, saying that he hath not left a virgin in the neighbourhood without taking her virginity: by Allah, I do long to have sight of him!" So she sprang to her feet with the freshness of the bath on her and, stepping to the door, looked at Nur al-Din Ali and saw a youth like the moon in its full and the sight bequeathed her a thousand sighs. The young man also glanced at her and the look made him heir to a thousand thoughts of care; and each fell into Love's ready snare. Then he stepped up to the two little slave-girls and cried aloud at them; whereupon both fled before him and stood afar off to see what he would do. And behold, he walked to the door of the damsel's chamber and, opening it, went in and asked her "Art thou she my

---

<sup>17</sup> Pronounce "Nooraddeen." I give the name as written in Arabic.

father bought for me?" and she answered "Yes." Thereupon the youth, who was warm with wine, came up to her and embraced her; then he took her legs and passed them round his waist and she wound her arms about his neck, and met him with kisses and murmurs of pleasure and amorous toyings. Next he sucked her tongue and she sucked his and, lastly, he loosed the strings of her petticoat-trousers and abated her maidenhead. When the two little slave-girls saw their young master get in unto the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, they cried out and shrieked; so as soon as the youth had had his wicked will of her, he rose and fled forth fearing the consequences of his ill-doing. When the Wazir's wife heard the slave-girls' cries, she sprang up and came out of the baths with the perspiration pouring from her face, saying, "What is this unseemly clamour in the house<sup>18</sup>?" Then she came up to the two little slave-girls and asked them saying, "Fie upon you! what is the matter?"; and both answered, "Verily our lord Nur al-Din came in and beat us, so we fled; then he went up to Anis al-Jalis and threw his arms round her and we know not what he did after that; but when we cried out to thee he ran away." Upon this the lady went to Anis al-Jalis and said to her, "What tidings?" "O my lady," she answered, "as I was sitting here lo! a handsome young man came in and said to me: – Art thou she my father bought for me?; and I answered Yes; for, by Allah, O mistress mine, I believed that his words were true; and he instantly came in and

---

<sup>18</sup> Amongst Moslems, I have said, it is held highly disgraceful when the sound of women's cries can be heard by outsiders.

embraced me." "Did he nought else with thee but this?" quoth the lady, and quoth she, "Indeed he did! But he did it only three times." "He did not leave thee without dishonouring thee!" cried the Wazir's wife and fell to weeping and buffetting her face, she and the girl and all the handmaidens, fearing lest Nur al-Din's father should kill him.<sup>19</sup> Whilst they were thus, in came the Wazir and asked what was the matter, and his wife said to him, "Swear that whatso I tell thee thou wilt attend to it." "I will," answered he. So she related to him what his son had done, whereat he was much concerned and rent his raiment and smote his face till his nose bled, and plucked out his beard by the handful. "Do not kill thyself," said his wife, "I will give thee ten thousand dinars, her price, of my own money." But he raised his head and cried; "Out upon thee! I have no need of her purchase-money: my fear is lest life as well as money go." "O my lord, and how is that?" "Wottest thou not that yonder standeth our enemy Al-Mu'in bin Sawi who, as soon as he shall hear of this matter, will go up to the Sultan?" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

## **Now when it was the Thirty-fifth Night,**

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the

---

<sup>19</sup> In a case like this, the father would be justified by Rasm (or usage) not by Koranic law, in playing Brutus with his son. The same would be the case in a detected intrigue with a paternal concubine and, in very strict houses, with a slave-girl.

Wazir said to his wife, "Wottest thou not that yonder standeth our enemy Al-Mu'in bin Sawi who, as soon as he hears of this matter will go up to the Sultan and say to him: – Thy Wazir who, thou wilt have it loveth thee, took from thee ten thousand ducats and bought therewith a slave-girl whose like none ever beheld; but when he saw her, she pleased him and he said to his son: – Take her: thou art worthier of her than the Sultan. So he took her and did away with her virginity and she is now in his house. The King will say: – Thou liest! to which he will reply: – With thy leave I will fall upon him unawares and bring her to thee. The King will give him warranty for this and he will come down upon the house and will take the girl and present her to the Sultan, who will question her and she will not be able to deny the past. Then mine enemy will say: – O my lord, thou wottest that I give thee the best of counsel; but I have not found favour in thine eyes. Thereupon the Sultan will make an example of me, and I shall be a gazing-stock to all the people and my life will be lost." Quoth his wife, "Let none know of this thing which hath happened privily, and commit thy case to Allah and trust in Him to save thee from such strait; for He who knoweth the future shall provide for the future." With this she brought the Wazir a cup of wine and his heart was quieted, and he ceased to feel wrath and fear. Thus far concerning him; but as regards his son Nur al-Din Ali, fearing the consequence of his misdeed he abode his day long in the flower-garden and came back only at night to his mother's apartment where he slept; and, rising before dawn, returned to the gardens.



He ceased not to do thus for two whole months without showing his face to his parent, till at last his mother said to his father, "O my lord, shall we lose our boy as well as the girl? If matters continue long in this way he will flee from us." "And what to do?" asked he; and she answered, "Do thou watch this night; and, when he cometh, seize on him and frighten him: I will rescue him from thee and do thou make peace with him and give him the damsel to wife, for she loveth him as he loveth her. And I will pay thee her price." So the Minister sat up that night and, when his son came, he seized him and throwing him down knelt on his breast and showed as though he would cut his throat; but his mother ran to the youth's succour and asked her husband, "What wouldest thou do with him?" He answered her, "I will split his weasand." Said the son to the father, "Is my death, then, so light a matter to thee?"; and his father's eyes welled with tears, for natural affection moved him, and he rejoined, "O my son, how light was to thee the loss of my good and my life!" Quoth Nur al-Din, "Hear, O my father, what the poet hath said: —

Forgive me! thee-ward sinned I, but the wise ❀ Ne'er to the sinner shall deny his grace:

Thyfoe may pardon sue when lieth he ❀ In lowest, and thou holdest highest place!"

Thereupon the Wazir rose from off his son's breast saying, "I forgive thee!"; for his heart yearned to him; and the youth kissed the hand of his sire who said, "O my son, were I sure that thou

woudest deal justly by Anis al-Jalis, I would give her to thee." "O my father, what justice am I to do to her?" "I enjoin thee, O my son, not to take another wife or concubine to share with her, nor sell her." "O my father! I swear to thee that verily I will not do her injustice in either way." Having sworn to that effect Nur al-Din went in to the damsel and abode with her a whole year, whilst Allah Almighty caused the King to forget the matter of the maiden; and Al-Mu'in, though the affair came to his ears, dared not divulge it by reason of the high favour in which his rival stood with the Sultan. At the end of the year Al-Fazl went one day to the public baths; and, as he came out whilst he was still sweating, the air struck him<sup>20</sup> and he caught a cold which turned to a fever; then he took to his bed. His malady gained ground and restlessness was longsome upon him and weakness bound him like a chain; so he called out, "Hither with my son;" and when Nur al-Din Ali came he said to him, "O my son, know that man's lot and means are distributed and decreed; and the end of days by all must be dree'd; and that every soul drain the cup of death is nature's need." Then he repeated these lines: —

I die my death, but He alone is great who dieth not! ❀ And  
well I wot, soon shall I die, for death was made my lot:  
A King there's not that dies and holds his kingdom in his  
hand, ❀ For Sovranty the Kingdom is of Him who dieth not.

---

<sup>20</sup> Orientals fear the "Zug" or draught as much as Germans; and with even a better reason. Draughts are most dangerous in hot climates.

Then he continued, "O my son, I have no charge to leave thee save that thou fear Allah and look to the issues of thine acts and bear in mind my injunctions anent Anis al-Jalis." "O my father!" said Nur al-Din, "who is like unto thee? Indeed thou art famed for well doing and preachers offer prayers for thee in their pulpits!" Quoth Al-Fazl, "O my son, I hope that Allah Almighty may grant me acceptance!" Then he pronounced the Two Testimonies,<sup>21</sup> or Professions of the Faith, and was recorded among the blessed. The palace was filled with crying and lamentation and the news of his death reached the King, and the city-people wept, even those at their prayers and women at household cares and the schoolchildren shed tears for Bin-Khakan. Then his son Nur al-Din Ali arose and made ready his funeral, and the Emirs and Wazirs and high Officers of State and city-notables were present, amongst them the Wazir al-Mu'in bin Sawi. And as the bier went forth from the house some one in the crowd of mourners began to chant these lines: —

On the fifth day I quitted all my friends for evermore, ❀ And  
they laid me out and washed me on a slab without my door:<sup>22</sup>  
They stripped me of the clothes I was ever wont to wear, ❀  
And they clothed me in the clothes which till then I never  
wore.

On four men's necks they bore me and carried me from home  
❀ To chapel; and some prayed for him on neck they bore:

---

<sup>21</sup> The Unity of the Godhead and the Apostleship of Mohammed.

<sup>22</sup> This would be done only in the case of the very poor.

They prayed for me a prayer that no prostration knows;<sup>23</sup> ❀  
They prayed for me who praised me and were my friends of  
yore;  
And they laid me in a house with a ceiling vaulted o'er, ❀  
And Time shall be no more ere it ope to me its door.

When they had shovelled in the dust over him and the crowd  
had dispersed, Nur al-Din returned home and he lamented  
with sobs and tears; and the tongue of the case repeated these  
couplets: —

On the fifth day at even-tide they went away from me: ❀ I  
farewelled them as faring they made farewell my lot:  
But my spirit as they went, with them went and so I cried, ❀  
"Ah return ye!" but replied she, "Alas! return is not  
To a framework here and lorn that lacketh blood and life, ❀ A  
frame whereof remaineth naught but bones that rattle and rot:  
Mine eyes are blind and cannot see quencht by the flowing  
tear! ❀ Mine ears are dull and lost to sense: they have no  
power to hear!"

He abode a long time sorrowing for his father till, one day,  
as he was sitting at home, there came a knocking at the door;  
so he rose in haste and opening let in a man, one of his father's  
intimates and who had been the Wazir's boon-companion. The  
visitor kissed Nur al-Din's hand and said to him, "O my lord,

---

<sup>23</sup> Prayers over the dead are not universal in Al-Islam; but when they are recited they  
lack the "sijdah" or prostration.

he who hath left the like of thee is not dead; and this way went also the Chief of the Ancients and the Moderns.<sup>24</sup> O my lord Ali, be comforted and leave sorrowing." Thereupon Nur al-Din rose and going to the guest-saloon transported thither all he needed. Then he assembled his companions and took his handmaid again, and, collecting round him ten of the sons of the merchants, began to eat meat and drink wine, giving entertainment after entertainment and lavishing his presents and his favours. One day his Steward came to him and said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, hast thou not heard the saying, Whoso spendeth and reckoneth not, to poverty wendeth and reckoneth not?" And he repeated what the poet wrote: —

I look to my money and keep it with care, ❀ For right well  
I wot 'tis my buckler and brand:

Did I lavish my dirhams on hostilest foes,<sup>25</sup> ❀ I should truck  
my good luck by mine ill luck trepanned:

So I'll eat it and drink it and joy in my wealth; ❀ And no  
spending my pennies on others I'll stand:

I will keep my purse close 'gainst whoever he be; ❀ And a  
niggard in grain a true friend ne'er I fand:

Far better deny him than come to say: – Lend, ❀ And five-

---

<sup>24</sup> Or, "Of the first and the last," *i. e.* Mohammed, who claimed (and claimed justly) to be the "Seal" or head and end of all Prophets and Prophecy. For note that whether the Arab be held inspired or a mere impostor, no man making the same pretension has moved the world since him. Mr. J. Smith the Mormon (to mention one in a myriad) made a bold attempt and failed.

<sup>25</sup> *i. e.* flatterers.

fold the loan shall return to thy hand!

And he turns face aside and he sidles away, ❀ While I stand like a dog disappointed, unmanned.

Oh, the sorry lot his who hath yellow-boys none, ❀ Though his genius and virtues shine bright as the sun!

"O my master," continued the Steward, "this lavish outlay and these magnificent gifts waste away wealth." When Nur al-Din Ali heard these words he looked at his servant and cried, "Of all thou hast spoken I will not heed one single word, for I have heard the saying of the poet who saith; —

An my palm be full of wealth and my wealth I ne'er bestow,

❀ A palsy take my hand and my foot ne'er rise again!

Show me niggard who by niggardise e'er rose to high degree,

❀ Or the generous in gifts generosity hath slain."

And he pursued, "Know, O Steward, it is my desire that so long as thou hast money enough for my breakfast, thou trouble me not with taking thought about my supper." Thereupon the Steward asked, "Must it be so?"; and he answered, "It must." So the honest man went his way and Nur al-Din Ali devoted himself to extravagance; and, if any of his cup-companions chanced to say, "This is a pretty thing;" he would reply, "'Tis a gift to thee!"; or if another said, "O my lord, such a house is handsome;" he would answer, "Take it: it is thine!" After this reckless fashion he continued to live for a whole year, giving his friends a banquet

in the morning and a banquet in the evening and a banquet at midnight, till one day, as the company was sitting together, the damsel Anis al-Jalis repeated these lines:

Thou deemedst well of Time when days went well, ❀ And  
fearedst not what ills might deal thee Fate:  
Thy nights so fair and restful cozened thee, ❀ For peaceful  
nights bring woes of heavy weight.

When she had ended her verse behold, somebody knocked at the door. So Nur al-Din rose to open it and one of his boon-companions followed him without being perceived. At the door he found his Steward and asked him, "What is the matter?"; and he answered, "O my lord, what I dreaded for thee hath come to pass!" "How so?" "Know that there remains not a dirham's worth, less or more in my hands. Here are my Daftars and account books showing both income and outlay and the registers of thine original property." When Nur al-Din heard these words he bowed his head and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" When the man who had followed him privily to spy on him heard the Steward's words, he returned to his friends and warned them saying, "Look ye well to what ye do: Nur al-Din is penniless;" and, as the young host came back to his guests, vexation showed itself in his face. Thereupon one of the intimates rose; and, looking at the entertainer, said to him, "O my lord, may be thou wilt give me leave to retire?" "And why so early retirement this day?"; asked he and the other answered

him, "My wife is in child-birth and I may not be absent from her: indeed I must return and see how she does." So he gave him leave, whereupon another rose and said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, I wish now to go to my brother's for he circumciseth his son to day."<sup>26</sup> In short each and every asked permission to retire on some pretence or other, till all the ten were gone leaving Nur al-Din alone. Then he called his slave-girl and said to her, "O Anis al-Jalis, hast thou seen what case is mine?" And he related to her what the Steward had told him. Then quoth she, "O my lord, for many nights I had it in my mind to speak with thee of this matter, but I heard thee repeating: —

When the World heaps favours on thee, pass on ❀ Thy favours to friends ere her hand she stay:

Largesse never let her when fain she comes, ❀ Nor niggardise kept her from turning away!"

"When I heard these verses I held my peace and cared not to exchange a word with thee." "O Anis al-Jalis," said Nur al-Din, "thou knowest that I have not wasted my wealth save on my

---

<sup>26</sup> In one matter Moslems contrast strongly with Christians, by most scrupulously following the example of their law-giver: hence they are the model Conservatives. But (European) Christendom is here, as in other things, curiously contradictory: for instance, it still keeps a "Feast of the Circumcision," and practically holds circumcision in horror. Eastern Christians, however, have not wholly abolished it, and the Abyssinians, who find it a useful hygienic precaution, still practise it. For ulcers, syphilis and other venereals which are readily cured in Egypt become dangerous in the Highlands of Ethiopia.



friends, especially these ten who have now left me a pauper, and I think they will not abandon and desert me without relief." "By Allah," replied she, "they will not profit thee with aught of aid." Said he, "I will rise at once and go to them and knock at their doors; it may be I shall get from them somewhat wherewith I may trade and leave pastime and pleasuring." So he rose without stay or delay, and repaired to a street wherein all his ten friends lived. He went up to the nearest door and knocked; whereupon a handmaid came out and asked him, "Who art thou?"; and he answered, "Tell thy master that Nur al-Din Ali standeth at the door and saith to him: – Thy slave kisseth thy hand and awaiteth thy bounty." The girl went in and told her master, who cried at her, "Go back and say: – My master is not at home." So she returned to Nur al-Din, and said to him, "O my lord, my master is out." Thereupon he turned away and said to himself, "If this one be a whoreson knave and deny himself, another may not prove himself such knave and whoreson." Then he went up to the next door and sent in a like message to the house-master, who denied himself as the first had done, whereupon he began repeating: —

He is gone who when to his gate thou go'st, ❀ Fed thy famisht  
maw with his boiled and roast.

When he had ended his verse he said, "By Allah, there is no help but that I make trial of them all: perchance there be one amongst them who will stand me in the stead of all the rest." So

he went the round of the ten, but not one of them would open his door to him or show himself or even break a bit of bread before him; whereupon he recited: —

Like a tree is he who in wealth doth wone, ❀ And while fruits  
he the folk to his fruit shall run:

But when bared the tree of what fruit it bare, ❀ They leave  
it to suffer from dust and sun.

Perdition to all of this age! I find ❀ Ten rogues for every  
righteous one.

Then he returned to his slave-girl and his grief had grown more grievous and she said to him, "O my lord, did I not tell thee, none would profit thee with aught of aid?" And he replied, "By Allah, not one of them would show me his face or know me!" "O my lord," quoth she, "sell some of the moveables and household stuff, such as pots and pans, little by little; and expend the proceeds until Allah Almighty shall provide." So he sold all of that was in the house till nothing remained when he turned to Anis al-Jalis and asked her "What shall we do now?"; and she answered, "O my lord, it is my advice that thou rise forthwith and take me down to the bazar and sell me. Thou knowest that thy father bought me for ten thousand dinars: haply Allah may open thee a way to get the same price, and if it be His will to bring us once more together, we shall meet again." "O Anis al-Jalis," cried he, "by Allah it is no light matter for me to be parted from thee for a single hour!" "By Allah, O my lord," she replied,

nor is it easy to me either, but Need hath its own law, as the poet said: —

Need drives a man into devious roads, ❀ And pathways  
doubtful of trend and scope:  
No man to a rope<sup>27</sup> will entrust his weight, ❀ Save for cause  
that calleth for case of rope.

Thereupon he rose to his feet and took her,<sup>28</sup> whilst the tears  
rolled down his cheek like rain; and he recited with the tongue  
of the case these lines: —

Stay! grant one parting look before we part, ❀ Nerving my  
heart this severance to sustain:  
But, an this parting deal thee pain and bane, ❀ Leave me to  
die of love and spare thee pain!

Then he went down with her to the bazar and delivered her  
to the broker and said to him, "O Hájj Hasan,<sup>29</sup> I pray thee note  
the value of her thou hast to cry for sale." "O my lord Nur al-  
Din," quoth the broker, "the fundamentals are remembered;"<sup>30</sup>  
adding, "Is not this the Anis al-Jalis whom thy father bought of

---

<sup>27</sup> Arab. "Sabab," the orig. and material sense of the word; hence "a cause," etc.

<sup>28</sup> Thus he broke his promise to his father, and it is insinuated that retribution came upon him.

<sup>29</sup> "O Pilgrim" (Ya Hájj) is a polite address even to those who have not pilgrimaged. The feminine "Hájjah" (in Egypt pronounced "Hággeh") is similarly used.

<sup>30</sup> Arab. *usúl*=roots, *i. e.* I have not forgotten my business.

me for ten thousand dinars?" "Yes," said Nur al-Din. Thereupon the broker went round to the merchants, but found that all had not yet assembled. So he waited till the rest had arrived and the market was crowded with slave-girls of all nations, Turks, Franks and Circassians; Abyssinians, Nubians and Takrúris;<sup>31</sup> Tartars, Georgians and others; when he came forward and standing cried aloud, "O merchants! O men of money! every round thing is not a walnut and every long thing a banana is not; all reds are not meat nor all whites fat, nor is every brown thing a date!"<sup>32</sup> O merchants, I have here this union-pearl that hath no price: at what sum shall I cry her?" "Cry her at four thousand five hundred dinars," quoth one of the traders. The broker opened the door of sale at the sum named and, as he was yet calling, lo! the Wazir Al-Mu'in bin Sawi passed through the bazar and, seeing Nur al-Din Ali waiting at one side, said to himself, "Why is Khakan's son<sup>33</sup> standing about here? Hath this gallows-bird aught remaining wherewith to buy slave-girls?" Then he looked round and, seeing the broker calling out in the market with all the merchants around him, said to himself, "I am sure that he is penniless and hath brought hither the damsel Anis al-Jalis for sale;" adding, "O how cooling and

---

<sup>31</sup> Moslems from Central and Western North Africa. (Pilgrimage i. 261; iii. 7, etc.); the "Jabarti" is the Moslem Abyssinian.

<sup>32</sup> This is a favourite bit of chaff and is to be lengthened out almost indefinitely *e. g.* every brown thing is not civet nor every shining thing a diamond; every black thing is not charcoal nor every white chalk; every red thing is not a ruby nor every yellow a topaz; every long-necked thing is not a camel, etc., etc., etc.

<sup>33</sup> He gives him the name of his grandfather; a familiar usage.

grateful is this to my heart!" Then he called the crier, who came up and kissed the ground before him; and he said to him, "I want this slave-girl whom thou art calling for sale." The broker dared not cross him, so he answered, "O my lord, Bismillah! in Allah's name so be it;" and led forward the damsel and showed her to him. She pleased him much whereat he asked, "O Hasan, what is bidden for this girl?" and he answered, "Four thousand five hundred dinars to open the door of sale." Quoth Al-Mu'in, "Four thousand five hundred is *my* bid." When the merchants heard this, they held back and dared not bid another dirham, wotting what they did of the Wazir's tyranny, violence and treachery. So Al-Mu'in looked at the broker and said to him, "Why stand still? Go and offer four thousand dinars for me and the five hundred shall be for thyself." Thereupon the broker went to Nur al-Din and said, "O my lord, thy slave is going for nothing!" "And how so?" asked he. The broker answered, "We had opened the biddings for her at four thousand five hundred dinars; when that tyrant, Al-Mu'in bin Sawi, passed through the bazar and, as he saw the damsel she pleased him, so he cried to me: – Call me the buyer at four thousand dinars and thou shalt have five hundred for thyself. I doubt not but that he knoweth that the damsel is thine, and if he would pay thee down her price at once it were well; but I know his injustice and violence; he will give thee a written order upon some of his agents and will send after thee to say to them: – Pay him nothing. So as often as thou shalt go in quest of the coin they will say: – We'll pay thee presently! and

they will put thee off day after day, and thou art proud of spirit; till at last, when they are wearied with thine importunity, they will say: – Show us the cheque. Then, as soon as they have got hold of it they will tear it up and so thou wilt lose the girl's price." When Nur al-Din heard this he looked at the broker and asked him, "How shall this matter be managed?"; and he answered, "I will give thee a counsel which, if thou follow, it shall bring thee complete satisfaction." "And what is that?" quoth Nur al-Din. Quoth the broker, "Come thou to me anon when I am standing in the middle of the market and, taking the girl from my hand, give her a sound cuffing and say to her: – Thou baggage, I have kept my vow and brought thee down to the slave-market, because I swore an oath that I would carry thee from home to the bazar, and make brokers cry thee for sale. If thou do this, perhaps the device will impose upon the Wazir and the people, and they will believe that thou broughtest her not to the bazar but for the quittance of thine oath." He replied, "Such were the best way." Then the broker left him and, returning into the midst of the market, took the damsel by the hand, and signed to the Wazir and said, "O my lord, here is her owner." With this up came Nur al-Din Ali and, snatching the girl from the broker's hand, cuffed her soundly and said to her, "Shame on thee, O thou baggage! I have brought thee to the bazar for quittance of mine oath; now get thee home and thwart me no more as is thy wont. Woe to thee! do I need thy price, that I should sell thee? The furniture of my house would fetch thy value many times over!" When Al-Mu'in saw this he

said to Nur al-Din, "Out on thee! Hast thou anything left for selling or buying?" And he would have laid violent hands upon him, but the merchants interposed (for they all loved Nur al-Din), and the young man said to them, "Here am I in your hands and ye all know his tyranny." "By Allah," cried the Wazir, "but for you I had slain him!" Then all signed with significant eyes to Nur al-Din as much as to say, "Take thy wreak of him; not one of us will come between thee and him." Thereupon Nur al-Din, who was stout of heart as he was stalwart of limb, went up to the Wazir and, dragging him over the pommel of his saddle, threw him to the ground. Now there was in that place a puddling-pit for brick-clay,<sup>34</sup> into the midst of which he fell, and Nur al-Din kept pummelling and fisti-cuffing him, and one of the blows fell full on his teeth, and his beard was dyed with his blood. Also there were with the minister ten armed slaves who, seeing their master entreated after this fashion, laid hand on sword-hilt and would have bared blades and fallen on Nur al-Din to cut him down; but the merchants and bystanders said to them, "This is a Wazir and that is the son of a Wazir; haply they will make friends some time or other, in which case you will forfeit the favour of both. Or perchance a blow may befall your lord, and you will all die the vilest of deaths; so it were better for you not to interfere." Accordingly they held aloof and, when Nur al-Din had

---

<sup>34</sup> Arab. "Ma'janah," a place for making unbaked bricks (Tob=Span. Adobe) with chaff and bruised or charred straw. The use of this article in rainless lands dates from ages immemorial, and formed the outer walls of the Egyptian temple.

made an end of thrashing the Wazir, he took his handmaid and fared homewards. Al-Mu'in also went his ways at once, with his raiment dyed of three colours, black with mud, red with blood and ash coloured with brick-clay. When he saw himself in this state, he bound a bit of matting<sup>35</sup> round his neck and, taking in hand two bundles of coarse Halfah-grass,<sup>36</sup> went up to the palace and standing under the Sultan's windows cried aloud, "O King of the age, I am a wronged man! I am foully wronged!" So they brought him before the King who looked at him; and behold, it was the chief Minister; whereupon he said, "O Wazir who did this deed by thee?" Al-Mu'in wept and sobbed and repeated these lines: —

Shall the World oppress me when thou art in't? ❀ In the lion's  
presence shall wolves devour?

Shall the dry all drink of thy tanks and I ❀ Under rain-cloud  
thirst for the cooling shower?

"O my lord," cried he, "the like will befall every one who loveth and serveth thee well." "Be quick with thee," quoth the Sultan, "and tell me how this came to pass and who did this deed by one whose honour is part of my honour." Quoth the Wazir, "Know,

---

<sup>35</sup> Arab. "Barsh," a bit of round matting used by the poor as a seat. The Wazir thus showed that he had been degraded to the condition of a mat-maker.

<sup>36</sup> The growth (a *Poa* of two species) which named Wady Halfá (vulg. "Halfah"), of which the home public has of late heard perhaps a trifle too much. Burckhardt (Prov. 226) renders it "dry reeds" – incorrectly enough.



O my lord, that I went out this day to the slave-market to buy me a cookmaid, when I saw there a damsel, never in my life long saw I a fairer; and I designed to buy her for our lord the Sultan; so I asked the broker of her and of her owner, and he answered, "She belongeth to Ali son of Al-Fazl bin Khakan. Some time ago our lord the Sultan gave his father ten thousand dinars wherewith to buy him a handsome slave-girl, and he bought this maiden who pleased him; so he grudged her to our lord the Sultan and gave her to his own son. When the father died, the son sold all he had of houses and gardens and household gear, and squandered the price till he was penniless. Then he brought the girl to the market that he might sell her, and he handed her over to the broker to cry and the merchants bid higher and higher on her, until her price reached four thousand dinars; whereupon quoth I to myself: – I will buy this damsel for our lord the Sultan, whose money was paid for her. So I said to Nur al-Din: – O my son, sell her to me for four thousand dinars. When he heard my words he looked at me and cried: – O ill-omened oldster, I will sell her to a Jew or to a Nazarene, but I will not sell her to thee! I do not buy her for myself, said I, I buy her for our lord and benefactor the Sultan. Hearing my words he was filled with rage; and, dragging me off my horse (and I a very old man), beat me unmercifully with his fists and buffeted me with his palms till he left me as thou seest, and all this hath befallen me only because I thought to buy this damsel for thee!" Then the Wazir threw himself on the ground and lay there weeping and shivering. When the Sultan

saw his condition and heard his story, the vein of rage started out between his eyes<sup>37</sup> and he turned to his body-guard who stood before him, forty white slaves, smiters with the sword, and said to them, "Go down forthright to the house built by the son of Khakan and sack it and raze it and bring to me his son Nur al-Din with the damsel; and drag them both on their faces with their arms pinioned behind them." They replied, "To hear is to obey;" and, arming themselves, they set out for the house of Nur al-Din Ali. Now about the Sultan was a Chamberlain, Alam<sup>38</sup> al-Din Sanjar hight, who had aforetime been Mameluke to Al-Fazl; but he had risen in the world and the Sultan had advanced him to be one of his Chamberlains. When he heard the King's command and saw the enemies make them ready to slay his old master's son, it was grievous to him: so he went out from before the Sultan and, mounting his beast, rode to Nur al-Din's house and knocked at the door. Nur al-Din came out and knowing him would have saluted him: but he said, "O my master this is no time for greeting or treating. Listen to what the poet said: —

Fly, fly with thy life if by ill overtaken!

Let thy house speak thy death by its builder forsaken!

---

<sup>37</sup> This "Háshimi" vein, as they call it, was an abnormal development between the eyes of the house of Abbas, inherited from the great grandfather of the Prophet; and the latter had it remarkably large, swelling in anger and battle-rage. The text, however, may read "The sweat of wrath," etc.

<sup>38</sup> Torrens and Payne prefer "Ilm"=knowledge. Lane has more correctly "Alam"=a sign, a flag.

For a land else than this land thou may'st reach, my brother,  
But thy life tho'lt ne'er find in this world another.<sup>39</sup>

"O Alam al-Din what cheer?" asked Nur al-Din, and he answered, "Rise quickly and fly for thy life, thou and the damsel; for Al-Mu'in hath set a snare for you both; and, if you fall into his hands, he will slay you. The Sultan hath despatched forty swordsmen against you and I counsel you to flee ere harm can hurt you." Then Sanjar put his hand to his purse and finding there forty gold pieces took them and gave them to Nur al-Din, saying, "O my lord receive these and journey with them. Had I more I would give them to thee, but this is not the time to take exception." Thereupon Nur al-Din went in to the damsel and told her what had happened, at which she wrung her hands. Then they fared forth at once from the city, and Allah spread over them His veil of protection, so that they reached the river-bank where they found a vessel ready for sea. Her skipper was standing amidships and crying, "Whoso hath aught to do, whether in the way of provisioning or taking leave of his people; or whoso hath forgotten any needful thing, let him do it at once and return, for we are about to sail"; and all of them saying, "There is naught left to be done by us, O captain!", he cried to his crew, "Hollo there! cast off the cable and pull up the mooring-pole!"<sup>40</sup> Quoth Nur al-

---

<sup>39</sup> The lines were in Night xi: I have quoted Torrens (p. 379) for a change.

<sup>40</sup> Still customary in Tigris-Euphrates land, where sea-craft has not changed since the days of Xisisthrus-Noah, and long before.

Din, "Whither bound, O captain?" and quoth he, "To the House of Peace, Baghdad," – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Thirty-sixth Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the skipper answered, "To the House of Peace, Baghdad," Nur al-Din Ali and the damsel went on board, and they launched the craft and shook out the sails, and the ship sped forth as though she were a bird on wing; even as said one of them and said right well: —

Watch some tall ship, she'll joy the sight of thee, ❀ The  
breeze outstripping in her haste to flee;  
As when a bird, with widely-spreading wings, ❀ Leaveth the  
sky to settle on the sea.

So the vessel sailed on her fastest and the wind to her was fairest. Thus far concerning them; but as regards the Mamelukes, they went to Nur al-Din's mansion and, breaking open the doors, entered and searched the whole place, but could find no trace of him and the damsel; so they demolished the house and, returning to the Sultan, reported their proceedings; whereupon quoth he, "Make search for them both, wherever they may be;" and they answered, "Hearing is obeying." The Wazir Al-Mu'in had also

gone home after the Sultan had bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and had set his heart at rest by saying, "None shall take blood-wreak for thee save I;" and he had blessed the King and prayed for his long life and prosperity. Then the Sultan bade proclaim about the city, "Oyez, O ye lieges one and all! It is the will of our lord the Sultan that whoso happeneth on Nur al-Din Ali son of Al-Fazl bin Khakan, and bringeth him to the Sultan, shall receive a robe of honour and one thousand gold pieces; and he who hideth him or knoweth his abiding place and informeth not, deserveth whatsoever pains and penalties shall befall him." So all began to search for Nur al-Din Ali, but they could find neither trace nor tidings of him. Meanwhile he and his handmaid sailed on with the wind right aft, till they arrived in safety at Baghdad, and the captain said to them, "This is Baghdad and 'tis the city where security is to be had: Winter with his frosts hath turned away and Prime hath come his roses to display; and the flowers are a-glowing and the trees are blowing and the streams are flowing." So Nur al-Din landed, he and his handmaid and, giving the captain five dinars, walked on a little way till the decrees of Destiny brought them among the gardens, and they came to a place swept and sprinkled, with benches along the walls and hanging jars filled with water.<sup>41</sup> Overhead was a trellis of reed-work and canes shading the whole length of the avenue, and at the upper end was a garden gate, but this was locked. "By Allah," quoth Nur al-Din to the damsel, "right pleasant is

---

<sup>41</sup> To cool the contents.

this place!"; and she replied, "O my lord sit with me a while on this bench and let us take our ease." So they mounted and sat them down on the bench, after which they washed their faces and hands; and the breeze blew cool on them and they fell asleep and glory be to Him who never sleepeth! Now this garden was named the Garden of Gladness<sup>42</sup> and therein stood a belvedere hight the Palace of Pleasure and the Pavilion of Pictures, the whole belonging to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid who was wont, when his breast was straitened with care, to frequent garden and palace and there to sit. The palace had eighty latticed windows and fourscore lamps hanging round a great candelabrum of gold furnished with wax-candles; and, when the Caliph used to enter, he would order the handmaids to throw open the lattices and light up the rooms; and he would bid Ishak bin Ibrahim the cup-companion and the slave-girls to sing till his breast was broadened and his ailments were allayed. Now the keeper of the garden, Shaykh Ibrahim, was a very old man, and he had found from time to time, when he went out on any business, people pleasuring about the garden gate with their bona robas; at which he was angered

---

<sup>42</sup> Hence the Khedivial Palace near Cairo "Kasr al-Nuzhah;" literally "of Delights;" one of those flimsy new-Cairo buildings which contrast so marvellously with the architecture of ancient and even of mediæval Egypt, and which are covering the land with modern ruins. Compare Mohammed Ali's mosque in the citadel with the older Sultan Hasan. A popular tale is told that, when the conquering Turk, Yáwúz Sultan Selim, first visited Cairo, they led him to Mosque Al-Ghúri. "This is a splendid Ká'ah (saloon)!" quoth he. When he entered Sultan Hasan, he exclaimed, "This is a citadel!"; but after inspecting the Mosque Al-Mu'ayyad he cried, "'Tis a veritable place of prayer, a fit stead for the Faithful to adore the Eternal!"

with exceeding anger.<sup>43</sup> But he took patience till one day when the Caliph came to his garden; and he complained of this to Harun al-Rashid who said, "Whomsoever thou surprisest about the door of the garden, deal with him as thou wilt." Now on this day the Gardener chanced to be abroad on some occasion and returning found these two sleeping at the gate covered with a single mantilla; whereupon said he, "By Allah, good! These twain know not that the Caliph hath given me leave to slay anyone I may catch at the door; but I will give this couple a shrewd whipping, that none may come near the gate in future." So he cut a green palm-frond<sup>44</sup> and went up to them and, raising his arm till the white of his arm-pit appeared, was about to strike them, when he bethought himself and said, "O Ibrahim, wilt thou beat them unknowing their case? Haply they are strangers or of the Sons of the Road,<sup>45</sup> and the decrees of Destiny have thrown them here. I will uncover their faces and look at them." So he lifted up the mantilla from their heads and said, "They are a handsome couple; it were not fitting that I should beat them."

---

<sup>43</sup> Arab. gardeners are very touchy on this point. A friend of mine was on a similar occasion addressed, in true Egyptian lingo, by an old Adam-son, "Ya ibn al-Kalb! beta'mil ay?" (O dog-son, what art thou up to?).

<sup>44</sup> "The green palm-stick is of the trees of Paradise;" say the Arabs in Solomonic style but not Solomonic words: so our "Spare the rod," etc.

<sup>45</sup> Wayfarers, travellers who have a claim on the kindness of those at home: hence Abd al-Rahman al-Burai sings in his famous Ode: —He hath claim on the dwellers in the places of their birth, Whoso wandereth the world, for he lacketh him a home. It is given in my "First Footsteps in East Africa" (pp. 53-55).

Then he covered their faces again and, going to Nur al-Din's feet, began to rub and shampoo them,<sup>46</sup> whereupon the youth opened his eyes and, seeing an old man of grave and reverend aspect rubbing his feet, he was ashamed and drawing them in, sat up. Then he took Shaykh Ibrahim's hand and kissed it. Quoth the old man, "O my son, whence art thou?"; and quoth he, "O my lord, we two are strangers," and the tears started from his eyes. "O my son," said Shaykh Ibrahim, "know that the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) hath enjoined honour to the stranger;" and added, "Wilt not thou arise, O my son, and pass into the garden and solace thy self by looking at it and gladden thy heart?" "O my lord," said Nur al-Din, "to whom doth this garden belong?;" and the other replied, "O my son, I have inherited it from my folk." Now his object in saying this was to set them at their ease and induce them to enter the garden. So Nur al-Din thanked him and rose, he and the damsel, and followed him into the garden: and lo! it was a garden, and what a garden! The gate was arched like a great hall and over walls and roof ramped vines with grapes of many colours; the red like rubies and the black like ebonies; and beyond it lay a bower of trelliced boughs growing fruits single and composite, and small birds on branches sang with melodious recite, and the thousand-noted nightingale shrilled with her varied shrigh; the turtle with her cooing filled the site; the blackbird whistled like human wight<sup>47</sup> and the ring-

---

<sup>46</sup> The good old man treated the youth like a tired child.

<sup>47</sup> In Moslem writings the dove and turtle-dove are mostly feminine, whereas the



dove moaned like a drinker in grievous plight. The trees grew in perfection all edible growths and fruited all manner fruits which in pairs were bipartite; with the camphor-apricot, the almond-apricot and the apricot "Khorasani" hight; the plum, like the face of beauty, smooth and bright; the cherry that makes teeth shine clear by her sleight, and the fig of three colours, green, purple and white. There also blossomed the violet as it were sulphur on fire by night; the orange with buds like pink coral and marguerite; the rose whose redness gars the loveliest cheeks blush with despight; and myrtle and gilliflower and lavender with the blood-red anemone from Nu'uman hight. The leaves were all gemmed with tears the clouds had dight; the chamomile smiled showing teeth that bite, and Narcissus with his negro<sup>48</sup> eyes fixed on Rose his sight; the citrons shone with fruits embowled and the lemons like balls of gold; earth was carpeted with flowers tintured infinite; for Spring was come brightening the place with joy and delight; and the streams ran ringing, to the birds' gay singing, while the rustling breeze upspringing attempered the air to temperance exquisite. Shaykh Ibrahim carried them up into the pavilion, and they gazed on its beauty, and on the lamps aforementioned in the latticed windows; and Nur al-Din, remembering his entertainments of time past, cried, "By Allah, this is a pleasant place; it hath quenched in me anguish which

---

female bird is always mute and only the male sings to summon or to amuse his mate.

<sup>48</sup> An unsavoury comparison of the classical Narcissus with the yellow white of a nigger's eyes.

burned as a fire of Ghazá-wood.<sup>49</sup>" Then they sat down and Shaykh Ibrahim set food before them; and they ate till they were satisfied and washed their hands: after which Nur al-Din went up to one of the latticed windows, and, calling to his handmaid fell to gazing on the trees laden with all manner fruits. Presently he turned to the Gardener and said to him, "O Shaykh Ibrahim hast thou no drink here, for folk are wont to drink after eating?" The Shaykh brought him sweet water, cool and pleasant, but he said, "This is not the kind of drink I wanted." "Perchance thou wishest for wine?" "Indeed I do, O Shaykh!" "I seek refuge from it with Allah: it is thirteen years since I did this thing, for the Prophet (Abhak<sup>50</sup>) cursed its drinker, presser, seller and carrier!" "Hear two words of me." "Say on." "If yon cursed ass<sup>51</sup> which standeth there be cursed, will aught of his curse alight

---

<sup>49</sup> A tree whose coals burn with fierce heat: Al-Hariri (Vth Séance). This *Artemisia* is like the tamarisk but a smaller growth and is held to be a characteristic of the Arabian Desert. A Badawi always hails with pleasure the first sight of the Ghazá, after he has sojourned for time away from his wilds. Mr. Palgrave (i. 38) describes the "Ghadá" as an *Euphorbia* with a woody stem often 5-6 feet high and slender flexible green twigs (?), "forming a feathery tuft, not ungraceful to the eye, while it affords some shelter to the traveller, and food to his camels."

<sup>50</sup> Arab. Sal'am=S(alla) A(Allah) a(layhi) wa S(allam); A(Allah) b(less) h(im) a(nd) k(eep)=Allah keep him and assain!

<sup>51</sup> The ass is held to be ill-omened. I have noticed the braying elsewhere. According to Mandeville the Devil did not enter the Ark with the Ass, but he left it when Noah said "Benedicite." In his day (A.D. 1322) and in that of Benjamin of Tudela, people had seen and touched the ship on Ararat, the Judi (Gordiaei) mountains; and this dates from Berosus (S.C. 250) who, of course, refers to the Ark of Xisisthrus. See Josephus Ant. i. 3, 6; and Rodwell (Koran, pp. 65, 530).

upon thee?" "By no means!" "Then take this dinar and these two dirhams and mount yonder ass and, halting afar from the wine-shop, call the first man thou seest buying liquor and say to him: – Take these two dirhams for thyself, and with this dinar buy me some wine and set it on the ass. So shalt thou be neither the presser, nor the buyer, nor the carrier; and no part of the curse will fall upon thee." At this Shaykh Ibrahim laughed and said, "By Allah, O my son, I never saw one wilier of wit than thou art, nor heard aught sweeter than thy speech." So he did as he was bidden by Nur al-Din who thanked him and said, "We two are now dependent on thee, and it is only meet that thou comply with our wishes; so bring us here what we require." "O my son," replied he, "this is my buttery before thee" (and it was the store-room provided for the Commander of the Faithful); "so go in, and take whatso thou wilt, for there is over and above what thou wantest." Nur al-Din then entered the pantry and found therein vessels of gold and silver and crystal set with all kinds of gems, and was amazed and delighted with what he saw. Then he took out what he needed and set it on and poured the wine into flagons and glass ewers, whilst Shaykh Ibrahim brought them fruit and flowers and aromatic herbs. Then the old man withdrew and sat down at a distance from them, whilst they drank and made merry, till the wine got the better of them, so that their cheeks reddened and their eyes wantoned like the gazelle's; and their locks became dishevelled and their brightness became yet more beautiful. Then said Shaykh Ibrahim to himself, "What aileth me to sit apart

from them? Why should I not sit with them? When shall I ever find myself in company with the like of these two that favour two moons?" So he stepped forward and sat down on the edge of the daïs, and Nur al-Din said to him, "O my lord, my life on thee, come nearer to us!" He came and sat by them, when Nur al-Din filled a cup and looked towards the Shaykh and said to him, "Drink, that thou mayest try the taste of it!" I take refuge from it with Allah!" replied he; "for thirteen years I have not done a thing of the kind." Nur al-Din feigned to forget he was there and, drinking off the cup, threw himself on the ground as if the drink had overcome him; whereupon Anis al-Jalis glanced at him and said, "O Shaykh Ibrahim see how this husband of mine treateth me;" and he answered, "O my lady, what aileth him?" "This is how he always serveth me," cried she, "he drinketh awhile, then falleth asleep and leaveth me alone with none to bear me company over my cup nor any to whom I may sing when the bowl goeth round." Quoth the Shaykh (and his mien unstiffened for that his soul inclined towards her), "By Allah, this is not well!" Then she crowned a cup and looking towards him said, "By my life thou must take and drink it, and not refuse to heal my sick heart!" So he put forth his hand and took it and drank it off and she filled a second and set it on the chandelier and said, "O master mine, there is still this one left for thee." "By Allah, I cannot drink it;" cried he, "what I have already drunk is enough for me;" but she rejoined, "By Allah, there is no help for it." So he took the cup and drank; and she filled him a third which he took and

was about to drink when behold, Nur al-Din rolled round and sat upright – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Thirty-seventh Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din sat upright and said, "Ho, Shaykh Ibrahim, what is this? Did I not adjure thee a while ago and thou refusedst, saying: – What, I! 'tis thirteen years ago since I have done such a thing!" "By Allah," quoth the Shaykh (and indeed he was abashed), "no sin of mine this, she forced me to do it." Nur al-Din laughed and they sat down again to wine and wassail, but the damsel turned to her master and said in a whisper, "O my lord, drink and do not press him, that I may show thee some sport with him." Then she began to fill her master's cup and he hers and so they did time after time, till at last Shaykh Ibrahim looked at them and said, "What fashion of good fellowship is this? Allah curse the glutton who keepeth the cup to himself! Why dost thou not give me to drink, O my brother? What manners are these, O blessed one?" At this the two laughed until they fell on their backs; then they drank and gave him to drink and ceased not their carousal till a third part of the night was past. Then said the damsel, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, with thy leave I will get up and light one of these candles." "Do so," he replied, "but light no more than one." So she sprang to her feet and, beginning with

one candle, lighted all the eighty and sat down again. Presently Nur al-Din said, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, in what favour am I with thee? May I not light one of these lamps?" "Light one," replied he, "and bother me no more in thy turn!" So he rose and lighted one lamp after another, till he had lighted the whole eighty and the palace seemed to dance with brilliancy. Quoth the Shaykh (and indeed intoxication had overcome him), "Ye two are bolder than I am." Then he rose to his feet and opened all the lattices and sat down again; and they fell to carousing and reciting verses till the place rang with their noisy mirth. Now Allah, the Decreeer who decreeth all things and who for every effect appointeth a cause, had so disposed that the Caliph was at that moment sitting in the light of the moon at one of the windows of his palace overlooking the Tigris. He saw the blaze of the lamps and wax candles reflected in the river and, lifting his eyes, perceived that it came from the Garden Palace which was all ablaze with brilliancy. So he cried, "Here to me with Ja'afar the Barmaki!"; and the last word was hardly spoken ere the Wazir was present before the Commander of the Faithful, who cried at him, "O dog of a Minister, hast thou taken from me this city of Baghdad without saying aught to me?" "What words are these words?" asked Ja'afar; and the Caliph answered, "If Baghdad city were not taken from me, the Palace of Pictures would not be illuminated with lamps and candles, nor would its windows be thrown open. Woe to thee! who durst do a deed like this except the Caliphate had been taken from me?" Quoth Ja'afar (and indeed his side-

muscles trembled as he spoke), "Who told thee that the Palace of Pictures was illuminated and the windows thrown open?" Come hither and see," replied the Caliph. Then Ja'afar came close to the Caliph and, looking towards the garden, saw the palace blazing with illumination that rayed through the gloom of the night; and, thinking that this might have been permitted by the keeper for some reason of his own, he wished to make an excuse for him; so quoth he, "O Commander of the Faithful, Shaykh Ibrahim said to me last week: – O my lord Ja'afar, I much wish to circumcise my sons during the life of the Commander of the Faithful and thy life. I asked: – What dost thou want?; and he answered: – Get me leave from the Caliph to hold the festival in the Garden Palace. So said I to him: – Go circumcise them and I will see the Caliph and tell him. Thereupon he went away and I forgot to let thee know." "O Ja'afar," said the Caliph, "thou hast committed two offences against me; first in that thou didst not report to me, secondly, thou didst not give him what he sought; for he came and told thee this only as excuse to ask for some small matter of money, to help him with the outlay; and thou gavest him nothing nor toldest me." "O Commander of the Faithful," said Ja'afar, "I forgot." "Now by the rights of my forefathers and the tombs of my forbears," quoth the Caliph, "I will not pass the rest of this night save in company with him; for truly he is a pious man who frequenteth the Elders of the Faith and the Fakirs and other religious mendicants and entertaineth them; doubtless they are now assembled together and it may be that the prayer of one

of them will work us weal both in this world and in the next. Besides, my presence may profit and at any rate be pleasing to Shaykh Ibrahim." "O Commander of the Faithful," quoth Ja'afar, "the greater part of the night is passed, and at this time they will be breaking up." Quoth the Caliph, "It matters not: I needs must go to them." So Ja'afar held his peace, being bewildered and knowing not what to do. Then the Caliph rose to his feet and, taking with him Ja'afar and Masrur the eunuch sworder, the three disguised themselves in merchants' gear and leaving the City-palace, kept threading the streets till they reached the garden. The Caliph went up to the gate and finding it wide open, was surprised and said, "See, O Ja'afar, how Shaykh Ibrahim hath left the gate open at this hour contrary to his custom!" They went in and walked on till they came under the pavilion, when the Caliph said, "O Ja'afar, I wish to look in upon them unawares before I show myself, that I may see what they are about and get sight of the elders; for hitherto I have heard no sound from them, nor even a Fakir calling upon the name of Allah.<sup>52</sup>" Then he looked about and, seeing a tall walnut-tree, said to Ja'afar, "I will climb this tree, for its branches are near the lattices and so look in upon them." Thereupon he mounted the tree and ceased not climbing from branch to branch, till he reached a bough which was right opposite one of the windows, and here he took seat and looked

---

<sup>52</sup> As would happen at a "Zikr," rogation or litany. Those who wish to see how much can be made of the subject will read "Pearls of the Faith, or Islam's Rosary, being the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah" (Asmá-el-Husna) etc. by Edwin Arnold: London. Trübner, 1883.



inside the palace. He saw a damsel and a youth as they were two moons (glory be to Him who created them and fashioned them!), and by them Shaykh Ibrahim seated cup in hand and saying, "O Princess of fair ones, drinking without music is nothing worth; indeed I have heard a poet say: —

Round with big and little, the bowl and cup, ❀ Take either  
that moon<sup>53</sup> in his sheen hath crowned:  
Nor drink without music, for oft I've seen, ❀ The horse drink  
best to the whistle's sound!

When the Caliph saw this, the vein of wrath started up between his eyes and he came down and said to the Wazir, "O Ja'afar, never beheld I yet men of piety in such case; so do thou mount this tree and look upon them, lest the blessings of the blest be lost to thee." Ja'afar, hearing the words of the Commander of the Faithful and being confounded by them, climbed to the tree-top and looking in, saw Nur al-Din and the damsel, and Shaykh Ibrahim holding in his hand a brimming bowl. At this sight he made sure of death and, descending, stood before the Commander of the Faithful, who said to him, "O Ja'afar, praise be to Allah who hath made us of those that observe external ordinances of Holy Law and hath averted from us the sin of disguising ourselves after the manner of hypocrites!"<sup>54</sup> But

---

<sup>53</sup> *i. e.* the Sáki, cup-boy or cup-bearer. "Moon-faced," as I have shown elsewhere, is no compliment in English, but it is in Persian and Arabic.

<sup>54</sup> He means we are "Záhirí," plain honest Moslems, not "Bátiní" gnostics (ergò

Ja'afar could not speak a word for excess of confusion; so the Caliph looked at him and said, "I wonder how they came hither, and who admitted them into my pavilion! But aught like the beauty of this youth and this damsel my eyes never yet saw!" "Thou sayest sooth, O our Lord the Sultan!" replied Ja'afar (and he hoped to propitiate the Caliph Harun al-Rashid). Then quoth the Caliph, "O Ja'afar, let us both mount the branch opposite the window, that we may amuse ourselves with looking at them." So the two climbed the tree and, peering in, heard Shaykh Ibrahim say, "O my lady, I have cast away all gravity mine by the drinking of wine, but 'tis not sweet save with the soft sounds of the lute-strings it combine." "By Allah," replied Anis al-Jalis, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, an we had but some instrument of music our joyance were complete." Hearing this he rose to his feet and the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "I wonder what he is about to do!" and Ja'afar answered, "I know not." The Shaykh disappeared and presently reappeared bringing a lute; and the Caliph took note of it and knew it for that of Abu Ishak the Cup-companion.<sup>55</sup> "By Allah," said the Caliph, "if this damsel sing ill I will crucify all of you; but if she sing well I will forgive them and only gibbet thee." "O Allah cause her to sing vilely!" quoth Ja'afar. Asked the Caliph, "Why so?"; and he answered, "If thou crucify us all together, we shall keep one another company." The Caliph laughed at his

---

reprobates) and so forth, who disregard all appearances and external ordinances. This suggests his opinion of Shaykh Ibrahim and possibly refers to Ja'afar's suspected heresy.

<sup>55</sup> This worthy will be noticed in a subsequent page.

speech. Presently the damsel took the lute and, after looking at it and tuning it, she played a measure which made all hearts yearn to her; then she sang these lines: —

O ye that can aid me, a wretched lover, ❀ Whom longing burns nor can rest restore me!

Though all you have done I have well deserved, ❀ I take refuge with you, so exult not o'er me:

True, I am weak and low and vile, ❀ But I'll bear your will and whatso you bore me:

My death at your hands what brings it of glory? ❀ I fear but your sin which of life forlore me!

Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah, good! O Ja'afar, never in my life have I heard a voice so enchanting as this." "Then haply the Caliph's wrath hath passed away," said Ja'afar, and he replied, "Yes, 'tis gone." Thereupon they descended from the tree, and the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "I wish to go in and sit with them and hear the damsel sing before me." "O Commander of the Faithful," replied Ja'afar, "if thou go in to them they will be terribly troubled, and Shaykh Ibrahim will assuredly die of fright." But the Caliph answered, "O Ja'afar, thou must teach me some device wherewith to delude them and whereby I can foregather with them without their knowing me." So they walked towards the Tigris pondering the matter, and presently came upon a fisherman who stood fishing under the pavilion windows. Now some time before this, the Caliph (being in the pavilion)

had called to Shaykh Ibrahim and asked him, "What noise is this I hear under the windows?" and he had answered, "It is voices of fisher folk catching fish: " so quoth the Caliph, "Go down and forbid them this place;" and he forbade them accordingly. However that night a fisherman named Karim, happening to pass by and seeing the garden gate open, said to himself, "This is a time of negligence; and I will take advantage of it to do a bit of fishing." So he took his net and cast it, but he had hardly done so when behold, the Caliph came up single-handed and, standing hard by, knew him and called aloud to him, "Ho, Karim!" The fisherman, hearing himself named, turned round, and seeing the Caliph, trembled and his side-muscles quivered, as he cried, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I did it not in mockery of the mandate; but poverty and a large family drove me to what thou seest!" Quoth the Caliph, "Make a cast in my name." At this the fisherman was glad and going to the bank threw his net, then waiting till it had spread out at full stretch and settled down, hauled it up and found in it various kinds of fish. The Caliph was pleased and said, "O Karim, doff thy habit." So he put off a gaberdine of coarse woollen stuff patched in an hundred places whereon the lice were rampant, and a turband which had never been untwisted for three years but to which he had sewn every rag he came upon. The Caliph also pulled off his person two vests of Alexandrian and Ba'lbak silk, a loose inner robe and a long-sleeved outer coat, and said to the fisherman, "Take them and put them on," while he assumed the foul gaberdine and filthy

turban and drew a corner of the head-cloth as a mouth-veil<sup>56</sup> before his face. Then said he to the fisherman, "Get thee about thy business!"; and the man kissed the Caliph's feet and thanked him and improvised the following couplets: —

Thou hast granted more favours than ever I craved; ❀ Thou  
hast satisfied needs which my heart enslaved:  
I will thank thee and thank whileas life shall last, ❀ And my  
bones will praise thee in grave engraved!

Hardly had the fisherman ended his verse, when the lice began to crawl over the Caliph's skin, and he fell to catching them on his neck with his right and left and throwing them from him, while he cried, "O fisherman, woe to thee! what be this abundance of lice on thy gaberdine." "O my lord," replied he, "they may annoy thee just at first, but before a week is past thou wilt not feel them nor think of them." The Caliph laughed and said to him, "Out on thee! Shall I leave this gaberdine of thine so long on my body?" Quoth the fisherman, "I would say a word to thee but I am ashamed in presence of the Caliph!"; and quoth he, "Say what thou hast to say." "It passed through my thought, O Commander

---

<sup>56</sup> Arab. "Lisám," the end of the "Kúfiyah," or head-kerchief passed over the face under the eyes and made fast on the other side. This mouth-veil serves as a mask (eyes not being recognisable) and defends from heat, cold and thirst. I also believe that hooding the eyes with this article, Badawi-fashion, produces a sensation of coolness, at any rate a marked difference of apparent temperature; somewhat like a pair of dark spectacles or looking at the sea from a sandy shore. Pilgrimage i., 210 and 346. The woman's "Lisám" (chin-veil) or Yashmak is noticed in i., 337.

of the Faithful," said the fisherman, "that, since thou wishest to learn fishing so thou mayest have in hand an honest trade whereby to gain thy livelihood, this my gaberdine besitteth thee right well."<sup>57</sup> The Commander of the Faithful laughed at this speech, and the fisherman went his way. Then the Caliph took up the basket of fish and, strewing a little green grass over it, carried it to Ja'afar and stood before him. Ja'afar thinking him to be Karim the fisherman feared for him and said, "O Karim, what brought thee hither? Flee for thy life, for the Caliph is in the garden to-night and, if he see thee, thy neck is gone." At this the Caliph laughed and Ja'afar recognized him and asked, "Can it be thou, our lord the Sultan?"; and he answered, "Yes, O Ja'afar, and thou art my Wazir and I and thou came hither together; yet thou knowest me not; so how should Shaykh Ibrahim know me, and he drunk? Stay here, till I come back to thee." "To hear is to obey," said Ja'afar. Then the Caliph went up to the door of the pavilion and knocked a gentle knock, whereupon said Nur al-Din, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, some one taps at the door." "Who goes there?" cried the Shaykh and the Caliph replied, "It is I, O Shaykh Ibrahim!" "Who art thou," quoth he, and quoth the other, "I am Karim the fisherman: I hear thou hast a feast, so

---

<sup>57</sup> Most characteristic is this familiarity between the greatest man then in the world and his pauper subject. The fisherman alludes to a practise of Al-Islam, instituted by Caliph Omar, that all rulers should work at some handicraft in order to spare the public treasure. Hence Sultan Mu'ayyad of Cairo was a calligrapher who sold his handwriting, and his example was followed by the Turkish Sultans Mahmúd, Abd al-Majíd and Abd al-Aziz. German royalties prefer carpentering and Louis XVI. watch-making.

I have brought thee some fish, and of a truth 'tis good fish." When Nur al-Din heard the mention of fish, he was glad, he and the damsel, and they both said to the Shaykh, "O our lord, open the door and let him bring us his fish." So Shaykh Ibrahim opened and the Caliph came in (and he in fisherman guise), and began by saluting them. Said Shaykh Ibrahim, "Welcome to the blackguard, the robber, the dicer! Let us see thy fish." So the Caliph showed them his catch and behold, the fishes were still alive and jumping, whereupon the damsel exclaimed, "By Allah! O my lord, these are indeed fine fish: would they were fried!" and Shaykh Ibrahim rejoined, "By Allah, O my lady, thou art right." Then said he to the Caliph, "O fisherman, why didst thou not bring us the fish ready fried? Up now and cook them and bring them back to us." "On my head be thy commands!" said the Caliph, "I will fry thee a dish and bring it." Said they, "Look sharp." Thereupon he went out and ran till he came up to Ja'afar when he called to him, "Hallo, Ja'afar!"; and he replied, "Here am I, O Commander of the Faithful, is all well?" "They want the fish fried," said the Caliph, and Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, give it to me and I'll fry it for them." "By the tombs of my forbears," quoth the Caliph, "none shall fry it but I, with mine own hand!" So he went to the gardener's hut, where he searched and found all that he required, even to salt and saffron and wild marjoram and else besides. Then he turned to the brasier and, setting on the frying-pan, fried a right good fry. When it was done, he laid it on a banana-leaf, and gathering

from the garden wind-fallen fruits, limes and lemons, carried the fish to the pavilion and set the dish before them. So the youth and the damsel and Shaykh Ibrahim came forward and ate; after which they washed their hands and Nur al-Din said to the Caliph, "By Allah, O fisherman, thou hast done us a right good deed this night." Then he put hand in pouch and, taking out three of the dinars which Sanjar had given him, said, "O fisherman, excuse me. By Allah had I known thee before that which hath lately befallen me, I had done away the bitterness of poverty from thy heart; but take thou this as the best I can do for thee." Then he threw the gold pieces to the Caliph, who took them and kissed them and put them in pouch. Now his sole object in doing all this was to hear the damsel sing; so he said to Nur al-Din, "Thou hast rewarded me most liberally, but I beg of thy boundless bounty that thou let this damsel sing an air, that I may hear her."<sup>58</sup> So Nur al-Din said, "O Anis al-Jalis!" and she answered "Yes!" and he continued, "By my life, sing us something for the sake of this fisherman who wisheth so much to hear thee." Thereupon she took the lute and struck the strings, after she had screwed them tight and tuned them, and sang these improvised verses: —

The fawn of a maid hent her lute in hand ❀ And her music  
made us right mettlesome:

For her song gave hearing to ears stone-deaf, ❀ While Brava!  
Brava! exclaimed the dumb.

---

<sup>58</sup> There would be nothing singular in this request. The democracy of despotism levels all men outside the pale of politics and religion.



Then she played again and played so ravishingly, that she charmed their wits and burst out improvising and singing these couplets: —

You have honoured us visiting this our land, ❀ And your splendour illumined the glooms that blent:

So 'tis due that for you I perfume my place ❀ With rose-water, musk and the camphor-scent!

Hereupon the Caliph was agitated, and emotion so overpowered him that he could not command himself for excess of pleasure, and he exclaimed, "By Allah, good! by Allah, good! by Allah, good!"<sup>59</sup> Asked Nur al-Din, "O fisherman, doth this damsel please thee?" and the Caliph answered, "Ay, by Allah!" Whereupon said Nur al-Din, "She is a gift to thee, a gift of the generous who repenteth him not of his givings and who will never revoke his gift!" Then he sprang to his feet and, taking a loose robe, threw it over the fisherman and bade him receive the damsel and be gone. But she looked at him and said, "O my lord, art thou faring forth without farewell? If it must be so, at least stay till I bid thee good-bye and make known my case." And she began versifying in these verses: —

When love and longing and regret are mine, ❀ Must not this body show of ills a sign?

---

<sup>59</sup> "Wa'lláhi tayyib!" an exclamation characteristic of the Egyptian Moslem.

My love! say not, "Thou soon shalt be consoled"; ❀ When  
state speaks state none shall allay my pine.

If living man could swim upon his tears, ❀ I first should float  
on waters of these eyne:

O thou, who in my heart infusedst thy love, ❀ As water  
mingles in the cup with wine,

This was the fear I feared, this parting blow. ❀ O thou whose  
love my heart-core ne'er shall tyne!

O Bin Khákán! my sought, my hope, my will, ❀ O thou  
whose love this breast made wholly thine!

Against thy lord the King thou sinn'dst for me, ❀ And  
winn'dst exile in lands peregrine:

Allah ne'er make my lord repent my loss ❀ To cream<sup>60</sup> o'  
men thou gavest me, one right digne.

When she had ended her verses, Nur al-Din answered her with  
these lines: —

She bade me farewell on our parting day, ❀ And she wept in  
the fire of our bane and pains:

"What wilt thou do when fro' thee I'm gone?" ❀ Quoth I,  
"say this to whom life remains!"

When the Caliph heard her saying in her verse: —

To Karim, the cream of men thou gavest me;

---

<sup>60</sup> The pretended fisherman's name Karím=the Generous.

his inclination for her redoubled and it seemed a hard matter and a grievous to part them; so quoth he to the youth, "O my lord, truly the damsel said in her verses that thou didst transgress against her master and him who owned her; so tell me, against whom didst thou transgress and who is it hath a claim on thee?" "By Allah, O fisherman," replied Nur al-Din, "there befel me and this damsel a wondrous tale and a marvellous matter: an 'twere graven with needle-gravers on the eye-corners it would be a warner to whoso would be warned." Cried the Caliph, "Wilt thou not tell me thy story and acquaint me with thy case? Haply it may bring thee relief, for Allah's aid is ever nearhand." "O fisherman," said Nur al-Din, "wilt thou hear our history in verse or in prose?" "Prose is a wordy thing, but verses," rejoined the Caliph, "are pearls on string." Then Nur al-Din bowed his head, and made these couplets: —

O my friend! reft of rest no repose I command, ❀ And my grief is redoubled in this far land:

Erst I had a father, a kinder ne'er was; ❀ But he died and to Death paid the deodand:

When he went from me, every matter went wrong ❀ Till my heart was nighbroken, my nature unmanned:

He bought me a handmaid, a sweeting who shamed ❀ A wand of the willow by Zephyr befanned:

I lavisht upon her mine heritage, ❀ And spent like a nobleman puissant and grand:

Then to sell her compelled, my sorrow increased; ❀ The

parting was sore but I mote not gainstand:  
Now as soon as the crier had called her, there bid ❀ A wicked  
old fellow, a fiery brand:  
So I raged with a rage that I could not restrain, ❀ And  
snatched her from out of his hireling's hand;  
When the angry curmudgeon made ready for blows, ❀ And  
the fire of a fight kindled he and his band,  
I smote him in fury with right and with left, ❀ And his hide,  
till well satisfied, curried and tanned:  
Then in fear I fled forth and lay hid in my house, ❀ To escape  
from the snares which my foeman had spanned:  
So the King of the country proclaimed my arrest; ❀ When  
access to me a good Chamberlain fand:  
And warned me to flee from the city afar, ❀ Disappear,  
disappoint what my enemies planned:  
Then we fled from our home 'neath the wing of the night, ❀  
And sought us a refuge by Baghdad strand:  
Of my riches I've nothing on thee to bestow, ❀ O Fisher,  
except the fair gift thou hast scanned:  
The loved of my soul, and when I from her part, ❀ Know for  
sure that I give thee the blood of my heart.<sup>61</sup>

When he had ended his verse, the Caliph said to him, "O

---

<sup>61</sup> Such an act of generosity would appear to Europeans well-nigh insanity, but it is quite in Arab manners. Witness the oft-quoted tale of Hátim and his horse. As a rule the Arab is the reverse of generous, contrasting badly, in this point, with his cousin the Jew: hence his ideal of generosity is of the very highest. "The generous (*i. e.* liberal) is Allah's friend, aye, though he be a sinner; and the miser is Allah's foe, aye, though he be a saint!" Indian Moslems call a skin-flint Makhi-chús=fly-sucker (Pilgrimage i. 242).

my lord Nur al-Din, explain to me thy case more fully." So he told him the whole story from beginning to end, and the Caliph said to him, "Whither dost thou now intend?" "Allah's world is wide," replied he. Quoth the Caliph, "I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, which when he readeth, he will not hurt nor harm thee in aught." – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Thirty-eighth Night,**

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph said to Nur al-Din Ali, "I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, which when he readeth, he will not hurt nor harm thee in aught," Nur al-Din asked "What! is there in the world a fisherman who writeth to Kings? Such a thing can never be!"; and the Caliph answered, "Thou sayest sooth, but I will tell thee the reason. Know that I and he learnt in the same school under one schoolmaster, and that I was his monitor. Since that time Fortune befriended him and he is become a Sultan, while Allah hath abased me and made me a fisherman; yet I never send to him to ask aught but he doeth my desire; nay, though I should ask of him a thousand favours every day, he would comply." When Nur al-Din heard this he said, "Good! write that I may see." So the Caliph took ink-case and reed-pen and wrote as follows, – "In the name of Allah, the

Compassionating, the Compassionate! But after.<sup>62</sup> This letter is written by Harun al-Rashid, son of Al-Mahdi, to his highness Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, whom I have encompassed about with my favour and made my viceroy in certain of my dominions. The bearer of these presents is Nur al-Din Ali, son of Fazl bin Khakan the Wazir. As soon as they come to thy hand divest thyself forthright of the kingly dignity and invest him therewith; so oppose not my commandment and peace be with thee." He gave the letter to Nur al-Din, who took it and kissed it, then put it in his turband and set out at once on his journey. So far concerning him; but as regards the Caliph, Shaykh Ibrahim stared at him (and he still in fisher garb) and said, "O vilest of fishermen, thou hast brought us a couple of fish worth a score of half-dirhams,<sup>63</sup> and hast gotten three dinars for them; and thinkest thou to take the damsel to boot?" When the Caliph heard this, he cried out at him, and signed to Masrur who discovered himself and rushed in upon him. Now Ja'afar had sent one of

---

<sup>62</sup> Arab. Ammá ba'ad (or Wa ba'ad), an initiatory formula attributed to Koss ibn Sa'idat al-Iyadi, bishop of Najrán (the town in Al-Yaman which D'Herbelot calls Negiran and a famous preacher in Mohammed's day) hence "more eloquent than Koss" (Maydání, Arab. Prov., 189). He was the first who addressed letters with the incept, "from A. to B."; and the first who preached from a pulpit and who leant on a sword or a staff when discoursing. Many Moslems date Ammá ba'ad from the Prophet David, relying upon a passage of the Koran (xxxviii. 19).

<sup>63</sup> Arab. "Nusf"=half (a dirham): vulgarly pronounced "nuss," and synonymous with the Egypt. "Faddah" (=silver), the Greek Asper, and the Turkish "paráh." It is the smallest Egyptian coin, made of very base metal and, there being forty to the piastre, it is worth nearly a quarter of a farthing.

the gardener-lads to the doorkeeper of the palace to fetch a suit of royal raiment for the Prince of the Faithful; so the man went and, returning with the suit, kissed the ground before the Caliph and gave it him. Then he threw off the clothes he had on<sup>64</sup> and donned kingly apparel. Shaykh Ibrahim was still sitting upon his chair and the Caliph tarried to behold what would come next. But seeing the Fisherman become the Caliph, Shaykh Ibrahim was utterly confounded and he could do nothing but bite his finger-ends<sup>65</sup> and say, "Would I knew whether am I asleep or am I awake!" At last the Caliph looked at him and cried, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, what state is this in which I see thee?" Thereupon he recovered from his drunkenness and, throwing himself upon the ground, repeated these verses: —

Pardon the sinful ways I did pursue; ❀ Ruth from his lord to every slave is due:

Confession pays the fine that sin demands; ❀ Where, then, is that which grace and mercy sue?<sup>66</sup>

The Caliph forgave him and bade carry the damsel to the city-palace, where he set apart for her an apartment and appointed

---

<sup>64</sup> The too literal Torrens and Lane make the Caliph give the gardener-lad the clothes in which he was then clad, forgetting, like the author or copier, that he wore the fishermen's lousy suit.

<sup>65</sup> In sign of confusion, disappointment and so forth: not "biting his nails," which is European and utterly un-Asiatic.

<sup>66</sup> See lines like these in Night xiii. (i. 136); the sentiment is trite.

slaves to serve her, saying to her, "Know that we have sent thy lord to be Sultan in Bassorah and, Almighty Allah willing, we will dispatch him the dress of investiture and thee with it." Meanwhile, Nur al-Din Ali ceased not travelling till he reached Bassorah, where he repaired to the Sultan's palace and he shouted a loud shout.<sup>67</sup> The Sultan heard him and sent for him; and when he came into his presence, he kissed the ground between his hands and, producing the letter, presented it to him. Seeing the superscription in the writing of the Commander of the Faithful, the Sultan rose to his feet and kissed it three times; and after reading it said, "I hear and I obey Allah Almighty and the Commander of the Faithful!" Then he summoned the four Kazis<sup>68</sup> and the Emirs and was about to divest himself of the rule royal, when behold, in came Al-Mu'in bin Sawi. The Sultan gave him the Caliph's letter and he read it, then tore it to pieces and putting it into his mouth, chewed it<sup>69</sup> and spat it out. "Woe to thee," quoth the Sultan (and indeed he was sore angered); "what induced thee to do this deed?" "Now by thy life! O our lord the Sultan," replied Mu'in, "this man hath never foregathered with the Caliph nor with his Wazir; but he is a gallows-bird, a limb

---

<sup>67</sup> The Arab will still stand under his ruler's palace and shout aloud to attract his attention. Sayyid Sa'id known as the "Imán of Muskat" used to encourage the patriarchal practice. Mohammed repeatedly protested against such unceremonious conduct (Koran xciv. 11, etc.). The "three times of privacy" (Koran cv. 57) are before the dawn prayer, during the Siesta (noon) and after the even-prayer.

<sup>68</sup> The Judges of the four orthodox schools.

<sup>69</sup> That none might see it or find it ever after.



of Satan, a knave who, having come upon a written paper in the Caliph's hand, some idle scroll, hath made it serve his own end. The Caliph would surely not send him to take the Sultanate from thee without the imperial autograph<sup>70</sup> and the diploma of investiture, and he certainly would have despatched with him a Chamberlain or a Minister. But he hath come alone and he never came from the Caliph, no, never! never! never!" "What is to be done?" asked the Sultan, and the Minister answered, "Leave him to me and I will take him and keep him away from thee, and send him in charge of a Chamberlain to Baghdad-city. Then, if what he says be sooth, they will bring us back autograph and investiture; and if not, I will take my due out of this debtor." When the Sultan heard the Minister's words he said, "Hence with thee and him too." Al-Mu'in took trust of him from the King and, carrying him to his own house, cried out to his pages who laid him flat and beat him till he fainted. Then he let put upon his feet heavy shackles and carried him to the jail, where he called the jailor, one Kutayt,<sup>71</sup> who came and kissed the ground before him. Quoth the Wazir, "O Kutayt, I wish thee to take this fellow and throw him into one of the underground cells<sup>72</sup> in the prison and torture him night and day." "To hear is to obey," replied the

---

<sup>70</sup> Arab. "Khatt Sharif"=a royal autographical letter: the term is still preserved in Turkey, but Europeans will write "Hatt."

<sup>71</sup> Meaning "Little tom-cat"; a dim. of "Kitt" vulg. Kutt or Gutt.

<sup>72</sup> Arab. "Matmúrah" – the Algerine "Matamor" – a "silo," made familiar to England by the invention of "Ensilage."

jailor and, taking Nur al-Din into the prison, locked the door upon him. Then he gave orders to sweep a bench behind the door and, spreading on it a sitting-rug and a leather-cloth, seated Nur al-Din thereon and loosed his shackles and entreated him kindly. The Wazir sent every day enjoining the jailor to beat him, but he abstained from this, and so continued to do for forty days. On the forty-first day there came a present from the Caliph; which when the Sultan saw, it pleased him and he consulted his Ministers on the matter, when one of them said, "Perchance this present was for the new Sultan." Cried Al-Mu'in, "We should have done well had we put him to death at his first coming;" and the Sultan cried "By Allah, thou hast reminded me of him! Go down to the prison and fetch him, and I will strike off his head." "To hear is to obey," replied Al-Mu'in: then he stood up and said, "I will make proclamation in the city: – Whoso would solace himself with seeing the beheading of Nur al-Din bin al-Fazl bin Khakan, let him repair to the palace! So follower and followed, great and small will flock to the spectacle, and I shall heal my heart and harm my foe." "Do as thou wilt," said the Sultan. The Wazir went off (and he was glad and gay), and ordered the Chief of Police to make the aforementioned proclamation. When the people heard the crier, they all sorrowed and wept, even the little ones at school and the traders in their shops; and some strove to get places for seeing the sight, whilst others went to the prison with the object of escorting him thence. Presently, the Wazir came with ten Mamelukes to the jail and Kutayt the jailor asked

him, "Whom seekest thou, O our lord the Wazir?"; whereto he answered, "Bring me out that gallows-bird." But the jailor said, "He is in the sorriest of plights for the much beating I have given him." Then he went into the prison and found Nur al-Din repeating these verses: —

Who shall support me in calamities, ❀ When fail all cures  
and greater cares arise?

Exile hath worn my heart, my vitals torn; ❀ The World to  
foes hath turned my firm allies.

O folk, will not one friend amidst you all ❀ Wail o'er my  
woes, and cry to hear my cries?

Death and its agonies seem light to me, ❀ Since life has lost  
all joys and jollities:

O Lord of Mustafá,<sup>73</sup> that Science-sea ❀ Sole Intercessor,  
Guide all-ware, all-wise!

I pray thee free me and my fault forego, ❀ And from me drive  
mine evil and my woe.

The jailor stripped off his clean clothes and, dressing him in two filthy vests, carried him to the Wazir. Nur al-Din looked at him and saw it was his foe that sought to compass his death; so he wept and said, "Art thou, then, so secure against the World? Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet: —

---

<sup>73</sup> The older "Mustapha"=Mohammed. This Intercession-doctrine is fiercely disputed. Pilgrimage ii. 77. The Apostle of Al-Islam seems to have been unable to make up his mind upon the subject: and modern opinion amongst Moslems is apparently borrowed from the Christians.

Kisras and Cæsars in a bygone day ❀ Stored wealth; where is it, and ah! where are they?"

"O Wazir," he continued, "know that Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) will do whatso He will!" "O Ali," replied he, "thinkest thou to frighten me with such talk? I mean this very day to smite thy neck despite the noses of the Bassorah folk and I care not; let the days do as they please; nor will I turn me to thy counsel but rather to what the poet saith: —

Leave thou the days to breed their ban and bate, ❀ And make thee strong t' upbear the weight of Fate.

And also how excellently saith another: —

Whoso shall see the death-day of his foe, ❀ One day surviving, wins his bestest wish."

Then he ordered his attendants to mount Nur al-Din upon the bare back of a mule; and they said to the youth (for truly it was irksome to them), "Let us stone him and cut him down though our lives go for it." But Nur al-Din said to them, "Do not so: have ye not heard the saying of the poet? —

Needs must I bear the term by Fate decreed, ❀ And when that day be dead needs must I die:

If lions dragged me to their forest-lair, ❀ Safe should I live

till draw my death-day nigh."

Then they proceeded to proclaim before Nur al-Din, "This is the least of the retribution for him who imposeth upon Kings with forgeries." And they ceased not parading him round about Bassorah, till they made him stand beneath the palace-windows and set him upon the leather of blood,<sup>74</sup> and the sword came up to him and said, "O my lord, I am but a slave commanded in this matter: an thou have any desire, tell it me that I may fulfil it, for now there remaineth of thy life only so much as may be till the Sultan shall put his face out of the lattice." Thereupon Nur al-Din looked to the right and to the left, and before him and behind him and began improvising: —

The sword, the sword and the blood-skin waiting me I sight,  
❀ And cry, Alack, mine evil fate! ah, my calamity!  
How is't I see no loving friend with eye of sense or soul? ❀  
What! no one here? I cry to all: will none reply to me?  
The time is past that formed my life, my death term draweth  
nigh, ❀ Will no man win the grace of God showing me  
clemency;  
And look with pity on my state, and clear my dark despair,  
❀ E'en with a draught of water dealt to cool death's agony?

---

<sup>74</sup> Lane (i. 486) curiously says, "The place of the stagnation of blood: " yet he had translated the word aright in the Introduction (i. 41). I have noticed that the Nat'a is made like the "Sufrah," of well-tanned leather, with rings in the periphery, so that a thong passed through turns it into a bag. The Sufrah used for provisions is usually yellow, with a black border and small pouches for knives or spoons (Pilgrimage i. 111).

The people fell to weeping over him; and the headsman rose and brought him a draught of water; but the Wazir sprang up from his place and smote the gugglet with his hand and broke it: then he cried out at the executioner and bade him strike off Nur al-Din's head. So he bound the eyes of the doomed man and folk clamoured at the Wazir and loud wailings were heard and much questioning of man and man. At this moment behold, rose a dense dust-cloud filling sky and wold; and when the Sultan, who was sitting in the palace, descried this, he said to his suite, "Go and see what yon cloud bringeth: " Replied Al-Mu'in, "Not till we have smitten this fellow's neck;" but the Sultan said, "Wait ye till we see what this meaneth." Now the dust-cloud was the dust of Ja'afar the Barmecide, Wazir to the Caliph, and his host; and the cause of his coming was as follows. The Caliph passed thirty days without calling to mind the matter of Nur al-Din Ali,<sup>75</sup> and none reminded him of it, till one night, as he passed by the chamber of Anis al-Jalis, he heard her weeping and singing with a soft sweet voice these lines of the poet: —

In thought I see thy form when farthest far or nearest near;  
❀ And on my tongue there dwells a name which man shall  
ne'er unhear.

Then her weeping redoubled; when lo! the Caliph opened the

---

<sup>75</sup> This improbable detail shows the Caliph's greatness.

door and, entering the chamber, found Anis al-Jalis in tears. When she saw him she fell to the ground and kissing his feet three times repeated these lines: —

O fertile root and noble growth of trunk; ❀ Ripe-fruitful  
branch of never sullied race;  
I mind thee of what pact thy bounty made; ❀ Far be't from  
thee thou should'st forget my case!

Quoth the Caliph, "Who art thou?" and she replied, "I am she whom Ali bin Khakan gave thee in gift, and I wish the fulfilment of thy promise to send me to him with the robe of honour; for I have now been thirty days without tasting the food of sleep." Thereupon the Caliph sent for Ja'afar and said to him, "O Ja'afar, 'tis thirty days since we have had news of Nur al-Din bin Khakan, and I cannot but suppose that the Sultan hath slain him; but, by the life of my head and by the sepulchres of my forefathers, if aught of foul play hath befallen him, I will surely make an end of him who was the cause of it, though he be the dearest of all men to myself! So I desire that thou set out for Bassorah within this hour and bring me tidings of my cousin, King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, and how he hath dealt with Nur al-Din Ali bin Khakan;" adding, "If thou tarry longer on the road than shall suffice for the journey, I will strike off thy head. Furthermore, do thou tell the son of my uncle the whole story of Nur al-Din, and how I sent him with my written orders; and if thou

find, O my cousin,<sup>76</sup> that the King hath done otherwise than as I commanded, bring him and the Wazir Al-Mu'in bin Sawi to us in whatsoever guise thou shalt find them."<sup>77</sup> "Hearing and obedience," replied Ja'afar and, making ready on the instant, he set out for Bassorah where the news of his coming had foregone him and had reached to the ears of King Mohammed. When Ja'afar arrived and saw the crushing and crowding of the lieges, he asked, "What means all this gathering?" so they told him what was doing in the matter of Nur al-Din; whereupon he hastened to go to the Sultan and saluting him, acquainted him with the cause why he came and the Caliph's resolve, in case of any foul play having befallen the youth, to put to death whoso should have brought it about. Then he took into custody the King and the Wazir and laid them in ward and, giving order for the release of Nur al-Din Ali, enthroned him as Sultan in the stead of Mohammed bin Sulayman. After this Ja'afar abode three days in Bassorah, the usual guest-time, and on the morning of the fourth day, Nur al-Din Ali turned to him and said, "I long for the sight of the Commander of the Faithful." Then said Ja'afar to Mohammed bin Sulayman, "Make ready to travel, for we will say the dawn-prayer and mount Baghdad-wards;" and he replied, "To hear is to obey." Then they prayed and they took horse and set out, all of them, carrying with them the Wazir, Al-Mu'in bin Sawi, who began to repent him of what he had done. Nur

---

<sup>76</sup> "Cousin" is here a term of familiarity, our "coz."

<sup>77</sup> *i. e.* without allowing them a moment's delay to change clothes.



al-Din rode by Ja'afar's side and they stinted not faring on till they arrived at Baghdad, the House of Peace, and going in to the Caliph told him how they had found Nur al-Din nigh upon death. Thereupon the Caliph said to the youth, "Take this sword and smite with it the neck of thine enemy." So he took the sword from his hand and stepped up to Al-Mu'in who looked at him and said, "I did according to my mother's milk, do thou according to thine."<sup>78</sup> Upon this Nur al-Din cast the sword from his hand and said to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, he hath beguiled me with his words;" and he repeated this couplet: —

By craft and sleight I snared him when he came; ❀ A few fair words aye trap the noble-game!

"Leave him then," cried the Caliph and, turning to Masrur said, "Rise thou and smite his neck." So Masrur drew his sword and struck off his head. Then quoth the Caliph to Nur al-Din Ali, "Ask a boon of me." "O my lord," answered he, "I have no need of the Kingship of Bassorah; my sole desire is to be honoured by serving thee and by seeing thy countenance." "With love and gladness," said the Caliph. Then he sent for the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, and bestowed plentiful favours upon them both and gave them one of his palaces in Baghdad, and assigned stipends and allowances, and made Nur al-Din Ali bin Fazl bin Khakan, one of his cup-companions; and he abode with the Commander of

---

<sup>78</sup> *i. e.* according to my nature, birth, blood, *de race*.

the Faithful enjoying the pleasantest of lives till death overtook him. "Yet (continued Shahrazad) is not his story in any wise more wondrous than the history of the merchant and his children." The King asked "And what was that?" and Shahrazad began to relate the

# *TALE OF GHANIM BIN AYYUB*

## *<sup>79</sup> , THE DISTRAUGHT, THE THRALL O' LOVE*

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore and in years and ages long gone before, there lived in Damascus a merchant among the merchants, a wealthy man who had a son like the moon on the night of his fullness<sup>80</sup> and withal sweet of speech, who was named Ghanim bin 'Ayyúb surnamed the Distracted, the Thrall o' Love. He had also a daughter, own sister to Ghanim, who was called Fitnah, a damsel unique in beauty and loveliness. Their father died and left them abundant wealth, –

---

<sup>79</sup> Our "Job." The English translators of the Bible, who borrowed Luther's system of transliteration (of A.D. 1522), transferred into English the German "j" which has the sound of "i" or "y"; intending us to pronounce Yacob (or Yakob), Yericho, Yimnites, Yob (or Hiob) and Yudah. Tyndall who copied Luther (A.D. 1525-26), preserved the true sound by writing Iacob, Ben Iamin and Iudas. But his successors unfortunately returned to the German; the initial I having from the xiii. century been ornamentally lengthened and bent leftwards became a consonant; the public adopted the vernacular sound of "j" (dg) and hence our language and our literature are disgraced by such barbarisms as "Jehovah" and "Jesus" – Dgehovah and Dgeesus for Yehovah and Yesus. Future generations of school-teachers may remedy the evil; meanwhile we are doomed for the rest of our days to hear Gee-rusalem! Gee-rusalem! etc. Nor is there one word to be said in favour of the corruption except that, like the Protestant mispronunciation of Latin and the Erasmian ill-articulation of Greek, it has become "English," and has lent its little aid in dividing the Britons from the rest of the civilised world.

<sup>80</sup> The moon, I repeat, is masculine in the so-called "Semitic" tongues.

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Thirty-ninth Night,**

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant left his two children abundant wealth and amongst other things an hundred loads<sup>81</sup> of silks and brocades, musk-pods and mother o' pearl; and there was written on every bale, "This is of the packages intended for Baghdad," it having been his purpose to make the journey thither, when Almighty Allah took him to Himself, which was in the time of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. After a while his son took the loads and, bidding farewell to his mother and kindred and townsfolk, went forth with a company of merchants, putting his trust in Allah Almighty, who decreed him safety, so that he arrived without let or stay at Baghdad. There he hired for himself a fair dwelling house which he furnished with carpets and cushions, curtains and hangings; and therein stored his bales and stabled his mules and camels, after which he abode a while resting. Presently the merchants and notables of Baghdad came and saluted him, after which he took a bundle containing ten pieces of costly stuffs, with the prices written on them, and carried it to the merchants' bazar, where they welcomed and saluted him and showed him all honour; and,

---

<sup>81</sup> *i. e.* camel-loads about lbs. 300; and for long journeys lbs. 250.

making him dismount from his beast, seated him in the shop of the Syndic of the market, to whom he delivered the package. He opened it and drawing out the pieces of stuff, sold them for him at a profit of two dinars on every dinar of prime cost. At this Ghanim rejoiced and kept selling his silks and stuffs one after another, and ceased not to do on this wise for a full year. On the first day of the following year he went, as was his wont, to the Exchange which was in the bazar, but found the gate shut; and enquiring the reason was told, "One of the merchants is dead and all the others have gone to follow his bier,<sup>82</sup> and why shouldst thou not win the meed of good deeds by walking with them?"<sup>83</sup> He replied "Yes," and asked for the quarter where the funeral was taking place, and one directed him thereto. So he purified himself by the Wuzu-ablution<sup>84</sup> and repaired with the other merchants to the oratory, where they prayed over the dead, then walked before the bier to the burial-place, and Ghanim, who was a bashful man, followed them being ashamed to leave them. They presently issued from the city, and passed through the tombs until they reached the grave where they found that the deceased's kith and kin had pitched a tent over the tomb and had brought thither lamps and wax-candles. So they buried the body

---

<sup>82</sup> Arab. "Janázah," so called only when carrying a corpse; else Na'ash, Sarír or Tábut: Irán being the large hearse on which chiefs are borne. It is made of plank or stick-work; but there are several varieties (Lane, M. E. chapt. xxviii).

<sup>83</sup> It is meritorious to accompany the funeral cortège of a Moslem even for a few paces.

<sup>84</sup> Otherwise he could not have joined in the prayers.

and sat down while the readers read out and recited the Koran over the grave; and Ghanim sat with them, being overcome with bashfulness and saying to himself "I cannot well go away till they do." They tarried listening to the Koranic perfection till nightfall, when the servants set supper and sweetmeats<sup>85</sup> before them and they ate till they were satisfied; then they washed their hands and again took their places. But Ghanim's mind was preoccupied with his house and goods, being in fear of robbers, and he said to himself, "I am a stranger here and supposed to have money: if I pass the night abroad the thieves will steal my money-bags and my bales to boot." So when he could no longer control his fear he arose and left the assembly, having first asked leave to go about some urgent business; and following the signs of the road he soon came to the city-gate. But it was midnight and he found the doors locked and saw none going or coming nor heard aught but the hounds baying and the wolves howling. At this he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! I was in fear for my property and came back on its account, but now I find the gate shut and I am in mortal fear for my life!" Then he turned back and, looking out for a place where he could sleep till morning, presently found a Santon's tomb, a square of four walls with a date-tree in the central court and a granite gateway. The door was wide open; so he entered and would fain have slept, but sleep came not to him; and terror and a sense of desolation

---

<sup>85</sup> Arab. "Halwá" made of sugar, cream, almonds, etc. That of Maskat is famous throughout the East.

oppressed him, for that he was alone amidst the tombs. So he rose to his feet and, opening the door, looked out and lo! he was ware of a light afar off in the direction of the city-gate; then walking a little way towards it, he saw that it was on the road whereby he had reached the tomb. This made him fear for his life, so he hastily shut the door and climbed to the top of the date-tree where he hid himself in the heart of the fronds. The light came nearer and nearer till it was close to the tomb; then it stopped and he saw three slaves, two bearing a chest and one with a lanthorn, an adze and a basket containing some mortar. When they reached the tomb, one of those who were carrying the case said, "What aileth thee O Sawab?"; and said the other, "What is the matter O Kafur?"<sup>86</sup> Quoth he, "Were we not here at supper-tide and did we not leave the door open?" "Yes," replied the other, "that is true." "See," said Kafur, "now it is shut and barred." "How weak are your wits!" cried the third who bore the adze and his name was Bukhayt,<sup>87</sup> "know ye not that the owners of the gardens use to come out from Baghdad and tend them and, when evening closes upon them, they enter this place and shut the door, for fear lest the wicked blackmen, like ourselves, should catch them and roast 'em and eat 'em."<sup>88</sup> "Thou sayest sooth,"

---

<sup>86</sup> *i. e.* "Camphor" to a negro as we say "Snowball," by the figure antiphrase.

<sup>87</sup> "Little Good Luck," a dim. form of "bakht"=luck, a Persian word naturalized in Egypt.

<sup>88</sup> There are, as I have shown, not a few cannibal tribes in Central Africa and these at times find their way into the slave market.

said the two others, "but by Allah, however that may be, none amongst us is weaker of wits than thou." "If ye do not believe me," said Bukhayt, "let us enter the tomb and I will rouse the rat for you; for I doubt not but that, when he saw the light and us making for the place, he ran up the date-tree and hid there for fear of us." When Ghanim heard this, he said in himself, "O curstest of slaves! May Allah not have thee in His holy keeping for this thy craft and keenness of wit! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! How shall I win free of these blackamoors?" Then said the two who bore the box to him of the adze, "Swarm up the wall and open the gate for us, O Bukhayt, for we are tired of carrying the chest on our necks; and when thou hast opened the gate thou shalt have one of those we catch inside, a fine fat rat which we will fry for thee after such excellent fashion that not a speck of his fat shall be lost." But Bukhayt answered, "I am afraid of somewhat which my weak wits have suggested to me: we should do better to throw the chest over the gateway; for it is our treasure." "If we throw it 'twill break," replied they; and he said, "I fear lest there be robbers within who murder folk and plunder their goods, for evening is their time of entering such places and dividing their spoil." "O thou weak o' wits," said both the bearers of the box, "how could they ever get in here!"<sup>89</sup> Then they set down the chest and climbing over the wall dropped inside and opened the gate, whilst the third slave (he that was called Bukhayt) stood by them

---

<sup>89</sup> *i. e.* After we bar the door.



holding the adze, the lanthorn and the hand-basket containing the mortar. After this they locked the gate and sat down; and presently one of them said, "O my brethren, we are wearied with walking and with lifting up and setting down the chest, and with unlocking and locking the gate; and now 'tis midnight, and we have no breath left to open, a tomb and bury the box: so let us rest here two or three hours, then rise and do the job. Meanwhile each of us shall tell how he came to be castrated and all that befel him from first to last, the better to pass away our time while we take our rest." Thereupon the first, he of the lanthorn and whose name was Bukhayt, said, "I'll tell you my tale." "Say on," replied they; so he began as follows the

# TALE OF THE FIRST EUNUCH BUKHAYT

Know, O my brothers, that when I was a little one, some five years old, I was taken home from my native country by a slave-driver who sold me to a certain Apparitor.<sup>90</sup> My purchaser had a daughter three years old, with whom I was brought up, and they used to make mock of me, letting me play with her and dance for her<sup>91</sup> and sing to her, till I reached the age of twelve and she that of ten; and even then they did not forbid me seeing her. One day I went in to her and found her sitting in an inner room, and she looked as if she had just come out of the bath which was in the house; for she was scented with essences and reek of aromatic woods, and her face shone like the circle of the moon on the fourteenth night. She began to sport with me, and I with her. Now I had just reached the age of puberty; so my prickles stood at point, as it were a huge key. Then she threw me on my back and, mounting astraddle on my breast, fell a-

---

<sup>90</sup> Arab. "Jáwísh" from Turk. Cháwúsh, Chiaoosh, a sergeant, poursuivant, royal messenger. I would suggest that this is the word "Shálísh" or "Jálísh" in Al-Siyúti's History of the Caliphs (p. 501) translated by Carlyle "milites," by Schultens "Sagittarius" and by Jarett "picked troops."

<sup>91</sup> This familiarity with blackamoor slave-boys is common in Egypt and often ends as in the story: Egyptian blood is sufficiently mixed with negro to breed inclination for miscegenation. But here the girl was wickedly neglected by her mother at such an age as ten.

wriggling and a-bucking upon me till she had uncovered my yard. When she saw it standing with head erect, she hent it in hand and began rubbing it upon the lips of her little slit<sup>92</sup> outside her petticoat-trousers. Thereat hot lust stirred in me and I threw my arms round her, while she wound hers about my neck and hugged me to her with all her might, till, before I knew what I did, my pizzle split up her trousers and entered her slit and did away her maidenhead. When I saw this, I ran off and took refuge with one of my comrades. Presently her mother came in to her; and, seeing her in this case, fainted clean away. However she managed the matter advisedly and hid it from the girl's father out of good will to me; nor did they cease to call to me and coax me, till they took me from where I was. After two months had passed by, her mother married her to a young man, a barber who used to shave her papa, and portioned and fitted her out of her own monies; whilst the father knew nothing of what had passed. On the night of consummation they cut the throat of a pigeon-poult and sprinkled the blood on her shift.<sup>93</sup> After a while they

---

<sup>92</sup> Arab. "Farj"; hence a facetious designation of the other sex is "Zawi'l-furuj" (grammatically Zawātu'l-furúj)=habentes rimam, slit ones.

<sup>93</sup> This ancient and venerable practice of inspecting the marriage-sheet is still religiously preserved in most parts of the East; and in old-fashioned Moslem families it is publicly exposed in the Harem to prove that the "domestic calamity" (the daughter) went to her husband a clean maid. Also the general idea is that no blood will impose upon the experts, or jury of matrons, except that of a pigeon-poult which exactly resembles hymeneal blood – when not subjected to the microscope. This belief is universal in Southern Europe and I have heard of it in England. Further details will be given in Night ccxi.

seized me unawares and gelded me; and, when they brought her to her bridegroom, they made me her Agha,<sup>94</sup> her eunuch, to walk before her wheresoever she went, whether to the bath or to her father's house. I abode with her a long time enjoying her beauty and loveliness by way of kissing and clipping and coupling with her,<sup>95</sup> till she died, and her husband and mother and father died also; when they seized me for the Royal Treasury as being the property of an intestate, and I found my way hither, where I became your comrade. This, then, O my brethren, is the cause of my cullions being cut off; and peace be with you! He ceased and his fellow began in these words the

---

<sup>94</sup> "Agha" Turk.=sir, gentleman, is, I have said, politely addressed to a eunuch.

<sup>95</sup> As Bukhayt tells us he lost only his testes, consequently his *erectio et distensio penis* was as that of a boy before puberty and it would last as long as his heart and circulation kept sound. Hence the eunuch who preserves his penis is much prized in the Zenanah where some women prefer him to the entire man, on account of his long performance of the deed of kind. Of this more in a future page.

## TALE OF THE SECOND EUNUCH, KAFUR

Know, O my brothers that, when beginning service as a boy of eight, I used to tell the slave-dealers regularly and exactly one lie every year, so that they fell out with one another, till at last my master lost patience with me and, carrying me down to the market, ordered the brokers to cry, "Who will buy this slave, knowing his blemish and making allowance for it?" He did so and they asked him, "Pray, what may be his blemish?" and he answered, "He telleth me one single lie every year." Now a man that was a merchant came up and said to the broker, "How much do they allow for him with his blemish?" "They allow six hundred dirhams," he replied; and said the other, "Thou shalt have twenty dirhams for thyself." So he arranged between him and the slave-dealer who took the coin from him and the broker carried me to the merchant's house and departed, after receiving his brokerage. The trader clothed me with suitable dress, and I stayed in his service the rest of my twelvemonth, until the new year began happily. It was a blessed season, plenteous in the produce of the earth, and the merchants used to feast every day at the house of some one among them, till it was my master's turn to entertain them in a flower-garden without the city. So he and the other merchants went to the garden, taking with them all that they required of provant and else beside, and sat eating and carousing

and drinking till mid-day, when my master, having need of some matter from his home, said to me, "O slave, mount the she-mule and hie thee to the house and bring from thy mistress such and such a thing and return quickly." I obeyed his bidding and started for the house but, as I drew near it, I began to cry out and shed tears, whereupon all the people of the quarter collected, great and small; and my master's wife and daughters, hearing the noise I was making, opened the door and asked me what was the matter. Said I, "My master was sitting with his friends beneath an old wall, and it fell on one and all of them; and when I saw what had happened to them, I mounted the mule and came hither in haste to tell you." When my master's daughters and wife heard this, they screamed and rent their raiment and beat their faces, whilst the neighbours came around them. Then the wife overturned the furniture of the house, one thing upon another, and tore down the shelves and broke the windows and the lattices and smeared the walls with mud and indigo, saying to me, "Woe to thee, O Kafur! come help me to tear down these cupboards and break up these vessels and this chinaware,<sup>96</sup> and the rest of it." So I went to her and aided her to smash all the shelves in the house with whatever stood upon them, after which I went round about the terrace-roofs and every part of the place, spoiling all I could and leaving no china in the house unbroken till I had laid waste the whole,

---

<sup>96</sup> It is or rather was the custom in Egypt and Syria to range long rows of fine China bowls along the shelves running round the rooms at the height of six or seven feet, and they formed a magnificent cornice. I bought many of them at Damascus till the people, learning their value, asked prohibitive prices.

crying out the while "Well-away! my master!" Then my mistress fared forth bare-faced wearing a head-kerchief and naught else, and her daughters and the children sallied out with her, and said to me, "O Kafur, go thou before us and show us the place where thy master lieth dead, that we may take him from under the fallen wall and lay him on a bier and bear him to the house and give him a fine funeral." So I went forth before them crying out, "Alack, my master!"; and they after me with faces and heads bare and all shrieking, "Alas! Alas for the man!" Now there remained none in the quarter, neither man nor woman, nor epicene, nor youth nor maid, nor child nor old trot, but went with us smiting their faces and weeping bitterly, and I led them leisurely through the whole city. The folk asked them what was the matter, whereupon they told them what they had heard from me, and all exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" Then said one of them, "He was a personage of consequence; so let us go to the Governor and tell him what hath befallen him." When they told the Governor, – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

## Now when it was the Fortieth Night, <sup>97</sup>

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they told the Governor, he rose and mounted and, taking with him labourers, with spades and baskets, went on my track, with many people behind him; and I ran on before them, howling and casting dust on my head and beating my face, followed by my mistress and her children keening for the dead. But I got ahead of them and entered the garden before them, and when my master saw me in this state, I smiting my face and saying, "Well-away! my mistress Alas! Alas! Alas! who is left to take pity on me, now that my mistress is gone? Would I had been a sacrifice for her!", he stood aghast and his colour waxed yellow and he said to me, "What aileth thee O Kafur! What *is* the matter?" "O my lord," I replied, "when thou sentest me to the house, I found that the saloon-wall had given way and had fallen like a layer upon my mistress and her children!" "And did not thy mistress escape?" "No, by Allah, O my master; not one of them was saved; the first to die was my mistress, thine elder daughter!" "And did not my younger daughter escape?"; "No, she did not!" "And what

---

<sup>97</sup> The tale is interesting as well as amusing, excellently describing the extravagances still practised in middle-class Moslem families on the death of the pater familias. I must again note that Arab women are much more unwilling to expose the back of the head covered by the "Tarhah" (head-veil) than the face, which is hidden by the "Burka" or nose-bag.



became of the mare-mule I use to ride, is she safe?" "No, by Allah, O my master, the house-walls and the stable-walls buried every living thing that was within doors, even to the sheep and geese and poultry, so that they all became a heap of flesh and the dogs and cats are eating them and not one of them is left alive." "And hath not thy master, my elder son, escaped?" "No, by Allah! not one of them was saved, and now there is naught left of house or household, nor even a sign of them: and, as for the sheep and geese and hens, the cats and dogs have devoured them." When my master heard this the light became night before his sight; his wits were dazed and he so lost command of his senses that he could not stand firm on his feet: he was as one struck with a sudden palsy and his back was like to break. Then he rent his raiment and plucked out his beard and, casting his turband from off his head, buffeted his face till the blood ran down and he cried aloud, "Alas, my children! Alas, my wife! Alas, my calamity! To whom ever befel that which hath befallen me?" The merchants, his friends, also cried aloud at his crying and wept for his weeping and tore their clothes, being moved to pity of his case; and so my master went out of the garden, smiting his face with such violence that from excess of pain he staggered like one drunken with wine. As he and the merchants came forth from the garden-gate, behold, they saw a great cloud of dust and heard a loud noise of crying and lamentation; so they looked and lo! it was the Governor with his attendants and the townsfolk, a world of people, who had come out to look on,

and my master's family following them, all screaming and crying aloud and weeping exceeding sore weeping. The first to address my owner were his wife and children; and when he saw them he was confounded and laughed<sup>98</sup> and said to them, "How is it with all of you and what befel you in the house and what hath come to pass to you?" When they saw him they exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah for thy preservation!" and threw themselves upon him and his children hung about him crying, "Alack, our father! Thanks to Allah for thy safety, O our father!" And his wife said to him, "Art thou indeed well? Laud to Allah who hath shown us thy face in safety!" And indeed she was confounded and her reason fled when she saw him, and she asked, "O, my lord, how didst thou escape, thou and thy friends the merchants?"; and he answered her, "And how fared it with thee in the house?" Quoth they, "We were all well, whole and healthy, nor hath aught of evil befallen us in the house, save that thy slave Kafur came to us, bareheaded with torn garments and howling: – Alas, the master! Alas the master! So we asked him: – What tidings, O Kafur? and he answered: – A wall of the garden hath fallen on my master and his friends the merchants, and they are all crushed and dead!" "By Allah," said my master, "he came to me but now howling: – Alas, my mistress! Alas, the children of the mistress!, and said: – My mistress and her children are all dead, every one of them!" Then he looked round and seeing me with my turband rent in rags round my neck, howling and weeping with exceeding weeping

---

<sup>98</sup> The usual hysterical laughter of this nervous race.

and throwing dust upon my head, he cried out at me. So I came to him and he said, "Woe to thee, O ill-omened slave! O whoreson knave! O thou damned breed! What mischief thou hast wrought? By Allah! I will flog thy skin from thy flesh and cut thy flesh from thy bones!" I rejoined, "By Allah, thou canst do nothing of the kind with me, O my lord, for thou boughtest me with my blemish; and there are honest men to bear witness against thee that thou didst so accepting the condition, and that thou knewest of my fault which is to tell one lie every year. Now this is only a half-lie, but by the end of the year I will tell the other half, then will the lie stand whole and complete." "O dog, son of a dog!", cried my master, "O most accursed of slaves, is this all of it but a half-lie? Verily if it be a half-lie 'tis a whole calamity! Get thee from me, thou art free in the face of Allah!" "By Allah," rejoined I, "if thou free me, I will not free thee till my year is completed and I have told thee the half-lie which is left. When this is done, go down with me to the slave-market and sell me as thou boughtest me to whoso will buy me with my blemish; but thou shalt not manumit me, for I have no handicraft whereby to gain my living;<sup>99</sup> and this my demand is a matter of law which the doctors have laid down in the Chapter of Emancipation."<sup>100</sup> While we were at these

---

<sup>99</sup> Here the slave refuses to be set free and starve. For a master so to do without ample reason is held disgraceful. I well remember the weeping and wailing throughout Sind when an order from Sir Charles Napier set free the negroes whom British philanthropy thus doomed to endure if not to die of hunger.

<sup>100</sup> Manumission, which is founded upon Roman law, is an extensive subject discussed in the Hidāyah and other canonical works. The slave here lays down the law

words, up came the crowd of people, and the neighbours of the quarter, men, women and children, together with the Governor and his suite offering condolence. So my master and the other merchants went up to him and informed him of the adventure, and how this was but a half-lie, at which all wondered, deeming it a whole lie and a big one. And they cursed me and reviled me, while I stood laughing and grinning at them, till at last I asked, "How shall my master slay me when he bought me with this my blemish?" Then my master returned home and found his house in ruins, and it was I who had laid waste the greater part of it,<sup>101</sup> having broken things which were worth much money, as also had done his wife, who said to him, "'Twas Kafur who broke the vessels and chinaware." Thereupon his rage redoubled and he struck hand upon hand exclaiming, "By Allah! in my life never saw I a whoreson like this slave; and he saith this is but a half-lie! How, then, if he had told me a whole lie? He would ruin a city, aye or even two." Then in his fury he went to the Governor, and they gave me a neat thing in the bastinado-line and made me eat stick till I was lost to the world and a fainting-fit came on me; and, whilst I was yet senseless, they brought the barber who docked me and gelded me<sup>102</sup> and cauterised the wound. When

---

incorrectly, but his claim shows his truly "nigger" impudence.

<sup>101</sup> This is quite true to nature. The most remarkable thing in the wild central African is his enormous development of "destructiveness." At Zanzibar I never saw a slave break a glass or plate without a grin or a chuckle of satisfaction.

<sup>102</sup> Arab. "Khassá-ni"; Khusyatáni (vulg.) being the testicles, also called "bayzatán" (the two eggs) a *double entendre* which has given rise to many tales. For

I revived I found myself a clean eunuch with nothing left, and my master said to me, "Even as thou hast burned my heart for the things I held dearest, so have I burnt thy heart for that of thy members whereby thou settest most store!" Then he took me and sold me at a profit, for that I was become an eunuch. And I ceased not bringing trouble upon all, wherever I was sold, and was shifted from lord to lord and from notable to notable, being sold and being bought, till I entered the palace of the Commander of the Faithful. But now my spirit is broken and my tricks are gone from me, so – alas! – are my ballocks. When the two slaves heard his history, they laughed at him and chaffed him and said, "Truly thou art skite<sup>103</sup> and skite-son! Thou liedest an odious lie." Then quoth they to the third slave, "Tell us thy tale." "O sons of my uncle," quoth he, "all that ye have said is idle: I will tell you the cause of my losing my testicles, and indeed I deserved to lose even more, for I Futtered both my mistress and my master's eldest son and heir: but my story is a long one and this is not

---

instance in the witty Persian book "Dozd o Kazi" (The Thief and the Judge) a footpad strips the man of learning and offers to return his clothes if he can ask him a puzzle in law or religion. The Kazi (in folk-lore mostly a fool) fails, and his wife bids him ask the man to supper for a trial of wits on the same condition. She begins with compliments and ends by producing five eggs which she would have him distribute equally amongst the three; and, when he is perplexed, she gives one to each of the men taking three for herself. Whereupon the "Dozd" wends his way, having lost his booty as his extreme stupidity deserved. In the text the eunuch, Kafur, is made a "Sandali" or smooth-shaven, so that he was of no use to women.

<sup>103</sup> Arab. "Khara," the lowest possible word: Yá Khara! is the commonest of insults, used also by modest women. I have heard one say it to her son.

the time to tell it; for the dawn, O my cousins, draweth near and if morning come upon us with this chest still unburied, we shall get into sore disgrace and our lives will pay for it. So up with you and open the door and, when we get back to the palace, I will tell you my story and the cause of my losing my precious stones." Then he swarmed up and dropped down from the wall inside and opened the door, so they entered and, setting down the lantern, dug between four tombs a hole as long as the chest and of the same breadth. Kafur plied the spade and Sawab removed the earth by baskets-full till they reached the depth of the stature of a man;<sup>104</sup> when they laid the chest in the hole and threw back the earth over it: then they went forth and shutting the door disappeared from Ghanim's eyes. When all was quiet and he felt sure that he was left alone in the place, his thought was busied about what the chest contained and he said to himself, "Would that I knew the contents of that box!" However, he waited till day broke, when morning shone and showed her sheen: whereupon he came down from the date-tree and scooped away the earth with his hands, till the box was laid bare and disengaged from the ground. Then he took a large stone and hammered at the lock till he broke it and, opening the lid, beheld a young lady, a model of beauty and loveliness, clad in the richest of garments and jewels of gold and such necklaces of precious stones that, were the Sultan's country evened with them, it would not pay

---

<sup>104</sup> Arab. "Kámah," a measure of length, a fathom, also called "Bá'a." Both are omitted in that sadly superficial book, Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, App. B.

their price. She had been drugged with Bhang, but her bosom, rising and falling, showed that her breath had not departed. When Ghanim saw her, he knew that some one had played her false and hocused her; so he pulled her out of the chest and laid her on the ground with her face upwards. As soon as she smelt the breeze and the air entered her nostrils, mouth and lungs, she sneezed and choked and coughed; when there fell from out her throat a pill of Cretan Bhang, had an elephant smelt it he would have slept from night to night. Then she opened her eyes and glancing around said, in sweet voice and gracious words, "Woe to thee O wind! there is naught in thee to satisfy the thirsty, nor aught to gratify one whose thirst is satisfied! Where is Zahr al-Bostan?" But no one answered her, so she turned her and cried out, "Ho Sabíhah! Shajarat al-Durr! Núr al-Hudá! Najmat al-Subh! be ye awake? Shahwah, Nuzhah, Halwá, Zarífah, out on you, speak!"<sup>105</sup> But no one answered; so she looked all around and said, "Woe's me! have they entombed me in the tombs? O Thou who knowest what man's thought enwombs and who givest compensation on the Day of Doom, who can have brought me from amid hanging screens and curtains veiling the Harím-rooms and set me down between four tombs?" All this while Ghanim was standing by: then he said to her, "O my lady, here are neither screened rooms nor palace-Haríms nor yet tombs; only the slave henceforth devoted

---

<sup>105</sup> Names of her slave-girls which mean (in order), Garden-bloom, Dawn (or Beautiful), Tree o' Pearl (P. N. of Saladin's wife), Light of (right) Direction, Star o' the Morn, Lewdness (=Shahwah, I suppose this is a chaff), Delight, Sweetmeat and Miss Pretty.

to thy love, Ghanim bin Ayyub, sent to thee by the Omniscient One above, that all thy troubles He may remove and win for thee every wish that doth behove!" Then he held his peace. She was reassured by his words and cried, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!"; then she turned to Ghanim and, placing her hands before her face, said to him in the sweetest speech, "O blessed youth, who brought me hither? See, I am now come to myself." "O my lady," he replied, "three slave-eunuchs came here bearing this chest;" and related to her the whole of what had befallen him, and how evening having closed upon him had proved the cause of her preservation, otherwise she had died smothered.<sup>106</sup> Then he asked her who she was and what was her story, and she answered, "O youth, thanks be to Allah who hath cast me into the hands of the like of thee! But now rise and put me back into the box; then fare forth upon the road and hire the first camel-driver or muleteer thou findest to carry it to thy house. When I am there, all will be well and I will tell thee my tale and acquaint thee with my adventures, and great shall be thy gain by means of me." At this he rejoiced and went outside the tomb. The day was now dazzling bright and the firmament shone with light and the folk had begun to circulate; so he hired a man with a mule and, bringing him to the tomb, lifted the chest wherein he had put the damsel and set it on the mule. Her love now engrossed his heart

---

<sup>106</sup> This mode of disposing of a rival was very common in Harems. But it had its difficulties and on the whole the river was (and is) preferred.



and he fared homeward with her rejoicing, for that she was a girl worth ten thousand gold pieces and her raiment and ornaments would fetch a mint of money. As soon as he arrived at his house he carried in the chest and opening it – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Forty-first Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ghanim son of Ayyub arrived with the chest at his house, he opened it and took out the young lady, who looked about her and, seeing that the place was handsome, spread with carpets and dight with cheerful colours and other deckings; and noting the stuffs up-piled and packed bales and other else than that, knew that he was a substantial merchant and a man of much money. Thereupon she uncovered her face and looked at him, and lo! he was a fair youth; so when she saw him she loved him and said, "O my lord, bring us something to eat." "On my head and mine eyes!" replied he; and, going down to the bazar, bought a roasted lamb and a dish of sweetmeats and with these dry fruits and wax-candles, besides wine and whatsoever was required of drinking materials, not forgetting perfumes. With all this gear he returned to the house; and when the damsel saw him she laughed and kissed him and clasped his neck. Then she began caressing him, which made his love wax hotter till it got the mastery of his heart. They ate and drank and each had

conceived the fondest affection; for indeed the two were one in age and one in loveliness; and when night came on Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall of Love, rose and lit the wax candles and lamps till the place blazed with light;<sup>107</sup> after which he produced the wine-service and spread the table. Then both sat down again, he and she, and he kept filling and giving her to drink, and she kept filling and giving him to drink, and they played and toyed and laughed and recited verses; whilst their joy increased and they clove in closer love each to each (glory be to the Uniter of Hearts!). They ceased not to carouse after this fashion till near upon dawn when drowsiness overcame them and they slept where they were, apart each from other, till the morning.<sup>108</sup> Then Ghanim arose and going to the market, bought all they required of meat and vegetables and wine and what not, and brought them to the house; whereupon both sat down to eat and ate their sufficiency, when he set on wine. They drank and each played with each, till their cheeks flushed red and their eyes took a darker hue and Ghanim's soul longed to kiss the girl and to lie with her and he said, "O my lady, grant me one kiss of that dear mouth: perchance 'twill quench the fire of my heart." "O Ghanim," replied she, "wait till I am drunk and dead to the world; then steal a kiss of me, secretly and on such wise that I

---

<sup>107</sup> An Eastern dislikes nothing more than drinking in a dim dingy place: the brightest lights seem to add to his "drinkitite."

<sup>108</sup> He did not sleep with her because he suspected some palace-mystery which suggested prudence, she also had her reasons.

may not know thou hast kissed me." Then she rose and taking off her upper dress sat in a thin shift of fine linen and a silken head-kerchief.<sup>109</sup> At this passion inflamed Ghanim and he said to her, "O my lady, wilt thou not vouchsafe me what I asked of thee?" "By Allah," she replied, "that may not be thine, for there is written upon my trouser-string<sup>110</sup> a hard word!" Thereupon Ghanim's heart sank and desire grew on him as its object offered difficulties; and he improvised these verses: —

I asked the author of mine ills ❀ To heal the wound with one sweet kiss:

No! No! she cried,<sup>111</sup> for ever no! ❀ But I, soft whispering, urged yes:

Quoth she, Then take it by my leave, ❀ When smiles shall pardon thine amiss:

By force, cried I? Nay, she replied ❀ With love and gladness eke I wis.

Now ask me not what next occurred ❀ Seek grace of God and whist of this!

Deem what thou wilt of us, for love ❀ By calumnies the sweeter is:

Nor after this care I one jot ❀ Whether my foe be known or not.

---

<sup>109</sup> This is called in Egypt "Aslah" (Lane M. E. chapt. i.).

<sup>110</sup> It would be a broad ribbon-like band upon which the letters could be worked.

<sup>111</sup> In the Arab. "*he* cried." These "Yes, Yes! and No! No!" trifles are very common amongst the Arabs.

Then his affection increased and love-fires rose hotter in his heart, while she refused herself to him saying, "Thou canst not possess me." They ceased not to make love and enjoy their wine and wassail, whilst Ghanim was drowned in the sea of love and longing; but she redoubled in coyness and cruelty till the night brought on the darkness and let fall on them the skirts of sleep. Thereupon Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and wax-candles, and refreshed the room and removed the table; then he took her feet and kissed them and, finding them like fresh cream, pressed his face<sup>112</sup> on them and said to her, "O my lady, take pity on one thy love hath ta'en and thine eyes hath slain; for indeed I were heart-whole but for thy bane!" And he wept somewhat. "O my lord, and light of my eyes," quoth she, "by Allah, I love thee in very sooth and I trust to thy truth, but I know that I may not be thine." "And what is the obstacle?" asked he; when she answered, "To-night I will tell thee my tale, that thou mayst accept my excuse." Then she threw herself upon him and winding her arms like a necklace about his neck, kissed him and caressed him and promised him her favours; and they ceased not playing and laughing till love gat the firmest hold upon both their hearts. And so it continued a whole month, both passing the night on a single carpet-bed, but whenever he would enjoy her, she put him off; whilst mutual love increased upon them and each could hardly abstain from other.

---

<sup>112</sup> Arab. "Maragha" lit. rubbed his face on them like a fawning dog. Ghanim is another "softy" lover, a favourite character in Arab tales; and by way of contrast, the girl is masterful enough.

One night, as he lay by her side, and both were warm with wine, Ghanim passed his hand over her breasts and stroked them; then he slipped it down to her waist as far as her navel. She awoke and, sitting up, put her hand to her trousers and finding them fast tied, once more fell asleep. Presently, he again felt her and sliding his hand down to her trouser-string, began pulling at it, whereupon she awoke and sat upright. Ghanim also sat up by her side and she asked him, "What dost thou want?" "I want to lie with thee," he answered, "and that we may deal openly and frankly with each other." Quoth she, "I must now declare to thee my case, that thou mayst know my quality; then will my secret be disclosed to thee and my excuse become manifest to thee." Quoth he, "So be it!" Thereat she opened the skirt of her shift and, taking up her trouser-string, said to him, "O my lord, read what is worked on the flat of this string: " so he took it in hand, and saw these words broidered on it in gold, "I AM THINE, AND THOU ART MINE, O COUSIN OF THE APOSTLE!"<sup>113</sup> When he read this, he withdrew his hand and said to her, "Tell me who thou art!" "So be it," answered she; "know that I am one of the concubines of the Commander of the Faithful, and my name is Kut al-Kulub – the Food of Hearts. I was brought up in his palace and, when I grew to woman's estate, he looked on me and, noting what share of beauty and loveliness the Creator had given me, loved me with exceeding love, and assigned me

---

<sup>113</sup> Because the Abbaside Caliphs descend from Al-Abbas paternal uncle of Mohammed. The text means more explicitly, "O descendant of the Prophet's uncle!"

a separate apartment, and gave me ten slave-girls to wait on me and all these ornaments thou seest me wearing. On a certain day he set out for one of his provinces, and the Lady Zubaydah came to one of the slave-girls in my service and said to her: – I have something to require of thee. What is it, O my lady? asked she and the Caliph's wife answered: – When thy mistress Kut al-Kulub is asleep, put this piece of Bhang into her nostrils or drop it into her drink, and thou shalt have of me as much money as will satisfy thee. With love and gladness; replied the girl and took the Bhang from her, being a glad woman because of the money and because aforetime she had been one of Zubaydah's slaves. So she put the Bhang in my drink, and when it was night I drank, and the drug had no sooner settled in my stomach than I fell to the ground, my head touching my feet, and knew naught of my life but that I was in another world. When her device succeeded, she bade put me in this chest, and secretly brought in the slaves and the doorkeepers and bribed them; and, on the night when thou wast perched upon the date-tree, she sent the blacks to do with me as thou sawest. So my delivery was at thy hands, and thou broughtest me to this house and hast entreated me honourably and with thy kindest. This is my story, and I wot not what is become of the Caliph during my absence. Know then my condition and divulge not my case." When Ghanim heard her words and knew that she was a concubine of the Caliph, he drew back, for awe of the Caliphate beset him, and sat apart from her in one of the corners of the place, blaming himself and brooding

over his affair and patiencing his heart bewildered for love of one he could not possess. Then he wept for excess of longing, and plained him of Fortune and her injuries, and the world and its enmities (and praise be to Him who causeth generous hearts to be troubled with love and the beloved, and who endoweth not the minds of the mean and miserly with so much of it as eveneth a grain-weight!). So he began repeating: —

The lover's heart for his beloved must meet ❀ Sad pain, and from her charms bear sore defeat:

What is Loves taste? They asked and answered I, ❀ Sweet is the taste but ah! 'tis bitter-sweet.

Thereupon Kut al-Kulub arose and took him to her bosom and kissed him; for the love of him was firm fixed in her heart, so that she disclosed to him her secret and all the affection she felt; and, throwing her arms round Ghanim's neck like a collar of pearls, kissed him again and yet again. But he held off from her in awe of the Caliph. Then they talked together a long while (and indeed both were drowned in the sea of their mutual love); and, as the day broke, Ghanim rose and donned his clothes and going to the bazar, as was his wont, took what the occasion required and returned home. He found her weeping; but when she saw him she checked herself and, smiling through her tears, said, "Thou hast desolated me, O beloved of my heart. By Allah, this hour of

absence hath been to me like a year!<sup>114</sup> I have explained to thee my condition in the excess of my eager love for thee; so come now near me, and forget the past and have thy will of me." But he interrupted her crying, "I seek refuge with Allah! This thing may never be. How shall the dog sit in the lion's stead? What is the lord's is unlawful to the slave!" So he withdrew from her, and sat down on a corner of the mat. Her passion for him increased with his forbearance; so she seated herself by his side and caroused and played with him, till the two were flushed with wine, and she was mad for her own dishonour. Then she sang these verses: —

The lover's heart is like to break in twain: ❀ Till when these coy denials ah! till when?

O thou who fliest me sans fault of mine, ❀ Gazelles are wont at times prove tame to men:

Absence, aversion, distance and disdain, ❀ How shall young lover all these ills sustain?

Thereupon Ghanim wept and she wept at his weeping, and they ceased not drinking till nightfall, when he rose and spread two beds, each in its place. "For whom is this second bed?" asked she, and he answered her, "One is for me and the other is for thee: from this night forth we must not sleep save thus, for that which is the lord's is unlawful to the thrall." "O my master!" cried she, "let us have done with this, for all things come to pass by Fate and

---

<sup>114</sup> The most terrible part of a *belle passion* in the East is that the beloved will not allow her lover leave of absence for an hour.



Fortune." But he refused, and the fire was lighted in her heart and, as her longing waxed fiercer, she clung to him and cried, "By Allah, we will not sleep save side by side!" "Allah forefend!" he replied and prevailed against her and lay apart till the morning, when love and longing redoubled on her and distraction and eager thirst of passion. They abode after this fashion three full-told months, which were long and longsome indeed, and every time she made advances to him, he would refuse himself and say, "Whatever belongeth to the master is unlawful to the man." Now when time waxed tiresome and tedious to her and anguish and distress grew on her, she burst out from her oppressed heart with these verses: —

How long, rare beauty! wilt do wrong to me? ❀ Who was it bade thee not belong to me?

With outer charms thou weddest inner grace ❀ Comprising every point of piquancy:

Passion thou hast infused in every heart, ❀ From eyelids driven sleep by deputy:

Erst was (I wot) the spray made thin of leaf ❀ O Cassia-spray! Unlief thy sin I see:<sup>115</sup>

The hart erst hunted I: how is't I spy ❀ The hunter hunted (fair my hart!) by thee?

Wondrous still I tell thee aye that I ❀ Am trapped while

---

<sup>115</sup> It is hard to preserve these wretched puns. In the original we have "O spray" (or branch) of capparish-shrub (*arāki*) which has been thinned of leaf and fruit (*tujna*, i. e., whose fruit, the hymen, has been plucked before and not by me) I see thee (*arāka*) against me sinning (*tajnī*).

never up to trap thou be!

Ne'er grant my prayer! For if I grudge thyself ❀ To thee, I  
grudge my *me* more jealously;

And cry so long as life belong to me, ❀ Rare beauty how,  
how long this wrong to me?

They abode in this state a long time, and fear kept Ghanim aloof from her. So far concerning these two; but as regards the Lady Zubaydah, when, in the Caliph's absence she had done this deed by Kut al-Kulub she became perplexed, saying to herself, "What shall I tell my cousin when he comes back and asks for her? What possible answer can I make to him?" Then she called an old woman, who was about her and discovered her secret to her saying, "How shall I act seeing that Kut al-Kulub died by such untimely death?" "O my lady," quoth the old crone, "the time of the Caliph's return is near; so do thou send for a carpenter and bid him make thee a figure of wood in the form of a corpse. We will dig a grave for it midmost the palace and there bury it: then do thou build an oratory over it and set therein lighted candles and lamps, and order each and every in the palace to be clad in black.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore command thy handmaids and eunuchs as soon as they know of the Caliph's returning from his journey, to

---

<sup>116</sup> Apparently the writer forgets that the Abbaside banners and dress were black, originally a badge of mourning for the Imám Ibrahim bin Mohammed put to death by the Ommiade Caliph Al-Marwán. The modern Egyptian mourning, like the old Persian, is indigo-blue of the darkest; but, as before noted, the custom is by no means universal.

spread straw over the vestibule-floors and, when the Commander of the Faithful enters and asks what is the matter, let them say: – Kut al-Kulub is dead, and may Allah abundantly compensate thee for the loss of her!<sup>117</sup>; and, for the high esteem in which she was held of our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace. When he hears this he will weep and it shall be grievous to him; then will he cause perlections of the Koran to be made for her and he will watch by night at her tomb. Should he say to himself: – Verily Zubaydah, the daughter of my uncle, hath compassed in her jealousy the death of Kut al-Kulub; or, if love-longing overcome him and he bid her be taken out of her tomb, fear thou not; for when they dig down and come to the image in human shape he will see it shrouded in costly grave-clothes; and, if he wish to take off the winding-sheet that he may look upon her, do thou forbid him or let some other forbid him, saying: – The sight of her nakedness is unlawful. The fear of the world to come will restrain him and he will believe that she is dead and will restore the figure to its place and thank thee for thy doings; and thus thou shalt escape, please Almighty Allah, from this slough of despond." When the Lady Zubaydah heard her words, she commended the counsel and gave her a dress of honour and a large sum of money, ordering her to do all she had said. So the old woman set about the business forthright and bade the carpenter make her the aforesaid image; and, as soon as it was finished, she brought it to the lady Zubaydah, who shrouded it and buried

---

<sup>117</sup> Koran, chapt. iv. In the East as elsewhere the Devil quotes Scripture.

it and built a sepulchre over it, wherein they lighted candles and lamps, and laid down carpets about the tomb. Moreover she put on black and she spread abroad in the Harim that Kut al-Kulub was dead. After a time the Caliph returned from his journey and went up to the palace, thinking only of Kut al-Kulub. He saw all the pages and eunuchs and handmaids habited in black, at which his heart fluttered with extreme fear; and, when he went in to the Lady Zubaydah, he found her also garbed in black. So he asked the cause of this and they gave him tidings of the death of Kut al-Kulub, whereon he fell a-swooning. As soon as he came to himself, he asked for her tomb, and the Lady Zubaydah said to him, "Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that for especial honour I have buried her in my own palace." Then he repaired in his travelling-garb<sup>118</sup> to the tomb that he might wail over her, and found the carpets spread and the candles and lamps lighted. When he saw this, he thanked Zubaydah for her good deed and abode perplexed, halting between belief and unbelief till at last suspicion overcame him and he gave order to open the grave and take out the body. When he saw the shroud and would have removed it to look upon her, the fear of Allah Almighty restrained him, and the old woman (taking advantage of the delay) said, "Restore her to her place." Then he sent at once for Fakirs and Koran-readers, and caused perlections to be made over her tomb and sat by the side of the grave, weeping till he

---

<sup>118</sup> A servant returning from a journey shows his master due honour by appearing before him in travelling suit and uncleaned.

fainted; and he continued to frequent the tomb and sit there for a whole month, – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

## **Now when it was the Forty-second Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph ceased not to frequent the tomb for the period of a whole month, at the end of which time it so happened one day that he entered the Serraglio, after dismissing the Emirs and Wazirs, and lay down and slept awhile; and there sat at his head a slave-girl fanning him, and at his feet a second rubbing and shampooing them. Presently he awoke and, opening his eyes, shut them again and heard the handmaid at his head saying to her who was at his feet, "A nice business this, O Khayzarán!" and the other answered her "Well, O Kazíb al-Bán?"<sup>119</sup> "Verily" said the first, "our lord knoweth naught of what hath happened and sitteth waking and watching by a tomb wherein is only a log of wood carved by the carpenter's art." "And Kut al-Kulub," quoth the other, "what hath befallen her?" She replied, "Know that the Lady Zubaydah sent a pellet of Bhang by one of the slave-women who was bribed to drug her; and when sleep overpowered her she let put her in a chest, and ordered Sawab and Kafur and Bukhayt

---

<sup>119</sup> The first name means "Rattan"; the second "Willow-wand," from the "Bán" or "Khiláf" the Egyptian willow (*Salix Ægyptiaca* Linn.) vulgarly called "Safsáf." Forskal holds the "Bán" to be a different variety.

to throw her amongst the tombs." "What dost thou say, O Kazíb al-Bán;" asked Khayzarán, "is not the lady Kut al-Kulub dead?" "Nay, by Allah!" she answered "and long may her youth be saved from death! but I have heard the Lady Zubaydah say that she is in the house of a young merchant named Ghanim bin Ayyub of Damascus, hight the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love; and she hath been with him these four months, whilst our lord is weeping and watching by night at a tomb wherein is no corpse." They kept on talking this sort of talk, and the Caliph gave ear to their words; and, by the time they had ceased speaking, he knew right well that the tomb was a feint and a fraud, and that Kut al-Kulub had been in Ghanim's house for four months. Whereupon he was angered with exceeding anger and rising up, he summoned the Emirs of his state; and his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmaki came also and kissed the ground between his hands. The Caliph said to him in fury; "Go down, O Ja'afar, with a party of armed men and ask for the house of Ghanim son of Ayyub: fall upon it and spoil it and bring him to me with my slave-girl, Kut al-Kulub, for there is no help but that I punish him!" "To hear is to obey," said Ja'afar; and setting out with the Governor and the guards and a world of people, repaired to Ghanim's house. Now about that time the youth happened to have brought back a pot of dressed meat and was about to put forth his hand to eat of it, he and Kut al-Kulub, when the lady, happening to look out saw calamity surrounding the house on every side; for the Wazir and the Governor, the night-guard and the Mamelukes with swords

drawn had girt it as the white of the eye girdeth the black. At this she knew that tidings of her had reached the Caliph, her lord; and she made sure of ruin, and her colour paled and her fair features changed and her favour faded. Then she turned to Ghanim and said to him, "O my love? fly for thy life!" "What shall I do," asked he, "and whither shall I go, seeing that my money and means of maintenance are all in this house?"; and she answered, "Delay not lest thou be slain and lose life as well as wealth." "O my loved one and light of mine eyes!" he cried, "How shall I do to get away when they have surrounded the house?" Quoth she, "Fear not;" and, stripping off his fine clothes, dressed him in ragged old garments, after which she took the pot and, putting in it bits of broken bread and a saucer of meat,<sup>120</sup> placed the whole in a basket and setting it upon his head said, "Go out in this guise and fear not for me who wotteth right well what thing is in my hand for the Caliph."<sup>121</sup> So he went out amongst them, bearing the basket with its contents, and the Protector vouchsafed him His protection and he escaped the snares and perils that beset him, by the blessing of his good conscience and pure conduct. Meanwhile Ja'afar dismounted and entering the house, saw Kut al-Kulub who had dressed and decked herself in splendid raiments and ornaments and filled a chest with gold and jewellery and precious stones and rarities and what else was light

---

<sup>120</sup> Arab. "Ta'ám," which has many meanings: in mod. parlance it would signify millet, holcus-seed.

<sup>121</sup> *i. e.* "I well know how to deal with him."

to bear and of value rare. When she saw Ja'afar come in, she rose and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O my lord, the Reed hath written of old the rede which Allah decreed!"<sup>122</sup> "By Allah, O my lady," answered Ja'afar, "he gave me an order to seize Ghanim son of Ayyub;" and she rejoined, "O my lord, he made ready his goods and set out therewith for Damascus and I know nothing more of him; but I desire thee take charge of this chest and deliver it to me in the Harim of the Prince of the Faithful." "Hearing and obedience," said Ja'afar, and bade his men bear it away to the head-quarters of the Caliphate together with Kut al-Kulub, commanding them to entreat her with honour as one in high esteem. They did his bidding after they had wrecked and plundered Ghanim's house. Then Ja'afar went in to the Caliph and told him all that had happened, and he ordered Kut al-Kulub to be lodged in a dark chamber and appointed an old woman to serve her, feeling convinced that Ghanim had debauched her and slept with her. Then he wrote a mandate to the Emir Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, his viceroy in Damascus, to this effect: – "The instant thou shalt receive this our letter, seize upon Ghanim bin Ayyub and send him to us." When the missive came to the viceroy, he kissed it and laid it on his head; then he let proclaim in the bazars, "Whoso is desirous to plunder, away with him to the house of Ghanim son of Ayyub."<sup>123</sup> So they flocked thither,

---

<sup>122</sup> The Pen (title of the Koranic chapt. lxviii.) and the Preserved Tablet (before explained).

<sup>123</sup> These plunderings were sanctioned by custom. But a few years ago, when the



when they found that Ghanim's mother and sister had built him a tomb<sup>124</sup> in the midst of the house and sat by it weeping for him; whereupon they seized the two without telling them the cause and, after spoiling the house, carried them before the viceroy. He questioned them concerning Ghanim and both replied, "For a year or more we have had no news of him." So they restored them to their place. Thus far concerning them; but as regards Ghanim, when he saw his wealth spoiled and his ruin utterest he wept over himself till his heart well-nigh brake. Then he fared on at random till the last of the day, and hunger grew hard on him and walking wearied him. So coming to a village he entered a mosque<sup>125</sup> where he sat down upon a mat and propped his back against the wall; but presently he sank to the ground in his extremity of famine and fatigue. There he lay till dawn, his heart fluttering for want of food; and, owing to his sweating, the lice<sup>126</sup> coursed over his skin; his breath waxed fetid and his

---

Turkish soldiers mutinied about arrears of pay (often delayed for years) the governing Páshá would set fire to the town and allow the men to loot what they pleased during a stated time. Rochet (*soi-disant* D'Héricourt) amusingly describes this manœuvre of the Turkish Governor of Al-Hodaydah in the last generation (Pilgrimage iii. 381).

<sup>124</sup> Another cenotaph whose use was to enable women to indulge in their pet pastime of weeping and wailing in company.

<sup>125</sup> The lodging of pauper travellers, as the chapel in Iceland is of the wealthy. I have often taken benefit of the mosque, but as a rule it is unpleasant, the matting being not only torn but over-populous. Juvenal seems to allude to the Jewish Synagogue similarly used: – "in quâ te quæro proseuchâ"? (iii. 296) and in Acts iii. we find the lame, blind and impotent in the Temple-porch.

<sup>126</sup> This foul sort of vermin is supposed to be bred by perspiration. It is an epoch in

whole condition was changed. When the villagers came to pray the dawn-prayer, they found him prostrate, ailing, hunger-lean, yet showing evident signs of former affluence. As soon as prayers were over, they drew near him; and, understanding that he was starved with hunger and cold, they gave him an old robe with ragged sleeves and said to him, "O stranger, whence art thou and what sickness is upon thee?" He opened his eyes and wept but returned no answer; whereupon one of them, who saw that he was starving, brought him a saucer of honey and two barley scones. He ate a little and they sat with him till sun-rise, when they went to their work. He abode with them in this state for a month, whilst sickness and weakness grew upon him; and they wept for him and, pitying his condition, took counsel with one another upon his case and agreed to forward him to the hospital in Baghdad.<sup>127</sup> Meanwhile behold, two beggar-women, who were none other than Ghanim's mother and sister,<sup>128</sup> came into the mosque and, when he saw them, he gave them the bread that was at his head; and they slept by his side that night but he knew them not. Next day the villagers brought a camel and said to the cameleer, "Set this sick man on thy beast and carry him to Baghdad and put him down at the Spital-door; so haply he may be medicined and be

---

the civilised traveller's life when he catches his first louse.

<sup>127</sup> The Moslem peasant is a kind-hearted man and will make many sacrifices for a sick stranger even of another creed. It is a manner of "pundonor" with the village.

<sup>128</sup> Such treatment of innocent women was only too common under the Caliphate and in contemporary Europe.

healed and thou shalt have thy hire."<sup>129</sup> "To hear is to comply," said the man. So they brought Ghanim, who was asleep, out of the mosque and set him, mat and all, on the camel; and his mother and sister came out among the crowd to gaze upon him, but they knew him not. However, after looking at him and considering him carefully they said, "Of a truth he favours our Ghanim, poor boy!; can this sick man be he?" Presently, he woke and finding himself bound with ropes on a camel's back, he began to weep and complain,<sup>130</sup> and the village-people saw his mother and sister weeping over him, albeit they knew him not. Then they fared forth for Baghdad, but the camel-man forewent them and, setting Ghanim down at the Spital-gate, went away with his beast. The sick man lay there till dawn and, when the folk began to go about the streets, they saw him and stood gazing on him, for he had become as thin as a toothpick, till the Syndic of the bazar came up and drove them away from him, saying, "I will gain Paradise through this poor creature; for if they take him into the Hospital, they will kill him in a single day."<sup>131</sup> Then he made his young men carry him to his house, where they spread him a new bed with a new pillow,<sup>132</sup> and he said to his wife, "Tend him carefully;" and

---

<sup>129</sup> This may also mean, "And Heaven will reward thee;" but camel-men do not usually accept any drafts upon futurity.

<sup>130</sup> He felt that he was being treated like a corpse.

<sup>131</sup> This hatred of the Hospital extends throughout Southern Europe, even in places where it is not justified.

<sup>132</sup> The importance of the pillow (*wisádah* or *makhaddah*) to the sick man is often recognised in *The Nights*. "He took to his pillow" is=took to his bed.

she replied, "Good! on my head be it!" Thereupon she tucked up her sleeves and warming some water, washed his hands, feet and body; after which she clothed him in a robe belonging to one of her slave-girls and made him drink a cup of wine and sprinkled rose-water over him. So he revived and complained, and the thought of his beloved Kut al-Kulub made his grief redouble. Thus far concerning him; but as regards Kut al-Kulub, when the Caliph was angered against her, – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Forty-third Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph was angered against Kut al-Kulub, he ordered her to a dark chamber where she abode eighty days, at the end of which the Caliph, happening to pass on a certain day the place where she was, heard her repeating poetry, and after she ceased reciting her verse, saying, "O my darling, O my Ghanim! how great is thy goodness and how chaste is thy nature! thou didst well by one who did ill by thee and thou guardedst his honour who garred thine become dishonour, and his Harim thou didst protect who to enslave thee and thine did elect! But thou shalt surely stand, thou and the Commander of the Faithful, before the Just Judge, and thou shalt be justified of him on the Day when the Lord (to whom be honour and glory!) shall be Kazi and the Angels of Heaven shall be witnesses!" When the Caliph heard

her complaint, he knew that she had been wronged and, returning to the palace, sent Masrur the Eunuch for her. She came before him with bowed head and eyes tearful and heart sorrowful; and he said to her, "O Kut al-Kulub, I find thou accusest me of tyranny and oppression, and thou avouchest that I have done ill by one who did well by me. Who is this who hath guarded my honour while I garred his become dishonour? Who protected my Harim and whose Harim I wrecked?" "He is Ghanim son of Ayyub," replied she, "for he never approached me in wantonness or with lewd intent, I swear by thy munificence, O Commander of the Faithful!" Then said the Caliph, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Ask what thou wilt of me, O Kut al-Kulub." "O Prince of the Faithful!", answered she, "I require of thee only my beloved Ghanim son of Ayyub." He did as she desired, whereupon she said, "O Lord of the Moslems, if I bring him to thy presence, wilt thou bestow me on him?"; and he replied, "If he come into my presence, I will give thee to him as the gift of the generous who revoketh not his largesse." "O Prince of True Believers," quoth she, "suffer me to go and seek him; haply Allah may unite me with him: " and quoth he, "Do even as thou wilt." So she rejoiced and, taking with her a thousand dinars in gold, went out and visited the elders of the various faiths and gave alms in Ghanim's name.<sup>133</sup> Next day she walked to the merchants' bazar and disclosed her object to the

---

<sup>133</sup> *i. e.* in order that the reverend men, who do not render such suit and service gratis, might pray for him.

Syndic and gave him money, saying, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" On the following Friday she fared to the bazar (with other thousand dinars) and, entering the goldsmiths' and jewellers' market-street, called the Chief and presented to him a thousand dinars with these words, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" The Chief looked at her (and he was the Syndic who had taken in Ghanim) and said, "O my lady, wilt thou come to my house and look upon a youth, a stranger I have there and see how goodly and graceful he is?" Now the stranger was Ghanim, son of Ayyub, but the Chief had no knowledge of him and thought him to be some wandering pauper, some debtor whose wealth had been taken from him, or some lover parted from his beloved. When she heard his words her heart fluttered<sup>134</sup> and her vitals yearned, and she said to him, "Send with me one who shall guide me to thy house." So he sent a little lad who brought her to the house wherein was the head man's stranger-guest and she thanked him for this. When she reached the house, she went in and saluted the Syndic's wife, who rose and kissed the ground between her hands, for she knew her. Then quoth Kut al-Kulub, "Where is the sick man who is with thee?" She wept and replied, "Here is he, O my lady; by Allah, he is come of good folk and he beareth the signs of gentle breeding: you see him lying on yonder bed." So she turned and looked at him: and she saw something like him, but he was worn and wasted till he had become lean

---

<sup>134</sup> The reader will notice in *The Nights* the frequent mention of these physical prognostications, with which mesmerists are familiar.

as a toothpick, so his identity was doubtful to her and she could not be certain that it was he. Yet pity for him possessed her and she wept saying, "Verily the stranger is unhappy, even though he be a prince in his own land!"; and his case was grievous to her and her heart ached for him, yet she knew him not to be Ghanim. Then she furnished him with wine and medicines and she sat awhile by his head, after which she mounted and returned to her palace and continued to visit every bazar in quest of her lover. Meanwhile Ghanim's mother and sister Fitnah arrived at Baghdad and met the Syndic, who carried them to Kut al-Kulub and said to her, "O Princess of beneficent ladies, there came to our city this day a woman and her daughter, who are fair of favour and signs of good breeding and dignity are apparent in them, though they be dressed in hair-cloth and have each one a wallet hanging to her neck; and their eyes are tearful and their hearts are sorrowful. So I have brought them to thee that thou mayst give them refuge, and rescue them from beggary, for they are not of asker-folk and, if it please Allah, we shall enter Paradise through them." "By Allah, O my master," cried she, "thou makest me long to see them! Where are they?", adding, "Here with them to me!" So he bade the eunuch bring them in; and, when she looked on them and saw that they were both of distinguished beauty, she wept for them and said, "By Allah, these are people of condition and show plain signs of former opulence." "O my lady," said the Syndic's wife, "we love the poor and the destitute, more especially as reward in Heaven will recompense

our love; and, as for these persons, haply the oppressor hath dealt hardly with them and hath plundered their property and harried their houses." Then Ghanim's mother and sister wept with sore weeping, remembering their former prosperity and contrasting it with their present poverty and miserable condition; and their thoughts dwelt upon son and brother, whilst Kut al-Kulub wept for their weeping; and they said, "We beseech Allah to reunite us with him whom we desire, and he is none other but my son named Ghanim bin Ayyub!" When Kut al-Kulub heard this, she knew them to be the mother and sister of her lover and wept till a swoon came over her. When she revived she turned to them and said, "Have no fear and sorrow not, for this day is the first of your prosperity and the last of your adversity!" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Forty-fourth Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kut al-Kulub had consoled them she bade the Syndic lead them to his house and let his wife carry them to the Hamman and dress them in handsome clothes and take care of them and honour them with all honour; and she gave him a sufficient sum of money. Next day, she mounted and, riding to his house, went in to his wife who rose up and kissed her hands and thanked her for her kindness. There she saw Ghanim's mother and sister whom the Syndic's wife had taken to the Hammam and clothed afresh,



so that the traces of their former condition became manifest upon them. She sat talking with them awhile, after which she asked the wife about the sick youth who was in her house and she replied, "He is in the same state." Then said Kut al-Kulub, "Come, let us go and visit him." So she arose, she and the Chief's wife and Ghanim's mother and sister, and went in to the room where he lay and sat down near him. Presently Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, heard them mention the name of Kut al-Kulub; whereupon life returned to him, emaciated and withered as he was, and he raised his head from the pillow and cried aloud, "O Kut al-Kulub!" She looked at him and made certain it was he and shrieked rather than said, "Yes, O my beloved!" "Draw near to me," said he, and she replied, "Surely thou art Ghanim bin Ayyub?"; and he rejoined "I am indeed!" Hereupon a swoon came upon her; and, as soon as Ghanim's mother and his sister Fitnah heard these words, both cried out "O our joy!" and fainted clean away. When they all recovered, Kut al-Kulub exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah who hath brought us together again and who hath reunited thee with thy mother and thy sister!" And she related to him all that had befallen her with the Caliph and said, "I have made known the truth to the Commander of the Faithful, who believed my words and was pleased with thee; and now he desireth to see thee," adding, "He hath given me to thee." Thereat he rejoiced with extreme joy, when she said, "Quit not this place till I come back" and, rising forthwith, betook herself to her palace. There she opened the

chest which she had brought from Ghanim's house and, taking out some of the dinars, gave them to the Syndic saying, "Buy with this money for each of them four complete suits of the finest stuffs and twenty kerchiefs, and else beside of whatsoever they require;" after which she carried all three to the baths and had them washed and bathed and made ready for them consommés, and galangale-water and cider against their coming out. When they left the Hammam, they put on the new clothes, and she abode with them three days feeding them with chicken meats and bouillis, and making them drink sherbet of sugar candy. After three days their spirits returned; and she carried them again to the baths, and when they came out and had changed their raiment, she led them back to the Syndic's house and left them there, whilst she returned to the palace and craved permission to see the Caliph. When he ordered her to come in, she entered and, kissing the ground between his hands, told him the whole story and how her lord, Ghanim bin Ayyub, yclept the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, and his mother and sister were now in Baghdad. When the Caliph heard this, he turned to the eunuchs and said, "Here with Ghanim to me." So Ja'afar went to fetch him; but Kut al-Kulub forewent him and told Ghanim, "The Caliph hath sent to fetch thee before him," and charged him to show readiness of tongue and firmness of heart and sweetness of speech. Then she robed him in a sumptuous dress and gave him dinars in plenty, saying, "Be lavish of largesse to the Caliph's household as thou goest in to him." Presently Ja'afar, mounted on his Nubian mule, came

to fetch him; and Ghanim advanced to welcome the Wazir and, wishing him long life, kissed the ground before him. Now the star of his good fortune had risen and shone brightly; and Ja'afar took him; and they ceased not faring together, he and the Minister, till they went in to the Commander of the Faithful. When he stood in the presence, he looked at the Wazirs and Emirs and Chamberlains, and Viceroys and Grandees and Captains, and then at the Caliph. Hereupon he sweetened his speech and his eloquence and, bowing his head to the ground, broke out in these extempore couplets: —

May that Monarch's life span a mighty span, ❀ Whose lavish of largesse all lieges scan:

None other but he shall be Kaysar hight, ❀ Lord of lordly hall and of haught Divan:

Kings lay their gems on his threshold-dust ❀ As they bow and salam to the mighty man;

And his glances foil them and all recoil, ❀ Bowing beards aground and with faces wan:

Yet they gain the profit of royal grace, ❀ The rank and station of high soldan.

Earth's plain is scant for thy world of men, ❀ Camp there in Kaywán's<sup>135</sup> Emphyrean!

May the King of Kings ever hold thee dear; ❀ Be counsel thine and right steadfast plan,

Till thy justice spread o'er the wide-spread earth ❀ And the

---

<sup>135</sup> The Pers. name of the planet Saturn in the Seventh Heaven. Arab. "Zuhál"; the Kiun or Chiun of Amos vi. 26.

near and the far be of equal worth.

When he ended his improvisation the Caliph was pleased by it and marvelled at the eloquence of his tongue and the sweetness of his speech, – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Forty-fifth Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph, after marvelling at his eloquence of tongue and sweetness of speech, said to him, "Draw near to me." So he drew near and quoth the King, "Tell me thy tale and declare to me thy case." So Ghanim sat down and related to him what had befallen him in Baghdad, of his sleeping in the tomb and of his opening the chest after the three slaves had departed, and informed him, in short, of everything that had happened to him from commencement to conclusion – none of which we will repeat for interest fails in twice told tales. The Caliph was convinced that he was a true man; so he invested him with a dress of honour, and placed him near himself in token of favour, and said to him, "Acquit me of the responsibility I have incurred."<sup>136</sup> And Ghanim so did, saying, "O our lord the Sultan, of a truth thy slave and all things his two hands own are his master's." The Caliph was pleased at this and gave orders to set apart a palace for him

---

<sup>136</sup> *i. e.* "Pardon me if I injured thee" – a popular phrase.

and assigned to him pay and allowances, rations and donations, which amounted to something immense. So he removed thither with sister and mother; after which the Caliph, hearing that his sister Fitnah was in beauty a very "fitnah,"<sup>137</sup> a mere seduction, demanded her in marriage of Ghanim who replied, "She is thy handmaid as I am thy slave." The Caliph thanked him and gave him an hundred thousand dinars, then summoned the witnesses and the Kazi, and on one and the same day they wrote out the two contracts of marriage between the Caliph and Fitnah and between Ghanim bin Ayyub and Kut al-Kulub; and the two marriages were consummated on one and the same night. When it was morning, the Caliph gave orders to record the history of what had befallen Ghanim from first to last and to deposit it in the royal muniment-rooms, that those who came after him might read it and marvel at the dealings of Destiny and put their trust in Him who created the night and the day. Yet, O auspicious King, this story to which thou hast deigned give ear is on no wise more wondrous than the

---

<sup>137</sup> A "seduction," a charmer. The double-entendre has before been noticed.

# TALE OF KING OMAR BIN AL-NU'UMAN AND HIS SONS SHARRKAN AND ZAU AL- MAKAN, AND WHAT BEFEL THEM OF THINGS SELD- SEEN AND PEREGRINE. <sup>138</sup>

The King asked her, "And what was their story?" and she answered: – It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was in the City of Safety, Baghdad, before the Caliphate of Abd

---

<sup>138</sup> This knightly tale, the longest in the Nights (xliv-cxlv.), about one-eighth of the whole, does not appear in the Bres. Edit. Lane, who finds it "objectionable," reduces it to two of its episodes, Aziz-cum-Azízah and Táj al-Mulúk. On the other hand it has been converted into a volume (8vo, pp. 240) "Scharkan, Conte Arabe;" etc. Traduit par M. Asselan Riche, etc. Paris: Dondey-Dupré. 1829. It has its *longueurs* and at times is longsome enough; but it is interesting as a comparison between the chivalry of Al-Islam and European knight-errantry. Although all the characters are fictitious the period is evidently in the early crusading days. Cæsarea, the second capital of Palestine, taken during the Caliphate of Omar (A.H. 19) and afterwards recovered, was fortified in A.H. 353=963 as a base against the Arabs by the Emperor Phocas, the Arab. "Nakfúr" *i. e.* Nicephorus. In A.H. 498=1104, crusading craft did much injury by plundering merchantmen between Egypt and Syria, to which allusion is found in the romance. But the story-teller has not quite made up his mind about which Cæsarea he is talking, and M. Riche tells us that Césarée is a "ville de la Mauritanie, en Afrique" (p. 20).

al-Malik bin Marwán,<sup>139</sup> a King, Omar bin al-Nu'uman hight, who was of the mighty giants and had subjected the Chosroes of Persia and the Kaysars of Eastern Rome; for none could warm himself at his fire;<sup>140</sup> nor could any avail to meet him in the field of foray and fray; and, when he was an-angered, there came forth from his nostrils sparks of flame. He had made himself King over all quarters, and Allah had subjected to him all His creatures; his word went forth to all great cities and his hosts had harried the farthest lands. East and West had come under his command with whatsoever regions lay interspersed between them, Hind and Sind and Sin,<sup>141</sup> the Holy Land, Al-Hijaz, the rich mountains of Al-Yaman and the archipelagos of India and China. Moreover, he reigned supreme over the north country and Diyár Bakr, or Mesopotamia, and over Sudán, the Eastern Negro-land and the Islands of the Ocean, and all the far famed rivers of the earth, Sayhún and Jayhún,<sup>142</sup> Nile and Euphrates. He sent envoys and ambassadors to capitals the most remote, to provide him with true report; and they would bring back tidings of justice and peace, with assurance of loyalty and obedience

---

<sup>139</sup> The fifth Ommiade Caliph reign. A.H. 65-86=685-704.

<sup>140</sup> This does not merely mean that no one was safe from his wrath: or, could approach him in the heat of fight: it is a reminiscence of the masterful "King Kulayb," who established game-laws in his dominions and would allow no man to approach his camp-fire. Moreover the Jinn lights a fire to decoy travellers; but if his victim be bold enough to brave him, he invites him to take advantage of the heat.

<sup>141</sup> China.

<sup>142</sup> The Jaxartes and the Bactrus (names very loosely applied).

and of prayers in the pulpits for King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; for he was, O Ruler of the Age, a right noble King; and there came to him presents of rarities and toll and tribute from all lands of his governing. This mighty monarch had a son yclept Sharrkan,<sup>143</sup> who was likest of all men to his father and who proved himself one of the prodigies of his time for subduing the brave and bringing his contemporaries to bane and ban. For this his father loved him with love so great none could be greater, and made him heir to the kingdom after himself. This Prince grew up till he reached man's estate and was twenty years old, and Allah subjected His servants to him, by reason of his great might and prowess in battle. Now his father, King Omar, had four wives legally married, but Allah had vouchsafed him no son by them, save Sharrkan, whom he had begotten upon one of them, and the rest were barren. Moreover he had three hundred and sixty concubines, after the number of days in the Coptic year, who were of all nations; and he had furnished for each and every a private chamber within his own palace. For he had built twelve pavilions, after the number of the months, each containing thirty private chambers, which thus numbered three hundred and three score, wherein he lodged his handmaids: and he appointed according to law for each one her night, when he lay with her and

---

<sup>143</sup> In full "Sharrun kána" *i. e.* an evil (Sharr) has come to being (kána), that is, "bane to the foe" – a pagan and knightly name. The hero of the Romance "Al-Dalhamah" is described as a bitter gourd (colocynth), a viper, a calamity.



came not again to her for a full year;<sup>144</sup> and on this wise he abode for a length of time. Meanwhile his son Sharrkan was making himself renowned in all quarters of the world and his father was proud of him and his might waxed and grew mightier; so that he passed all bounds and bore himself masterfully and took by storm castles and cities. Presently, by decree of the Decreeer, a handmaid among the handmaids of Omar bin Nu'uman became pregnant; and, her pregnancy being announced to the Harim, the King was informed thereof; whereupon he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "Haply 'twill be a son, and so all my offspring will be males!" Then he documented the date of her conception and entreated her with all manner of kindness. But when the tidings came to Sharrkan, he was troubled and the matter seemed to him a sore one and a grievous; and he said, "Verily one cometh who shall dispute with me the sovereignty: " so quoth he to himself, "If this concubine bear a male child I will kill it: " but he kept that intention hidden in his heart. Such was the case with Sharrkan; but what happened in the matter of the damsel was as follows. She was a Roumiyah, a Greek girl, by name Sofiyah or Sophia,<sup>145</sup> whom the King of Roum and

---

<sup>144</sup> This is a Moslem law (Koran chapt. iv. bodily borrowed from the Talmud) which does not allow a man to marry one wife unless he can carnally satisfy her. Moreover he must distribute his honours equally and each wife has a right to her night unless she herself give it up. This was the case even with the spouses of the Prophet; and his biography notices several occasions when his wives waived their rights in favour of one another. M. Riche kindly provides the King with *la piquante française* (p. 15).

<sup>145</sup> So the celebrated mosque in Stambul, famed for being the largest church in

Lord of Cæsarea had sent to King Omar as a present, together with great store of gifts and of rarities: she was the fairest of favour and loveliest of all his handmaids and the most regardful of her honour; and she was gifted with a wit as penetrating as her presence was fascinating. Now she had served the King on the night of his sleeping with her, saying to him, "O King! I desire of the God of the Heavens that he bless thee this night with a male child by me, so I may bring him up with the best of rearing, and enable him to reach man's estate perfect in intelligence, good manners and prudent bearing"<sup>146</sup>— a speech which much pleased the King. During her pregnancy she was instant in prayer, fervently supplicating the Lord to bless her with a goodly male child and make his birth easy to her; and Allah heard her petition so that after her months were accomplished she sat safely upon

---

the world, is known to the Greeks as "Agia (pron. Aya) Sophia" and to Moslems as "Aya Sofiyeh" (Holy Wisdom) *i. e.* the Logos or Second Person of the Trinity (not a Saintess). The sending a Christian girl as a present to a Moslem would, in these days be considered highly scandalous. But it was done by the Mukaukis or Coptic Governor of Egypt (under Heraclius) who of course hated the Greeks. This worthy gave two damsels to Mohammed, one called Sírín and the other Máriyah (Maria) whom the Prophet reserved for his especial use and whose abode is still shown at Al-Medinah. The Rev. Doctor Badger (*loc. cit.* p. 972) gives the translation of an epistle by Mohammed to this Mukaukis, written in the Cufic character (??) and sealed "Mohammed, The Apostle of Allah." My friend seems to believe that it is an original, but upon this subject opinions will differ. It is, however, exceedingly interesting, beginning with "Bismillah," etc., and ending (before the signature) with a quotation from the Koran (iii. 57); and may be assumed as a formula addressed to foreign potentates by a Prophet who had become virtually "King of Arabia."

<sup>146</sup> This prayer before "doing the deed of kind" is, I have said, Moslem as well as Christian.

the birth-stool.<sup>147</sup> Now the King had deputed a eunuch to let him know if the child she should bring forth were male or female; and in like way his son Sharrkan had sent one to bring him tidings of the same. In due time Sophia was delivered of a child, which the midwives examined and found to be a girl with a face sheenier than the moon. So they announced this to all present in the room, whereupon the King's messenger carried the news to him; and Sharrkan's eunuch did the like with his master, who rejoiced with exceeding joy. But, after the two had departed, quoth Sophia to the midwives, "Wait with me awhile, for I feel as if there were still somewhat in my womb." Then she cried out and the pains of child-bed again took her; and Allah made it easy to her and she gave birth to a second child. The wise women looked at it and found it a boy like the full moon, with forehead flower-white, and cheek ruddy-bright with rosy light; whereupon the mother rejoiced, as did the eunuchs and attendants and all

---

<sup>147</sup> Exodus i. 16, quoted by Lane (M. E., chapt. xxvii.). Torrens in his Notes cites Drayton's "Moon-calf": —Bring forth the birth-stool – no, let it alone;She is so far beyond all compass grown,Some other new device us needs must stead,Or else she never can be brought to bed.It is the "groaning-chair" of Poor Robin's Almanac (1676) and we find it alluded to in Boccaccio, the classical sedile which according to scoffers has formed the papal chair (a curule seat) ever since the days of Pope Joan, when it has been held advisable for one of the Cardinals to ascertain that His Holiness possesses all the instruments of virility. This "Kursí al-wiládah" is of peculiar form on which the patient is seated. A most interesting essay might be written upon the various positions preferred during delivery, *e. g.* the wild Irish still stand on all fours, like the so-called "lower animals." Amongst the Moslems of Waday, etc., a cord is hung from the top of the hut, and the woman in labour holds on to it standing with her legs apart, till the midwife receives the child.

the company; and Sophia was delivered of the after-birth whilst all in the palace sent forth the trill of joy.<sup>148</sup> The rest of the concubines heard it and envied her lot; and the tidings reached Omar son of Al-Nu'uman, who was glad and rejoiced at the excellent news. Then he rose and went to her and kissed her head, after which he looked at the boy; and, bending over him, kissed him, whilst the damsels struck the tabors and played on instruments of music; and the King gave order that the boy should be named Zau al-Makan and his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman.<sup>149</sup> They answered "Hearing and obedience," and did his bidding; so he appointed wet nurses and dry nurses and eunuchs and attendants to serve them; and assigned them rations of sugar and diet-drinks and unguents and else beside, beyond the power of tongue to rehearse. Moreover the people of Baghdad, hearing that Allah had blessed their King with issue, decorated the city and made proclamation of the glad tidings with drum and tom-tom; and the Emirs and Wazirs and high dignitaries came to the palace and wished King Omar bin al-Nu'uman joy of his son, Zau al-Makan, and of his daughter Nuzhat al-Zaman, wherefor he thanked them

---

<sup>148</sup> Some Orientalists call "lullilooing" the trilling cry, which is made by raising the voice to its highest pitch and breaking it by a rapid succession of touches on the palate with the tongue-tip, others "Ziraleet" and Zagaleet, and one traveller tells us that it began at the marriage-festival of Isaac and Rebecca(!). Arabs term it classically Tahlíl and vulgarly Zaghrutah (Plur. Zaghárit) and Persians "Kil." Finally in Don Quixote we have "Lelilies," the battle-cry of the Moors (Duffield iii. 289). Dr. Buchanan likens it to a serpent uttering human sounds, but the good missionary heard it at the festival of Jagannath (Pilgrimage iii. 197).

<sup>149</sup> *i. e.* "Light of the Place" (or kingdom) and "Delight of the Age."

and bestowed on them dresses of honour and further favoured them with gifts, and dealt largesse to all, gentle and simple, who were present. After this fashion he did for four days full told, and he lavished upon Sophia raiment and ornaments and great store of wealth; and, every few days he would send a messenger to ask after her and the new-borns. And when four years had gone by, he provided her with the wherewithal to rear the two children carefully and educate them with the best of instructions. All this while his son Sharrkan knew not that a male child had been born to his father, Omar son of Al-Nu'uman, having news only that he had been blessed with the birth of Nuzhat al-Zaman; and they hid the intelligence from him, until days and years had sped by, whilst he was busied in battling with the brave and fighting single-handed against the knights. One day, as King Omar was sitting in his palace, his Chamberlains came in to him and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O King there be come Ambassadors from the King of Roum, Lord of Constantinople the Great, and they desire admission to thee and submission to thy decree: if the King command us to introduce them we will so do; and, if not, there is no disputing his behest." He bade them enter and, when they came in, he turned to them and, courteously receiving them, asked them of their case, and what was the cause of their coming. They kissed the ground before him and said, "O King glorious and strong! O lord of the arm that is long! know that he who despatched us to thee is King Afridun,<sup>150</sup> Lord of Ionia-

---

<sup>150</sup> It is utterly absurd to give the old heroic Persian name Afridun or Furaydun, the

land<sup>151</sup> and of the Nazarene armies, the sovereign who is firmly established in the empery of Constantinople, to acquaint thee that he is now waging fierce war and fell with a tyrant and a rebel, the Prince of Cæsarea; and the cause of this war is as follows. One of the Kings of the Arabs in past time, during certain of his conquests, chanced upon a hoard of the time of Alexander,<sup>152</sup> whence he removed wealth past compute; and, amongst other things, three round jewels, big as ostrich eggs, from a mine of pure white gems whose like was never seen by man. Upon each were graven characts in Ionian characters, and they have many virtues and properties, amongst the rest that if one of these jewels be hung round the neck of a newborn child, no evil shall befall him and he shall neither wail, nor shall fever ail him as long as the jewel remain without fail.<sup>153</sup> When the Arab King laid hands upon them and learned their secrets, he sent to King Afridun presents of certain rarities and amongst them the three jewels afore mentioned; and he equipped for the mission two ships, one bearing the treasure and the other men of might to guard it from any who might offer hindrance on the high seas, albeit

---

destroyer of Zohák or Zahhák, to a Greek, but such anachronisms are characteristic of *The Nights* and are evidently introduced on purpose. See Boccaccio, ix. 9.

<sup>151</sup> Arab. "Yunán" lit. Ionia, which applies to all Greece, insular and continental, especially to ancient Greece.

<sup>152</sup> In 1870 I saw at Sidon a find of some hundreds of gold "Philippi" and "Alexanders."

<sup>153</sup> M. Riche has (p. 21): – Ces talismans travaillés par le ciseau du célèbre *Calfaziri*, adding in a note: – Je pense que c'est un sculpteur Arabe.

well assured that none would dare waylay his vessels, for that he was King of the Arabs, and more by token that their course lay over waters subject to the King of Constantinople and they were bound to his port; nor were there on the shores of that sea any save the subjects of the Great King, Afridun. The two ships set out and voyaged till they drew near our city, when there sallied out on them certain corsairs from that country and amongst them troops from the Prince of Cæsarea, who took all the treasures and rarities in the ships, together with the three jewels, and slew the crews. When our King heard of this, he sent an army against them, but they routed it; then he marched a second and a stronger but they put this also to flight, whereupon the King waxed wroth and swore that he would not go forth<sup>154</sup> against them save in his own person at the head of his whole army; nor would he turn back from them till he had left Cæsarea of Armenia<sup>155</sup> in ruins and had laid waste all the lands and cities over which her Prince held sway. So he sent us to the Lord of the age and the time, Sultan Omar bin al-Nu'uman, King of Baghdad and of Khorasan, desiring that he aid us with an army, so may honour and glory accrue to him; and he hath also forwarded by us somewhat of various kinds of presents, and of the King's grace he beggeth their acceptance and the friendly boon of furtherance." Then the Ambassadors kissed the ground before him – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of

---

<sup>154</sup> This periphrase, containing what seems to us a useless negative, adds emphasis in Arabic.

<sup>155</sup> This bit of geographical information is not in the Bul. Edit.

day and ceased to say her permitted say.

## **Now when it was the Forty-sixth Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that, after the Ambassadors and retinue from the Constantinopolitan King had kissed the ground before Omar and had delivered their embassy, they brought out the presents, which were fifty damsels of the choicest from Græcia-land, and fifth Mamelukes in tunics of brocade, belted with girdles of gold and silver, each wearing in his ears hoops of gold with pendants of fine pearls costing a thousand ducats every one. The girls were adorned in like fashion and were clad in stuffs worth a treasury of money. When the King saw them, he rejoiced in them and accepted them; then he bade the Ambassadors be honourably entreated and, summoning his Wazirs, took counsel with them of what he should do. Herewith rose up among them a Wazir, an ancient man, Dandán<sup>156</sup> hight, who kissed the ground before Omar and said, "O King, there is nothing better to do in this matter than equip an army valiant and victorious, and set over it thy son Sharrkan with us as his lieutenants; and this rede commendeth itself to me on two counts: first, because the King of Roum hath invoked thine assistance and hath sent thee gifts which thou hast accepted; and, secondly, because while no enemy dareth attack

---

<sup>156</sup> In Pers.=a tooth, the popular word.



our country, thine army may go forth safely and, should it succour the King of Græcia-land and defeat his foe, the glory will be thine. Moreover, the news of it will be noised abroad in all cities and countries; and especially, when the tidings shall reach the Islands of the Ocean and the Kings of Mauritania shall hear it, they will send thee offerings of rarities and pay thee tribute of money." The King, pleased by the Wazir's words and approving his rede, gave him a dress of honour and said to him, "Of the like of thee should Kings ask counsel, and it seemeth fit that thou shouldst conduct the van of our army and our son Sharrkan command the main battle." Then he sent for his son who came and kissed ground before him and sat down; and he expounded to him the matter, telling him what the Ambassadors and the Wazir Dandan had said, and he charged him to take arms and equip himself for the campaign, enjoining him not to gainsay Dandan in aught he should do. Moreover, he ordered him to pick out of his army ten thousand horsemen, armed cap-à-pie and inured to onset and stress of war. Accordingly, Sharrkan arose on the instant, and chose out a myriad of horsemen, after which he entered his palace and mustered his host and distributed largesse to them, saying, "Ye have delay of three days." They kissed the earth before him in obedience to his commands and began at once to lay in munitions, and provide provisions for the occasion; whilst Sharrkan repaired to the armouries and took therefrom whatsoever he required of arms and armour, and thence to the stable where he chose horses of choice blood and others. When

the appointed three days were ended, the army drew out to the suburbs of Baghdad city;<sup>157</sup> and King Omar came forth to take leave of his son who kissed the ground before him and received from the King seven parcels of money.<sup>158</sup> Then he turned to Dandan and commended to his care the army of his son; and the Wazir kissed the ground before him and answered, "I hear and I obey;" and lastly he charged Sharrkan that he should consult the Wazir on all occasions, which he promised to do. After this, the King returned to his city and Sharrkan ordered the officers to muster their troops in battle-array. So they mustered them and their number was ten thousand horsemen, besides footmen and camp-followers. Then they loaded their baggage on their beasts and the war-drums beat and the trumpets blared and the bannerols and standards were unfurled, whilst Sharrkan mounted horse, with the Wazir Dandan by his side, and the colours fluttering over their heads. So the host fared forth and stinted not faring, with the Ambassadors preceding them, till day departed and night drew nigh, when they alighted and encamped for the night. And as soon as Allah caused the morn to morrow, they mounted and hied on, guided by the Ambassadors, for a space of twenty days; and by the night of the twenty-first they came to

---

<sup>157</sup> This preliminary move, called in Persian Nakl-i-Safar, is generally mentioned. So the Franciscan monks in California, when setting out for a long journey through the desert, marched three times round the convent and pitched tents for the night under its walls.

<sup>158</sup> In Arab. "Khazinah" or "Khaznah" lit. a treasure, representing 1,000 "Kis" or purses (each=£5). The sum in the text is 7,000 purses  $\times$  5=£35,000.

a fine and spacious Wady well grown with trees and shrubbery. Here Sharrkan ordered them to alight and commanded a three days' halt, so they dismounted and pitched their tents, spreading their camp over the right and the left slopes of the extensive valley, whilst the Wazir Dandan and the Ambassadors of King Afridun pitched in the sole of the Wady.<sup>159</sup> As for Sharrkan, he tarried behind them for awhile till all had dismounted and had dispersed themselves over the valley-sides; he then slacked the reins of his steed, being minded to explore the Wady and to mount guard in his own person, because of his father's charge and owing to the fact that they were on the frontier of Græcia-land and in the enemy's country. So he rode out alone after ordering his armed slaves and his body-guard to camp near the Wazir Dandan, and he fared on along the side of the valley till a fourth part of the night was passed, when he felt tired and drowsiness overcame him, so that he could no longer urge horse with heel. Now he was accustomed to take rest on horseback; so when slumber overpowered him, he slept and the steed ceased not going on with him till half the night was spent and entered one of the thickets<sup>160</sup> which was dense with growth; but Sharrkan

---

<sup>159</sup> Travellers often prefer such sites because they are sheltered from the wind, and the ground is soft for pitching tents; but many have come to grief from sudden torrents following rain.

<sup>160</sup> Arab. "Ghábah" not a forest in our sense of the word, but a place where water sinks and the trees (mostly Mimosas), which elsewhere are widely scattered, form a comparatively dense growth and collect in thickets. These are favourite places for wild beasts during noon-heats.

awoke not until his horse stumbled over wooded ground. Then he started from sleep and found himself among the trees; and the moon arose and shone brightly over the two horizons, Eastern and Western. He was startled when he found himself alone in this place and said the say which ne'er yet shamed its sayer, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" But as he rode on, in fear of wild beasts, behold, the moon spread her glad light over a meadow as if 'twere of the meads of Paradise; and he heard pleasant voices and a loud noise of talk and laughter captivating the senses of men. So King Sharrkan alighted and, tying his steed to one of the trees, went over a little way till he came upon a stream and heard a woman talking in Arabic and saying, "Now by the truth of the Messiah, this is not well of you! but whoso utters a word, I will throw her and truss her up with her own girdle<sup>161</sup>!" He kept walking in the direction of the sound and when he reached the further side he looked and behold, a stream was gushing and flowing, and antelopes at large were frisking and roving, and wild cattle amid the pasture moving, and birds expressed joy and gladness in their divers tongues, and that place was purfled with all manner flowers and green herbs, even as a poet described it in these couplets: —

Most beautiful is earth in budding bloom, ❀ When lucid

---

<sup>161</sup> At various times in the East Jews and Christians were ordered to wear characteristic garments, especially the Zunnár or girdle.

waters course through plain and wood:

No work but His th' All-great, th' All-glorious, ❀ Giver of  
all gifts, Giver of all good!

And as Sharrkan considered the place, he saw in it a Christian Monastery within whose enceinte a castle towered high in air catching the light of the moon.<sup>162</sup> Through the midst of the convent passed a stream, the water flowing amongst its gardens; and upon the bank sat the woman whose voice he had heard, while before her stood ten handmaids like moons and wearing various sorts of raiment and ornaments that dazed and dazzled the beholder, high-bosomed virgins, as saith of them the poet in these couplets: —

The mead is bright with what is on't ❀ Of merry maidens  
debonnair:

Double its beauty and its grace ❀ Those trooping damsels  
slender-fair:

Virgins of graceful swimming gait ❀ Ready with eye and lip  
to ensnare;

And like the tendril'd vine they loose ❀ The rich profusion  
of their hair:

Shooting their shafts and arrows from ❀ Beautiful eyes  
beyond compare;

Overpowering and transpiercing ❀ Every froward adversaire.

---

<sup>162</sup> The description is borrowed from the Coptic Convent, which invariably has an inner donjon or keep. The oldest monastery in the world is Mar Antonios (St. Anthony the Hermit) not far from Suez (Gold Mines of Midian, p. 85).

Sharrkan gazed upon the ten girls and saw in their midst a lady like the moon at fullest, with ringleted hair and forehead sheeny-white, and eyes wondrous wide and black and bright, and temple-locks like the scorpion's tail; and she was perfect in essence and attributes, as the poet said of her in these couplets: —

She beamed on my sight with a wondrous glance, ❀ And her straight slender stature enshamed the lance:

She burst on my sight with cheeks rosy-red, ❀ Where all manner of beauties have habittance:

And the locks on her forehead were lowering as night ❀  
Whence issues a dawn-tide of happiest chance.

Then Sharrkan heard her say to the handmaids, "Come ye on, that I may wrestle with you and gravel you, ere the moon set and the dawn break!" So each came up to her in turn and she grounded them forthright, and pinioned them with their girdles, and ceased not wrestling and pitching them until she had overthrown one and all. Then there turned to her an old woman who was before her, and the beldam said as in wrath, "O strumpet, dost thou glory in grounding these girls? Behold I am an old woman, yet have I thrown them forty times! So what hast thou to boast of? But if thou have the strength to wrestle with me, stand up that I may grip thee and set thy head between thy heels!" The young lady smiled at her words, but she was filled with inward wrath, and she jumped up and asked, "O my lady Zát

al-Dawáhí,<sup>163</sup> by the truth of the Messiah, wilt thou wrestle with me in very deed, or dost thou jest with me?"; and she answered, "Yea," – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

## **Now when it was the Forty-seventh Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young lady asked Zat al-Dawahi, "By the truth of the Messiah, wilt wrestle with me or dost jest?", and she answered, "Yea, I will wrestle with thee in very deed" (Sharrkan looking on the while), the damsel cried, "Rise up for the fall an thou have spunk so to do." When the old woman heard this, she raged with exceeding rage, and her body-hair stood on end like the bristles of a fretful hedgehog.<sup>164</sup> Then she sprang to her feet, whilst the damsel stood up to her, and said, "Now by the truth of the Messiah, I will not wrestle with thee unless I be naked, Mistress whore!"<sup>165</sup> So she loosed her petticoat-trousers and, putting her hand under her clothes, tore them off her body; then twisted up a silken kerchief into cord-shape, girt it round her middle and became as

---

<sup>163</sup> "Dawáhi," plur. of Dáhiyah=a mishap. The title means "Mistress of Misfortunes" or Queen of Calamities (to the enemy); and the venerable lady, as will be seen, amply deserved her name, which is pronounced Zát ad-Dawáhí.

<sup>164</sup> Arab. "Kunfuz"=hedgehog or porcupine.

<sup>165</sup> These flowers of speech are mere familiarities, not insults. In societies where the sexes are separated speech becomes exceedingly free. *Étourdie que vous êtes*, says M. Riche, toning down the text.

she were a scald-head Ifritah or a spotted snake. With this she inclined towards the damsel and said, "Do thou as I have done." All this time, Sharrkan was gazing at the twain, and laughing at the beldam's loathly semblance. So the damsel leisurely rose and, taking a sash of Yamani stuff, passed it twice round her waist, then she tucked up her trousers and displayed two calves of alabaster carrying a mound of crystal, smooth and rounded, and a stomach which exhaled musk from its dimples, as it were a bed of Nu'uman's anemones; and breasts like double pomegranates. Then the old woman leant towards her, and the two laid hold either of each, while Sharrkan raised his head Heavenwards and prayed Allah that the belle might beat the beldam. Presently the young woman gat beneath the old woman; and, gripping her waist-cloth with the left and circling her neck with the right hand, hoisted her off the ground with both; whereupon the old woman strove to free herself and, in so doing fell on her back arseversy, with her legs high in air and her hairy bush between them showed manifest in the moonshine; furthermore she let fly two great farts<sup>166</sup> one of which blew up the dust from the earth's face and the other steamed up to the gate of Heaven. Sharrkan laughed till he fell back upon the ground. Then he arose and, baring his brand looked right and left, but he saw no one save the old woman sprawling on her back, and said to himself, "He lied not who

---

<sup>166</sup> Arab. "Zirt," a low word. The superlative "Zarrát" (farthermost) or, "Abu Zirt" (Father of farts) is a facetious term among the bean-eating Fellahs and a deadly insult amongst the Badawin (Night ccccx.). The latter prefer the word Taggáa (Pilgrimage iii. 84). We did not disdain the word in farthingale=pet en air.



named thee Lady of Calamities! Verily thou knewest her prowess by her performance upon the others." So he drew near them to hear what should pass between them. Then the young lady went up to the old one and, throwing a wrapper of thin silk upon her nakedness, helped her to don her clothes and made excuses saying, "O my lady Zat al-Dawahi, I intended only to throw thee and not all this, but thou triedst to twist out of my hands; so laud to Allah for safety!" She returned her no answer, but rose in her shame and walked away till out of sight, leaving the handmaids prostrate and pinioned, with the fair damsel standing amongst them. Quoth Sharrkan to himself, "Every luck hath its cause. Sleep did not fall upon me nor the war-horse bear me hither save for my good fortune; for doubtless this maid and what is with her shall become booty to me." So he made towards his steed and mounted and heeled<sup>167</sup> him on, when he sped as the shaft speeds from the bow, and in his hand he still hent his brand bare of sheath, which he brandished shouting the while his war-cry, "Allah is All-mighty<sup>168</sup>!" When the damsel saw him she sprang to her feet and, taking firm stand on the bank of the stream, whose breadth was six ells, the normal cubits, made one bound and landed clear on the farther side,<sup>169</sup> where she turned and

---

<sup>167</sup> Arab. "kicked" him, *i. e.* with the sharp corner of the shovel-stirrup. I avoid such expressions as "spurring" and "pricking over the plain," because apt to give a wrong idea.

<sup>168</sup> Arab. "Allaho Akbar!" the classical Moslem slogan.

<sup>169</sup> Arab horses are never taught to leap, so she was quite safe on the other side of a brook nine feet broad.

cried out with a loud voice, "Who art thou, O thou fellow, that breakest in upon our privacy and pastime, and that too hanger in hand as if charging a host? Whence camest thou and whither art thou going? Speak sooth, for truth will stand thee in good stead, and lie not, for lies come of villein-breed. Doubtless thou hast wandered this night from thy way, that thou chancedst upon this place whence escape were the greatest of mercies; for thou art now in an open plain and, did we shout but a single shout, would come to our rescue four thousand knights.<sup>170</sup> So tell me what thou wantest; and if thou wouldst only have us set thee on the right road, we will do so." When Sharrkan heard her words he replied, "I am a stranger of the Moslems, who fared forth this night single-handed, seeking for spoil; nor could this moonlight show me a fairer booty than these ten maidens; so I shall seize them and rejoin my comrades with them." Quoth she, "I would have thee know that as for the booty thou hast not come at it; and, as for the handmaids, by Allah, they shall never be thy spoil. Have I not told thee that to lie is villein-vile?" Quoth he, "The wise man is he who taketh warning by others." Thereupon quoth she, "By the truth of the Messiah, did I not fear that thy death would be on my hands, I would shout a shout should fill the mead for thee with war steeds and with men of might, but I take pity upon the stranger. So, if thou seek booty, I require of thee that

---

<sup>170</sup> "Batrík" (vulg. Bitrík)=patricius, a title given to Christian knights who commanded ten thousand men; the Tarkhan (or Nobb) heading four thousand, and the Kaumas (Arab. Káid) two hundred. It must not be confounded with Batrak (or Batrik)=patriarcha (Lane's Lex.).

thou alight from thy steed and swear to me, by thy faith, that thou wilt not advance against me aught like arms in hand, and we will wrestle, I and thou. If thou throw me, set me on thy steed and take all of us to thy booty; but if I throw thee, thou shalt become under my command. Swear this to me, for I fear thy treachery: indeed it hath become a common saw, Where Perfidy is innate there Trust is a weakly mate. Now an thou wilt swear I will return and draw near to thee and tackle thee." Answered Sharrkan (and indeed he lusted to seize her and said in his soul, "Truly she knoweth not that I am a champion of champions"); "Swear me by what oath thou wilt and by what thou deemest most binding, and I will not approach thee with aught till thou hast made thy preparation and sayest: – Draw near that I wrestle with thee. If thou throw me, I have money wherewithal to ransom myself; and if I throw thee, 'twill be booty and booty enough for me!" Rejoined the damsel, "I am content herewith!" and Sharrkan was astounded at her words and said, "And by the truth of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!) I too am content on the other part!" Then said she, "Swear to me by Him who sprite in body dight and dealt laws to rule mankind aright, that thou wilt not offer me aught of violence save by way of wrestling; else mayst thou die without the pale of Al-Islam." Sharrkan replied, "By Allah! were a Kazi to swear me, even though he were a Kazi of the Kazis,<sup>171</sup> he would

---

<sup>171</sup> Arab. "Kázi al-Kuzát," a kind of Chief Justice or Chancellor. The office was established under the rule of Harun al-Rashid, who so entitled Abú Yúsuf Ya'akub al-Ansári: therefore the allusion is anachronistic. The same Caliph also caused the Olema to dress as they do still.

not impose upon me such an oath as this!" Then he sware to her by all she named and tied his steed to a tree; but he was drowned in the sea of thought, saying in himself, "Praise be to Him who fashioned her from dirty water!"<sup>172</sup> Then he girt himself and made ready for wrestling, and said to her, "Cross the stream to me;" but she replied, "It is not for me to come over to thee: if thou wilt, pass thou over here to me." "I cannot do that," quoth he, and quoth she, "O boy, I will come across to thee." So she tucked up

---

<sup>172</sup> The allusion is Koranic: "O men, if ye be in doubt concerning the resurrection, consider that he first created you of the dust of the ground (Adam); afterwards of seed" (chapt. xxii.). But the physiological ideas of the Koran are curious. It supposes that the Mani or male semen is in the loins and that of women in the breast bone (chapt. lxxxvi.); that the mingled seed of the two (chapt. lxxxvi.) fructifies the ovary and that the child is fed through the navel with menstruous blood, hence the cessation of the catamenia. Barzoi (Kalilah and Dîmnah) says: – "Man's seed, falling into the woman's womb, is mixed with her seed and her blood: when it thickens and curdles the Spirit moves it and it turns about like liquid cheese; then it solidifies, its arteries are formed, its limbs constructed and its joints distinguished. If the babe is a male, his face is placed towards his mother's back; if a female, towards her belly. (P. 262, Mr. I. G. N. Keith-Falconer's translation.) But there is a curious prolepsis of the spermatozoa-theory. We read (Koran chapt. vii.), "Thy Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam;" and the commentators say that Allah stroked Adam's back and extracted from his loins all his posterity, which shall ever be, in the shape of small ants; these confessed their dependence on God and were dismissed to return whence they came." From this fiction it appears (says Sale) that the doctrine of pre-existence is not unknown to the Mohammedans; and there is some little conformity between it and the modern theory of *generatio ex animalculis in semine marium*. The poets call this *Yaum-i-Alast*=the Day of Am-I-not (-your Lord)? which Sir William Jones most unhappily translated "Art thou not with thy Lord?" (*Alasta bi Rabbi-kum*); and they produce a grand vision of unembodied spirits appearing in countless millions before their Creator.

her skirts and, leaping, landed on the other side of the stream by his side; whereupon he drew near to her and bent him forwards and clapped palms.<sup>173</sup> But he was confounded by her beauty and loveliness; for he saw a shape which the Hand of Power had tanned with the dye-leaves of the Jánn, which had been fostered by the Hand of Beneficence and fanned by the Zephyrs of fair fortune and whose birth a propitious ascendant had greeted. Then she called out to him, "O Moslem, come on and let us wrestle ere the break of morning," and tucked up her sleeves from a forearm like fresh curd, which illumined the whole place with its whiteness; and Sharrkan was dazzled by it. Then he bent forwards and clapped his palms by way of challenge, she doing the like, and caught hold of her, and the two grappled and gripped and interlocked hands and arms. Presently he shifted his hands to her slender waist, when his finger tips sank into the soft folds of her middle, breeding languishment, and he fell a trembling like the Persian reed in the roaring gale. So she lifted him up and, throwing him to the ground, sat upon his breast with hips and hinder cheeks like mounds of sand, for his soul had lost mastery over his senses. Then she asked him, "O Moslem! the slaying of Nazarenes is lawful to you folk; what then hast thou to say about being slain thyself?"; and he answered, "O my lady, thy speech as regards slaying me is not other than unlawful; for our prophet Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!) prohibited the slaying of women and children, old men and monks!" "As it

---

<sup>173</sup> The usual preliminary of a wrestling bout.

was thus revealed to your Prophet," she replied, "it behoveth us to render the equivalent of his mercy; so rise. I give thee thy life, for generosity is never lost upon the generous." Then she got off his breast and he rose and stood shaking the dust from his head against the owners of the curved rib, even women; and she said to him, "Be not ashamed; but verily one who entereth the land of Roum in quest of booty, and cometh to assist Kings against Kings, how happeneth it that he hath not strength enough to defend himself from one made out of the curved rib?" "'Twas not for lack of strength in me," he answered; "nor didst thou throw me by thy force; it was thy loveliness overthrew me; so if thou wilt grant me another bout, it will be of thy courtesy." She laughed and said, "I grant thee thy request: but these handmaids have long been pinioned and their arms and sides are weary, and it were only right I should loose them, for haply this next wrestling bout will be long." Then she went to the slave-girls and, unbinding them, said to them in the tongue of Greece, "Get ye to some safe place, till I foil this Moslem's lust and longing for you." So they went away, whilst Sharrkan kept gazing at them and they kept turning to look at the two. Then each approached the adversary and he set his breast against hers, but when he felt waist touch waist, his strength failed him; and she, waxing ware of this, lifted him with her hands swiftlier than the blinding leven-flash, and threw him to the ground. He fell on his back,<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> In Eastern wrestling this counts as a fair fall. So Ajax fell on his back with Ulysses on his breast (*Iliad* xxxii., 700, etc.).

and then she said to him, "Rise: I give thee thy life a second time. I spared thee in the first count because of thy Prophet, for that he made unlawful the slaying of women; and I do so on the second count because of thy weakliness and the greenness of thine years and thy strangerhood; but I charge thee, if there be in the Moslem army sent by Omar bin al-Nu'uman to succour the King of Constantinople, a stronger than thou, send him hither and tell him of me: for in wrestling there are shifts and trips, catches and holds, such as the feint or falsing and the snap or first grip, the hug, the feet-catch, the thigh-bite,<sup>175</sup> the jostle and the leg-lock." "By Allah, O my lady," quoth Sharrkan (and indeed he was highly incensed against her), "had I been Master al-Safdí, Master Mohammed Kimál or Ibn al-Saddí,<sup>176</sup> as they were in their prime, I had kept no note of these shifts thou mentionest; for O my mistress, by Allah, thou hast not grassed me by thy strength, but by the blandishments of thy back-parts; for we men of Mesopotamia so love a full-formed thigh that nor sense was left me nor foresight. But now, an thou wish, thou shalt try a third fall with me while my wits are about me, and this last match is allowed me by the laws of the game which sayeth the best of three: moreover I have regained my presence of mind." When she heard his words she said to him, "Hast thou not had a belly-full

---

<sup>175</sup> So biting was allowed amongst the Greeks in the ἀνακλινοπάλη, the final struggle on the ground.

<sup>176</sup> Supposed to be names of noted wrestlers. "Kayim" (not El-Kim as Torrens has it) is a term now applied to a juggler or "professor" of legerdemain who amuses people in the streets with easy tricks (Lane, M. E., chapt. xx.).

of this wrestling, O vanquished one? However come on, an thou wilt; but know that this must be the last round." Then she bent forward and challenged him and Sharrkan did likewise, setting to it in real earnest and being right cautious about the throw: so the two strove awhile and the damsel found in him a strength such as she had not observed before and said to him, "O Moslem, thou art now on thy mettle." "Yes," he replied, "thou knowest that there remaineth to me but this one round, after which each of us will wend a different way." She laughed and he laughed too;<sup>177</sup> then she overreached at his thigh and caught firm hold of it unawares, which made him greet the ground and fall full on his back. She laughed at him and said, "Art thou an eater of bran? Thou art like a Badawi's bonnet which falleth off with every touch or else the Father of Winds<sup>178</sup> that droppeth before a puff of air. Fie upon thee, O thou poor thing!" adding, "Get thee back to the Moslem army and send us other than thyself, for thou failest of thews; and proclaim for us, among the Arabs and Persians, the Turks and Daylamites,<sup>179</sup> whoso hath might in him, let him come to us." Then she made a spring and landed on the other side of the stream and said to Sharrkan, laughing, "Parting with thee is right grievous to me, O my lord; but get thee to thy mates

---

<sup>177</sup> Lit. "laughed in his face" which has not the unpleasant meaning it bears in English.

<sup>178</sup> Arab. "Abu riyâh"=a kind of child's toy. It is the "Πόμπος" of the Greeks, our "bull-roarer" well known in Australia and parts of Africa.

<sup>179</sup> The people of the region south of the Caspian which is called "Sea of Daylam." It has a long history; for which see D'Herbelot, s. v. "Dilem."



before dawn, lest the Knights come upon thee and pick thee up on their lance-points. Thou hast no strength to defend thee against a woman, so how couldst thou hold thine own amongst men of might and Knights?" Sharrkan was confounded and called to her (as she turned from him making towards the convent), "O my lady, wilt thou go away and leave the miserable stranger, the broken hearted slave of love?" So she turned to him laughing and said, "What is thy want? I will grant thee thy prayer." "Have I set foot in thy country and tasted the sweetness of thy courtesy," replied he, "and shall I return without eating of thy victual and tasting thy hospitality; I who have become one of thy servitors!" "None baulk kindliness save the base," she rejoined, "honour us in Allah's name, on my head and eyes be it! Mount thy steed and ride along the brink of the stream over against me, for now thou art my guest." At this Sharrkan was glad and, hastening back to his horse, mounted and walked him abreast of her, and she kept faring on till they came to a drawbridge<sup>180</sup> built of beams of the white poplar, hung by pullies and steel-chains and made fast with hooks and padlocks. When Sharrkan looked, he saw awaiting her upon the bridge the same ten handmaids whom she had thrown in the wrestling-bouts; and, as she came up to them, she said to one in the Greek tongue, "Arise and take the reins of his horse and conduct him across into the convent." So she went up to Sharrkan and led him over, much puzzled and perturbed with what he saw, and saying to himself, "O would that the Wazir

---

<sup>180</sup> Coptic convents in Egypt still affect these drawbridges over the keep-moat.

Dandan were here with me that his eyes might look upon these fairest of favours." Then he turned to the young lady and said to her, "O marvel of loveliness, now I have two claims upon thee; first the claim of good-fellowship, and secondly for that thou hast carried me to thy home and offered me thy hospitality. I am now under thy commandance and thy guidance; so do me one last favour by accompanying me to the lands of Al-Islam; where thou shalt look upon many a lion-hearted warrior and thou shalt learn who I am." When she heard this she was angered and said to him, "By the truth of the Messiah, thou hast proved thyself with me a man of keen wit; but now I see what mischief there is in thy heart, and how thou canst permit thyself a speech which proveth thy traitorous intent. How should I do as thou sayest, when I wot that if I came to that King of yours, Omar bin al-Nu'uman, I should never get free from him? For truly he hath not the like of me or behind his city walls or within his palace-halls, Lord of Baghdad and of Khorasan though he be, who hath built for himself twelve pavilions, in number as the months of the year, and in each a concubine after the number of the days; and if I come to him he would not prove shy of me, for your folk believe I am lawful to have and to hold as is said in your writ: – Or those women whom your right hand shall possess as slaves.<sup>181</sup> So how canst thou speak thus to me? As for thy saying: – Thou shalt look upon the braves

---

<sup>181</sup> Koran iv., xxii. etc., meaning it is lawful to marry women taken in war after the necessary purification although their husbands be still living. This is not permitted with a free woman who is a True Believer. I have noted that the only concubine slave-girls mentioned in the Koran are these "captives possessed by the right hand."

of the Moslems, by the truth of the Messiah, thou sayest that which is not true, for I saw your army when it reached our land, these two days ago; and I did not see that your ordinance was the ordinance of Kings, but I beheld only a rabble of tribesmen gathered together. And as to thy words: – Thou shalt know who I am, I did not do thee kindness because of thy dignity but out of pride in myself; and the like of thee should not talk thus to the like of me, even wert thou Sharrkan, Omar bin al-Nu'uman's son, the prowdest name in these days!" "Knowest thou Sharrkan?" asked he; and she answered "Yes! and I know of his coming with an army numbering ten thousand horsemen; also that he was sent by his sire with this force to gain prevalence for the King of Constantinople." "O my lady," said Sharrkan, "I adjure thee by thy religion, tell me the cause of all this, that sooth may appear to me clear of untruth, and with whom the fault lies." "Now by the virtue of thy faith," she replied, "did I not fear lest the news of me be bruited abroad that I am of the daughters of Roum, I would adventure myself and sally forth single-handed against the ten thousand horsemen and slay their leader, the Wazir Dandan and vanquish their champion Sharrkan.<sup>182</sup> Nor would aught of shame accrue to me thereby, for I have read books and studied the rules of good breeding in the language of the Arabs. But I

---

<sup>182</sup> The Amazonian dame is a favourite in folk-lore and is an ornament to poetry from the Iliad to our modern day. Such heroines, apparently unknown to the Pagan Arabs, were common in the early ages of Al-Islam as Ockley and Gibbon prove, and that the race is not extinct may be seen in my Pilgrimage (iii. 55) where the sister of Ibn Rumi resolved to take blood revenge for her brother.

have no need to vaunt my own prowess to thee, more by token as thou hast proved in thy proper person my skill and strength in wrestling; and thou hast learnt my superiority over other women. Nor, indeed, had Sharrkan himself been here this night and it were said to him: – Clear this stream, could he have done it; and I only long and lust that the Messiah would throw him into my hands in this very convent, that I might go forth to him in the habit of a man and drag him from his saddle-seat and make him my captive and lay him in bilboes." – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

### **Now when it was the Forty-eighth Night,**

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Nazarene damsel said to Sharrkan (and he listening impatiently enow), "Verily if Sharrkan fell into my hands, I would go forth to him in the habit of a man and drag him from his saddle-seat and make him my captive and lay him in bilboes," pride and passion and knightly jealousy took possession of him and he desired to discover and declare himself and to lay on load; but her loveliness restrained him and he began repeating: —

An faulty of one fault the Beauty prove, ❀ Her charms a thousand advocates shall move.

So she went up and Sharrkan after her; and, when he saw the

maiden's back and hinder cheeks that clashed against each other, like rollers in the rolling sea, he extemporised these couplets: —

For her sins is a pleader that brow, ❀ And all hearts its fair pleading must trow:

When I saw it I cried, "To-night ❀ The moon at its fullest doth show;

Tho' Balkís' own Ifrit<sup>183</sup> try a bout, ❀ Spite his force she would deal him a throw.

The two fared on till they reached a gate over which rose a marble archway. This she opened and ushered Sharrkan into a long vestibule, vaulted with ten connected arches, from each of which hung a crystal lamp glistening like a spark of fire. The handmaids met her at the further end bearing wax candles of goodly perfume, and wearing on their heads golden fillets crusted with all manner bezel-gems,<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> And Solomon said, "O nobles, which of you will bring me her throne?" A terrible genius (*i. e.* an Ifrit of the Jinn named Dhakwan or the notorious Sakhr) said, "I will bring it unto thee before thou arise from thy seat (of justice); for I am able to perform it, and may be trusted" (Koran, xxvii. 38-39). Balkís or *Bilkís* (says the Durrat al-Ghawwás) daughter of Hozád bin Sharhabíl, twenty-second in the list of the rulers of Al-Yaman, according to some murdered her husband, and became, by Moslem ignorance, the Biblical "Queen of Sheba." The Abyssinians transfer her from Arabian Saba to Ethiopia and make her the mother by Solomon of Menelek, their proto-monarch; thus claiming for their royalties an antiquity compared with which all reigning houses in the world are of yesterday. The dates of the Tabábi'ah or Tobbas prove that the Bilkís of history ruled Al-Yaman in the early Christian era.

<sup>184</sup> Arab. "Fass," fiss or fuss; the gem set in a ring; also applied to a hillock rounded



# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.